

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS: STEPS FOR PROGRAMS TO CONSIDER



Use this brief to better understand the Head Start regulations and considerations for family child care (FCC) providers.

Local programs determine how their staff meet the Head Start regulations.

Follow these steps to help guide you in the process of determining and justifying how your FCC providers meet the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS).

1. Read the HSPPS.
 - Know the specific education requirements for staff and consultant roles detailed in §1302.91.
 - Review the cross references to the staff and consultant qualification requirements in the Head Start Act and other relevant HSPPS.
2. Gather data to know your program's needs and expectations, based on:
 - Community, family, and child needs
 - Program goals including school readiness goals
 - Your existing continuous quality improvement system
3. Use all available information to ensure your program has:
 - Human resources and professional development policies and procedures to help you meet regulations
 - Clear program goals including school readiness goals
 - Qualified staff and consultants who can effectively support your program's goals and service delivery
 - An ongoing monitoring process that identifies and addresses challenges in hiring and retaining qualified staff and consultants

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS?*

*For full text access the [HSPPS](#)

KNOWLEDGE

§1302.91(e)(4)(i) “A program must ensure family child care providers have previous early child care experience and, at a minimum, are enrolled [prior to beginning service provision] in [either]:

- a Family Child Care CDA** program or state equivalent [and acquire the credential within 18 months of beginning services], or
- an associate’s or baccalaureate degree program in child development or early childhood education...”



**The national FCC CDA credential that is issued by the Council for Professional Recognition fully meets the requirements. Other CDA credentials may fully or partially meet the HSPPS requirements.

- Infant and toddler center-based and home visitor’s CDAs include an infant and toddler focus but do not address effectively working with a group of children in a provider’s home.
- Preschool center-based CDA does not have an infant and toddler focus.

COMPETENCIES

§1302.91(a) “A program must:

- Ensure all staff, consultants, and contractors...have sufficient knowledge, training and experience, and competencies to:
 - fulfill the roles and responsibilities of their positions...
 - ensure high-quality service delivery...
- Provide ongoing training and professional development to support staff in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.”

§1302.91(e)(5) “A program must ensure...family child care providers demonstrate competency to:

- Provide effective and nurturing teacher-child interactions,
- Plan and implement learning experiences that ensure effective curriculum implementation and use of assessment and
- Promote children’s progress across...the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five* and applicable state early learning and development standards, including for children with disabilities and dual language learners, as appropriate.”

PLEASE NOTE!

Grantees have the flexibility to implement higher or more stringent requirements than those outlined in the regulations. To meet the Head Start requirements, FCC providers could do one of the following:

- Be enrolled in FCC credential program and can earn it within 18 months of beginning service delivery
- Have a current national FCC CDA credential issued by the Council for Professional Recognition
- Have a comparable certificate or credential that meets or exceeds the national FCC CDA requirements***
- Be enrolled in a degree program for child development or early childhood education (ECE)
- Have an associate, bachelor, or advanced degree in child development or ECE

***A comparable credential is issued by state, territory, and tribal agencies, boards, and commissions as well as accredited colleges and universities and other early childhood organizations that offer certificates and degree programs.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

CONSIDERATIONS FOR HIRING STAFF

- Consider your local needs to help you determine how much ECE experience staff need to work in your program.
- Ensure FCC providers have sufficient knowledge, training, experience, and competency to effectively plan for and implement education services for children ages birth to five in a provider's home.
- Use the national FCC CDA credential issued by the Council for Professional Recognition to help you determine if a state or comparable credential meets or exceeds the requirements. This credential covers the growth and development of children ages birth to 5 years.
- Review**** training and course content to determine if it includes ECE or child development. To the extent possible, get the course descriptions from awarding institutions. ECE or child development related courses may be offered in various departments—such as education, home economics, family and consumer science, human ecology, music, art, library science, physical education and recreation, psychology, family studies, and others.
- Access the T/TA system for support and connect with your regional office program specialist as necessary.
- Consider requirements detailed within the state/territory early care and education system (includes licensing requirements, requirements included within the Quality Rating and Improvement System, etc.).

*****In reviewing coursework taken by applicants, be sure to look beyond just the title or name of the department that issued the credits, as they are sometimes deceiving.*

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Use the annual professional development (PD) hour requirement to ensure FCC providers effectively:
 - support child development and learning;
 - implement and individualize curriculum for mixed-age groups;
 - complete training or coursework needed for their credential or degree in a timely manner; and
 - build respectful, culturally responsive, and trusting relationships with families.

This can include ongoing training, taking college courses, and intensive coaching.

- Use individualized professional development plans and ongoing supervision to:
 - support areas of need or interest such as implementing curriculum and learning experiences with very young children, using assessments, or working with mixed ages, etc.; and
 - outline steps and ensure timely progress in acquiring a degree.
- Enlist partners to support an ECE career pathway in your community.
 - Contact your child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agency to learn about trainings and courses. Determine if and how they connect to CDA credential or degree programs.
 - Create a cadre of CDA professional development specialists to expedite the national CDA approval and renewal process. Identify local candidates from your program, ECE programs, and the community.
 - Partner with local colleges for an ECE degree program. Ensure course offerings include adequate ECE content for FCC providers.
 - Create a cohort of students from your program and other ECE programs.
 - Contact FCC networks to learn if partnering is an option.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE ON THIS TOPIC?

- Head Start Regulations <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii>
 - Program Performance Standards on Staff Qualifications and Competency Requirements <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-91-staff-qualifications-competency-requirements>
 - The Showcase of Head Start Regulations on Staff Qualifications <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/showcase/staff-qualifications>
 - Head Start Program Performance Standards Excerpts on Staff Qualifications <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/docs/pdf/staff-qualifications.pdf>
 - Program Performance Standards Related to the Family Child Care Option <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-23-family-child-care-option>
- Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>
 - Head Start Staff Qualifications <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/human-resources/article/head-start-staff-qualifications>
 - Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement/article/relationship-based-competencies-support-family-engagement>
 - Steps Local Agencies Can Use to Determine Credential or Degree Equivalency <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/steps-local-agencies-can-use-determine-credential-or-degree-equivalency>
 - Information about Family Child Care Partners <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/local-early-childhood-partnerships/article/family-child-care-partners>
- National CDA Credential Program <http://www.cdacouncil.org/credentials/apply-for-cda>
 - Family Child Care CDA <http://www.cdacouncil.org/credentials/apply-for-cda>
 - Professional Development (PD) Specialists <http://www.cdacouncil.org/pd-specialists/role-a-responsibilities#>
 - The Council's Online Platform YourCouncil <https://www.cdacouncil.org/yourcda>
- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) <https://www.nafcc.org/>
- Early Educator Central <https://earlyeducatorcentral.acf.hhs.gov/>
 - Information for Teachers and Family Child Care Providers <https://earlyeducatorcentral.acf.hhs.gov/teachers-families-child-care-providers>
 - Successful Inclusion of FCC Providers in Higher Education Degree Programs and Courses: A Research to Practice Guide <https://earlyeducatorcentral.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/resources/Successful%20Inclusion%20of%20Family%20Child%20Care%20Providers%20in%20Higher%20Education%20Degree%20Programs%20and%20Courses.pdf>
- Quality Rating and Improvement Systems <https://qrisguide.acf.hhs.gov/about-qris>
 - State QRIS info <https://qrisguide.acf.hhs.gov/states>
 - National Program Standards Crosswalk Tool <https://qrisguide.acf.hhs.gov/crosswalk/>