

Education Requirements for Family Services Managers and Staff

Staff Qualifications: Steps for Programs to Consider



Use this brief to better understand the Head Start regulations and considerations for family services managers and staff. Local programs determine how their staff meet the Head Start regulations.

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

1. Read the HSPPS:

- Know the specific education requirements for staff roles detailed in §1302.91.
- Review the cross references to the staff qualification requirements in the Head Start Act and other relevant HSPPS.

2. Gather information 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 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.

What are the Requirements?

Knowledge

§1302.91(d)(1) A program must ensure staff responsible for management and oversight of family services...have, at a minimum,

- a baccalaureate degree, preferably related to one or more of the disciplines they oversee.

§1302.91(e)(7) A program must ensure family services staff who work directly with families on the family partnership process...have,

- within eighteen months of hire, at a minimum, a credential or certification in social work, human services, family services, counseling or a related field.

Note: §1302.91(d)(1) and §1302.91(e)(7) apply to staff who are hired after November 7, 2016.

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 position, and
 - ensure high-quality service delivery.
- Provide ongoing training and professional development to support staff in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

Grantees have the flexibility to implement higher or more stringent requirements than those outlined in the regulation. To meet the Head Start requirements, family services staff could have one of the following:

- Current credential or certification in social work, human services, family services, counseling, or a related field
- Degree in social work, human services, family services, counseling, or a related field
- Credential or certification earned within 18 months of their hire date

Note: For full text, visit Head Start Program Performance Standards, 45 CFR § 1302.91 Staff qualifications and competency requirements.

What More Do I Need to Know?

Considerations for Hiring

- Review training materials and course syllabi to determine if a credential or degree includes sufficient content related to family partnership or engagement. Relying on a review of the materials and syllabi will keep you from making assumptions about the content.
- Access the T/TA system for support and connect with your Regional Office Program Specialist as necessary.
- Consider the requirements detailed in the HSPPS:
 - Family service managers who also serve as education managers must meet the requirements outlined in §1302.91(d)(2),
 - The requirement in 1302.91(e)(7) is applicable for all staff who work directly with families on the family partnership process regardless of their title, and
 - In some cases, program family services duties occur within other roles such as teacher or home visitor.

Considerations for Professional Development

To ensure your family services staff know how to implement the family partnership process you may:

- Use the 15 hours of annual professional development (PD) required by the HSPPS 1302.92(b)(1) to ensure staff have the skills to support and engage families in the family partnership process,
- Offer PD opportunities that support staff working with all families based on your community assessment or continuous quality improvement data,
- Use individualized PD plans to further the skills and knowledge specific to the family partnership process, and
- Consider using the Relationship-Based Competencies (RBCs) as a guide for both individual and program PD planning.

Where Can I Find More on this Topic?

Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (ECLKC)

- **Head Start Policy & Regulations**
 - **§1302.91 Staff qualifications and competency requirements.**
 - **Showcase of Head Start Regulations**
 - **Staff Qualifications Head Start Program Performance Standards Excerpts Chart**

Where Can I Find More on this Topic? cont.

- **Credentialing and Degree Programs Databases for Head Start Staff Who Work with Families**
Find the latest credentialing, certificate, and degree programs in your state to meet HSPPS Staff Qualifications and Competency Requirements, 45 CFR § 1302.91(d) and (e) (7). There are credential/certificate and degree program databases to help Head Start program staff who work with families locate professional development and educational opportunities. Explore career pathways in social work, human services, family services, counseling, and related fields.
- **Head Start Staff Qualifications**
- **Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement: A Guide for Early Childhood Professionals Who Work with Families**
- **Steps Local Agencies Can Use to Determine Credential or Degree Equivalency**

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