

Excerpts from the Head Start Act's Training and Professional Development Requirements: Staff Qualifications

To enhance program quality, the Head Start Act requires:

Sec. 648A Staff Qualifications and Development

(a)(5) Teacher In-Service Requirement – Each Head Start teacher shall attend not less than 15 clock hours of professional development per year. Such professional development shall be high-quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom, and regularly evaluated by the program for effectiveness.

(f) Professional Development Plans – Each Head Start agency and program shall create, in consultation with an employee, a professional development plan for all full-time Head Start employees who provide direct services to children and shall ensure that such plans are regularly evaluated for their impact on teacher and staff effectiveness. The agency and the employee shall implement the plan to the extent feasible and practicable.

Sec. 637 Definitions

(21) The term "professional development" means high-quality activities that will improve the knowledge and skills of Head Start teachers and staff, as relevant to their roles and functions, in program administration and the provision of services and instruction, as appropriate, in a manner that improves service delivery to enrolled children and families, including activities that—

- A. are part of a sustained effort to improve overall program quality and outcomes for enrolled children and families;
- B. are developed or selected with extensive participation of administration and teachers from Head Start programs;
- C. are developmentally appropriate for the children being served;
- D. include instruction in ways that Head Start teachers and staff may work more effectively with parents, as appropriate;
- E. are designed to give Head Start teachers and staff the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate support services to children of diverse backgrounds, as appropriate;
- F. may include a 1-day or short-term workshop or conference, if the workshop or conferences is consistent in the professional development plan described in section 648A(f) and will be delivered by an institution of higher education or other entity, with expertise in delivering training in early childhood development, training in family support, and other assistance designed to improve the delivery of Head Start services; and



- G. in the case of teachers, assist teachers with—
- i. the acquisition of the content knowledge and teaching strategies to provide effective instruction and other school readiness services regarding early language and literacy, early mathematics, early science, cognitive skills, approaches to learning, creative arts, physical health and development, and social and emotional development linked to school readiness;
 - ii. meeting the requirements in paragraphs (1) and (2) of section [648A\(a\)](#), as appropriate;
 - iii. improving classroom management skills, as appropriate;
 - iv. advancing their understanding of effective instructional strategies that are—
 - (I) based on scientifically valid research; and
 - (II) aligned with—
 - (aa) the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework developed by the Secretary and, as appropriate, State early learning standards; and
 - (bb) curricula, ongoing assessments, and other instruction and services, designed to help meet the standards described in section [641A\(a\)\(1\)](#);
 - v. acquiring the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and support services to increase the English language skills of limited English proficient children, as appropriate; or
 - vi. methods of teaching children with disabilities, as appropriate.

