



HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS SUPPORT CHILDREN'S INTERESTS

PART 1302 PROGRAM OPERATIONS

- **Subpart C – Education and Child Development Program Services**
- **1302.30 Purpose.** All programs must provide high-quality early education and child development services, including for children with disabilities, that promote children's cognitive, social and emotional growth for later success in school... A program must deliver developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences in language, literacy, mathematics, social and emotional functioning, approaches to learning, science, physical skills, and creative arts.
- **1302.31 Teaching and the learning environment.**
 - (b)(1)(i) Teaching practices must emphasize nurturing and responsive practices, interactions, and environments that foster trust and emotional security; are communication and language rich; promote critical thinking and problem-solving; social, emotional, behavioral, and language development; provide supportive feedback for learning; motivate continued effort; and support all children' engagement in learning experiences and activities
 - (b)(1)(ii) Focus on promoting growth in the developmental progressions described in the HSELOF by aligning with and using the Framework and the curricula as described in 1302.32 to direct planning of organized activities, schedules, lesson plans, and the implementation of high-quality early learning experiences that are responsive to and build upon each child's individual pattern of development and learning.
 - (b)(1)(iv) Include developmentally appropriate learning experiences in language, literacy, social and emotional development, math, science, social studies,, creative arts, and physical development that are focused toward achieving progress outlined in *the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five* (ELOF).

MAKING THE CONNECTION TO THE ELOF

1. Build on children's interests to support their children's learning and development across the ELOF domains.
 - **Approaches to Learning**
 - **Curiosity and initiative.** When children are interested in certain objects, materials, people, or events, they take the initiative to explore further.
 - **Executive functioning.** Research shows that children focus, sustain attention, and persist in actions and behaviors for longer periods of time when they are interested in the topic or task (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2018).
 - **Social and Emotional Development**
 - **A sense of belonging.** When education staff incorporate children's interests, children see themselves and their interests reflected in the learning setting.
 - **Language and Literacy**
 - **Communication of cognitive skills.** When children are interested in a topic or a task, they are motivated to describe and share their ideas and thoughts. For example, when children are interested in pets, they are likely to want to talk about them, read about them, compare them, draw them, and write about them. These experiences provide opportunities to build foundational skills in language, literacy, and cognitive skills.
2. Implementing a curriculum responsively requires education staff to learn about children's interests. It also requires that education staff understand their curriculum resources. With this information, education staff can provide learning environments, learning experiences, and interactions that build on children's interests. As part of daily observations and interactions with children, notice and learn about their interests. Consider what the curriculum materials offer to ensure the curriculum is implementing with fidelity.