

Professional Development in Head Start – Part 1: History of PD in Head Start

Hello, I'm Sharon Yandian the T/TA Director from the Office of Head Start, and I'm excited to share one of my life-long passions with you- professional development and training!

From the very beginning, one of the smartest things the architects of Head Start did was to look to the community to employ the staff working with the enrolled families and children. It was during these early days that Head Start administrators recognized the need to build the knowledge and skills of these newly employed community-based staff members by providing professional development opportunities. As Head Start moved from a summer effort to a year round-program for many, the competencies required increased and training and staff development efforts expanded to include every role in the Head Start program. This required a systematic approach that emphasized improving quality services for children, parents and families.

It is an approach that still continues to this day. Particularly with the moving landscape and regulations that prompt changes to qualifications, credentials and competencies for staff. Over the years the Office of Head Start has continued its commitment to providing professional development efforts that are responsive to communities and that address the legislative and regulation changes necessary to run and a Head Start program. OHS has learned from our many efforts that remain informed by research and evidence-based practice.

One of the results is a knowledge base that supports a broad and comprehensive view of professional development and training for those working in early care and education.