

Program Performance Standards

Below are some of the Head Start Program Performance Standards that require supporting children's language development, including English Language Learners. The accompanying rationale statements explain the importance of each Program Performance Standard listed.

For All Children Birth to Five

1304.21(a) Child development and education approach for all children.

(1) In order to help children gain the social competence, skills and confidence necessary to be prepared to succeed in their present environment and with later responsibilities in school and life, grantee and delegate agencies' approach to child development and education must:

(i) ***Be developmentally and linguistically appropriate, recognizing that children have individual rates of development as well as individual interests, temperaments, languages, cultural backgrounds, and learning styles.***

Rationale: Abilities, interests, temperaments, developmental rates, and learning styles vary among children. The program environment, therefore, is arranged to accommodate a variety of children's needs and strengths, and to stimulate learning across all domains of development: social, emotional, cognitive, and physical.

(iii) ***Provide an environment of acceptance that supports and respects gender, culture, language, ethnicity and family composition.***

Rationale: Respecting individual children nurtures a positive sense of self in each child and enhances the development of the skills needed to communicate and interact with others. Encouraging an understanding of human diversity helps children to grow up confident of their identity and to be respectful of the identity of others.

(3)(i) Grantee and delegate agencies must support social and emotional development by encouraging development which enhances each child's strengths by:

(E) ***Supporting and respecting the home language, culture, and family composition of each child in ways that support the child's health and well-being.***

Rationale: Incorporating the home language and culture throughout the curriculum supports the development of social competence and demonstrates respect for the values and beliefs of the family. Understanding and respecting the culture, social background, religious beliefs, composition, and childrearing practices of each family supports social and emotional development.

(4) Grantee and delegate agencies must provide for the development of each child's cognitive and language skills by:

(ii) ***Ensuring opportunities for creative self-expression through activities such as art, music, movement, and dialogue.***

Program Performance Standards

Rationale: *Children communicate ideas and feelings through gestures, words, pictures, body movements, and sounds. Creative expression in all of these areas helps children to experience success, to develop competence, and to acquire self-confidence.*

(iii) *Promoting interaction and language use among children and between children and adults.*

Rationale: *Children develop language skills by communicating with others; and they use verbal and nonverbal communication to share feelings and to express ideas.*

1304.21(b)(1) Child development and education approach for infants and toddlers. Grantee and delegate agencies' program of services for infants and toddlers must encourage (see **45 CFR 1304.3(a)(5)** for a definition of curriculum):

(i) The development of secure relationships in out-of-home care settings for infants and toddlers by having a limited number of consistent teachers over an extended period of time. Teachers must demonstrate an understanding of the child's family culture and, whenever possible, speak the child's language (see 45 CFR 1304.52(g)(2) for more information).

Rationale: *To support the development of infants and toddlers, the curriculum focuses on relationships, respect, and responsiveness of the child development services. Social and emotional development of infants and toddlers is based upon their relationship with their caregivers. For healthy social and emotional development, infants and toddlers need the attention of consistent caregiving. Staff who understand the child's family culture and speak the home language reinforce an infant's or toddler's emotional security and trust. A safe and secure environment nurtures positive relationships with peers and adults.*

