

# Program Performance Standards

Below are some of the Head Start Program Performance Standards that require experiences that support children's literacy. The accompanying rationale statements explain the importance of each Program Performance Standard listed.

## For All Children Birth to Five

1304.21(a)(4) Child development and education approach for all children. Grantee and delegate agencies must provide for the development of each child's cognitive and language skills by:

- (i) ***Supporting each child's learning using various strategies including experimentation, inquiry, observation, play and exploration.***

*Rationale: Through meaningful interactions with adults, other children, and a rich environment, children gain knowledge and understanding of the world. Strategies that support the development of cognitive and language skills allow exploration in both indoor and outdoor environments.*

1304.21(b)(2) Child development and education approach for infants and toddlers. Grantee and delegate agencies must support the social and emotional development of infants and toddlers by promoting an environment that:

- (ii) ***Supports the emerging communication skills of infants and toddlers by providing daily opportunities for each child to interact with others and to express himself or herself freely.***

*Rationale: Children acquire and develop communication skills through observation and practice. They learn verbal and nonverbal means of communicating needs, thoughts, and feelings by imitating the behaviors of others.*

1304.21(c)(1) Child development and education approach for preschoolers. Grantee and delegate agencies, in collaboration with parents, must implement a curriculum (see **45 CFR 1304.3(a)(5)**) that:

- (ii) ***Provides for the development of cognitive skills by encouraging each child to organize his or her experiences, to understand concepts, and to develop age appropriate literacy, numeracy, reasoning, problem solving and decision-making skills which form a foundation for school readiness and later school success;***

*Rationale: Children expand their knowledge and skills through a variety of experiences and interactions with other children and adults. Intellectual development is reinforced and extended through opportunities to engage in meaningful work that stimulates questioning, forming ideas, and represent what is being learned.*

# Program Performance Standards

1304.40(e)(4) Parental involvement in child development and education. Grantee and delegate agencies must provide, either directly or through referrals to other local agencies, opportunities for children and families to participate in family literacy services by:

(i) ***Increasing family access to materials, services, and activities essential to family literacy development; and***

(ii) ***Assisting parents as adult learners to recognize and address their own literacy goals.***

*Rationale: Parental involvement in the program's approach to child development and education enhances the ability of parents and staff to work together to support each child's growth and learning in the home and program environments. Parents who understand how children grow and develop usually are more responsive to their children's needs, and are better able to support child development. Parental involvement also provides parents with opportunities to share knowledge about their children so that staff can individualize the program to support each child's individual pattern of development and learning.*

1304.41(a)(2) Partnerships. Grantee and delegate agencies must take affirmative steps to establish ongoing collaborative relationships with community organizations to promote the access of children and families to community services that are responsive to their needs, and to ensure that Early Head Start and Head Start programs respond to community needs, including:

(vii) ***Local elementary schools and other educational and cultural institutions, such as libraries and museums, for both children and families.***

*Rationale: Community planning fosters the development of a comprehensive system of family centered services attuned to the complex and diverse needs of children and families.*

