

The Revised Head Start Act and Limited English Proficient (LEP)Language- Addressing Children and Families who Speak a Language Other Than English(LOTE)

Excerpts from either existing regulations or the previous Head Start act specifically related to home language & culture and progress towards acquisition of the English language in Head Start and Early Head Start are identified below and may assist you in thinking about the future standards and current Head Start Act.

Reference to Limited English Proficient (LEP), or children who speak a language other than English and their families appears on nearly 40 pages of the 150 page compilation of the Head Start Act and loosely falls into six areas: definition of LEP, curriculum/ curricular practices, professional development considerations, measures/assessment, family literacy/outreach and support (including transitions to public school) and reports required to be conducted by OHS.

Highlights from the Current Head Start Program Performance Standards

Part 1304 Subpart A –General

► Definitions: Developmentally appropriate means any behavior or experience that is appropriate for the age span of the children and is implemented with attention to the different needs, interests, and developmental levels and **cultural backgrounds** of individual children. (1304.3 a(7))

Early Childhood Development and Health Services 1304 Subpart B

► In collaboration with each child's parent, and within 45 calendar days of the child's entry into the program, grantee and delegate agencies must perform or obtain **linguistically and age appropriate screening** procedures to identify concerns regarding a child's developmental, sensory (visual and auditory), behavioral, motor, **language, social, cognitive**, perceptual, and emotional skills (see 45 CFR 1308.6(b)(3) for additional information). **To the greatest extent possible, these screening procedures must be sensitive to the child's cultural background.** (45 CFR 1304.20(b)(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: -- **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;**-- **Provide an environment of acceptance that supports and respects gender, culture, language, ethnicity and family composition;** (45 CFR 1304.21(a)(1)(i & iii))

Early Childhood Development and Health Services 1304 Subpart B (conti)

▶ **Parents must be:-- Invited to become integrally involved** in the development of the program's curriculum and approach to child development and education; (45 CFR 1304.21(a)(2))

▶ Grantee and delegate agencies must support **social and emotional development** by: -- Encouraging development which enhances each child's strengths by: -- **Supporting and respecting the home language, culture, and family composition of each child in ways that support the child's health and well-being**; and (45 CFR 1304.21(a)(3)(i)(E))

▶ Grantee and delegate agencies must provide for the development of each child's **cognitive and language skills** by: -- **Promoting interaction and language use among children and between children and adults**; and -- **Supporting emerging literacy and numeracy development** through materials and activities according to the developmental level of each child. (45 CFR 1304.21(a)(4)(iii & iv))

▶ 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** (1304.21(b)(1)(i)) (see 45 CFR 1304.52(g)(2));

▶ Grantee and delegate agencies must design and implement a nutrition program that meets the nutritional needs and feeding requirements of each child, including those with special dietary needs and children with disabilities. Also, the nutrition program must serve a variety of foods which consider cultural and ethnic preferences and which broaden the child's food experience (1304.23(b)(1)).

Family Community Partnerships-Subpart C

▶ Meetings and interactions with families must be respectful of each family's diversity and cultural and ethnic background. (1304.40(a)(5))

▶ Increase family access to materials, services, and activities essential to family and literacy development. Assisting parents as adult learners to recognize and address their own literacy goals. (1304.40(e)(4)(i & ii))

Program Design and Management- Subpart D

▶ Grantee and delegate agencies must ensure that **effective two-way comprehensive communications between staff and parents are carried out on a regular basis** throughout the program year. (1304.51(c)(1))

▶ **Communication with parents must be carried out in the parents' primary or preferred language or through an interpreter, to the extent feasible.** (1304.51(c)(2))

Program Design and Management- Subpart D (conti)

► **Staff and program consultants must be familiar with the ethnic background and heritage of families in the program and must be able to serve and effectively communicate, to the extent feasible, with children and families with no or limited English proficiency.**

(1304.52(b)(4))

► **When a majority of children speak the same language, at least one classroom staff member or home visitor interacting regularly with the children must speak their language.**

(1304.52(g)(2))

► **Standards of Conduct.** Grantee and delegate agencies must ensure that **all staff, consultants, and volunteers abide by the program's standards of conduct.** These standards must specify that: -- They will **respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family** and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, **ethnicity, culture,** religion, or disability;

(1304.52(h)(1)(i))

► Grantee and delegate agencies must provide and arrange sufficient equipment, toys, materials, and furniture to meet the needs and facilitate the participation of children and adults.

Equipment, toys, materials, and furniture owned or operated by the grantee or delegate agency must be: -- Supportive of the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the children; (

1304.53(b)(1)(ii))

Staffing Requirements and Program Options-Subpart 1306

• Classroom staff and home visitors must be able to communicate with the families they serve either directly or through a translator. They should also be familiar with the ethnic background of the children 1306.20(e)

Services for Children with Disabilities-Part 1308

•.....Testing and evaluation procedures must be selected and administered so as not to be racially or culturally discriminatory, administered in the child native language or mode of communication unless it is clearly not feasible to do so (1308.6 (e) (i.)

• A child is classified as having a speech or language impairment whose speech is unintelligible much of the time, or who has been professionally diagnosed as having speech impairments which requires intervention or who is professionally diagnosed as having a delay in development in his or her primary language which required intervention. 1308.9 (b)

► A child should not be classified as having a speech or language impairment whose speech or language differences may be attributed to:

(1) cultural, ethnic, bilingual, or dialectical differences or being non-English speaking (1308.9 (e))

Services for Children with Disabilities-Part 1308 (cont)

- Provide interpreters, if needed, and offer the parents a copy of the IEP in the parents' language of understanding after it has been signed (1308.19 (j))3)

- Valid and reliable instruments appropriate to the age range must be used. If they do not exist for the language and cultural group to which the child belongs, observation and professional judgement are to be used instead. 1308.10(C)

Highlights from the 1998 Head Start Act (this language is not found in the existing standards)

- ▶ Establishment of Standards. The Secretary shall establish by regulation standards, including minimum levels of overall accomplishment, applicable to Head Start agencies, programs, and projects under this subchapter, including—Additional education performance standards to ensure that the children participating in the program, at a minimum.....**in the case of non-English background children, progress toward acquisition of the English language** (Head Start Act Section 641A(a)(1)(B)(ii)(V))

- ▶ Ensuring that such programs have adequate numbers of **qualified staff**, and that such staff are **furnished adequate training, including developing skills in working with children with non-English language background** and children with disabilities, when appropriate. (Head Start Act Section 640(a)(3)(B)(ii))

- ▶ To train classroom teachers and other staff to meet the education performance standards as described in section 641A(a)(1)(B), through activities --to promote children's language and literacy growth, through techniques identified through scientifically based reading research; -- **to promote the acquisition of the English language for non-English background children and families;** (Head Start Act Section 640(a)(3)(C)(ii)(I-II))