

EARLY HEAD START TIP SHEET

No. 2 – Revised

Teacher qualification & EHS

Why do both staff members in an Early Head Start classroom with eight children need to be teacher qualified?

Response:

In every Early Head Start classroom, the maximum group size is eight children. To meet the 4:1 child to teacher ratio, the classroom is considered two clusters of four children. Since each teacher is responsible for the direct care and well being of the children, both staff members need to be teacher qualified.

What does it mean to be teacher qualified?

Currently, an EHS teacher must have, at a minimum, a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential in Infant and Toddler Caregivers; and EHS teachers are given a year, from the date of hire, to receive this CDA [1304.52(f)].

The Head Start Act of 2007 states:

- By September 30, 2010, all EHS teachers must have, at a minimum, a CDA credential, and have been trained (or have equivalent coursework) in early childhood development.
- By September 30, 2012, all EHS teachers must be trained (or have equivalent coursework) in early childhood development with a focus on infant and toddler development.

The quality of care provided by EHS teachers has a great impact on the healthy growth and development of the children in their care. Therefore, the training and education of EHS teachers should appropriately and specifically address infant and toddler development. It is recommended that EHS programs support their teachers in acquiring, at a minimum, a CDA credential for Infant and Toddler Caregivers. Some programs have worked with community colleges in creating local CDA programs and/or Early Childhood Education programs focusing on infant/toddler development.

In addition to infant and toddler development, EHS teachers need training that includes a focus on health and safety issues in infant and toddler care; the importance of relationship building with infants and toddlers; communicating effectively with families and colleagues; and working in partnership with parents of infants and toddlers.

Questions to Consider for Planning and Programming:

- How does the program ensure that its EHS teachers are qualified?
- How does the program support staff in gaining their CDA, AA, or BA degrees?
- How does the program partner with local educational agencies to form CDA credentialing and/or college programs that focus on infant/toddler development?
- How does the program ensure that EHS staff members receive training and/or gain coursework that focuses on infant and toddler development and needs?

Performance Standards, Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations:

- 1304.52(f) Early Head Start and Head Start staff working as teachers with infants and toddlers must obtain a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential for Infant and Toddler Caregivers or an equivalent credential within one year of hire as a teacher of infants and toddlers. In addition, infant and toddler teachers must have the training and experience necessary to develop consistent, stable, and supportive relationships with very young children. The training must develop knowledge of infant and toddler development, safety issues in infant and toddler care, and methods for communicating effectively with infants and toddlers, their parents, and other staff members.
- 1304.52(g)(4) Grantee and delegate agencies must ensure that each teacher working exclusively with infants and toddlers has responsibility for no more than four infants and toddlers and that no more than eight infants and toddlers are placed in any one group.

Resources:

ACF-IM-HS-08-12 **Statutory Degree and Credentialing Requirements for Head Start Teaching Staff.** HHS/ACF/OHS. 2008.

Child Development Associate (CDA). <http://www.cdacouncil.org/>

Early Head Start National Resource Center. **Early Head Start Program Strategies-Staff Development.** HHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB. 1999.

Head Start Act as amended December 12, 2007

- Sec. 645A(h)(1)&(2) No later than September 30, 2010, all teachers providing direct services to children and families participating in Early Head Start programs located in Early Head Start centers, have a minimum of a child development associate credential, and have been trained (or have equivalent coursework) in early childhood development; and the secretary will establish staff qualification goals to ensure that not later than September 30, 2012, all such teachers have been trained (or have equivalent coursework) in early childhood development with a focus on infant and toddler development.

Head's Up! Network <http://www.heads-up.org/> (accessed May 21, 2009)

National Head Start Association provides a credit-bearing courses via the Head's Up Network.

Office of Head Start. **Policy Clarifications: J – Staffing Requirements and Program Options.** *The Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Available via

http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/Policy%20Clarifications%20and%20FAQs/b_pc.htm#B018

University of Cincinnati. Infant and Toddler Focus in the online Associate Degree. Call 1-888-325-2669 for more information. <http://www.eclc.uc.edu/news.php>.

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This Tip Sheet is not a regulatory document. Its intent is to provide a basis for dialogue, clarification, and problem solving among Office of Head Start, Regional Offices, TA consultants, and grantees. If you need further clarification on Head Start Policies and regulations, please contact your Regional Program Specialist.