

EARLY HEAD START TIP SHEET

No. 4 – 2009 revision

Full day/full year services & EHS/Infants and Toddlers

Are Early Head Start programs required to provide full-day/full-year services? What is the working definition of full-day/full-year?

Response:

The Head Start Program Performance Standards do not specifically require full-day/full-year services, but they do require continuity of care that provides services to infants and toddlers with the least disruptive and most stable ongoing care.

“Given the continuity of care [needed for optimal outcomes] for pregnant women, and infant and toddler age children, the Office of Head Start ... anticipates [programs] serving children in a full-year model” (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Early Head Start Expansion, Program Background and Purpose, ¶ 2).

Programs should consider how to best provide full-day/full-year EHS services for their community. The hours of service provided by an Early Head Start program should reflect the needs of the children and families within the community and be based on the Community Assessment. Moreover, programs should be flexible and strive to meet families’ individual needs.

Defining full-day, full-year services ...based on community and family need

“The Head Start Act [as amended 2007] defines ‘full-working day’ to mean not less than 10 hours per day while noting that no Head Start program is required by this definition to serve children more hours per day than is permitted by state law (including regulations); that is, full-working day could be fewer than 10 hours if the State did not allow a child to be served for that long a period of time” (Conversion of Part-day Slots to Full-working Day Slots or Sessions [ACYF-PI-HS-09-02], 1/200p, Instruction ¶ 1).

The term ‘full-day, full-year services’ refers to programs that respond to the varied schedules of families in which parents are working or making the transition to work. “This does not necessarily mean that programs should design to serve all enrollees for 8 hours a day, 52 weeks a year. A variety of different schedules may be needed to assist parents who have part-time jobs or are in training and educational programs. Also, the hours a specific family needs services may change over the course of the year. Many Head Start programs have developed innovative and flexible designs to meet these varied needs.” (Increased Funds Available for FY 2001 [Attachment for ACYF-PI-HS-00-03], 12/2000, ACF's goals for this year's expansion ¶ 4).

Children who are not in child care full time might need to be in a combination option, receiving both home visits and center-based care. The number of home visits is contingent upon the hours of child care. The Head Start Program Performance Standards [1306.34(a)(2) & (3)] provide examples of acceptable combinations of minimum numbers of class sessions and corresponding number of home visits. For example, if a child attends the center-based program for 3 days a week (or 96 class sessions over a 10 – 12 month period of time), the program provides at a minimum 8 home visits (each visit lasting 1 and ½ hours) throughout the program year.

Questions to Consider for Planning and Programming:

- How does the program ensure that its services reflect the needs of families within its community? How does the program's duration of services (length of day and program year) match the identified needs noted within the current community assessment?
- What efforts has the program made to partner with community entities to ensure full-day, full-year services?
- How has the program utilized its states child care regulations to consider full- or part-day services?

Performance Standards, Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations:

- Head Start Act as amended 2007, Section 637(6) The term "full-working-day" means not less than 10 hours per day. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to require an agency to provide services to a child who has not reached the age of compulsory school attendance for more than the number of hours per day permitted by State law (including regulation) for the provision of services to such a child.
- Head Start Act as amended 2007, Section 648 (3)(B)(iv) assist Head Start agencies and programs in developing and implementing full-working-day and full calendar year programs where community need is clearly identified and making the transition to such programs, with particular attention to involving parents and programming for children throughout the day, and assist the agencies and programs in expediting the sharing of information about innovative models for providing full-working-day, full calendar year services for children.
- 1305.3(d) The Early Head Start and Head Start grantee and delegate agency must use information from the Community Assessment (2) to determine the type of services that are most needed and the program option(s) that will be implemented.
- 1306.3(e) A full-day variation means a variation of the center-based program option in which program operations continue for longer than six hours per day.
- 1306.32(2) Programs are encouraged to meet the needs of Head Start families for full day services by securing funds from other agencies.
- 1306.3(b) Combination program option means Head Start services provided to children in both a center setting and through intensive work with the child's parents and family at home.
- 1306.34(a)(1) Grantees implementing a combination program option must provide class sessions and home visits that result in an amount of contact with children and families that is, at a minimum, equivalent to the services provided through the center-based program option or the home-based program option.

Resources:

Brush, Lorelei, Sharon, Deich, Kerry Traylor and Nancy Pindus. **Options for Full-Day Services for Children Participating in Head Start.** Pelavin Research Institute and The Urban Institute for DHHS/Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. March 7, 1995. <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/cyp/fullday.htm> (accessed December 14, 2009).

Community Assessment of local program/area.

Increased Funds Available for FY 2001. ACYF-PI-HS-00-03. HHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB. 2000.

Paulsell, Diane and Ellen Kisher. **Quality Care for Low-Income Infants and Toddlers: A Study of Community Strategies.** *ZERO TO THREE Journal*, 22(4). ZERO TO THREE: Washington DC, Feb/March 2002.

Paulsell, Diane, Renée Nogales and Julie Cohen. **Quality Child Care for Infants and Toddlers: Case Studies of Three Community Strategies.** ZERO TO THREE: Washington, DC. 2003. <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/PDFs/qualchildhlthes.pdf> (accessed December 14, 2009).

National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC). **Partnerships, Alliances, and Coordination Techniques (PACT).** DHHS/ACYF/ACF/CCB. <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/pact/index.html>

National Association for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA). www.NACCRRA.org

NACCRA'S mission is to promote national policies and partnerships to advance the development and learning of all children and to provide vision, leadership, and support to community Child Care Resource & Referral.

State Child Care Regulations

What is the minimum number of days for an Early Head Start program? Policy Clarification OHS-PC-A-037. DHHS/ACF/OHS. 2007.

ZERO TO THREE and Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. **Partnerships for Quality: Improving Infant-Toddler Child Care for Low-Income Families.** DHHS/ACYF/ACF/CCB. March 2002. <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/PDFs/partnership.pdf> (accessed December 14, 2009).

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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.