

HEAD START STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

Sec. 648A. (a) CLASSROOM TEACHERS.--

(1) PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS.--The Secretary shall ensure that each Head Start classroom in a center-based program is assigned one teacher who has demonstrated competency to perform functions that include --

(A) planning and implementing learning experiences that advance the intellectual and physical development of children, including improving the readiness of children for school by developing their literacy and phonemic, print, and numeracy awareness, their understanding and use of language, their understanding and use of increasingly complex and varied vocabulary, their appreciation of books, and their problem solving abilities;

(B) establishing and maintaining a safe, healthy learning environment;

(C) supporting the social and emotional development of children; and

(D) encouraging the involvement of the families of the children in a Head Start program and supporting the development of relationships between children and their families.

(2) DEGREE REQUIREMENTS.--

(A) IN GENERAL.--The Secretary shall ensure that not later than September 30, 2003, at least 50 percent of all Head Start teachers nationwide in center-based programs have--

(i) an associate, baccalaureate, or advanced degree in early childhood education; or

(ii) an associate, baccalaureate, or advanced degree in a field related to early childhood education, with experience in teaching preschool children.

(B) PROGRESS.--The Secretary shall require Head Start agencies to demonstrate continuing progress each year to reach the result described in subparagraph (A)

(3) ALTERNATIVE CREDENTIALING REQUIREMENTS.---The Secretary shall ensure that, for center-based programs, each Head Start classroom that does not have a teacher that meets the requirements of clause (i) or (ii) of paragraph (2)(A) is assigned one teacher who has--

(A) a child development associate (CDA) credential that is appropriate to the age of the children being served in center-based programs;

(B) a State-awarded certificate for preschool teachers that meets or exceeds the requirements for a child development associate credential; or

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(C) a degree in a field related to early childhood education with experience in teaching preschool children and a State-awarded certificate to teach in a preschool program.

(4) WAIVER.--

(A) **IN GENERAL.--**On request, the Secretary shall grant a 180-day waiver of the requirements of paragraph (3), for a Head Start agency that can demonstrate that the agency has unsuccessfully attempted to recruit an individual who has a credential, certificate, or degree described in paragraph (3), with respect to an individual who--

(i) is enrolled in a program that grants any credential, certificate, or degree; and

(ii) will receive such credential certificate, or degree under the terms of such program not later than 180 days after beginning employment as a teacher with such agency.

(B) **LIMITATION.--**The Secretary may not grant more than one such waiver with respect to such individual.

Sec. 648A. (b) MENTOR TEACHERS.--

(1) **DEFINITION; FUNCTION.--**For purposes of this subsection, the term "mentor teacher" means an individual responsible for observing and assessing the classroom activities of a Head Start program and providing on-the-job guidance and training to the Head Start program staff and volunteers, in order to improve the qualifications and training of classroom staff, to maintain high quality education services, and to promote career development, in Head Start programs.

(2) **REQUIREMENT.--**In order to assist Head Start agencies in establishing positions for mentor teachers, the Secretary shall--

(A) provide technical assistance and training to enable Head Start agencies to establish such positions;

(B) give priority consideration, in providing assistance pursuant to subparagraph (A), to Head Start programs that have substantial numbers of new classroom staff or that are experiencing difficulty in meeting applicable education standards;

(C) encourage Head Start programs to give priority consideration for such positions to Head Start teachers at the appropriate level of career advancement in such programs; and

(D) promote the development of model curricula, designed to ensure the attainment of appropriate competencies of mentor teachers in Head Start programs.

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Sec. 648A. (c) FAMILY SERVICE WORKERS.--

In order to improve the quality and effectiveness of staff providing in-home and other services (including needs assessment, development of service plans, family advocacy, and coordination of service delivery) to families of children participating in Head Start programs, the Secretary, in coordination with concerned public and private agencies and organizations examining the issues of standards and training for family service workers, shall--

- (1) review and, as necessary, revise or develop new qualification standards for Head Start staff providing such services;
- (2) promote the development of model curricula (on subjects including parenting training and family literacy) designed to ensure the attainment of appropriate competencies by individuals working or planning to work in the field of early childhood and family services; and
- (3) promote the establishment of a credential that indicates attainment of the competencies and that is accepted nationwide.