Subpart C

Education and Child Development Program Services

Standard Operating Procedures

Aligned with the 2016 Head Start Program Performance Standards
(Standards 1302.30 -1302.47)

Table of Contents

Introduction (Standard 1302.30)

All programs must provide high-quality early education and child development services, including for children with disabilities that promote children's cognitive, social, and emotional growth for later success in school. A center-based or family child care program must embed responsive and effective teacher-child interactions. All programs must implement a research-based curriculum, and screening and assessment procedures that support individualization and growth in the areas of development described in the <u>Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five</u> and support family engagement in children's learning and development. A program must deliver developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences in language, literacy, mathematics, social and emotional functioning, approaches to learning, science, physical skills, and creative arts. To deliver such high-quality early education and child development services, a center-based program must implement, at a minimum, the elements in 1302.31 through 1302.34.

TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (Standard 1302.31)

(a) Teaching and the learning environment.
A center-based program must ensure teachers and other relevant staff provide responsive care, effective teaching, and an organized learning environment that promotes healthy development and children's skill growth aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five including for children with disabilities. A program must also support implementation of such environment with integration of regular and ongoing supervision and a system of individualized and ongoing professional development, as appropriate. This includes, at a minimum, the practices described in paragraphs (b) through (e) of this section.

(b) <u>Effective teaching practices.</u>
(1) Teaching staff must:

(i) Emphasize nurturing and responsive practices, interactions, and environments that foster trust and emotional security; are communication and language rich; promote critical thinking and problem-solving; social, emotional, behavioral, and language development; provide supportive feedback for learning; motivate continued effort; and support all children's engagement in learning experiences and activities;

(ii) Focus on promoting growth in the developmental progressions described in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five by aligning with and using the Framework and the curricula as described in 1302.32 to direct planning of organized activities, schedules, lesson plans, and the implementation of high-quality early learning experiences that are responsive to and build upon each child's individual pattern of development and learning;

(iii) Integrate child assessment data in individual and group planning; and,

(iv) Include developmentally appropriate learning experiences in language, literacy, social and emotional development, math, science, social studies, creative arts, and physical development that are focused toward achieving progress outlined in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five.

PROCEDURE

1. Activities implemented in the classroom are age appropriate and adhere to research-based best practices
2. Teachers recognize that each child is a unique person and that learning incorporates experiences which are individually appropriate, not only matching a child's abilities, but challenging them as well
3. The learning environment is colorful and engages young children's interests (See Education Operating Manual)
4. Bulletin boards, pictures, and artwork are placed at children's eye level
5. Activities and experiences are planned in a way that encourages children to participate
6. Children are given hands-on direct experiences with a variety of materials and manipulatives
7. Activities are appropriate and relevant to the children's interests
   a. Children have time to experiment with what they are learning in the classroom
   b. Children are allowed to learn from their own self-directed problem-solving
   c. Children are given choices in joining an activity

(1) <u>For Dual Language Learners</u>:

A program must recognize bilingualism and biliteracy as strengths and implement research-based teaching practices that support their development. These practices must:

(i) For an infant and toddler dual language learner, include teaching practices that focus on the development of the home language, when there is a teacher with appropriate language competency, and experiences that expose the child to English;

(ii) For the preschool age dual language learner, include teaching practices that focus on both English language acquisition and the continued development of the home language; or

(iii) If staff do not speak the home language of all children in the learning environment, include steps to support the development of the home language for dual language learners such as having culturally and linguistically appropriate materials available and other evidence-based strategies. Programs must work to identify volunteers who speak children's home language/s who could be trained to work in the classroom to support children's continued development of the home language.

PROCEDURE

1. CSNT Head Start recognizes bilingualism and biliteracy as strengths in a child's educational process (See Education Operating Manual)
2. CSNT Head Start implements curriculum that provides guidance for teachers on dual language instruction of the curriculum
3. Teachers implement strategies that will not only enhance the child's ability to strengthen their home language skills, but also enhance the child's English language acquisition (See Education Operating Manual)

(a) Learning environment. (Standard 1302.31(c))

A program must ensure teachers implement well-organized learning environments with developmentally appropriate schedules, lesson plans, and indoor and outdoor learning experiences that provide adequate opportunities for choice, play, exploration, and experimentation among a variety of learning, sensory, and motor experiences and:

(1) For infants and toddlers, promote relational learning and include individualized and small group activities that integrate appropriate daily routines into a flexible schedule of learning experiences; and,

(2) For preschool age children, include teacher-directed and child-initiated activities, active and quiet learning activities, and opportunities for individual, small group, and large group learning activities.

PROCEDURE

1. Teachers will implement teacher-directed and child-initiated activities documented on the daily lesson plans
2. Teachers will implement learning activities through all models of instruction including large and small groups and individualized instruction
3. Teachers will implement learning activities that align with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and the Texas Pre-K Guidelines
4. Classrooms will include Learning Centers (See Education Operating Manual)
5. Classrooms will follow their assigned schedules and include daily routines (See Education Operating Manual)

(b) Materials and space for learning. (Standard 1302.31(d))

To support implementation of the curriculum and the requirements described in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (e) of this section a program must provide age-appropriate equipment, materials, supplies and physical space for indoor and outdoor learning environments, including functional space. The equipment, materials, and supplies must include any necessary accommodations and the space must be accessible to children with disabilities. Programs must change materials intentionally and periodically to support children's interests, development, and learning.

PROCEDURE

1. Classrooms will have age-appropriate equipment, materials and supplies to implement a developmentally appropriate, research-based curriculum
2. Classrooms will accommodate all children including children with disabilities, where applicable.
3. Teachers will rotate/change materials in the classroom on a regular basis (See Education Operating Manual)

(c) <u>Teaching staff must promote learning through approaches to rest, meals, routines, and physical activity</u>. (Standard 1302.31(e))

(1) A program must implement an intentional, age appropriate approach to accommodate children's need to nap or rest, and that, for preschool age children in a program that operates for 6 hours or longer per day provides a regular time every day at which preschool age children are encouraged but not forced to rest or nap. A program must provide alternative quiet learning activities for children who do not need or want to rest or nap.

(2) A program must implement snack and meal times in ways that support development and learning. Snack and meal times must be structured and used as learning opportunities that support teaching staff-child interactions and foster communication and conversations that contribute to a child's learning, development, and socialization. Programs are encouraged to meet this requirement with family style meals when developmentally appropriate.

(3) A program must approach routines, such as hand washing and diapering, and transitions between activities, as opportunities for strengthening development, learning, and skill growth.

(4) A program must recognize physical activity as important to learning and integrate intentional movement and physical activity into curricular activities and daily routines in ways that support health and learning. A program must not use physical activity as a reward or punishment.

PROCEDURE

1. Teachers follow an appointed schedule throughout the day that integrates rest, mealtime, transitions, routines and physical activity into the school day.
2. Classroom schedules provide times for nutritional activities including meals where teachers and students are able to interact in a way that promotes learning, when appropriate. (See Education Operating Manual)
3. Teachers follow classroom schedules that provide quiet times for student to rest and/or nap. (See Education Operating Manual)
4. Children follow daily classroom routines that develop and strengthen learning.
5. Teachers provide transitional activities throughout the day that focus on building children's skills.
6. Outdoor and indoor physical activity is integrated throughout the school day through implementation of I Am Moving, I Am Learning and other research-

based, developmentally appropriate physical activities (See Education Operating Manual)

CURRICULA (Standard 1302.32)

(a) <u>Curricula</u>.

(1) Center-based and family child care programs must implement developmentally appropriate research-based early childhood curricula, including, additional curricula enhancements, as appropriate, that:

(i) Are based on scientifically valid research and have standardized training procedures and curriculum materials to support implementation;

(ii) Are aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five and, as appropriate, state early learning and development standards; and are sufficiently content-rich to promote measurable progress toward development and learning outlined in the Framework; and,

(iii) Have an organized developmental scope and sequence that include plans and materials for learning experiences based on developmental progressions and how children   learn.

(iv) A program must support staff to effectively implement curricula and at a minimum monitor curriculum implementation and fidelity, and provide support, feedback, and supervision for continuous improvement of its implementation through the system of training and professional development.

(b) <u>Adaptation</u>. **A program that chooses to make significant adaptations to a curriculum or a curriculum enhancement described in paragraph (a) (1) of this section to better meet the needs of one or more specific populations must use an external early childhood education curriculum or content area expert to develop such significant adaptations. A program must assess   whether the adaptation adequately facilitates progress toward meeting school readiness goals, consistent with the process described in 1302.102 (b) and (c). Programs are encouraged to partner with outside evaluators in assessing adaptations.**

PROCEDURE

1. CSNT Head Start implements research-based early childhood curricula, aligned with Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: ages Birth to Five and the Texas PreK Guidelines with an organized developmental scope and sequence including plans and materials for learning experiences (See Education Operating Manual)

2. Education Team reviews all curriculum on the state adoption Pre-kindergarten list and obtains sample curriculum kits for curriculum that meet the standards and regulations set forth by Head Start.

3. Education Team narrows search to top 3 to 5 curriculums and presents list and descriptions to the Program School Readiness Committee (Committee members include parents appointed by Policy Council) for selection of the program curriculum (See Education Operating Manual for information on School Readiness Teams)

4. Upon approval of by the Program School Readiness Committee, the selected curriculum will be presented to Policy Council and Governing Board for approval

5. Staff is trained on effective implementation of the curriculum on an on-going basis and new staff are trained through the New Hire Orientation process.

6. On-going monitoring is completed on a monthly basis for curriculum implementation

7. Professional development is provided to teaching staff based on data collected through site visits as part of the on-going monitoring process

8. Professional development is provided through mentoring, coaching, or one-on-one instruction by Education Management staff.

9. CSNT does not make adaptations to the selected curriculum(s).

CHILD SCREENINGS AND ASSESSMENTS (Standard 1302.33)
(a) Screening.

(1) In collaboration with each child's parent and with parental consent, a program must complete or obtain a current developmental screening to identify concerns regarding a child's developmental, behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, and emotional skills within 45 calendar days of when the child first attends the program. A program that operates for 90 days or less must complete or obtain a current developmental screening within 30 calendar days of when the child first attends the program.

(2) A program must use one or more research-based developmental standardized screening tools to complete the screening. A program must use as part of the screening additional information from family members, teachers, and relevant staff familiar with the child's typical behavior.

PROCEDURE

1. Children are screened within the first 45 days of entry into the program using a research-based, valid and reliable, developmental screener.

2. The results of the screening are used for individualized planning for each child.

3. Additional developmental information is gathered from family through implementation of the parent questionnaire

4. Results of the developmental screening are provided to the parents during the Parent/Teacher Conference and/or Home Visit.

5. Children are screened within the first 45 days of entry into the program using a research-based, valid and reliable, social/emotional screener

6. Results are discussed during the first Parent/Teacher Conference

(3) If warranted through screening and additional relevant information and with direct guidance from a mental health or child development professional a program must, with the parent's consent, promptly and appropriately address any needs identified through:

(i) Referral to the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA for a formal evaluation to assess the child's eligibility for services under IDEA as soon as possible, and not to exceed timelines required under IDEA; and,

(ii) Partnership with the child's parents and the relevant local agency to support families through the formal evaluation process.

(4) If a child is determined to be eligible for services under IDEA, the program must partner with parents and the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA, as appropriate, and deliver the services under subpart F of this part.

(5) If, after the formal evaluation described in paragraph (a) (3) (i) of this section, the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA determines the child is not eligible for early intervention or special education and related services under IDEA, the program must:

(i) Seek guidance from a mental health or child development professional to determine if the formal evaluation shows the child has a significant delay in one or more areas of development that is likely to interfere with the child's development and school readiness; and,

(ii) If the child has a significant delay, partner with parents to help the family access services and supports to help address the child's identified needs.

(A) Such additional services and supports may be available through a child's health insurance or it may be appropriate for the program to provide needed services and supports under section 504 of the   Rehabilitation Act if the child satisfies the definition of disability in 29 U.S.C. section 705(9)(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the child who satisfies the definition of disability in 29 U.S.C. 705(9)(b) of the   Rehabilitation Act is not excluded from the program on the basis of disability.

(B) A program may use program funds for such services and supports when no other sources of funding are available.

PROCEDURE

1. CSNT Head Start provides mental health services for children, with the consent of the parent, through local contracted services including the Local Education Agency.

2. Mental health services are provided through a team approach that includes parents as well as local IDEA and/or mental health professionals (See Head Start Campus intervention Plan)

(b) Assessment for Individualization. (Standard 1302.33(b))

(1)   A program must conduct standardized and structured assessments, which may be observation-based or direct, for each child that provide ongoing information to evaluate the child's developmental level and progress in outcomes aligned to the goals described in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five. Such assessments must result in usable information for teachers, home visitors, and parents and be conducted with sufficient frequency to allow for individualization within the program year.

(2)   A program must regularly use information from paragraph (b)(1) of this section along with informal teacher observations and additional information from family and staff, as relevant, to determine a child's strengths and needs, inform and adjust strategies to better support individualized learning and improve teaching practices in center-based settings.

PROCEDURE

1. Teachers conduct formal assessments on each child enrolled in the program three (3) times each school year. (See Education Operating Manual)

2. Assessments provide information on the child's development level and progress in achieving outcomes that are aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five and the State Pre-Kindergarten Guidelines.

3. Information from the assessment as well as other relevant information are used to determine a child's strengths and needs that lead to an individualization plan for each child (See Education Operating Manual)

(3)   If warranted from the information gathered from paragraphs (b)(1) and (2) of this section and with direct guidance from a mental health or child development professional and a parent's consent, a program must refer the child to the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA for a formal evaluation to assess a child's eligibility for services under IDEA.

PROCEDURE

1. CSNT Head Start provides mental health services for children, with the consent of the parent, through local contracted services including the Local Education Agency.

2. Disability services are provided through a team approach that includes parents as well as local IDEA and/or mental health professionals (See Head Start Campus intervention Plan)

(c) Characteristics of screenings and assessments. (Standard 1302.33(c))

(1) Screenings and assessments must be valid and reliable for the population and purpose for which they will be used, including by being conducted by qualified and training personnel, and being age, developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate, and appropriate for children with disabilities, as needed.

(2) If a program serves a child who speaks a language other than English, a program must use qualified bilingual staff, contractor, or consultant to:

(i) Assess language skills in English and in the child's home language, to assess both the child's progress in the home language and in English language acquisition;

(ii) Conduct screenings and assessments for domains other than language skills in the language or languages that best capture the child's development and skills in the specific domain; and,

(iii) Ensure those conducting the screening or assessment know and understand the child's language and culture and have sufficient skill level in the child's home language to accurately administer the screening or assessment and to record and understand the child's responses, interactions, and communications.

(3) If a program serves a child who speaks a language other than English and qualified bilingual staff, contractors, or consultants are not able to conduct screenings and assessments, a program must use an interpreter in conjunction with a qualified staff person to conduct screenings and assessments as described in paragraphs (c)(2)(i) through (iii) of this section.

(4) If a program serves a child who speaks a language other than English and can demonstrate that there is not a qualified bilingual staff person or interpreter, then screenings and assessments maybe conducted in English. In such a case, a program must also gather and use other information, including structured observations over time and information gathered in a child's home language from the family, for use in evaluating the child's development and progress.

PROCEDURE

1. All screenings and assessments used in the CSNT Head Start Program are valid and reliable, developmentally appropriate for its purpose as well as research-based (See Education Operating Manual)

2. Classroom staff and applicable management staff receive on-going training on the implementation of child screening and assessment tools used within the program
3. New classroom staff receive child screening and assessment training as part of the New Hire Orientation process
4. CSNT Head Start assesses children in their home language as well as English through CSNT Head Start staff who speak the same language as the child or through school district staff at partnership Campuses
5. Screening and assessment tools can be used with children who do not speak English as their native language (See Education Operating Manual)

(d) Prohibitions on use of screening and assessment data. (Standard 1302.33(d))
The use of screening and assessment items and data on any screening or assessment authorized under this subchapter by any agent of the federal government is prohibited for the purposes of ranking, comparing, or otherwise evaluating individual children for purposes of providing rewards or sanctions for individual children or staff. A program must not use screening or assessments to exclude children from enrollment or participation.

PROCEDURE

1. CSNT Head Start does not use children's assessment or screening data for ranking, comparing, or providing rewards or sanctions for individual children or staff
2. CSNT Head Start does not use children's assessment or screening data to exclude them from enrollment with the Head Start Program

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES. (Standard 1302.34)
(a) Purpose: Center-based and family child care programs must structure education and child development services to recognize parents' roles as children's lifelong educators, and to encourage parents to engage in their child's education.

(b) Engaging parents and family members. A program must offer opportunities for parents and family members to be involved in the program's education services and implement policies to ensure:

(1) The program's settings are open to parents during all program hours;

(2) Teachers regularly communicate with parents to ensure they are well-informed about their child's routines, activities, and behavior;

(3) Teachers hold parent conferences, as needed, but no less than two times per program year, to enhance the knowledge and understanding of both staff and parents of the child's education and developmental progress and activities in the program;

(4) Parents have the opportunity to learn about and to provide feedback on selected curricula and instructional materials used in the program;

(5) Parents and family members have opportunities to volunteer in the class and during group activities;

(6) Teachers inform parents, about the purposes of and the results from screenings and assessments and discuss their child's progress;

(7) Teachers, except those described in paragraph (b)(8) of this section, conduct at least two home visits per program year for each family, including one before the program year begins, if feasible, to engage the parents in the child's learning and development, except that such visits may take place at a program site or another safe location that affords privacy at the parent's request, or it visit to the home presents significant safety hazards for staff; and,

(8) Teachers that serve migrant or seasonal families make every effort to conduct home visits to engage the family in the child's learning and development.

PROCEDURE

1. CSNT Head Start engages parents in their child's education through collaborating roles within the classroom (See Education Operating Manual)
2. Teachers and Teacher Assistants collaborate/communicate with parents throughout the school year concerning classroom activities and their child's progress in obtaining the skills they need to become school ready (See Education Operating Manual)
3. Teachers hold parent/teacher conferences, as needed, but at least twice per school year to collaborate/communicate with parents concerning their child's progress (See Education Operating Manual)
4. Teaching staff encourage parents to volunteer in the classroom and become acquainted with activities that are being administered in the classroom
5. Teachers collaborate/communicate with parents throughout the school year concerning their child's educational progress (See Education Operating Manual)
6. Teachers conduct at least (2) home visits per school year with each family that have a child enrolled in the Head Start Program (See Education Operating Manual)

EDUCATION IN HOME-BASED PROGRAMS (Standard 1302.35)
Reference the Performance Standard Requirements for Home-based Option. Not applicable to CSNT Head Start

TRIBAL LANGUAGE PRESERVATION AND REVITALIZATION (Standard 1302.36)
Reference the Performance Standard Requirements for Home-based Option. Not applicable to CSNT Head Start