



DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND SUPPORT SERVICES

CITY OF CHICAGO

To: Head Start Executive/Program Directors

From: Madeline Cancel-Hanieh *MC*
Director
Children Services Division

Date: August 19, 2011

Subject: TEACHING STAFF QUALIFICATIONS: HEAD START

The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) require that Head Start teaching staff of children three to five years of age must possess the following criteria per the Head Start Act 42 USC 9801 et. seq. (Sec. 648A):

By October 1, 2011, **each Head Start classroom** in center-based programs must have a teacher who has at least one of the following qualifications:

1. An associate, baccalaureate or advanced degree in early childhood education;
2. An associate degree in a field related to early childhood education and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education, with experience teaching preschool-age children;
3. A baccalaureate or advanced degree in any field and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education, with experience teaching preschool-age children or;
4. A baccalaureate degree in any field and has been admitted into the Teach For America program, passed a rigorous early childhood content exam, such as the Praxis II, participated in a Teach For America summer training institute that includes teaching preschool children and is receiving ongoing professional development and support from Teach For America's professional staff.

Please note: Failure to meet the above requirements, for each classroom by October 1, 2011, will result in a disallowed cost.

Although this requirement is not in effect until October 1 2011, the department strongly urges your agency to take the necessary steps to comply with this mandate before the beginning of the new program year, if you have not done so. This would eliminate the possibility of any adverse effects your program may encounter as a result of having unqualified teaching staff in head start classrooms.

In addition, by September 30, 2013, **at least 50% of all Head Start teachers** nationwide must have a baccalaureate or advanced degree in Early Childhood Education or a baccalaureate or

advanced degree in any subject, and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education with experience teaching preschool-age children.

Additionally by September 30, 2013, DFSS will require that each Head Start Teacher have at least a baccalaureate degree or advanced degree in Early Childhood Education or a baccalaureate or advanced degree in any subject, and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education with experience teaching preschool-age children. In order to ensure that each Head Start program is fully prepared to meet and maintain this DFSS staff qualifications mandate, agencies will be required to submit a Certified Agreement by June 1, 2012. This Certified Agreement will have been approved by an agency's executive leadership, governing body and policy committee, as well as DFSS, and will outline the necessary steps the program will follow to reach and maintain compliance with this mandate.

Head Start Teacher Assistants

By September 30, 2013 **all teaching assistants** in center-based programs must:

- Have a child development associate (CDA) credential;
- Be enrolled in a CDA credential program that will be completed within 2 years; or
- Have an associate or baccalaureate degree (in any area) or be enrolled in a program leading to such a degree.

Additionally, DFSS will continue to require six (6) credit hours in early childhood education for all Head Start Teacher Assistants.

By September 30, 2013 DFSS will require that each Head Start Teacher Assistant have a child development associate (CDA) credential.

Please note: Failure to meet the above requirements, for each classroom by September 30, 2013, will result in a disallowed cost.

Guidance for Coursework Equivalency

According to ACF-IM-HS-08-12, coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education includes but is not limited to courses that focus on child development, early childhood education and curriculum, early childhood teaching and assessment, psychology, family development, health and physical development, mathematics, science, and children's literature. Such courses may be offered in various departments, such as Education, Home Economics, Music, Art, Library Sciences, Physical Education and Recreation, Psychology, Family Studies, and others.

It is the responsibility of each delegate agency to provide the Grantee with information on the college credit courses taken and to demonstrate that the courses address early childhood education or child development with a focus on children ages 0-5.

Please note that substitute teachers must also meet the same requirements as the role they are filling in for.

Head Start also requires that a minimum of two paid staff be in a classroom at all times.

If you have any questions pertaining to this policy, please contact Denise Jordan at (312) 743-1750 or (312) 743-0300

Thank you for your continued support.