



Subpart B Program Structure

Standard Operating Procedures

*Aligned with the 2024 Head Start
Program Performance Standards
(Standards 1302.20 -
1302.24)*

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**Aligned
w/HSPPS**

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Subpart B PROGRAM OPERATIONS - (Standard 1302)

OVERVIEW (Standard 1302.1)

This part implements these statutory requirements in Sections 641A, 645, 645A, and 648A of the Act by describing all of the program performance standards that are required to operate Head Start, Early Head Start, American Indian and Alaska Native and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs. The part covers the full range of operations from enrolling eligible children and providing program services to those children and their families, to managing programs to ensure that staff are qualified and supported to effectively provide services. This part also focuses on using data through ongoing program improvement to ensure high-quality service. As required in the Act, these provisions do not narrow the scope or quality of the services covered in previous regulations. Instead, these regulations raise the quality standard to reflect science and best practices, and streamline and simplify requirements so programs can better understand what is required for quality services.

DETERMINING PROGRAM STRUCTURE (Standard 1302.20)

(a) Choose a program option.

(1) A program must choose to operate one or more of the following program options: center-based, home-based, family child care, or an approved locally-designed variation as described in 1302.24. The program option(s) chosen must meet the needs of the children and families based on the community assessment described in 1302.11(b). A Head Start Preschool program may not provide only the option described in 1302.22 (a) and (c)(2).

(2) To choose a program option and develop a program calendar, a program must consider in conjunction with the annual review of the community assessment described in 1302.11(b)(2), where it would better meet child and family needs through conversion of existing slots to full school day or full working day slots, extending the program year, conversion of existing Head Start Preschool slots to Early Head Start slots as described in paragraph (c) of this section, and ways to promote continuity of care and services. A program must work to identify alternate sources to support full working day services. If no additional funding is available, program sources may be used.

PROCEDURES

1. Head Start Preschool/Early Head Start services are provided through a center-based model in partnership with local school districts, when possible.
2. The service model is based on data received from the program Community Assessment.

(b) Comprehensive services. (Standard 1302.20(b)) All program options must deliver the full range of services, as described in subparts C, D, E, F, and G of this part, except that 1302.30 through 1303.32 and 1302.34 do not apply to home-based options.

PROCEDURES

3. Head Start Preschool children receive at least 1,020 hours of comprehensive services per day for at least (8) months during the school year in partnership with local school districts.
4. Early Head Start children will receive at least 1,380 hours of comprehensive services per day for at least (10) months during the year.
5. Head Start Preschool staff, Head Start Preschool Contracted staff, or Head Start Preschool and ISD staff provide services throughout the school day to children enrolled in both programs. Some Campuses implement a team-teaching model where both ISD and Head Start Preschool staff plan and work together.
6. Where Campuses implement a Team-Teaching Model, the Head Start Preschool Classroom and their partner ISD Classroom follow one schedule. Each child enrolled in both programs receive instruction from both the Head Start Preschool Teacher and the ISD Teacher during the school day. Teaching Teams decide who will teach what part of the schedule.
7. In order to meet state regulations for highly qualified pre-kindergarten programs (Texas Education Code Sec. 29.167), a state certified teacher must provide at least (3) hours of instruction for each child enrolled in the State funded Pre-kindergarten. To meet this requirement for School District partners, Head Start Preschool children rotate through the ISD classroom for at least (3) hours of instruction per day.
8. Early Head Start Classrooms will follow a schedule that is age-appropriate and that allows the child to receive a comprehensive educational service.

(c) Conversion. (Standard 1302.20(c)) Reference the Performance Standards

PROCEDURES

1. The Head Start Program will follow the procedures outlined in the Performance Standards that detail how to convert slots 1302.20

(c).

- (d) Source of funding. (Standard 1302.20(d))** A program may consider hours of service that meet the Head Start Program Performance Standards, regardless of the source of funding, as hours of planned class operations for the purposes of meeting the Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start service duration requirements in this subpart.

PROCEDURES

1. CSNT Head Start Preschool children spend part of the day with the State funded pre-kindergarten teacher as part of the 1,020 hours of instruction. The Head Start teacher and the State funded, State certified pre-kindergarten teacher implement a team-teaching instructional model where children receive classroom instruction distributed between the (2) teachers based on their classroom schedules. (See Classroom Schedules)

CENTER-BASED OPTION (Standard 1302.21)

- a) Setting. The center-based option delivers the full range of services, consistent with 1302.20(b) Education and child development services are delivered primarily in classroom settings.**

PROCEDURES

1. The Head Start Preschool/Early Head Start Programs deliver comprehensive center-based services consistent with subparts C, D, E, F, and G of the Performance Standards. (See Operating Manuals Policies and Procedures)

- b) Ratios and group size. (Standard 1302.21(b))**

(1) Staff-child ratios and group size maximums must be determined by the age of the majority of the children and the needs of the children present. A program must determine the age of the majority of the children in a class at the start of the year and may adjust this determination during the program year, if necessary. Where state and local licensing requirements are more stringent than the teacher-child ratios and group size specifications in this section, a program must meet the stricter requirements. A program must maintain appropriate ratios during all hours of the program operation, except:

(i) For brief absences of a teaching staff member for no more than five minutes; and,

(ii) During nap time, one teaching staff member may be replaced by one staff member or trained volunteer who does not meet the teaching qualifications required for age.

(2) An Early Head Start or Migrant or Seasonal Head Start class that serves children under 36 months old must have two teachers with no more than eight children, or three teachers with no more than four children to promote continuity of care for individual children. A program must minimize teacher changes throughout a child's enrollment, whenever possible, and consider mixed age group classes to support continuity of care.

(3) A class that serves a majority of children who are three years old must have no more than 17 children with a teacher and teaching assistant or two teachers. A double session class that serves a majority of children who are three years old must have no more than 15 children with a teacher or teaching assistant or two teachers.

(4) A class that serves a majority who are four and five years old must have no more than 20 children with a teacher and a teaching assistant or two teachers. A double session class that serves a majority of children who are four and five years old must have no more than 17 children with a teacher and a teaching assistant or two teachers.

TABLE (Standard 1302.21(b)) - Center-based group size

4 and 5 year olds	No more than 20 children enrolled in any class. No more than 17 children enrolled in any double session class.
3 year olds	No more than 17 children enrolled in any class. No more than 15 children enrolled in double session class.
Under 3 years old	No more than 8 or 9 children enrolled in any class, depending on the number of teachers.

PROCEDURES

1. Head Start Preschool classrooms have no more than 17 three-year-olds and 20 four-year-olds.
2. Early Head Start classrooms have no more than 4 children per care giver.
3. The majority age of each classroom is determined at the beginning of each school year, unless the majority age of the classroom changes during the school year,
4. The appropriate measures will be taken to bring each classroom into compliance with the age and ratio per the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

(c.) Service Duration. (Standard 1302.21(c))

(1) Early Head Start.

- (i) A program must provide 1,380 hours of planned class operations for all enrolled children.**
- (ii) A program that is designed to meet the needs of young parents enrolled in school setting may meet the service duration requirements in paragraph (c)(1)(i) of this section if it operates a center-based program schedule during the school year aligned with its local education agency requirements and provides regular home-based services during the summer.**

(2) Head Start.

- (i) Service duration for at least 45 percent. A program must provide 1,020 hours of operations over the course of at least eight months per year for at least 45 percent of its Head Start Preschool center-based students.**
- (ii) Service duration for remaining slots. A program must provide, at a minimum, at least 160 days per year of planned class operations if it operates for five days per week, or at least 128 days per year if it operates four days per week. Classes must operate for a minimum of 3.5 hours per day.**
- (iii) Double Session. Double session variation must provide classes for four days per week for a minimum of 128 days per year and 3.5 hours per day. Each double session class staff member must be provided adequate break time during the course of the day. In addition, teachers, assistants, and volunteers must have appropriate time to prepare for each session together, to set**

up the classroom environment, and to give individual attention to children entering and leaving the center. (See time table for implementation in the Performance Standards 1302.21(c)(2)(iii-v).

- (iv) Special provision for alignment with local education agency. A Head Start Preschool program providing fewer than 1,020 hours of planned class operations or fewer than eight months of service is considered to meet the requirements describe in paragraphs (c)(2)(iii) of this section if its program schedule aligns with the annual hours required by its local education agency for grade one and such alignment is necessary to support partnerships for service delivery.

PROCEUDRES

1. Early Head Start operates center-based classrooms according to the performance standards (1,380 hours within at least 11 months) in partnership with the local school district per-kindergarten.
2. Head Start Preschool operates center-based classrooms according to the performance standards (1,020 hours within at least 8 months) in partnership with the local school district per-kindergarten and the local Head Start Program.

POLICY

- (1) Exemption for Migrant or Seasonal Head Start programs. Not applicable to CSNT Head Start
- (2) Calendar Planning. A program must:
 - (ii) Plan its year using a reasonable estimate of the number of days during a year that classes may be closed due to problems such as inclement weather; and,
 - (iii) Make every effort to schedule makeup days using existing resources if hours of planned class operations fall below the number required per year.

PROCEDURES

1. Head Start Preschool follows the local school district partnership calendars including holidays, staff workdays, and the start and end of school.
2. Early Head Start follows the local school district calendars including holidays, staff workdays, when possible, and the start date of the new school year.

(c) Licensing and square footage requirements. (Standard 1302.21(d))

(1) The facilities used by a program must meet state, tribal, or local licensing requirements, even if exempted by the licensing entity. When state, tribal, or local requirements vary from Head Start requirements, the most stringent provision takes precedence.

(2) A center-based program must have at least 35 square feet of usable indoor space per child available for the care and use of children (exclusive of bathrooms, halls, kitchens, staff rooms, and storage places) and at least 75 square feet of usable outdoor play space per child.

(3) A program that operates two or more groups within an area must ensure clearly defined safe divisions to separate groups. A program must ensure such spaces are learning environments that facilitate the implementation of the requirements in subpart C of this part. The divisions must limit noise transfer from one group to another to prevent disruption of an effective learning environment.

PROCEDURES

1. Program facilities meet state licensing requirements even if the Campus is a School District and exempt from licensing requirements.
2. All Program classrooms have at least 35 square foot of usable space per child and at least 80 square foot of usable outdoor play space per child.
3. All classrooms have clearly defined space where classroom will operate. Where there are more than one group operating in a space such as gymnasiums, libraries and playgrounds, the division of the groups will be clearly defined.

HOME-BASED OPTION (Standard 1302.22)

Reference the Performance Standard Requirements for Home-based Option. Not applicable to CSNT Head Start

FAMILY CHILD CARE OPTION (Standard 1302.23)

Reference the Performance Standard Requirements for Family Child Care Option. Not applicable to CSNT Head Start

LOCALLY-DESIGNED PROGRAM OPTION VARIATIONS

(Standard 1302.24) Reference the Performance Standard Requirements for Locally-designed Program Option Variations.