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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

TO: Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees and Delegate Agencies

SUBJECT: Center-based Preschool Classroom Teacher Qualification Waiver Authority and Procedures

INFORMATION:

This Information Memorandum (IM) addresses the statutory requirements and authorities related to conditional and time-limited waivers of minimum education credential requirements for Head Start center-based preschool classroom teachers effective October 1, 2011. This IM also describes the minimum education credential requirements for these teachers.

Please note: There is no authority to consider or approve waivers of the education credential requirements for infant and toddler center-based teachers providing direct services to children and families participating in Early Head Start and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs. These infant and toddler teachers must have a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential in order to provide such services.

Requirements Effective October 1, 2011 – Head Start Center-based Classroom Teachers

By October 1, 2011, every Head Start preschool classroom in a center-based program that does not have a teacher with a baccalaureate or advanced degree in early childhood education or in a field related to early childhood education with the required early education coursework and teaching experience must have a teacher who has at least one of the following:

1. An associate degree in early childhood education; or
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; or
3. A baccalaureate degree unrelated to early childhood education and admitted to the Teach for America program and compliance with Teach for America-related statutory requirements in section 648A(a)(3)(B)(iii) of the Head Start Act.

After October 1, 2011, Head Start programs that do not have a preschool classroom teacher with at least one of the above education credentials will be noncompliant with Head Start requirements unless they have an approved waiver for each affected classroom.

Requirements for Waiver of Education Credentials for Head Start Preschool Center-based Classroom Teachers (Section 648A(a)(4)(B) of the Head Start Act)

Effective October 1, 2011, requests for waiver of Head Start preschool center-based classroom teacher qualification requirements must include the following information:

1. Evidence the Head Start agency has unsuccessfully attempted to recruit an individual who has at least an associate degree in early childhood education or in a related field and the required coursework and experience.
2. Evidence each individual for whom a waiver is requested is enrolled in a program that grants a qualifying associate or higher degree and that the degree will be awarded in a reasonable time not to exceed 3 years.
3. Evidence the individual for whom a waiver is requested has: a) a current CDA credential appropriate to the age of the children being served; b) a State-awarded certificate for center-based pre-school teachers that meets or exceeds the requirements for a CDA; or c) the teacher can demonstrate that she/he has completed all prerequisites for a CDA or State-awarded preschool certificate meeting or exceeding the requirements of the CDA and is awaiting the award of the CDA or certificate.

Waiver requests must include the information described in items 1- 3. Requests should be submitted to your Office of Head Start Regional Office for all Head Start preschool center-based classroom teachers who do not have at least a qualifying associate degree and any required experience, will be employed as a preschool teacher effective October 1, 2011, and will be assigned to teach in a classroom without a teacher with the required credentials. Any center-based classroom teacher hired after October 1, 2011, who does not have at least a qualifying associate degree, and any required experience, may not be assigned to a preschool center-based classroom unless covered by an approved waiver under the procedures described above or another teacher with the required credentials will be teaching along with the teacher covered by the waiver.

Please direct any questions on this Information Memorandum to your Office of Head Start Regional Office.

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