

**Program Information Report (PIR) Validation Study and Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitoring (PRISM)
Re-Review Study**

ACYF Administration on Children, Youth and Families	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES Administration for Children and Families	
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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

TO: Head Start and Early Head Grantees and Delegate Agencies

SUBJECT: Program Information Report (PIR) Validation Study and Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitoring (PRISM) Re-Review Study

INFORMATION:

Two of the most important data sources available to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) about the Head Start program are the PIR and the PRISM data generated during a grantee's triennial monitoring review. These data are the primary means by which ACF is able to understand both the scope and the quality of services being provided to more than 900,000 Head Start children and families. It is, therefore, incumbent on us now more than ever to assure that PIR and PRISM data are both accurate and reliable. Toward that end, ACF will undertake a PIR Validation Study and a PRISM Re-Review Study.

PIR Validation Study

The PIR was initiated in the late 1970s in an effort to provide the Head Start Bureau with information on what was happening in Head Start programs throughout the country. Data from the PIR have been used for well over two decades to provide information about Head Start to the public, Congress and other Federal agencies. It has been used to identify trends, to discover problems and to determine where there were issues that needed attention. It is, in short, a singularly important source of information about Head Start programs.

During the PIR Validation Study, we will visit a random selection of Head Start programs, discuss their PIR data and how the data were compiled, and conduct an independent evaluation of grantee records. Where there are discrepancies, we will try to understand the reasons.

PRISM Re-Review Study

PRISM reviews are the primary tool for ACF to assess whether grantees are in compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. The monitoring process identifies and describes for the grantee those areas in which its program is out of compliance. While it is reasonable and appropriate for different review teams to report some variance in their qualitative assessment, it is not acceptable for a PRISM review to miss critical deficiencies that pose unacceptable risks to program quality or operations. The re-review study will determine if the PRISM instrument and process is reliable and consistent in this regard.

The re-review team will visit a random selection of recently reviewed grantees approximately two weeks after their original monitoring visit. The PRISM re-reviews will be similar to original reviews but will be conducted by a second, separate review team. Because of the short time frame between the original review and the re-review, selected programs will receive relatively short notice of their selection for the re-review.

Both the PIR Validation Study and the PRISM Re-Review Study will be conducted this spring, summer and early fall. During the two studies, we will work to limit disruptions to grantee services. Your program may be selected as one of those that will be asked to participate in one of these two studies. If so, you will be notified by your Regional Office. We, of course, ask your full cooperation in these efforts.

Sincerely,

/S/ Channell Wilkins
Associate Commissioner
Head Start Bureau

