

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR HEALTH SERVICES MANAGERS AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS



Staff Qualifications: Steps for Programs to Consider

Use this brief to better understand the Head Start regulations and considerations for health services managers and health professionals (mental health consultants and staff or consultants who support nutrition services).

Local programs determine how their staff and consultants meet the Head Start regulations.

Follow these steps to help guide you in the process of determining and justifying how your staff and consultants meet the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS).

1. Read the HSPPS.
 - Know the specific education requirements for staff and consultant roles detailed in §1302.91.
 - Review the cross references to the staff and consultant qualification requirements in other relevant HSPPS.
2. Gather information to know your program's needs and expectations, based on:
 - Community, family, and child needs
 - Program goals including school readiness goals
 - Your existing continuous quality improvement system

3. Use all available information to ensure your program has:
 - Human resources and professional development policies and procedures to help you meet regulations
 - Clear program goals, including school-readiness goals
 - Qualified staff and consultants who can effectively support your program's goals and service delivery
 - An ongoing monitoring process that identifies and addresses challenges in hiring and retaining qualified staff and consultants

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS?*

Knowledge

§1302.91(d) A program must ensure staff responsible for management and oversight of ... health services ... [applies to staff hired after November 7, 2016] have, at a minimum, a baccalaureate degree, preferably related to one or more of the disciplines they oversee

**For full text access the [HSPPS](#).*

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Competencies

§1302.91(a) A program must:

- Ensure all staff, consultants, and contractors ... have sufficient knowledge, training and experience, and competencies to:
 - Fulfill the roles and responsibilities of their positions;
 - Ensure high-quality service delivery...
 - Provide ongoing training and professional development to support staff in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities

Health Professionals

- §1302.91(e)(8)(i) A program must:
 - Ensure health procedures are performed only by a licensed or certified health professional.
- §1302.91(e)(8)(ii) A program must:
 - Ensure all mental health consultants are licensed or certified mental health professionals.
 - Use mental health consultants with knowledge of and experience in serving young children and their families, if available in the community.
- §1302.91(e)(8)(iii) A program must:
 - Use staff or consultants to support nutrition services who are registered dietitians or nutritionists with appropriate qualifications.

Registered Dietitian Nutritionists

A registered dietitian nutritionist is a food and nutrition expert who has met academic and professional requirements including:

- Earned a bachelor's degree with coursework approved by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics. Coursework typically includes food and nutrition sciences, food-service-systems management, business, economics, computer science, sociology, biochemistry, physiology, microbiology, and chemistry.
- Completed an accredited, supervised practice program at a health care facility, community agency, or food-service corporation.
- Passed a national examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration.
- Completes continuing professional educational requirements to maintain registration on an ongoing basis.

<http://www.eatright.org/resource/food/resources/learn-more-about-rdns/qualifications-of-a-registered-dietitian-nutritionist>

Common Types of Licensed Mental Health Providers

Social workers

- Psychologists
- Professional counselors or mental health counselors

The Center for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) recommends that qualifications include 3 or more years of post-master's experience involving work with young children, infant-child mental health, and IECMHC delivery and the capacity to work within the culture and system of the service community in which consultation is delivered.

https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs_campaigns/IECMHC/qualifications-infant-early-childhood-mental-health-consultant.pdf

Please note!

Grantees have the flexibility to implement higher or more stringent requirements than those outlined in the regulation.



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WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

- What is a health procedure?
Some children have special health care needs and may require a specific health treatment while they are in your care. Health procedures are defined by your state medical board or board of nursing. Also consult your state/territory licensing regulations.
- What are the requirements for a licensed or certified health professional who can perform a health procedure?
These requirements vary. Check with your state medical board or board of nursing to find out who is qualified to perform specific health procedures.

Considerations for hiring health services managers

- Use the [Head Start Health Services Competencies: A Tool to Support Health Managers and Staff](#) to identify applicants who can effectively establish and oversee health, nutrition, and mental health services.
- Access the T/TA system for support, and connect with your Regional Office program specialist as necessary.
- Consider requirements detailed within the state/territory early care and education system (includes licensing requirements, and when applicable, health requirements included within the state Quality Rating and Improvement System and early childhood program health standards).

Considerations for hiring staff or consultants to support nutrition services

- Consult this [resource](#) to understand the difference between a registered dietician and a nutritionist.
- Consult the [Committee on Dietetic Registration](#), which provides state/territory-specific licensure and certification requirements.



Considerations for hiring mental health consultants

- Consult the [Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation](#) for resources that Head Start administrators can use to hire a consultant.
- Check your state/territory [Psychologist Licensing Requirements](#), [Social Work Regulatory Boards](#), and [Professional Counselor Licensure Boards](#) to find your state/territory licensing requirements for social workers, psychologists, and allied mental health professionals.
- Consult the Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health's [Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation: Competencies](#) to review recommended skills for mental health consultants.

Considerations for professional development

- Ongoing professional development and supervision can help staff who manage health services and staff who support nutrition services develop the knowledge and competencies they need to effectively oversee child health and nutrition services and support the health and wellness needs of families enrolled in your program.
- Staff can use the [Head Start Health Services Competencies: A Tool to Support Health Managers and Staff](#) to learn more about the attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to deliver high-quality health and nutrition services.

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WHERE CAN I FIND MORE ON THIS TOPIC?

- Head Start Regulations
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii>
 - Program Performance Standards on staff qualifications and competency requirements
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-91-staff-qualifications-competency-requirements>
 - The Showcase of Head Start Regulations on staff qualifications
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/showcase/staff-qualifications>
 - Head Start Program Performance Standards excerpts on staff qualifications <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/docs/pdf/staff-qualifications.pdf>
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
<http://www.eatright.org/>
- Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
<https://www.ecmhc.org/>
- Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
<https://www.samhsa.gov/iecmhc>
- Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/health>
 - Head Start Staff Qualifications
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/human-resources/article/head-start-staff-qualifications>
 - Head Start Health Services Competencies
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/health-services-management/article/head-start-health-services-competencies>
- Head Start and Early Head Start Relationship-Based Competencies for Staff and Supervisors Who Work with Families
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/ohs-rbc.pdf>
- Making the Most of Your Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Services
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/mental-health/article/making-most-your-infant-early-childhood-mental-health-consultation-services>
- The Mental Health Consultation Tool
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/mental-health/learning-module/mental-health-consultation-tool>
- National Database of Child Care Licensing Regulations
<https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/licensing>