

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR HOME VISITORS

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS: STEPS FOR PROGRAMS TO CONSIDER



Use this brief to better understand the Head Start regulations and considerations for home visitors.

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

Follow these steps to help guide you in the process of determining and justifying how your home visitors 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 the Head Start Act and other relevant HSPPS.
2. Gather data 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?*

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

KNOWLEDGE

§1302.91(e)(6)(i) “A program must ensure home visitors providing home-based education services have a minimum of:

- A home-based [home visitor] CDA credential or a comparable credential or
- Equivalent coursework as part of an associate’s or bachelor’s degree”¹

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 position...
 - ensure high-quality service delivery...
- Provide ongoing training and professional development to support staff in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities..”

§1302.91(e)(6)(ii) “A program must ensure home visitors...demonstrate competency** to:

- Plan and implement learning experiences that ensure effective implementation of the home visiting curriculum
- Promote children’s progress across the standards described in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, including children with disabilities and dual language learners
- Build respectful, culturally responsive, and trusting relationships with families.”



**The national home visitor’s CDA credential that is issued by the Council for Professional Recognition fully meets the requirement. Other CDA credentials may fully or partially meet the HSPPS requirements.

Programs need to ensure staff have sufficient training, coursework, experience, and competency to be a home visitor.

- Preschool and infant and toddler center-based CDAs do not have a birth to five focus nor do they address effectively working with parents in their homes.
- Family child care CDA includes a birth to five focus but does not address effectively working with parents in their homes.

PLEASE NOTE!

Grantees have the flexibility to implement higher or more stringent requirements than those outlined in the regulations. For example, programs could require a home visitor to have a degree in ECE or related field^{***}.

To meet the Head Start requirements, home visitors could have one of the following:

- A current national Home Visitor CDA Credential issued by the Council for Professional Recognition
- A comparable certificate or credential that meets or exceeds the national home visitor’s CDA requirements
- An associate, bachelor, or advanced degree that has equivalent coursework

***A comparable credential is issued by state, territory, and tribal agencies, boards, and commissions as well as accredited colleges and universities or other early childhood organizations that offer certificate or degree programs.

1 §1302.91(e)(6)(i) and §1302.91(e)(6)(ii) are in effect on August 1, 2018

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

CONSIDERATIONS FOR HIRING STAFF

Use the national home visitor's CDA credential issued by the Council for Professional Recognition to help you determine if a state or comparable credential meets or exceeds the requirements. This credential covers delivering services to parents of children under five in their own homes.

- Ensure home visitors have sufficient training, experience, and competency to be able to effectively plan for and implement home-based education services.
- Review**** training and course content to determine if it includes child development or working with families. To the extent possible, get the course descriptions from awarding institutions. ECE or child development related courses may be offered in various departments—such as education, home economics, family and consumer science, human ecology, music, art, library science, physical education and recreation, psychology, family studies, and others.
- 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 systems (includes licensing requirements, requirements included within the Quality Rating and Improvement System, etc.).

*****In reviewing coursework taken by applicants, be sure to look beyond just the title or name of the department that issued the credits, as they are sometimes deceiving.*

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Use the annual professional development (PD) hour requirement to make sure home visitors have knowledge and skills in the following:
 - How to facilitate positive parent-child interaction focused on the child's development and learning
 - How to implement and individualize curriculum with fidelity
 - Knowledge of infant and toddler development (for EHS home-based programs)
 - Knowledge of preschool child development (for Head Start home-based programs)
 - Strategies for sharing child development knowledge with parents
 - How to support parents as they use their home as the learning environment
 - Trauma-informed practice
 - Working with families with substance use, depression or other mental health issues, interpersonal violence, and/or poverty
 - Home visitor self-care
 - Safety for home visitors
 - Working with children with identified or suspected disabilities
 - Delivering culturally and linguistically appropriate services
 - Complete training or coursework needed for their credential or degree
 - This can include ongoing training, taking college courses, and intensive coaching
- Enlist partners to support a home visitor career pathway in your community.
 - Every state and territory has a Maternal, Infant, & Early Childhood (MIECHV) Program. Reach out to the MIECHV office in your state to find out about other home visiting professional development opportunities. Determine if and how they connect to CDA credential or degree programs.
 - Create a cadre of CDA PD specialists to expedite the national CDA approval and renewal process. Identify local candidates from your program, ECE programs, and the community.

- Partner with local colleges for a degree program. Ensure course offerings include content focusing on ECE and working with families.
- Create a cohort of students from your program and other ECE programs.
- Use individualized professional development (PD) plans and ongoing supervision to
 - support areas of need or interest such as implementing curriculum and working with families; and
 - outline steps and ensure timely progress in acquiring a credential or degree.

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>
 - Section 645A(i) of the Head Start Act on Staff Qualifications and Professional Development <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/head-start-act/sec-645a-early-head-start-programs>
- Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>
 - Head Start Staff Qualifications <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/human-resources/article/head-start-staff-qualifications>
 - Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement/article/relationship-based-competencies-support-family-engagement>
 - Steps Local Agencies Can Use to Determine Credential or Degree Equivalency <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/steps-local-agencies-can-use-determine-credential-or-degree-equivalency>
- Institute for the Advancement of Family Support Professionals <https://institutefsp.org>
- National CDA Credential Program <http://www.cdacouncil.org/credentials/apply-for-cda>
 - Home Visitor CDA Credential <http://www.cdacouncil.org/credentials/apply-for-cda/home-visitor>
 - Professional Development (PD) Specialists <http://www.cdacouncil.org/pd-specialists/role-a-responsibilities>
- Quality Rating and Improvement Systems <https://qrisguide.acf.hhs.gov/about-qris>
 - State QRIS info <https://qrisguide.acf.hhs.gov/states>
 - National Program Standards Crosswalk Tool <https://qrisguide.acf.hhs.gov/crosswalk/>
- The Council's Online Platform YourCouncil <https://www.cdacouncil.org/yourcda>

SPOTLIGHT ON A RESOURCE

The Institute for the Advancement of Family Support Professionals.

The Institute is funded through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) as a MIECHV innovation grant, which are federal dollars, and with funding from the Heising Simons Foundation, a private foundation. The Institute offers training free of charge and is open to anyone from any home visiting program regardless of the funding stream. The Council for Professional Recognition will accept successful completion of the 63 home visitor modules as meeting the 120 educational clock hours for HS/EHS home visitor CDA candidates. To access these free online home visiting modules, go to <https://institutefsp.org>.

The Institute also recently released as set of national home visiting competencies. To access a copy of these competencies go to <https://institutefsp.org/about>.