



HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS SUPPORT CHILDREN’S BEHAVIORS!

PART 1302—PROGRAM OPERATIONS

- Subpart C—Education and Child Development Program Services
 - 1302.30 Purpose
 - 1302.33(b) Child screenings and assessments
 - 1302.34 Parent and family engagement in education and child development services
- Subpart D—Health Program Services
 - 1302.45(b) Child mental health and social and emotional well-being

Programs must provide high-quality early education and child development services to all children, including children with disabilities, that promote children’s cognitive, social, and emotional growth for later success in school. Programs must offer opportunities for parents and families, such as volunteering, providing feedback, and communicating through daily interactions or parent-teacher conferences. Additionally, programs should support a culture that promotes children’s mental, social, and emotional well-being through effective classroom management, positive learning environments, and supportive teacher practices.

1. Take the time to observe children and figure out the meaning of their behaviors to foster positive interactions with children, build confidence in children’s ability to communicate their wants, needs, feelings, and intentions and support social and emotional development skills. All these skills and behaviors promote school readiness.
2. Children’s behaviors reflect their learning and development across the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) domains. Children communicate with adults through their behaviors. Learning to manage their impulses and practicing self-regulation skills are ELOF goals that stretch across the developmental continuum for infants and toddlers and preschoolers. Conduct ongoing child assessments to evaluate their developmental levels and determine their strengths and needs. Refer children for further support or additional services when needed.
3. You observe children’s behaviors every day. This is not an additional curriculum piece to add to your planning and practices. Learn the meaning of children’s behaviors to meet children’s needs, wants, and understand their intentions and emotions—and make children feel valued and respected.
4. Early childhood mental health refers to how well a child develops socially and emotionally. HSPPS state that to support children’s mental, social, and emotional well-being, programs must help teachers provide effective classroom management, positive learning environments, and supportive practices. Mental health consultants should partner with staff and families, as needed.

