



Supporting Local Head Start Programs with Farm-to-Early Care and Education Models

Head Start is the nation's largest early childhood program. With a federal appropriation of \$9.1 billion in 2016, Head Start serves nearly one million children younger than 5 in over 1,500 communities across the country. (You can find the Head Start grantees in your community [here](#).) Head Start is a federal-to-local program where each local grantee must adhere to a set of federal regulations called "Head Start Program Performance Standards." Programs can serve children birth-to-3 years old in Early Head Start; 3- and 4-year-olds in Head Start; or can implement a birth-to-5 Head Start model. Head Start standards do allow for local variation to meet specific community needs, but the Head Start Program Performance Standards articulate a national vision for organizations to provide comprehensive services to support the country's most at-risk children and their families. Head Start programs provide services that address early learning, health, mental health, nutrition, and family well-being.

In September 2016, the Administration for Children and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services published the first complete revision of the Head Start Program Performance Standards since 1975. The standards, which can be found [here](#), incorporate the latest research on child development and early learning. Most of the standards went into effect on November 7, 2016, with some of the more significant changes taking effect later. (You can see the compliance timeline [here](#).) The revision of the new standards provides Farm-to-ECE models with a unique opportunity to engage Head Start programs as they work to best meet the new performance standards.

To support Farm-to-ECE organizations who wish to partner with Head Start programs, this brief provides important contextual information on the new Head Start standards and highlights key areas of alignment between the new standards and Farm-to-ECE approaches.

Head Start Context and Key Considerations for Farm-to-ECE Initiatives

In order to effectively engage Head Start programs in Farm-to-ECE initiatives, it is important to understand the overall context in which the new Head Start Program Performance Standards were created, as well as the questions and information that Head Start programs will consider as they work to meet the new standards. Below are several considerations for organizations implementing Farm-to-ECE initiatives as they develop partnerships with local Head Start programs.

Farm-to-ECE initiatives must address their potential impact on specific child outcomes

Head Start has historically attempted to improve child and family well-being, but the new standards have a stronger focus on child outcomes and continuous quality improvement. A significant body of research documents the positive short- and long-term impacts of the Head Start program on child and family outcomes. However, the [Head Start Impact Study](#), a study funded by the federal government that used a rigorous experimental design found that, on average, Head Start programs had small impacts on only a few child outcome measures. These impacts faded away after children attended kindergarten. As such, the new Head Start standards work to improve child outcomes through an emphasis on high-quality, research-based teaching and learning activities, family engagement, and data-driven decision making. Local Head Start programs will be particularly interested in research-based models that show evidence of producing positive child outcomes in one or more areas of child development and early learning outlined in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (discussed below). Accordingly, Farm-to-ECE models must draw a link between the initiative and its impact on nutritious food choices and eating habits, positive social-emotional development and behavior, improved language and literacy skills, science knowledge, or other child outcomes.

Farm-to-ECE models must understand the new Head Start philosophy of addressing both program quality and appropriate "dosage"

To improve child outcomes, the new Head Start Program Performance Standards use an approach that focuses on two key elements: (1) improving the quality of Head Start programs through stronger standards; and (2) increasing the amount of time that children and families are exposed to Head Start programs (called "dosage" or "program duration"). In the same way that a person will not get better if they take less than the prescribed dose of an effective medicine, Head Start programs cannot produce the desired



outcomes for children if they do not have sufficient exposure to a high-quality Head Start model. Accordingly, in addition to standards that improve Head Start program quality, the standards also work to increase the amount of time that Head Start programs must operate. By August 1, 2018, Early Head Start programs will be required to provide 1,380 hours of annual “planned classroom operations,” and by 2019, Head Start programs will be required to provide 1,020 hours per year.

The emphasis on dosage is important to Farm-to-ECE models for two reasons. First, many Head Start programs will need to increase their hours of program operation, which provides an opportunity to fill those hours with Farm-to-ECE activities. Equally important, the Head Start quality/dosage framework should serve as a model for Farm-to-ECE implementation. While all Farm-to-ECE initiatives strive to implement high-quality activities (learning activities, field trips to farms, parent meetings, etc.), it is also important to provide enough exposure to these activities to have the desired impact. Given that Farm-to-ECE models are so new, the question of how much exposure is enough is an open question. At the very least, Farm-to-ECE organizations should ask the question, “Is this enough exposure to the activity to reach the desired outcome?” Further, the question of dosage should be considered in the evaluation of program models.

Farm-to-ECE models must provide a rationale for how they help Head Start programs meet the new standards

Prior to the recent revision, Head Start standards were perceived as overly prescriptive. Depending on how you counted them, anywhere from 1,400 to 2,400 Head Start standards very specifically defined the operations of a Head Start program. The previous standards detailed program requirements right down to the lighting in Head Start classrooms (“Rooms shall be well lighted.”)¹ This created a hyper-compliant mentality among local Head Start programs that stifled innovation and local variation. The new program standards have been streamlined to make Head Start requirements easier to understand and less burdensome to local programs.

The new program performance standards focus on “the *what* of Head Start, but not the *how*.” This means that new program standards define what Head Start programs must do, but, unlike the old standards, do not prescribe the way to do it. With this increased flexibility, Head Start programs will need to provide a strong rationale to Head Start monitors for why the program decided to meet a standard in the way it did. For example, the new Head Start standards require that “Safe drinking water is available to children during the program day.” In response to this standard, Head Start programs are required to outline a set of policies and procedures that meet the standard, which must be grounded in a strong rationale. The rationale for program activities include one or more of the following:

- Research-based with evidence of effectiveness
- Established best practice in the field
- Result of consultation with child development, nutrition, health, or other experts
- Response to community needs assessment data
- Best meets the needs of the program’s specific population
- Response to data-driven decision making process

In the example provided in the text box below, the rationale for the policies and procedures related to safe drinking water is grounded in best practice as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control in its publication entitled, *Increasing Access to Drinking Water and Other Healthier Beverages in Early Care and Education Settings*, which can be accessed [here](#).

Farm-to-ECE models can provide the “how” to several different standards related to nutrition, curriculum, and family engagement (discussed in more detail below). In working with Head Start programs, it will be important for the organizations implementing Farm-to-ECE models to provide a rationale for why their model or approach is the best way to meet a given Head Start standard.

¹ Former standard 1304.2-3(a)(9) under *Education services plan content: facilities*



Example: Developing a Rationale for Addressing Head Start Program Performance Standards

Head Start Standard:

Safe drinking water is available to children during the program day

Potential program action:

- Children will be made aware and given access to drinking fountain and served water during snacks and with milk during meals
- Water will be tested every year as required by the local health department
- Children will be provided additional water when they are physically active or when it is hot outside, and children will drink water before and during periods of physical activity
- Drinking fountains will be kept clean and maintained to provide adequate water flow and drainage and children will be taught to drink water without mouthing the drinking fountain fixture

Rationale:

Following CDC guidance

Documentation:

Written water policy and water test results

Farm-to-ECE models must align with the new Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework

The *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework*, which can be found [here](#), outlines the expectations for what Head Start children should know and be able to do at different ages between birth and kindergarten entry. The Outcomes Framework focuses on five domains of development and learning:

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Language and Literacy
- Cognition
- Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development

The domains are further organized into sub-domains, goals, developmental progressions, and indicators. Head Start programs are instructed to use the Framework to guide their choices in curriculum and learning materials, to plan daily activities, and to inform teaching practices. Accordingly, Farm-to-ECE models that include a curriculum component or classroom-based activities should discuss how the materials align to one or more of the indicators in the Outcomes Framework. An example of alignment from a curriculum publisher can be found [here](#). Organizations implementing Farm-to-ECE models should think broadly about how they may align to the Outcomes Framework, including how the model fosters curiosity (Approaches to Learning), teamwork and collaboration (Social and Emotional Development), an understanding of science (Cognition), and language skills, in addition to nutritional knowledge. The

progressions in Appendix A below are taken from the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and provide examples of key indicators within the Framework where there is strong alignment between Farm-to-ECE models and the goals of Head Start.

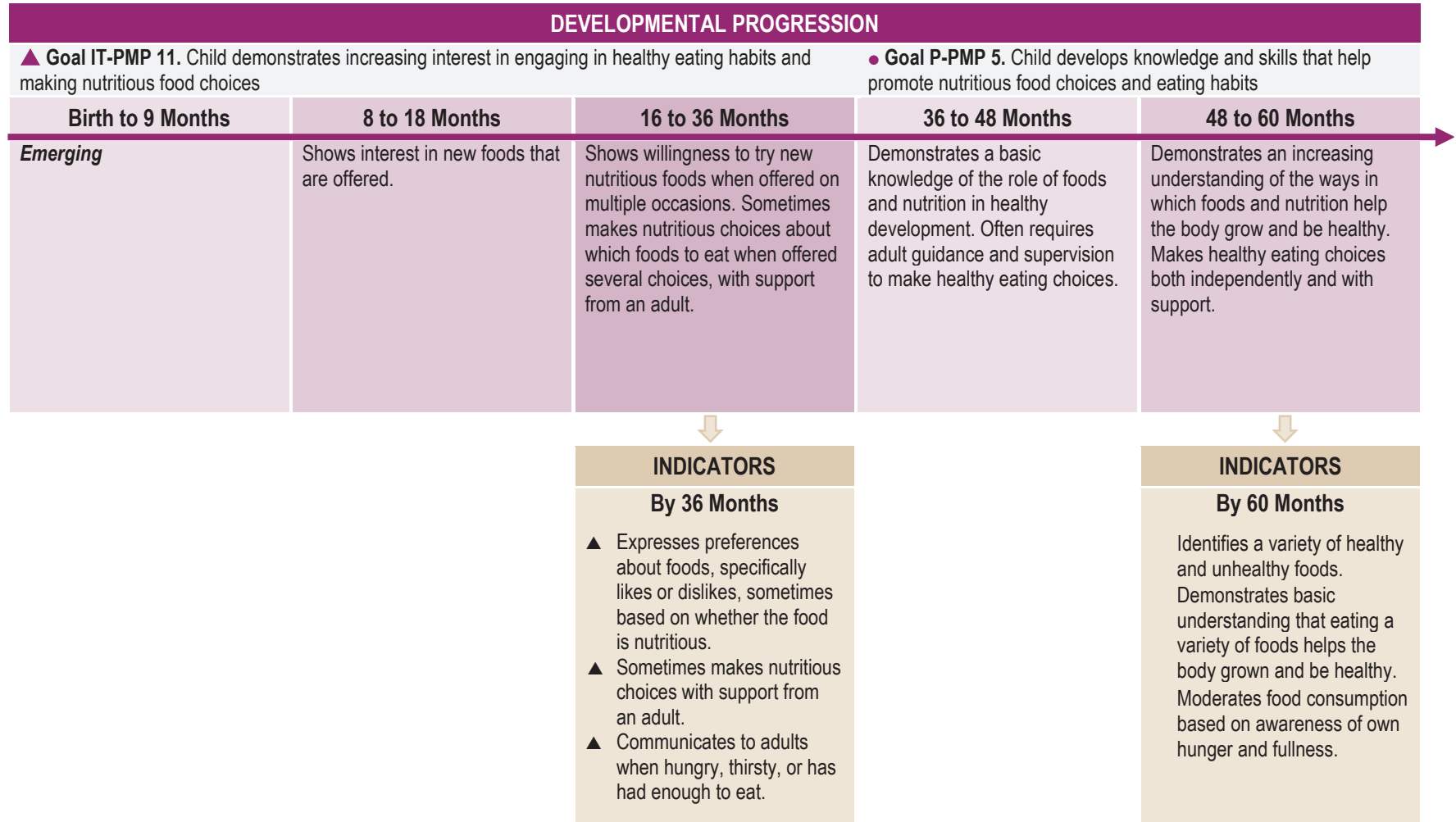
Farm-to-ECE models must show how they align to key elements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards

The new Head Start standards have a strong focus on child nutrition and health that align well with the work of Farm-to-ECE. In the table below, the Head Start Program Performance Standards that are most relevant to Farm-to-ECE models have been identified. Appendix B includes a description of the standard, information regarding the implications of the standard for Farm-to-ECE models, and how these models might support local Head Start programs in meeting the standards.



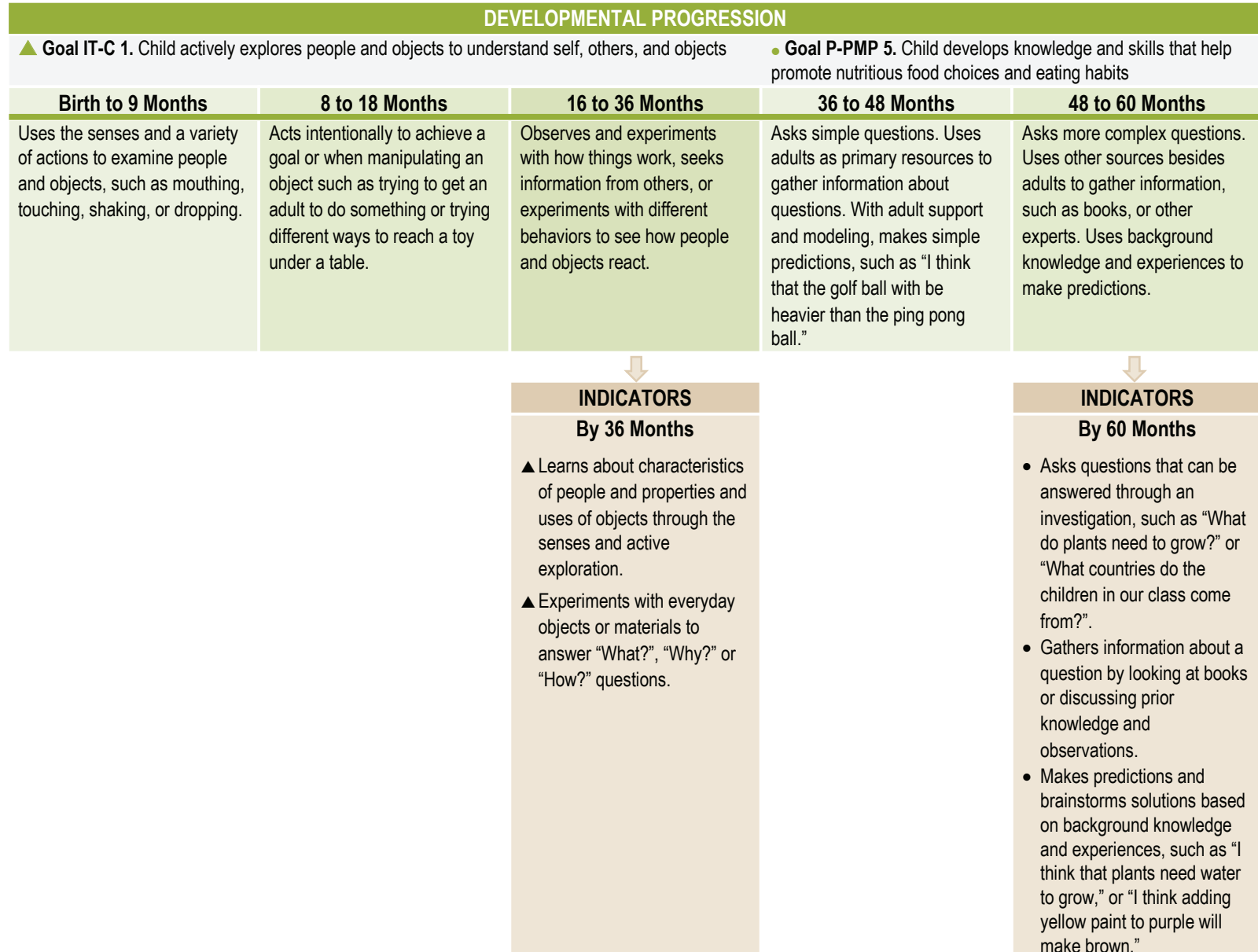
Appendix A

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework Nutrition Standards



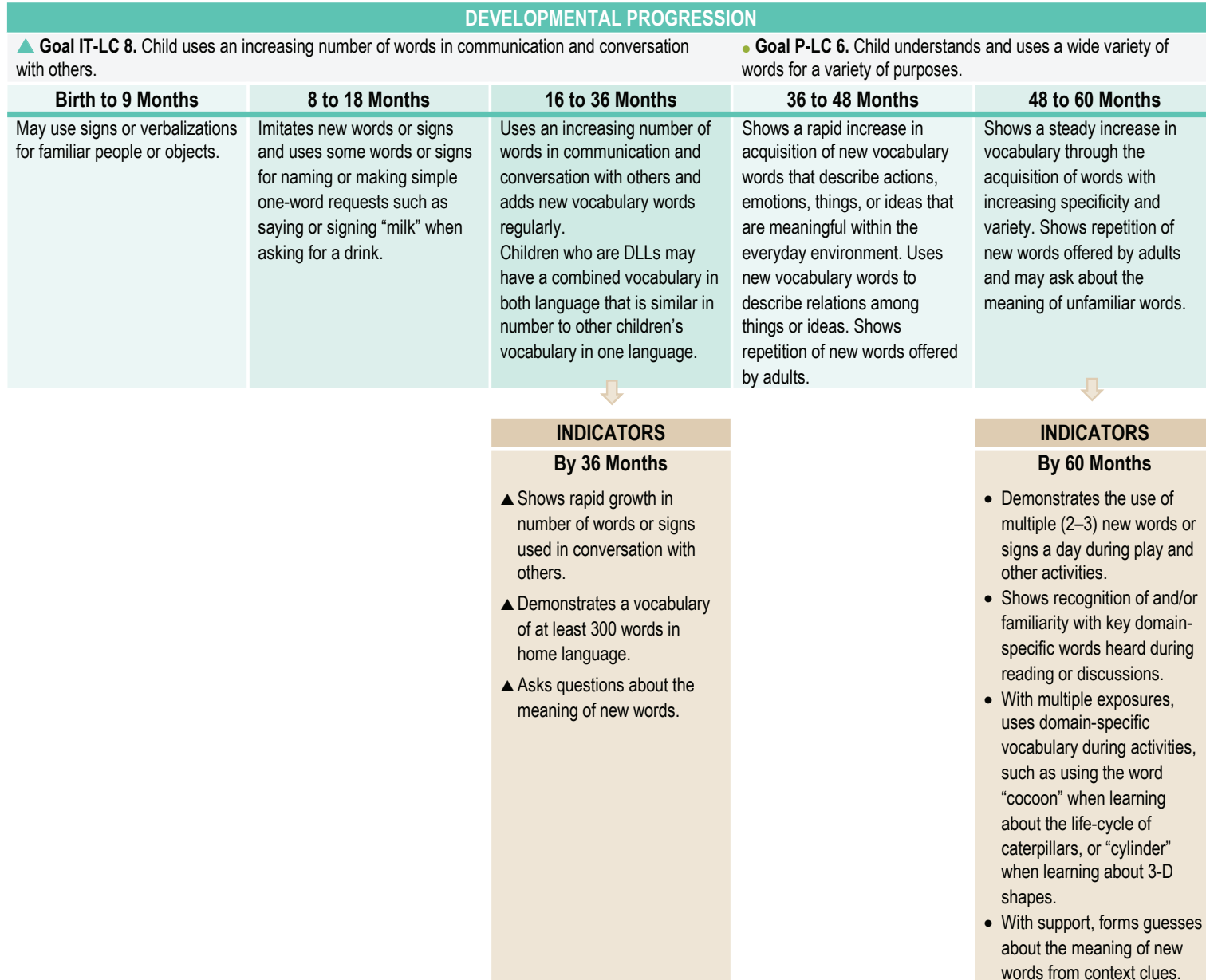


Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework Logic and Reasoning Standards





Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework Vocabulary Standards





Appendix B

Head Start Program Performance Standard	Considerations for Farm-to-ECE Organizations
<p>1302.11 Determining community strengths, needs, and resources</p> <p>(b) Community wide strategic planning and needs assessment (community assessment).</p> <p>(1) To design a program that meets community needs, and builds on strengths and resources, a program must conduct a community assessment at least once over the five-year grant period. The community assessment must use data that describes community strengths, needs, and resources and include, at a minimum:</p> <p>...(ii) The education, health, nutrition and social service needs of eligible children and their families, including prevalent social or economic factors that impact their well-being;</p> <p>...(iv) Other child development, child care centers, and family child care programs that serve eligible children, including home visiting, publicly funded state and local pre-schools, and the approximate number of eligible children served;</p> <p>(v) Resources that are available in the community to address the needs of eligible children and their families; and,</p> <p>(vi) Strengths of the community.</p> <p>(2) A program must annually review and update the community assessment to reflect any significant changes including... significant shifts in community demographics and resources.</p>	<p>Farm-to-ECE models are a community resource that should be included in the community needs assessments of local Head Start programs. Organizations implementing Farm-to-ECE models can provide data on the nutritional needs of the children in the community and discuss the services they provide as a potential resource to Head Start programs in meeting those needs. Conversations with Head Start programs should focus on the nutritional needs of children in the community and the resources available to address those needs. Head Start programs should review community needs assessments annually, providing a yearly opportunity for Head Start programs to be included in the assessment.</p>
<p>1302.31 Teaching and the learning environment</p> <p>a) Teaching and the learning environment. A center-based and family child care program must ensure teachers and other relevant staff provide responsive care, effective teaching, and an organized learning environment that promotes healthy development and children’s skill growth aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five, including for children with disabilities. A program must also support implementation of such environment with integration of regular and ongoing supervision and a system of individualized and ongoing professional development, as appropriate. This includes, at a minimum, the practices described in paragraphs (b) through (e) of this section.</p>	<p>The new Head Start standards require that Head Start programs use snack and meal times as an opportunity for development and learning. A key aspect of good teaching in early childhood is that teachers plan experiences that draw on children’s own interests and integrate learning across domains (e.g., social emotional and cognitive learning). Clearly, what is of interest to children during snack and meal times is food, and Farm-to-ECE models are particularly well-suited to support learning during snack and meal times. Learning activities provided during these times must make the learning experience during snack and meal times interesting for children and work to integrate learning across the multiple domains of early learning and development.</p>



Head Start Program Performance Standard

(b) **Effective teaching practices.**

(1) Teaching practices must:

(i) Emphasize nurturing and responsive practices, interactions, and environments that foster trust and emotional security; are communication and language rich; promote critical thinking and problem-solving; social, emotional, behavioral, and language development; provide supportive feedback for learning; motivate continued effort; and support all children's engagement in learning experiences and activities;

(ii) Focus on promoting growth in the developmental progressions described in the **Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five** by aligning with and using the Framework and the curricula as described in §1302.32 to direct planning of organized activities, schedules, lesson plans, and the implementation of high-quality early learning experiences that are responsive to and build upon each child's individual pattern of development and learning;

(iii) Integrate child assessment data in individual and group planning; and,

(iv) Include developmentally appropriate learning experiences in language, literacy, social and emotional development, math, science, social studies, creative arts, and physical development that are focused toward achieving progress outlined in the **Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five**.

(2) For dual language learners, a program must recognize bilingualism and biliteracy as strengths and implement research-based teaching practices that support their development.

...e) **Promoting learning through approaches to rest, meals, routines, and physical activity.**

...(2) A program must implement snack and meal times in ways that support development and learning. For bottle-fed infants, this approach must include holding infants during feeding to support socialization. **Snack and meal times must be structured and used as learning opportunities that support teaching staff-child interactions and foster communication and conversations that contribute to a child's learning, development, and socialization.** Programs are encouraged to meet this requirement with family style meals when developmentally appropriate. A program must also provide sufficient time for children to eat, not use food as reward or punishment, and not force children to finish their food.

Considerations for Farm-to-ECE Organizations

In addition, organizations implementing Farm-to-ECE models must take into account the diverse population of children served by the Head Start program. Activities and materials must be culturally and linguistically appropriate and translated into the language or languages spoken by the families attending local Head Start programs.



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Considerations for Farm-to-ECE Organizations

(3) A program must approach routines, such as hand washing and diapering, and transitions between activities, as opportunities for strengthening development, learning, and skill growth.

(4) A program must recognize physical activity as important to learning and integrate intentional movement and physical activity into curricular activities and daily routines in ways that support health and learning. A program must not use physical activity as reward or punishment.

1302.32 Curricula

(a) *Curricula.* (1) Center-based and family child care programs must implement **developmentally appropriate research-based early childhood curricula**, including additional curricular enhancements, as appropriate that:

(i) Are based on scientifically valid research and have **standardized training procedures and curriculum materials** to support implementation;

(ii) Are aligned with the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five* and, as appropriate, state early learning and development standards; and are sufficiently content-rich to promote measurable progress toward development and learning outlined in the Framework; and,

(iii) Have an organized developmental scope and sequence that include **plans and materials for learning experiences based on developmental progressions** and how children learn.

(2) **A program must support staff to effectively implement curricula and at a minimum monitor curriculum implementation and fidelity, and provide support, feedback, and supervision for continuous improvement of its implementation through the system of training and professional development.**

(b) *Adaptation.* A program that chooses to make significant adaptations to a curriculum or a curriculum enhancement described in paragraph (a)(1) to better meet the needs of one or more specific populations must use an external early childhood education curriculum or content area expert to develop such significant adaptations. A program must assess whether the adaptation adequately facilitates progress toward meeting **school readiness goals**, consistent with the process described in §1302.102(b) and (c). Programs are encouraged to partner with outside evaluators in assessing such adaptations.

Given that Head Start is a \$9 billion program, curriculum publishers work hard to sell materials to local Head Start programs. Over the years, Head Start has become increasingly sophisticated in how it evaluates curricula. As noted in the standards, curricula used in Head Start programs have to be developmentally appropriate (see more about that [here](#)); based on scientifically valid research; include a scope and sequence; and provide implementation supports. In other words, Head Start programs want to know that the curriculum is appropriate for preschool children, impactful, and that program administrators can assess that teachers are implementing the curriculum correctly. Farm-to-ECE programs need to take these factors into account when developing curriculum or learning activities for children. For those models wishing to develop or implement a curriculum, it may be beneficial to partner with a local college/university or current curriculum provider to develop nutrition education materials that meet the Head Start standards.



Head Start Program Performance Standard

1302.34 Parent and family engagement in education and child development services

(a) **Purpose.** Center-based and family child care programs must structure education and child development services to recognize parents' roles as children's lifelong educators, and to encourage parents to engage in their child's education.

(b) **Engaging parents and family members.** A program must offer opportunities for parents and family members to be involved in the program's education services and implement policies to ensure:

...(5) Parents and family members have opportunities to volunteer in the class and during group activities;

1302.44 Child Nutrition

(a) **Nutrition service requirements.** (1) A program must design and implement **nutrition services that are culturally and developmentally appropriate**, meet the nutritional needs of and accommodate the feeding requirements of each child, including children with special dietary needs and children with disabilities. Family style meals are encouraged as described in §1302.31 (e)(2).

(2) Specifically, a program must:

(i) Ensure each child in a program that operates for fewer than six hours per day receives meals and snacks that provide one third to one half of the child's daily nutritional needs;

(ii) Ensure each child in a program that operates for six hours or more per day receives meals and snacks that provide one half to two thirds of the child's daily nutritional needs, depending upon the length of the program day;

(iii) Serve three- to five-year-olds meals and snacks that conform to USDA requirements in 7 CFR parts 210, 220, and 226, and are high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar, and salt;

(iv) Feed infants and toddlers according to their individual developmental readiness and feeding skills as recommended in USDA requirements outlined in 7 CFR parts 210, 220, and 226, and ensure infants and young toddlers are fed on demand to the extent possible;

(v) Ensure bottle-fed infants are never laid down to sleep with a bottle;

(vi) Serve all children in morning center-based settings who have not received breakfast upon arrival at the program a **nourishing breakfast**;

(vii) Provide appropriate **healthy snacks and meals to each child during group socialization activities** in the home-based option;

Considerations for Farm-to-ECE Organizations

The new family engagement standards of the Head Start program (discussed here and below) provide opportunities for Farm-to-ECE providers to support Head Start programs in engaging families.

The Head Start program has strong nutrition requirements. These requirements encourage family style meals (no longer a requirement); require that programs serve nutritious meals and snacks that meet a portion of a child's daily nutritional needs depending on program length; and that meals and snacks conform to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirements. The standards also require that USDA and other child nutrition programs be the primary method for covering the costs of these services.

Head Start programs need support in meeting these requirements and organizations implementing Farm-to-ECE models can serve an important consultation role in helping them to meet these requirements. Farm-to-ECE organizations can provide guidance in how locally sourced foods can be used to meet the standards and help Head Start programs understand how the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) can be used to buy locally sourced foods. Finally, organizations implementing Farm-to-ECE models can support Head Start programs in implementing nutrition services that are culturally and developmentally appropriate. (Information on linguistically and culturally appropriate practices can be found [here](#).)



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Considerations for Farm-to-ECE Organizations

(viii) Promote breastfeeding, including providing facilities to properly store and handle breast milk and make accommodations, as necessary, for mothers who wish to breast-feed during program hours, and if necessary, provide referrals to lactation consultants or counselors; and,

(ix) Make safe drinking water available to children during the program day.

(b) *Payment sources.* **A program must use funds from USDA Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services child nutrition programs as the primary source of payment for meal services.** Early Head Start and Head Start funds may be used to cover those allowable costs not covered by the USDA.

1302.46 Family support services for health, nutrition, and mental health

(a) *Parent collaboration.* Programs must collaborate with parents to promote children’s health and well-being by providing medical, oral, nutrition and mental health education support services that are understandable to individuals, including individuals with low health literacy.

(b) *Opportunities.* (1) Such collaboration must include opportunities for parents to:

(i) Learn about preventive medical and oral health care, emergency first aid, environmental hazards, and health and safety practices for the home including health and developmental consequences of tobacco products use and exposure to lead, and safe sleep;

(ii) **Discuss their child’s nutritional status with staff, including the importance of physical activity, healthy eating, and the negative health consequences of sugar-sweetened beverages, and how to select and prepare nutritious foods that meet the family’s nutrition and food budget needs;**

(iii) Learn about healthy pregnancy and postpartum care, as appropriate, including breastfeeding support and treatment options for parental mental health or substance use problems, including perinatal depression;

(iv) Discuss with staff and identify issues related to child mental health and social and emotional well-being, including observations and any concerns about their child’s mental health, typical and atypical behavior and development, and how to appropriately respond to their child and promote their child’s social and emotional development...;

Family engagement has always been an integral part of Head Start programming. The new standards are more explicit in how family engagement should be woven throughout program operations, and place a greater explicit emphasis on the involvement of fathers.

Farm-to-ECE models have a strong family engagement component that aligns closely with the requirements of the Head Start program. It will be important for organizations implementing Farm-to-ECE models to consult the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework (found [here](#)) to better understand and align to Head Start goals around family engagement.

Also, the Head Start standards require that local programs provide opportunities for parents to discuss their child’s nutritional status and healthy eating with staff. Organizations implementing Farm-to-ECE models can provide guidance to Head Start programs on how best to engage in these discussions, with an emphasis on locally sourced food and ways in which this food can be obtained affordably by Head Start parents (using SNAP benefits, for example).



THE

POLICY EQUITY

GROUP

EMPOWERING THE SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS

Head Start Program Performance Standard

Considerations for Farm-to-ECE Organizations

1302.50 Family engagement

(a) *Purpose.* A program must **integrate parent and family engagement strategies into all systems and program services** to support family well-being and promote children’s learning and development. Programs are encouraged to develop innovative two-generation approaches that address prevalent needs of families across their program that may leverage community partnerships or other funding sources.

(b) *Family engagement approach.* A program must:

(1) Recognize parents as their children’s primary teachers and nurturers and implement intentional strategies to engage parents in their children’s learning and development and support parent-child relationships, **including specific strategies for father engagement;**

(2) Develop relationships with parents and structure services to encourage trust and respectful, ongoing two-way communication between staff and parents to create welcoming program environments that incorporate the unique cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds of families in the program and community;

(3) Collaborate with families in a family partnership process that identifies needs, interests, strengths, goals, and services and resources that support family well-being, including family safety, health, and economic stability;

(4) Provide parents with opportunities to participate in the program as employees or volunteers;

(5) Conduct family engagement services in the family’s preferred language, **or through an interpreter, to the extent possible, and ensure families have the opportunity to share personal information in an environment in which they feel safe....**

1302.51 Parent activities to promote child learning and development

(a) A program must promote shared responsibility with parents for children’s early learning and development, and implement family engagement strategies that are designed to foster parental confidence and skills in promoting children’s learning and development. These strategies must include:

(1) Offering activities that support parent-child relationships and child development including language, dual language, literacy, and bi-literacy development as appropriate;

(2) Providing parents with information about the importance of their child’s regular attendance, and partner with them, as necessary, to promote consistent attendance; and,

See above.



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(3) For dual language learners, information and resources for parents about the benefits of bilingualism and biliteracy.

(b) A program must, at a minimum, offer opportunities for parents to participate in a research-based parenting curriculum that builds on parents' knowledge and offers parents the opportunity to practice parenting skills to promote children's learning and development. A program that chooses to make significant adaptations to the parenting curriculum to better meet the needs of one or more specific populations must work with an expert or experts to develop such adaptations.

1302.52 Family partnership services.

(a) **Family partnership process.** A program must implement a family partnership process that includes a family partnership agreement and the activities described in this section to support family well-being, including family safety, health, and economic stability, to support child learning and development, to provide, if applicable, services and supports for children with disabilities, and to foster parental confidence and skills that promote the early learning and development of their children....

(b) **Identification of family strengths and needs.** A program must implement intake and family assessment procedures to identify family strengths and needs related to the family engagement outcomes as described in the Head Start Parent Family and Community Engagement Framework, including family well-being, parent-child relationships, families as lifelong educators, families as advocates and leaders.

(c) **Individualized family partnership services.** A program must offer individualized family partnership services that:

(1) Collaborate with families to identify interests, needs, and aspirations related to the family engagement outcomes described in paragraph (b) of this section;

(2) Help families achieve identified individualized family engagement outcomes;

(3) Establish and implement a family partnership agreement process that is jointly developed and shared with parents in which staff and families to review individual progress, revise goals, evaluate and track whether identified needs and goals are met, and adjust strategies on an ongoing basis, as necessary, and;

(4) Assign staff and resources based on the urgency and intensity of identified family needs and goals.

See above.



Head Start Program Performance Standard

Considerations for Farm-to-ECE Organizations

(d) **Existing plans and community resources.** In implementing this section, a program must take into consideration any existing plans for the family made with other community agencies and availability of other community resources to address family needs, strengths, and goals, in order to avoid duplication of effort.

1302.53 Community partnerships and coordination with other early childhood and education programs

(a) *Community partnerships.* (1) A program must establish ongoing **collaborative relationships and partnerships with community organizations** such as establishing joint agreements, procedures, or contracts and arranging for onsite delivery of services as appropriate, to facilitate access to community services that are responsive to children's and families' needs and family partnership goals, and community needs and resources, as determined by the community assessment.

(2) A program must establish necessary collaborative relationships and partnerships, with community organizations that may include:

(i) Health care providers, including child and adult mental health professionals, Medicaid managed care networks, dentists, other health professionals, **nutritional service providers**, providers of prenatal and postnatal support, and substance abuse treatment providers...;

(v) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, **nutrition assistance agencies**, workforce development and training programs, adult or family literacy, adult education, and post-secondary education institutions, and agencies or financial institutions that provide asset-building education, products and services to enhance family financial stability and savings;

(viii) Other organizations or businesses that may provide support and resources to families.

(b) *Coordination with other programs and systems.* A program must take an active role in promoting coordinated systems of comprehensive early childhood services to low-income children and families in their community through communication, cooperation, and the sharing of information among agencies and their community partners, while protecting the privacy of **child records** in accordance with subpart C of part 1303 of this chapter and applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws.

The standards around community partnerships and coordination with other ECE programs present several entry points for Farm-to-ECE initiatives to establish joint agreements, contracts, and other aspects of service delivery with Head Start providers.



Head Start Program Performance Standard

Considerations for Farm-to-ECE Organizations

(2) *Quality Rating and Improvement Systems.* A program, with the exception of American Indian and Alaska Native programs, must participate in its state or local Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) if:

(i) Its state or local QRIS accepts Head Start monitoring data to document quality indicators included in the state’s tiered system;

(ii) Participation would not impact a program’s ability to comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards; and,

(iii) The program has not provided the Office of Head Start with a compelling reason not to comply with this requirement.

1303.4 Federal financial assistance, non-federal match, and waiver requirements

In accordance with section 640(b) of the Act, federal financial assistance to a grantee will not exceed 80 percent of the approved total program costs. A grantee must contribute 20 percent as non-federal match each budget period. The responsible HHS official may approve a waiver of all or a portion of the non-federal match requirement on the basis of the grantee’s written application submitted for the budget period and any supporting evidence the responsible HHS official requires. In deciding whether to grant a waiver, the responsible HHS official will consider the circumstances specified at section 640(b) of the Act and whether the grantee has made a reasonable effort to comply with the non-federal match requirement.

Organizations that implement Farm-to- ECE models have the opportunity to help Head Start programs in meeting non-federal match requirements. Head Start programs must contribute 20 percent of the program’s budget each year in non-federal match. Cash or in-kind contributions can be counted toward the non-federal match if they are reasonable, allocable, and necessary for the accomplishment of the project objectives. Volunteer services and in-kind donations of products and materials are an important way in which Head Start programs meet the match requirements. A key selling point of Farm-to-ECE models will be how they can contribute to Head Start’s non-federal share requirement. Organizations implementing Farm-to-ECE models should assign a value to the services they provide to Head Start programs that can be counted toward the non-federal share requirement. Information on how to do this, and on the Head Start non-federal share requirements generally, can be found [here](#).