

Supplemental Material

Reforming Head Start for the 21st Century: A Policy Prescription

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Supplemental Text

In this Supplemental Material, we provide some background information on the timeline for both designation renewal and public comment on the proposed standards.

We also provide more information and resources on tools used for assessing prekindergarten children, rating systems for early childhood programs, and linked data systems that allow research into many aspects of early childhood education, including long-term effects.

Designation Renewal Timeline

To date, the Office of Head Start has reviewed four cohorts of Head Start grantees under designation renewal and completed competitions for the first three cohorts. The first designation renewal cohort was evaluated using only the first five designation criteria listed in our article, because the last two criteria did not become effective until December 2011. All current Head Start grantees had been evaluated under the designation renewal system by July 2015. In the future, grantees will be identified for designation renewal as their current 5-year grants come up for renewal.¹ For more information, see <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/grants/dr>.

Schedule for Public Comment and Adoption of the Proposed Standards

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released the proposed standards on June 19, 2015. HHS received more than 1,000 public comments during the public comment period, which ended September 17, 2015. The agency is currently considering these comments and expects to release a final rule in 2016. For more information, see <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/hspps/nprm>.

Quality Rating and Improvement Systems and Linked Data Systems

Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) are designed to support ongoing program improvement and informed parent choice in early childhood programs by (a) establishing common quality standards for use across all early childhood settings (including child care, Head Start, and private and publicly funded preschool), (b) defining multiple levels of quality relative to those standards, (c) rating programs based on the level of quality standards they meet, (c) and providing incentives and support to help programs move to higher levels of quality. More than 40 states currently have some form of state or local QRIS. For more information, see <http://qrisnetwork.org/>.

Coordinated early childhood data systems seek to aggregate data from multiple state and local early childhood programs and agencies using unique child identifiers to generate a comprehensive picture of the number of children being served at any point in time and to allow programs and policymakers to track the sequence or combination of services each child receives over time. Ideally, these systems should be integrated with state P-20 (preschool through lifelong learning) or K-12 (kindergarten through 12th grade) longitudinal data systems to allow state officials to track children's experience from early childhood into the K-12 system, to understand the long-term impact of early childhood programs. For more information, see the Early Childhood Education Data Collaborative: <http://www.ecedata.org/>.

Reference

1. Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (2015). Grantees required to compete for continued funding. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/grants/dr/cohort-4-listsby-state.html>