



Building Blocks

The Essentials of Early Head Start

Webcast Viewing Guide

Topic

1

Primary Caregiving

Part I: Why is primary caregiving important?

Head Start Program Performance Standards

45 CFR 1304.52(g)(4)—Grantee and delegate agencies must ensure that each teacher working exclusively with infants and toddlers has responsibility for no more than four infants and toddlers and that no more than eight infants and toddlers are placed in any one group. However, if State, Tribal or local regulations specify staff:child ratios and group sizes more stringent than this requirement, the State, Tribal or local regulations must apply.

45 CFR 1304.21(b)(1)(ii)—Grantee and delegate agencies' program of services for infants and toddlers must encourage: Trust and emotional security so that each child can explore the environment according to his or her developmental level.

Child Development Research and Information

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2006). *Preliminary findings from the Early Head Start Prekindergarten Followup*. Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project. Washington, DC: Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1994). *Statement of the Advisory Committee on Services to Infants and Toddlers*. Washington, DC.

Part II: What does primary caregiving mean for infants and toddlers? What does it look like in practice?

Definition of Primary Caregiving

The practice of assigning a primary teacher to be responsible for the care of a child—providing infants and toddlers with an opportunity to develop a close, trusting relationship with a consistent caregiver who knows the child well.

Part III: How do we know primary caregiving is happening?

Key Points:

- ▶ Reflect on your own experience as to what constitutes a close and trusting relationship.
- ▶ Be a careful and sensitive observer.
- ▶ Be aware of extraordinary circumstances.
- ▶ Look at the documentation and ask yourself: Are these the people who are consistently caring for this child?



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2

Curriculum/Responsive Caregiving

Part I: Why is curriculum/responsive caregiving important for infants and toddlers?

Head Start Program Performance Standards

45 CFR 1304.3(a)(5) *Curriculum* means a written plan that includes: (i) The goals for children's development and learning; (ii) The experiences through which they will achieve these goals; (iii) What staff and parents do to help children achieve these goals; and (iv) The materials needed to support the implementation of the curriculum. The curriculum is consistent with the Head Start Program Performance Standards and is based on sound child development principles about how children grow and learn.

45 CFR 1304.21(b)(1)(iii)—Grantee and delegate agencies' program of services for infants and toddlers must encourage: Opportunities for each child to explore a variety of sensory and motor experiences with support and stimulation from teachers and family members.

45 CFR 1304.21(b)(2)—Grantee and delegate agencies must support the social and emotional development of infants and toddlers by promoting an environment that:(i) Encourages the development of self-awareness, autonomy, and self-expression; and (ii) Supports the emerging communication skills of infants and toddlers by providing daily opportunities for each child to interact with others and to express himself or herself freely.

Child Development Research and Information

National Research Council, and Institute of Medicine (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development* (J. P. Shonkoff & D. A. Phillips, Eds.). Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development; Board on Children, Youth, and Families; Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Part II: What does curriculum/responsive caregiving mean for infants and toddlers? What does it look like in practice?

Definition of Curriculum/Responsive Caregiving

In addition to the Head Start definition of curriculum, summarized by the acronym GERMSS, one strategy for understanding curriculum for infants and toddlers is "OPEN":

- ▶ Observe what interests the child;
- ▶ Provide experiences for the child to interact with what interests him or her;
- ▶ Expand the child's interactions; and
- ▶ Note the child's experiences and interactions.

Part III: How do we know curriculum/responsive caregiving is happening?

Key Points:

- ▶ Be a careful and sensitive observer.
- ▶ Understand the unique characteristics of curriculum for infants and toddlers.
- ▶ Understand the key point that for infants and toddlers, learning experiences ARE the curriculum.
- ▶ Understand what curriculum is not—it is not a book on a shelf or a single activity that is done for a predetermined amount of time.



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3

Continuity of Care

Part I: Why is continuity of care important?

Head Start Program Performance Standards

45 CFR 1304.21(b)(1)(i)—Grantee and delegate agencies' program of services for infants and toddlers must encourage: The development of secure relationships in out-of-home care settings for infants and toddlers by having a limited number of consistent teachers over an extended period of time. Teachers must demonstrate an understanding of the child's family culture and, whenever possible, speak the child's language.

45 CFR 1304.21(a)(3)(ii)—Grantee and delegate agencies must support social and emotional development by: Planning for routines and transitions so that they occur in a timely, predictable and unrushed manner according to each child's needs.

Child Development Research and Information

Early Head Start: Mirroring the Parent-Child Bond for Infants and Toddlers. News You Can Use. Early Head Start National Resource Center @ ZERO TO THREE (2007). Available at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov>.

Part II: What does continuity of care mean for infants and toddlers? What does it look like in practice?

Definition of Continuity of Care

The practice of providing young children in childcare with as much consistency of relationships, environment, and culture as possible in order to strengthen those relationships—and the children's early learning experiences.

Part III: How do we know continuity of care is happening?

Key Points:

- Be a careful and sensitive observer.
- Ask questions—especially around culture and language.
- Look at the documentation and ask yourself: Are these the people who are consistently caring for this child?



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