

EARLY HEAD START TIP SHEET

No. 31

Home Visitor Caseload & Number of Infants and Toddlers

What is the maximum number of EHS children for a home visitor's caseload?

Response:

Regulations do not specify the number of children to be served within each home visitor's caseload. Instead, caseloads are determined by the number of families. Each home visitor must maintain an average caseload of 10 – 12 families with a maximum of 12 families. It is important for the program to ensure that each child enrolled receives appropriate and individualized services.

At any given time, the number of families within a caseload can be lower than the average of 10 – 12 families, depending on the needs and circumstances of the particular children and families served. When deciding upon the size of a home visitor's caseload it is important to remember that:

- Families with more complex life circumstances and greater needs require more time and attention by the home visitor.
- Logistical concerns such as the distance traveled to reach families or the number of children served within one family should also be considered.

When the above circumstances arise, some programs have found it beneficial to create caseloads consisting of 10 – 12 children (rather than families) so that the home visitor is better able to focus attention and services for each child enrolled.

Individualizing services

Programs may provide additional or lengthier home-visits as needed to address specific issues such as providing services for a child with significant needs or working with a family who has multiple children enrolled in EHS. For example, if one child in the family is exhibiting aggressive behavior, the home visitor may spend extra time to observe and support the family to understanding the behavior. Shorter additional visits may be helpful while the parents are trying new strategies. These shorter visits may allow parents to become more comfortable with the strategies, and integrate them into the existing parent-child relationship.

Questions to Consider for Planning and Programming:

- How does the program ensure that the home-visit plans are individualized for each child in the program? Within a family?
- What systems are in place allowing the program flexibility in adjusting home visitors' caseloads to ensure that each child and each family receives appropriate services?
- What systems are in place allowing the program/home-visitor flexibility in providing lengthier or additional visits as needed?

Performance Standards, Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations:

- 1306.33(a)(5) Grantees implementing a home-based program option must maintain an average caseload of 10 – 12 families per home visitor with a maximum of 12 families for any individual.
- 1306.33(a)(1) Grantees implementing a home-based program option must provide one home visit per week per family lasting for a minimum of 1 and ½ hours each.
- 1306.33(b)(1) The purpose of the home visit is to help parents improve their parenting skills and to assist them in the use of the home as the child’s primary learning environment. The home visitor must work with the parents to help them provide learning opportunities that enhance their child’s growth and development.

Resources:

Early Head Start Program Strategies: Socializations for Infants and Toddlers in the Home-Based Program Option. DHHS/ACF/HSB. 2001.
<http://www.ehsnrc.org/pdf/ehs/EHSProgramStrategies.pdf>.

Early Head Start Home-based Program Option: Recruiting, Training, and Retraining High Quality Staff. Technical Assistance Paper No. 2. DHHS/ACF/HSB. 1999.
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Management%20and%20Administration/Human%20Resources/Staff%20Qualifications/intodd_pub_00030a_071305.html

“Early Head Start Home-Based Services.” **Early Head Start Research to Practice.** DHHS/ACF/OPRE. 2006. Retrieved October 9, 2008 from
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/ehs/ehs_resrch/reports/homebase_services/homebase_services.pdf

Home Visitor’s Handbook for the Head Start Home-Based Program Option. DHHS/ACF/HSB. 2004.
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/resources/ECLKC_Bookstore/Home-Visitor's%20Handbook%20for%20the%20Head%20Start%20Home-Based%20Program%20Option.htm

Information Memorandum ACYF-IM-HS-00-22: Child Development Services During Home Visits and Socializations in Early Head Start Home-Based Program Options. DHHS/ACF/HSB. 2000.
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ecdh/eecd/Learning%20Environments/Program%20Options/infants_intodd_ime_00035a1_080205.html

Program Administrator’s Checklist for the Head Start Home-Based Program Option. DHHS/ACF/HSB. 2004.
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ecdh/Disabilities/Program%20Planning/Disabilities%20Service%20Plan/intodd_pub_00034a_080205.html

Home-Based Supervisor’s Manual. DHHS/ACF/HSB. 2004.
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Management%20and%20Administration/Human%20Resources/Leadership%20%26%20Supervision/intodd_pub_00033a_080205.html

This Tip Sheet is not a regulatory document. Its intent is to provide a basis for dialogue, clarification, and problem solving among Office of Head Start, Regional Offices, TA consultants, and grantees. If you need further clarification on Head Start Policies and regulations, please contact your Regional Program Specialist.