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## INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

**TO:** All Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees

**SUBJECT:** Head Start and Early Head Start Relationship-Based Competencies for Staff and Supervisors who Work With Families

### INFORMATION:

#### Introduction

The purpose of this Information Memorandum is to provide Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) agencies with information about a new technical assistance resource. Local grantees and delegate agencies can use this document to improve the preparation and ongoing professional development of staff and supervisors who work with families. This resource, *Head Start and Early Head Start Relationship-Based Competencies for Staff and Supervisors who Work with Families*, replaces the 2001 resource, *Competency Goals and Indicators for Head Start Staff Working with Families*.

Developing effective partnerships and goal-directed relationships with families is a critical part of supporting family well-being and children's school readiness. Research shows that children have better outcomes when parents have adequate resources, live in safe home environments that support learning and development, and provide active and intentional learning experiences. These conditions result in children who are more likely to perform better upon entry to kindergarten and show resilience throughout childhood and adolescence <sup>1</sup>. (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990).

There are over 25,000 family services staff and supervisors and over 7,000 home visitors who work with families in HS and EHS programs. Local agencies have established different qualifications for family services staff and supervisors, ranging from a Masters of Social Work or other graduate degrees to family development credentials. Qualifications for home visitors also vary, ranging from advanced degrees to Baccalaureates in Early Childhood and related fields to infant and toddler Child Development Associates. Regardless of the variation in local qualifications for staff who work with families, the *Relationship-Based Competencies (RBC)* can be used to assist programs in their planning and professional development activities. Local agencies can also use this resource to assess their current policies, practices, management systems, and use of resources to support quality family and community engagement. In addition, the *RBC* can:

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<sup>1</sup> Masten A., Best, K., & Garmezy, N. (1990) "Resilience and development: Contributions from the study of children who overcome adversity." *Development and Psychopathology*, 2,425-444.

- Accompany an agency review of qualification standards, job descriptions, college internship policies, training and development opportunities, and supervision practices and policies (45 CFR 1304.52(d)(5)(6); 45 CFR 1304.52(l)(1-3); 45 CFR 1304.52(k)(3); 45 CFR 1306.23(a)(b));
- Help programs understand the current knowledge and skills of staff and supervisors and make decisions about compensation, staff and family ratios, and staffing patterns for family services staff and supervisors (45 CFR 1304.52(a)(1)(iii); 45 CFR 1306.20(f); 45 CFR 1304.52(j); Head Start Act section 648A(c)); and
- Support the professional development of home visitors since home visitors develop the skills of both family services and teaching staff (45 CFR 1304.52(e); Head Start Act section 645A(i)).

In addition, programs might find the *RBC* to be useful for the development of specific community partnerships. For example, the *RBC* might inform child welfare agencies about family partnerships in HS/EHS or it could be used to assist with the development of partnerships with community colleges and universities that could support the training, credentialing, and education of staff who work with families.

Professional development that is consistent and aligned with the *RBC* can increase positive outcomes for families. Staff and supervisors who work with families play a critical role in this endeavor. OHS will be releasing additional resources to support the use of the *RBC* throughout 2012-2013. These resources are part of a larger effort to support quality family engagement practice and improve children's school readiness.

## Resources

### [Head Start Relationship-Based Competencies for Staff and Supervisors who Work with Families](#)

[Credentialing and Degree Programs for Family Service Workers](#) - This resource, located on the [Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center \(ECLKC\)](#), was created to support the career paths of family services staff in HS/EHS. It is an online database that contains a listing of all credentialing and degree programs by state.

Please direct any questions on this Information Memorandum to Kiersten Beigel, Family and Community Partnerships Specialist, Office of Head Start at (202) 260-4869.

Thank you for your work on behalf of children and families.

/ Yvette Sanchez Fuentes /

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