

# STANDARDS IN ACTION

SERVING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND THE 10% ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT — 1302.14 (b)



## THE CURRENT SITUATION

Eliana is a new disability services coordinator with Oak Valley Head Start. She is excited about this new role and wants to do her best to make sure that families in her community know that Oak Valley welcomes children with disabilities. As a first step, she takes a closer look at the eligibility and selection sections of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS). Eliana wants to learn more about Standard 1302.14 (b), which states “a program must ensure at least 10 percent of its total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA, unless the responsible HHS official grants a waiver.” Eliana wonders what this means for her program. She wants her program to meet and exceed this Standard, but doesn’t understand how the percentage is calculated. She wants to ensure that her program serves both children already identified with a disability and those who are identified after enrolling in Head Start.

## THE SOLUTION: FIRST THINGS FIRST

*Which children are included in the 10%?* Eliana considers the children currently enrolled in her program and makes a list of her specific questions.

- Are children who have been referred for an evaluation included?
- Are children who are eligible for, but are not receiving, services included?
- Are children who are eligible and receiving services from a private therapist included?
- Are children with delays but are found not eligible for services included?

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## THE SOLUTION: NEXT STEPS

Looking at her list of questions, Eliana takes a closer look at the Standard. She highlights the phrase “eligible for services under IDEA.” She interprets this to mean that eligibility determines who counts toward the 10% requirement. Children eligible for services under IDEA can be included. Children not eligible for services under IDEA should not be included. Eliana feels that she has answered her questions and is going to include all children who have been evaluated and are eligible for services, regardless of whether they are receiving such services.

Eliana also picks out the phrase “funded enrollment.” As defined in the Standard, funded enrollment is “the number of participants which the Head Start grantee is to serve, as indicated on the grant award.” Eliana interprets this to mean that she should calculate the percentage based on funded and not actual enrollment.

To be sure she is on the right track, Eliana also reviews a publication from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) titled, [Questions and Answers \(Q&A\) on the Release of the New Head Start Program Performance Standards](#). According to the information on page 7, “...The Standards maintain the long existing practice in Head Start for the full inclusion and participation of children with disabilities in all program activities, and the requirement that at least 10 percent of program enrollment be children with disabilities eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).” Eliana once again makes note of the phrase, “eligible for services under IDEA.”

### ELIANA IS RIGHT!

Children eligible for services under IDEA can be included. Children not eligible for services under IDEA should not be included. The percentage should be calculated based on funded and not actual enrollment.

## THE SOLUTION: THE STORY CONTINUES

Eliana feels more confident in her understanding of how the percentage is calculated. Moving forward, she will calculate the percentage using the number of children eligible for services under IDEA and total funded enrollment.

Eliana reflects on what she has read and considers the additional information provided in the Q&A document.

“All programs will develop and implement an informed and coordinated program-wide management approach to supporting the school readiness of children with disabilities in order to ensure that all children receive the appropriate supports and services they need to succeed. The Standards include a new requirement that programs provide necessary supportive services for children who have delays significant enough to interfere with school success but who are not eligible for IDEA services. And the Standards maintain [and] strengthen the requirements to work with parents of children with disabilities to help them best support their children’s healthy development, [better understand their children’s disability, and become advocates for needed services].”

This sparks a shift in her thinking. The percentage required in the Standard is just the beginning. The goal is to have programs provide coordinated and comprehensive systems of high-quality services and supports for all children and their families—regardless of whether they qualify for IDEA and count toward the

### CONSIDER THIS...

Programs may find that partnering with LEAs brings additional benefits beyond the individual child. As LEAs learn about the value of Head Start in preparing children to be ready for school, they may become more motivated to support families with the timely delivery of evaluations and services.

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10% requirement. As a next step, Eliana will strengthen the partnership between Oak Valley and local education agencies (LEAs) and other community organizations and work to ensure timely referrals and evaluations. She will tell families that Oak Valley is a program that can serve and include children with disabilities in every way. Eliana also wants to make sure that staff have the resources they need to identify children with suspected delays and can support children with disabilities in the classroom or in a home-based setting. As a member of the Head Start Disabilities Inclusion Network on MyPeers, Eliana can connect with colleagues from across the country. She plans to use the network to ask questions about coordinated approaches and learn about what other programs are doing to ensure that all children receive the support they need to be successful. Eliana was excited about her new job before, but now she is even more energized and ready to make a difference in the lives of children and families.

## SELECTED RESOURCES:

- [Head Start Program Performance Standards](#)
- [Questions and Answers \(Q&A\) on the Release of the New Head Start Program Performance Standards](#)
- [Head Start Disabilities Inclusion Network on MyPeers](#)
- [Individuals with Disabilities Act \(IDEA\)](#)
  - [Section 1401 Definitions](#)
  - [Section 1414 Evaluations, Eligibility Determinations, Individualized Education Programs, and Educational Placements](#)
- [Partnerships for Inclusion: Ensuring Access to High Quality Evaluation and Services Webinar](#)

