

# Data Brief on Child Safety in Head Start Programs



## Introduction

The Office of Head Start (OHS) holds a strong and uncompromising position when it comes to the safety of children. We are committed to continuous quality improvement to improve oversight of Head Start programs, and to supporting our programs in preventing incidents that jeopardize children's safety.

This data brief provides information on deficient and noncompliant citations related to child safety that OHS has identified and issued to Head Start grant recipients through monitoring reviews. Programs are required to report Head Start Program Performance Standard (HSPPS) violations to OHS. Note the following when reviewing the brief:

- Deficient citations reflect incidents determined to be a systemic or substantial material failure of an agency that presents a severe threat to children's health and safety.
- Noncompliant citations reflect the failure to comply with program requirements for incidents determined to be less severe than deficiencies.
- Where specified, there are measures reported in this data brief that only include deficient citations to focus data reported on the more severe cited incidents.
- The historical data in this brief provides aggregated and then averaged data across select fiscal years on citations related to child safety.

Grant recipients issued a citation for a child safety issue are required to demonstrate both immediate resolution of the issue and more systemic correction within a specified period of time to mitigate the risk of continued child safety issues. OHS monitors progress during the corrective action period. Immediately following the corrective action period, OHS conducts a follow-up review to determine whether the issue has been corrected. OHS typically looks for immediate resolution to the issue identified as well as improvements to program policies, staff training, oversight of staff practices, and the grant recipient's system of monitoring its own performance.

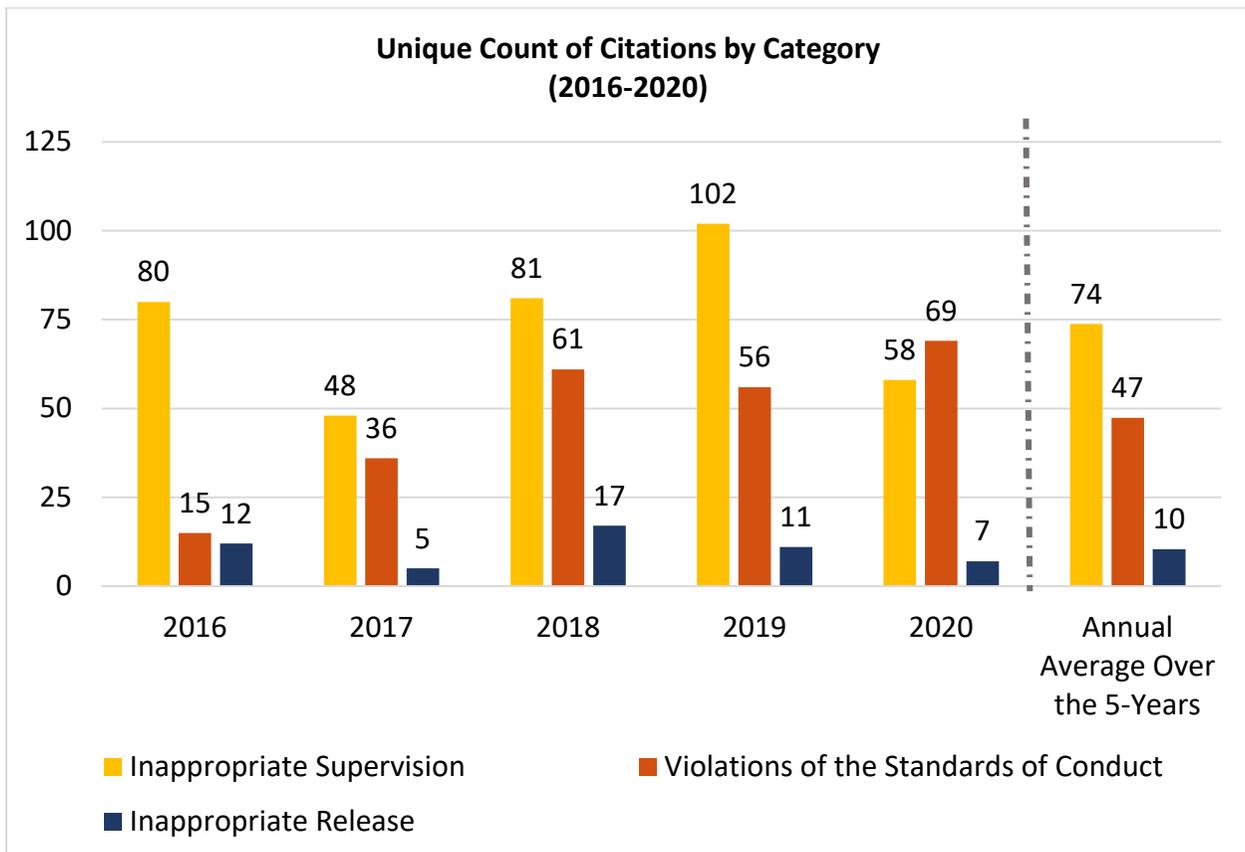
Additionally, OHS proactively works with grant recipients through training and technical assistance efforts to support their understanding of how to mitigate child safety issues in their Head Start program.

## About Citations Related to Child Safety

Citations related to child safety represent identified incidents of inappropriate supervision, violations of the standards of conduct, and inappropriate release.

- *Inappropriate supervision* is defined by the HSPPS at 45 CFR §§ [1302.90\(c\)\(1\)\(v\)](#), [1302.47\(b\)\(5\)\(iii\)](#), and [1303.72\(a\)\(3\)](#), and includes children left alone or unsupervised by staff, consultants, contractors, or volunteers while under their care.
- *Violations of the standards of conduct* is defined by the HSPPS at 45 CFR §[1302.90\(c\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#) and includes inappropriate discipline, the maltreatment or endangerment of the health or safety of children, and child abuse.
- *Inappropriate release* is defined by the HSPPS at 45 CFR §[1302.47\(b\)\(5\)\(iv\)](#) and [\(b\)\(7\)\(v\)](#), and includes releasing children to an unauthorized adult.

The following graph shows the number of citations that were issued from fiscal year 2016 to 2020. Over this five-year period, on average, 74 citations of inappropriate supervision, 47 citations of violations of standard of conduct, and 10 citations of inappropriate release were issued per year from 2016 to 2020.



*Note: This graph accounts for relevant changes to the HSPPS made during 2016.*

## Head Start Grants, Locations, and Classrooms Cited for Issues Related to Child Safety (2016-2020)

### Annual Averages

On average, there were 1,611 Head Start grant recipients that operated 2,094 grants each fiscal year between 2016 to 2020. The following figures provide an overview of the number of citations related to child safety and how those compare to the number of grants, locations, classrooms, and children.

Of **2,094** Head Start grants  **5.6%** were cited for child safety issues

Of **20,100** Head Start locations<sup>1</sup>  **<1.0%** were cited for child safety issues<sup>2</sup>



The <1.0% includes the following annual average number of citations over the 5-year period:

- 74 citations of inappropriate supervision
- 47 citations of violations of the standards of conduct
- 10 citations of inappropriate release

Of **63,927** Head Start classrooms  **<0.5%** were cited for child safety issues

Of **1,052,736** Head Start children  **0.01%** were impacted by child safety incidents determined to be a deficiency<sup>3</sup>



The 0.01% includes the following annual average number of deficient citations:

- 53 citations of inappropriate supervision
- 64 citations of violations of the standards of conduct
- 7 citations of inappropriate release

<sup>1</sup> Head Start locations include Head Start centers, family child care homes, and group socialization spaces for home-based programs.

<sup>2</sup> Assumes each citation issued corresponds to one location and classroom; the figure reported is likely an overestimate and represents a ceiling.

<sup>3</sup> These measures provide greater detail on deficient citations issued on child safety. Noncompliant citations are excluded to focus data on the more severe cited incidents for these measures.