



Head Start Health Services Competencies Professional Development Assessment

Introduction

The *Head Start Health Services Competencies Professional Development Assessment (PDA)* is a companion document to the *Head Start Health Services Competencies: A Tool to Support Health Managers and Staff (The Competencies Tool)*. The Competencies Tool is a framework for identifying the critical attitudes, knowledge, and skills to implement effective health services. Attitudes refers to what an individual values; knowledge refers to what an individual knows; and skills refers to what an individual can do. The 68 competencies are organized into four categories. In the PDA, each competency has four levels of accomplishment along a continuum of strengths. Program directors, health managers, and health staff can use the PDA themselves and with the staff they supervise to promote successful job performance and support career development.

The levels of accomplishment are incremental. The “basic” level allows an employee to enter the position and successfully perform his or her job responsibilities. The other levels provide room for growth and learning. At the “expert” level, the employee achieves mastery and can mentor others.

- **Basic.** Staff understand and use introductory concepts and methods. They require regular coaching and support.
- **Proficient.** Staff work independently, and understand and use introductory concepts and methods. They use data effectively and plan and guide the work of others.
- **Advanced.** Staff understand and consistently use more complex concepts and methods, as well as perform in-depth analysis. They lead and direct staff, specialists, and consultants.
- **Expert.** Staff have a deep, specialized expertise. They play a leadership and mentoring role within their organization, community, and among their peers.

Using The Competencies Tool and PDA together can build the capacity of individual staff as well as their Head Start organizations to provide high quality health services to young children.

OVERARCHING COMPETENCIES

These competencies reflect the most critical set of attitudes, knowledge, and skills. They form a foundation for providing health services within early care and education programs.

Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills		Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Expert	N/A	Notes
Attitudes							
O-1	Value the connections between health and learning						
O-2	Acknowledge how one’s own values, beliefs, attitudes, and preferences affect interactions with children, families, and staff						
Knowledge							
O-3	Have a working knowledge of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) and other federal, tribal, state, and local requirements regarding health and safety in early care and education ¹						
O-4	Understand the general principles of health and wellness, including promotion, prevention, early identification, and intervention						
O-5	Understand the risk factors that make some people healthy, and other people unhealthy (e.g., determinants of health ²) that contribute to health disparities ³ among culturally and linguistically diverse populations						

¹Throughout the tool there are references made to federal, state, local, and tribal regulations. Users of the tool need to know the pertinent information regarding the entities that have authority over a program or its families.

²Healthy People 2020 defines determinants of health as “The range of personal, social, economic, and environmental factors that influence (an individual’s) health status.”

³Health disparities are differences in health outcomes between groups that reflect social inequalities.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011). CDC Health Disparities and Inequalities Report—United States, 2011. *MMWR*, 2011;60, p.1.

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Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills		Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Expert	N/A	Notes
Skills							
O-6	Assist staff and families to understand children’s healthy growth and development						
O-7	Model and reinforce healthy and safe behaviors						
O-8	Assist children and families to address challenges that affect their well-being, promote resilience, and strengthen protective factors						
O-9	Be able to find and use appropriate sources of evidence-based or science-informed health and safety information						
O-10	Share culturally, linguistically, and developmentally-appropriate science-informed health education materials with children, families, and staff						
O-11	Apply the principles of health literacy ⁴ when communicating with staff and families						

⁴Health literacy is “The degree to which individuals share the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions (Ratzan and Parker, 2000).” Nielsen-Bohman, L., Panzer, A.M., Kindig, D.A. (Eds). (2004). *Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press, p. 32.

CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH COMPETENCIES

These competencies address the healthy growth and development of young children from birth to five years of age, family well-being, and Head Start requirements regarding the health and safety of children, families, and staff.

Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills		Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Expert	N/A	Notes
Attitudes							
CFH-1	Believe that children and families have the right to be healthy and safe						
CFH-2	Acknowledge the importance of safe, responsive, and nurturing relationships for healthy social and emotional development						
Knowledge							
CFH-3	Be familiar with early childhood developmental milestones including cognitive, motor, language, and social and emotional						
CFH-4	Be aware that maternal and family health and wellness beginning with preconception ⁵ influence health across the lifespan						
CFH-5	Know current pediatric periodicity schedules (EPSDT), dental periodicity schedules, and immunization recommendations and requirements, and understand screening, assessment, and examination results						
CFH-6	Be aware of changes in health care delivery systems (e.g., eligibility, provider participation, covered services) ⁶						

⁵The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) define preconception health as “the health of women and men during their reproductive years”. For more information: <http://www.cdc.gov/preconception/overview.html>

⁶The examples listed in this and other competencies are not meant to be exhaustive.

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Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills		Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Expert	N/A	Notes
Knowledge <i>continued</i>							
CFH-7	Understand how toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences influence health and development						
CFH-8	Know the importance of healthy oral development, risks and protective factors						
CFH-9	Know about food safety and sanitation practices (e.g., food preparation, cross-contamination, temperatures, and storage including breast milk and infant formula)						
CFH-10	Be familiar with individual child and adult nutritional needs, preferences, and special dietary requirements including feeding recommendations for infants (e.g., breastfeeding, introduction of solids) and young children (e.g., food allergy/intolerance, portion size, BMI)						
CFH-11	Know about physical activity and screen-time recommendations for infants, toddlers, and preschool children, and physical activity recommendations for adults						
Skills							
CFH-12	Assist eligible families to access health insurance for themselves and their children						
CFH-13	Assist families to access medical and dental homes						

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Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills		Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Expert	N/A	Notes
Skills <i>continued</i>							
CFH-14	Identify whether children are up-to-date on their EPSDT and immunization requirements						
CFH-15	Help families identify and overcome barriers to completing further diagnostic testing, follow-up, and treatment						
CFH-16	Develop and implement Individual Healthcare Plans (IHP) for children with special health care needs, in collaboration with families, the medical home, and other related service providers						
CFH-17	In collaboration with the program's mental health consultant and families, promote children's social and emotional well-being, assess risk and make appropriate referrals for children with mental health concerns						
CFH-18	In collaboration with the program's mental health consultant, assess risk and make appropriate referrals for families living with challenges such as domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, substance abuse, depression (especially for prenatal and post-partum women) and other mental health issues						
CFH-19	Demonstrate infection control procedures: basic assessment, initial management, and prevention of communicable diseases						

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Skills <i>continued</i>							
CFH-20	Identify indoor and outdoor hazards related to common child and adult injuries, and apply age and developmentally appropriate injury prevention strategies						
CFH-21	Demonstrate safe methods that meet state and tribal requirements of administering medications, including consent, handling, labeling, storing, disposing, and recognizing possible side effects						
CFH-22	Support family-style meals for children and staff as appropriate						
CFH-23	Support positive oral health practices during program hours						
CFH-24	Ensure that program staff can provide first aid and CPR and always have access to well-maintained first aid supplies in order to respond to medical and dental emergencies						
CFH-25	Plan and oversee ongoing training to meet programmatic health and safety requirements						
CFH-26	Assure staff implement health and safety practices including daily health checks						
CFH-27	Establish and maintain confidentiality policies and procedures						

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Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills		Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Expert	N/A	Notes
Skills <i>continued</i>							
CFH-28	Maintain effective recordkeeping systems, and accurately track individual child and family health information						
CFH-29	Collect and use child and family health history, including current health needs, to help children and families achieve optimal wellness						
CFH-30	Facilitate comprehensive services including appropriate education, information, support, and referrals for prenatal and postpartum women, fathers, and significant family members						
CFH-31	For enrolled pregnant women, develop a plan for the two-week newborn visit						
CFH-32	Assure that programs implement and inform staff and families about safe sleep practices for infants						

ENGAGING FAMILIES COMPETENCIES

These competencies reflect the relationship-based approach found in the *Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework* and recognize that families are the primary decision makers for their children’s health.

Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills		Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Expert	N/A	Notes
Attitudes							
EF-1	Believe that families are experts about, and the primary decision makers for, their children’s health						
Knowledge							
EF-2	Understand how the attitudes, beliefs, and traditions of individuals from diverse ethnic, cultural, religious, educational and socioeconomic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and genders affect health practices						
EF-3	Be familiar with strength-based communication strategies such as reflective listening and motivational interviewing						
Skills							
EF-4	Develop and sustain trusting relationships with families						
EF-5	Identify and use family strengths when addressing health concerns						
EF-6	Partner with families to promote safe, healthy, and nurturing home environments						
EF-7	Educate families about how all aspects of health affect children’s learning and school readiness						
EF-8	Engage families in the review and development of program policies and activities related to all areas of health (e.g., health education curriculum, menu planning)						

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

These competencies address how to effectively manage and lead Head Start health services and work collaboratively with families, staff, individual providers, health organizations, and service delivery systems.

Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills		Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Expert	N/A	Notes
Attitudes							
L-1	Be open to multiple perspectives, new information, and novel approaches to working with children, families, and staff						
L-2	Be willing to take advantage of professional development and support activities (e.g., training, higher education, and professional networking)						
Knowledge							
L-3	Know how to access and use external health resources, including technical assistance providers, health consultants, and state, tribal, and community agencies						
L-4	Understand adult learning principles						
Skills							
L-5	Gather and use community health data, make use of available resources, and develop strategies to address service delivery gaps and barriers to care						
L-6	Use data to plan, implement, and evaluate health services						
L-7	Report program-level health information to meet program, federal, tribal, and state requirements and requests, including the Head Start Program Information Report (PIR)						
L-8	Use technology to improve efficiency and strengthen the quality of health services						

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Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills		Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Expert	N/A	Notes
Skills <i>continued</i>							
L-9	Demonstrate responsive program management practices (e.g., collaboration, communication, meeting facilitation)						
L-10	Develop, disseminate, review, and update program health and safety policies and procedures						
L-11	Conduct ongoing monitoring activities to assure healthy and safe program practices and implement improvements as needed						
L-12	Maintain a state of readiness to address the needs of children, families, and staff that cover the three phases of an emergency: preparedness, response, and recovery						
L-13	Be able to successfully use USDA Food and Consumer Services Child Nutrition Programs						
L-14	Assist families and staff to increase their health literacy						
L-15	Promote staff wellness, including stress management, injury and illness prevention (e.g., staff immunizations), and healthy active living						
L-16	Establish partnerships with local health care providers to support the health needs of children and families and promote healthy communities						
L-17	Maintain a Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) that includes engaged Head Start families, health professionals, program staff, and other community volunteers						

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