

§ 1302.102

with subpart C of part 1303 of this chapter and applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws.

[81 FR 61412, Sept. 6, 2016, as amended at 89 FR 67815, Aug. 21, 2024]

§ 1302.102 Program goals, continuous improvement, and reporting.

(a) *Establishing program goals.* A program, in collaboration with the governing body and policy council, must establish goals and measurable objectives that include:

(1) Strategic long-term goals for ensuring programs are and remain responsive to community needs as identified in their community assessment as described in subpart A of this part;

(2) Goals for the provision of educational, health, nutritional, and family and community engagement program services as described in the program performance standards to further promote the school readiness of enrolled children;

(3) School readiness goals that are aligned with the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five*, state and tribal early learning standards, as appropriate, and requirements and expectations of schools Head Start children will attend, per the requirements of subpart B of part 1304 of this part; and,

(4) Effective health and safety practices to ensure children are safe at all times, per the requirements in §§ 1302.47, 1302.90(b) and (c), 1302.92(c)(1), and 1302.94 and part 1303, subpart F, of this chapter.

(b) *Monitoring program performance—*(1) *Ongoing compliance oversight and correction.* In order to ensure effective ongoing oversight and correction, a program must establish and implement a system of ongoing oversight that ensures effective implementation of the program performance standards, including ensuring child safety, and other applicable federal regulations as described in this part, and must:

(i) Collect and use data to inform this process;

(ii) Correct quality and compliance issues immediately, or as quickly as possible;

(iii) Work with the governing body and the policy council to address issues during the ongoing oversight and cor-

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rection process and during federal oversight; and,

(iv) Implement procedures that prevent recurrence of previous quality and compliance issues, including previously identified deficiencies, safety incidents, and audit findings.

(2) *Ongoing assessment of program goals.* A program must effectively oversee progress towards program goals on an ongoing basis and annually must:

(i) Conduct a self-assessment that uses program data including aggregated child assessment data, and professional development and parent and family engagement data as appropriate, to evaluate the program's progress towards meeting goals established under paragraph (a) of this section, compliance with program performance standards throughout the program year, and the effectiveness of the professional development and family engagement systems in promoting school readiness;

(ii) Communicate and collaborate with the governing body and policy council, program staff, and parents of enrolled children when conducting the annual self-assessment; and,

(iii) Submit findings of the self-assessment, including information listed in paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section to the responsible HHS official.

(c) *Using data for continuous improvement.* (1) A program must implement a process for using data to identify program strengths and needs, develop and implement plans that address program needs, and continually evaluate compliance with program performance standards and progress towards achieving program goals described in paragraph (a) of this section.

(2) This process must:

(i) Ensure data is aggregated, analyzed and compared in such a way to assist agencies in identifying risks and informing strategies for continuous improvement in all program service areas;

(ii) Ensure child-level assessment data is aggregated and analyzed at least three times a year, including for sub-groups, such as dual language learners and children with disabilities, as appropriate, except in programs operating fewer than 90 days, and used with other program data described in

paragraph (c)(2)(iv) of this section to direct continuous improvement related to curriculum choice and implementation, teaching practices, professional development, program design and other program decisions, including changing or targeting scope of services; and,

(iii) For programs operating fewer than 90 days, ensures child assessment data is aggregated and analyzed at least twice during the program operating period, including for subgroups, such as dual language learners and children with disabilities, as appropriate, and used with other program data described in paragraph (c)(2)(iv) of this section to direct continuous improvement related to curriculum choice and implementation, teaching practices, professional development, program design and other program decisions, including changing or targeting scope of services;

(iv) Use information from ongoing monitoring and the annual self-assessment, and program data on teaching practice, staffing and professional development, child-level assessments, family needs assessments, and comprehensive services, to identify program needs, and develop and implement plans for program improvement; and,

(v) Use program improvement plans as needed to either strengthen or adjust content and strategies for professional development, change program scope and services, refine school readiness and other program goals, and adapt strategies to better address the needs of sub-groups.

(d) *Reporting.* (1) A program must submit:

(i) Status reports, determined by ongoing oversight data, to the governing body and policy council, at least semi-annually;

(ii) Reports, as appropriate, to the responsible HHS official immediately but no later than 7 calendar days following the incident, related to:

(A) Any significant incident that affects the health or safety of a child that occurs in a setting where Head Start services are provided and that involves:

(I) A staff member, contractor, or volunteer that participates in either a Head Start program or a classroom at

least partially funded by Head Start, regardless of whether the child receives Head Start services; or

(2) A child that receives services fully or partially funded by Head Start or a child that participates in a classroom at least partially funded by Head Start; or

(B) Circumstances affecting the financial viability of the program; breaches of personally identifiable information, or program involvement in legal proceedings; any matter for which notification or a report to State, Tribal, or local authorities is required by applicable law; and

(iii) Reportable incidents under paragraph (d)(1)(ii) of this section include at a minimum:

(A) Any mandated reports regarding agency staff or volunteer compliance with Federal, State, Tribal, or local laws addressing child abuse and neglect or laws governing sex offenders;

(B) Incidents that require classrooms or centers to be closed;

(C) Legal proceedings by any party that are directly related to program operations;

(D) All conditions required to be reported under §1304.12 of this chapter, including disqualification from the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and license revocation;

(E) Any suspected or known maltreatment or endangerment of a child by staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers under §1302.90(c)(1)(ii);

(F) Serious harm or injury of a child resulting from lack of preventative maintenance;

(G) Serious harm, injury, or endangerment of a child resulting from lack of supervision; and,

(H) Any unauthorized release of a child.

(2) Annually, a program must publish and disseminate a report that complies with section 644(a)(2) of the Act and includes a summary of a program's most recent community assessment, as described in §1302.11(b), consistent with privacy protections in subpart C of part 1303 of this chapter.

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(3) If a program has had a deficiency identified, it must submit, to the responsible HHS official, a quality improvement plan as required in section 641A(e)(2) of the Act.

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EDITORIAL NOTE: Nomenclature changes to part 1303 appear at 89 FR 67816, Aug. 21, 2024.

§ 1303.1 Overview.

Section 641A of the Act requires that the Secretary modify as necessary program performance standards including administrative and financial management standards (section 641A(a)(1)(C)). This part specifies the financial and administrative requirements of agencies. Subpart A of this part outlines the financial requirements consistent with sections 640(b) and 644(b) and (c) of the Act. Subpart B of this part specifies the administrative requirements consistent with sections 644(a)(1), 644(e), 653, 654, 655, 656, and 657A of the Act. Subpart C of this part implements the statutory provision at section 641A(b)(4) of the Act that directs the Secretary to ensure the confidentiality of any personally identifiable data, information, and records collected or maintained. Subpart D of this part prescribes regulations for the operation of delegate agencies consistent with Section 641(A)(d). Subpart E of this part implements the statutory requirements in Section 644(c), (f) and (g) related to facilities. Subpart F prescribes regulations on transportation consistent with section 640(i) of the Act.