

	DHS Head Start Program Policy		
PDM 9			
SUBJECT	Critical Incident Reporting		
REFERENCE	Program Design and Management		
EFFECTIVE	12/13/2011		
Policy Council Approval: 7/28/20	Policy Council Revision: 5/23/23	Governing Body Approval: 8/13/20	Governing Body Revision: 6/15/23
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Policy:

The Head Start Program, including the Grant Recipient and Education Service Providers, will develop and implement procedures for Critical Incident Reporting (CIR). All staff must be trained on incident reporting.

A critical incident includes, but is not limited to:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect which may or may not have occurred during Head Start hours.
- Allegations of child abuse/neglect or maltreatment against any Head Start staff member, volunteer, consultant, and or contractor, including, but not limited to grabbing, shoving, shaking, swatting, or dragging a child; spanking or any other type of corporal or physical punishment; binding, tying, or taping a child; terrorizing a child with threats or menacing acts; or any form of sexual contact.
- Incidents which may have placed a child, family member, or staff in danger.
- Any incident where a child is left unsupervised while in the care or under the supervision of program staff, which includes leaving a child alone anywhere on the grounds of a Head Start facility (e.g., in a classroom, bathroom, on a playground), as well as outside the facility in a parking lot, on a nearby street, or on a bus or another program-approved transportation or excursion/field trip.
- Any incident that involves a classroom that is out of ratio. The program will maintain appropriate staffing during Head Start program hours except for brief absences of a teaching staff member for no more than five minutes to accommodate for a teacher or child's needs. One teacher or staff member may accompany a small group of children away from the group for a brief period of time, not to exceed a ratio of 1:10, to accommodate for program needs, such as onsite clinics, special events, child restroom breaks, etc. Any situation that involves a classroom out of ratio for a longer period of time should be reported.

- Inappropriate discipline, which is any type of conduct used to instill fear or humiliate rather than to educate a child, such as poking or pinching a child; making fun of or laughing about a child; using/withholding food or an activity as a punishment or reward; or isolating a child.
- Health incidents and illnesses, which include, but are not limited to:
 - Injuries that require urgent medical attention by a health-care professional, such as a broken bone; a severe sprain; chipped or cracked teeth; head trauma; deep cuts; contusions or lacerations; or animal bites.
 - Child or staff member leaving by emergency medical transport.
 - Any reportable disease/illnesses, as indicated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, State of Texas, the Texas Education Agency, the City of San Antonio Metro Health Department, or School District Health Department Child receiving outside medical attention at any point in time for an injury sustained during Head Start program hours.
- Unauthorized release where a child is released from a Head Start facility, bus, or other approved program transportation to a person without the permission or authorization of a parent or legal guardian and whose identity had not been verified by photo identification.
- Any incident which has the potential to generate negative media coverage.
- Any media inquiry/ coverage of the program.
- Unplanned interruption in Head Start Program services.
- Closure of any facility or part of a facility, including outdoor play areas.
- Accidents involving vehicles that transport children and families.

When applicable, parents/guardians must be notified of critical incidents within 24 hours of occurrence. Education Service Providers must also provide notification to the Head Start Administrator or designee within 24 hours.

Performance Standard(s):

1302.47(c); 1302.102(d)(1)(ii); 1304.12; 1303.79(b)(3)

Information

Memorandum: ACF-IM-
HS-22-0

