

## Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitoring (PRISM) for FY 2006

ACYF Administration on Children, Youth and Families	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES Administration for Children and Families	
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### INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees and Delegate Agencies

**SUBJECT:** Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitoring (PRISM) for FY 2006

#### INFORMATION:

At least once every three years, each Head Start and Early Head Start program receives a comprehensive review by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). These reviews play a vital role in assuring that Head Start programs are providing high quality services to children and their families. This Information Memorandum briefly describes revisions to the Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitoring (PRISM) for fiscal year (FY) 2006. The FY 2006 *PRISM Guide* and *PRISM Instrument* will be available in October 2005 on the Head Start Bureau website and the Head Start Reviews website ([www.headstartreviews.com](http://www.headstartreviews.com)).

The FY 2006 version of the *PRISM Guide* and *PRISM Instrument* is designed to address an audience that includes PRISM Federal and non-Federal team leaders, report coordinators, reviewers, and grantees. The *Guide* offers guidance to various participants in the monitoring process, while the *Instrument* presents a compendium of tools (e.g., protocols, interview guides, and checklists) and forms designed to facilitate this process.

#### KEY CHANGES TO THE FY 2006 PRISM

The Head Start Bureau has made key changes to the policies and procedures guiding the PRISM process in order to accomplish several overarching goals:

- Ensure national consistency in implementation of the PRISM process;
- Provide grantees with clear results of all monitoring activities, emphasizing the specific areas for which a Head Start program is out of compliance with Federal regulations and other program requirements in order to inform program improvement; and
- Provide a national system for collecting and maintaining all data related to the monitoring process.

The changes to the FY 2006 PRISM reflect an emphasis on providing grantees with reports that clearly indicate any compliance problems identified during a review. FY 2006 focuses on reporting exceptions to compliance such that the Head Start Review Report specifies and describes only those areas for which a grantee's program is out of compliance with Federal regulations and other program requirements. Accordingly, the reformatted Head Start Review Report consolidates information provided previously in the cover letter and review report into a single document, and eliminates the reporting of program strengths.

#### ***Changes to the PRISM Process***

The following changes to the PRISM process are in place for fiscal year 2006:

- The on-site review will focus on the collection, reporting, and analysis of data. The grantee presentation and summary meeting will no longer occur.
- Federal team leaders will not supervise reviews in their home region when conducting triennial and first year reviews. These team leaders will, however, continue to supervise follow-up reviews for grantees in the Federal team leader's home region.
- For grantees with delegate agencies, each delegate agency will be reviewed concurrently with the grantee agency review as part of each triennial and first-year review.

#### ***Changes to the PRISM Instrument***

Significant changes to the *PRISM Instrument* include the introduction of protocols for reviewing several service areas, a revised Fiscal Checklist, the introduction of a new Core Question and the elimination of one Core Question. Specific instrument changes include the following:

- New protocols are introduced for reviews of the health, disabilities, mental health and early childhood development service areas. The protocols are designed to provide an overarching framework and detailed guidance to help reviewers to address the primary standards related to these service areas.
- The FY 2006 Fiscal Checklist maintains its risk-based approach, but reorganizes the questions into five categories designed to guide the fiscal reviewer through the data collection process. (The five categories include Fiscal Risk Indicators, Internal Controls and Monitoring, Fiscal Accountability, Reporting, and Summary Standards.)
- The Core Questions are revised to include a Mental Health Core Question, eliminate the Child Outcomes Core Question, and renumber most of the service area Core Questions.
- The interview "protocols" (denoted as such in the FY 2005 *PRISM Instrument*) are renamed to interview "guides," and the previously designated (i.e., FY 2005) "optional" interview guides have been eliminated from the FY 2006 *PRISM Guide*.
- A child record checklist is introduced to facilitate the monitoring and tracking of information during the focus child file review process.

We appreciate the support of and efforts made by grantees, reviewers and Regional Office staff to implement the changes in the monitoring system over the last several years. Our experiences and lessons learned from the field will continue to inform our efforts to refine PRISM. The collaboration between the Head Start Bureau and Regional Office staff has been highly productive and has never been more vital for ensuring the successful implementation of PRISM. As always, our goal in monitoring is to work with local programs to ensure that high quality services are provided to all Head Start children and their families.

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