

Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitoring (PRISM) for FY 2004

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 [[See Attachments at the bottom](#)]

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

SUBJECT: Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitoring (PRISM) for FY2004

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. This Information Memorandum briefly describes revisions to the Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitoring (PRISM) for fiscal year (FY) 2004. The FY 2004 *PRISM Instrument* and *PRISM Guide* are included as attachments to this communication.

The FY 2004 version of the *PRISM Guide (Guide)* is newly designed to address an audience that includes PRISM team leaders, reviewers, and grantees. It replaces the *PRISM Federal Team Leader Planner* and the *Grantee Guide to PRISM* of past years. While most language in the *Guide* is addressed to the team leader, the information provided is intended to benefit all audiences. In some instances, the language is addressed specifically to reviewers and grantees. Forms in the back of the *Guide* are labeled for their particular audience.

KEY CHANGES TO THE FY 2004 PRISM

Key changes for FY 2004 are intended to accomplish two objectives. The first objective is to shift efforts toward the collection and review of as much material as possible prior to arrival on-site, and the second objective is to increase the discretion of the team leader to customize evidence-gathering activities, as appropriate, to the circumstances of specific reviews. Together, these changes are intended to increase the time available for review teams to engage in activities fundamental to conducting an effective review, including:

- The collection, verification, and analysis of information from multiple sources to establish relevant facts;
- Analysis of relevant facts to assess compliance with applicable standards; and
- Development of accurate, clear, and concise Head Start Review Reports.

Consistent with the goals outlined above, the following key changes take effect in FY 2004:

- **Advance Document Review - All Reviewers.** Consistent with procedures implemented in some regions in prior years, team leaders in all regions must now send reviewers as much background and other material (obtained from the grantee and Regional Office) as possible for review prior to the team's arrival on-site.
- **Advance Document Review - Fiscal Reviewers.** Fiscal Reviewers may now arrive one day in advance of other review team members to conduct an advance review of relevant fiscal documents.
- **Fiscal Reviewer Core Question Assignment.** Team leaders must assign Fiscal Reviewers responsibility for the Fiscal Management Core Question only.
- **Optional Group Interviews.** Four group interviews-Management Team Interview, Content Area Experts Interview, Staff Group Interview, and Delegate Directors Interview - are optional and conducted at the team leader's discretion.
- **Assignment of Reviewers to Group Interviews.** The team leader also has the discretion to assign reviewers only to those group interviews that provide information relevant to their Core Questions.
- **Summary Meeting.** The two events formerly referred to as the Final Grantee Briefing and the Exit Meeting have been combined into one event called the Summary Meeting.
- **Delivery of Final Head Start Review Report and Cover Letter.** On the same day the final Head Start Review Report and cover letter are mailed to the grantee, a copy of these documents must be mailed to the Policy Council Chairperson and the Head Start Director. Copies of the report will also be made available to participating reviewers, upon request.

NEW AND REVISED FORMS

Several forms are new or revised for FY 2004, including:

- A new **Reviewer Code of Conduct**, which must be signed by each reviewer every year;
- Two new checklists, the **Team Leader's Advance Activities Checklist** and the **Grantee's Advance Activities Checklist**, each of which contains items relevant to the respective audience, replace the Prereview Activities Checklist; and
- The **PRISM Records Request** was also updated.

A new Web site for reviewers and team leaders (www.headstartreviews.com) serves as a rich resource not only for forms, but also for training materials and information about what is happening at the national level.

CHANGES TO THE PRISM INSTRUMENT

Several changes were made to the **PRISM Instrument**, including:

The addition of Core Question 18, which addresses Child Outcomes;

- Minor changes in Core Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9a, 10, 12, and 15, which include moving standards and bulleted items related to child outcomes in Core Question 18;
- Revision of language in Core Question 16 to more precisely reflect requirements regarding enrollment opportunities for children with disabilities;
- Changes to the Summary of Review Decisions chart (formerly, the Summary of Findings chart) to reflect the new terminology of "no areas of noncompliance" and "areas of noncompliance" and the addition of a Core Question on Child Outcomes;
- Changes in the Bus Ride Checklist to provide more accuracy in citing standards, as well as changes reflecting the July 2001 transportation standards;
- The addition of an item to Area 1 on the Fiscal Checklist, which refers to planning;
- Changes showing that the Management Team Interview Protocol, Delegate Directors Interview Protocol, Content Area Experts Interview Protocol, and Staff Group Interview Protocol are now optional.

The Head Start Bureau will continue to make modifications to PRISM as we learn from our experiences. 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. 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.

Windy M. Hill
Associate Commissioner
Head Start Bureau

Attachments:

[PRISM All Instruments 2004](#) [PDF, 613KB]

[PRISM Guide 2004](#) [PDF, 1.40MB]

Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitoring (PRISM) for FY 2004. ACYF-IM-HS-03-08. DHHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB. 2003. English.