

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]

**TO:** All Early Head Start and Head Start Grantee and Delegate Agencies

**SUBJECT:** Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitoring (PRISM) for FY 2005

**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. The system used by ACF to conduct these reviews is the Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitoring (PRISM). PRISM is both a set of instruments (observation questionnaires, checklists, interview protocols, and software) and the process used to conduct Federal monitoring of Head Start grantees. There are three main phases to the PRISM process - Advance Activities, On-Site Activities, and Grantee Notice and Program Improvement. On-site review teams comprised of federal staff and expert reviewers conduct interviews, observe the program and review documentation. The resulting Head Start Review Report outlines the grantee's compliance and non-compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards and other regulations and provides timelines for correction, when applicable.

For your information, a discussion of the FY 2005 changes to the PRISM can be found at Attachment A. Attachment B contains the PRISM Guide. In FY 2005, the Bureau will implement a quality assurance initiative in which specially trained reviewers, referred to as "Lead Consultants," will lead teams to conduct re-reviews of a sample of recently monitored grantees. This initiative will help ACF increase the consistency of findings from monitoring reviews across the country. We want to assure that each grantee being monitored is provided an assessment of the state of its Head Start program that is as objective as possible. We will make every attempt to carry out this initiative in a way that minimizes any disruptions to grantees. Your program will be contacted directly if it is among those in the sample.

Sincerely,

/ Windy M. Hill /

Windy M. Hill  
 Associate Commissioner  
 Head Start Bureau

**Attachments:**

[Key Changes to PRISM](#)  
[PRISM for FY 2005](#)