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| ACF<br>Administration for Children and<br>Families | U.S. DEPARTMENT<br>OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES |                            |
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**INFORMATION MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees and their Delegates

**SUBJECT:** Head Start Risk Management Process

**INFORMATION:**

The Office of Head Start is implementing a Risk Management Process for all grantees that will become fully operational in April 2008.

The Risk Management Process will serve as an overarching framework tying together the Funding, Monitoring, and Technical Assistance processes to serve the following purposes:

- Prevent or reduce risks
- Focus on early intervention and build on strengths
- Improve communication and information sharing
- Create corporate knowledge

The Risk Management process will be repeated each year for all grantees. It will begin approximately seven months in advance of each grantee’s continuation funding date and will help identify specific areas that need to be addressed in the Refunding Application. Grantees will be expected to play an active role in this process.

A central and dynamic component of this process is the Risk Management Meeting (RMM). The goals of the RMM are to recognize grantee strengths, identify areas of performance that need improvement, and, using this information, collaborate in producing a comprehensive action plan that addresses those areas in need of support and improvement. Participants at this meeting will include, in addition to grantee staff, OHS program staff, ACF grants staff, and training and technical assistance staff.

The Regional Office will contact grantees well in advance of the funding year to arrange RMM meetings. An invitational letter and preliminary agenda will be sent approximately 30 days prior to the meeting. We encourage you to provide input on the agenda and to take the opportunity to collaboratively plan and prepare for the meeting. To ensure the timely delivery of meeting materials, grantees are asked to verify and update contact information on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) profiles.

Key grantee staff, including Governing Body representative(s), the Executive Director, the Chief Financial Officer, the Head Start Director, Policy Council representative(s), and Program Managers are encouraged to fully participate in the RMM. State funding partners and CSBG Representatives may be invited, as appropriate.

The RMM will result in an Action Plan collaboratively tailored to address areas of improvement or growth. Plans will reflect necessary action steps, identify those persons responsible and establish implementation timelines. Active, mutual engagement in the implementation of the Action Plan is vital to the success of the Risk Management Process.

While all grantees will have at least one RMM each year, there are circumstances when additional RMMs may be held to gauge progress in meeting goals or sustaining improvements. One such circumstance, for example, may be the scheduling of additional meetings with a grantee that has been determined to have deficiencies or a significant number of non-compliances.

A presentation of the Risk Management Process by senior OHS staff can be accessed on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov>.

OHS looks forward to developing closer working relationships with grantees and the communities they serve. Risk management is a tool to identify potential problems and address them early in a shared manner so that we can assure all of the children and families in Head Start are receiving services of the highest possible quality.

/ Patricia E. Brown /

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