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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

TO: Head Start and Early Head Grantees and Delegate Agencies

SUBJECT: Hurricane Katrina

INFORMATION:

We have all been moved by the tragedy which has befallen Americans living along the Gulf Coast in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and many of us have wanted to find some way to assist those whose lives have been so dramatically disrupted. From a community perspective, Head Start is uniquely positioned to reach out to many of these families and help ease some of their suffering. ACF and Head Start leadership urge you to begin taking immediate steps to join the national relief effort targeted at affected families and other individuals from the Gulf region.

Specifically, we are asking all Head Start grantees, particularly those in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, Florida, Georgia and Tennessee, to open your doors to those displaced families who have sought refuge in your community and to seek new ways to support children, parents and others affected by this disaster.

Head Start programs are encouraged, for example, to provide Head Start services to any displaced pre-school children and their families who are now living in your community. Head Start programs are further encouraged to open your doors to refugee families and extend to them available facilities including kitchens, bed space and showers. In addition, ACF and Head Start leadership encourage grantees and program directors to make themselves and their relationships in the community available to support other Federal, state and local relief efforts.

You may wish to begin this task by conducting a quick inventory of the services and resources you currently have and asking yourself how they might be deployed to assist victims of this disaster. Please look particularly to physical resources (room space and facilities) and professional assets (physicians, social workers, mental health personnel) that might be of use.

ACF and the Head Start Bureau will assist you in every way possible. National and regional ACF staff will be available to help coordinate services among the Head Start programs in your state as well as the Federal, state and local entities with which you partner.

We are here to empower you as you take part in one of the most critical human services relief efforts in our Nation's history. Please let us know how we can support your work to assist those in need. Please contact your ACF Regional Office to discuss your agency's participation in this effort.

/ Wade F. Horn /

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