

The Region 1 Head Start Quality Initiative Questions and Answers

The Region One Head Start Quality Initiative provides technical assistance to Head Start and Early Head Start grantees throughout New England. The mission of the Head Start Quality Initiative is *to ensure that Head Start and Early Head Start grantees in New England deliver high-quality services and meet all national performance standards and requirements through the provision of expert knowledge and technical support.*

Who administers the Head Start Quality Initiative?

The Region 1 TA system is administered by the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, under contract with the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Region 1 Office. The UMass Donahue Institute is the public service, outreach and economic development unit of the President's Office of the University of Massachusetts. The UMass Donahue Institute serves as a bridge between public higher education, innovation, and real life applications.

Who is the Head Start Quality Initiative Staff?

The staff is comprised of a regional team of specialists including: Director, Coordinator, six Content Specialists (Early Literacy, Health, Disabilities, Administration/Fiscal/Management, Family and Community Partnerships, and Child Development) and ten Technical Assistance Specialists. The Director, Coordinator, and Content Specialists are located at the ACF Regional Office in Boston and the TA Specialists work out of their homes throughout New England. Each Head Start grantee is assigned a TA Specialist.

Will there be only one person from the TA network working with my program?

The *entire* TA team is available to support Head Start and Early Head Start grantees. The TA Specialist serves as the program's primary contact with the TA network. One of his/her responsibilities is to link grantees with the Content Specialists and the other TA Specialists.

How will the Head Start Quality Initiative work with my program?

This TA network will provide *individualized and customized* support to Head Start programs in the development of their TA plans.

What is the role of the TA Specialist?

The TA Specialist may:

- Make regular on-site visits to the program
- Help to identify and gather data
- Act as a coach and facilitator and assist in building capacity within the program
- Assist grantee to translate needs into action
- Assist in linking to other relevant community, state and federal technical assistance systems and resources
- Provide direct TA to your program
- Disseminate research and best practices
- Facilitate linkages among grantees to promote the sharing of best practices and address common TA needs
- Provide an inventory of consultants appropriate to the program's TA needs

What is the role of the Content Specialists?

The Content Specialists will provide expert guidance and direct technical assistance to programs in their specific content area. They will also provide support and materials for ACF Program Specialists and TA Specialists to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities. The Content Specialists will ensure that all programs are kept current with the most up-to-date research to inform best practice throughout the Head Start community.

How does the TA Team work with my ACF Program Specialist?

The Head Start Quality Initiative works in close partnership with ACF. The TA team will communicate regularly with the ACF Program Specialists in regard to programs' needs and strengths and the development of TA plans.

What if my program has no deficiencies and does not require a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)?

The Head Start Quality Initiative works with *all* grantees. This TA network is designed to *support and build on program strengths* so that all Head Start children and families are served in programs of excellence.

What is the Head Start Quality Initiative Framework?

This initiative is based on a quality improvement framework that continually measures, evaluates, and improves outcomes and quality of Head Start services to children and families. The process has four components:

1. Self-Assessment and Information Gathering
Gathering and compiling data and information from various sources, including the program self-assessment, PRISM, PIR, long and short term program goals and objectives, strategic plans, community assessments, child outcome data and other relevant sources of information.
2. Identifying Outcomes and Priorities
Synthesizing and analyzing information and data to determine areas of quality improvement needs, prioritize these needs, and identify specific outcomes.
3. TA Plan Development
Determining and identifying specific TA activities, how they will be implemented, the resources available and cost estimates. A final technical assistance plan is submitted to the Regional ACF Office for approval.
4. TA Implementation
Implementing the TA activities to meet the individual and unique needs of each program.

Who Do I Contact for More Information?

For more information on the Head Start Quality Initiative, please contact Dee Bertozzi, Director, at 617-565-1712 or at dbertozzi@acf.hhs.gov, or your TA Specialist.