

TRAINING & TECHNICAL SERVICES

Nueces County Community Action Agency is committed to providing ongoing staff development activities for all employees. The Training & Technical Assistance (T & TA) department is responsible for assessing the training needs of employees and coordinating relevant training in each of the content areas.

Training and Technical Assistance Plan specifies that New Staff will receive 24 hours of training during New Staff orientation. Eight of the 24 hours of New Staff Orientation will consist of the following as per Minimum Standard 746.1303.

- Overview of Minimum Standards,
- Overview of Operational Policy's including Discipline and Guidance,
- Overview of agency policy on the prevention, recognition, and reporting of child maltreatment,
- Emergency procedures,
- Administration of medication,
- Understanding building and physical premises safety, including identification and from hazards that can cause bodily injury such as electric hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic.
- Use of location of fire extinguishers and first aid equipment

Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers §746.1301 requires Head Start caregivers to earn a minimum of 24 annual clock hours in training; 30 annual clock hours for Center Directors annually. Additionally, caregivers must complete pre-service training on all content areas. Head Start staff members meet and exceed annual training requirements in order to be well prepared to address multiple issues in a variety of contexts.

The Training and Technical Assistant Plan that is composed by the Content Area Coordinators and is followed according to the schedule described in the T & TA plan that describes what annual training will be provided.

Early Head Start and Head Start centers are divided into clusters, additional Human Resource, Educational safety trainings are provided monthly.

In addition, Head Start provides ongoing individualized training for staff members. Content area specialists continuously offer on-site technical assistance in an effort to strengthen the program.

External training in the form of workshops or conferences enable individual staff members to receive extensive, in-depth training in a defined area of need.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

NCCAA is dedicated to improving the quality of instruction provided by classroom teachers by setting high standards for teacher qualifications.

According to the Head Start Act, Sec. 648 (a)(2), as of September 2003, at least 50% of all Head Start teachers nationwide in center-based programs must have an Associate's, Bachelor's, or advanced degree in Early Childhood Education/Development or a degree in a related field and experience in teaching preschool children.

In an effort to comply with the Head Start Act and contribute to the professional development and personal growth of employees, Nueces County Community Action Agency has enacted an Educational Assistance Program to assist Early Head Start and Head Start teachers in earning a higher degree. Provisions of the Educational Assistance Program allow for payment of tuition, fees, and books for teachers earning college credits towards the attainment of an Associate's or Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. Teaching certification is not a requirement, staff must have an AA or Bachelor's in Early Childhood Education or a related field to be a teacher. All Early Head Start & Head Start staff are informed about opportunities for scholarships, grants, and other programs, which may help to further their professional and personal goals. Early Head Start and Head Start centers are divided into clusters, additional Human Resource, Educational safety trainings are provided monthly.

45 CFR §1302.91(e)(1) “As prescribed in section 645A(h) of the Act, a program must ensure center-based teachers that provide direct services to infants and toddlers...have:

- A minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA)...or comparable credential**; and
- Been trained or have equivalent coursework in early childhood development with a focus on infant and toddler development.”

Child Development Associate (CDA) training is provide for staff who are required to have this credential. CDA consist of 120 training hours, building a professional portfolio, classroom observation and an exam. The cost of this credential is covered by NCCAA.

As of March 2004, 56% of NCCAA Head Start teachers have earned an Associate’s degree or higher in Early Childhood Education or a related field. Many others are diligently working towards completing a degree, proving that Head Start teachers constantly strive to meet and exceed any challenge, which may arise.