

## HOW STRENGTHENING FAMILIES™ HELPS PROGRAMS MEET HEAD START PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Across the country, many Head Start, Early Head Start and other early care and education programs are using the Center for the Study of Social Policy's (CSSP) Strengthening Families™ approach to guide the way they engage and support families. Strengthening Families identifies how programs can help families build protective factors that enable children to thrive. It is about protecting and nurturing young children while promoting their development. It is also about providing support to parents so that they can build their protective factors and be the best parents they can be, even in times of stress.

Recently, many Head Start stakeholders have asked how Strengthening Families aligns with the Head Start Parent, Family and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework and ultimately, how the approach helps programs meet federally-mandated performance standards.<sup>1</sup> To examine these intersections, CSSP convened a working group of state administrators and Head Start grantees and held extensive discussions with the federal Office of Head Start and the Head Start National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement.

### Methodology

The working group conducted a crosswalk between the concrete, everyday actions that programs can take to implement Strengthening Families (as delineated in the Strengthening Families center-based program self-assessment tool) and the Head Start performance standards (45 CFR 1301-1311. [Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations](#). 2006).

Because the social and emotional competence of children is one of the five protective factors in the Strengthening Families framework, the self-assessment was also compared to the social and emotional outcomes for children described in the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework ([The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework: How Do Preschool Programs Support School Readiness? Head Start Approach to School Readiness](#). HHS/ACF/OHS. 2012. English.)

### Findings

The tables beginning on page 3 below present the crosswalk results. They show that Strengthening Families can indeed be used to guide program practices that meet many provisions within the following Head Start standards:

- § 1304.21 Education and early childhood development

### Strengthening Families

Strengthening Families™ is a research-informed approach to increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. It is based on engaging families, programs and communities in building five protective factors:

- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Concrete support in times of need
- Social and emotional competence of children

Using the Strengthening Families framework, more than 30 states are shifting policy and practice to help programs working with children and families focus on protective factors. States apply the Strengthening Families approach in early childhood, child welfare, child abuse prevention and other child and family serving systems.

For more information, visit [www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net).

<sup>1</sup> To learn more about the intersection with the PFCE framework see CSSP's issue brief: [How Strengthening Families™ Aligns with the Head Start Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework](#).

- § 1304.24 Child mental health
- § 1304.40 Family partnerships
- § 1304.41 Community partnerships
- § 1304.50 Program governance
- § 1304.52 Human resources management
- § 1308.21 Parent participation and transition of children into Head Start and from Head Start to public school. (Appendix to Part 1308)

However, programs should note that in some instances the PFCE Framework offers specific guidance that is more tightly aligned to the Head Start Performance Standards. For example:

- The PFCE Framework addresses the importance of sharing child assessment results with parents to involve them in decisions about their children. It also addresses transitions from one early care and education setting to the next and offers more detail on what programs can do to prepare children and families for the transition from Head Start to kindergarten.
- The PFCE framework includes a stronger focus on family literacy and the needs of pregnant women and expectant parents. Strengthening Families addresses supporting parents on a broad range of parenting knowledge and skills, with added emphasis on children's social and emotional development.

Head Start programs can find implementation resources and tools to help them cover all the federal requirements (see *Resources for Program Implementation* below). Programs can choose to use the resources from one or both in ways that best suit the needs and goals of their program or local initiative.

### About the Strengthening Families self-assessment tool

The self-assessment helps programs look at what they are doing to build protective factors in seven key practice areas. The tool is designed to help programs both identify their strengths and provide concrete and actionable areas where they can strengthen their practice. There are two versions of the tool, one for [center-based programs](#) (also available in [Spanish](#)) and the other for [family child care programs](#). The self-assessment is designed to support a reflective continuous improvement process involving parents, front line staff and program leadership and managers. The results can inform action planning that leads to enhanced practice, parent partnerships and improved family engagement.

### Resources for Program Implementation

Programs that choose to adopt the Strengthening Families approach can use the [Strengthening Families self-assessment tool](#), access an [online training curriculum](#) from the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds and find [other resources](#) from CSSP and its Strengthening Families national partners.

Likewise, programs can use the [PFCE Assessment Tools and Guides](#), and access the [Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Interactive Framework](#) to find research, resources and regulations related to program foundations, program impact areas, family engagement outcomes and child outcomes.

### Alignment Tables

The tables below demonstrate the alignment between Strengthening Families and the relevant Head Start Performance Standards (45 CFR 1301-1311. [Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations](#). 2006) and where applicable, the social and emotional outcomes for children described in the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework.

- Table 1. [§ 1304.21 Education and early childhood development.](#)
- Table 2. [§ 1304.24 Child mental health.](#)
- Table 3. [§ 1304.40 Family partnerships.](#)
- Table 4. [§ 1304.41 Community partnerships.](#)
- Table 5. [§ 1304.50 Program governance.](#)
- Table 6. [§ 1304.52 Human resources management.](#)
- Table 7. [§ 1308.21 Parent participation and transition of children into Head Start and from Head Start to public school. \(Appendix to Part 1308\)](#)
- Table 8. [Alignment with Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework Outcomes: Social and Emotional Development](#)

**Table 1. § 1304.21 Education and early childhood development.**

[Back to List of Tables <sup>2</sup>](#)

<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.21 Education and early childhood development</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</b>
<p>Child development and education approach for all children.</p> <p>(a) Child development and education approach for infants and toddlers.</p> <p>1. Grantee and delegate agencies' program of services for infants and toddlers must encourage (see 45 CFR 1304.3(a)(5) for a definition of curriculum):</p> <p>i. The development of secure relationships in out-of-home care settings for infants and toddlers by having a limited number of consistent teachers over an extended period of time. Teachers must demonstrate an understanding of the child's family culture and, whenever possible, speak the child's language (see 45 CFR 1304.52(g)(2));</p>	<p><i>Strategy 5: Facilitate Children's Social and Emotional Development</i></p>	<p>5.1 The program supports children's social and emotional development with intentional practices that</p> <p>a. Are culturally sensitive to the families it serves</p> <p>5.9 Staff understand and respect the relationships and attachments that children form in the program by:</p> <p>a. Providing children the opportunity to say goodbye when they are leaving the program or when staff changes occur</p> <p>b. Helping children process class and/or staffing changes</p> <p>c. Communicating any staff changes to parents</p> <p>d. Intentionally helping children enter into new settings</p>
<p>2. Grantee and delegate agencies must support the social and emotional development of infants and toddlers by promoting an environment that:</p> <p>i. Encourages the development of self-awareness, autonomy, and self-expression; and</p> <p>ii. Supports the emerging communication skills of infants and toddlers by providing daily opportunities for each child to interact with others and to express himself or herself freely.</p>	<p><i>Strategy 5: Facilitate Children's Social and Emotional Development</i></p>	<p>5.2 Staff receive training on:</p> <p>a. Fostering children's social and emotional development</p> <p>5.7 Staff encourage children to express their feelings through words, artwork, and expressive play</p> <p>5.8 Staff model behavior toward children that encourages social and emotional expressiveness</p>

<sup>2</sup> For online readers, click this link to [click to jump back to the list of Alignment Tables on page 2.](#)

<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.21 Education and early childhood development</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</b>
<p>(b) Child development and education approach for preschoolers.</p> <p>1. Grantee and delegate agencies, in collaboration with the parents, must implement a curriculum (see 45 CFR 1304.3(a)(5)) that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iv. Ensures that the program environment helps children develop emotional security and facility in social relationships;</li> <li>v. Enhances each child's understanding of self as an individual and as a member of a group;</li> <li>vi. Provides each child with opportunities for success to help develop feelings of competence, self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward learning;</li> </ul>	<p><i>Strategy 5: Facilitate Children's Social and Emotional Development</i></p>	<p>5.1 The program supports children's social and emotional development with intentional practices that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Are culturally sensitive to the families it serves</li> <li>b. Encourage children to express their feelings</li> <li>c. Encourage sharing, taking turns, and cooperative play</li> </ul> <p>5.2 Staff receive training on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Fostering children's social and emotional development</li> </ul> <p>5.7 Staff encourage children to express their feelings through words, artwork, and expressive play</p> <p>5.8 Staff model behavior toward children that encourages social and emotional expressiveness</p> <p>5.9 Staff understand and respect the relationships and attachments that children form in the program by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Providing children the opportunity to say goodbye when they are leaving the program or when staff changes occur</li> <li>b. Helping children process class and/or staffing changes</li> <li>c. Communicating any staff changes to parents</li> <li>d. Intentionally helping children enter into new settings</li> </ul>

**Table 2. § 1304.24 Child mental health**

[Back to List of Tables](#)

<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.24 Child mental health</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</b>
<p>(a) Mental health services.</p> <p>1. Grantee and delegate agencies must work collaboratively with parents (see 45 CFR 1304.40(f) for issues related to parent education) by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. Sharing staff observations of their child and discussing and anticipating with parents their child's behavior and development, including separation and attachment issues;</li> <li>iii. Discussing and identifying with parents appropriate responses to their child's behaviors;</li> <li>iv. Discussing how to strengthen nurturing, supportive environments and relationships in the home and at the program;</li> <li>v. Helping parents to better understand mental health issues; and</li> <li>vi. Supporting parents' participation in any needed mental health interventions.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Strategy 2: Strengthen Parenting</i></p>	<p>2.5 Staff share parenting tips and discuss parenting issues with parents when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Families are arriving and departing</li> <li>b. Staff are meeting one-on-one with parents</li> <li>c. A parent appears to be frustrated or stressed and in need of support</li> <li>d. A parent appears to be having difficulty relating to or communicating with their child(ren)</li> <li>e. Child behavior or development issues arise</li> </ul> <p>2.8 Staff reinforce parental authority by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Learning about the parent's expectations and limits for their child</li> <li>b. Supporting parents' directions and/or decisions about their child</li> <li>c. Talking with parents in a respectful manner about how best to handle differences in expectations regarding children's behavior</li> </ul> <p>2.15 When staff are concerned about parenting techniques or behavior, they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Proactively and respectfully reach out to parents and share their concerns about the children or about the parents' parenting practices</li> <li>b. Acknowledge young children's frustrating behavior and recognize parents' efforts</li> <li>c. Connect parents to resources and supports that may help to address the parenting issues</li> <li>d. Connect parents to other parents who can share/model positive parenting approaches</li> </ul>

<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.24 Child mental health</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</b>
	<i>Strategy 5: Facilitate Children's Social and Emotional Development</i>	<p>5.2 Staff receive training on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Fostering children's social and emotional development</li> <li>b. Recognizing developmental delays</li> <li>c. Recognizing behavioral/emotional problems</li> <li>d. The impact of loss or trauma on behavior</li> <li>e. Sensory awareness and integration</li> </ul> <p>5.3 The program introduces parents to social and emotional development by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Informing parents of the importance of supporting children's healthy social and emotional development—and its connection to success in school</li> <li>b. Helping parents understand age-appropriate social and emotional skills and behaviors</li> <li>c. Providing opportunities to discuss social and emotional issues with parents within a cultural context</li> <li>d. Encouraging parents to be aware of their children's social and emotional development</li> <li>e. Offering parents' ideas on how to foster a child's social and emotional learning at home</li> <li>f. Teaching parents about children's social and emotional development</li> </ul> <p>5.6 Staff coach parents about how to interact effectively with their children (listening; appreciating ideas, efforts, and feelings; creating a non-threatening environment)</p> <p>5.10 If staff are concerned about a child's social and emotional development, they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Discuss concerns with the child's parent(s)</li> </ul>



<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.24 Child mental health</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</b>
		<p>b. Connect the family to resources that can support the child's social and emotional development (such as play therapy, mental health services, or parenting classes)</p> <p>c. Help the parent(s) develop strategies for addressing the issue at home</p>
<p>3. Mental health program services must include a regular schedule of on-site mental health consultation involving the mental health professional, program staff, and parents on how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Design and implement program practices responsive to the identified behavioral and mental health concerns of an individual child or group of children;</li> <li>ii. Promote children's mental wellness by providing group and individual staff and parent education on mental health issues;</li> <li>iii. Assist in providing special help for children with atypical behavior or development; and</li> <li>iv. Utilize other community mental health resources, as needed.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Strategy 3: Respond to Family Crises</i></p> <p><i>Strategy 5: Facilitate Children's Social and Emotional Development</i></p>	<p>3.11 Staff receive support when working with families under stress through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Access to a mental health consultant</li> </ul> <p>5.11 Staff have access to a mental health consultant to help them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop positive approaches for individual children</li> <li>b. Determine what additional resources and/or training they may need</li> <li>c. Talk with parents about their child(ren)'s development, needs, or challenges</li> </ul>

**[Back to List of Tables](#)**

8



9

<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.40 Family partnerships.</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</b>
		<p>room</p> <p>d. Providing activities or services that are man-to-man, father-to-father</p> <p>e. Using intake forms, applications, and surveys that are gender-neutral</p> <p>f. Establishing working partnerships with a wide range of community resources that provide services to fathers</p> <p>7.13 Staff show that they value fathers and are sensitive to their unique needs by:</p> <p>a. Sharing responsibility for inviting and engaging fathers in programs and activities</p> <p>b. Taking part in periodic training on understanding and appreciating fathers' needs and parenting styles</p> <p>c. Understanding the needs of individual fathers, such as navigating the child support system or having multiple children with different mothers in the same program</p> <p>d. Being sensitive to barriers that limit father involvement, such as a difficult relationship with the child's mother, lack of information, and non-custodial relationship with child</p> <p>e. When possible and within the bounds of custody agreements, responding to non-custodial fathers' desire to participate in their children's lives by including them in mailings and updates about a child's progress, inviting them to activities, and responding to requests for information</p> <p>f. Encouraging fathers and male family members to engage in many aspects of the program, not only activities for fathers</p>
<p>(c) Accessing community services and resources.</p> <p>1. Grantee and delegate agencies must work collaboratively with all participating parents to identify</p>	<p><i>Strategy 4. Link Families to Services and</i></p>	<p>4.1 The program develops family plans with parents that:</p> <p>a. Identify their interests, skills, needs, and goals for themselves and their children</p>

<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.40 Family partnerships.</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</b>
<p>and continually access, either directly or through referrals, services and resources that are responsive to each family's interests and goals, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Emergency or crisis assistance in areas such as food, housing, clothing, and transportation;</li> <li>ii. Education and other appropriate interventions, including opportunities for parents to participate in counseling programs or to receive information on mental health issues that place families at risk, such as substance abuse, child abuse and neglect, and domestic violence; and</li> <li>iii. Opportunities for continuing education and employment training and other employment services through formal and informal networks in the community.</li> </ul> <p>2. Grantee and delegate agencies must follow-up with each family to determine whether the kind, quality, and timeliness of the services received through referrals met the families' expectations and circumstances.</p>	<p><i>Opportunities</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Identify services and opportunities within the program that may help them achieve their goals and use their skills and talents</li> <li>c. Identify other community resources and opportunities that may help them achieve their goals, continue their learning, and/or provide other avenues for involvement</li> <li>d. Are regularly revised and updated in conjunction with families</li> </ul> <p>4.3 When staff make referrals to outside services, they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Brainstorm with families about what resources would be helpful</li> <li>b. Help parents address barriers to utilizing services, such as lack of transportation or childcare, language difficulties, or fees</li> <li>c. Help them fill out paperwork that might help them access these services, for example, insurance and eligibility forms</li> <li>d. Follow up with families to see if they used the referral and ensure that they were satisfied with the services they received</li> <li>e. Try to make a personal connection between families and service providers</li> <li>f. Identify services and opportunities within the program that may help them achieve their goals and use their skills and talents</li> </ul>
<p>(e) Parent involvement--general.</p> <p>1. In addition to involving parents in program policy-making and operations (see 45 CFR 1304.50), grantee and delegate agencies must provide parent involvement and education activities that are responsive to the ongoing and expressed needs of the parents, both as individuals and as members of a group. Other community agencies should be</p>	<p><i>Strategy 1: Facilitate Friendships and Mutual Support</i></p>	<p>1.5 The program encourages and provides support for parent-organized social/educational events and activities, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Making information available on outside activities for parents to attend together—for example, gathering at playgrounds, fun fairs, or libraries</li> <li>b. Providing supports such as space, childcare, food, or other resources so that parents can</li> </ul>

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<p>encouraged to assist in the planning and implementation of such programs.</p> <p>2. Early Head Start and Head Start settings must be open to parents during all program hours. Parents must be welcomed as visitors and encouraged to observe children as often as possible and to participate with children in group activities. The participation of parents in any program activity must be voluntary, and must not be required as a condition of the child's enrollment.</p> <p>3. Grantee and delegate agencies must provide parents with opportunities to participate in the program as employees or volunteers (see 45 CFR 1304.52(b)(3)) for additional requirements about hiring parents).</p>		<p>participate in activities</p> <p>1.6 The program offers opportunities for parents to talk with each other about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Typical challenges of parenting</li> <li>b. Stages of child development</li> <li>c. Expectations and norms about child rearing</li> <li>d. Sibling rivalry</li> <li>e. Balancing work and family</li> <li>f. Parenting practices in and across cultural and ethnic groups</li> </ul> <p>1.7 Program staff reach out to isolated families by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Calling, sending notes, or making home visits</li> <li>b. Inviting them to social activities</li> <li>c. Offering support with transportation, childcare, or other barriers to participation in social activities</li> <li>d. Making special efforts to connect them with other families</li> <li>e. Connecting them with resources, such as mental health consultation, that can help them explore difficulties with forming social connections</li> </ul> <p>1.8 The program models positive social skills and community building by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Welcoming all families</li> <li>b. Inviting all children and families to parties or social events</li> <li>c. Helping to resolve issues among families</li> <li>d. Promoting understanding of different cultures and backgrounds</li> </ul> <p>2.4 Opportunities are created for parents to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Cultural/ethnic expectations and practices about parenting</li> </ul>

13

<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.40 Family partnerships.</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</b>
	<p><i>Strategy 5: Facilitate Children's Social and Emotional Development</i></p> <p><i>Strategy 7. Value and Support Parents</i></p>	<p>interacting with other children and staff in the program</p> <p>7.5 Parents have opportunities to volunteer and contribute to the program</p> <p>7.6 Parents have opportunities to share skills, talents , and cultural traditions with children and other parents</p> <p>7.9 Parents have regular opportunities to engage in activities in the center's physical space</p> <p>7.11 The program offers specific activities for fathers, mothers, and other family members</p> <p>7.13 Staff show that they value fathers and are sensitive to their unique needs by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Sharing responsibility for inviting and engaging fathers in programs and activities</li> <li>b. Taking part in periodic training on understanding and appreciating fathers' needs and parenting styles</li> <li>c. Understanding the needs of individual fathers, such as navigating the child support system or having multiple children with different mothers in the same program</li> <li>d. Being sensitive to barriers that limit father involvement, such as a difficult relationship with the child's mother, lack of information, and non-custodial relationship with child</li> <li>e. When possible and within the bounds of custody agreements, responding to non-custodial fathers' desire to participate in their children's lives by including them in mailings and updates about a</li> </ul>



<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.40 Family partnerships.</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</b>
		<p>child's progress, inviting them to activities, and responding to requests for information</p> <p>f. Encouraging fathers and male family members to engage in many aspects of the program, not only activities for fathers</p> <p>7.15 Parents are connected to resources that help them explore different ways of parenting, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Parent education groups</li> <li>b. Counseling</li> <li>c. Support groups</li> <li>d. Mentors/coaches</li> <li>e. Sisterhoods/brotherhoods</li> <li>f. Faith-based activities</li> </ul> <p>7.19 The program provides parents opportunities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Personal growth—such as attending conferences or special events and collecting and sharing information of interest to other parents</li> <li>b. Leadership development</li> <li>c. Input into programmatic decisions</li> <li>d. Input into staff hiring and training</li> </ul>

<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.40 Family partnerships.</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</b>
<p>(f) Parent involvement in health, nutrition, and mental health education.</p> <p>2. Grantee and delegate agencies must ensure that, at a minimum, the medical and dental health education program:</p> <p>iii. Provides parents with the opportunity to learn the principles of preventive medical and dental health, emergency first-aid, occupational and environmental hazards, and safety practices for use in the classroom and in the home. In addition to information on general topics (e.g., maternal and child health and the prevention of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), information specific to the health needs of individual children must also be made available to the extent possible.</p>	<p><i>Strategy 1: Facilitate Friendships and Mutual Support</i></p> <p><i>Strategy 2: Strengthen Parenting</i></p>	<p>1.6 The program offers opportunities for parents to talk with each other about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Typical challenges of parenting</li> <li>b. Stages of child development</li> <li>c. Expectations and norms about child rearing;</li> <li>d. Sibling rivalry</li> <li>e. Balancing work and family</li> <li>f. Parenting practices in and across cultural and ethnic groups</li> </ul> <p>2.1 Information on parenting is available through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Books and videos in a resource library</li> <li>b. Parenting classes and discussion groups</li> <li>c. Regular postings on bulletin boards in public spaces</li> <li>d. Take-home materials distributed regularly to parents</li> <li>e. Opportunities for parents with similar concerns to come together and share specific information on such issues as Shaken Baby Syndrome, SIDS, scalding, toilet training, routine preventative health care, nutrition, and sleep patterns</li> </ul> <p>2.11 Information is provided on regular developmental challenges, such as bed wetting, potty training, appropriate discipline, eating, sleeping, and aggression</p>

<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.40 Family partnerships.</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</b>
<p>4. Grantee and delegate agencies must ensure that the mental health education program provides, at a minimum (see 45 CFR 1304.24 for issues related to mental health education):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. A variety of group opportunities for parents and program staff to identify and discuss issues related to child mental health;</li> <li>ii. Individual opportunities for parents to discuss mental health issues related to their child and family with program staff; and</li> <li>iii. The active involvement of parents in planning and implementing any mental health interventions for their children.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Strategy 5: Facilitate Children's Social and Emotional Development</i></p>	<p>5.3 The program introduces parents to social and emotional development by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Informing parents of the importance of supporting children's healthy social and emotional development—and its connection to success in school</li> <li>b. Helping parents understand age-appropriate social and emotional skills and behaviors</li> <li>c. Providing opportunities to discuss social and emotional issues with parents within a cultural context</li> <li>d. Encouraging parents to be aware of their children's social and emotional development</li> <li>e. Offering parents' ideas on how to foster a child's social and emotional learning at home</li> <li>f. Teaching about children's social and emotional develop</li> </ul> <p>5.10 If staff are concerned about a child's social and emotional development, they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Discuss concerns with the child's parent(s)</li> <li>b. Connect the family to resources that can support the child's social and emotional development (such as play therapy, mental health services, or parenting classes</li> <li>c. Help the parent(s) develop strategies for addressing the issue at home</li> </ul>

<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.40 Family partnerships.</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</b>
(g) Parent involvement in child development and education. 1. Grantee and delegate agencies must provide opportunities to include parents in the development of the program's curriculum and approach to child development and education (see 45 CFR 1304.3(a)(5) for a definition of curriculum).	<i>Strategy 7. Value and Support Parents</i>	7.1 The program encourages parents to be active in making decisions about their children's education  7.19 The program provides parents opportunities for: a. Personal growth—such as attending conferences or special events and collecting and sharing information of interest to other parents b. Leadership development c. Input into programmatic decisions d. Input into staff hiring and training
3. Grantee and delegate agencies must provide opportunities for parents to enhance their parenting skills, knowledge, and understanding of the educational and developmental needs and activities of their children and to share concerns about their children with program staff (see 45 CFR 1304.21 for additional requirements related to parent involvement).	<i>Strategy 2: Strengthen Parenting</i>	2.1 Information on parenting is available through: a. Books and videos in a resource library b. Parenting classes and discussion groups c. Regular postings on bulletin boards in public spaces d. Take-home materials distributed regularly to parents e. Opportunities for parents with similar concerns to come together and share specific information on such issues as Shaken Baby Syndrome, SIDS, scalding, toilet training, routine preventative health care, nutrition, and sleep patterns  2.4 Opportunities are created for parents to explore: a. Cultural/ethnic expectations and practices about parenting b. How they were parented c. New parenting practices d. Their relationship with their child(ren)  2.5 Staff share parenting tips and discuss parenting issues with parents when: a. Families are arriving and departing b. Staff are meeting one-on-one with parents

<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.40 Family partnerships.</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</b>
		<p>c. A parent appears to be frustrated or stressed and in need of support d. A parent appears to be having difficulty relating to or communicating with their child(ren) e. Child behavior or development issues arise</p> <p>2.7 Parents are invited to visit and observe their children participating in programming, where appropriate, and talk with staff about their observations and questions</p> <p>2.10 Staff guide parents' observations of their children to help them recognize: a. Their child's unique temperament, personality, communication styles, and cues b. Their children's growth and development patterns c. Positive social skills and developmentally appropriate emotional behavior in their children d. Their child's independence and abilities e. Activities they can use at home</p> <p>2.11 Information is provided on regular developmental challenges, such as bed wetting, potty training, appropriate discipline, eating, sleeping and aggression</p> <p>5.4 Parents have opportunities to observe their children interacting with other children and staff in the program</p>
(h) Parent involvement in transition activities. 1. Grantee and delegate agencies must assist parents in becoming their children's advocate as they transition both into Early Head Start or Head Start from the home or other child care setting, and from	<i>Strategy 5: Facilitate Children's Social and Emotional Development</i>	
	<i>Strategy 4. Link Families to Services and Opportunities</i>	<p>4.7 The program provides information and guidance on: a. Transition to school for children b. Parents' and children's educational rights and responsibilities c. The importance of parents staying involved with</p>

<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.40 Family partnerships.</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</b>
<p>Head Start to elementary school, a Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act preschool program, or a child care setting.</p> <p>2. Staff must work to prepare parents to become their children's advocate through transition periods by providing that, at a minimum, a staff-parent meeting is held toward the end of the child's participation in the program to enable parents to understand the child's progress while enrolled in Early Head Start or Head Start.</p> <p>3. To promote the continued involvement of Head Start parents in the education and development of their children upon transition to school, grantee and delegate agencies must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Provide education and training to parents to prepare them to exercise their rights and responsibilities concerning the education of their children in the school setting;</li> <li>...</li> </ul>	<p><i>Strategy 5: Facilitate Children's Social and Emotional Development</i></p>	<p>their children's education and school</p> <p>5.9 Staff understand and respect the relationships and attachments that children form in the program by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Providing children the opportunity to say goodbye when they are leaving the program or when staff changes occur</li> <li>b. Helping children process class and / or staffing changes</li> <li>c. Communicating any staff changes to parents;</li> <li>d. Intentionally helping children enter into new settings</li> </ul>
<p>(i) Parent involvement in community advocacy.</p> <p>1. Grantee and delegate agencies must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Establish procedures to provide families with comprehensive information about community resources (see 45 CFR 1304.41(a)(2) for additional requirements).</li> </ul> <p>2. Parents must be provided regular opportunities to work together, and with other community members, on activities that they have helped develop and in which they have expressed an interest.</p>	<p><i>Strategy 1: Facilitate Friendships and Mutual Support</i></p> <p><i>Strategy 4. Link Families to Services and Opportunities</i></p>	<p>1.5 The program encourages and provides support for parent-organized social/educational events and activities, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Making information available on outside activities for parents to attend together—for example, gathering at playgrounds, fun fairs, or libraries</li> <li>b. Providing supports such as space, childcare, food, or other resources so that parents can participate in activities.</li> </ul> <p>4.1 The program develops family plans with parents that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify their interests, skills, needs, and goals for themselves and their children</li> <li>b. Identify services and opportunities within the program that may help them achieve their goals and use their skills and talents</li> </ul>



<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.40 Family partnerships.</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</b>
		<p>c. Identify other community resources and opportunities that may help them achieve their goals, continue their learning, and/or provide other avenues for involvement</p> <p>d. Are regularly revised and updated in conjunction with families</p> <p>4.2 Staff and parents have access to up-to-date information about services that are available in the community that includes hours of business, fees, location, eligibility, language capacity, etc.</p> <p>4.6 The program connects parents to opportunities that promote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Their continued growth and development</li> <li>b. Family enrichment, i.e., reading hours at the library, parent-child book groups, and cultural heritage events</li> <li>c. Healthy adult relationships and marriage</li> <li>d. Fathers' involvement with their children</li> <li>e. Enrichment activities for children</li> </ul>

**Table 4. § 1304.41 Community partnerships.**

[Back to List of Tables](#)

<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.41 Community partnerships.</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</b>
<p>(b) Partnerships.</p> <p>1. Grantee and delegate agencies must take an active role in community planning to encourage strong communication, cooperation, and the sharing of information among agencies and their community partners and to improve the delivery of community services to children and families in accordance with the agency's confidentiality policies.</p> <p>2. Grantee and delegate agencies must take affirmative steps to establish ongoing collaborative relationships with community organizations to promote the access of children and families to community services that are responsive to their needs, and to ensure that Early Head Start and Head Start programs respond to community needs.</p>	<p><i>Strategy 4. Link Families to Services and Opportunities</i></p>	<p>4.4 The program actively builds collaborative links with other service providers in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Bring other services on site when possible</li> <li>b. Ease the referral process by ensuring the workers in different programs work together</li> <li>c. Share information with parents about resources</li> <li>d. Identify and fill gaps</li> </ul>
<p>(c) Transition services.</p> <p>1. Grantee and delegate agencies must establish and maintain procedures to support successful transitions for enrolled children and families from previous child care programs into Early Head Start or Head Start and from Head Start into elementary school, a Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act preschool program, or other child care settings.</p>	<p><i>Strategy 4. Link Families to Services and Opportunities</i></p>	<p>4.7 The program provides information and guidance on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Transition to school for children</li> <li>b. Parents' and children's educational rights and responsibilities</li> <li>c. The importance of parents staying involved with their children's education and school</li> </ul>

**Table 5. § 1304.50 Program governance.**

[Back to List of Tables](#)

<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.50 Program governance.</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</b>
<p>(b) Policy Council, Policy Committee, and Parent Committee structure.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grantee and delegate agencies must establish and maintain a formal structure of shared governance through which parents can participate in policy making or in other decisions about the program.</li> </ol> <p>(e) Parent Committee. The Parent Committee must carry out at least the following minimum responsibilities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advise staff in developing and implementing local program policies, activities, and services;</li> <li>2. Plan, conduct, and participate in informal as well as formal programs and activities for parents and staff; and</li> <li>3. Within the guidelines established by the governing body, Policy Council, or Policy Committee, participate in the recruitment and screening of Early Head Start and Head Start employees.</li> </ol>	<p>Strategy 7. Value and Support Parents</p>	<p>7.19 The program provides parents opportunities for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Personal growth—such as attending conferences or special events and collecting and sharing information of interest to other parents</li> <li>b. Leadership development</li> <li>c. Input into programmatic decisions</li> <li>d. Input into staff hiring and training</li> </ol>

**Table 6. § 1304.52 Human resources management.**

[Back to List of Tables](#)

<b>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.52 Human resources management.</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</b>	<b>Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Item(s)</b>
<p>(c) Staff qualifications—general.</p> <p>4. Staff and program consultants must be familiar with the ethnic background and heritage of families in the program and must be able to serve and effectively communicate, to the extent feasible, with children and families with no or limited English proficiency.</p>	<p><i>Strategy 2: Strengthen Parenting</i></p>	<p>2.3 Staff are knowledgeable about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The parenting practices of different cultural and ethnic groups</li> <li>b. The parenting styles of both mothers and fathers and the strengths of each</li> <li>c. Parent-child relationships, attachment, and bonding</li> <li>d. Promoting positive relationships between children living in the same household</li> </ul>
<p>(j) Standards of conduct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grantee and delegate agencies must ensure that all staff, consultants, and volunteers abide by the program's standards of conduct. These standards must specify that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. They will respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>Strategy 1: Facilitate Friendships and Mutual Support</i></p>	<p>1.8 The program models positive social skills and community building by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Welcoming all families</li> <li>b. Inviting all children and families to parties or social events</li> <li>c. Helping to resolve issues among families</li> <li>d. Promoting understanding of different cultures and backgrounds</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. They will follow program confidentiality policies concerning information about children, families, and other staff members;</li> </ul>	<p><i>Strategy 3: Respond to Family Crises</i></p>	<p>3.7 Staff know how to respond appropriately to family crises. Staff receive training on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Maintaining confidentiality</li> </ul>

<b><i>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1304.52 Human resources management.</i></b>	<b><i>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</i></b>	<b><i>Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Item(s)</i></b>
iv. They will use positive methods of child guidance and will not engage in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, or humiliation. In addition, they will not employ methods of discipline that involve isolation, the use of food as punishment or reward, or the denial of basic needs.	<i>Strategy 2: Strengthen Parenting</i>	<p>2.13 Physical discipline (spanking or hitting) is not allowed in the program by staff or parents</p> <p>2.14 When staff talk with parents about discipline, they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Explain why physical discipline is not allowed</li> <li>b. Explain why the program uses the forms of discipline it does</li> <li>c. Provide information on age-appropriate discipline and reasonable expectations</li> <li>d. Offer ideas for alternate forms of discipline and how to recognize and reinforce desired/appropriate behavior</li> <li>e. Encourage parents to discuss discipline challenges they may have at home</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX TO PART 1308—HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS ON SERVICES TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

**Table 7. § 1308.21 Parent participation and transition of children into Head Start and from Head Start to public school.**

[Back to List of Tables](#)

<i>Head Start Performance Standard Language § 1308.21 Parent participation and transition of children into Head Start and from Head Start to public school.</i>	<i>Strengthening Families Program Strategy</i>	<i>Strengthening Families Self- Assessment Item(s)</i>
<p>(a) In addition to the many references to working with parents throughout these standards, the staff must carry out the following tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Support parents of children with disabilities entering from infant/toddler programs.</li> <li>(2) Provide information to parents on how to foster the development of their child with disabilities.</li> <li>(3) Provide opportunities for parents to observe large group, small group and individual activities describe in their child's IEP.</li> <li>(4) Provide follow-up assistance and activities to reinforce program activities at home.</li> <li>(5) Refer parents to groups of parents of children with similar disabilities who can provide helpful peer support.</li> <li>(6) Inform parents of their rights under IDEA.</li> <li>(7) Inform parents of resources which may be available to them from the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program, the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) Program and other sources and assist them with initial efforts to access such resources.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Strategy 2: Strengthen Parenting</i></p>	<p>2.16 For parents of children with special needs, staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Connect parents with parenting materials and websites, support groups and play groups, and community resources specific to their children's special needs</li> <li>b. Check regularly with parents about parenting issues</li> <li>c. Are sensitive to parents' frustration, protectiveness, guilt, loss, and other related feelings, and acknowledge challenges</li> <li>d. Support parents in understanding appropriate developmental expectations for their special-needs children</li> <li>e. Check in with parents about the impact their children's special needs are having on family dynamics and parental stress</li> <li>f. Are especially supportive at the time that special needs are initially identified</li> <li>g. Provide speakers/resources for parents on topics of interest/concern</li> <li>h. Ensure that parent-child activities are appropriate for families with children with special needs</li> </ul>



<p>(8) Identify needs (caused by the disability) of siblings and other family members.</p> <p>(9) Provide information in order to prevent disabilities among younger siblings.</p> <p>(10) Build parent confidence, skill and knowledge in accessing resources and advocating to meet the special needs of their children.</p> <p>(b) Grantees must plan to assist parents in the transition of children from Head Start to public school or other placement, beginning early in the program year.</p>		
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**Table 8. Alignment with Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework Outcomes: Social and Emotional Development**

The table below illustrates how Strengthening Families informs program structure and staff practice to achieve the social and emotional outcomes for children in the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. The table lists the four domains of children's social and emotional development addressed in the Head Start framework alongside the Strengthening Families center-based program self-assessment items under Strategy 5: Facilitate Children's Social and Emotional Development.

[Back to List of Tables](#)

<b><i>Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework: Social and Emotional Development Domains</i></b>	<b><i>Associated Items in the Strengthening Families self-assessment for center-based programs</i></b>
<p>Social relationships- the healthy relationships and interactions with adults and peers.</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>communicates with familiar adults and accepts or requests guidance.</li> <li>cooperates with others.</li> <li>develops friendships with peers.</li> <li>establishes secure relationships with adults.</li> <li>uses socially appropriate behavior with peers and adults, such as helping, sharing, and taking turns.</li> <li>resolves conflict with peers alone and/or with adult intervention as appropriate.</li> <li>recognizes and labels others' emotions.</li> <li>expresses empathy and sympathy to peers.</li> <li>recognizes how actions affect others and accepts consequences of one's actions.</li> </ul> <p>Self-concept and self-efficacy- the perception that one is capable of successfully making decisions, accomplishing tasks, and meeting goals.</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifies personal characteristics, preferences, thoughts, and feelings.</li> <li>demonstrates age-appropriate independence in a range of activities, routines, and tasks.</li> <li>shows confidence in a range of abilities and in the capacity to accomplish tasks and take on new tasks.</li> </ul>	<p>Strategy 5: Facilitate Children's Social and Emotional Development</p> <p>5.1 The program supports children's social and emotional development with intentional practices that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are culturally sensitive to the families it serves</li> <li>Encourage children to express their feelings</li> <li>Encourage sharing, taking turns, and cooperative play</li> </ol> <p>5.2 Staff receive training on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fostering children's social and emotional development</li> <li>Recognizing developmental delays</li> <li>Recognizing behavioral/emotional problems</li> <li>The impact of loss or trauma on behavior</li> <li>Sensory awareness and integration</li> </ol> <p>5.3 The program introduces parents to social and emotional development by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informing parents of the importance of supporting children's healthy social and emotional development—and its connection to success in school</li> <li>Helping parents understand age-appropriate social and emotional skills and behaviors</li> <li>Providing opportunities to discuss social and emotional issues with parents within a cultural context</li> <li>Encouraging parents to be aware of their children's social and emotional development</li> <li>Offering parents' ideas on how to foster a child's social and emotional learning at home</li> <li>Teaching about children's social and emotional development</li> </ol> <p>5.4 Parents have opportunities to observe their children interacting with other children and staff in the program</p> <p>5.5 Staff make sure that parents understand how their child(ren)'s positive relationships with other adults</p>

<b><i>Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework: Social and Emotional Development Domains</i></b>	<b><i>Associated Items in the Strengthening Families self-assessment for center-based programs</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates age-appropriate independence in decision making regarding activities and materials.</li> </ul> <p>Self-regulation- the ability to recognize and regulate emotions, attention, impulses, and behaviors.</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recognizes and labels emotions.</li> <li>handles impulses and behavior with minimal direction from adults.</li> <li>follows simple rules, routines, and directions.</li> <li>shifts attention between tasks and moves through transitions with minimal direction from adults.</li> </ul> <p>Emotional &amp; behavioral health- a healthy range of emotional expression and learning positive alternatives to aggressive or isolating behaviors.</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expresses a range of emotions appropriately, such as excitement, happiness, sadness, and fear.</li> <li>refrains from disruptive, aggressive, angry, or defiant behaviors.</li> <li>adapts to new environments with appropriate emotions and behaviors.</li> </ul>	<p>positively impact their own relationship with their child(ren)</p> <p>5.6 Staff coach parents about how to interact effectively with their children (listening; appreciating ideas, efforts, and feelings; creating a non-threatening environment</p> <p>5.7 Staff encourage children to express their feelings through words, artwork, and expressive play</p> <p>5.8 Staff model behavior toward children that encourages social and emotional expressiveness</p> <p>5.9 Staff understand and respect the relationships and attachments that children form in the program by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing children the opportunity to say goodbye when they are leaving the program or when staff changes occur</li> <li>Helping children process class and/or staffing changes</li> <li>Communicating any staff changes to parents</li> <li>Intentionally helping children enter into new settings</li> </ol> <p>5.10 If staff are concerned about a child's social and emotional development, they:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss concerns with the child's parent(s)</li> <li>Connect the family to resources that can support the child's social and emotional development (such as play therapy, mental health services, or parenting classes.</li> <li>Help the parent(s) develop strategies for addressing the issue at home</li> </ol> <p>5.11 Staff have access to a mental health consultant to help them:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop positive approaches for individual children</li> <li>Determine what additional resources and or training they may need</li> <li>Talk with parents about their child(ren)'s development, needs, or challenges</li> </ol>