

This is a template for Head Start parents and caregivers to provide Public Comments for HHS's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking *Reducing Federal Burden for Head Start Programs*. Please consider including personal impacts and stories that describe why Head Start's current standards must remain. The sections in yellow should be replaced with your own words before you submit. When your comments are ready, you can submit them by clicking the green SUBMIT A PUBLIC COMMENT button on the top right of [this page](#) and copy-paste the comments into the comment box. Comments are due by October 6, 2026 and will not be accepted after that date.

---

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

As a Head Start parent, I am writing to urge the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to protect the Head Start Program Performance Standards and withdraw the proposed rule.

For more than 60 years, Head Start has enabled millions of children, including mine, to have a strong start in life by providing high-quality early education, as well as health, dental, and nutrition services. Head Start was founded as a two-generation program, providing meaningful family engagement and parent leadership in addition to services to young children. These are not intangible services. Head Start has been an essential component of my family's life and I know that my child and children and families across my community are better off because they received Head Start's high-quality services.

[Include 3-5 sentences of your experience in Head Start. How did Head Start help your child? How did Head Start engage and support you as a parent? ]

The Head Start Program Performance Standards protect and preserve Head Start's proven model. They operationalize evidence-based practices and ensure that the most vulnerable children and families have services that meet their needs. The standards provide consistent quality while allowing programs to flexibly design services around local needs.

The rule proposed by HHS would fundamentally upend those standards and make it harder for Head Start programs to deliver the high-quality services children and families deserve. Specifically, the proposal would:

—Eliminate research-based standards that support educational quality, child safety and healthy development.

—Remove evidence-based teacher-child ratio and group size requirements that support individualized learning and high-needs classrooms.

—Reduce the number of hours that programs are required to be open, threatening parents' ability to work.

—Eliminate requirements for vision, hearing, and developmental screenings.

—Reduce access for children from families experiencing homelessness by requiring documentation that families may not have or have access to.

—Remove and weaken qualifications and professional support for educational staff.

—Reduce protections and services for children with disabilities and developmental delays.

—Eliminate evidence-based best practices for serving dual language learners and engaging their families.

—Limit opportunities for parents to shape their local Head Start programs.

—Make it more difficult for communities to sustain high-quality Head Start services.

In particular, had these changes occurred during my child's time in Head Start, we would have lost critical services. [Include an example if you can of how these changes could have impacted your experience in Head Start. If your child has a disability, did Head Start's screenings and referrals help get your child the services they needed earlier? Did your child benefit from having a bilingual educator? Did you receive full-day child care through Head Start that allowed you to attend school or work? Share those things here.]

The harm of the proposed rule does not come from any one of these changes alone, it comes from the compounding impact of removing services and protections for the most vulnerable children and families. Children learn best when their health and mental health are sound, when their teachers are consistent and qualified, when their unique needs are identified early, and when their families have the resources and tools they need to thrive. The Act requires the Secretary to ensure that revisions to the standards will not reduce quality, scope, or services provided by Head Start. This rule would reduce the quality, scope, and services provided by Head Start. It would threaten a child and a family's overall wellbeing and experience in Head Start. For these reasons, I respectfully urge HHS to withdraw this proposed rule.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Signed,

[Your name]