

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES****ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

Head Start Bureau  
330 C Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20447

Dear Head Start Directors,

I am pleased to announce that the Head Start Bureau is sending you a copy of Head Start Self-Assessment: Your Foundation for Program Excellence. This guide is designed to support you not only in meeting the regulatory requirement for an annual self-assessment, but also to do so in a comprehensive, systematic and analytical manner, based on Head Start Performance Standards.

We believe that an annual self-assessment, done well, is a key management practice that works to ensure programs are meeting the Performance Standards and providing high quality services for young children and their families. This user-friendly guide and its helpful tools and worksheets assist grantees through the four stage process:

- 1) Preparing for Self-Assessment,
- 2) Collecting and Synthesizing the Information,
- 3) Interpreting the Information, and 4) Strengthening the Program.

This Self-Assessment Guide helps programs address the following central questions: Are we meeting the Head Start Performance Standards and other regulations? Are our services responding effectively to the needs of children and families? How can we refine our program design and management systems to further improve outcomes for children and families? Are Head Start funds well-invested and properly managed?

Your assigned TA Specialist is specifically trained on this guide and is available to work with you throughout all phases of the self-assessment process and to support you in developing a strong plan to address any identified need for training and technical assistance.

The emphasis on comprehensive self-assessment together with our new T/TA system is designed to support you in your important and challenging work. On the occasion of this fortieth Head Start anniversary year, we are especially reminded of our critical mission of ensuring the highest quality services and improved child outcomes so that all our Head Start children are prepared and ready to succeed in school.

Sincerely,

Windy M. Hill  
Associate Commissioner  
Head Start Bureau