

Feds Aim to Keep Services Intact at 122 'Deficient' Head Start Agencies Nationwide

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Federal Head Start Director Yvette Sanchez Fuentes said in a statement that her office is working to ensure services are not disrupted at [122 agencies in 35 states and Puerto Rico](#) that must compete for continued funding.

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) said the Head Start agencies did not meet quality thresholds laid out in regulations issued by President Obama in December 2011. Transportation is not specifically reviewed for deficiencies, but the related service could be impacted by a cut in funding. The announcement marks the second time that agencies were found to be deficient and have been ordered to compete, with an additional round of reviews required by the 2007 Head Start Act.

"We will make every effort to ensure that Head Start services are not disrupted for children and their parents during this time of transition," said Fuentes. "Our goal is, and always has been, to provide the best possible early childhood education to children across the country. This competition process will ensure that we are meeting that goal."

ACF said the affected agencies either had their licenses revoked, had fiscal or management issues preventing them from properly maintaining federal funds or had deficiencies discovered during on-site, federal monitoring reviews. The deficient grantees also scored in the lowest 10 percent of all Head Start centers that received a classroom quality evaluation. All 1,600 Head Start grantees nationwide are evaluated against seven research-based quality benchmarks that gauge standards for health and safety and fiscal integrity.

George Sheldon, the acting assistant secretary of ACF, the competition for funds is designed to ensure Head Start children receive "the best early education that each of their communities can offer."

The program supports more than 1 million low-income, preschool-age children and their parents nationwide. Head Start agencies must comply with [45 CFR 13.10](#) that establishes requirements for the safety features and the safe operation of vehicles used by Head Start agencies to transport children participating in Head Start programs. This includes the required use of school buses or "allowable alternate vehicles."