

Northern Tier Community Action Corporation

HEAD START

Program Self-Assessment

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2018

2018 SELF-ASSESSMENT NTCAC HEAD START

INTRODUCTION

The annual Head Start Self-Assessment process involves the collection of information from a variety of sources to determine if systems and services currently in place are working effectively. Self-Assessment results serve as a driving force in determining needs for program improvement.

TIME FRAME

January through March of 2018

OVERVIEW

The Office of Head Start *Guide to Self-Assessment*, questionnaires and surveys were used to complete this self-assessment. These targeted questions are indicative of basic program requirements, whereby collected responses assure that the area is being properly serviced or reflects that the area is lacking and needs improvement. Continuous quality improvement is the foundation of excellent Head Start programs. It is the goal of Northern Tier Community Action Agency Head Start to not only meet, but exceed Program Performance Standards, moving toward program excellence in serving the children and families of Elk, Cameron, Potter, and McKean Counties.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS USED BY SELF - ASSESSMENT TEAM:

Self - Assessment Guide for Head Start Programs, Interview Questions, and Surveys

SOURCE DOCUMENTS:

- Center files/Records
- ChildPlus Reports
- Program Information Report
- Policies and Procedures
- Meeting(s) Minutes
- Community Partnership Agreements
- Personnel Records
- Fiscal Records & Audit
- Transition Plans
- USDA Records/Reports/Menus
- Health Services Records
- Disabilities Records
- Child Outcome Data

SELF-ASSESSMENT TEAM MEMBERS

- Executive Director
- Board of Directors
- Policy Council Members
- Policy Council /Chairperson
- Staff
- Management
- Parents

RESULTS AND BENEFITS EXPECTED

Data analysis provides information utilized in program planning. Expected results include:

- Obtaining objectives, reliable information about our program services and systems;
- Promoting an atmosphere of shared understanding of Head Start goals and objectives with governing bodies, program stakeholders, and community partners;
- Effective Program Quality Improvement Plans based on a thorough analysis of program data;
- Help in developing meaningful Training and Technical Assistance Plan.

PREPARING OUR SELF-ASSESSMENT

NTCAC uses the self -assessment process as an opportunity to provide cross-service area training to Head Start Management Team members, which provide leadership to each team. Data mining and evidence gathering included utilizing the methodologies such as interview guides, observation guides, review guides, surveys, and checklists in a standardized process linked to compliance areas. Raw data was collected by team leaders and organized. Head Start Management Team members then analyzed the presented data. A final report is compiled from this information, which includes a summary of these results and makes determination regarding opportunities for program quality improvement.

SELF-ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Self-Assessment is for us to determine areas that require improvement and to enable us to better achieve our goal of providing the best possible service to children and families. Each service area is carefully examined and the outcome is analyzed. These findings, with any areas that need improvement, are incorporated into the T/TA Plan and Strategic Plan. A (QIP) Quality Improvement Plan is developed to improve the areas identified. Although we continually seek ways to improve program service delivery and program design and management, the accountability of the self-assessment process allows for an unbiased view of program operations. In general, the findings were positive with several areas in need of improvement were identified. The following areas of strength and those considered for improvement are as follows:

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

STRENGTHS:

- Several Governing Board members have expertise in accounting, government, management, law as well as business administration and the board is properly composed of a volunteer tri-partite Board of Directors.
- The Board of Directors and the Policy Council are involved in all aspects of program planning, implementation and oversight.
- Programmatic informational packets/agendas are sent to the Board members each month.
- Meeting minutes, governance training, and technical assistance is on-going.
- Funding applications and amendments are reviewed and approved by the governing bodies.

- Board members are aware of the established procedures and criteria for recruiting, selecting, and enrolling children.
- Governing bodies review and approve all major policies, major financial expenditures, annual operating budget, and monitors the agency's actions to correct any findings.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- A continuing need for increased parental involvement in Policy Council meetings and PCC (Policy Council Committee) meetings was noted.
- A plan for board recruitment should be put in place so that full board membership is obtainable in a short period of time following the resignation of a current board member.
- A new board liaison must be appointed as the current member does not attend regularly.

PLANNING

STRENGTHS:

- Sound recruitment and enrollment procedures are in place for program planning.
- Monthly staff meetings and weekly management team meetings provide for a sound basis for program planning and monitoring.
- All (100%) of the centers have planned 'male' involvement activities.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- Brainstorm more formalized and planned socialization activities to increase attendance.

COMMUNICATION

STRENGTHS:

- Increased use of varied technological capabilities ease the burden of the vast geographic areas we encompass.
- Use of the "Google Meet" system increases staff communication capabilities.
- Parent Handbook and program brochures are being revised for clarity.
- Social media has been integrated and used frequently to promote the program.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- Consistency in communication with staff needs to be a focal point. Management team will attend monthly center-based meetings and communications will be shared with all staff regardless of supervisory status.
- Small, cluster trainings provide a more 'intimate' presentation to staff.

RECORD-KEEPING AND REPORTING

STRENGTHS:

- Increased use of Child-Plus and GOLD is helping with record-keeping and reporting.
- Weekly management team meetings provide feedback for dealing with time-sensitive issues as well as increasing programmatic communication.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- Clarify and streamline the process for the timely tracking of program data into ChildPlus and GOLD.

ONGOING MONITORING**STRENGTHS:**

- ChildPlus provides time-sensitive information that promotes monitoring of program activities.
- Weekly management team meetings, staffing meetings, and center-based reports help to provide a strong foundation for ongoing monitoring.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- Clarify and streamline the process for the timely tracking of program data into ChildPlus and GOLD.

HUMAN RESOURCES**STRENGTHS:**

- A personnel file maintenance system is in place and working effectively.
- A comprehensive orientation for new staff is in place.
- A reference binder of HR information has been updated for managers.
- A more cohesive working relationship between the director and HR manager is helping to streamline processes.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- Supervisory training would allow management team to function with increased competence.
- A more meaningful, objective employee evaluation tool should be implemented program-wide.

FISCAL MANAGEMENT**STRENGTHS:**

- Effective communication exists between the Head Start Director, Executive Director, Board, Policy Council, and Fiscal Staff.
- A strong fiscal support staff has been established.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- In-Kind documentation should be reviewed by management team on a regular basis.

PREVENTION & EARLY INTERVENTION**STRENGTHS:**

- Nutritional services strive to meet the needs of the children.
- USDA guidelines are followed and menus are reviewed by a registered dietitian.
- The agreement with the I.U. provides for screenings on site and timely referrals.

- The mobile dentist program has expanded substantially to meet the needs of the four county area.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- Establish a clear system for entering data into the areas of disabilities and mental health using ChildPlus.

TRACKING & FOLLOW UP

STRENGTHS:

- The Child Plus database is used and an independent audit is completed for the Child Outcomes.
- A registered nurse reviews all health records and meets on a regular basis with the Director and Health and Nutrition Specialist to review policies, procedures, child health records, and miscellaneous areas of concern in a constant attempt to improve performance in this area.
- The GOLD system allows the Education Manager the ability to generate individual classroom and program child outcome reports on a regular basis.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- Provide staff training on GOLD Plus to better utilize the system.
- Work with the mobile dentist to increase availability.

INDIVIDUALIZATION

STRENGTHS:

- GOLD allows teachers to individualize their lesson plans and activities specifically for each child.
- Screening results and checkpoint levels provide teacher with academic and social information to help set appropriate goals.
- Parents are kept well-informed through conferences and at-home communications.
- Parent surveys reflected positivity in meeting the needs of individual children.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- Plan staff training on GOLD Plus to better utilize the system.
- Use GOLD to generate home activities for the parents for a more cohesive approach.

DISABILITIES SERVICES

STRENGTHS:

- The program consistently serves over 10% of children with diagnosed disabilities.
- Services are provided through a close working collaboration with the Seneca Highland Intermediate Unit #9.
- Head Start and the IU collaborate on issues dealing with children's challenging behaviors and social-emotional delays.
- Education Managers are now in charge of disabilities services so that there is program continuity.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- Monitoring and reporting needs to occur on a regular and consistent basis.

- Parents need training/information on advocating for the needs of their children with disabilities.
- A holistic disability plan must be put into place.

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

STRENGTH:

- Curriculum is aligned with ELOF and used to plan developmentally appropriate activities.
- We use CHOOSEY regularly for dental and nutrition lessons with children.
- Staff participates in family-style meals in a positive manner.
- The program is engaged in numerous curriculum trainings to enhance fidelity.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- All staff could benefit from additional curriculum(s) training.
- All staff could benefit from ongoing support with making authentic observations and entering them into GOLD in a timely manner.
- Utilizing observations in a constructive manner to formulate outcomes that support school readiness.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

STRENGTHS:

- FSW's have positive relationships with parents and caregivers and this is reinforced throughout the school year.
- All files viewed contained evidence of family goals from a strength-based perspective.
- Timetables and strategies for achieving these family goals were noted.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- Continue to work closely and collaborate with community and resource providers.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

STRENGTHS:

- Our "Volunteer Training Program" has been a positive experience for both parents and staff.
- Parents have opportunities to participate directly in class, attend PCC meetings as well as Policy Council.
- Parents are provided with monthly newsletters to keep them updated on activities as well as Facebook page.
- We have a high number of parents that participate in Transition meetings with local school districts.
- Fatherhood (male-centered) activities are very well received; one hundred percent (100%) the center-based sites promoted male involvement activities.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- Develop a consistent method of presenting Parent Modules across the program.
- Work with help parents to gain understanding that they are their child's first teacher.
- Parental involvement could increase at the centers, socializations, and at Policy Council meetings.

COMMUNITY AND CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIPS**STRENGTHS:**

- There is evidence that this program has on-going, collaborative, relationships with health care providers, mental health providers, nutritional service providers, providers of services to children with disabilities, child protective services, local elementary schools, and organizations and businesses that provide support and resources to mothers, fathers and families.
- There are procedures in place to facilitate transitions from Head Start to elementary school.
- Transition advisory committees are established and maintained to help the program respond to family and community needs.
- Strong transition practices are in place with the local school districts for families of all children, including those with disabilities.
- Families have the opportunity to serve on various committees in conjunction with Policy Council and within the program in general.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- Consistently work to strengthen and build relationships with all community resource providers.
- Find ways to increase the number of parent volunteers.

ELIGIBILITY, RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE**STRENGTHS:**

- Over 90% of our families are low-income families.
- Reports are run on a regular basis to check attendance using Child Plus and consistent attendance is stressed.
- Social media is used to market the program.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- n/a

FACILITIES, MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT & TRANSPORTATION**STRENGTHS:**

- Regular maintenance checks are scheduled for all centers.
- Old equipment and appliances are updated on a regular basis.
- Bus drivers (ATA) and bus monitors receive training annually.
- Weekly reports from management team provide a timely response to maintenance requests.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- Our program must be aware of new /different locations that would best meet the needs of the children and families we serve.

USING CHILD OUTCOMES IN PROGRAM SELF-ASSESSMENT**STRENGTHS:**

- GOLD allows for ease of tracking and monitoring outcomes to measure school readiness.
- An outside contractor completes an unbiased, independent outcomes report, which also highlights areas of concern as well as program strengths.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- Communicating outcome data to our teaching staff in a clear way so that they understand the importance of outcomes and how they can use it to assess their own teaching skills.
- Teachers must be more aware of and be able to take advantage of teachable moments.

MENTAL HEALTH**STRENGTHS:**

- Education Managers now also work with this service area, which has provided a more streamlined process for mental health tracking services more efficient.
- Established relationships with additional agencies this year to provide more services to all areas.
- Mental Health Consultant is available at all centers to observe, consult with parents/staff, and to assist parents in connecting to services.
- Implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Solutions, PATHS, and the Parent Training Modules to foster social skills.

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT:

- We need to develop a consistent system for dealing with behavior issues, documentation, and referrals in the area of mental health.
- Provide staff information, training and team building activities to promote staff wellness.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT GOAL – CARRIED OVER FROM 2016-2017

FACILITIES				
Continue to search for locations that best meet the needs of the families we serve	Explore options for relocating area centers to best meet the needs of the community	Management Team	Summer 2018	Ongoing

CHALLENGES - Transportation costs and access to health, dental, and medical providers due to the rural locations of our Head Start Centers will continue to be problematic. The absolute need to be centrally located is a priority. Staff retention due to wages and excessive work load pushes us to strive continuously to seek innovative ways to reduce the workloads and retain staff. Although we have always maintained full enrollment, we face challenges due to location and competition with local school system Pre-K programs.

PROGRAM STRENGTHS/ASSETS

- Staff dedication to exceed mandated Head Start and state requirements
- Individual and personal relationships with each family
- Community and governing board support

2018- CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Recommendations / GOALS to support Program Improvement	Corrective Action Plan	Person(s) Responsible	Completion Target Date	Status
MONITORING Clarify and monitor processes in noted areas of need	Clarify the process for the timely tracking/monitoring of mental health & disabilities information into ChildPlus	Management Team, Education Staff, FSW's, HV's	April 2018	In Progress
FISCAL Increase In-Kind by developing a new Home Activity Form	Increase In-Kind through parent participation by recreating the In-Kind Home Activity Form to a more user-friendly format	Fiscal Staff, Management Team, Education Staff, FSW's, HV's	Summer 2018	Will be scheduled
HUMAN RESOURCES Obtain increased support and professional development for staff in	Provide staff trainings in GOLD and curriculums used programmatically	Management Team, Staff, Trainer, Professional Development Coordinator	Oct - 18	Will be scheduled

areas of need	Develop a holistic, coordinated, program-wide professional development plan	Professional Development Coordinator, Director, Management Team	Summer 2018	In Progress
PARENT INVOLVEMENT Increased parental involvement in center-based activities and governing functions	Increase attendance at home-based socialization, parent activities, Policy Council and PCC meetings	Head Start Staff, Parents	August 2018	Ongoing throughout program year
COMMUNICATION Ensure clear, respectful, appropriate and timely communication within the Head Start program and the larger community	Marketing our program successfully to ensure positive PR and a stable enrollment	Management Team	May – Sept. 2018	In Progress/Ongoing
	Updating Parent Handbook	Management Team	April 2018	In Progress
	Support staff through consistent, clear communication and team building	Management Team, Teaching Staff, Parents, FSW's	Ongoing throughout program year	In Progress

NORTHERN TIER COMMUNITY ACTION CORPORATION

HEAD START 03CH3485

ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT - APPROVAL

The Self-Assessment has been presented to the Policy Council for their approval.

Approval has been received.

4/12/2018

Policy Council Chairperson
Jaqueline Howard

Date

The Self-Assessment has been presented to the Board of Directors for their approval.

Approval has been received.

5/24/2018

Board President
Anthony Moscato

Date

The Self-Assessment has been presented to the Executive Director for his approval.

Approval has been received.

5/24/2018

Executive Director
David Greene

Date
