



Hidalgo County Head Start Program

Policy Council Agenda

DATE: March 11, 2009

SUBJECT: Discussion/Approval of Hidalgo County Head Start Program Self Assessment and Corrective Action Plans

RATIONALE/NEED: The purpose of the Self Assessment is to improve program effectiveness. The Self Assessment was conducted during the weeks of February 9-13, 2009 and February 16-20, 2009. All centers were reviewed and corrective action plans were developed accordingly based on non-compliance issues/findings.

RECOMMENDATION: Administration recommends approval.

COST: N/A

RELATED INFORMATION INCLUDES: Hidalgo County Head Start Program Self Assessment Report and Corrective Action Plans

INITIATED BY: Nora S. Munoz, Assistant Program Director 

REVIEWED BY: Teresa Flores, Executive Director

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL: Teresa Flores 



Hidalgo County Head Start Program Annual Self Assessment Program Year 2008 – 2009

Continuous quality improvement is a central belief of the Hidalgo County Head Start program, with the goal of meeting Performance Standards and moving toward program excellence for serving children and families throughout the county. As part of this process, the annual Self Assessment provides the program with the means to regularly assess the management systems and program operations in order to continually strengthen the program and the services delivered to children and families.

The Head Start Performance Standards clearly state that at least once each program year, with the consultation and participation of the Policy Council, the Grantee Board and, as appropriate, other community members, grantee agencies must conduct a Self Assessment of their effectiveness and progress in meeting program goals and objectives and in implementing Federal Regulations.

By using the Self Assessment process, the Hidalgo County Head Start Program can assess annually how specific aspects of the program's operations impact services delivered to children and families. The Self Assessment is an integral part of the program's planning cycle.

The Self Assessment process involves the collection of information from a variety of sources to determine if systems and services have been implemented and are working effectively. This information is used to identify program strengths, determine areas for further development and plan appropriate strategies to effectively address the identified weaknesses of the program.

In order to ensure that the Hidalgo County Head Start Program is meeting program goals and objectives and is implementing Federal Regulations, the Program utilized the 2009 Office of Head Start Monitoring Protocol as the primary instrument to record and document the results of the annual Self Assessment.

The Self Assessment results are presented in a summary format based on the eleven (11) areas of the Protocol. A Plan of Action is provided on areas where weaknesses or areas of concern were identified.

I. Health Services:

Section 1: Human Resources

Section 2: Providing Health Services

Section 3: Health Policies and Procedures

Section 4: Early Head Start Programs Serving Pregnant Women or New Mothers

Section 5: On Going Monitoring

II. Safe Environments:

Section 1: Facilities Materials and Equipment

Section 2: Hygiene

Section 3: Food Safety and Sanitation

Section 4: Ongoing Monitoring

Program Strengths:

- The centers were clean and inviting.
- The classrooms were well organized and clutter free.
- The playground was clean and equipment was free of any safety hazards.
- The center managers and staff were very friendly and able to answer all questions asked.
- The children records were well organized.
- The teachers in all the classrooms had great classroom management and were eager to assist with the self assessment.
- The children's work was proudly displayed through-out the center.
- The children were happy and participating in classroom activities.
- The staff promoted good dental hygiene and hand washing procedures.
- Good documentation was maintained through-out the child's folder.
- The center staff was very helpful and courteous.
- Policies and procedures were clearly posted on the classroom walls.
- The health bulletin board was up to date in every classroom.
- The teachers were promoting safety practices by supervising children and re-directing them accordingly.
- The toys were properly stored and labeled.
- Toothbrushes and toothpaste were properly labeled and stored.
- The exits and evacuation routes were easily visible.

Plan of Action for Health Services:

1304.53 (a)(5) There are at least 35 square feet of usable indoor space (ie., not including, bathrooms, halls, kitchens, staff rooms, and storage places) per child.

One classroom in Edinburg I did not meet the space requirements defined above. An adjustment to the enrollment quota will be made to meet the minimum required space per child.

III. Nutrition Services:

Section 1: Human Resources

Section 2: Understanding Children's Nutritional Needs

Section 3: Managing Nutritional Services

Section 4: Integrating Nutrition into Early Childhood Development

Section 5: Ongoing Monitoring

Program Strengths:

- The center staff was very friendly and worked very well as a team.
- The children were very happy and the staff made parents feel welcomed at the facility.
- The center kitchens were extremely clean and organized.
- The centers were clean and well organized.
- Good classroom management during meal service was observed.
- Good parent participation was observed and projected through-out the center.
- There is good communication between parents and staff.
- Nutrition related classroom activities were followed on a daily basis.
- The parents interviewed were knowledgeable on nutrition services.
- The nutrition bulletin board provided additional nutrition information for the parents.
- The staff was well prepared for the Self Assessment.
- There was a peaceful atmosphere through-out the centers.
- The staff was genuine on caring for children's meal service needs.

Plan of Action for Nutrition Services:

No plan of action was required at this time.

IV. Transportation Services:

Section 1: Transportation Services Management

Section 2: Grantee and Delegate Directly Provided or Contract -Provided Transportation

Section 3: Bus Driver Credentials, Qualifications, and Training

Section 4: Transportation Related Services

Section 5: Ongoing Monitoring

Program Strengths:

- Both routes (where provided) were done within one hour each.
- All the required safety equipment was current and identified.
- All the children were ready to board the bus on time.
- The bus drivers and the bus aides were very courteous with all the parents.
- All the required documents were current and easily accessible to the reviewer.
- The bus aides were very friendly and involved with the children on the bus.
- The parents were at the bus stop waiting for the bus to arrive.
- The children with disabilities were transported with no problems.
- The buses were very clean and properly maintained.

Plan of Action for Transportation Services:

No plan of action was required at this time.

V. Disabilities Services:

Section 1: Human Resources

Section 2: Coordinated Activities

Section 3: Outreach and Recruitment

Section 4: Evaluation and Development of IEP/IFSP

Section 5: Community Partners

Section 6: Ongoing Monitoring

Program Strengths:

- Information on events taking place for parents of children with disabilities was posted.
- The disability aides were assigned to children with significant disabilities.
- Case management documentation was well written and maintained.
- The centers were inviting and clean.

- The center managers and support services staff were very receptive to the suggestions and guidance provided.
- The support services staff worked as a team in assisting the teaching staff as needed.
- The parent volunteers assisted in decorating the center according to the unit of study (theme).
- The teachers displayed good classroom management skills.
- A foster grandparent was observed singing to the children during nap time.
- The parent volunteers were observed assisting in the classrooms.
- The bus aides assisted the teachers with the children with behavior issues.

Plan of Action for Disabilities Services:

No plan of action was required at this time.

VI. Mental Health Services:

Section 1: Human Resources

Section 2: Implementation of Mental Health Services

Section 3: Ongoing monitoring

Program Strengths:

- The lesson plans reflected the mental health curriculum and the unit of study.
- The classrooms were print rich and labeled at the children's eye level.
- The classrooms were nicely decorated and children's artwork was displayed.
- The classroom environment was warm and inviting.
- The staff was friendly and greeted parents, children and visitors with a smile.
- The teachers provided the opportunities for good socialization and language reinforcement.
- The teachers did a great job teaching the social skills (very creative).
- The environment is very clean, warm and nurturing.
- The center staff was kind and helpful.
- The staff demonstrated great use of positive reinforcement.
- Good team work was observed between the teachers and the assistant teachers.
- The bulletin boards had pictures of dads in action doing activities with their children (great idea).

- The support services staff was very helpful and involved.
- Well structured classroom settings were observed.
- The children were smiling and appeared happy and well adjusted.
- The centers were father friendly, there were many posters of fathers with their children displayed through-out the centers.
- The children's work and photos were displayed through-out the centers.
- The teachers appeared to have a good relationship with the parents.

Plan of Action for Mental Health Services:

No plan of action was required at this time.

VII. Family and Community Services:

Section 1: Human Resources

Section 2: Building Relationships with Families

Section 3: Strengthening Families through the Family Partnership Agreement Process

Section 4: Encouraging Parent Participation

Section 5: Building and Maintaining Community Partnerships

Section 6: Ongoing Monitoring

VIII. Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance:

Section 1: Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance

Section 2: Ongoing Monitoring

Program Strengths:

- The parent's corner was very informative.
- The centers had a well stocked parent library.
- The parent volunteers were present and very involved in the center activities.
- Positive motivation and incentives for promoting attendance were implemented on a daily basis.
- There was a high level of parent participation evident at the centers.
- The parent's corner had a section for volunteer recognition.
- The parents interviewed were very receptive and appreciative of the staff and the program.
- The staff was very knowledgeable about resources in the community.

- The parents interviewed were center committee members and very proud of being part of their child's decision making process.
- The classrooms were very colorful and full of parent/child take home activities.
- The parents were willing and proud to be interviewed as part of the Self Assessment process.
- The Exploring Parenting curriculum has been implemented and the parents interviewed were very complimentary.
- The center office files were very organized.
- The parent corner displayed good information for parents in both English and Spanish with great recognition of the volunteer of the month.
- The support services staff was very knowledgeable in the case management system.
- The collaboration with the Independent School Districts and the TEEM project enhanced the transition process from Head Start to the public schools.
- The substitute pool consisted of mostly parent volunteers.

Plan of Action for Family and Community Services:

1304.40 (i)(2) Parent Involvement and Home Visits. Home visits are opportunities for making connections between the home and program settings, developing positive relationships which allow parents and staff to get to know one another, focusing individualized attention on family strengths, interests and goals.

Mercedes I did not complete the required home visits. Training and technical assistance will be provided to ensure that the staff understands the program's procedures in conducting home visits.

IX. Education and Early Childhood Development Services:

Section 1: Human Resources

Section 2: Curriculum, Individualization, and Assessment

Section 3: Social-Emotional Development

Section 4: Cognitive and Language Development

Section 5: Physical Development

Section 6: Ongoing Monitoring

Program Strengths:

- The staff had a positive attitude and demonstrated pride in their work.
- The staff provided a cheerful learning environment.
- There was evidence of parent participation through-out the center.
- The centers were very clean and inviting.
- The teachers praised and encouraged the children.
- The children seemed very happy and well adjusted to the environment.
- The learning areas were neatly organized and had ample amount of materials.
- The classrooms had a print rich environment.
- The bulletin boards were very attractive and up to date with the unit of study and the culture of the month.
- The center managers and staff were very welcoming and cooperative through-out the Self Assessment process.
- The children know and understand the classroom routine.
- Word walls were being used as an instructional tool for vocabulary.
- The children's work was displayed through-out the centers.
- The teachers greeted the parents and the children in a friendly, respectful manner.
- The teachers were observed asking open-ended questions.
- The children had good command of the English language.
- The teachers were sensitive to the children's needs.
- Smooth transitions between activities were observed.
- The independent school district teachers and the Head Start teachers have great working relationships.

Plan of Action for Education and Early Childhood Development Services:

1304.20 (f)(1) Individualization of the program. Grantee and delegate agencies must use the screenings for developmental, sensory, and behavioral concerns, the ongoing observations, medical and dental evaluations and treatments, and insights from the child's parents to help staff and parents determine how the program can best respond to each child's individual characteristics, strengths and needs.

Individualization of instruction reflected that there is a lack of congruence between the written plan and the implementation

level for meeting children's individual needs. Training and technical assistance will be provided to the classroom staff to ensure that the educational program is developmentally appropriate for each child in the program and that activities are carried out according to plan. Training will include instructional methods as well as proper documentation.

1304.21 (a)(4)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv) Grantee and delegate agencies must provide for the development of each child's cognitive and language skills by: (i) Supporting each child's learning, using various strategies including experimentation, inquiry, observation, play and exploration; (ii) Ensuring opportunities for creative self-expression through activities such as art, music, movement, and dialogue; (iii) Promoting interaction and language use among children and between children and adults; and (iv) Supporting emerging literacy and numeracy development through materials and activities according to the developmental level of each child.

More attention is required of staff to develop prerequisite skills in the areas of writing, numeracy and early literacy. Training and technical assistance will be provided to the classroom staff to ensure that the use of dittos is eliminated and the developmentally appropriate practices are implemented in the instructional program.

X. Fiscal Management:

Section 1: Governance and Internal Controls

Section 2: Use of Head Start Grant Funds

Section 3: Grant Property

Section 4: Compensation

Section 5: Financial Reporting

Program Strengths for Fiscal Management:

- Monthly monitoring and submission of financial reporting to policy groups, administration and department heads

- Timely submission and report monitoring of the IRS Form 941, Federal Cash Transaction Report Form 272, Financial Status Report Form 269, IRS Wage and Tax Statement Form W-2, etc...
- Internal Revenue Service E-Services accessibility for verifying W-9's
- Verification of employment taxes (Form 941) through the MIP Accounting Payroll module
- Electronic Requisitioning
- Electronic Payroll Process & Direct Deposit
- Reconciliation forms prepared and designed to assist in reconciling inter-fund accounts, cash draw downs, bank accounts, etc...

Plan of Action for Fiscal Management:

No plan of action was required at this time.

XI. Program Design and Management:

Section 1: Governing Body

Section 2: Policy Council

Section 3: Planning

Section 4: Ongoing Monitoring

Section 5: Communications

Section 6: Record Keeping and Reporting

Section 7: Human Resources

Section 8: Program Strengths

Program Strengths for Program Design and Management:

- The program provides the employees with opportunities to attend institutions of higher learning. The accomplishments and commitment of the staff are reflected as follows:

Center Managers with a degree	25
Associates	18
Bachelors	5
Masters	2
Teachers with a degree	141
Associates	114
Bachelors	27
Support Staff with a degree	17
Facilitators	11
Assistants	6

Teachers graduating May/August	28
Administrators with degrees	18

Total Head Start employees with degrees: 229

- Services and policy procedures were established and conducted on a timely manner. These include: Organizational Chart, Monitoring, Qualified Staff and Consultants, Annual Performance Appraisals, Professional Development, Health Appraisals/TB Tests, Standards of Conduct, Child Abuse and Neglect Policy, and Teacher Training – 15 hours.

Plan of Action for Program Design and Management:

644 (a)(2)642 (d)(2)648A (g)(3) 1310.16 (b) 1301.31 (b)(1)(iii)

The Self Assessment process for Program Design and Management revealed a strong system that complies with all Head Start Standards. The process also outlined new areas of compliance as adopted by the newly enacted 2007 Head Start Act. These areas although not formally adopted as standards must still be part of the Program Design and Management compliance process.

These Include:

1. Creating additional reports to the Policy Council and the Grantee Board for Attendance, Meals Snacks as well as a monthly Program Information Report (PIR).
2. Creating an annual report to the general public that reveal; Total number of funds and the source of each; explanation of budgetary expenditures; total number of children serve; audit results; percentage of children receiving medical help and parent involvement information.
3. A procedure for conducting new employee criminal record checks prior to employment with the Hidalgo County Head Start Program. In addition, an FBI fingerprint background check for all new employees during the pre-employment process.