



Hidalgo County Head Start Program Annual Self Assessment Program Year 2009 – 2010

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 2010 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 for the area where a concern was identified.

HEALTH SERVICES

Staff Qualifications – Health
Providing Health Services
Health Policies and Procedures
Early Head Start Programs Serving Pregnant Women or New Mothers (N/A)
Management Systems Analysis

SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

Facilities, Materials, and Equipment
Hygiene
Food Safety and Sanitation
Class Size and Staffing
Management Systems Analysis

PROGRAM STRENGTHS:

- Teachers were promoting safety by redirecting children at all times.
- Classrooms were appropriately decorated, and uncluttered.
- Teachers properly modeled and observed the children washing their hands and brushing their teeth.
- All toys and materials were stored in the proper place and easily accessible to the children. There was no risk for falls or injury.
- The classrooms/centers were very clean, inviting, and well organized.
- Staff was very helpful, knowledgeable, and friendly.
- Volunteers were present, helpful and eager to participate.
- Evacuation routes, emergency policies and numbers were clearly posted.
- The sanitation process was observed and maintained.
- The playground was clean and free of hazardous objects.
- Medication was clearly labeled and under lock and key.
- First Aid kits were clearly visible and out of the children's reach.

POTENCIAL AREAS OF NON COMPLIANCE (PANC)

None

NUTRITION SERVICES

Staff Qualifications – Nutrition
Understanding Children’s Nutritional Needs
Managing Nutritional Services
Integrating Nutrition into Early Childhood Development
Management Systems Analysis

PROGRAM STRENGTHS:

- Excellent classroom activities were observed.
- The kitchen area was very clean and organized.
- The children’s work was nicely displayed around the center.
- The center was clean and organized.
- The children’s records were well organized.
- Good communication was noted between staff members.
- Excellent volunteer work/activities were noted around the center.
- Teachers interacted well with the children.
- Classroom organization was excellent.
- The staff was friendly, well organized, and prepared.
- Volunteers were very active in the centers.
- Good classroom management was observed during meal service.
- Nutrition related classroom activities were followed on a daily basis.

POTENCIAL AREAS OF NON COMPLIANCE (PANC)

None

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Transportation Services Management
Providing Transportation Services
Bus Driver Credentials, Qualifications, and Training
Arranging for Transportation Services
Management Systems Analysis

PROGRAM STRENGTHS:

- The Program has collaborated with Teaching and Mentoring Communities (TMC) in the planning and implementing of the pre service training for ten (10) years.
- The bus drivers have been trained to replace head lamps, fuses, light bulbs and air conditioner filters and perform minor body work repair to safeguard federal dollars.

- The Program has purchased three (3) new buses to expand the bus routes and increase service to more children.
- All required safety equipment was current and identified.
- The staff was very courteous with all the parents.
- All the required documents were current and easily accessible to the reviewer.
- The buses were very clean and properly maintained.

POTENCIAL AREAS OF NON COMPLIANCE (PANC)

None

DISABILITIES SERVICES

Staff Qualifications – Disabilities
Coordinated Activities
Recruitment and Enrollment
Evaluation and Development of IEP/IFSP
Community Partners
Management Systems Analysis

PROGRAM STRENGTHS:

- The center staff was welcoming, attentive and very accommodating.
- The centers were clean and inviting.
- The children were happy and actively involved in all the activities.
- The disability service aides were observed working with special needs children.
- Parent volunteers were present.
- Documentation was accurate, complete and well organized.
- The children's work was displayed.
- The foster grandparents were present and actively involved with the children.
- A disability service aide has gone above and beyond to learn sign language and used it as a teachable moment with the rest of the class.
- The staff was well prepared, very knowledgeable, and eager to participate in the self assessment process.

POTENCIAL AREAS OF NON COMPLIANCE (PANC)

None

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Staff Qualifications – Mental Health
Implementation of Mental Health Services
Management Systems Analysis

PROGRAM STRENGTHS:

- The centers were inviting and clean.
- The staff was very friendly, cooperative and well prepared.
- There was good documentation in the Child's Record.
- The centers/classrooms were very colorful and nicely decorated.
- The children were happy and very comfortable in their environment.
- Behavior concerns were addressed and properly documented.
- Volunteers were present and actively involved.
- The children's records were neat, and well organized.
- Children's art work was displayed throughout the center.
- Positive Behavior Support was implemented. Praise was used when children demonstrated good behavior and redirected the children as needed.
- Good team work was observed between Head Start staff and public school staff.
- The classroom rules were posted at the children's eye level and reinforced throughout the day.
- A variety of "feelings" books were displayed in the library center.

POTENCIAL AREAS OF NON COMPLIANCE (PANC)

None

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Staff Qualifications – FCS
Building Relationships with Families
Strengthening Families through the Family Partnership Agreement Process
Encouraging Parent Participation
Building and Maintaining Community Partnerships
Management Systems Analysis

ELIGIBILITY, RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, ENROLLMENT, AND ATTENDANCE

Eligibility and Enrollment
Attendance and Participation
Program Options
Management Systems Analysis

PROGRAM STRENGTHS:

- Parent volunteers were present and actively involved in the classrooms.
- The children's records were complete, accurate, and well organized.
- Positive motivation and incentives for promoting attendance were in place.
- The staff was friendly, accommodating, and very knowledgeable of the center operations.
- The parent's comments about the Program were very positive.
- The Parent's Area/Corner was full of information about the Program and community resources. The information was posted in English and Spanish.
- The centers/classrooms were very clean and inviting.
- The parent's/child's work was displayed throughout the centers.
- Collaboration between the public school teacher and the Head Start teacher was observed to be very positive.
- The substitute pool consisted of mostly parent volunteers.

POTENCIAL AREAS OF NON COMPLIANCE (PANC)

10% children with disabilities (ERSEA)

PLAN OF ACTION FOR ERSEA

An official waiver addressing the issues has been submitted to Regional Office. Mr. Alfredo Huerta has acknowledged receipt of the waiver. The Program will be notified of the outcome.

EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Teacher Credentialing and Qualifications
Curriculum, Individualization and Assessment
Social – Emotional Development
Cognitive and Language Development
Physical Development
Management Systems Analysis

PROGRAM STRENGTHS:

- The centers were clean and inviting.
- Parents were present and actively involved with the children.
- The staff was very knowledgeable, helpful, and friendly.
- The teachers were sensitive to the children's needs.
- There was excellent classroom management.
- The learning centers were neatly organized and had a variety of materials.
- The teachers used a variety of modalities and materials.
- There was a positive climate throughout the centers.

- The children are well adjusted, comfortable and engaged in assigned/choice tasks.
- The records were well kept and organized.
- Transition activities were well established and consistent.
- The teachers were well organized and prepared.
- The classroom environment is print rich.
- The children's work was displayed throughout the classrooms and centers.
- The Program currently has thirty (30) classrooms participating in the TEEMS project.
- The Program currently has sixty-two (62) classrooms participating in the School Readiness Integration project with the Local Education Agencies.
- The staff was observed working well together.
- The parents were greeted and welcomed.

POTENCIAL AREAS OF NON COMPLIANCE (PANC)

None

FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Governance and Internal Controls
Use of Head Start Grant Funds
Grant Property
Compensation
Financial Reporting
Management Systems Analysis

PROGRAM STRENGTHS:

- 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 Dash 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 and Direct Deposit
- Reconciliation forms prepared and designated to assist in reconciling inter-fund accounts, cash draw downs, bank accounts, employee insurance payments and benefits, payroll payables

POTENCIAL AREAS OF NON COMPLIANCE (PANC)

None

PROGRAM DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

Governing Body
Policy Council
Planning
Ongoing Monitoring
Communications
Record Keeping and Reporting
Human Resources

PROGRAM STRENGTHS:

- Governing Board is prepared, experienced and participates in training to assist its members in overseeing the program operations effectively
- Monthly meetings of the Governing Board insure that the Board receives financial reports, enrollment reports, financial audits, the Self Assessment, the Community Assessment and the Strategic Plan.
- Governing Body reviews and approves policies for carrying out the provisions of the grant application and the overall program operation including personnel policies and the Civil Service Commission Rules.
- Governing Board approves all financial management procedures including the budget and internal controls to insure that financial practices and procedures meet general accounting principles for governmental entities. Automation of financial operating procedures facilitates the oversight of expenditures by the Governing Board.
- Governing Board and Policy Council are involved in Program Planning and Design as reflected by their role in the development, review and approval of Program Plans, the Strategic Plan, the Self Assessment and the Community Assessment.
- Policy Council and Parent Committees function as per Head Start requirements. Policy Council By-Laws govern the roles and responsibilities of the Policy Council, the Grantee Board and the parent Committees.
- Monthly communication with the Grantee Board is well documented. Since they meet on a weekly basis, it is convenient to communicate with them more often if there is a need.
- Communication with Policy Council is ongoing and on a monthly basis.

- Comprehensive Monitoring, Communication, Record Keeping and Reporting Systems are in place to allow for appropriate feedback and problem resolution. The Monitoring System insures that the identification of issues/concerns is properly document by designated or assigned staff through feedback forms, visits to each of the 44 centers, desk audits, center bi-yearly reviews and that timely follow-ups are completed. The Communication System insures that there is information flows freely up and down the organization as all Program activities are conducted. Computer systems for Record Keeping and Reporting facilitate financial transactions and the safeguarding of funds; facilitates family and children's data to provide appropriate and timely services in all areas including health, mental health, special needs, transportation, nutrition, education, transition, and family services and insures that all data is secure and readily available as required by Head Start Standards and Texas Child Care Licensing.
- The Human Resources process is in compliance with all Federal, State and local regulations that personnel is subject to criminal record check, annual performance reviews, health examination, ongoing training and development including reporting child abuse and neglect and a professional development plan.
- The Program provides employees opportunity to attend institutions of higher learning. More than 100 employees attend classes each semester and if they are not eligible for financial assistance the Program pays for tuition, fees and books. Currently 108 employees are enrolled in higher education classes. Two hundred sixty employees have earned associate, bachelor or master degrees. One hundred eighty (180) of the 199 teachers hold associate's, bachelor's, or master's degrees and 14 assistant teachers have associates, degrees and 128 have a CDA (Child Development Associate Credential).
- Training of trainers is a strategy which has assisted in meeting our Program training needs. Currently we have 60 certified trainers for the Positive Behavior Support Program to address needs of children with challenging behavior and to provide for the social emotional development of all children and 19 trainers have been certified to train in CPR and First Aid.
- Partnerships with the public schools through the Early Start and Texas School Ready! Programs have supplemented training to insure that our staff has reached proficiency in the preparation of our children to be ready for Kindergarten when they transition to the public schools.
- Thirty-three certified public school teachers join Head Start staff in 55 classrooms to supplement Head Start efforts for school readiness for 1,399 children.

POTENCIAL AREAS OF NON COMPLIANCE (PANC)

None