

**York County Head Start
03CH2758-000
Implication from Self Assessment 2013**

Team I - Program Governance, Management Systems and Fiscal Responsibility

Team Members: Sheri Newcomb (team leader), Tara Thompson, Carolyn Ehn, Kathy Dansey, Doretta Hill, and Margi Schmid-Bailey

Community Representatives and Parents: Shelonda Smith and Colleen Donahue

Strengths:

- Policy Council minutes are very detailed and provide a great amount of information. All actions items are voted on and approved.
- The Manager is aware of the program. Tools to assessment program are current and up to date, all staff are included in the planning process and in making decisions. All staff are working together for a common goal. Communicate well with parents through emails, bag tags, flyers, newsletter, internet web site and oral reminders.
- Over all communication among staff is done well.
- Children's files are very uniform, organized, and consistent. All staff is very active in keeping the children's files in order.
- Safety reports are used to make changes in the programming or to address safety issues.
- Human Resource Services is provided as an in-kind service by the County, and therefore not an expense of the grant. Staff is experienced and trained and provides resources.
- Financial support is provided by the County and no Federal funds are used to support this position.
- Facilities are owned by York County and well maintained. All equipment is monitored to insure safety. All facility inspections are documented and facilities are monitored daily.
- Transportation services are contracted through YCPS. All buses are regularly maintained. Teachers are required to have a CDL.
- All facilities are handicap accessible.

Challenges:

- No minutes are taken during Policy Council training to provide a record. It was recommended that minutes be taken and also to develop certificates of training.
- Finding the time for all staff to meet and participate in program planning.
- We do not currently have any Policies and Procedure for allowing a parent to review their child's file.
- It is recommended that all forms have a revision date at the bottom of the form, allowing staff to track and maintain current forms.
- Human Resources are not as physically accessible; however, there has been no delay in obtaining information and/or assistance.
- The turn over in staff and staff qualifications is a challenge
- Currently there are no staff to communicate to children/parents in a primary language other than English.
- Fuel cost for transportation is increasing making it difficult for the budget and meeting the needs of the families.

Team 2 – Child Development

Disabilities Services, Individualization, Curriculum and Assessment and Child Outcomes

Team Members: Stephanie Barton (team leader), Kelly Wright, Gwyn George, Ana Reed, Anita Foster, and Karen Reynolds.

Community Representatives and Parents: Sholonda Smith

Strengths:

- York County Head Start provides effective and efficient strategy programs for children; such as, Al's Pals, Color Me Healthy, Food Friends, Music Classes, and the research based Teaching Strategies Gold Curriculum.
- Extensive efforts are made to recruit children with special needs (posters, brochures, flyers, referrals). A Memorandum of Understanding has been developed and is current with York Public Schools around enrollment of children with special needs. In addition, Child Development Resources refers children to the Head Start program.
- Disability services are tracked and followed closely by the Education Coordinator. Families are supported in the process by the teacher, Education/Disabilities Coordinator, Family Services Coordinator, and the Family Services Specialist.
- Modifications are made when requested for children with special needs. Educational services are coordinated with the public school system which allows children to receive services in the afternoon at the local elementary school.
- Monthly staff meetings include health, mental health, family services, and education and are held to discuss any concerns with children needing additional support.
- Utilization of one of the best research based curriculums for preschool – Teaching Strategies is an authentic observational assessment system for children from birth through kindergarten.
- The curriculum identifies strengths, needs, and interest, as well as weaknesses, allowing for both group and individual settings; and covers all areas of development (social, emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, math, science, social studies, art, and English language acquisition.
- Outcome reports are generated 3 times yearly and are discussed with parents and the Education Review Team. Results of the outcomes reports are also used to evaluate education staff and training needs and support.

Weaknesses:

- Parent's will often forget about the Individual Education Plan meeting or the referral meeting for additional services, leaving the child without services for an extended period of time. These meetings include both the public school staff and the Head Start staff, and are painstakingly planned to schedule.
- Teaching staff only work 6.5 hrs per day, 191 days per year, and although they are meeting the requirements they struggle with time limitations and often use their personal time to get the job completed. Performance Standards, State Standards, Early Childhood Framework, Department of Social Services, ECERS and CLASS.

Team 3 – Prevention and Early Intervention, Tracking and Follow Up, Mental Health and Nutrition

Team Members: Stephanie Davenport (team leader), Christy Wilson, Lori Evans, Jana Shelton, Vicki Montgomery, Lauren Miller and Anita Rohr.

Community Representatives and Parents: Laura Arroyo, Tonya Crew, Lauren Califano, and Debbie Coleman (Mental Health Specialist)

Strengths:

- Medications are received and tracked sufficiently and the majority of education staff has received MAT training. Each classroom has at least one staff member trained in MAT.
- All staff receive monthly safety training that is relevant to their jobs.
- Playground safety is monitored both at Griffin Yeates and at the off sites.
- Mental health services are sought and obtained through a contract with Colonial Behavioral Health. The Health Services Coordinator is responsible for managing this contract and sees that services are provided.
- The program option allows for children who may need more support or teacher's who may be struggling with a certain behavior, to move the child to another classroom in an effort to get more supportive services.
- Staff of the program is working well in the areas of supervision and monitoring children both indoors and out doors.

Weaknesses:

- It would be beneficial for the children at Bethel Manor to have access to a preschool playground. Due to a DSS licensing requirement, currently the children are unable to use this playground; however, a variance is being obtained to allow for access.
- When education staff is experiencing behavior challenges from children and in need of additional support the time can be prolonged with evaluations until services can be provided.
- At times there is not enough staff to help teachers with children who are having behavior problems.
- Since it is a federal requirement, it would be helpful if physicals and dentals are required prior to attendance. This requirement would help insure compliance with the federal mandates.
- Increase cleaning and sanitation of toys during the cold and flu season.
- There is no exit sign over the door exiting the building in the kitchen.

Team 4 – Program Design

Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment & Attendance; Family & Community Partnerships, Parent Involvement; Family Partnership Building; Community and Child Care Partnerships

Team Members: Tracy Bridgeforth (team leader), Michelle Lawrence, Dorothy Julien, Melissa Olivis, Sholonda Graham, and Bessie Carmichael.

Community Representative: Ashleigh Mcquillen and Morris Randall **Parents:** Lauren Hall, Amy Burnett, Tiffany Levy

Strengths:

- A Resource Guide has been developed and is maintained and included in the Parent Handbook.
- Parent Resource Boards are maintained in each classroom; as well as, resource boards are located throughout the Griffin Yeates center.
- The Family and Community Partnership Services coordinates parent involvement activities with health/mental health, education/disabilities, nutrition, transition and family services.
- A transition plan exists for children coming into or leaving Head Start. Much detailed attention is given to easily transition children into the Head Start program. This plan not only helps families, but also provides all staff time to gather all the required documents to maintain enrollment and provide orientation to parents.
- Parents are given an overview of the various committees (Health Advisory, Education Review, Policy Council, Parent Center Committee, Personnel, and Budget) and are encouraged to participate. Parents are surveyed to determine in what capacity they can provide volunteer support.
- The Fatherhood Initiative is a joint effort between Williamsburg James City County Head Start and York County Head Start, increasing the resources for both localities.
- Parents play a vital role in shaping the direction of the program and overseeing activities for the children and families.
- The family and community partnership services have continued to develop very strong partnership with the community.
- The program receives generous donations of time spent, classroom reading, school supply donations, family fun events, parenting workshops, trainings, support groups, community awareness activities, and food backpacks provided by the Peninsula Food Bank.
- Outreach is conducted to provide families with a variety of needed resources so that they can become self-sufficient.
- The Family Services team ensures that efforts are made to reach eligible children through an extensive recruitment plan. On-site recruitment is conducted in target area neighborhoods, flyers are posted and distributed, staff attend community events and receive community referrals, the County cable channel is utilized; as well as the County newsletter.
- An active eligible wait list, over-income waiting list, and pending waiting list of families is maintained.
- An Attendance Policy was developed and is followed by both the Family Service and Education Staff. The efforts of this policy have prevented classrooms from falling below the 85% attendance rate, as well as the entire program has maintained 85% or above in attendance.

Challenges:

- Training needs to be provided to all staff regarding Fatherhood Initiative involvement.
- To establish additional partnerships and collaborations with churches and connect with faith based organizations.
- Coordinate child care partners in the community to provide adequate, affordable child care with transportation services.
- Maintaining 10% of children with special needs.