



York County Head Start

2021-2022

Self-Assessment Report

Mission of Children and Family Services/Head Start

To develop partnerships that promote quality opportunities for children's educational readiness, at all levels of ability, and to foster success for families and staff.

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INTRODUCTION

York County Head Start (YCHS) has provided comprehensive, high-quality early childhood services to at-risk and low-income families residing in York County, Virginia, during the 2021-2022 school year. York County's Head Start program received funding to provide 117 children center-based Head Start services five (5) days a week. Services are provided at three (3) licensed childcare centers located throughout the County. The Griffin-Yeates Center (four classrooms) is located in the upper portion of the County, the Yorktown Center (one classroom) is located in the mid-portion of the County, and the Bethel Manor Center (two classrooms) is located in the lower portion of the County.

For the 2021-2022 school year, the program encountered challenges brought about by COVID-19. Among these challenges included a staffing shortage and classroom closures due to confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19. The program did not meet its funded enrollment. York County provided center-based services to students this program year. Virtual learning was offered to prevent a lapse in instruction when there was inclement weather, change in York County School District's school schedule that affected Head Start's operation, and when students had to quarantine.

Although there were obstacles that the program had to overcome, York County Head Start continued to make progress towards achieving program goals. Progress was assessed using data from several sources, including ongoing monitoring results, child and family outcomes, health and family information, and parent and staff feedback. Program staff, Policy Council, and the Board of Supervisors work in partnership with parents to meet the program's goals. During this project period, efforts have been made to address the challenges brought about by COVID-19. Staff worked in partnership with parents, community members, and other staff to provide needed services to children and their families.

The Self-Assessment Team evaluated the effectiveness of the program's systems and services during this project period in this year's self-assessment process. Policy Council members, parents, and community representatives served as members of the Self-Assessment Team. The team worked together to assess the program's progress in achieving program goals. The Self-Assessment Team engaged in dialogue around the program data presented, program strengths, systemic issues, and innovations and resources that can assist the program in making improvements. The self-assessment outcomes will assist in creating program improvement plans that will support the program's quality improvement efforts.

METHODOLOGY

To prepare for the self-assessment, the self-assessment purpose, process, and timeline were reviewed and approved by the Head Start Policy Council on December 15, 2021. The program's leadership team (e.g., HS Director, Administrative Assistants, Family Services Coordinator, Health Services Program Administrator, Nutrition Services Specialist, Education/Disabilities Coordinator, and Education Specialist) met on January 24, 2022, to discuss the program's quarterly monitoring results. At this meeting, the Director gave an analysis of the program's area of need based on each content area's quarterly summary. The reoccurring trend found within monitoring results that determined the focus of the self-assessment was the need to focus efforts on improving parent engagement. Data was gathered around this to be shared at the self-assessment meeting.

Following Head Start Performance Standards, York County Head Start's annual self-assessment process for Year 4 of the Head Start Project Period was completed virtually on January 28, 2022. At the self-assessment meeting, content area staff shared data and information from ongoing monitoring summaries, program policies and procedures, and program reports. The self-assessment process included an analysis and assessment of York County's systems,

processes, and procedures followed across content areas, given the implications of COVID-19 by the Self-Assessment Team.

2021-2022 SELF-ASSESSMENT TIMELINE

12/15/2021	Self-Assessment Training of Management Staff and Policy Council/BoS
1/28/2022	Self-Assessment Team Engagement and Orientation
1/28/2022	Conduct Self-Assessment Process-Analyze and Dialogue
1/31-2/14/2022	Collate Information and Develop Self-Assessment Reports
2/16/2022	Provide Policy Council/ BoS with a copy of the Self-Assessment Report for review and approval
3/16/2022	Governing Body final approval of the Self-Assessment Report
3/17/2022- Ongoing	The management team will use the report for planning and goal setting
4/1/2022	Submit Report to the Regional Office

KEY INSIGHTS: SUCCESSES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

York County Head Start is committed to providing quality comprehensive early childhood services to children and their families. The program believes that the care and education of children require engaging and partnering with families and other community organizations. Some of the key strengths of the program and achievements of York County Head Start over the last year included:

- Operating a Summer Screening Fair and Transition Program targeting students transitioning into the program held August 2-13, 2021.
- Purchasing supplies (e.g., personal protective equipment, sanitizing sprayers, hands-free faucets/toilets, fob entry system, etc.) and creating/revising program policies and procedures that would prevent and/or minimize the risk of COVID-19 exposure.
- Broadening mental health services and supports by implementing the Conscious Discipline curriculum, hiring a Family and Community Support Specialist to oversee mental health services, and solidifying a partnership with Elk Hill to provide weekly on-site support.

- Expanding the partnership with the Peninsula Foodbank to include a Fresh Market. The Fresh Market offers fresh fruits and vegetables to Head Start families.

The 2021-2022 Self-Assessment Team completed a review of York County Head Start’s services, systems, policies, and procedures relating to the program’s approach to promoting school readiness. The team also discussed the program's progress in meeting goals and objectives across content areas, systemic issues and innovations, and new resources. After analyzing and discussing the focus area for this year’s self-assessment, the team recommended strategies that can support the program’s ongoing quality improvement efforts.

SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS

Focus Area	Progress of the Program in meeting its Goals and Objectives
<p>Approaches to building positive, goal-oriented relationships with families and engaging them in services offered to help prepare their child and family for transitioning to school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program used email, text messaging, phone calls, social media, and written correspondence to communicate programmatic information to families. • Despite the challenges and barriers brought about by COVID-19, the program still planned and carried out parent-child activities, parent training, and advisory meetings that promoted family engagement and parent involvement in decision-making activities. • The program created and utilizes a COVID19 Dashboard to maintain and track COVID-19 data i.e., positive cases of COVID-19 and instances of child and staff having to quarantine. • Although the program was not fully enrolled, center-based services were provided to enrolled students for the required amount of time required for the grant. • Virtual services were offered during school closures to prevent a lapse in educational instruction i.e., inclement weather, classroom closures due to confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19. • Parents utilized Teaching Strategies CLOUD to review classroom plans and communicate with the classroom teacher. • The program distributed resources purchased by the program or obtained from community partners to assist families. • The program hired an MH professional, referred families to Elk

	<p>Hill, and purchased Conscious Discipline curriculum tools and resources to address children's social and emotional wellbeing.</p>
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<p>Focus Area</p>	<p>Systemic Issues/ Opportunities For Improvement</p>
<p>Approaches to building positive, goal-oriented relationships with families and engaging them in services offered to help prepare their child and family for transitioning to school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The program encountered obstacles and barriers that have impacted daily operations, program activities, and outcomes due to COVID-19. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Families are not as responsive or participatory in program offerings. Some families are not receiving information and notifications from the program. - There were not many face-to-face opportunities. Most interactions were completed virtually or over the phone as a safety precaution and to maintain physical distancing. - Staff and parents seem to have virtual meeting burnout because of the overuse of virtual platforms. - Many students are entering the program developmentally behind their peers. This could result from not being in a structured environment previously or the lack of socialization. - Classrooms and staff had irregular attendance patterns due to quarantine requirements. ● There is a rise in multi-generational families, children being cared for by non-biological parents and military families. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More military families were having a change in duty station this program year. This can be attributed to the military postponing Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders due to COVID-19. ● Parents were more nonresponsive this year. It is unknown if measures used to provide guidance, information, and direction to families were sufficient because there were limited face-to-face interactions and contact with families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Priorities have been identified for strengthening the program based on the recommendations provided by the Self-Assessment Team. The recommendations given during the self-assessment process were used to develop strategies to assist the program in making improvements. Strategies were identified to affect the school readiness, health, and safety of children enrolled in the York County Head Start program. To address program improvements identified through the self-assessment, goals have been identified with actionable steps, timelines, and person(s) responsible, which are listed below. The program will track strategies for achieving goals over the next grant cycle for effectiveness. The results will be monitored by the program’s leadership team and reported to stakeholders.

SELF-ASSESSMENT PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Focus Area	Strategies	Responsible Persons	Timeframe
<p style="text-align: center;">Approaches to building positive, goal-oriented relationships with families and engaging them in services offered to help prepare their child and family for transitioning to school.</p> <p>Goal: York County Head Start will develop and implement a plan to increase the engagement of</p>	<p>A communication plan will be developed to allow the program better-individualized approaches used to communicate with families. The plan will include some of the following action steps:</p>	<p>YCHS Leadership Team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>- Questions will be incorporated into the intake process to allow parents to provide their communication preferences (e.g., the best time and method). Responses from the questionnaire will help program staff determine what form of communication to use with families (e.g., email, text, phone call, written correspondence).</p>	<p>Administrative Assistant I</p>	<p>March 2022</p>
	<p>-The process for orienting families to the program and advertising program activities will be revised so that the program will be more intentional in explaining specific policies, activities, and expectations to parents. The program will increase the use of computer programs and technology to provide information to families so that it is more informative, personable, relatable, and clear (i.e. commercials, videos, YouTube, social media, etc.).</p>	<p>Family Services Coordinator, & Education Coordinator</p>	<p>July 2022</p>

<p>families by varying the approaches used.</p> <p><u>Desired Outcome:</u> Family engagement and involvement in crucial program activities will increase by 10% (e.g., parent surveys, the literacy program, male involvement activities, and advisory meetings.)</p>	<p>- Strategies to support the families of Dual-Language Learners will be outlined within the plan.</p> <p>The program will use different strategies to promote participation in family engagement activities. For example, two activities will be held on a Saturday, reminder stickers will be used, refrigerator magnets will be distributed, and dates will be included on the school calendar.</p> <p>The parent survey process will be reformatted to increase participation. Family Services will incorporate the surveying of parents into monthly contacts, survey questions will be revised to have more open-ended questions, and the timeframe for completing surveys will be changed based on the new format.</p> <p>The program will replace the ReadyRosie curriculum with the Conscious Discipline Parent Education Curriculum. Using the Conscious Discipline Parent Curriculum will help the program strengthen school-home connections and reinforce the Social-Emotional Learning and Classroom Management strategies being used in the classroom.</p> <p>Videos or in-person demonstrations will be used to help parents build their knowledge and skills in using education resources and tools. For example, staff will create a family-friendly video that will show families how to use literacy packet materials.</p>	<p>Family Services Coordinator</p> <p>Administrative Assistant I & Family Services Coordinator</p> <p>Family Services Coordinator</p> <p>Content Area Managers</p>	<p>June-July 2022</p> <p>June-August 2022</p> <p>August 2022</p> <p>August-May 2022</p>
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2021-2022
SELF-ASSESSMENT TEAM MEMBERS

**Parent Policy Council and
Community Representative**

Ioana Dallinger, Policy Council Parent Representative
Mridul Singh, Policy Council Community Representative

Management

Amber Richey, Head Start Director
Jessica Kercado, Administrative Assistant
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**Health, Nutrition, and
Mental Health**

Julie Conka, Health Services Program Administrator
Jessica Dorn, Family and Community Support Specialist
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**Family Partnerships and
ERSEA**

Leyda Vazquez, Family Services Coordinator
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