



York County Head Start

2019-2020

Self-Assessment Report

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INTRODUCTION

York County Head Start (YCHS) provides comprehensive, high-quality early childhood services to low-income families residing in York County, Virginia. Services provided by YCHS are designed to promote the educational, social, nutritional and emotional development of children while providing family support services to their family. The program is operated by the staff of the Division of Children and Family Services, which is within York County's Department of Community Services. The mission of Children and Family Services is *"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."* The staff of York County Head Start strives to assist families in reaching self-sufficiency and to ensure children are prepared for school.

The program's specific long and short- range goals, objectives, and strategies are outlined in the program's School Readiness Plan, Training and Technical Plan, and Program Plan. Goals and objectives are derived from information gathered from the Annual Self-Assessment, Community Assessment, Child and Family Outcomes Reports, Program Information Report, and other data sources. Feedback from program staff, parents, community representatives, Policy Council members, and the Board of Supervisors (BoS) is also used in planning and to make programmatic decisions. Members of the BoS and Policy Council actively participate in the shared program governance and decision-making.

The York County Head Start program serves 117 children and operates **five (5)** days a week. The program operates three (3) centers in locations 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. Yorktown and Bethel

Manor centers are modular units that house classrooms that operate a full day (6.5 hours per day). The Griffin-Yeates Center has three half-day (4.5 hours per day) classrooms and one full-day classroom (6.5 hours per day). All classrooms operate Monday through Friday for at least 161 days per year. All three centers are licensed through the Virginia Department of Social Services and participate in Virginia Star Quality.

York County is able to analyze a collection of data and information from a variety of sources to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of its systems and services through the self-assessment process. In this year's Self-Assessment, program staff was able to work collaboratively with policy council members, parents, and community representatives on the self-assessment team to focus on improving services for enrolled children and families in three key areas. Throughout the Self-Assessment process members of the Self-Assessment Team were able to assess the progress that the program is making towards achieving its goals and objectives. As a result of the process, York County will use the information gathered from the Self-Assessment to determine plans that will advance and improve the program's services.

METHODOLOGY

In accordance with Head Start Performance Standards, York County Head Start’s annual self-assessment process was conducted in the winter of the 2019-2020 school year. The Self-Assessment purpose, process, and timeline was reviewed and approved by the Policy Council. After this Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, the York County Head Start management team met to complete a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis. At the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis meeting, the program staff was able to discuss program information and data to determine three (3) Focus Areas for the Self-Assessment team to explore. Summaries of ongoing monitoring results, information on the progress of the program’s goals and objectives, and other program data were identified and gathered so that it could be further evaluated by the Self-Assessment (SA) team. The following individuals were a part of the self-assessment team: management and leadership staff (Director, Administrative Assistant II, Family Services Coordinator, Health Services Program Administrator, Education Coordinator, and Education Specialist); program staff (Family Services Specialist and Teaching Staff); and parents/policy council members.

To complete the Self-Assessment, a timeline of events which identified activities and person(s) involved was created and followed. This timeline was used to ensure the self-assessment process was completed. See below for the chart listing events associated with the self-assessment process and timelines:

York County Head Start Self-Assessment Timeline	
12/18/2019	Self-Assessment Overview and Training of Management Staff and Policy Council/BoS
1/27/2020	Self-Assessment Team Engagement and Orientation
1/27/2020	Conduct Self-Assessment Process-Analyze and Dialogue

1/28/2020- 2/14/2020	Collate Information and Develop Self-Assessment Reports
2/19/2020	Provide Policy Council/ BoS with a copy of the Self- Assessment Report for review and approval
3/5/2020	Governing Body final approval of the Self-Assessment Report
3/6/2020- Ongoing	Management Team uses report for planning and goal setting
4/1/2020	Submit Report to the Regional Office

Conducted on January 27, 2020, the self-assessment process included an analysis and assessment of York County’s systems, processes, and procedures followed in three specific focus areas by the Self-Assessment Team. During the Self-Assessment, information on the three specific focus areas was presented and discussed to assess and determine:

- 1) how the program was progressing towards meeting program goals, objectives, and mission;
- 2) potential systemic issues and program challenges; and
- 3) possible innovations and new resources that the program could consider.

Data and information sources used at the Self-Assessment included ongoing monitoring summaries, program policies, procedures, records, forms, and reports including the parent survey/outcomes reports, Program Information Report (PIR), Annual Report, and the Community Assessment. The Summary of results was discussed with program staff which included recommendations made by the Self-Assessment Review Team.

KEY INSIGHTS: SUCCESSES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

York County Head Start is dedicated to building a sustainable comprehensive early childhood education program that provides quality family support services to families. The program believes that the care and education of children require partnerships and putting families first will build a strong foundation for future generations. Some of the key strengths of the program and achievements of York County Head Start over the last year included:

- Implementing iPad and Smartboard technology in classrooms to enhance classroom instruction, support lesson planning, and more effectively track meal counts.
- Developing a partnership with Elk Hill to provide Therapeutic Day Treatment Services, Professional Development Training, and on-site consultation to aid the program in addressing children's social-emotional wellbeing and behavioral needs.
- Implementing the utilization of the E-DECA screening to more efficiently conduct social-emotional screenings and provide additional resources and strategies to staff and families to help address children's social-emotional development.
- Expanding the partnership with Old Towne Medical Center to include screening children for lead.
- Coordinating the program's first summer screening allowed the program to complete required health screenings and obtain health information for new students before to their entry into the program.

The 2019-2020 Self-Assessment Team completed a review of York County Head Start's services, systems, policies and procedures relating to 1) Transition and LEA Partnership; 2) Parent Engagement in Decision-Making Activities (Parenting Curriculum and Education Curriculum Training), and; 3) Approaches to Address Children's Social-Emotional Well-being

(Mental Health Services). The following were discussed for each focus area: Progress of the Program in meeting goals and objectives; systemic issues; and innovations and new resources. After analyzing and discussing these three focus areas, the team made recommendations on ways that the program can improve. The chart below summarizes the results of how the Program is progressing towards meeting its goals and objectives and systemic issues.

Focus Area	Progress of the Program in meeting its Goals and Objectives	Systemic Issues/ Opportunities for Improvement
<p>Transition and LEA Partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● York County Head Start (YCHS) has partnered with York County School Division (YCSD) to attend school readiness meetings held for families with children transitioning to kindergarten at each York County Elementary School. ● YCHS has started sharing Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) outcomes data with YCSD to assess the literacy skills and progress of 4-year old Head Start students. ● YCHS continues to implement a joint application process with YCSD. ● YCHS implemented a new application process that requires HS staff to input intake applications directly into the ChildPlus system which has improved efficiency and accuracy. ● YCHS held its first summer screening fair in addition to having a summer orientation to support children’s smooth transition into the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determining strategies to encourage parents to attend school readiness meetings and complete the kindergarten registration process for YCSD timelier. ● Problem solves to determine how to address the inconsistency in planning transition opportunities for Head Start students at elementary schools based on it being at the discretion of the Assistant Principal at each elementary school. ● Expand the summer screening fair to include returning students based on this year’s efforts only targeting new enrollees. ● Develop ways to assist parents in overcoming barriers that they may face in starting YCSD’s kindergarten registration process (e.g. lack of transportation, limited computer access, etc.) based on it is web-based.

Focus Area	Progress of the Program in meeting its Goals and Objectives	Systemic Issues/ Opportunities for Improvement
<p style="text-align: center;">Parent Engagement in Decision-Making Activities</p> <p>-Parenting Curriculum</p> <p>-Education Curriculum</p> <p>Training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● YCHS had an increased male presence in the program due to more fathers/ father-figures being involved in program activities. ● YCHS has been flexible in delivering parenting curriculum information to meet the needs of families. For example, the Family Services Specialist held 1-on-1 sessions with parents to complete parenting curriculum sessions. ● YCHS has continued to partner with CDR to offer the 24/7 Dad Curriculum. ● YCHS has implemented twice a year parent surveys (WINTER & SPRING) to obtain parent feedback and assess program effectiveness. ● YCHS content areas have combined parent events to minimize the burden on families and staff. As a result, content areas have increased their collaboration to offer opportunities for parents to engage in parent training and parent-child activities in a more streamlined manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creating avenues to obtain more input, feedback, and participation from families in program offerings e.g. parent surveys, events, etc. ● Planning activities in a way that considers the needs of families and takes into account the demographics and structure of the county. This includes finding alternative times, locations, and/ or methods for parent engagement activities so that more opportunities will be given to families. ● Developing alternative strategies to deliver Education Review Team meeting information to families that are not able to attend. This includes strategies to assist families in building a better understanding of education curriculum information and creating opportunities for parents to be engaged in decision-making activities.

Focus Area	Progress of the Program in meeting its Goals and Objectives	Systemic Issues/ Opportunities for Improvement
<p style="text-align: center;">Approaches to Address Children’s Social-Emotional Well-being</p> <p>-Mental Health Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YCHS revised its policies and procedures to improve the mental health referral process which included outlining timelines for steps in the process. • YCHS implemented the utilization of E-DECA to be more efficient in calculating DECA outcomes and obtaining strategies that parents and teachers can utilize to support children’s social-emotional development. • YCHS provided increased professional development opportunities to staff on topics relating to trauma-informed care, working with impoverished communities and behavior management. • YCHS continues to use the AI’s Pals curriculum. In addition to AI’s Pals, YCHS has piloted the Conscious Discipline Curriculum in specific classrooms and started Yoga classes for all students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to develop more partnerships and obtain additional resources to address the social-emotional well-being of students and parents based on the increased need for mental health services and supports. • Identify strategies to encourage parents to address their own mental health needs by working to combat the stigma attached to “mental health.” • Continue to train staff on the implementation and use of the E-DECA system to increase the utilization of resources available through the online system. • Implement strategies to decrease the amount of classroom instruction time that teaching staff loses based on addressing challenging behaviors in the classroom due to the increase in the number of children being identified as having concerns or needs in the area of social and emotional development.

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 program improvements. Strategies 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. Strategies outlined for the achievement of goals will be tracked 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;">Transition and LEA Partnership</p> <p><u>Goal:</u> York County Head Start staff will help prepare children for their transition to Kindergarten by creating and following a Transition Plan.</p> <p><u>Desired Outcome:</u> Transition activities will promote school readiness and help children be better prepared to enter kindergarten ready to learn.</p>	Develop a Kindergarten Transition Plan that outlines kindergarten transition activities for the school year coordinated by the program.	Education Coordinator	March 2020
	Work with YCSD Assistant Principals and Social Workers to coordinate transition activities and monitor the status of Head Start families completing the registration process.	Education Coordinator	March 2020
	Collaborate with YCSD to meet with parents at Transition events at local schools to ensure that parents obtain school registration information and requirements.	Education Coordinator & Family Services Coordinator	April-May 2020
	Plan and implement kindergarten registration meetings in the community to help parents start the kindergarten enrollment process.	Family Services Coordinator	May-August 2020

Focus Area	Strategies	Responsible Persons	Timeframe
<p>Parent Engagement in Decision-Making</p> <p>Activities</p> <p>Goal: York County Head Start will increase parent engagement in decision-making activities by implementing a new strategy to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -deliver parenting curriculum information. -provide education curriculum information. -offer alternative ways for parents to volunteer to serve on the Policy Council and vote for Policy Council representatives. <p>Desired Outcome: The program will offer a variety of opportunities for parents to be involved in decision-making activities and be engaged in their child’s education to promote their child’s school readiness.</p>	<p>Develop and implement a strategy to allow all parents to participate in the process of volunteering for the Policy Council and voting for Policy Council representative.</p>	<p>Family Services Coordinator</p>	<p>September 2020</p>
	<p>Develop and implement a strategy that allows flexibility for parents to benefit from and participate in parenting curriculum training i.e. online trainings, webinars, videos, etc.</p>	<p>Family Services Coordinator</p>	<p>February 2020-May 2021</p>
	<p>Develop and implement a strategy that allows flexibility for parents to benefit from and participate in education curriculum training i.e. face-to-face meetings, Open House, online trainings, webinars, videos, etc.</p>	<p>Education Coordinator</p>	<p>February 2020-May 2021</p>
	<p>Develop a family-friendly Fact Sheet for parents that highlights education curriculum information that will be distributed to parents that outlines education curriculum, screening, and assessment information.</p>	<p>Education Coordinator</p>	<p>September 2020</p>
	<p>Distribute and utilize a parent survey to assess their interest and preferences in training topics.</p>	<p>Family Services Specialist</p>	<p>September-October 2020</p>
	<p>Track participation in parenting curriculum training and education curriculum training.</p>	<p>Administrative Assistant I</p>	<p>February 2020-May 2021</p>

Focus Area	Strategies	Responsible Persons	Timeframe
<p>Approaches to Address Children’s Social-Emotional Well-being</p> <p>Goal: 100% of students referred for mental health services will show an improvement in their social and emotional development.</p> <p>Desired Outcome: Children referred for mental health services will have an improvement in their social and emotional development as a result of the supportive services that they receive from Head Start.</p>	<p>Order self-regulation tools for all classrooms and expand the implementation of Conscious Discipline strategies.</p> <p>Expand partnership with Elk Hill to include providing Therapeutic Day Treatment Services at Griffin-Yeates and Bethel Manor locations.</p> <p>Training on DECA, Conscious Discipline, and trauma-informed care will be offered to staff.</p> <p>Revise the Individual Behavior Plan form so that it is more goal-oriented to meet the individualized needs of students.</p> <p>Information relating to adverse childhood experiences and trauma will be incorporated into parent training topics.</p> <p>Continue implementing Yoga in the program and train parents on using Yoga and its benefits.</p> <p>Implement a process to utilize the E-DECA as a tool to assess the progress of children referred for mental health services.</p>	<p>Education Coordinator & Family Services Coordinator</p> <p>Director</p> <p>Education Coordinator</p> <p>Family Services Coordinator</p> <p>Family Services Coordinator</p> <p>Health Services Program Administrator</p> <p>Health Services Program Administrator</p>	<p>February 2020-May 2021</p> <p>February 2020-May 2021</p> <p>February 2020- May 2021</p> <p>May-August 2020</p> <p>September 2020-May 2021</p> <p>September 2020-May 2021</p> <p>May 2020-May 2021</p>

SELF-ASSESSMENT TEAM MEMBERS

Head Start	Team Members
Management	Amber Richey, Head Start Director Jessica Kercado, Administrative Assistant
Education and Disabilities	Stephanie Barton, Education Coordinator Tanisha Simmons, Education Specialist Sarah Rogone, Teacher Assistant Catherine Doyal, Teacher Assistant Iris Grimsley, Teacher Assistant
Health, Nutrition and Mental Health	Julie Conka, Health Services Program Administrator
Family Partnerships and ERSEA	Taren Thomas, Family Services Coordinator Sherry Bort, Family Services Specialist Tracy Evans, Family Services Specialist
Parent Policy Council and Community Representative	Jacqueline Linder, Policy Council Community Representative Kristie Wynn, Policy Council Community Representative

Head Start Director

Date

Policy Council Representative

Date