

# Self-Assessment Plan

## **Philosophy**

It is the intent of the management team to correlate self-assessment activities with the program's mission and vision of continuous improvement in both operation and management. The primary benefits for conducting a self-assessment are to:

- Meet the requirements of the *Performance Standards* and *Head Start Act*
- Identify program strengths and weaknesses
- Measure progress toward meeting stated goals
- Improve the quality of services to children and families
- Identify and respond to community issues
- Fully engage parents, community partners and Policy Council and Board members in the process
- Provide opportunities for staff to broaden their knowledge of program operations and management systems.

## **Conducting a Self-Assessment**

In order to provide a multi-level introspective self-assessment, three levels of program evaluation are executed. The *Self-Assessment CATscan Comprehensive Approach & Tool* published by Western Kentucky University is used. This publication ensures consistency from center to center as different aspects of the program are assessed for strengths and weaknesses. It is designed to gather information in a manner that promotes fact-finding supported by reports and documents from the recordkeeping system. The process described below is conducted annually and, combined with regular monitoring procedures, ensures continuing program compliance.

- Each center is assessed by its own center coordinator who evaluates the program performance at the center level through the following methods:
  - Conduct classroom observations, including *CLASS* observation tool as assigned
  - Review daily schedules and lesson plans – check for activities that provide individualization and that targets school readiness for all children
  - Review health services data, including screening information, referral and follow-up documentation
  - Document children with disabilities, ensuring an IFSP or IEP is on file
  - Observe all aspects of the nutrition services
  - Examine files and reports to ensure full enrollment is met and the eligibility status of each child/family is correct and documented
  - Examine attendance records
  - Examine documentation of parent involvement, family literacy, family goals and progress toward achieving the goals
  - Review parent meeting minutes and ensure parents selected representatives to serve their area on the Policy Council

- Review bulletin boards for required postings
  - Complete a Child and Family Audit form for 20% of the center's child folders to ensure information reflected on monitoring reports is accurately documented in the files
  - Review documentation of safety practices such as playground checks, facility checklist, fire drills, tornado drills, earthquake drills, emergency shut-down procedures, bus and pedestrian training, sign in/out process
- Policy Council members assist in the bulletin board and safety check review.

- Each center is assessed by the area specialist assigned to a group of centers using the same criterion as the center coordinator.
- Each center is also assessed by program area managers and the Head Start/Early Head Start Director in unannounced center visits.

After all data has been collected program management meets with the area specialists and center coordinators individually to assess strengths noted for their center as well as areas that need improvement. The center coordinator will complete a program improvement plan for each identified weakness or problem and submit to the compliance manager. The center coordinators will update progress toward meeting each goal and submit to the compliance office until the goal is achieved.

Program systems are reviewed and amended as necessary to manage processes, documents and reports that accurately reflect program operation and that meet Federal and state guidelines and regulations. The *Fiscal Addendum* from the *CATscan* instrument is used to assess control over and accountability for grant funds, property and other assets.

Program goals and objectives that encompass all areas of program operation will be developed. These goals and objectives will be used in program planning and to determine training that is reflected in the training/technical assistance plan.

The Policy Council and Board of Directors are kept informed of the progress and findings throughout the assessment process.