

2020-2021

# SELF ASSESSMENT



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# INTRODUCTION

Annually, Head Start programs must conduct a Self-Assessment of their effectiveness, progress in meeting program goals and objectives, and in implementing Federal Regulations. The Self-Assessment must measure the agency's strengths and areas for growth, allowing for continuous improvement of the program to enhance the impact for children, families, and communities.

## Tri-County Head Start

Tri-County Head Start (TCHS) began in 1972, and currently serves 908 children in Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties, in Head Start (3-4 years old), GSRP/Head Start Blends (4-years old), and Early Head Start (prenatal-3-years old) programs. TCHS operates both center-based and home-based programming, in 21 centers and 45 classrooms. The organization is a single-purpose, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

## Total Funded Enrollment - 908

Head Start - 704      Early Head Start - 204

GSRP  
Blended  
Classrooms  
73

Head Start  
Center-Based  
571

Head Start  
Home-Based  
60

Early Head  
Start Center-  
Based  
72

Early Head  
Start Home-  
Based  
132





## Context for Self-Assessment

Tri-County Head Start began the first year of their 5-year grant cycle on February 1, 2020. The Self-Assessment is conducted on the same timeline as the Fiscal Year and the Grant Year. During this year, the global COVID-19 pandemic began and disrupted routines, goals, and progress. However, TCHS prevailed and was still able to progress in goals, continuous quality improvement, and in providing the highest quality experiences for children and families.

Our Self-Assessment process was designed with the assistance of Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) professionals, input from staff, and the input and approval of the governance team. This report includes ongoing implementation and has been approved by the governance team.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the process for the Self-Assessment process was adapted to be held virtually. Inclusion of staff, families, was still gathered electronically and analyzed during our virtual Self-Assessment meeting. While disappointing and challenging that it could not be held in-person, effective solutions and recommendations were successfully developed.

“

*The relationship between my child and his teacher is the best part. She is always happy to see him virtually. Even though he isn't seeing her in person he still gets excited to do his virtual visit with her.*

- TCHS Parent

”

# 5-YEAR GOALS

Every five years, each program decides on BOLD goals and initial short-term objectives, annually reviewing and revising if necessary. The program goals for the 2020-2025 grant cycle are as follows:



## **No. 01 – Staff**

Tri-County Head Start will enhance strengths-based professional development and training opportunities for all staff members to maximize their potential and quality of services.



## **No. 02 – Community**

Tri-County Head Start will increase community awareness that we are leaders in Early Childhood Education.



## **No. 03 – Locations**

Tri-County Head Start will improve access to community resources and services for the children and families we serve.

# METHODOLOGY

## Self-Assessment Design

### Pre-Assessment

The Directors team on a regular basis reviews data as it related to the organizations program and school readiness goals, in addition to any other important agency data. The information is presented to the Board and Policy Council on a monthly basis and shared with staff.

### Process Design

The self-assessment process was designed with the assistance and input from a T/TA professional, staff, and the Board and Policy Council. The process is reviewed on an annual basis and changes and adaptations are made as necessary.

### Team Engagement

Staff, Board and Policy Council members are invited to take part of this annual process. The team for this report included the CEO/Executive Director, the Directors team, Policy Council members, Board members, and staff from each department. The team meets to learn about the self-assessment process and to analyze the data.

### Analyze & Dialogue

During a virtual meeting, the group reviewed the data, and were given the opportunity to ask further questions. They then made comments on the strengths, opportunities, and developed recommendations.

### Recommendations

From the broad list of possible recommendations, major themes were developed to narrow the focus to establish actionable recommendations for the next grant year.

### Timeline





## Self-Assessment Data Tools

Data collection tools used in the Self-Assessment process include the following:

### Monitoring Chart

This chart was designed during the creation of the Self-Assessment plan and is a document completed on an ongoing basis by the Directors team that reports progress in each goal and department.

### Parent Survey

The Parent Survey was sent out in a Survey Monkey questionnaire in February and had 192 responses. An increase over the previous two years.

### Staff Survey

The Staff Survey was sent out in a Survey Monkey questionnaire in February and had 201 responses. The same as the previous year.

### Our CQI Story

Out of the Data Exploration with ACORN the previous year, TCHS has created an ongoing CQI story that was presented to the Board, Policy Council and Staff prior to the Focus Area 1 Monitoring Review in January. This report will be updated and presented annually.

### Self-Assessment Team – Data Exploration

During the February Self-Assessment meeting the data from the above tools was combined and analyzed, and recommendations were developed.

# KEY INSIGHTS

The Self-Assessment process included examining data from key areas of the organization including program goals, the Staff and Family Surveys, School Readiness goals, and community needs.

Key Area	Strength	Opportunity for Improvement
5-year goals and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals are relevant, bold, and though lofty are achievable</li> <li>• Staff are supported in their educational and professional development</li> <li>• Community support and collaboration is strong and growing</li> <li>• Staff wellness is a top priority of the agency</li> <li>• Family needs and goals are considered and included in the goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first objective in Goal 1, needs to be updated to reflect considerations that have been brought to light in the COVID pandemic</li> <li>• Increasing the number of substitute staff to fully support staffing needs, and to determine the "magic number" of substitutes necessary.</li> <li>• Further developing Professional Development by targeting options based on staff skill level and experience</li> </ul>
School Readiness Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The instructional supports in place for children</li> <li>• Maintained progress on goals even during COVID</li> <li>• Staff are built into the budget to observe, support, and coach teaching teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train teachers in topics that observers learn to help them understand domains and expectations</li> <li>• Move all classrooms to High Scope curriculum</li> <li>• Create a training opportunity for families to learn about domains</li> </ul>



Key Area	Strength	Opportunity for Improvement
<p><b>Departmental Data Exploration - Focus on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Staff Survey</b></li> <li>• <b>Family Survey</b></li> <li>• <b>Human Resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Transportation</b></li> <li>• <b>In-Kind/Non-Federal Match</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall the agency has had continued positive outcomes in all areas</li> <li>• Turnover rates and longevity of staff</li> <li>• Families are satisfied and highly recommend the program</li> <li>• Employees are satisfied with organizational culture</li> <li>• Employees are satisfied with employee benefits</li> <li>• Newer bus fleet, means fewer repair costs</li> <li>• With the exception of this year due to COVID, in-kind numbers have always exceeded required amounts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer more education opportunities for families with dedicated family education space</li> <li>• Continue to examine and explore various options for hours and days of service</li> <li>• Add more bilingual staff and offer Spanish learning for staff</li> <li>• We provide books to help build the child's at-home library, but having an adult book drive would also contribute to helping families build their love of learning and reading</li> <li>• Display the number of books given to children annually on our website</li> <li>• Offer community learning opportunities and potentially build volunteer pool by supporting internships, and connecting with High Schools and Tech centers</li> <li>• Develop new and innovative ways to show Head Start's impact on child learning and school/life outcomes</li> <li>• Look for ways to continuously build on and improve the staff experience and organizational culture</li> </ul>

# RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPROVEMENT PLAN

## 5-Year Goals and Objectives

### Action Items

1. Revise the first objective under Goal 1 to "TCHS will monitor staff shortages to ensure reliability and quality of services, operating all classrooms without closures due to staffing by January 31, 2025".
  - a. Update 5-year goal documents
  - b. Track substitutes available vs. substitutes needed
  - c. Establish schedule for annual tracking
2. Review professional development opportunities to see where options can be broken out to be based on skill level and experience. An example could be new staff attend a 101 version, 2nd year staff attend a 201 version, and seasoned staff attend "Masters" level.
  - a. Meet with education staff to evaluate which trainings might be appropriate to break out
  - b. Look for sessions during the TCHS Expo where this might apply
  - c. Plan pre-service 2022 with this in mind

### Responsible Staff

Directors Team  
Education Team

### Time Frame

Complete steps  
by April 2022 to  
begin  
implementation

### Anticipated Outcome

1. Consistency will impact School Readiness of children because learning will be maximized. Families will be able to maintain work and education commitments. Families and children will develop routines that will set them up for success.
2. Staff will continue to expand their knowledge, enabling them to offer better and more comprehensive services to children and families. Staff retention will continue to improve.

# School Readiness Goals

## Action Items

1. The education team will review professional development opportunities to see where observation topics could fit into trainings.
2. The education team will continue to move all classrooms to High Scope by offering the opportunity to the next round of classrooms and scheduling the training for the summer of 2022.
3. Create a Family Education calendar to be implemented that begins with introductory overviews of our curriculum and then continues into more in-depth detail. Trainings will be planned and scheduled to begin in the 2022-23 program year.

### Responsible Staff

Education Team

### Time Frame

Complete steps by April 2022 to begin implementation

## Anticipated Outcome

1. Staff will gain additional experience in the expectations and be able to offer consistently high-quality services.
2. The High-Scope curriculum will result better outcomes for children and staff buy-in for training.
3. Families will develop a deeper understanding of their child's experience and be able to share their knowledge with others.

# Departmental Data Exploration

## Action Items

1. When exploring potential locations, keep in mind a dedicated space for family education and begin to develop a family education calendar, that can be implemented in the 2022-23 program year.
2. Review the number of bilingual staff we currently have and determine how many is an adequate number that will go above the OHS requirements, but will assist in creating a more culturally inclusive experience for monolingual and bilingual children.
3. Work with the Policy Council to first determine interest and need an adult book drive, then determine if that is a project they would be interested in facilitating.
4. Create a plan to share in the community our need for community support to encourage additional partnerships and volunteer opportunities.

### Responsible Staff

Directors Team  
Policy Council

### Time Frame

Complete steps  
by April 2022 to  
begin  
implementation

## Anticipated Outcome

1. Families will gain valuable knowledge and support in their learning.
2. We will continue to move towards a more inclusive and culturally aware organization that demonstrates the importance by imbedding it into what we do, how we teach, and what we focus on.
3. Policy Council will gain confidence in taking on an exciting project that will benefit all and help to build home libraries. Having a robust library at home impacts children's ability to learn to love reading and learning.
4. The community will become more aware of ways that they can support our work and it will help to build in-kind opportunities.

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This report is also available at [www.tricountyhs.org](http://www.tricountyhs.org).  
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