

2021-2022

# SELF ASSESSMENT



**TRI-COUNTY  
HEAD START**  
Berrien • Cass • Van Buren

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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) and Early Head Start (prenatal-3-years old) programs. TCHS operates both center-based and home-based programming, in 23 centers and 46 classrooms. The organization is a single-purpose, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

## Total Funded Enrollment - 908

Head Start - 704      Early Head Start - 204

Head Start  
Center-Based  
656

Head Start  
Home-Based  
48

Early Head  
Start Center-  
Based  
76

Early Head  
Start Home-  
Based  
128





## 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. The global COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact our communities, lives, and services the program was able to provide.

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.

The Self-Assessment process returned to an in-person process. Inclusion of staff, families, and community partners was prioritized during the meetings.

**“ I love our Head Start family. We always feel welcomed, don't feel judged about our circumstances, and I see that the teachers value my child. The teachers help me understand ways to help my child when he has big emotions. Thank you so much for everything you do. - 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.

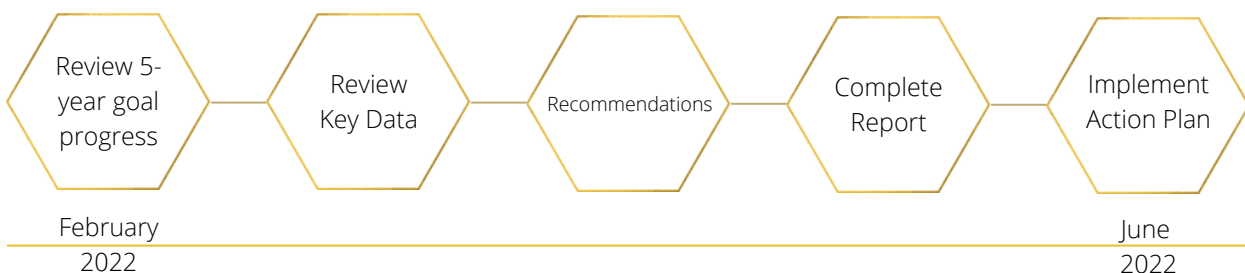
### Analyze & Dialogue

During a 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 146 responses.

### **Staff Survey**

The Staff Survey was sent out in a Survey Monkey questionnaire in February and had 196 responses.

### **Self-Assessment Team – Data Exploration**

During the February Self-Assessment meeting the data from the above tools and department specific data 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>In Goal 1, reliability goals are not being met, not only due to pandemic related closures but also the early education staffing crisis. Several classrooms were unable to open due to staffing and consistency and reliability was impacted.</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 year 2 of COVID</li> <li>Increased the number of prenatal families served</li> <li>Children are still meeting school readiness goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Move all classrooms to High Scope curriculum</li> <li>More training opportunities for staff and families on the assessment system</li> <li>Smooth transitions between EHS to HS, and HS to K, for dual-language learners</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>Family Services</b></li> <li>• <b>Health Services</b></li> <li>• <b>Human Resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Facilities &amp; Learning Environments</b></li> <li>• <b>Transportation</b></li> <li>• <b>Operations</b></li> <li>• <b>Finance</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>• Wage Scale continues to increase</li> <li>• We have increased the number of FA's</li> <li>• Staff value being a part of decision making processes</li> <li>• We have an updated bus fleet, leading to lower maintenance costs</li> <li>• Mental Health Consultants on staff, impact staff, children, and families wellbeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to assist more staff in obtaining CDA's and AA's</li> <li>• Need more teachers with BA's</li> <li>• Need more bilingual staff</li> <li>• More families are requesting that classes are in session Monday - Friday</li> <li>• Need to create plan for more non-federal share</li> <li>• Need to create plan to better engage families in decision making at the center level</li> <li>• Continue with new location plan to allow program to better control maintenance costs.</li> </ul>

# RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPROVEMENT PLAN

## Action Items

- Address staffing issues, and need for additional staff members to better support classrooms and ensure reliability of services. This will include asking for a slot reduction to improve the quality of services.
- Lower the number of Head Start children per classroom to better support children's social-emotional learning and improve quality outcomes.
- Increase Conscious Discipline support in classrooms by adding a Conscious Discipline coordinator and investing in additional training to truly embed it into the culture of the organization. This will better support staff and children's overall wellbeing.
- Revise the process for Parent Activity funds to drive engagement at the center level.

### Responsible Staff

Directors Team  
Board and Policy  
Council

### Time Frame

Complete steps  
by December  
2022

### 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. Conscious Discipline support will impact child outcomes and staff wellbeing.
3. Families will feel more engaged with the program and provide valuable input in addition to learn life long leadership skills.

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TCHS is a 501(c)3 funded through grants and community support  
This report is also available at [www.tricountyhs.org](http://www.tricountyhs.org).  
Approved by Board and Policy Council: June 24, 2022



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