Head Start A to Z:  ERSEA

Eligibility
Recruitment
Selection
Enrollment
Attendance
Looking at ERSEA from a Systems Perspective

**Program Governance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What roles do the Board, Policy Council, and management staff have in the planning and development of ERSEA processes?</th>
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<tr>
<th>When does the program train the Board and Policy Council on the ERSEA process? What does the training for board and Policy Council Members who determine eligibility on applicable Federal regulations look like?</th>
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<tr>
<th>How does the Board, Policy Council, and staff receive information and updates on ERSEA, such as the selection criteria, the recruitment processes and enrollment?</th>
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**Communication**

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<tr>
<th>How are parents kept informed about the program?</th>
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<th>How are families made aware of enrollment opportunities?</th>
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<tr>
<th>Are staff involving the community into the ERSEA process?</th>
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<tr>
<th>Does staff use the family engagement to strengthen the ERSEA process?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are ALL staff practiced at and understand the value of using active listening and other skills to ensure that families feel welcomed?</strong></td>
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**Ongoing Monitoring**

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<th><strong>How is the ERSEA process built into the ongoing monitoring system?</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>How is ERSEA discussed as part of solution building and problem solving at the management level?</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>How is ERSEA reflected in the program options offered in your program?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Recordkeeping and Reporting</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>What reports are provided to the Board, Policy Council, staff, and community partners?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who is responsible for recording ERSEA data, for reporting the information, and to whom is it reported, i.e. enrollment and attendance?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
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<tr>
<td>What internal system is used to record and track ERSEA data?</td>
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<td>What data is tracked and collected regularly? How do you analyze the data to track the</td>
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<td>progress of children and families?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self Assessment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Which program goals or short term program and financial objectives support ERSEA?</td>
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</table>
Are there indirect or direct concerns that connect back to eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment or attendance?

**Human Resources**

Who is leading and coordinating the ERSEA services?

At what level of the organization is the ERSEA Coordinator operating?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What knowledge and skill does the ERSEA Manager/Lead require?</th>
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<tr>
<th>What training, mentoring, or supervision does the ERSEA staff need?</th>
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<tr>
<th>Are additional staff required to build a quality ERSEA system? What roles?</th>
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## Fiscal Management

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What existing fiscal resources can be used to better support ERSEA efforts?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What community resources are available to support the program in operating a quality ERSEA system, e.g. recruitment?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is your program’s cost per child? How does ERSEA impact it?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are you using non-federal share when appropriate? Describe how.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How is your program monitoring average daily attendance (ADA) rates?</td>
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<td>Are any potential partners identified? What is their contribution?</td>
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### Facilities, Materials and Equipment

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<th>Question</th>
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<td>Is there enough classroom space to serve the funded enrollment slots?</td>
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<td>Does your program provide transportation? What difference does it make in attendance?</td>
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</table>

### Planning

<table>
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<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>How do you incorporate ERSEA when developing your program goals, school readiness goals, and family engagement goals?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are ERSEA elements evidenced in short term program and financial objectives, action plans and service area plans?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do you use the results of your Community Assessment, Self-Assessment, Program Information Report (PIR), and other external data to support ERSEA?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do you involve parents in planning, implementation, and follow-up as it relates to ERSEA?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do you do to ensure that children with disabilities can access program services?</td>
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**Thoughts on Recruitment and Your Marketing Strategy**

The non-profits or public sectors are led by the mission and the marketing that often focuses on telling the story about the mission. It describes services and how those services can help and empower others. In the advertising world, the focus is not so much on the product you are selling, but on the consumer and the action you want them to take.

The Head Start mission is compelling and significant. Telling your story can go a long way to getting support from the community, both volunteering of time and donations. Still, for recruitment purposes what works best is to focus on the action you want consumers to take. Our marketing should target the following four groups of people:

1. Parents/guardians with children birth to five
2. Pregnant women
3. Potential referral sources
4. Current parents

**The goal** is to get families, to enroll their children and to get pregnant women to participate in Early Head Start. For referral sources, it is to actively promote your program and encourage families to enroll. For current parents, it is to have them share their positive experiences, so that their neighbors and friends will enroll.

**Use a variety of methods, strategies, and venues** to get the word out.

- Distribute flyers
- Post on community resources websites
- Post on your own website and Facebook page
- Place an announcement in local newspapers

**Using Social Media and Technology**

Websites and Facebook pages are a great way to get the word out. It is important that your website is up-to-date and easy to navigate. Having a public Facebook page and twitter feed are easy and inexpensive ways to connect to the community you serve. There is a risk when using these venues. Make sure that you have a dedicated person who regularly posts new updates, monitors for inappropriate or detrimental shares. It is important to establish a social media policy for staff and current families. Finally, be smart on how you allocate your resources when it comes to social media. Things are constantly changing. Periodically assess views and response rates to see where you need to focus. Ask parents about their preferred method for receiving information through electronic means. For example, many programs are finding that parents now a days respond more to texts than emails.

**Make it easy for families to take the first step**
All written material should be direct and to the point. Focus on the who, what, where, when, and how. Provide them with a website and an email address and phone number, of a specific staff member, where they can more information. Do not list all the requirements in your initial marketing flyers and posts. Parents may perceive that application process being complicated and taking too much time. Too much information can be overwhelming and people do not have time to read paragraphs. Make sure your flyers and other written materials are in plain language. Plain language is not dumbed down language; it is language that is accessible to a wide variety of audiences. Written materials should also reflect the languages spoken by the families in your communities.

- **Staff a table at a community event**
  Host an activity that attracts families and children to your table. Talk with parents about your program and take the time to answer any questions. Make sure they leave with a flyer with easy to follow directions on enrolling their children. Also collect their name, email address, and mailing address and follow-up with an email about how good it was meeting them, again informing them of the opportunity.

- **Enlist help from current parents**
  Have teachers distribute flyers to current parents and ask them to share the information with friends and family. Encourage them to share what they love about the program with others.

- **Go to where your potential families are**
  Parents are busy and often overwhelmed. Going to them rather than having them come to you is easier for parents and more doable. Also, by meeting face to face with potential families, your program is no longer an abstract, but a friendly, welcoming person and place.

**Relationship building is the foundation to getting the word out**

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**An example of thinking outside the box**

A local health center, in Boston, had great success at getting more women, in low-income communities, to have mammograms. They went to hair salons, laundromats, and corner stores often frequented by their target audience. Paid peer counselors, who live in the community and are breast cancer survivors, share their stories and information about the program, provide onsite sign-ups and eventually mammograms through a travelling mammography van.
• **Build relationships with potential referral resources**
  Dropping off flyers, and asking referral sources to distribute or post on their bulletin board, at an office such as a pediatrician’s, WIC, food stamps, or community–based programs is a first step, but often not enough. It is important to find the key people in the office who will actively share the information with families. Develop a relationship with this person throughout the year. Let them know that recruitment time and ask if they have time to meet in person with you. Do not forget to thank the current parents and potential referral sources, who helped spread the word; making it a positive experience for them.

Again the goal is to get parents to take action. Many of these strategies initially take a lot of work, particularly in reaching out to members in the community and building those connections. People are more likely to respond when they hear about an opportunity from a person they know and trust.

The **First Contact** with a potential family is crucial, Whether it is face-to-face, via phone, internet or paper correspondence, make sure you use a respectful and warm tone and there is a quick follow-up. This may seem like commonsense, but often a family’s follow-through with the enrollment process is determined by that first contact. It is not just the recruitment person’s responsibility. Anyone could be the first contact. All staff should consider themselves ambassadors for the program. This includes volunteers, particularly those answering the phones. Make sure everyone has been trained on good customer service and has the basic information and understanding about the ERSEA coordinator. The name, email address, and phone number for the enrollment manager should be easily accessible to staff and volunteers so they can refer families to the right person who can answer questions.

• **Use this 3-phase framework to target the children and families in your community**
  The **ATTRACT** phase helps you to be clear about who your best customers are, what they need, and how you should connect with them

  ✓ Do you have a strong understanding of their wants, needs and interests?

  ✓ Are you eager to learn new ways to learn new sources to attract the children and families?

  ✓ What is unique about the services you offer to children and families?

The **ENROLL** phase helps you create content that connects the families and guides them through the process.

  ✓ What strategies or content moves the families to enroll their children.
In general, how do the families make decisions?

How can I learn more about what attracts families in our current work environment?

The WOW phase you want to be able to anticipate the needs of the families in your community, go the extra mile and deliver more than what is required.

Have you considered a plan for going above and beyond in some aspect of school readiness or family services?

Do you want to learn new ways to work on retention of children and families as well as successful movement of families beyond the HS/EHS program?

What is your referral program?

Resources

Books and Articles


Murray, Kris (2012) Child Care Phone Skills to Increase Your Enrollments Kris Murray - Child Care Marketing Coach https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihF5YMhaYbY

Murray, Kris (2013) One Quick & Easy Step For Better Enrollment Tours: Get Teachers Involved! - Child Care Marketing Kris Murray - Child Care Marketing Coach https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZAq9gY4Q8k

NSGD (2009) Suffering from Information Overload? Help your product, service or issue stand out Naomi Shacter Graphic Design

Websites

Center for Plain Language  http://centerforplainlanguage.org/resources/

The resources page for the Center for Plain Language provides tips and resources on getting started using plain language, includes a definition and guidelines of plain language.

Information and resources to ensure that your internal and external communications are clear. © Clear Language @ Work Inc.

Tips and tools from the federal government’s website on plain language.
Things to Consider for Maintaining Funded Enrollment

Over the years, more definitive research has shown the importance of education in the early years and the value of school readiness. Shonkoff (2009) points out in *Investment in Early Childhood Development Lays the Foundation for a Prosperous and Sustainable Society*:

“... stable, responsive, nurturing relationships and rich learning experiences in the earliest years provide lifelong benefits for learning, behavior and both physical and mental health”.

As early education professionals we know this. Quite possibly, this notion is why you chose early education as your career path. There are also families out there who are very aware of this notion. Yet, there is another population of families out there who may not know what an early education brings to their children as well as to themselves. This is the population we want to give first priority to enroll in our programs. And once they are enrolled, we must use our professional skills, knowledge and abilities to keep the children and families in our programs.

It is not as simple as ringing a school bell and all parents bring their children to the little red school house. Infant, toddler, and preschool education is not a requirement in many communities. So, we are faced with the challenge both to ensure we attract the children and families with the greatest need and to keep them in the program.

This tip sheet looks at maintaining funded enrollment from a system’s perspective, considering not only the classroom, but all aspects of enrollment.

**Is the Community Assessment updated and is that data used to determine where the slots are?**

- Understand the importance and **value** of conducting a Community Assessment (**ALL** staff)
- Use a team approach to conduct the Community Assessment (Suggestion: The ERSEA Manager serves as the organizer. See *ERSEA Suggested Function, Knowledge, and Skills*
- Consider a variety of techniques to collect data
- Analyze and summarize the information to make decisions about ERSEA (i.e. recruitment, selection criteria, etc.)

**Does your program have an ERSEA process?**

- ERSEA is seen as a management function, not just family engagement.
- The ERSEA process should include:
  - Timelines
- Board and Policy Council’s responsibilities throughout the process
- Application process
- Recruitment process and procedures
  - Selection Criteria
    - Do you have a committee that helps develop the selection criteria?
    - How do you know staff are using the criteria consistently?
  - Eligibility
    - What documents are accepted for income and age eligibility for Head Start (HS) or Early Head Start (EHS)
    - What process do you have in place for serving categorically eligible children and families?
- Enrollment policies and procedures
  - When do you re-verify a family’s income?
  - How do you determine families to re-enroll - Refer to 1305.7(a)?
  - How is the waiting list maintained?
  - What is the enrollment process? How are enrollment decisions made?
  - What reports are maintained for enrollment?
- Attendance Procedures
  - What happens when a child is absent?
  - When there is chronic absenteeism?
  - At what point do you consider an enrollment vacancy?
  - Do your procedures have an effective system for tracking and follow-up?
- Documentation
  - What documents are accepted to verify income and child’s age?
  - What steps do you take to ensure all documentation is filed properly?
  - What is your process for maintaining the eligibility determination records?

How does fiscal management fit into the ERSEA process?
- Develop the ERSEA process with fiscal staff involved
- Ensure that the budget includes funds (as appropriate) to support the ERSEA process

What recruitment strategies are in place?
- Develop a recruitment process as part of your ERSEA process
• Recruitment is ongoing as it relates to program/community relationships
• Board, parents, staff, and community at a minimum are aware of recruitment (and may be involved)
• Provide recruitment training and support for Board, Policy Council, parents, partners, and staff
• Use the Community Assessment data to ensure you are targeting the population most in need and to determine if you are using the strategies that connect with the targeted population

**Does staff know the families in the community and have relationships with them?**

• Ask Family Engagement Manager and the ERSEA Coordinator to create a staff development training focused on working with families and building positive working relationships with them, methods on how to collect data and accurate eligibility information from third party sources; explain program policies procedures that describe actions taken against staff, families or participants who intentionally attempt to provide or provide false information.
• Bring on board staff who live in the community (when possible)
• Consider the organizational culture of your program, it impacts relationship-building with families
• Encourage volunteerism at the centers

**Who is building community relationships?**

• Represent your program well (as the Director/Executive Director, you may be the face of your program in the community)
• Identify and work with partners to provide additional resources to support delivery of HS/EHS/EHS-CC services
• Encourage managers and, in some cases, other staff to nurture relationships they may have with service providers. It is important that all staff know how to represent the program. Staff should ensure that their community partners:
  o Understand and support HS core values and the program’s mission
  o Meet regularly (as necessary)
  o Understand and support the ERSEA process by being involved in efforts to enroll families
What is the turnover rate in your program?

Low staff turnover is desirable. High staff turnover make services less attractive to parents, resulting in a decrease in enrollment size and reduced sustainability. Consider the following suggestions:

- Check for understanding and clarity. Does staff understand and accept the HS/EHS vision as well as the organization’s vision?
- Ensure, to the degree possible, your organization offers competitive salaries to retain the staff who know the families and the community
- Allow staff input in the development of the ERSEA process (make course corrections when needed)
- Promote teamwork on behalf of the children and families (use the management team to ensure the message is promulgated throughout the program)
- Encourage individual uniqueness as an asset (model this concept with your management team)

Do you have a pulse on the changing demographics?

- Maintain a seat at the table of community planning committees that support HS/EHS eligible children and families
- Track and monitor movement of currently enrolled families in an effort to meet the families’ ongoing needs
- Use Community Assessment information to plan activities that support HS/EHS/EHS-CC eligible children and families
- Meet with community agencies to learn about emerging populations or other families who meet HS/EHS/EHS-CC eligibility requirements
- Look at trends and patterns of why children and families are leaving the program. Brainstorm viable solutions. Make course corrections. Follow-up to determine if the solution is working.
- Do visual scans of the community (often times you see and hear about changes in the community before they are officially recognized)
- Use the Community Assessment to ensure the program options and program types meet the needs of the community your program serves.

Do you have a pulse on the political climate of your community?

- Investigate your program’s reputation in the community...(you may need to resuscitate the program’s reputation in the community; work with the Board, Policy Council, management team, and staff)
• Forge relationships with key players such as local, state, and HS representatives
• Position yourself to be informed and stay current about national, local, and regional initiatives or issues that impact your program.

Does your staff operate from a systems perspective?

• Ensure **all** management staff understand how their content areas impact the ERSEA system
• Emphasize the importance of a ‘non-silo approach’ to all work. This is essential for ERSEA.
• Promote opportunities for staff to see the value in cross-functional training and implementation of work activities to support the ERSEA process and program operations
• Promote the importance of systems thinking to tap into a higher level of analyzing, problem solving and strategizing.

Have you considered effective marketing strategies?

• Engage in a marketing campaign. BUT first evaluate your program and make corrections that could render marketing strategies ineffective.
• Develop a marketing plan that supports the program’s ERSEA process (See Tip sheet: Recruitment and Your Marketing Strategy )
• If feasible, refer to a person with marketing expertise (consider a board member it could be an opportunity for in-kind)
• Evaluate the effectiveness of the marketing strategies. Be sure to incorporate ideas of both staff and parents of currently enrolled children (this applies even if you engage a marketing expert)
• Use information from the Community Assessment
• Generate messages that emphasize the importance of school readiness
• Know what makes your program special
• Know your competition
The Importance of Attendance in Early Childhood Education and its Connection to School Readiness

Introduction

The Head Start Program Performance Standards are reflective of best practice in regards to the importance of focusing on children being ready for school. Research has established a direct correlation between regular attendance in early childhood programs and long-term, consistent success in school. A teacher can plan engaging intentional activities, but if the child is not in attendance, he/she will not learn. The child will not attain the basic foundation needed for subsequent learning and as a result fall further behind his/her peers.

Studies show that low-income children are more likely to miss school due to illness, lack of reliable transportation, conflicts with parent work schedules and a general misunderstanding about the importance of preschool. Head Start programs can play a crucial role in addressing these barriers through the comprehensive services provided: health and safety, parent engagement and support and transportation. Habits established in preschool and the early school years, such as attending on a regular basis, are known to follow children throughout all of their school years including high school and college.

Instilling a culture of regular attendance is a program management issue. All stakeholders and management systems must be involved.

Section 641A(h)(2) of the Head Start Act requires all Head Start programs to report on a monthly basis their actual enrollment and, if their actual enrollment is less than their funded enrollment, the reasons for this shortfall.

**Performance Standards**, Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations:

- **1305.8(a)** When the monthly average daily attendance rate in a center-based program falls below 85 percent, a Head Start program must analyze the causes of absenteeism. The analysis must include a study of the pattern of absences for each child, including the reasons for absences as well as the number of absences that occur on consecutive days.
- **1305.8(b)** If the absences are a result of illness or if they are well-documented absences for other reasons, no special action is required.
- **1305.8(c)** In circumstances where chronic absenteeism persists and it does not seem feasible to include the child in either the same or a different program option, the child’s slot must be considered an enrollment vacancy.
The data snapshot revealed still existing reading proficiency disparities despite improvements of proficiency rates over the past decade. It further emphasized and confirmed the past findings of children more likely to graduate from high school and be economically successful in adulthood when they were able to read proficiently by the end of third grade. At the current rate of reading disparities, it predicted a surplus of 6 million individuals without a high school diploma to be unemployed because they lacked necessary educational credentials by 2020. Reading proficiency disparities remain prevalent across income and racial groups.

The Kids Count policy report found attendance in quality early care and education to promote children to have higher test scores, fewer behavior problems, and lower rates of grade repetition. It suggested elementary schools to collaboratively implement strong parent engagements to monitor and address absenteeism in early grades to ensure children with exposure to full-day effective instruction.

A study of 640 children attending schools in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. The data suggests that, chronic absence in kindergarten and first grade negates the benefits of entering kindergarten with strong school readiness skills. One conclusion is that those working on attendance issues and school readiness need to work hand in hand.

The research brief findings emphasizing the necessity of engaging families in order to effectively reduce chronic absenteeism. Collaborative efforts of schools and organizations could help families overcome barriers to prevent absenteeism and promote academic success, especially for families of low-income as poor attendance was significantly prevalent of children from low-income backgrounds.


A PowerPoint presentation on the importance of attendance in Head Start. It showcases several projects/campaigns addressing the issue of absenteeism in early childhood. These include: Community Action Program’s Tulsa County Early Childhood Initiative, Learning Leadership and Families: On Time and On Target Campaign and Families in School’s Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors.


http://www.edcentral.org/adding-absences-coming-short/

An article summarizing the findings from Attendance Work’s recent report, *Absences Add Up: How School Attendance Influences Student Success*. It highlighted absenteeism at all grade levels highly associated with absenteeism during preschool and kindergarten and the significance of identifying current prevalence of early absenteeism data to start the conversation to implement preventative and collaborative solutions.


A research brief on the critical importance of tracking attendance in the early grades. Tracking average daily attendance (ADA) is only the first step in analyzing student attendance rates. Simply looking at ADA may give an impression that attendance rates are better than they actually are. To be effective schools need to do a more comprehensive analysis of data. Recommendations on what schools and school systems can do are provided.


http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_837.html

A thorough research-based case for why regular attendance in the early grades is so important to life-long learning. Factors contributing to chronic absences, particularly among low-income children, are identified. (A child with an attendance rate of 90 percent or less is determined to be chronically absent.) It is essential that staff, parents and the community members work together to promote a culture of the importance of regular attendance at all age levels.


http://earlyed.newamerica.net/blogposts/2010/on_time_attendance_even_in_the_early_years_it_matters_a_lot-30827

A blog posting citing a nationwide survey of Head Start programs that indicates that in half of the classrooms three to six children arrive late every week across all types of communities including urban, suburban and rural. Children who are tardy miss an opportunity to connect with peers and prevents a smooth transition into the classroom. Steps suggested that preschool programs can take towards instilling good habits and a culture of the importance of early childhood education and being present.
A case was made for why cities need to pay attention to school attendance. Suggested strategies for addressing the issue were provided. As well, three case studies of cities that developed and implementing campaigns to address chronic absences in their schools were showcased. These cities included: Baltimore, New York, and Oakland, California.

New America Foundation’s report on utilizing child Development Accounts as a strategy in planning and implementing appropriate and improving current early childhood interventions. The report described children’s attendance in Head Start or child development centers experience positive effects on educational achievement and associated their attendance with longitudinal outcomes in reading and math achievements.

Attendance Work’s report on national testing data, further connecting school attendance with student achievement and the significance of early preventative interventions in addressing early chronic absenteeism to reduce achievement gaps especially for students from low-income backgrounds.

A blog highlighted Tulsa’s Head Start Programs’ two-prong approach for addressing chronic absences. In one year, they went from have 36 percent of children attending 90 percent or more of the time to 52 percent of children attending 90 percent or more of the time. In addition, 88 percent of children with good attendance met the organization’s literacy goals compared to 78 percent of the children with poor attendance.

An Augusta Chronicle newspaper article analyzed Georgia Department of Education data on attendance. The data underlined the importance of regular attendance for children living in poverty. Chronic absences in kindergarten tend to translate to lower tests scores in fifth grade for children receiving free or reduced lunch. It was also found that increasing the school attendance of public school students by just three percent had a positive impact on testing.
A blog post highlighted the National Center for Children in Poverty report on chronic absenteeism in early elementary grades which reports that 1 in 10 kindergarten and first grade students miss at least 10 percent (or one month) of the school year and the first “Attendance awareness Month. This blog post also briefly described the negative effects on chronic early absenteeism found in other scholarly articles, specifically for at-risk children.


An article proposed 10 new policy ideas to the 111th Congress to improve access, quality, and alignment in early education from preschool. In the 10th idea, it highlighted the necessity of targeting chronic early absenteeism as a strategy to reduce elementary absenteeism.


An article cited the National Center for Children in Poverty report on chronic absenteeism in early elementary grades which reports that 1 in 10 kindergarten and first grade students miss at least 10 percent (or one month) of the school year. In some urban schools, the rate was even higher with 1 in 4 kindergarteners and first graders missing at least 10 percent of the school year. One conclusion was that high-quality early education programs are crucial to addressing chronic absences in the early school years.


The research summarized the strong correlation between social class and children’s cognitive development specific to school absences and academic success during kindergarten and first grade. It found children of lower socioeconomic status who had good attendance rates gained more literacy skills and the effects of schooling on cognitive development were stronger, specific to literacy development during early elementary school.


The brief identified the prevalence of absenteeism in the early childhood schooling and the impact of family income and other factors on early absenteeism. It also described the negative effects of early absenteeism on academic success and later attendance.

From the Baltimore Education Research Consortium, the brief revealed absence during the first month of school to predict chronic absenteeism for the rest of the year. It revealed that students who missed fewer than 2 days in September typically had good attendance rates for the rest of the year. When compared with students who were absent fewer than 2 days, students who missed 2 to 4 days in September were 5 times more likely to be chronically absent and students who missed more than 4 days were over 16 times as likely to be chronically absent.

**Tools**

**Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors Network**  

A peer-to-peer training program sponsored by Families in Schools. (The National Head Start Association is a partner.) The program seeks to improve the outcomes of Latino children by focusing on building the capacity and confidence of parents to be advocates for their children. Attendance and other education issues are addressed.

**Attendance Works**  
[www.attendancework.org](http://www.attendancework.org)

A national and state initiative that promotes better policy and practice around school attendance.

**Attendance Works. Attendance in the early grades: Infographic. (2014).**  

An infographic on who is most impacted by absences, why attendance matters, and describes a few steps schools and communities can make to improve attendance.

**Attendance Works. The Power of Positive Connections Toolkit. (2014).**  

A toolkit that focuses on promoting preventative, supportive approaches in targeting attendance and achievement to help districts and schools identify the most at risk students and explore solutions with parents and community partners.

**Early Head Start Tip Sheet No. 11 Does the 85 percent Monthly Average Daily Attendance Rate Rule Apply to EHS Programs?**  

A tip sheet that provides clarification on Performance Standards 1305.8(a), 1305.8(b) and 1305.8(c) as it applies to Early Head Start, planning and programming considerations as well as resources.

**Interactive Homelessness Lesson 4 Enrollment**
An online interactive guide on tracking attendance and ensuring that families experiencing homelessness receive/access support and services they need so that their children can regularly attend HS/EHS programs and be successfully integrated in the classroom.
ERSEA Scenario
Mountain Laurel Head Start/Early Head Start
and the Ghimirey Family

The Community Assessment for Mountain Laurel Head Start/Early Head Start (ML HS/EHS) program was conducted during the 2013-2014 program year. The demographics showed that Bhutanese families resettled in the community in the winter of 2012. When the ML HS/EHS reached out to Catholic Charities to find out more about the families, they found out there were only five families resettled to the community. They also discovered that none of the children were infant, toddler, or preschool age.

ML HS/EHS has worked hard to build a stellar reputation in the community over the past five years. So, in October 2014 when new Bhutanese families were being resettled to the community ML HS/EHS quickly learned about the resettlement through informal channels. Two family engagement staff, returning from their work in the community, noticed the families in the community and brought it to the attention of the ERSEA Manager, Earl Fann and the Family Engagement team during their weekly meeting.

Mr. Fann, through communication with Catholic Charities, determined that a considerable number of Bhutanese families were resettled to the community. Further Mr. Fann spoke with the Head Start director. Now, it is a high priority item on the agenda for the next management team meeting. ML HS/EHS must engage the families. They also know they have to reach out in a manner that is culturally sensitive, effective, and supportive of the families’ needs.

The management team meeting convenes, and as expected, New Families in the Community: What is our Plan of Action? is the first item on the agenda.
Meet the Ghimirey family:

Mr. and Mrs. Ghimirey and their two children, four-year-old son Prakash and eighteen-month-old daughter Nirmala, live in central Pennsylvania. Their family was expelled from Bhutan along with other ethnic Nepalese. They had lived in a refugee camp in Nepal since 1995. The Ghimirey family was resettled to central Pennsylvania by Catholic Charities three weeks ago because Mrs. Ghimirey’s elderly aunt and uncle were resettled to the area in 2012. However, there were quite a few Bhutanese families that also were resettled to this community. They practice the Hindu religion and speak Nepali, Bhutanese, and a few words of English.

Although the family suffered tremendous hardship in the refugee camp in Nepal, Mrs. Ghimirey had developed many friendships with other refugee families and had the support of several cousins with young children like her own. Mrs. Ghimirey was able to get some work on a nearby farm for her family’s survival. Her cousin, Chandra, watched the children while she worked. Now here in the United States, she is faced with few resources and less support.

Usually energetic and positive, Mrs. Ghimirey finds that she has difficulty sleeping and little strength to engage both children. Mrs. Ghimirey is very hesitant to take her four-year-old to the park because she is afraid of walking alone in the neighborhood. She is also exhausted because she is breastfeeding both children.

Although she loves her husband, she cannot turn to him for support to care for the children and the household. He seems stressed and worried about finding work. She doesn’t know where to turn. She wants to learn English and work too, but her cousin, Chandra, is still in Nepal and her aunt and uncle are too frail to provide child care. It turns out the family lives six blocks from Mountain Laurel Head Start/Early Head Start program.
Your task: What questions should be asked and answered during the management team meeting to ensure that the families will receive services and support from the ML HS/EHS program?

Eligibility:

1. How will we determine which families are eligible for Head Start or Early Head Start?

2. 

3. 

4.
Recruitment:

1. What do we need to know about cultural and religious background?

2.

3.

4.
Selection:

1. Do we need to revisit the selection criteria? How will it be different?

2.

3.

4.
Enrollment:

1. Have we reached our funded enrollment? If yes or no, talk about what happens.

2.

3.

4.
Attendance:

1. What will we need to do to ensure children attend regularly and parents are engaged?

2.

3.

4.
ERSEA Suggested Function, Knowledge, and Skills

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

- Organize and participate in development of Community Assessment
- Develop, maintain, and manage system to track eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance of children to comply with federal and state regulations
- Verify income and eligibility qualifications of children and families
- Ensure applications are complete and data is accurately entered into program database or other type of tracking system
- Create and maintain recordkeeping and reporting policies for waitlists, enrollment, attendance, timelines, schedules, and procedures in accordance with designated state and federal program requirements
- Ensure ongoing monitoring, tracking, follow-up and analysis of enrollment data, and produce regular reports for management meetings
- Maintain enrollment forms, ensuring information is current, accurate, and disseminated to all necessary staff to meet program requirements
- Organize recruitment activities to provide information and enrollment opportunities to children and families
- Supervise ERSEA staff, monitoring performance, providing evaluations, facilitating goals setting and professional development
- Maintain funded enrollment and sufficient waiting list
- Compile and submit Program Information Report (PIR) data
- Attend meetings and training as required
- Report to the HS/EHS Director

Knowledge and Skills:

- Demonstrate knowledge of 45 CFR Part 1305 of the Head Start Program Performance Standards and other legislative requirements as stipulated in the Head Start Act
- Ability to read, analyze, and interpret data and other written materials
- Ability to use Community Assessment data to construct an ERSEA process that is reflective of the program’s service area needs
- Ability to add, subtract, multiply and divide in all units of measure, using whole numbers, common, fractions, and decimals
- Ability to compute percentages and interpret and develop graphs
- Ability to interpret a variety of instructions furnished in written, oral, and diagrams
- Ability to effectively use social skills to communicate with staff, children, and families
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Ability to work a flexible schedule
Thank you!