HEAD START “KIDS FIRST” NEEDS ASSESSMENT

SCHOOL YEAR 2009-2010

1. Introduction

2. Assessment Goals
   The goal of the assessment will be to understand the Performance Standards and other Program Regulations. Be able to use the systems approach and integrate each content area into overall program planning.

   - Health Services
   - Nutritional Services
   - Safe Environments
   - Disabilities Services
   - Mental Health Services
   - Family and Community Partnerships
   - Transportation Services
   - Education and Early Childhood Development Services
   - Fiscal Management
   - Program Design and Management

4. Program Self-Assessment Instrument
   1. Management Team
      - Self-Assessment team assignments
      - Content Area Plans/Monitoring System
      - Record keeping system
      - Follow-up protocol
   2. Education
      - Draft Pre-K guideline-Head Start curriculum framework
      - Assessment
      - Literacy
      - Math
      - Science
The Hitchcock ISD “Kids First” Head Start employees includes: Director, Teachers, Teacher’s Assistants, Family Service Coordinator and Worker, Nurse, Parent Involvement Coordinator, Maintenance Staff, ERSEA/Secretary. Head Start is going through a lot of changes and some programs are being forced to close due to operating expenses.

The goal of the assessment will be to understand the Performance Standards and other program regulations and also to be able to use the systems approach and integrate each content area into overall program planning.

**Health Services**

Staff is encouraged to review documentation and ensure they place health/safety on the daily schedule and address how they are going to accomplish the goal in their lesson plans. Emergency medical and emergency dental posters must be placed in every classroom. It is advised to keep all the health information in one area in the classroom. Staff must ensure each classroom teacher/assistant teacher is trained on the individual medical concern of the children in the classroom. Medications logs must be kept current by the nurse, including adverse reactions and observations after medication has been given. Staff medications should be locked up, not kept in purses.

Policy must be followed regarding disinfecting the toys and all classroom items. All content areas must work together; documentation, services, and resources are intertwined throughout the standards. Some of the main hot topics in the monitoring plan include medications, bilingual materials, ongoing monitoring, risk management and posting of the emergency asthma poster.

**Nutrition Services**

The program utilizes the school dietician who provides services to the program; developing menus. The children receives breakfast in the mornings, lunch in the afternoon and snacks. (2 different food groups for snacks). The children eat breakfast and lunch in the cafeteria; the snacks are eaten family style in the classroom. Nutrition must be noted on the lesson plan, weekly theme and discussed during snack time. The schedules and the menus are posted. The Head Start Nurse is responsible for completing the heights and weights of the children and follow ups on low hemoglobin. If there is a concern, the Nurse notifies the dietician. Information regarding food substitutions/food allergies is kept on the teacher’s clipboards and folders. The cafeteria manager is informed of children with food allergies. Dietary alerts are visible and posted so substitutes/volunteers are aware; disability, all information is documented. Menus are in 6 week cycles, food low in fats and sugars, ethnic foods, etc. The
dietician should have a copy of the performance standards, continue to invite the HSAC and maintain open communication. The children brush their teeth after breakfast and lunch. The Nutrition Plan could be approved during the HSAC, discussed during the meetings. The members of the HSAC committee include: parents, social worker, nutritionist, mental health provided, community health nurse, school nurse, and registration staff. There is a food health and sanitation report that is completed by the cafeteria manager. This information should be included in the Nutrition Monitoring plan to ensure that all the compliance areas in Head Start are being met and maintained. Although there are some things the program is not directly responsible for, Head Start still must ensure the performance standards are being followed. The meal counts are handled by the cafeteria staff when they go through the lunch line.

Safe Environment/Transportation

All toys should be sanitized daily and there should be a schedule of when it is done. Trash cans in the classroom must have lids. Fire drills include alternate exits in the event an area is blocked. There is documentation of all checks; fire extinguishers, fire drills, etc. It would be advisable to have the annual reports readily available.

Transportation

The school provided transportation for the children. Hitchcock children are picked up on a door to door. Children in LaMarque and Texas City have designated locations for pick-up. The transportation is contracted through Durham Transportation Services. Both, the school and Durham work closely together regarding licensing requirement, credentials, accident reports, etc.

Disabilities/Mental Health

The Family Service/Parent Involvement, Nurse Staff assists with this aspect of Head Start. All use resources in the community in locating and providing services for the children. Children are pre-screened and if there is a child with a disability, they are referred to Head Start. Once a child with a disability is acknowledged, a team is organized to address the concern. The application has an area that addresses suspected or documented disability. During registration, teachers, nurse are notified of any concerns. In their disability plan, there is an agreement with Greater Gulf Coast Coop to accept children with disabilities that accommodates dual enrollment when needed. A mental health consultant comes several times per month to provide services. Confidentiality is stressed and Teachers are advised to be sure to use codes, never use a child’s name. The list of the special needs children and their codes should be kept in a locked file cabinet. Staff is reminded to incorporate mental health on the lesson plans.
Family and Community Partnerships

All programs must be monitored; once a program is deficient, it is possible the program can be up for re-competition. It is important to do a thorough assessment of the family’s needs. Once a need is addressed, family services must locate resources, and provide services in a timely manner. All contacts; phone calls, letters, referrals, resources, etc. must be documented and placed in the folder. Assist the families in short term and long term goals; using staff and consultants within the agency and those that provide services free or at a minimal cost. Must be sure to set realistic time lines for the family’s goals and document all progress. If there are not any services in the community; give the family alternate strategies to solve the problem. Be sure to document ways to show that you work with the family. It would be advisable to have a time line for families who have goals. The Program must be sure to have a current resource directory of services for the families; updated as needed.

ERSEA

Income and age are the only two requirements to determine eligibility. New criteria enroll up to 130% of the poverty guidelines; able to enroll more children. Reviewers are looking at the enrollment and the number of children on the wait list. Agency must be at full enrollment at all times; first day of school, 30 days after and again in February. If a child is absent for more than 3 days, family service is notified and a contact is made. Information is logged in a book by the secretary. The information must be documented by the teacher, family service worker in a case note in the child’s record. The recruitment area and the target areas are determined by the program’s community assessment; updated annually. Priority is given to the homeless children and children with disabilities. If a person is transient on a regular basis, or living with relatives and friends, that person may be considered homeless. Income for a child with a disability is not counted. The income for a child who lives in foster care is not counted; the child is considered a ward of the state. If a teenager is living with her parents, the parents’ income is excluded; the teenager and her child are considered the “family”.

Education

Education is the most important thing we do; this is why Head Start exists. It is most important that all areas work together as a team because a child is not going to want to learn if he/she doesn’t feel well or is worried about something at home. It is important that the teacher has a balanced curriculum and that all content areas, health, mental wellness, nutrition, etc., are incorporated into the daily posted schedule. It is very important that a routine is maintained in the classroom as a routine is one of the key components of early childhood education. The Letter People is the curriculum for the 3 year old student the DLM Express is the curriculum for the 4 year old students; both have been adopted by the school district. Teachers were advised
to ensure they are doing what the plan says and to document input from teachers, parents, etc. All content areas must work together to ensure the necessary time frames for screenings are being met in a timely manner. Make sure teachers, and other personnel are able to document everything that is in place and that’s being implemented.

Circle time is a great time to review. Be sure to review and discuss with the child what has been done so the child can relate the information to the parent. Although it is important to maintain order in the classroom, they must remember that children learn by talking and playing, so instructions to be quiet should be very clear. Parents are the major part of the program and should be informed of the activities involving their children and the school they attend. Parents should be invited to volunteer in the classroom or for those who are working maybe an activity (cutting letters, printing alphabets, etc.) could be sent home on the weekends and returned. The teachers should find creative ways for the parents to volunteer.

Teachers are reminded to complete the Teacher Observation Form neatly and appropriately; use positive statements. The teacher should make any referrals when being followed. A statement such as “Thomas is out sick quite a bit”, should have a referral to the health content area, along with contact by the parent.

Teachers are the largest piece of the puzzle; they help keep everyone joined together so it is important if the teacher finds out something about a child, the information is disseminated to the appropriate content area for services and follow-up.

The information in the child health record is very important. It may be beneficial to have a checklist so that all staff that goes in the folder is aware of what forms should be there. A lot of informal assessment is done through observation of the child. The educational plan is considered a plan for the year and should be very broad; there may even be more than one goal.

**Program Design and Management**

The program is run by the agency’s community assessment. The needs of the program are based on the needs of the community. Surveys are sent to the community/parents. The assessment by the city is obtained via the website so that information is used also. Once all the information is compiled, the Director of Head Start evaluates the information to address any changes to the program. This information can be used to determine the needs and the challenges of the community. This information can be incorporated in making the agency Strategic Plan. The information may be used to determine that an early head start program may be beneficial for the community. The community assessment will address concerns
relating to the price of gas, public transportation, etc. Based on the community assessment, Galveston County has decided to provide public transportation on the mainland. There is a public fair conducted in Texas City, College of the Mainland, and several area churches to assist the families in locating resources. It included many vendors, cholesterol checks, diabetes, finger printing, sickle cell, WIC, etc. The school district has a strategic plan and that information is shared with Head Start. Part of the school district strategic plan is to work closely with Head Start, tracking the children through public school.

Head Start must have an annual self-assessment; evaluating your own program prior to a review to correct any problems and make improvements. The Policy Committee must approve team members prior to their training. In order to get a good overview of the program; the length of the self-assessment should be at least 2 weeks.

The Policy Committee included: retired persons, school board member, parents, and business persons. The meeting is held once per month.