Program Self-Assessment Booklet 12

Child Development and Health Services: Curriculum and Assessment

Core Question to be answered by the Self-Assessment team:

How has the grantee engaged in a process of curriculum selection and/or development, implementation, and evaluation resulting in a written plan that supports the growth of children's social competence, including school readiness, for each identified program option?

Purpose:

The objective is to provide all children with a safe, nurturing, engaging, and secure learning environment, in order to help them gain the awareness, skills, and confidence necessary to succeed in their present environment, and to deal with later responsibilities in school and in life. (Introduction to 1304.21, p. 58.)

This booklet will help the team assess if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to curriculum development and implementation. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.21; 1304.23(b)-1304.23(c); 1304.3(a)(5); 1304.40(e)-1304.40(f); 1306.30(b); 1308.4(c); 1310.21.

As you conduct your assessment of the program's ability to develop an appropriate curriculum, see if you can confirm that:

- Families have been given the opportunity to be involved in curriculum development that meets the social/emotional, language and literacy, and academic needs of their children in order to be prepared for school
- The written curriculum contains core elements of sound child development and learning principles and developmentally appropriate practices
- The implementation of the curriculum is evident in classrooms, family child care homes, or in other program options offered by the program

Included are adapted tools from the *PRISM*: the Classroom, Family Child Care or Socialization Experience Observation Instrument (page 8); the Early Head Start Classroom, Family Child Care or Socialization Experience Observation Instrument (page 15) and; the Head Start Home Visit Observation Instrument (page 22). These are optional tools that team members may find helpful in assessing the program's curriculum. Other helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Observe:

The team member should observe a sample of classrooms, socialization settings, and/or family child care homes (depending on the options offered by your program). Use the attached curriculum observation instrument or your own data collection tool. Duplicate the instrument as necessary to complete a good sampling of the child development services offered by the program.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents. (In order to maintain confidentiality, only a staff member serving on your Self-Assessment team can review these files.)

- The written curriculum
- The written plan describing child development services
- Daily and weekly classroom plans
- Child progress records
- Documentation of parent involvement
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

Use the checklist below to assist your document review:

Does the Early Head Start written curriculum include:

Goals for children's development, learning and school readiness?	❑ Yes	❑ No
The experiences through which they will achieve these goals?	❑ Yes	❑ No
What staff and parents do to help children achieve these goals?	❑ Yes	❑ No
The materials needed to support the implementation of the curriculum?	❑ Yes	❑ No

Does the Head Start written curriculum include:

Goals for children's development, learning and school readiness?	❑ Yes	❑ No
The experiences through which they will achieve these goals?	❑ Yes	❑ No
What staff and parents do to help children achieve these goals?	❑ Yes	❑ No
The materials needed to support the implementation of the curriculum?	❑ Yes	❑ No

Is the curriculum consistent with the *Performance Standards* and based on sound child development and learning principles? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Does it provide appropriate and comprehensive programming for the oral language, early literacy, social-emotional, cognitive, and physical development of children of all ages served by the program? ❑ Yes ❑ No

For preschool children, does the curriculum include experiences in the eight domains (language, literacy, mathematics, science, creative arts, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, and physical development and health)? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Does the curriculum and assessment process support the inclusion of children with disabilities? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Does the curriculum and assessment process support the inclusion of the home language of the children? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Are health, nutrition, mental health, and safety education integrated into the curriculum? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Does the curriculum include transition issues? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Does curriculum implementation, including assessment, provide appropriate environments and comprehensive programming for children, from birth to five years old? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Is there a written plan describing child development services that gets updated annually to reflect the changing needs of children? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Do the ongoing assessment tools address the eight domains and thirteen mandated elements and indicators? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Is the tool appropriate to children's ages, home languages, cultures, and special needs? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Comments:

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Interview:

A Self-Assessment team member should interview the education manager and ask:

How does your team engage with parents to select, develop, implement and evaluate the curriculum for each program option? How do you ensure that the curriculum supports the oral language development, literacy skills, and the growth of the social competence of children?

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How have you incorporated outcome-based measures into curriculum development and implementation?

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How do you ensure that the curriculum supports children whose home language is different than English?

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Does ongoing assessment align with the curriculum and cover all the major goals and objectives?

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Are teachers and other staff members well-trained in using the ongoing assessment tools to provide accurate and consistent information on children's progress?

Are teachers and other staff members provided adequate time and support to record and review ongoing assessment information so that they can understand it and use it appropriately in adjusting teaching strategies, materials and learning opportunities for groups of children and for individual children?

For children who are transported to the program, how is the time spent riding the bus used to reinforce the curriculum and otherwise foster healthy child development?

A Self-Assessment team member should interview teachers and/or home visitors and family child care providers and ask:

How is the curriculum consistent with the *Performance Standards* and sound child development and learning principles?

How are parents involved in curriculum development and reporting child progress?

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Tell me how your classroom environment and daily schedule supports the curriculum.

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Tell me how your classroom environment supports an enriched language and early literacy environment.

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What process do you use for curriculum planning?

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How do you evaluate children's progress?

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Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

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Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

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CLASSROOM, FAMILY CHILD CARE, or SOCIALIZATION EXPERIENCE

OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT
(Adapted from *PRISM*)

Instructions: Make arrangements to visit a cross-section of classrooms, family child care homes, and/or socializations. Be sure to include child care partnership classrooms in your selection. Spend some time sitting and observing the setting to gather enough information to complete the instrument. You may want to pair with another Self-Assessment team member. You can then work together to reach consensus regarding your interpretations of the activity you observe. Team members engaged in this process should have knowledge of appropriate early childhood practice.

Use this observation tool to observe classrooms, family child care and socializations. *Duplicate this form for each site the Self-Assessment team visits.*

1. Teacher Interaction and Strategies

- Adults using a variety of intentional strategies that vary in complexity
- Supervision of all indoor and outdoor activities
- Positive child guidance and appropriate limits
- Materials are accessible for children

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Child-initiated and adult-directed activities			
■ Individual and small group experiences			
■ Children exploring and making choices			
■ Timely, predictable, and unhurried routines and transitions			
■ Talking to children, singing and playing with them during transitions, mealtimes, and other routines			

2. Facilitating Children's Language and Early Literacy Development

- Language use and interaction among and between children and adults
- Adults fostering children's communication, including home language
- Experiences that develop auditory and visual discrimination
- Experiences that support creative expression
- Experiences that develop school-readiness skills in early literacy
- Books that are accessible

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Alphabet posters, puzzles and books			
■ Examples of functional print and other materials in appropriate places: mailboxes, sign-in charts, maps, helper charts and schedules			
■ Opportunities for children to scribble, write and dictate stories and messages			
■ Art, music, rhyming songs and movement			
■ Learning activities such as games, puzzles and books that promote knowledge of letters (alphabet) and sounds			
■ Adults reading and discussing stories one-on-one and in small groups			
■ Books that are accessible for children to choose, to look at alone, to share with a friend, or to take home			
■ Adults and children asking questions and engaged in meaningful conversations			
■ Experiences, materials, conversation and activities that support the language used at home and English as a second language			

3. Facilitating Children's Math and Science Development

- Experiences that develop skills in mathematics and science understanding
- Experiences that develop auditory and visual discrimination
- Opportunities for children to discover how numerical concepts relate to other concepts

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Puzzles, games, unit blocks, and manipulatives that range in complexity			
■ Materials and experiences that develop counting, sequencing and one-to-one correspondence			
■ Materials and experiences that encourage understanding of cause and effect and spatial relationships such as Legos®, sand/water table			
■ Opportunities for children to discover how mathematical concepts relate to other concepts, e.g., measuring or weighing			
■ Opportunities for children to count, classify, sequence, sort and match			
■ Children experiment, describe and make predictions			
■ Children using recipes for making snacks			
■ Children caring for plants and animals and learning about science in their surroundings			
■ Adults asking open-ended questions in ways that extend children's thinking			

4. Facilitating Children's Social and Emotional Development

- Experiences that foster trust, independence and self-esteem
- Age-appropriate expectations of children
- Adults interacting in supportive ways
- Experiences that help children develop social skills, competence, respect for others and positive attitudes towards learning

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Self-portraits and family pictures			
■ Books, stories, puppets, and other dramatic play experiences			
■ Interactive games and activities			
■ Familiar routines and transitions			
■ Clear, consistent age-appropriate rules developed with child input			
■ Children accessing materials independently			
■ Adults timely response to children's cries and other cues			
■ Adults encouraging and modeling problem solving, behaviors and language			
■ Singing or talking during routines and transitions			

5. Facilitating Children's Physical Development

- Experiences that develop sensory and motor skills
- Experiences that develop fine and gross motor skills
- Children using and coordinating small muscles, including eyes, hands and eye-hand coordination
- Sufficient safe indoor and outdoor space with age-appropriate equipment and materials

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Tools such as blocks, beads, scissors, stapler and writing or drawing tools, pencils and brushes, as appropriate			
■ Opportunities and sufficient space for children to walk, run, jump and climb			
■ Age and ability-appropriate equipment and materials			
■ Children using motor skills in daily routines such as pouring juice or milk, serving themselves, buttoning and zipping			
■ Children manipulate materials such as sand, water and clay			

6. Prevention and Early Intervention-Integrating Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, Safety, and Wellness			
■ Health, nutrition and mental health integrated into routines and children's learning experiences. Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?			
Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Toothbrushing and handwashing			
■ Children using tissues and throwing them in the wastebasket after use			
■ Sufficient time for meals			
■ Adults and pre-school children sharing family-style meals and meaningful conversations			
■ Children involved in food experiences			
■ Topical books, songs, games, and fingerplays			
■ Materials available for socio-dramatic play			
■ Adults and children talking about visits to the dentist and doctor			
■ Experiences representative of children's cultures			
■ Children instructed in pedestrian safety			

7. Individualizing and Disabilities Services			
■ Respect for the culture, language, ethnicity, family and ability of each child ■ Facilities that ensure children's safety, comfort and participation ■ Environment and curriculum that reflect the IEP ■ Adults observing and assessing children's behavior and progress Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?			
Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Books, music, posters, and games in different languages and representing different cultures			
■ Dolls, posters, pictures and books that represent children with disabilities			
■ Special furniture, equipment, and materials, if needed, to accommodate a child with disabilities			
■ Experiences required in the IEP			
■ Adults working with individual children and with small groups of children			
■ Use of post- its, notebooks, folders, cameras, or other tools used to record observations			

EARLY HEAD START CLASSROOM, FAMILY CHILD CARE, or SOCIALIZATION EXPERIENCE

OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT
(Adapted from *PRISM*)

Instructions: Make arrangements to visit a cross-section of classrooms, family child care homes and/or socializations. Be sure to include child care partnership classrooms in your selection. Spend some time sitting and observing the setting to gather enough information to complete the instrument. You may want to pair with another Self-Assessment team member. You can then work together to reach consensus regarding your interpretations of the activity you observe. Team members engaged in this process should have knowledge of appropriate early childhood practice.

Use this observation tool to observe classrooms, family child care and socializations. *Duplicate this form for each site the Self-Assessment team visits.*

1. Teacher Interaction and Strategies

- Adults using a variety of intentional strategies that vary in complexity
- Supervision of all indoor and outdoor activities
- Positive child guidance, e.g. infants and toddlers able to explore and play safely with teachers naming and supporting the exploration
- Materials accessible to infants and toddlers
- Environment arranged so infants and toddlers have places to snuggle and safely be "alone" and play "peek-a-boo".

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Child-initiated and adult-directed activities			
■ Individual and small group experiences			
■ Children exploring and making choices			
■ Timely, predictable and unhurried routines and transitions			
■ Talking, singing, playing with babies and toddlers during diaper changes, mealtimes and other routines			

2. Facilitating Children's Language and Literacy Development

- Infants and toddlers vocalizing and talking to each other and to adults
- Adults talking to infants and toddlers
- Experiences that develop auditory and visual discrimination
- Experiences that support creative expression
- Early literacy experiences that develop school-readiness skills

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Pictures, puzzles and books			
■ Examples of functional print and other materials in appropriate places: pictures of infants and toddlers with their names, pictures of family members with names			
■ Opportunities for toddlers to scribble, draw and dictate stories and messages			
■ Music, rhyming songs and movement			
■ Books that promote games (peek-a boo), activities (patting), and sounds ("the cow says")			
■ Adults reading or telling stories to infants and toddlers in their lap or close by			
■ Infants and toddlers choosing books to look at alone or to share with a friend, or to take home			
■ Adults naming activities and feelings, asking questions and engaging in conversations with infants and toddlers			
■ Experiences, materials, conversation and activities that support the language used at home and English as a second language			

3. Facilitating Children's Math and Science Development			
■ Experiences that develop skills in mathematics and science ■ Experiences that develop auditory and visual discrimination Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?			
Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Puzzles, games, unit blocks and manipulatives that range in complexity			
■ Materials and experiences that develop sequencing, e.g. enough toys so toddlers can create "line ups"			
■ Materials and experiences that encourage understanding of cause and effect and spatial relationship, e.g. busy boxes, push and pull toys			
■ Opportunities for toddlers to classify, sequence, sort and match			
■ Infants and toddlers experiment, describe and make predictions			
■ Toddlers helping with snacks			
■ Infants and toddlers learning about their surroundings, e.g. experiencing sand, water			
■ Adults asking toddlers open-ended questions			

4. Facilitating Children's Social and Emotional Development			
■ Experiences that foster independence and trust and self-esteem ■ Age-appropriate expectations of children ■ Adults interacting in supportive ways ■ Experiences that help children develop social skills, competence, respect for others, and positive attitudes towards learning Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?			
Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Pictures of the infants, toddlers and their families, self portraits of toddlers (body outline drawings)			
■ Books, stories, puppets and other dramatic play opportunities			
■ Interactive games and activities			
■ Familiar routines and transitions			
■ An environment that supports exploration and does not require adult prohibitions to ensure safety			
■ Infants and toddlers accessing materials independently			
■ Adults timely response to infants' and toddlers' non-verbal cues such as vocalizing, pointing, crying, smiling and talking			
■ Adults encouraging and modeling problem solving, behaviors and language			
■ Singing or talking during routines and transitions			

5. Facilitating Children's Physical Development			
■ Experiences that develop sensory and motor skills ■ Experiences that develop fine and gross motor skills ■ Children using and coordinating small muscles, including eyes, hands and eye-hand coordination ■ Sufficient safe indoor and outdoor space with age-appropriate equipment and materials Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?			
Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Opportunities and sufficient space for infants and toddlers to crawl, sit, walk, run, jump and climb safely			
■ Age and ability-appropriate equipment and materials			
■ Infants and toddlers using motor skills in daily routines as they develop, such as self feeding and using utensils			
■ Infants and toddlers manipulating materials such as sand and water			

6. Prevention and Early Intervention-Integrating Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, Safety, and Wellness			
■ Health, nutrition, and mental health integrated into routines and children's learning experiences. Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?			
Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Adults swabbing infants' gums, toddlers using toothbrushes and washing hands			
■ Toddlers using tissues and throwing them in the wastebasket after use			
■ Sufficient time for meals			
■ Adults and toddlers sharing family-style meals and talking			
■ Infants held while being fed			
■ Songs and books that name feelings			
■ Opportunities for toddlers to dress up and pretend			
■ Adults and children talking about visits to the dentist and doctor			
■ Experiences representative of children's cultures			
■ Toddlers instructed in pedestrian safety			

7. Individualizing and Disabilities Services

- Respect for the culture, language, ethnicity, family, and ability of each child
- Facilities that ensure children's safety, comfort, and participation
- Environment and curriculum that reflect the IFSP or IEP
- Adults observing and assessing children's behavior and progress.

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Books, music, posters and games in different languages and representing different cultures			
■ Dolls, posters, pictures and books that represent children with disabilities			
■ Special furniture, equipment and materials, if needed, to accommodate a child with disabilities			
■ Experiences and adaptations required in the IFSP			
■ Adults sitting on the floor with individual infants and toddlers and with small groups of infants and toddlers			
■ Use of photos to document observations of interactions between and among infants and toddlers and adults			

HEAD START HOME VISIT OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT

(Adapted from *PRISM*)

Instructions: Make arrangements to visit a cross-section of family child care homes. Spend some time sitting and observing the setting to gather enough information to complete the instrument. You may want to pair with another Self-Assessment team member. You can then work together to reach consensus regarding your interpretations of the activity you observe. Team members engaged in this process should have knowledge of appropriate early childhood practice.

Use this observation tool to observe home visits. *Duplicate this form for each site the Self-Assessment team visits.*

1. Home Visit Interactions and Strategies	
How does the home visitor:	
■ Demonstrate a friendly, cooperative relationship with the family? ■ Encourage parents to take leadership of the home visit? ■ Communicate in the family's preferred language? ■ Use the home as a learning environment and as a resource for curriculum experiences? ■ Understand the link between home visits and socialization experiences?	■ (For preschool children) help parents plan experiences that foster their child's development and learning in the 8 domains? ■ Help parents improve their parenting skills? ■ Plan home visits with parents to incorporate all services of the Head Start program? ■ Evaluate the home visit with parents?
Observe: What are the adults doing? What is the child doing?	
Issues, Questions and Follow-up:	

2. Facilitating Children's Language and Literacy Development
How does the home visitor help parents: ■ Understand how children learn? ■ Provide age-appropriate experiences that support child language and literacy learning and development? ■ Provide school-readiness experiences through home visits and group socializations that reflect the program's curriculum? ■ Value creative expression? ■ Foster communication, including communication in the language spoken in the home? ■ Develop auditory and visual discrimination?
Observe: What are the adults doing? What is the child doing?
Issues, Questions, and Follow-up:

3. Facilitating Children's Math and Science Development
How does the home visitor help parents provide: ■ Experiences that develop skills in mathematics? ■ Experiences that develop skills in science? ■ Experiences that develop auditory and visual discrimination? ■ Opportunities for children to discover how numerical concepts relate to other concepts?
Observe: What are the adults doing? What is the environment like?
Issues, Questions, and Follow-up:

4. Facilitating Children's Social and Emotional Development
How do the home visits help parents: ■ Provide experiences that foster independence? ■ Develop age-appropriate expectations of children? ■ Interact in supportive ways? ■ Help children develop social skills, respect for others, and friendships? ■ Help children feel successful, competent and positive toward learning?
Observe: What are the adults doing? What is the child doing?
Issues, Questions, and Follow-up:

5. Facilitating Children's Physical Development
How does the home visitor help parents: ■ Provide experiences that develop sensory and motor skills? ■ Provide experiences that develop fine and gross motor skills? ■ Assist children in using and coordinating small muscles including eyes, hands and eye-hand coordination? ■ Provide sufficient safe age-appropriate equipment and materials? ■ Supervise their child during physical activities?
Observe: What are the adults doing? What is the child doing?
Issues, Questions, and Follow-up:

6. Curriculum: Prevention and Early Intervention-Integrating Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, Safety and Wellness
How does the home visitor help parents: ■ Ensure a safe environment? ■ Promote health, nutrition and wellness? ■ Understand and use health and hygiene practice?
Observe: What are the adults doing? What is the child doing?
Issues, Questions, and Follow-up:

7. Curriculum: Individualizing and Disabilities Services
How do the home visitor and the parent demonstrate: ■ Planning and implementation of experiences that match the child's current developmental level? ■ Understanding of ways to adapt or change activities for the child? ■ Understanding and use of health and hygiene practice?
Observe: What are the adults doing? What is the child doing?
Issues, Questions, and Follow-up:

8. Family Partnerships
How does the home visitor: ■ Support positive relationships? ■ Respect the home language and culture? ■ Encourage parents to get involved in other areas of the Head Start program? ■ Support parents in progress towards their goals?
Observe: What are the adults doing? What is the child doing?
Issues, Questions, and Follow-up:

Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Curriculum and Assessment

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

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Areas where the program needs improvement:

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Additional areas of concern:

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TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source
Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source