

# Program Self-Assessment Booklet 19

## Child Development and Health Services: Mental Health

### **Core Question to guide the Self-Assessment team:**

*How does the grantee implement a comprehensive system of mental health prevention and intervention services for children and families including providing mental health awareness and education to staff?*

### **Purpose:**

The purpose is to ensure the healthy mental development of young children enrolled in the program by designing and implementing program practices that support each child's mental health, prevent mental health problems, and are responsive to identified concerns. (Introduction to 1304.21, p. 58; Introduction to 1304.24, p.116; Introduction to 1304.40, p.125)

This booklet will help the Self-Assessment team determine if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to Mental Health Services. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.20(a)(1)(ii)–1304.20(a)(1)(iv); 1304.20(b); 304.20(c)(1); 1304.20(d); 1304.20(e)(2)-1304.20(e)(3); 1304.20(f)(1); 1304.21(a)(3)(i); 1304.21(b)(1)(i)-1304.21(b)(1)(ii); 1304.21(b)(2)(i); 1304.21(c)(1)(iii)-1304.21(c)(1)(vi); 1304.24; 1304.40(b) 1304.40(c)(1)(iii); 1304.40(c)(2); 1304.40(f)(1); 1304.40(f)(4); 1304.41(a)(1)-1304.41(a)(2); 1304.41(c)(1)(ii); 1304.51(a)(1)(iii), 1304.52(j)(3)

As you conduct your assessment of the program's mental health services, pay close attention to:

- The process used by your program to plan and utilize community resources to meet the wellness and mental health needs of children, families, and staff
- The process used by your program to screen children to identify needs in the area of mental health
- How your program supports families with helpful information about how to respond to children's behaviors, with a special emphasis on environment and relationships
- How your program provides mental health education for families and how services are accessed when families need mental health intervention
- How your program responds to the identified behavioral and mental health issues of individual children and groups of children

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Before you begin, determine if mental health services in your program are provided directly by program staff or through a contractual agreement with outside individuals or organizations. This information will assist you in planning your approach to the assessment.

## **Review:**

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

- Contracts and job descriptions for mental health professionals
- Job descriptions of mental health staff and/or staff who oversee the mental health contracts
- Posted schedules for mental health professionals
- Interagency agreements with community partners providing mental health services to the program
- Budget information reflecting allocation for mental health services
- Service plan describing mental health services
- List of members on any relevant advisory committees and minutes
- Confidentiality policies
- Information for staff mental health and wellness
- Home visitor protocol/curricula
- Records/ ongoing monitoring reports of mental health services provided over the past year including tracking for 45 day screening requirements
- Staff training and orientation plans, agendas, evaluations, and most recent T/TA Plan
- Staff and parent handbooks
- Sample child/family files, including files that contain multiple sources of information, documentation of parent involvement, screenings and follow up, family partnership agreements and IEPs/IFSPs
- Screening tool(s)
- Parent resource information (i.e.: community resource book, parent bulletin boards)
- Parent education materials, training agendas, and training evaluations
- Individualized plans or reports related to mental health or behavioral concerns for a child or a group of children (e.g. behavioral/treatment plans, report recommendations, classroom charts)
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, results of last year's self-assessment, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

## **Use the questions below to assist your document review.**

Can you determine from your review of documents listed above if your program has service plans that address both mental wellness and mental health interventions?

Yes  No Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a written plan describing mental health services for children, families, and staff? Has the plan been updated within the past year to reflect how the program responds to the changing needs of children, families and staff?

Yes  No Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Do administrative/policy records demonstrate attention to and support of mental health services? (Records of policy council, budgets, records of staff training, reports about mental health service delivery)

Comment \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are there plans in place to:

Yes  No Address the mental health needs of children and families involved with traumatic events affecting the program or in the wider community (natural disasters, fire, violence)? Look for examples of emergency plans and follow-up services.

Yes  No Address psychiatric emergencies for children and adults?

Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Yes  No Make mental health and wellness information available to staff with concerns that may affect their job performance?

Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Do the budget and staffing provide sufficient resources to accomplish goals in the area of mental health and wellness?

Yes  No Comment \_\_\_\_\_

If your program contracts mental health services with an outside organization or individual:

Yes  No Is there a designated manager assigned to oversee mental health services? Who is it?

Yes  No Is there a contract that is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the changing needs of the program?

Yes  No Are the terms of the contract consistent with the needs of the program and the written plan describing mental health services?

Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Do interagency agreements exist with community partners for referrals and additional mental health services?

Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Do mental health professionals have the appropriate licenses/certifications? Do they have experience and expertise that correspond to the mental health services outlined by the program for supporting children, families, and staff?

Yes  No Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Does training and orientation adequately prepare staff, including staff conducting home visits with families, to work in ways that support the mental health of families?

Yes  No Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Can you find ongoing documentation in child/family files that indicates families are referred for counseling, substance abuse treatment, parental depression or other mental health interventions? Do staff follow up on referrals?

Yes  No Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Does your program follow-up with families to ensure that other community mental health resources/services met the families' expectations and needs?

Yes  No Comment \_\_\_\_\_

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Do child/family files and training plans indicate that the program provides opportunities for parents to:

Yes  No Share their mental health and/or behavioral concerns about their child?

Yes  No Be involved in the planning of mental health services for their child?

Yes  No Learn about and get support to strengthen parent-child relationships and create healthy environments?

Yes  No Understand child and family mental health issues?

Yes  No Learn appropriate responses to children's behavior?

Yes  No Learn about mental health services for parents, including support regarding substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health issues for pregnant women?

Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Do child/family files note evidence of staff:

Yes  No Sharing mental health or behavioral concerns about a child with parents?

Yes  No Sharing observations of a child with parents?

Yes  No Discussing and anticipating with parents their child's behavior and development?

Comment \_\_\_\_\_  
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Does your program provide information and resources to families and staff on the availability of mental health services in the community?

Yes  No Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a system for child mental health screening and assessment?

Yes  No Is the screening tool reliable and valid? Does it screen for social, emotional, and behavioral concerns?

Yes  No Is behavioral screening completed within the required 45 day timeframe?

Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Do IEPs/IFSPs include mental health and behavioral services, as appropriate, for children?

Yes  No Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a system in place to track and provide regular updates on the delivery of mental health services throughout the program?

Yes  No Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Is there evidence of follow up when screenings have identified a need for further assessment or treatment?

Yes  No Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Are the 45 day screenings done in collaboration with each child's parent?

Yes  No Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Are the 45 day screenings linguistically and age appropriate for the following areas: developmental, sensory (auditory and visual), behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, perceptual, and emotional skills?

Yes  No Comment \_\_\_\_\_

Is there evidence that parents are informed and made aware of the various screenings as they occur (permission forms, contact notes, home visit reports, notification of results)?

Yes  No Comment \_\_\_\_\_

## **Observe:**

It is important to observe a number of classroom settings, home visits, and/or socializations to obtain an assessment of mental health services across all program options. Observations should be conducted by persons with background and expertise in mental health and/or child development, paying particular attention to the interactions between teachers and children, staff and parents, and also between mental health professionals and children, families, and staff. Team members may want to coordinate this work with team members assessing curriculum and individualization. Their insights can inform your work.

Use the following questions to focus your observations and/or to guide conversations with other team members:

Are classroom practices responsive to the mental health and behavioral needs of children?

Are interactions and/or services sensitive to cultural and linguistic differences?

Does teaching staff set age-appropriate limits?

Does teaching staff encourage the development of trust, self-esteem, and identity through respectful and responsive communication?

Does teaching staff demonstrate an understanding of age appropriate social behaviors, varying temperaments, realistic behavioral expectations for young children, setting appropriate limits and opportunities to encourage self-discipline?

Does staff encourage and support parents to respond to their children in appropriate ways?

If you have the opportunity to observe mental health professionals at work, how would you describe the role they have and the strategies they use in supporting children, staff, and families with mental health issues?

Does the program's record-keeping system protect confidentiality and promote the use of information needed?

Does the program have space for meetings with parents which allows privacy for discussing sensitive issues?

**Interview:**

The Self-Assessment team member should interview:

- The manager of mental health services (including Early Head Start, if appropriate)
- Mental health professionals and community mental health providers
- Staff
- Families

**Use the questions below to assist you with interviews:**

**Questions for the manager of mental health services:**

What process do you use to determine the mental health needs of children, families, and staff and develop plans for the delivery of mental health services in this program? Who is involved?

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Describe the role of mental health professionals in the program and how community mental health providers are utilized.

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Provide examples of the strategies they use in supporting children, staff, and families around mental health issues.

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If you provide Early Head Start Services, how do you address the specific needs of pregnant women, new mothers and fathers, and children from birth to three?

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Describe the process you use to screen for mental health and behavioral issues (listen for information on how the screening tool was selected, when screening occurs, and how results are used).

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Describe your process for monitoring mental health services throughout the program.

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Provide an example of an issue that has surfaced as a result of monitoring mental health services and the action that the program has taken to address the issue.

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How do you know the mental health services provided were useful and sufficient?

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Tell me how the program collaborates with community partners in the area of mental health (listen for examples of how community partners provide prevention and intervention services).

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How does the program coordinate mental health and disability services within the program?

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How does the program help parents to understand how their own mental health is connected to and impacts their children's mental health?

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In what ways does the program support the mental health wellness of staff?

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What kinds of services are available to staff? Without mentioning any names, can you provide an example of how a staff person has accessed these services?

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**Questions for mental health professionals:**

Describe how you are involved with designing and implementing program practices for identified behavioral or mental health needs for an individual child or for a group of children, including providing special help to children with atypical behavior.

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Describe the services you provide and the strategies you use to support mental wellness for staff, children, and/or families. Describe the strategies you use to provide mental health services for identified mental health needs of children and families.

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Describe how you assist in promoting children's mental wellness by providing individual and group education on mental health issues for staff and parents.

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Describe the process you use to arrange for further diagnostic testing, examination and/or treatment as needed for mental health issues.

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Describe how you use and coordinate with other community mental health resources as needed.

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Without mentioning names, provide examples of how you and the program have supported children with identified mental health or behavioral needs.

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How do you know if the mental health services are provided to children with sufficient frequency to identify and address staff and family concerns in a timely and effective manner?

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**Questions for teaching staff**

Describe the screening process you use (listen for inclusion of mental health/behavioral issues and if screening is accomplished within 45 days, and how results are used).

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How is mental health integrated into the curriculum? Describe some specific ways that you support children's social and emotional development.

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For Early Head Start:

What practices do you use to promote the social and emotional development of children?

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**Questions for teaching staff and/or family partnership staff:**

How do you access mental health services for a child or family you serve? (Listen for information on referral and follow-up procedures).

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How quickly are services and consultations provided?

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In what ways does the program support you in your work with children and families with mental health issues?

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How do you help families to access mental health assistance?

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Without mentioning names, can you provide examples of how you have supported parents to understand and respond to their child's behavior?

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What mental health services in the community are most helpful to children and families?

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**Questions for parents:**

In what ways has Head Start helped you to:

- Strengthen your relationship with your child? \_\_\_\_\_
- Communicate better with your child? \_\_\_\_\_
- Answer your questions about your child’s behavior? \_\_\_\_\_
- Understand your child’s development and how to make him feel good about himself? \_\_\_\_\_

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How has Head Start helped you to know what counseling and mental health services are available to you?

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If you had concerns about your child’s development, behavior, or mental health, what kind of help is available through the Head Start program?

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**Questions for community partners:**

Describe the role your program has in supporting Head Start children and families in the area of mental health.

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## Team Member Summary Worksheet

### Summary of Results for Mental Health Services

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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