

# Head Start Program Governance Training: Building Skills of Head Start Leaders Text Version

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## 1: Introduction: Leadership Development

### 1.1: You Are a Head Start Leader

As a member of a Head Start Policy Council, governing body, or Tribal Council, you are an important leader in your Head Start program.

Your past education, professional experiences, and leadership skills prepare you well for your role in Head Start governance. You have a lot to offer, and children and families in your community benefit from your knowledge and dedication.

### 1.2: Leadership Development

Strong leaders recognize that leadership development is a continuous process.

This training module includes different activities to deepen your understanding of your Head Start role and to help you practice applying your skills in Head Start situations.

Although we encourage you to explore all of the training activities, you can start with the activities that best match your current leadership needs and interests.

### 1.3: Key Areas of Head Start Leadership

Which path do you want to take first to strengthen your Head Start leadership skills?

#### 1.3.1: Path: Fulfill Your Role

Do you want to learn more about your Head Start leadership role?

Effective Policy Council, Tribal Council, and governing body members understand their distinct roles and the roles of others with governance responsibilities. They recognize the different talents, viewpoints, and expertise within the team, and show a growing confidence in their unique contributions. They also think about their role, tap into resources for learning, and set personal leadership goals.

**Suggested Training:** [Fulfill Your Role](#)

### **1.3.2: Path: Ask the Right Questions**

Do you like to review and analyze data? Do you enjoy digging into graphs and charts to uncover organizational successes and challenges?

As a member of the Head Start governance system, your job is to work with others to oversee the Head Start program. This involves reviewing reports that contain extensive data and information. Policy Council and governing body members will want to become familiar with the different types of Head Start reports and learn how to analyze them.

**Suggested Training:** [Ask the Right Questions](#)

### **1.3.3: Path: Make Meaningful Decisions**

Do you welcome everyone's contributions when making decisions? Do you work to help others agree so that everyone can support the final decision?

In Head Start governance, all Policy Council, governing body, and Tribal Council members play a role in decision-making. In fact, decisions are most often made by a team of people or across teams. The best decisions are those that are thoughtful and that reflect everyone's opinion.

**Suggested Training:** [Make Meaningful Decisions](#)

### **1.3.4: Path: Envision a Better Future**

Are you a person who likes to examine current realities and think about ways to make things better?

Policy Council, governing body, and Tribal Council members are driven by their desire to make a big difference in the lives of low-income children and families in their community. They help the Head Start organization set and achieve goals for children's healthy development and school readiness, families' economic well-being, and community empowerment.

You may choose to be part of your Head Start program's planning team. If so, you will want to hone your skills in thinking strategically, crafting a vision, and making your organization more innovative.

**Suggested Training:** [Envision a Better Future](#)

### **1.3.5: Path: Be a Head Start Ambassador**

Do you like to work with outside partners? Do you enjoy sharing Head Start's success with everyone you meet?

Ambassadors serve as spokespeople for the Head Start program. They tell the story of how the program makes a difference in the lives of children, families, and the community. They also reach out to build partnerships and bring new resources to the program.

Effective Head Start ambassadors continually strengthen their communication and relationship skills. They speak purposefully, listen actively, and foster cooperation among Head Start staff, families, partners, community members, and other groups.

**Suggested Training:** [Be a Head Start Ambassador](#)

### 1.3.6: Path: Mentor Others

Are you interested in becoming an effective teacher, coach, or mentor?

Exemplary Policy Council, governing body, and Tribal Council members serve as good role models by continually sharpening their leadership skills. They mentor and provide support to help others grow as leaders.

If you're ready to mentor other Head Start governance leaders, you'll want to become familiar with all of the training activities. Share them with others so they can become more effective stewards of your Head Start program.

**Suggested Trainings:**

[Fulfill Your Role](#)

[Ask the Right Questions](#)

[Make Meaningful Decisions](#)

[Envision a Better Future](#)

[Be a Head Start Ambassador](#)

### 1.4: What Will You Learn?

**Fulfill Your Role.** Learn about the three entities of Head Start program governance, their distinct roles and responsibilities, and how they work together.

**Ask the Right Questions.** Practice analyzing Head Start reports, asking good questions to ensure proper oversight, and reviewing the parts of a Head Start audit.

**Make Meaningful Decisions.** Build skills in making informed and inclusive decisions, choosing a proper decision-making method, and preventing and resolving conflicts.

**Envision a Better Future.** Learn about the Head Start program planning cycle, develop goal-setting skills, and practice applying a systems approach to solving problems.

**Be a Head Start Ambassador.** Practice sharing information with others, gathering data to inform decisions, and making connections between your program and the community.

Download [Activity Descriptions](#) [PDF, 82B] to read about each activity and to keep track of your progress.

### 1.5: Become the Leader You Want to Be

Being a Head Start governance leader is a tremendous responsibility and an enormous privilege. While your prior leadership experiences will help you succeed, there is much to learn that is unique to Head Start.

Because of this, the Head Start Act of 2007 requires programs to provide ongoing training and technical assistance (T/TA) for their governance members. We hope this training module becomes a valuable part of your program's T/TA plan.

## Activity 2: Fulfill Your Role

### 2.1: Fulfill Your Role

Do you want to learn more about your Head Start leadership role?

Effective Policy Council, Tribal Council, and governing body members understand their distinct roles and the roles of others with governance responsibilities. They recognize the different talents, viewpoints, and expertise within the team, and show a growing confidence in their unique contributions. They also think about their role, tap into resources for learning, and set personal leadership goals.

If you're ready to deepen your understanding of your governance leadership role and the roles of others, this activity is perfect for you. It will help you reflect on the role you have chosen to play and may inspire you to explore the other skill-building activities in this module.

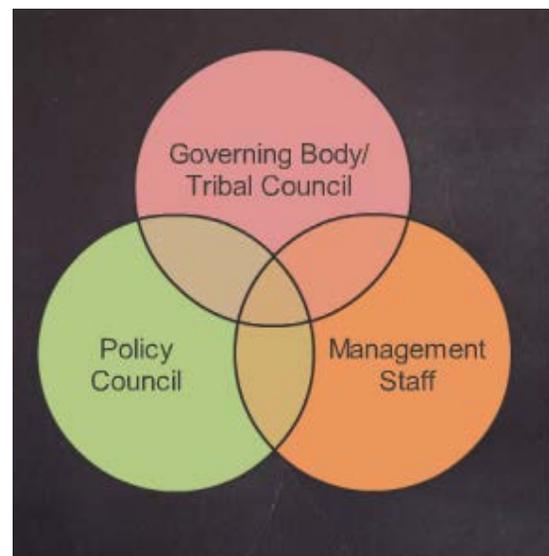
### 2.2: Know Your Role

When you become part of Head Start governance, you join a dynamic organization. Head Start thoughtfully created a governance structure that allows for broad representation and strong oversight.

The structure includes three distinct entities that come together to form a solid whole. Members of each entity bring a unique and vital perspective that contributes to the effective running of the Head Start program.

These three entities are:

- Governing body and Tribal Council
- Policy Council
- Management staff



### 2.3: A Worthwhile Challenge

Most nonprofit organizations are led by two entities: a governing body or board of directors and management staff, which includes the executive director.

While adding the Policy Council as a third entity can make coordination more challenging, the addition helps to ensure that all voices are heard in the decision-making process. By engaging both the governing body and Policy Council in governance, you create a system of checks and balances and strengthen your

program's ability to proactively mitigate risks. You also broaden the vision, mission, and goals for your program.

Each entity in the Head Start governance system plays a distinct and important role; it also shares a number of roles with partners in other entities. Although learning your role takes time, when all members learn and fulfill their particular responsibilities, low-income children and families in your community will benefit enormously.

## 2.4: A Worthwhile Challenge Video

[Watch this video](#) to learn how well-informed governing body and Policy Council members can help strengthen their Head Start programs.

## 2.5: A Single Mission

All three entities in the governance system focus on a single mission, the Head Start mission. Working together, they promote the school readiness of low-income children by enhancing their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.

To accomplish your mission, members from the governing body, Policy Council, and management staff need to understand and carry out their own roles and respect the roles of others. They also need to view places where roles overlap as opportunities for partnership and collaboration.

### Activity Intro: A Single Mission

To achieve your mission of preparing your community's low-income children for success in school, you will need help from many people who serve Head Start in a variety of ways.

In this activity, you will explore ways that different members of your Head Start program's governance system contribute to the mission. You will meet three team members and review a variety of governance-related duties. Your task is to assign each duty to the right individual to keep things moving smoothly.

For help, download the [Head Start Program Governance Reference Book](#) [PDF, 220KB], which provides detailed information about the responsibilities of different members of the Head Start governance system.

## 2.6. Meet Your Team Members

### G.B. Oversee

G.B. Oversee is a member of your organization's **governing body**.

She has a degree in psychology and has done research in early child development. She is eager to lend her support and expertise to help your program achieve its school readiness goals.

As a governing body member, her primary role is to provide **oversight** and ensure that the program meets its **legal and fiscal responsibilities** and **safeguards federal funds**.

## P.C. Direction

P.C. Direction is in his second year serving on your Head Start program's **Policy Council**.

He is the father of 4-year-old twin boys who attend a center-based classroom five days a week. The boys are in their second year with your program. P.C. is studying at the community college to be an accountant.

As a Policy Council member, his primary role is to **represent parents and the community** and make sure the decision makers consider their views about the program's **direction and future**.

## M.S. Day-to-Day

M.S. Day-to-Day has been your organization's **Head Start director** for three years.

She began her career as a dietician and joined your Head Start program 10 years ago as manager of nutrition services. She took night classes to earn her master's degree in business administration (MBA), and she has a keen interest in staff professional development.

As a member of your program's **management staff**, her primary role is to manage the **day-to-day operations** of your Head Start program.

## 2.7: Make Your Assignments

Read each assignment, and then select the best person for the task. Remember, you can use the [Head Start Program Governance Reference Book](#) [PDF, 220KB] to help you make your decision.

**Task 1:** Supervise Head Start program staff.

Select from the following:

1. G.B. Oversee (governing board member)
2. P.C. Direction (Policy Council member)
3. M.S. Day-to-day (Head Start director)

**Correct Assignment:** M.S. Day-to-Day

**Correct Feedback:** You're right! Supervising program staff is definitely a job for a member of the management staff.

In general, your Head Start managers are responsible for day-to-day operations in your program. Their responsibilities include supervising staff, developing procedures, generating and using data, and monitoring how well your program complies with Head Start regulations. While governing body members oversee the program and need to be told about any problems, they should be careful not to micromanage daily activities.

**Incorrect Feedback:** Not quite. Supervising program staff is definitely a job for a member of the management staff.

In general, your Head Start managers are responsible for day-to-day operations in your program. Their responsibilities include supervising staff, developing procedures, generating and using data and reports, and monitoring how well your program complies with Head Start regulations. While governing body members oversee the program and need to be told about any problems, they should be careful not to micromanage daily activities.

**Task 2:** Approve activities to support parent involvement and engagement.

Select from the following:

1. G.B. Oversee (governing board member)
2. P.C. Direction (Policy Council member)
3. M.S. Day-to-day (Head Start director)

**Correct Assignment:** P.C. Direction

**Correct Feedback:** Excellent! Approving activities that support parent involvement and engagement is certainly a job for the Policy Council.

Policy Council members are elected by parents of currently enrolled children to represent them and the community in program decision-making and planning. Policy Council members lend their voice and perspective to many decisions, including those related to parent involvement; program recruitment, selection, and enrollment; funding applications and amendments; Policy Council election procedures; program personnel policies; and the selection of delegate agencies and service areas.

**Incorrect Feedback:** Good try. However, approving activities that support parent involvement and engagement is a job for the Policy Council.

Policy Council members are elected by parents of currently enrolled children to represent them and the community in program decision-making and planning. Policy Council members lend their voice and perspective to many decisions, including those related to parent involvement; program recruitment, selection, and enrollment; funding applications and amendments; Policy Council election procedures; program personnel policies; and the selection of delegate agencies and service areas.

**Task 3:** Select an auditor.

Select from the following:

1. G.B. Oversee (governing board member)
2. P.C. Direction (Policy Council member)
3. M.S. Day-to-day (Head Start director)

**Correct Assignment:** G.B. Oversee

**Correct Feedback:** You're right! It is the governing body's job to select an independent financial auditor each year.

Selecting an auditor is just one of many fiscal responsibilities that lie with governing body members. They also review and approve the program's annual operating budget, all major expenditures, the annual audit report, and all actions to correct audit findings. As well, they receive and review monthly financial statements, including credit card expenses.

**Incorrect Feedback:** Not quite. It is the governing body's job to select an independent financial auditor each year.

Selecting an auditor is just one of many fiscal responsibilities that lie with governing body members. They also review and approve the program's annual operating budget, all major expenditures, the annual audit report, and all actions to correct audit findings. As well, they receive and review monthly financial statements, including credit card expenses.

**Task 4:** Approve policies for financial reimbursement and participation in Policy Council activities, and then submit them to the governing body.

Select from the following:

1. G.B. Oversee (governing board member)
2. P.C. Direction (Policy Council member)
3. M.S. Day-to-day (Head Start director)

**Correct Assignment:** P.C. Direction

**Correct Feedback:** You're right! Policy Council members approve and then submit to the governing body decisions about policies for reimbursement and participation in Policy Council activities.

Since many Policy Council activities happen in the evenings or on weekends, some parents need to pay for child care in order to attend. Every Head Start program develops its own policies for covering parents' costs to attend activities. These reimbursement policies help more parents engage with and learn from Head Start services.

**Incorrect Feedback:** Nice try. However, Policy Council members approve policies for reimbursement and participation in Policy Council activities. The Policy Council then submits its decisions about these policies to the governing body.

Since many Policy Council activities happen in the evenings or on weekends, some parents need to pay for child care in order to attend. Every Head Start program develops its own policies for covering parents' costs to attend activities. These reimbursement policies help more parents engage with and learn from Head Start services.

**Task 5:** Adopt written standards of conduct, including those for disclosing, addressing, and resolving conflicts of interests and complaints.

Select from the following:

1. G.B. Oversee (governing board member)
2. P.C. Direction (Policy Council member)
3. M.S. Day-to-day (Head Start director)

**Correct Assignment:** G.B. Oversee

**Correct Feedback:** Excellent! Adopting written standards of conduct is definitely a job for the governing body.

As part of its responsibility to oversee the Head Start program, the governing body adopts practices to ensure active, independent, and informed governance. Members document these practices in governing body bylaws that comply with the Head Start Act; standards of conduct that address, at a minimum, conflicts of interest and complaints; and impasse policies. They also establish advisory committees to oversee key responsibilities related to program governance.

**Incorrect Feedback:** Not quite. Adopting written standards of conduct is definitely a job for the governing body.

As part of its responsibility to oversee the Head Start program, the governing body adopts practices to ensure active, independent, and informed governance. Members document these practices in governing body bylaws that comply with the Head Start Act; standards of conduct that address, at a minimum, conflicts of interest and complaints; and impasse policies. They also establish advisory committees to oversee key responsibilities related to program governance.

**Task 6:** Generate and share accurate and regular reports about the Head Start program's planning, policies, and operations.

Select from the following:

1. G.B. Oversee (governing board member)
2. P.C. Direction (Policy Council member)
3. M.S. Day-to-day (Head Start director)

**Correct Assignment:** M.S. Day-to-Day

**Correct Feedback:** Great job! One of the management staff's most important jobs is to generate and share with the governing body and Policy Council accurate and regular information about the Head Start program.

These reports include monthly financial statements, program information summaries, enrollment and attendance reports, the annual Self-Assessment, and more. Policy Council and governing body members review and analyze the information to make recommendations and decisions about program operations and planning.

**Incorrect Feedback:** Good try. However, it's the management staff's job to generate and share with the governing body and Policy Council accurate and regular information about the Head Start program.

These reports include monthly financial statements, program information summaries, enrollment and attendance reports, the annual Self-Assessment, and more. Policy Council and governing body members review and analyze the information to make recommendations and decisions about program operations and planning.

## **2.8: See the Whole Picture**

Congratulations! You've assigned important duties to the right people and learned more about your role and the role of others in Head Start governance.

The full list of responsibilities for each entity in the Head Start governance system is detailed below.

### **Governing Body/Tribal Council**

Assumes legal and fiscal responsibility for Head Start and the safeguarding of federal funds.

#### ***Adopt practices to ensure active, independent, and informed governance:***

- Governing body bylaws
- Procedures for accessing and collecting information
- Written standards of conduct, including conflicts of interest and complaints
- Procedures for selecting Policy Council members
- Advisory committees

#### ***Select:***

- Delegate agencies and the service areas for such agencies

#### ***Establish:***

- Procedures and criteria for recruitment, selection, and enrollment

#### ***Review:***

- All funding applications and amendments
- Results and follow-up activities from federal monitoring

#### ***Review and Approve:***

- Major policies and procedures, including Self-Assessment, financial audit, and personnel policies
- Progress on implementing the Head Start grant, including corrective actions
- Major expenditures
- Operating budget
- Selection of auditor
- Actions to correct audit findings

#### ***Receive and Use:***

- Annual, monthly, and periodic reports

## **Management Staff**

Assumes operating responsibility for Head Start day-to-day functions.

### ***Take Action:***

- Implement policies
- Develop procedures
- Provide T/TA to governing body and Policy Council
- Supervise staff
- Monitor compliance
- Generate and use annual, monthly, and periodic reports
- Share reports with Policy Council and governing body

## **Policy Council**

Assumes responsibility for Head Start program direction.

### ***Approve and submit to the governing body decisions regarding:***

- Activities for parent involvement and engagement
- Program recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities
- Funding applications and amendments
- Budget planning, including reimbursement and participation in Policy Council activities
- Policy Council bylaws
- Head Start program personnel policies and decisions, including criteria for employment and dismissal of program staff
- Policy Council election procedures
- Recommendations on delegates and service areas

### ***Receive and Use:***

- Annual, monthly, and periodic reports

## **Governing Body/Tribal Council and Policy Council**

### ***Take Action:***

- Hire and terminate Head Start director and other lead staff
- Establish impasse procedures

## **Governing Body/Tribal Council and Management Staff**

### ***Provide Legal Oversight:***

- Ensure compliance with federal laws and state, tribal, and local laws

## Governing Body/Tribal Council, Policy Council, and Management Staff

### *Provide Leadership and Strategic Direction:*

- Focus on Self-Assessment
- Develop, plan, and evaluate the Head Start program

View the full [Governance Entities Diagram](#) [PDF, 186KB] that lists everyone's responsibilities. You may wish to print a copy to include with your Head Start Program Governance Reference Book.

## 2.9: Flow of Reports

The Head Start Act requires management staff to regularly generate and share particular reports and information. These reports help you understand what is happening in the program and make important decisions in a timely manner.

Many programs present information first to the Policy Council for review and recommendations, and then to the governing body or Tribal Council. In this way, the governing body benefits from the Policy Council's insights before making decisions and taking action.

Occasionally, the governing body will want additional information to fully understand the Policy Council's recommendations. Your organization should have a process in place for such situations. With a strong process in place, you can feel confident that good decisions will be made.

### Required Reports

- Communications from the secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- Financial statements, including credit card expenditures
- Program information summaries
- Enrollment reports
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) meal reports
- Financial audit
- Self-Assessment
- Community assessment
- Annual Program Information Report (PIR)

[Download this list](#) [PDF, 52KB].

## 2.10: Working Together

[Watch this video](#) to learn how a governing body and Policy Council can work closely together on behalf of their program.

## 2.11: Fulfill Your Role

The success of Head Start governance comes from synergy. The combined energy from each of the entities in the governance system leads to effective decision-making. As individuals fulfill their roles, each entity thrives. In turn, as each entity thrives, the entire team succeeds.

Collaborative governance team members:

- Know what is required of them and carry out their actions with passion and integrity
- Know what is required of others and do what they can to offer support and promote accountability

By working together, you can accomplish your mission and improve the lives and opportunities for low-income children and families in your community.

## Activity 3: Ask the Right Questions

### 3.1: Ask the Right Questions

Do you like to review and analyze data? Do you enjoy digging into graphs and charts to uncover organizational successes and challenges?

As a member of the Head Start governance system, your job is to work with others to oversee the Head Start program. This involves reviewing reports that contain extensive data and information. Policy Council and governing body members will want to become familiar with the different types of Head Start reports and learn how to analyze them.

This activity covers the core skills required to analyze Head Start reports and to ask thoughtful questions so you get the details you need to make good decisions. You'll also learn about Head Start audits and the role you play in the audit process.

### 3.2: Required Reports

The Head Start Act of 2007 requires your Head Start management team to share with the Policy Council and governing body "accurate and regular" information about your program's operations, planning, and policies.

Here are the reports they should be sharing with you. If you are not getting this information, be sure to ask for it.

- Communications from the HHS secretary
- Financial statements, including credit card expenditures
- Program information summaries
- Enrollment reports
- USDA meal reports
- Financial audit
- Self-Assessment
- Community assessment
- Annual PIR

Head Start Act Sec. 642(d)(2)

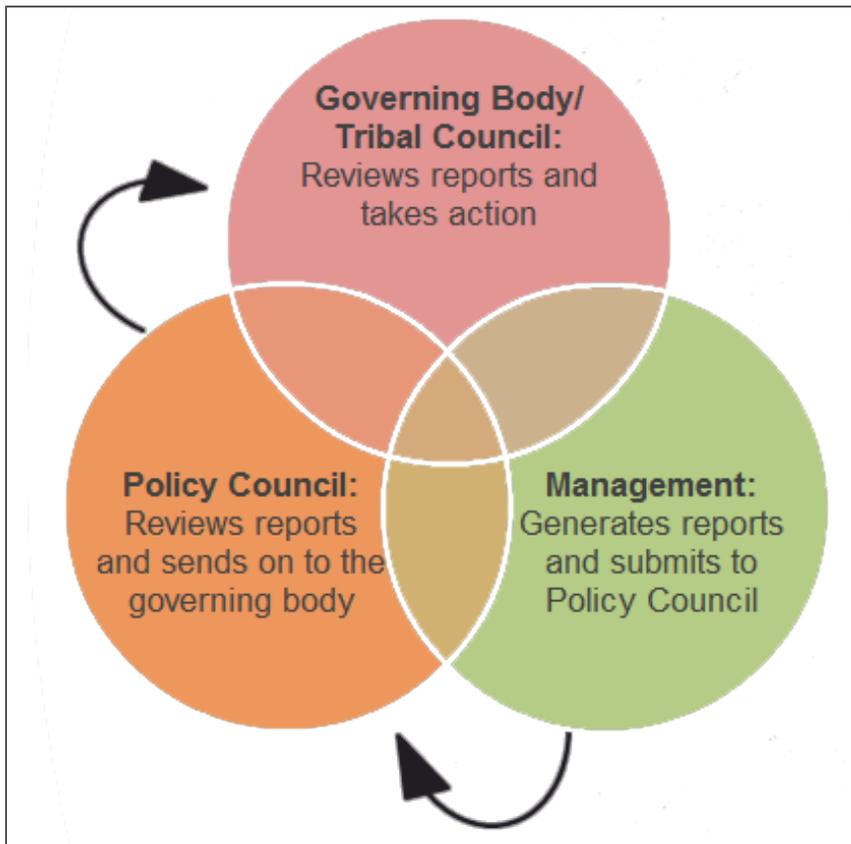
[Download this list](#) [PDF, 52KB].

### 3.3: Flow of Reports

Head Start programs need to think carefully about the process they use to ensure both the Policy Council and governing body are able to review Head Start reports and make important decisions in a timely manner.

Many programs present information first to the Policy Council for review and recommendations, and then to the governing body or Tribal Council. This allows governing body members to hear the perspective of Policy Council members before making decisions and taking action.

Here you see the flow of reports from one group to the next.



### 3.4: Working with Reports

Just receiving and reviewing reports is not enough, however.

By becoming familiar with these reports and asking questions about the data you see, you will learn the story the data is telling you.

[Watch the video](#) to hear what one Head Start director says about the importance of sharing data with her Policy Council and governing body.

### 3.5: What Will You Learn?

This training activity will help you develop the skills you need to review and analyze the reports you receive. It also will help you learn to ask good questions to guide your decision-making.

After this activity, you will be able to:

- Recognize the "Four A's" of good reports
- Identify the story in each report and ask good questions in response
- Identify the parts of a Head Start audit, one of the important reports you will review each year

### 3.6: What Makes a Good Report?

Reviewing and analyzing reports is a lot easier when the reports are well designed and clearly presented.

When thinking about the characteristics of a good report, consider the Four A's:

- Appealing
- Accessible
- Accurate
- Audience-specific

#### Read Descriptions of the Four A's

**Appealing:** Good reports are simple, clear, and visually attractive; they tell a story in a compelling way.

**Accessible:** Effective reports use an appropriate reading level and avoid jargon or acronyms that the audience may not understand. They utilize bulleted lists rather than long narratives, and they are written in the language(s) spoken by the audience members.

**Accurate:** Good reports include accurate data. They convey what the data actually say, not what someone wishes the data said. Effective reports also are error free, without typos or misleading content or data.

**Audience-specific:** Effective reports highlight the issues that the audience cares about. They take into account the level of detail needed and the audience's prior knowledge of the topic.

Now, let's look at some reports together to see if they meet the Four A's.

#### Activity Introduction

##### Which Report Would You Want to Receive?

In this activity, you will compare two reports that display the same information in different ways. Consider whether they are appealing, accessible, accurate, and audience-specific. Then select the one that does a better job.

### 3.7: Do You Know What Makes a Good Report?

#### Maple Leaf Head Start Budget Summary

What do you think of these reports? Compare the two versions and then pick the report that does a better job. Remember to consider the Four A's: appealing, accessible, accurate, and audience-specific.

##### Report 1

Maple Leaf Head Start 2012/2013 Budget Summary	
This year's budget is \$11,388,442	
Includes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• \$7,577,456 for personnel costs</li><li>• \$823,995 to run the facilities</li><li>• \$1,983,008 for overall program operations</li><li>• \$1,003,983 for other, miscellaneous expenses</li></ul>	
Last year's budget was \$10,506,237	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personnel costs were \$6,889,013</li><li>• Facilities cost \$754,228</li><li>• Program operations totaled \$1,983,008</li><li>• Other items cost \$879,988</li></ul>	
This year's budget is \$882,205 more than last year's.	

##### Report 2

Maple Leaf Head Start 2012/2013 Budget Summary			
	Prior Year Budget	Current Year Budget	Difference
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$10,506,237</b>	<b>\$11,388,442</b>	<b>\$882,205</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Personnel	\$6,889,013	\$7,577,456	688,443
Facilities	\$754,228	\$823,995	69,767
Program Operations	\$1,983,008	\$1,983,008	0
Other	\$879,988	\$1,003,983	123,995
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$10,506,237</b>	<b>\$11,388,442</b>	<b>\$882,205</b>

If you selected Report 1, the feedback is:

**Incorrect:** Not quite. While this report includes important financial information, it is difficult to find the data and make comparisons within the bulleted lists of figures. Effective reports are **appealing** and **accessible**. Reports that include financial data should be easy to read and interpret. Presenting financial data in tables, charts, or graphs helps people quickly identify income and spending patterns or trends.

Keep in mind that your budget reports will show a lot more financial detail than this simplified budget summary.

If you selected Report 2, the feedback is:

**Correct:** You're right. Having financial data presented in tables, charts, or graphs is more **appealing** and **accessible**.

With the budget information in a table format, you can easily see how program income and expenses have changed from one year to the next. The column on the right provides quick access to the differences in spending between both years. It's easy to know where the biggest spending increases are.

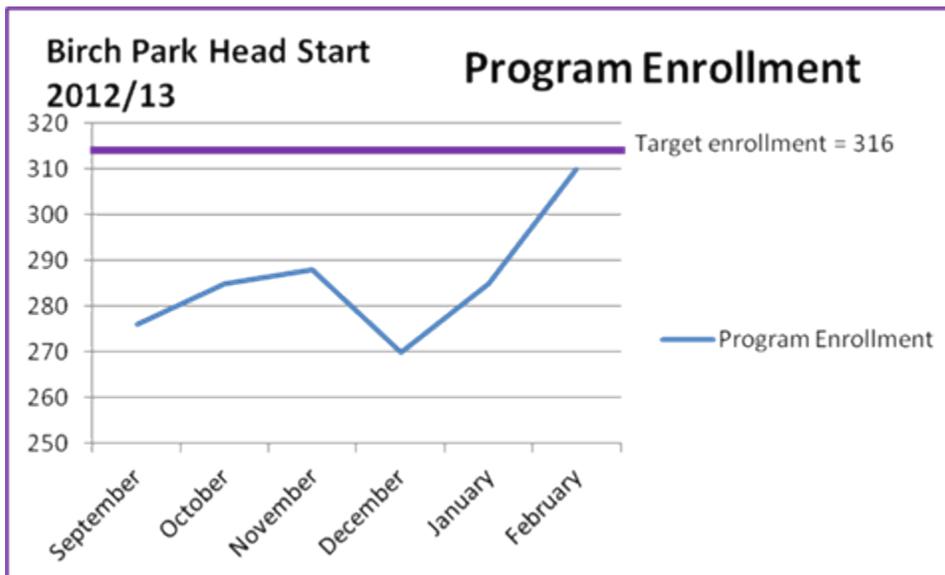
Keep in mind that your budget reports will show a lot more financial detail than this simplified budget summary.

### 3.8: Do You Know What Makes a Good Report?

#### Birch Park Head Start Enrollment

What do you think of these reports? Compare the two versions, and then pick the report that does a better job. Remember to consider the Four A's: appealing, accessible, accurate, and audience-specific.

#### Report 1



## Report 2

### Birch Park Head Start

#### 2012/13 Enrollment Data

Target = 316

- On September 30, enrollment was 276
- The next month, 285 kids attended
- Following month, 288 enrolled
- Then, we had 270 kids
- In January, it went back up to 285
- In February, we did some outreach to the community and had 310 kids enrolled

If you selected Report 1, the feedback is:

**Correct:** Excellent. This line graph is a great way to view this program's enrollment data. You can quickly see how enrollment has varied and ultimately increased over time. You also can see how the program's actual enrollment compares to the target enrollment.

As with financial data, numerical data are often best presented in tables, charts, or graphs. In this case, the line graph helps to make this report **appealing** and **accessible**.

If you selected Report 2, the feedback is:

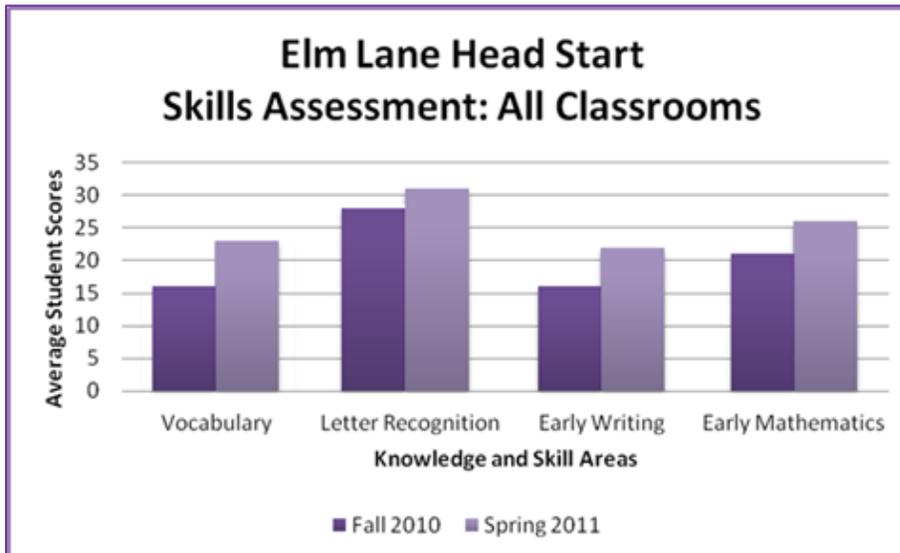
**Incorrect:** Not exactly. Presenting numbers within text makes it hard for people to find what they are looking for. As with financial information, numerical data is much easier to see and understand when presented in tables, charts, or graphs. These data tools make reports **appealing** and **accessible**. They make information easy to read and interpret and can help people quickly see the story the data are telling.

### 3.9: Do You Know What Makes a Good Report?

#### Elm Lane Head Start Skills Assessment

What do you think of these reports? Compare the two versions, and then pick the report that does a better job. Remember to consider the Four A's: appealing, accessible, accurate, and audience-specific.

##### Report 1



##### Report 2



If you selected Report 1, the feedback is:

**Correct:** Good choice. Interestingly, these graphs contain the same data, but they differ in important ways. The graph you chose is more **appealing** because of its simple display. Overuse of fancy display

options (dark background and 3-D bars) can actually get in the way of reading and understanding a graph.

More importantly, this graph is more **accurate** because it uses an appropriate y-axis scale, starting at zero. The orange graph uses a scale that starts at 15, so smaller increases in scores seem more significant than they really are. The white graph also includes a clear, factual heading, which is critical for telling an accurate story.

If you selected Report 2, the feedback is:

**Incorrect:** Think again. Interestingly, these graphs contain the same data, but they differ in important ways, and the white graph is a better choice. That other graph is more **appealing** because of its simple display. Overuse of fancy display options (dark background and 3-D bars) can actually get in the way of reading and understanding a graph.

More importantly, this graph is less **accurate** because it uses an inappropriate scale. Rather than starting at zero, the y-axis here starts at 15, so smaller increases in scores seem more significant than they really are. This graph also includes a misleading heading, given the small sample size of just 18 students.

### 3.10: Do You Know What Makes a Good Report?

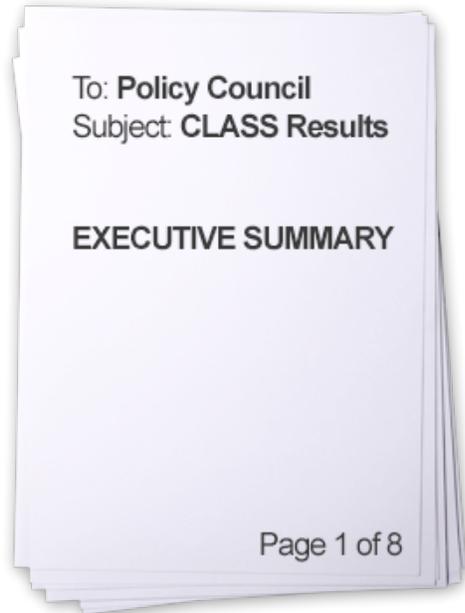
#### CLASS™ Results

What do you think of these reports? Compare the two versions, and then pick the report that does a better job. Remember to consider the Four A's: appealing, accessible, accurate, and audience-specific.

#### Report 1



## Report 2



If you selected Report 1, the feedback is:

**Incorrect:** Not quite. As a Policy Council or governing body member, wouldn't you rather read the executive summary than a full 93-page report?

Effective reports are **audience-specific**. They are designed to suit the needs of the people receiving and using them. In this case, your program's education manager and teachers might need all the details of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS™) scores, which measure teacher-child classroom interactions. But for most Policy Council members, a summary of the results would be more appropriate. Of course, your Head Start program should always make the full report available in case you are interested in reviewing more details.

If you selected Report 2, the feedback is:

**Correct:** You're right. A report should be appropriate for the **audience**. As a Policy Council or governing body member, wouldn't you rather read the executive summary than a full 93-page report?

Effective reports are **audience-specific**. They are designed to suit the needs of the people receiving and using them. In this case, your program's educator manager and teachers might need all the details of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS™) scores, which measure teacher-child classroom interactions. But for most Policy Council members, a summary of the results would be more appropriate. Of course, your Head Start program should always make the full report available in case you are interested in reviewing more details.

### 3.11: Summary: The Four A's

In fulfilling your governance role, you use Head Start data reports to provide recommendations and make decisions. Make sure the reports you receive from management meet the Four A's.

Consider these questions when looking at your Head Start reports:

- **Appealing:** Are the reports pleasurable to view? Do they present the data graphically rather than in long paragraphs?
- **Accessible:** Are the reports easy for you to read and interpret? Do they avoid jargon or acronyms you're not familiar with? Are they available in your primary language?
- **Accurate:** Does the data appear to be error-free? Is the data clearly labeled? Are there typos or other mistakes in the reports? Does any of the data seem very unusual or unrealistic?
- **Audience-specific:** Do the reports highlight the issues you care about most? Do they include the level of detail you need to make informed decisions?

### 3.12 Reviewing Reports

Now that you know what makes a good report, you are ready to practice analyzing and interpreting information so you can make good decisions. Remember, your job as a governing body or Policy Council member is to use data and information to oversee and improve your Head Start program.

#### Activity Introduction: Find the Story

In this activity, you will review some sample Head Start reports to identify the story each one is telling. You will also ask meaningful questions about the information in each report to get the most from your review.

#### Scenario 1: Looking at Program Income

You are a governing body, Tribal Council, or Policy Council member at Green County Head Start. The chief financial officer and governing body treasurer have sent you a mid-year financial report to review prior to your monthly meeting. The report focuses on the program's income sources and the income received to date.

When reviewing financial reports, it is important to:

- Closely compare your budgeted income and expenses against actual income and expenses
- Pay attention to areas where the program has either overspent or underspent
- Note where revenue is less than expected
- Ask management to explain unexpected or unusual financial data

Review the report to practice analyzing and interpreting the information. Think about questions you might want to ask.

### 3.13: Sample Financial Report Question 1

Has the program received all of its six-month budgeted income? Select the red cell or cells that help you find the answer to this question.

Green County Head Start Mid-Year (6-month) Financial Report				
Income Source	Annual Budgeted Income	6-month Budgeted Income	Actual Income to Date	Actual as a % of Budgeted
Office of Head Start	\$11,780,382	\$5,890,191	\$4,986,433	42%
State Funding	\$1,375,986	\$687,993	\$602,890	43%
In-kind/ Donations	\$2,945,096	\$1,472,548	\$337,829	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$16,101,464</b>	<b>\$8,050,732</b>	<b>\$5,927,152</b>	<b>36%</b>

If you selected \$5,890,191 or 42 percent, the feedback is:

**Incorrect:** Not quite. Data about the program's six-month budgeted income and the actual income to date can be found in the two red cells in the bottom row.

As you can see, while the program's six-month budgeted income is about \$8 million, the program has received just shy of \$6 million. This means it has \$2 million less from its income sources than it should have at this point.

If you selected \$8,050,732 and \$5,927,152 the feedback is:

**Correct:** You found it. These cells show the six-month budgeted income and the actual income to date for all income sources. While the program's six-month budgeted income is about \$8 million, the program has received just shy of \$6 million. This means it has received \$2 million less from its income sources than it should have at this point.

### 3.14: Sample Financial Report Question 2

Which piece of data in this report creates the most concern? Select a red cell to indicate where you would find the answer to this question.

**Green County Head Start  
Mid-Year (6-month) Financial Report**

Income Source	Annual Budgeted Income	6-month Budgeted Income	Actual Income to Date	Actual as a % of Budgeted
Office of Head Start	\$11,780,382	\$5,890,191	\$4,986,433	42%
State Funding	\$1,375,986	\$687,993	\$602,890	43%
In-kind/Donations	\$2,945,096	\$1,472,548	\$337,829	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$16,101,464</b>	<b>\$8,050,732</b>	<b>\$5,927,152</b>	<b>36%</b>

If you selected \$687,993 or \$5,927,152, the feedback is:

**Incorrect.** Not quite. The correct answer is the cell with 11 percent. With the program at its mid-year point, the percentage of income received to date versus annual budgeted income for each income source should be close to 50 percent. However, the current figure for income from in-kind contributions and donations is 11 percent, which is well below 50 percent. This is cause for concern. Keep in mind that the non-federal share of your overall program budget is as important as the federal income sources.

If you selected 11 percent, the feedback is:

**Correct.** Excellent. With the program at its mid-year point, the percentage of actual income received to date versus annual budgeted income for each income source should be close to 50 percent. The current figure for income from in-kind contributions and donations is 11 percent, which is well below 50 percent. This is cause for concern. Keep in mind that the non-federal share of your overall program budget is as important as the federal income sources.

### 3.15: Sample Financial Report Question 3

<b>Green County Head Start Mid-Year (6-month) Financial Report</b>				
<b>Income Source</b>	<b>Annual Budgeted Income</b>	<b>6-month Budgeted Income</b>	<b>Actual Income to Date</b>	<b>Actual as a % of Budgeted</b>
Office of Head Start	\$11,780,382	\$5,890,191	\$4,986,433	42%
State Funding	\$1,375,986	\$687,993	\$602,890	43%
In-kind/ Donations	\$2,945,096	\$1,472,548	\$337,829	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$16,101,464</b>	<b>\$8,050,732</b>	<b>\$5,927,152</b>	<b>36%</b>

What additional questions might you ask after reviewing this report? Select all that apply.

- a) Why is our income from in-kind contributions and donations so much lower than budgeted, and what should we do about it?
- b) Are we properly recording and accounting for our in-kind income?
- c) Do we have more boys or girls in our Head Start program?
- d) Should we let our Office of Head Start program specialist know that our income from in-kind contributions and donations is below budget? Is this something he or she can help with?

#### **Feedback**

The correct response is a), b), and d). There are several good questions to ask. Because the income from in-kind contributions and donations to date is so much less than budgeted, you should ask questions to learn more. Sometimes the facts and figures that concern you can be the result of poor recordkeeping, so make sure your program has systems in place to accurately record all financial transactions. If you still have concerns after the management team has answered your questions, talk with your colleagues about possible next steps.

When determining what to ask, make sure questions are relevant to the report at hand, elicit information to help your decision-making, and spark thoughtful conversations about next steps.

#### **Scenario 2: Looking at Enrollment and Attendance Data**

You are a governing body, Tribal Council, or Policy Council member at Yellow Bus Regional Head Start. The Head Start director has circulated the December enrollment and attendance report at your monthly meeting.

When reviewing these types of data, it is important to:

- Pay close attention to how enrollment levels compare with your program's target enrollment
- Look at your program's average daily attendance to see if it meets Head Start standards
- Ask questions if your enrollment or attendance rates are low

Review the report to practice analyzing and interpreting the information. Think about questions you might want to ask.

### 3.16: Sample Enrollment Report Question 1

Is the Early Head Start program reaching its enrollment goal? Select the section of this report where you would find the answer to this question.

Yellow Bus Regional Head Start					
Enrollment & Attendance Report (2012/13)					
	September	October	November	December	Goal
Actual Enrollment Head Start classrooms	296	302	305	302	307
Average Daily Attendance Head Start classrooms	88%	88%	82%	82%	85%
Actual Enrollment Early Head Start classrooms	56	50	59	61	62
Average Daily Attendance Early Head Start classrooms	84%	84%	85%	69%	85%

If you selected the "Actual Enrollment Head Start classrooms" row or the 85 percent cell, the feedback is:

**Incorrect.** Not quite. The "Actual Enrollment Early Head Start classrooms" row provides the information you are looking for. It shows the Early Head Start program's enrollment each month, as well as the enrollment goal, which is listed in the last column. The data indicate that the enrollment has fluctuated each month but is currently just one child shy of reaching the target enrollment of 62.

If you selected the "Actual Enrollment Early Head Start classrooms" row, the feedback is:

**Correct.** You found it. This row shows the Early Head Start program's enrollment each month, as well as the enrollment goal. The data indicate that the enrollment has fluctuated each month but is currently just one child shy of reaching the target enrollment of 62.

## Definitions

**Actual Enrollment** refers to the number of children currently enrolled in a Head Start program, as opposed to "funded enrollment," which refers to the total number of children a program is funded to serve.

**Average Daily Attendance (ADA)** is calculated by dividing the number of children attending a Head Start program on any given day by the number of children actually enrolled (excluding vacancies) in the program on that same day.

### 3.17: Sample Enrollment Report Question 2

Which piece of data in this report creates the most concern? Select a red cell to indicate where you would find the answer to this question.

Yellow Bus Regional Head Start					
Enrollment & Attendance Report (2012/13)					
	September	October	November	December	Goal
Actual Enrollment Head Start classrooms	296	302	305	302	307
Average Daily Attendance Head Start classrooms	88%	88%	82%	82%	85%
Actual Enrollment Early Head Start classrooms	56	50	59	61	62
Average Daily Attendance Early Head Start classrooms	84%	84%	85%	69%	85%

If you selected 88 percent or 62, the feedback is:

**Incorrect.** Not quite. The correct answer is the red cell with 69 percent. Good attendance is very important for Head Start children. When the ADA dips below 85 percent, programs must analyze the causes and decide if family support services are needed. The data in the red cell in the bottom row show that your program's Early Head Start ADA in December was just 69 percent. This number should concern you, as low attendance rates can impact children's learning as well as your program's evaluation.

If you selected 69 percent, the feedback is:

**Correct.** Excellent. Good attendance is very important for Head Start children. When the ADA dips below 85 percent, programs must analyze the causes and decide if family support services are needed. Here, the data show that your program's Early Head Start ADA in December was just 69 percent. This number should concern you, as low attendance rates can impact children's learning as well as your program's evaluation.

### 3.18: Sample Enrollment Report Question 3

Yellow Bus Regional Head Start					
Enrollment & Attendance Report (2012/13)					
	September	October	November	December	Goal
Actual Enrollment Head Start classrooms	296	302	305	302	307
Average Daily Attendance Head Start classrooms	88%	88%	82%	82%	85%
Actual Enrollment Early Head Start classrooms	56	50	59	61	62
Average Daily Attendance Early Head Start classrooms	84%	84%	85%	69%	85%

What additional questions might you ask after reviewing this report? Select all that apply.

- a) Do you know why both Head Start and Early Head Start attendance rates were low in December?
- b) What can we do to get our ADA in all of our classrooms consistently at or above 85 percent?
- c) My brother wants his kids in Head Start. Why didn't you call me to let me know spaces were available?
- d) What strategies do you think helped us boost our enrollment numbers from September to December?

#### Feedback

The correct response is a), b), and d). There are several good questions to ask. Because enrollment and attendance are very important in Head Start, programs pay close attention to these numbers. The data indicate your program is not consistently meeting its enrollment or attendance goals. Ask your management team about the causes for this and about their strategies for improvement. You also can ask questions that acknowledge success, which in this case is the enrollment growth from September to December.

When reviewing a report, ask questions that focus on the best interests of the entire program, its families, and the community served. It is not appropriate to ask questions specific to your own needs or the needs of your family members, neighbors, or friends.

### Scenario 3: Looking at CLASS™ Data

You are a governing body, Tribal Council, or Policy Council member at Big Red Head Start. Your education manager is sharing year-end Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS™) data for all classrooms in your program. These data provide information on how well your classroom teachers interact with their students.

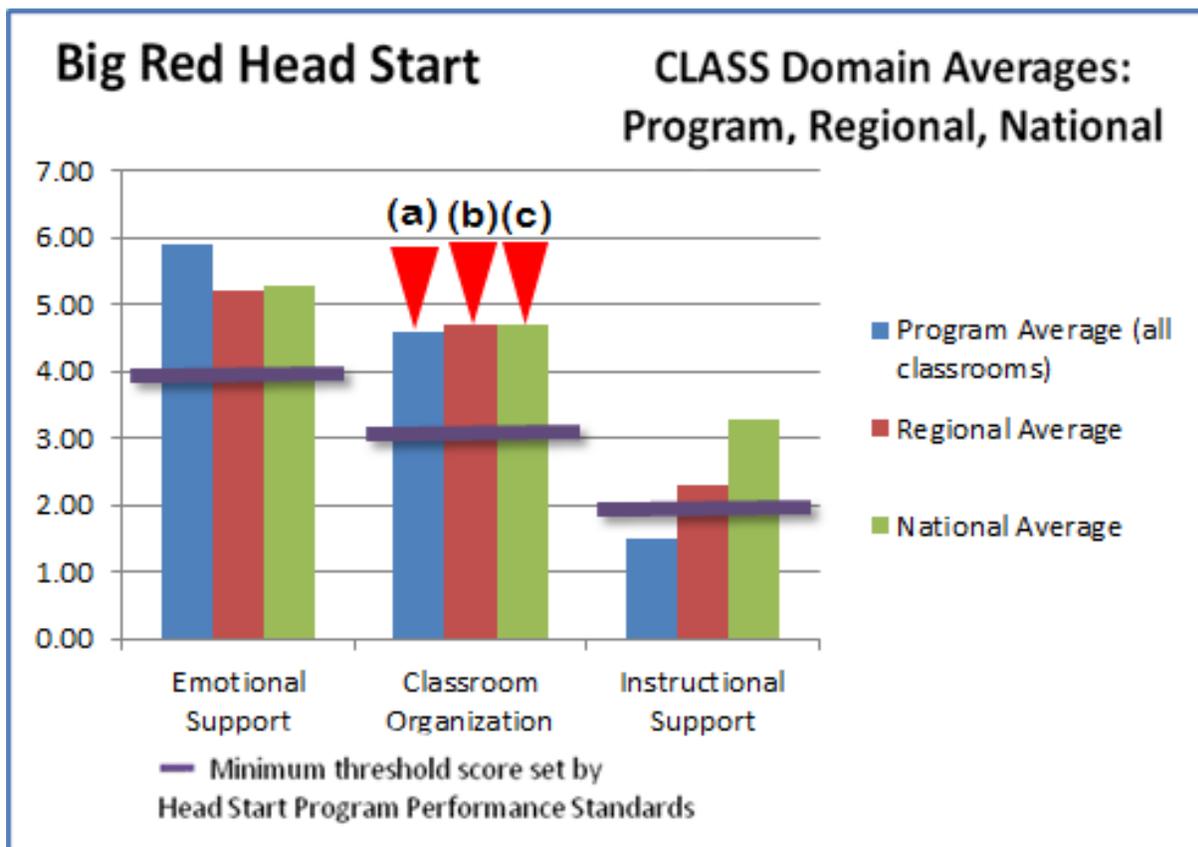
When reviewing CLASS™ data, it is important to:

- Compare your program's scores with regional and national averages
- Compare the scores with the minimum thresholds and standards of excellence set by the Head Start Program Performance Standards
- Use longitudinal data to compare the current year's scores to previous years' scores

Review the report to practice analyzing and interpreting the information. Think about questions you might want to ask.

#### 3.19: Sample CLASS™ Report Question 1

What is your program's average score in the domain of classroom organization? Select a red arrow to indicate where you would look for the answer to this question.



If you selected the bar marked with an (a), the feedback is:

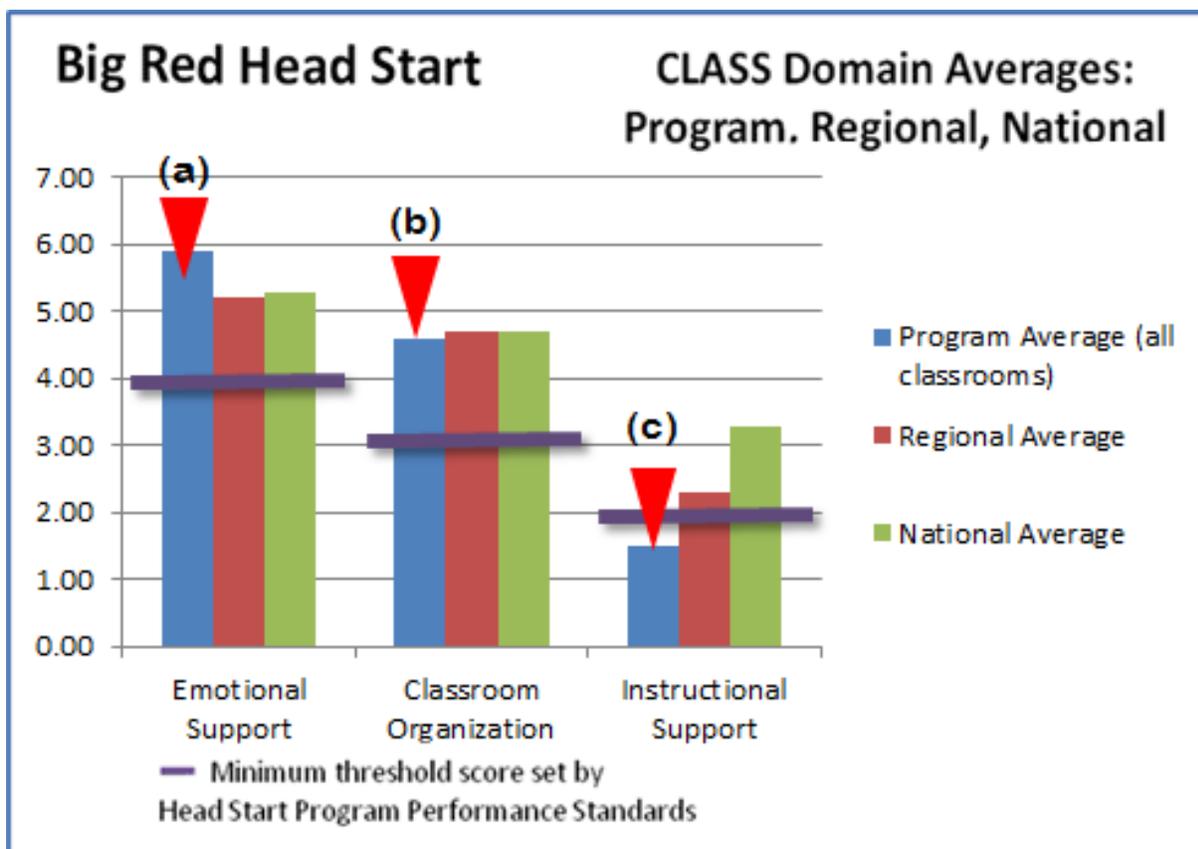
**Correct.** Great job, you found it. This bar graph clearly labels the CLASS™ domains along the x-axis, and the legend explains that the blue bar represents the program average. As you can see, the program's average score for classroom organization is just below 5 and nearly identical with the regional and national averages. It is also well above the minimum threshold score of 3, set by the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

If you selected the bars marked with either (b) or (c), the feedback is:

**Incorrect.** Not quite. Your program's average score in classroom organization is represented by the blue bar marked with (a). This bar graph clearly labels the CLASS™ domains along the x-axis, and the legend shows that the blue bar represents the program average. As you can see, your program's average score for classroom organization is just below 5, and nearly identical with the regional and national averages. It is also well above the minimum threshold score of 3 set by the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

### 3.20: Sample CLASS™ Report Question 2

Which piece of data in this report indicates a great CLASS™ success for your program? Select a red arrow to indicate your answer.



Choose from the following options:

- a) The bar for program average in the category "Emotional Support" marked (a). This bar is higher than both the regional and national averages. It ends above the threshold line.
- b) The bar for program average in the category "Classroom Organization" marked (b). This bar is slightly lower than both the regional and national averages, which have the same value. It ends above the threshold line.
- c) The bar for program average in the category "Instructional Support" marked (c). This bar is lower than both the regional and national averages. It ends below the threshold line.

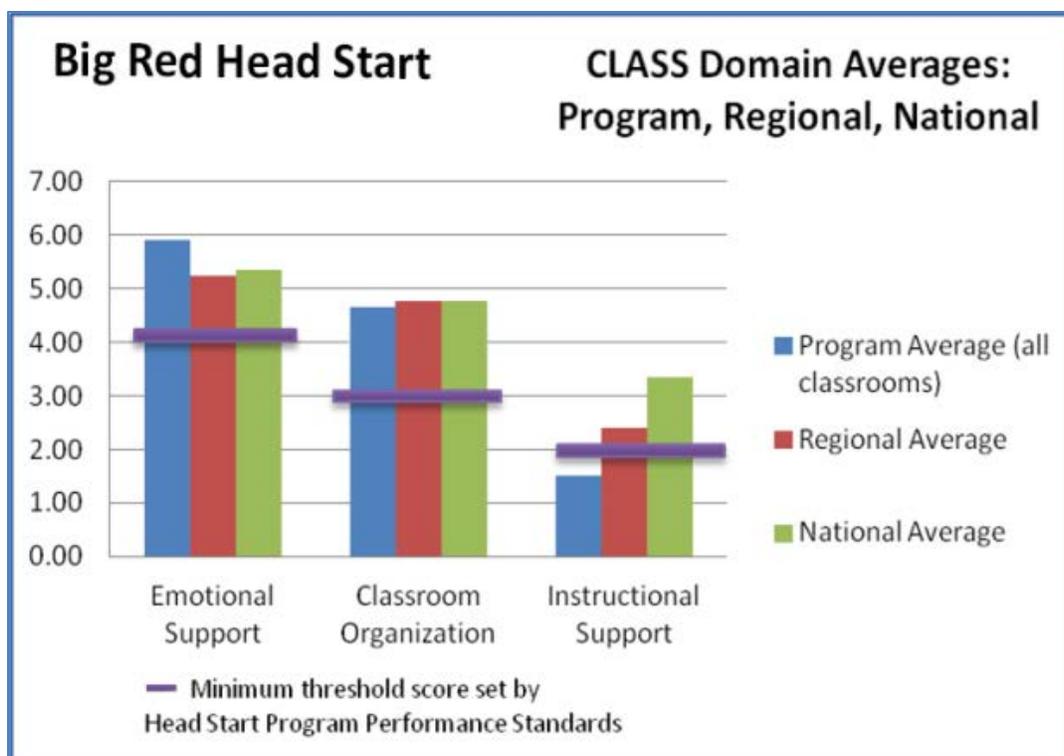
If you selected (a), the response is:

**Correct.** Great insight. Your program's average score in the CLASS™ domain of emotional support is above the regional and national averages. The score of nearly 6 is also well above the minimum threshold score of 4 set by the Head Start Program Performance Standards. This data reveals that your program's teachers are highly skilled at providing emotional support to the children in their classrooms. This is great news not only for the children but for their families as well.

If you selected (b) or (c), the response is:

**Incorrect.** Not exactly. Your program's greatest CLASS™ success is its average score in the domain of emotional support, which is indicated by the blue bar marked with (a). The score of nearly 6 is above the regional and national averages and well above the minimum threshold score of 4 set by the Head Start Program Performance Standards. This data reveals that your program's teachers are highly skilled at providing emotional support to the children in their classrooms. This is great news not only for the children but for their families as well.

### 3.21 Sample CLASS™ Report Question 3



What additional questions might you ask your Head Start director or education manager after reviewing this report? Select all that apply.

- a) Do you know why our instructional support scores are below the minimum threshold set by the Head Start Program Performance Standards?
- b) Are there changes we can make to our training plan and budget that might help our teachers improve their instructional support?
- c) What do our teachers do to provide such excellent emotional support to the children?
- d) How can we improve children's physical fitness and eating habits?

#### Feedback

The correct response is a), b), and c). There are several good questions to ask. Remember, when reviewing CLASS™ data, you want to compare your program's scores with regional and national averages, and with minimum thresholds set by the Office of Head Start (OHS). This is important, as programs with average CLASS™ scores below the minimum threshold on any of the three domains will have to compete for future grants.

If your program is not meeting the thresholds set by OHS, ask your management team why. Explore together how the program can improve areas of weakness and build on its strengths. Also, since your program's budget should support your program's goals, it makes sense to ask how the budget might be modified to help improve CLASS™ scores.

### Scenario 4: Looking at Teacher Credentials

You are a newly appointed governing body, Tribal Council, or Policy Council member at Blue Sky Head Start. For the past four years, one of your program goals has been to increase the number of classroom teachers with qualifying credentials. As part of the Self-Assessment, the Head Start director has pulled together data to show progress toward this goal.

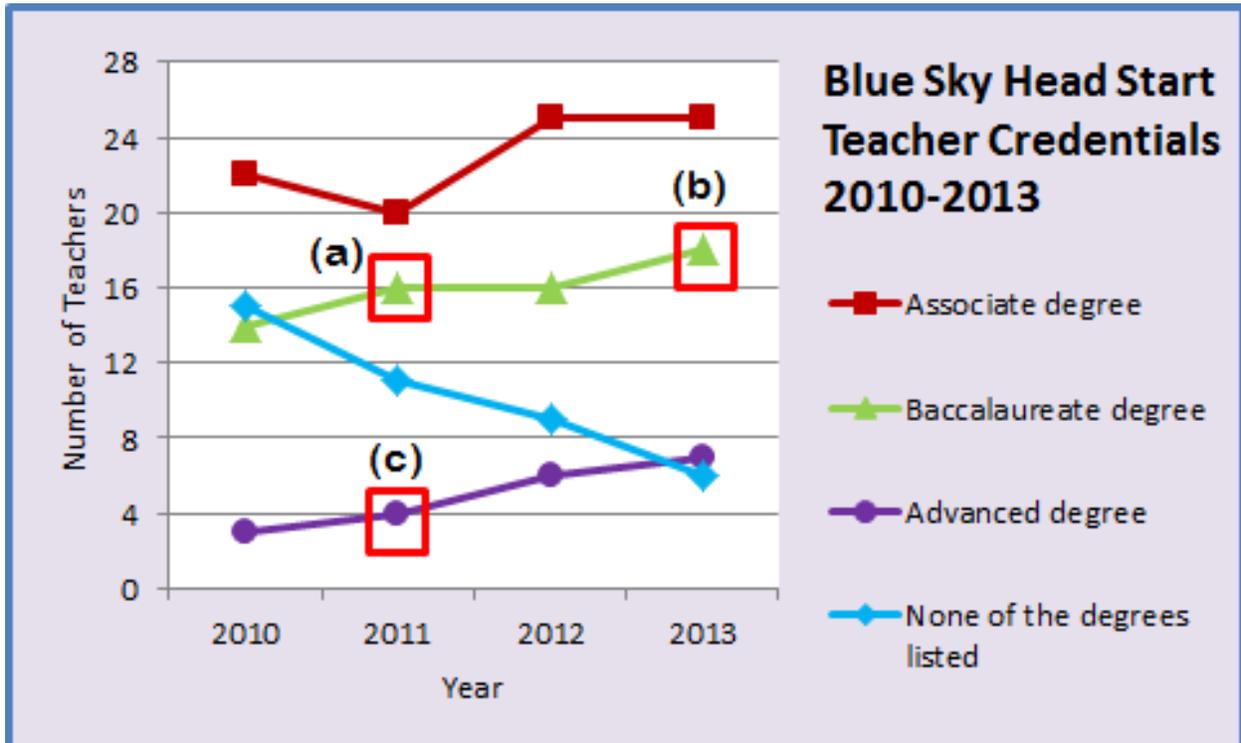
When looking at data on teacher credentials, it is important to:

- Review the educational degrees held by various teaching staff members
- Compare your teachers' credentials with the requirements of the Head Start Act
- Determine if your program needs to increase the number of teachers who have qualifying credentials

Review the report to practice analyzing and interpreting the information. Think about questions you might want to ask.

### 3.22: Sample Teacher Credentials Report Question 1

How many classroom teachers had baccalaureate degrees in 2011? Select a red square on the graph to indicate where you would look for the answer to this question.



Choose from the options:

- a. The point for "Baccalaureate Degree" for the category 2011 marked (a). This is a middle value for series. For the category 2011, it is below the "Associate Degree" and higher than "Advanced Degree" and "None of the degrees listed."
- b. The point for "Baccalaureate Degree" for the category 2013 marked (b). This is the highest value for series. For the category 2013, it is below the "Associate Degree" and higher than "Advanced Degree" and "None of the degrees listed."
- c. The point for "None of the degrees listed" for the category 2011 marked (c). This is a middle value for series. For the category 2011, it is the lowest value for all the series.

If you selected (a), the feedback is:

**Correct.** Great job! This green line shows the number of teachers with baccalaureate degrees from 2010 to 2013. The data indicate that 16 teachers had this type of degree in 2011. The data also show that the number of teachers with this degree increased from 2010 to 2013.

If you selected (b) or (c), the feedback is:

**Incorrect.** Not quite. The red square marked with (a) indicates the data point with the number you were looking for. It shows that 16 teachers had baccalaureate degrees in 2011. When viewing line graphs, look to the legend to explain what each line shows. In this graph, the green line shows the number of teachers with baccalaureate degrees from 2010 to 2013. You can see that the numbers of teachers with this degree has increased over time.

## Teacher Credential Requirements

### Teacher Credential Information

[Adapted and modified from the Head Start Act Sec. 648A(a)(2) and (3)]

#### Head Start Teachers

OHS expects every program to make reasonable progress in increasing its numbers of teachers with qualifying BA degrees.

The qualifications for teachers in center-based classrooms are:

- An associate, baccalaureate, or advanced degree in early childhood education;
- An associate degree in a field related to early childhood education and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education, with experience teaching preschool-age children;
- A baccalaureate or advanced degree in any field and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education, with experience teaching preschool-age children; or
- A baccalaureate degree in any field and has been admitted into the Teach For America program, passed a rigorous early childhood content exam, such as the Praxis II, participated in a Teach For

America summer training institute that includes teaching preschool children and is receiving ongoing professional development and support from Teach For America's professional staff.

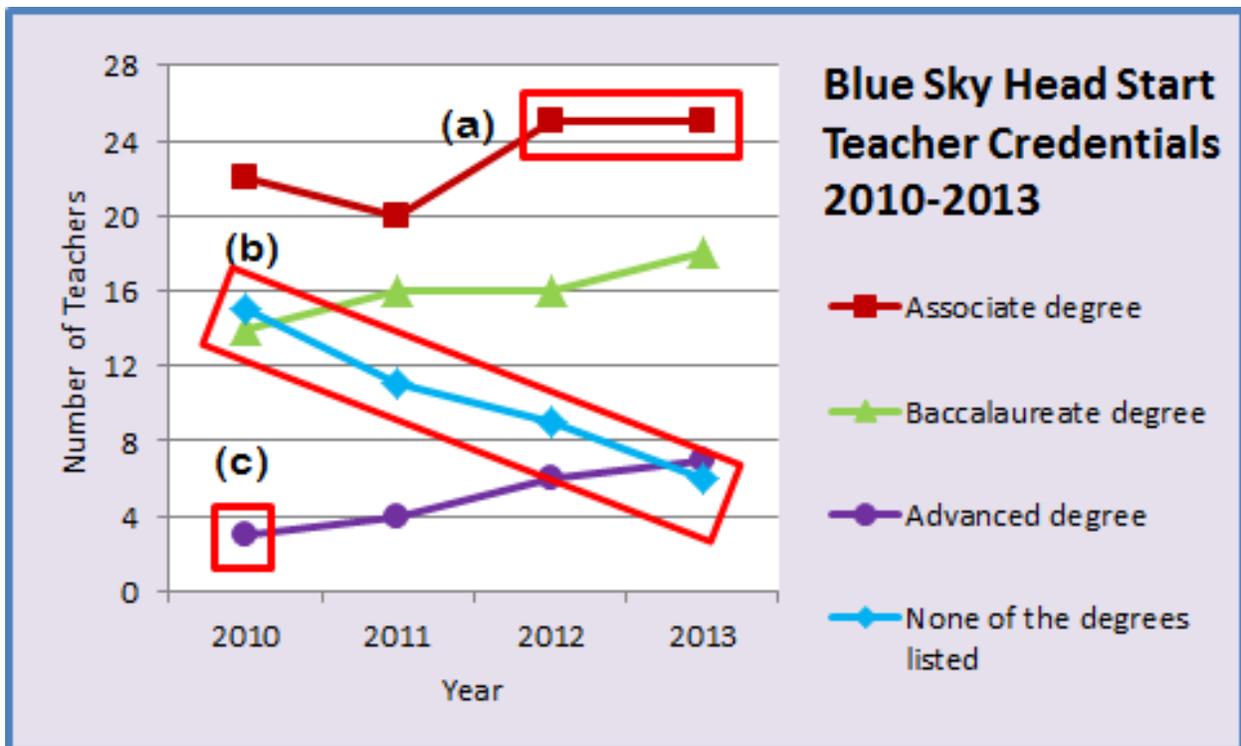
### Head Start Teacher Aides and Assistants

The qualifications for teacher aides and assistants in center-based classrooms are:

- Have a child development associate (CDA) credential;
- Be enrolled in a CDA credential program that will be completed within two years; or
- Have an associate or baccalaureate degree (in any area) or be enrolled in a program leading to such a degree.

### 3.23: Sample Teacher Credentials Report Question 2

Which piece of data in this graph indicates the greatest success related to teacher credentials? Select a red outlined section of the graph to indicate where you would find the answer to this question.



Choose from the following options:

- The two points, for the categories 2012 and 2013 marked (a), in the series "Associate Degree." Both points have the same value of 25, which is the highest value for all the series for all categories.
- The line for the series "None of the degrees listed" marked (b). The line consistently decreases from a high of 15 to a low of 6. It starts as the second highest value in 2010 and is the lowest value for 2013.

- c) The point for the series "Advanced Degree" for the category 2010 marked (c). This is the lowest value for the series. For the category 2010, it is the lowest value for all the series.

If you selected (a) or (c), the feedback is:

**Incorrect.** Not quite. While this report has lots of good news, perhaps the greatest success is in how much the number of teachers without postsecondary degrees has declined. This is shown by the blue line marked with (b).

In 2010, 15 teachers did not have an associate, baccalaureate, or advanced degree; but by 2013, just six teachers lacked a degree. This shows that your program has been successful in increasing the number of teachers with qualifying credentials.

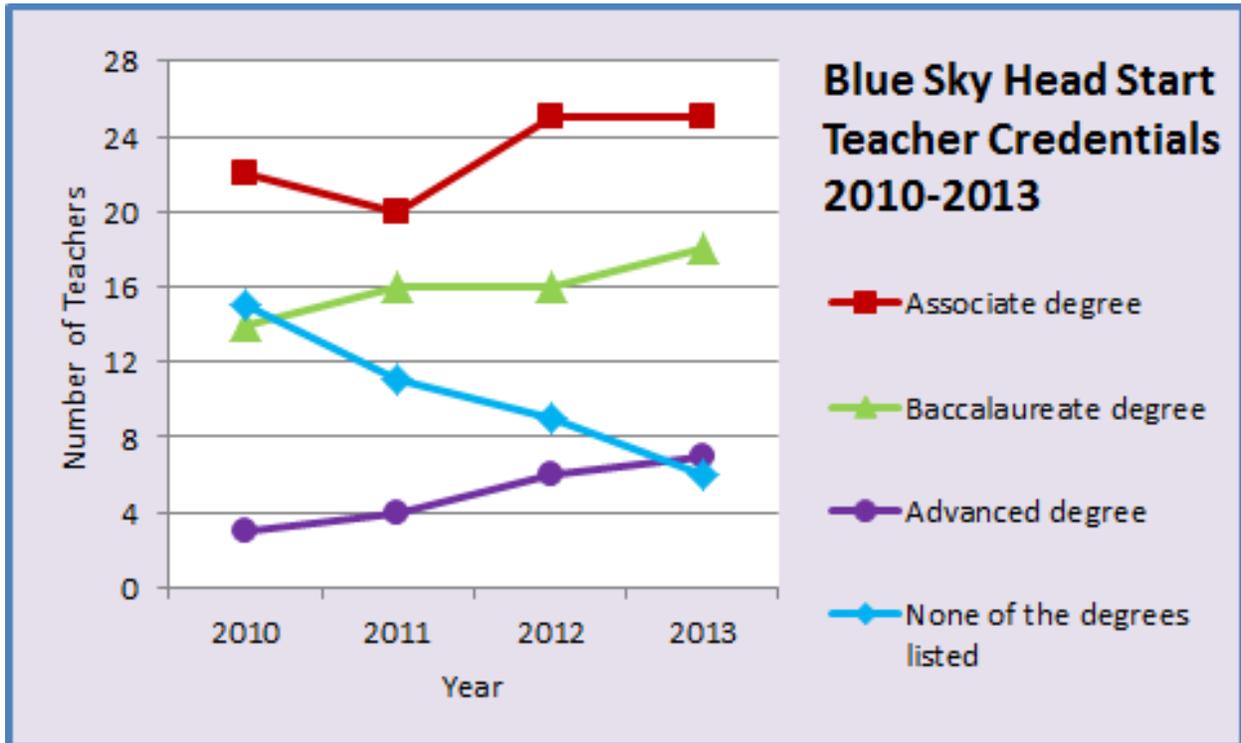
Remember, when viewing line graphs, the slopes of the lines indicate trends over time.

If you selected (b), the feedback is:

**Correct.** Excellent! While this report has lots of good news, perhaps the greatest success is in how much the number of teachers without post-secondary degrees has declined. In 2010, 15 teachers did not have an associate, baccalaureate, or advanced degree; but by 2013, just six teachers lacked a degree. This shows that your program has been successful in increasing the number of teachers with qualifying credentials.

Remember, when viewing line graphs, the slopes of the lines indicate trends over time.

### 3.24: Sample Teacher Credentials Report Question 3



What additional questions might you ask your Head Start director or education manager after reviewing this report? Select all that apply.

- a) Are there ways we can better support our teachers in obtaining degrees?
- b) What's the average number of children in each classroom?
- c) Are we meeting the requirements of the Head Start Act regarding teacher credentials?
- d) What do you credit for the program's success in reducing the number of teachers without degrees?

#### Feedback

The correct response is a), c), and d). There are several good questions to ask. Because the Head Start Act has specific educational requirements for Head Start teachers and assistant teachers, pay attention to the degrees your teachers hold. The data in this report show that your program is successfully raising the credentials of its teachers. Ask your management team how they have achieved this success and how they plan to reach the goal of having all teachers hold degrees.

Remember to ask questions that are relevant to the data at hand, focus on strategies for success, and contribute to meaningful conversation and decision-making.

### 3.25: Annual Audit

As a governing body, Tribal Council, or Policy Council member, one of the most important reports you review each year is the annual audit. The Head Start Act requires the governing body to hire an independent auditor to conduct the audit and supply your program with an audit report.

A Head Start audit has three purposes:

- To determine whether a grantee agency's financial statements are accurate
- To determine whether a grantee agency is in compliance with its federal grant
- To determine whether appropriate financial controls are in place

The audit has another result as well. It gives the governing body and Policy Council a year-end snapshot of the grantee agency's financial position.

### 3.26: Annual Audit

An audit is a complicated document. In this section, you will view the different parts of an audit and learn what they say about an organization's fiscal health. This information will help you better understand your organization's finances, ask appropriate questions, and make sound financial decisions.

You may wish to download the [Glossary of Audit Terms](#) [PDF, 96KB] to keep close by as you review the parts of an audit. Keep in mind that all Head Start grantee agencies must follow strict rules regarding audits of federally funded programs. For more detailed information about Head Start audits, view the [Office of Head Start A-133 Audit Training Webcast](#).

### Anatomy of an Audit

In this activity, you will review a sample audit to see what sorts of details are included.

### 3.27: Anatomy of an Audit: Opinion Letter

#### Opinion Letter

- Provides the auditor's view of the organization's financial statements and systems
- Indicates whether the audit was "clean"

#### Sample Opinion Letter

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Board of Directors Nonprofit Org, Inc. Anytown, USA

We have audited the accompanying statement of financial position of Nonprofit Org, Inc. (a not-for-profit organization) as of June 30, 200X, and the related statements of activities, cash flows, and functional expenses for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of NONPROFIT ORG, INC.'s management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with U.S. generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Nonprofit Org, Inc. as of June 30, 20XX, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles.

September 15, 2013

### Questions to Consider

Here are some questions to consider when reviewing your own program's audit:

- Is the audit opinion unqualified, qualified, or adverse?
- Was the auditor unable to express an opinion on the financial statements?
- What is the date of the audit? Was the audit conducted and completed in a timely manner?

## 3.28: Anatomy of an Audit: Statement of Financial Position

### Statement of Financial Position

- Summarizes the net worth of the organization at the close of fiscal year
- Shows what the organization owns (assets) and what it owes (liabilities)
- Is also referred to as the balance sheet

### Sample Statement of Financial Position

NONPROFIT ORG, INC. STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
JUNE 30, 20XX

	ASSETS
Cash	\$274,139
Pledges and contracts receivable	200,000
Prepaid expenses	17,000

Property and equipment, less accumulated depreciation of \$27,505	39,393
Other Assets - security deposit	<u>12,000</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u>\$542,532</u>

#### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

##### Liabilities:

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 179,578
Advances	72,544
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<u>252,122</u>

##### Net Assets:

Unrestricted	(38,427)
Temporarily restricted	328,837
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<u>\$290,410</u>

<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<u>\$542,532</u>
---	------------------

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

### Questions to Consider

Here are some questions to consider when reviewing your own program's audit:

- What is the value of your organization's total assets? What is the value of its net assets?
- Are your assets restricted or unrestricted?

## 3.29: Anatomy of an Audit: Statement of Activities

### Statement of Activities

- Provides an overview of the organization's financial performance for the fiscal year
- Reveals the organization's net operating margin (revenue less expenses)
- Shows major categories of revenues and expenses as well as unrestricted and restricted funds
- Is also referred to as the income, or profit-and-loss, statement

### Sample Statement of Activities

NONPROFIT ORG, INC. STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 20XX

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
Revenue and support:			
Government contracts	\$ 692,998	--	\$ 692,998
Grants and contributions, non-government	188,760	559,100	747,860
Fundraising event	--	11,100	11,100
Satisfaction of program restrictions	333,930	<u>(333,930)</u>	--
Interest income	<u>3,915</u>	--	<u>3,915</u>
Total revenue and support	1,219,603	236,270	1,455,873
Expenses:			
Program A	357,953	--	357,953
Program B	118,378	--	118,378
Program C	381,238	--	381,238
Program D	<u>229,861</u>	--	<u>229,861</u>
Total program expenses	1,087,430		1,087,430
<u>Supporting Services</u>			
Administration and General	118,058	--	118,058
Funding Raising	<u>166,959</u>	--	<u>166,959</u>
Total expenses	1,372,447		1,372,447
Change in net assets	(152,844)	236,270	83,426
Net assets - beginning of year	<u>114,417</u>	<u>92,567</u>	<u>206,984</u>
Net assets - end of year	(38,427)	\$ 328,837	\$ 290,410

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

### **Questions to Consider**

Here are some questions to consider when reviewing your own program's audit:

- What funds were available at the beginning of the year and then at the end of the year?
- Did the organization have a net gain or a loss of assets during the year?
- What was the organization's largest source of revenue? What was its largest expense?

## **3.30: Anatomy of an Audit: Statement of Functional Expenses**

### **Statement of Functional Expenses**

- Details how much is spent on mission-related program activities as compared to administrative support
- Shows expenses by function (e.g., program, management, fundraising, etc.) and by nature (e.g., salaries, rent, etc.)
- Is required for voluntary health and welfare organizations

**Sample Statement of Functional Expenses**

NONPROFIT ORG, INC.

SCHEDULE OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 20XX

	Program Services					Supporting Services		Total
	Program A	Program B	Program C	Program D	Program Expenses	Management and General	Fundraising	
Salaries	\$168,189	\$ 67,710	\$247,474	\$129,323	\$612,696	\$ 74,120	\$ 75,697	\$ 762,513
Payroll taxes and								
Employee benefits	34,037	13,703	49,962	26,120	123,822	15,228	15,263	154,313
Rent	97,288	8,215	24,436	13,271	143,210	7,162	6,530	156,902
Utilities	2,935	1,180	3,509	1,906	9,530	1,029	938	11,497
Office cleaning	1,797	723	2,149	1,167	5,836	630	574	7,040
Consultants	6,989	3,237	8,668	7,440	26,334	1,887	46,987	75,208
Accountants	4,850	1,950	5,800	3,150	15,750	1,700	1,550	19,000
Office expense	6,123	2,462	7,248	3,945	19,778	2,122	1,921	23,821
Supplies	7,907	2,500	3,355	2,514	16,276	-	-	16,276
Telephone	7,591	3,052	9,078	4,930	24,651	2,661	2,426	29,738
Postage and messengers	1,500	750	600	1,584	4,434	1,784	4,000	10,218
Photocopying	135	145	80	2,565	2,925	390	-	3,315
Equipment leasing	3,535	1,421	4,227	2,296	11,479	1,239	1,130	13,848
Insurance	2,848	1,145	3,406	1,849	9,248	998	910	11,156
Local	667	268	798	434	2,167	234	213	2,614
Meals and entertainment	1,798	723	1,371	125	4,017	1,000	2,026	7,043
Seminars and training	500	250	750	2,500	4,000	3,698	1,000	8,698
Fees	560	3,247	1,003	-	4,810	219	-	5,029
Data processing	496	199	593	322	1,610	174	158	1,942
Dues and	385	532	130	683	1,730	375	185	2,290

subscriptions								
Advertising, promotion, website	5,017	3,838	3,245	5,979	18,079	432	393	18,904
Depreciation	2,284	918	2,731	1,483	7,416	800	730	8,946
Miscellaneous	522	210	625	16,275	17,632	176	4,328	22,136
Total expenses	\$357,953	\$118,378	\$381,238	\$229,861	\$1,087,430	\$118,058	\$166,959	\$1,372,447

## Questions to Consider

Here are some questions to consider when reviewing your own program's audit:

- Are administrative and fundraising expenses appropriate, given the size and scope of the organization and its funding requirements?
- What is the organization's largest program? How does it compare with the organization's largest expense?

## 3.31: Anatomy of an Audit: Statement of Cash Flows

### Statement of Cash Flows

- Summarizes where the organization's cash came from and how it was used
- Reports on cash involved in operations, investing, and financing
- Provides end-of-year cash balance

### Sample Statement of Cash Flows

#### Cash Flows from Operating Activities:

Change in net assets	\$83,426
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided in operating activities	
Depreciation	8,946
Increase in pledges receivable	(50,019)
Increase in prepaid expenses	(3,932)
Increase in security deposits	(255)
Increase in accounts payable and accrued expenses	120,127
Decrease in advances	<u>(6,304)</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>151,989</u>

#### Cash Flows from Investing Activities:

Capital expenditures	<u>(9,573)</u>
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>(9,573)</u>
Net increase in cash	142,416
Cash - beginning of year	<u>131,723</u>

Cash - end of year	<u>\$274,139</u>
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### Questions to Consider

Here are some questions to consider when reviewing your own program's audit:

- Are accounts payable increasing or decreasing?
- Were there any major purchases or sales of equipment or facilities?
- How much cash is on hand at the end of the year?

### 3.32: Anatomy of an Audit: Notes

#### Notes

- Provides a description of the organization, its accounting policies, and additional fiscal issues
- Includes information on:
  - Fixed assets and depreciation (property and equipment)
  - Funding sources (grants and contracts)
  - Commitments and contingencies (debt, leases, etc.)
  - Related party transactions
  - Significant subsequent events

#### Sample Notes

NONPROFIT ORG, INC. NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
JUNE 30, 200X

Note #1 – Organization

Organization and Tax Status:

NONPROFIT ORG, INC. (the Organization) is a not-for-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of New York. The Organization is exempt from Federal income tax purpose under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is not classified as a private foundation.

Financial Statement Presentation:

The financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The classification of an organization's net assets and its support, revenues and expenses is based on the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions. It requires that the amounts for each of three classes of net assets—permanently restricted, temporarily restricted, and unrestricted—be displayed in a statement of financial position and that the amounts of change in each of those classes of net assets be displayed in a statement of activities.

These three classes are defined as follows:

Permanently Restricted - Net assets resulting from contributions and other inflows of assets whose use by the organization is limited by donor-imposed stipulations that neither expire by passage of time nor can be fulfilled or otherwise removed by actions of the Organization.

Temporarily Restricted - Net assets resulting from contributions and other inflows of assets whose use by the organization is limited by donor-imposed stipulations that either expire by passage of time or can be fulfilled and removed by actions of the Organization pursuant to those stipulations. When such stipulations end or are fulfilled, such temporarily restricted net assets are reclassified to unrestricted net assets and reported in the statement of activities and changes in net assets. However, if a restriction is fulfilled in the same time period in which the contribution is received, the Organization reports the support as unrestricted.

Unrestricted - The part of net assets that is neither permanently nor temporarily restricted by donor-imposed stipulations.

### Questions to Consider

Here are some questions to consider when reviewing your own program's audit:

- Are major assets almost fully depreciated?
- Are any major debt obligations due in the near future (e.g., balloon payments)?
- How soon do leases and other major agreements expire?

### 3.33: Audits Provide Powerful Insights

If you found some of the terminology in the sample audit overwhelming, you are not alone. Over time and with the help of others, you will gain an understanding of the important insights that audits provide.

Remember, your grantee agency's auditors tell you whether:

- The financial statements fairly reflect your grantee agency's financial position
- Appropriate accounting principles were used and applied consistently
- The Head Start program complies with federal fiscal laws and regulations

Using the information contained in the audit, your governance team can:

- Deepen its understanding of the grantee agency and how it operates
- Make more informed decisions on ways to strengthen your program's fiscal systems
- Ensure that the governing body provides effective fiscal oversight and safeguards federal funds

[View all questions to consider when reviewing your audit](#) [PDF, 52KB].

### 3.34: It's Time to Take Action

We've covered a lot of ground here. Here's a recap of the key points:

- As a governing body, Tribal Council, or Policy Council member, you receive and review many reports about your Head Start program.
- If you cannot easily read or interpret the reports you receive, speak up so the situation can be corrected.
- It's your job to analyze the reports and to ask questions so your team can make informed decisions that benefit the Head Start program.

Remember, reviewing reports and asking questions is everybody's business. The more you are involved in this process, the stronger your Head Start program will become.

## Activity 4: Make Meaningful Decisions

### 4.1: Make Meaningful Decisions

Do you welcome everyone's contributions when making decisions? Do you work to help others agree so that everyone can support the final decision?

In Head Start governance, all Policy Council, governing body, and Tribal Council members play a role in decision-making. In fact, decisions are most often made by a team of people or across teams. The best decisions are those that are thoughtful and that reflect everyone's opinion.

This activity describes the types of decisions you may make in Head Start, and it provides tips for informed and inclusive decision-making. You'll also learn how to choose the right decision-making method for a situation and how to prevent and resolve conflicts.

### 4.2: You Will Make Important Decisions

As a Head Start Policy Council, governing body, or Tribal Council member, you will be asked to make important decisions that impact your Head Start program.

Examples might include:

- Who do we want to hire as our next Head Start director?
- Does it make sense for us to expand our services to infants and toddlers?
- Is it possible for us to open a new center in order to be closer to the population we hope to serve?
- Are we being strategically wise if we ask our Regional Office to reduce our enrollment because of the rising costs of providing high-quality services?

### 4.3: What Will You Learn?

This training activity will help you to further develop the skills you need to make effective decisions. It also will help you learn how to foster respectful working relationships and build consensus.

After completing this activity, you will be better able to:

- Make informed and inclusive decisions
- Select an appropriate decision-making method for particular situations
- Prevent and resolve conflicts

### 4.4: Informed and Inclusive Decision-Making

Head Start program governance requires the governing body, Policy Council, and management team to work collaboratively. This requirement sets the stage for an informed and inclusive process that can

result in great decisions on behalf of children and families. Are you ready to be an active participant in Head Start decision-making?

[Watch the video](#) to hear how effective decision-making works in one Head Start program.

## 4.5: Everybody Is Responsible for Decision-Making

Everyone in Head Start governance is responsible for modeling good decision-making practices and creating a climate where all opinions are respected.

One of the key strengths of the Head Start governance system is that it welcomes diverse perspectives. The goal is to reach the best decision by considering many different viewpoints, not to make everyone think the same way.

## 4.6: What Is Informed and Inclusive Decision-Making?

In this activity, we are using the terms "informed decision-making" and "inclusive decision-making." Let's learn more about each of these terms and how you can contribute to making great decisions on behalf of your Head Start program.

## 4.7: What Is an Informed Decision?

An **informed** decision is one that is:

- **Data-driven:** Decision-makers rely on sound information and data, not instincts or feelings.
- **Thoughtfully Made:** Decision-makers "do their homework" and come to meetings prepared to ask questions, share opinions, and weigh options.
- **Appropriate and Lawful:** Decision-makers voice their dissent if a choice is illegal or will cause harm to the agency.
- **Actionable:** Decision-makers find solutions that can be implemented practically, financially, and physically.
- **Consistent:** Decision-makers consider previous decisions that were similar in nature and apply criteria and values uniformly.

## 4.8: What Is an Inclusive Decision?

An **inclusive** decision is one that is:

- **Transparent:** Decision-makers openly share all aspects of the decision-making process, including who will make the decision, what criteria will be applied, and what is decided.
- **Thoughtful:** Decision-makers clarify risks and assumptions, and they consider potential positive and negative effects for all parties.
- **Welcoming of Different Perspectives:** Decision-makers seek out diverse opinions and input, and they value all voices.
- **Guided by Expert Opinion:** Decision-makers look for and consider outside expertise when appropriate.

- **Reflective of the Consumer's Voice:** Decision-makers regard consumers of services as experts and consider their input a critical part of the decision-making process. In a Head Start program, families are the consumers.

## 4.9: Including Families in Decision-Making

[Watch the video](#) to learn how families and parents can be included in the decision-making process.

## 4.10: Decision-Making in Action: Scenario 1

### Activity Introduction

It's time to put your learning into practice.

In this activity, you will observe some Policy Council and governing body members in action. Read what they say, and think about whether they are modeling informed and inclusive decision-making.

### Scenario 1

It's been a full month since the Policy Council has met, and the agenda for tonight's meeting is full! Among other topics, members will discuss whether or not to recommend eliminating the program's transportation services.

The meeting begins in five minutes and a few of the Policy Council members are catching up. Listen in.

Scenario 1	
<b>Instructions</b>	Select each Policy Council member to read his or her comments before the meeting. Then select "Thumbs Up" or "Thumbs Down" to indicate whose actions are contributing to informed and inclusive decision-making and whose are not.
<b>Person 1 Says</b>	Do you know what we're talking about tonight? It's been such a crazy week that I didn't even get to open the agenda in my email.
<b>Person 1 Correct Answer</b>	Thumbs Down
<b>Person 1 Correct Feedback</b>	Correct  You're right. We all get busy. And it sounds as though a busy week prevented this person from prepping for the meeting. That's unfortunate, because preparation is essential for formulating questions and opinions and for participating fully in discussions. Maybe next month she can schedule an hour to herself a few days before the meeting to ensure she has some quiet time to prep.
<b>Person 1 Incorrect Feedback</b>	Incorrect  No. We all get busy, but lack of preparation earns a thumbs-down. It seems a busy week prevented this person from prepping for the meeting. But preparation is essential for formulating questions and opinions and for participating fully in discussions. Maybe next month

	she can schedule an hour to herself a few days before the meeting to ensure she has some quiet time to prep.
<b>Person 2 Says</b>	I thought that the packet of information that Randy sent out last week was interesting. I was quite surprised by the cost savings associated with eliminating our transportation services. I have a lot of questions to ask.
<b>Person 2 Correct Answer</b>	Thumbs Up
<b>Person 2 Correct Feedback</b>	Correct You're right. This member earns a thumbs-up for being prepared and proactive. And kudos to Randy, the finance manager, for making sure the information was distributed prior to the meeting. If you're not getting the information you need before your meetings, speak up and ask your group leader to make the distribution of agendas, reports, and meeting minutes a priority.
<b>Person 2 Incorrect Feedback</b>	Incorrect Hmm. It seems this member definitely earns a thumbs-up for being prepared and proactive. And kudos to Randy, the finance manager, for making sure the information was distributed prior to the meeting. If you're not getting the information you need before your meetings, speak up and ask your group leader to make the distribution of agendas, reports, and meeting minutes a priority.
<b>Person 3 Says</b>	I read some of the packet Randy sent out but stopped when I got to the list of recommendations. It sounds like they already know what to do, so I figured it wasn't a good use of my time to get caught up in the details.
<b>Person 3 Correct Answer</b>	Thumbs Down
<b>Person 3 Correct Feedback</b>	Correct You're right. This response gets a thumbs-down. When another group or individual makes a recommendation, it's time to pay attention, not start coasting. You might think they have things all figured out and don't need your insights, but the reality is that your scrutiny and creative ideas are still essential. Nobody else will look at a situation from your perspective. They're counting on you.
<b>Person 3 Incorrect Feedback</b>	Incorrect Not quite. This response actually gets a thumbs-down! When another group or individual makes a recommendation, it's time to pay attention, not start coasting. You might think they have things all figured out and don't need your insights, but the reality is that your

	scrutiny and creative ideas are still essential. Nobody else will look at a situation from your perspective. They're counting on you.
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## 4.11: Decision-Making in Action: Scenario 2

### Scenario 2

The governing body meeting has been long and intense. The group has gone over its scheduled meeting time discussing some serious Head Start budget issues. After engaging in a passionate debate and sorting through lots of data, members still cannot reach consensus and are unclear about the Policy Council's views on the issues. Although everyone appears ready to head home, a few members still have something to say.

Scenario 2	
<b>Instructions</b>	Select each governing body member to read his or her comments during the meeting. Then select "Thumbs Up" or "Thumbs Down" to indicate whose actions are contributing to informed and inclusive decision-making and whose are not.
<b>Person 1 Says</b>	I know we've all worked hard tonight, but at this point I want to hear about the Policy Council's recommendation. I know they reviewed and approved this information at their last meeting, and I want to fully consider their viewpoint.
<b>Person 1 Correct Answer</b>	Thumbs Up
<b>Person 1 Correct Feedback</b>	<p>Correct</p> <p>Yes. Thumbs up! This comment reflects exactly how the Head Start governance system is intended to work. An important part of the job of individuals from both the governing body and Policy Council is to support and develop open and respectful communication processes between the two groups.</p> <p>Holding one or more joint meetings throughout the year is a great way to open lines of communication and encourage inclusive decisions.</p>
<b>Person 1 Incorrect Feedback</b>	<p>Incorrect</p> <p>No. This gets a thumbs-up! This comment reflects exactly how the Head Start governance system is intended to work. An important part of the job of individuals from both the governing body and Policy Council is to support and develop open and respectful communication processes between the two groups.</p> <p>In addition to maintaining open lines of communication and making inclusive decisions, these groups can consider holding one or more</p>

	joint meetings throughout the year.
<b>Person 2 Says</b>	We've thought about this from every angle tonight, and we have the expert recommendations of our accountant. I think we need to be quick and decisive and make the decision now.
<b>Person 2 Correct Answer</b>	Thumbs Down
<b>Person 2 Correct Feedback</b>	Correct Yes. Even though the accountant has provided an expert recommendation from a fiscal standpoint, the governing body will want to honor and consider the perspectives of the Policy Council members before making critical decisions that affect the Head Start program.
<b>Person 2 Incorrect Feedback</b>	Incorrect No. Even though the accountant has provided an expert recommendation from a fiscal standpoint, the governing body will want to honor and consider the perspectives of the Policy Council members before making critical decisions that affect the Head Start programs.
<b>Person 3 Says</b>	This doesn't solve our problem tonight, but moving forward I think we would be wise to consider revising our structure and bylaws. Even though we have a Policy Council parent serving on the governing body, we could also have a governing body liaison serving on the Policy Council. This would facilitate better communication, especially when we have urgent matters such as this.
<b>Person 3 Correct Answer</b>	Thumbs Up
<b>Person 3 Correct Feedback</b>	Correct Yes! She deserves a thumbs-up for that clever idea. You might consider this for your governance structure as well. It's worth investigating.
<b>Person 3 Incorrect Feedback</b>	Incorrect Actually, she deserves a thumbs-up for that clever idea. You might consider this for your governance structure as well. It's worth investigating.

## 4.12: Decision-Making in Action: Scenario 3

### Scenario 3

The program director provided Policy Council members with copies of a large document titled, "Program Information Report (PIR)," as well as three other documents with raw program data. The PIR alone is more than 50 pages long.

Tonight, they will review the data, determine if the program is making significant progress in implementing services, and send the reports on to the governing body.

Scenario 3	
<b>Instructions</b>	Select each Policy Council member to read his or her comments before the meeting. Then select "Thumbs Up" or "Thumbs Down" to indicate whose actions are contributing to informed and inclusive decision-making and whose are not.
<b>Person 1 Says</b>	Wow. I spent six hours reading these reports and used up most of a legal pad making notes for this meeting. I don't know if this information was clear to everyone else, but to me it was confusing and overwhelming. I hope I got the key points. Let's ask if there's another way we can get this information in the future so that we can understand it better.
<b>Person 1 Correct Answer</b>	Thumbs Up
<b>Person 1 Correct Feedback</b>	<p>Correct</p> <p>You're right. This person deserves praise for preparing diligently for the meeting. However, his statement points to some things that need to be addressed.</p> <p>Head Start managers can support an informed decision-making process by providing data in a manner that is informative but not overwhelming.</p> <p>As a recipient, if you get tons of raw data that is not easy to read or understand, speak up. You could request a summary page or ask that important information be graphed.</p>
<b>Person 1 Incorrect Feedback</b>	<p>Incorrect</p> <p>While this person had trouble analyzing the data he received, he deserves a thumbs-up for preparing diligently for the meeting. Still, his statement points to some things that need to be addressed.</p> <p>Head Start managers play a critical role in supporting an informed decision-making process. They better serve their colleagues when they provide data in a manner that is informative but not overwhelming.</p> <p>As a recipient, if you get tons of raw data that is not easy to read or</p>

	understand, speak up. You could request a summary page or ask that important information be graphed.
<b>Person 2 Says</b>	When I look at all of this data, my eyes just glaze over. I have no idea what it all means. I was never good at math, and you can't teach an old dog new tricks. I will just ask the Head Start director if the program is doing OK.
<b>Person 2 Correct Answer</b>	Thumbs down
<b>Person 2 Correct Feedback</b>	<p>Correct</p> <p>You are correct. Every Policy Council and governing body member has an obligation to take the time to learn how to review and analyze data. These skills help them to form their own opinions when making decisions and keep them from relying solely on the Head Start director's recommendations.</p>
<b>Person 2 Incorrect Feedback</b>	<p>Incorrect</p> <p>Although reviewing and analyzing data may be challenging for some Policy Council and governing body members, it's important they take the time to learn these skills. This will help them to form their own opinions when making decisions and keep them from relying solely on the Head Start director's recommendations.</p>
<b>Person 3 Says</b>	I've known kids in this program for years, and I think it's pretty clear we are doing good things. We do not need data to know that. My experience and common sense is just as valuable as all those numbers and reports.
<b>Person 3 Correct Answer</b>	Thumbs down
<b>Person 3 Correct Feedback</b>	<p>Correct</p> <p>Right. This response gets a thumbs-down. Common sense and experience are great, but they cannot replace data-driven decisions. To be an informed decision maker, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review all materials sent to you prior to the meeting</li> <li>• Rely on data, whenever possible, to inform decisions</li> <li>• Seek answers to information you do not fully understand</li> <li>• Be prepared to ask questions about information that stands out</li> </ul>
<b>Person 3 Incorrect Feedback</b>	<p>Incorrect</p> <p>Not quite. This response gets a thumbs-down. Common sense and experience are great, but they cannot replace data-driven decisions. To be an informed decision maker, you must:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review all materials sent to you prior to the meeting</li> <li>• Rely on data, whenever possible, to inform decisions</li> <li>• Seek answers to information you do not fully understand</li> <li>• Be prepared to ask questions about information that stands out</li> </ul>
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### Activity Conclusion

The goal of all Policy Council, governing body, and Tribal Council members is to exercise informed and inclusive decision-making.

How will you know if you are successful? The following practices will be evident at your meetings:

- Meetings are well attended and membership represents diverse expertise and perspectives.
- Members feel comfortable asking questions and sharing their ideas.
- Policy Council decisions are communicated to the governing body on a regular basis.
- Governing body members listen respectfully to the viewpoints of Policy Council members and use these perspectives to inform their decisions.

### 4.13: Triage for Decision-Making

In the medical field, triage is the process of determining the priority of patients' treatments based on the severity of their condition.

On a busy night, emergency room staff make hundreds of decisions. Sometimes they must act with urgency, such as when treating a patient with heart attack symptoms.

Other cases, such as a young patient with a sprained ankle, allow for a slower, calmer approach.

Similarly, the various decisions you have to make in Head Start require different approaches depending on the situation. Governing body, Tribal Council, and Policy Council members will want to give all decisions adequate attention while balancing time and effort to appropriately reflect each situation's degree of urgency and the potential impact of each decision on the program.

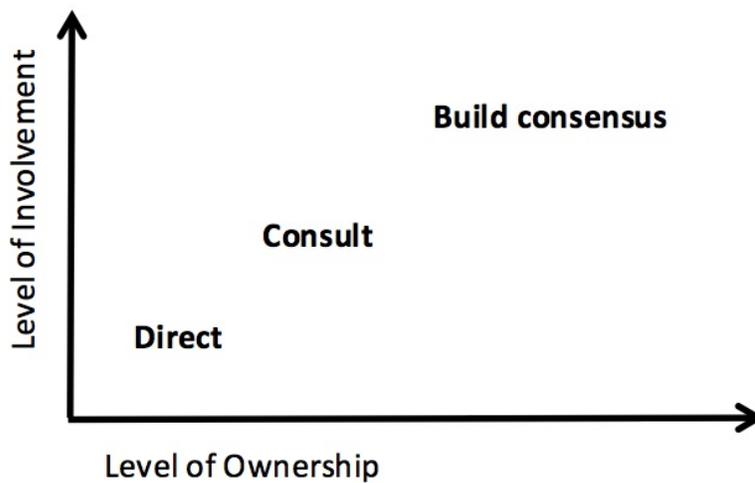
### 4.14: Three Decision-Making Methods

Policy Council and governing body members can use three primary decision-making methods in their work.

- **Direct:** Decide and announce. The leader makes a decision with little or no input and then announces the decision to those who will be affected by, or who must carry out, the decision. This method works best when the situation is urgent, the correct action is clear, and the potential negative consequences of taking immediate action are minimal.

- **Consult:** Gather input from others and decide. The leader asks team members to share ideas and then decides after hearing from the team. This method works best when the decision maker needs help in thinking through the potential implications of a decision.
- **Build Consensus:** Seek a decision that all members can support and implement by giving everyone an opportunity to ask questions, offer opinions, and support or block proposals. This is the preferred method when the leader recognizes that the best decision will result from seeking a number of different perspectives and gathering needed support for implementation.

As the diagram illustrates, direct decision-making has the lowest level of involvement and ownership, while consensus building has the highest level of involvement and ownership.



As involvement in decision-making increases, so does the level of ownership or buy-in for the outcome.

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### 4.15: What Would You Do? Decision 1

#### Activity Introduction: Choose a Method

Different decision-making methods are appropriate for different situations.

In this activity, you will practice choosing a decision-making method. Read each scenario and then select the best approach for the situation.

Decision 1	
<b>Instructions</b>	Read the scenario. Then select the most appropriate decision-making method.

Decision 1	
<b>Scenario 1</b>	<p>During a visit to a Head Start center, the licensing inspector cited the program for not having first aid kits in all classrooms. The director needs to decide what action to take.</p> <p>How should this decision be made?</p>
<b>Option 1</b>	The director adds this topic to the agenda for the next Policy Council meeting and seeks input on the type of kits to purchase, where they will be best located, and how much to spend on the purchase.
<b>Option 2</b>	The director consults with a few Policy Council members to make sure he has the OK to go ahead and purchase the first aid kits. This way, he will be "covered" if others object later on.
<b>Option 3</b>	The director immediately purchases and installs first aid kits in all classrooms. He can let the Policy Council know about this action at its next meeting.
<b>Correct Answer</b>	Option 3
<b>Correct Feedback</b>	<p>Correct</p> <p>Yes. This is definitely the time for directive decision-making. The situation is urgent, the correct action is clear, and the potential negative consequences of taking immediate action are minimal.</p> <p>With directive decision-making, the leader makes a decision with little or no input and then announces the decision to those who will be affected by, or who must carry out, the decision.</p>
<b>Incorrect Feedback</b>	<p>Incorrect</p> <p>No. The situation is urgent, the correct action is clear, and the potential negative consequences of taking immediate action are minimal. This is not the time to consult with others or delay action; it is a time for directive decision-making.</p> <p>With directive decision-making, the leader makes a decision with little or no input and then announces the decision to those who will be affected by, or who must carry out, the decision.</p>

#### 4.16: What Would You Do? Decision 2

Decision 2	
<b>Instructions</b>	Read the scenario. Then select the most appropriate decision-making method.

Decision 2	
<b>Scenario 2</b>	<p>The governing body treasurer is looking for ways to balance the Head Start budget in anticipation of higher health care costs for next year. She suggests that the director increase the number of children in the 3-year-old classrooms from 17 to 19. Attendance records show that at least two children are absent from each classroom every day, so the treasurer does not think this will put an additional burden on the teachers.</p> <p>How should this decision be made?</p>
<b>Option 1</b>	The treasurer does not need input to make this cost-saving decision. Based on the information at hand, her recommendation is a reasonable solution. She can instruct the Head Start director to implement this plan.
<b>Option 2</b>	The treasurer must run this idea by program management so that the Head Start director and education manager have the opportunity to weigh in. They can help her think through the potential implications of increasing enrollment, and then she can bring the recommendation to the full governing body and Policy Council for discussion, if appropriate.
<b>Option 3</b>	Because this decision directly impacts families and children, the treasurer's best approach is to provide a written proposal to the Policy Council and let its members decide if the idea has merit.
<b>Correct Answer</b>	Option 2
<b>Correct Feedback</b>	<p>Correct</p> <p>Yes. The best choice here is for the treasurer to consult with people who know the Head Start regulations and can help assess the impact of such a decision on the program. Increasing class size could be a potentially sensitive idea. Before she gets many people debating the issue, it's wise for her to check her thinking with a smaller group of experts.</p> <p>In doing this, the treasurer would be reminded that Head Start regulations do not allow more than 17 children to be enrolled in any one class. She also would learn that adding students to a classroom places additional burdens on the teaching staff in terms of curriculum planning, documentation, and more. The treasurer will need to find alternative income sources or budget savings.</p>
<b>Incorrect Feedback</b>	<p>Incorrect</p> <p>The best choice here is for the treasurer to consult with people who know Head Start regulations and can help assess the impact of such a decision on the program. Increasing class size could be a potentially</p>

Decision 2	
	<p>sensitive idea. Before she gets many people debating the issue, she would be wise to check her thinking with a smaller group of experts.</p> <p>In doing this, the treasurer would be reminded that Head Start regulations do not allow more than 17 children to be enrolled in any one class. She also would learn that adding students to a classroom places additional burdens on the teaching staff in terms of curriculum planning, documentation, and more. The treasurer will need to find alternative income sources or budget savings.</p>

**4.17: What Would You Do? Decision 3**

Decision 3	
<b>Instructions</b>	Read the scenario. Then select the most appropriate decision-making method.
<b>Scenario 3</b>	<p>The Policy Council is struggling with a recurring issue: low parent participation in the many events and opportunities offered by the Head Start programs. Policy Council members need to find strategies to increase participation.</p> <p>How should this decision be made?</p>
<b>Option 1</b>	The Policy Council members will want to seek ideas from within and outside the group. They could ask for creative ideas from their own council members, enlist the help of the Head Start director and family services staff, and also seek suggestions from other parents.
<b>Option 2</b>	The Policy Council chairperson has some ideas of her own for improving parent participation. She plans to attend the next parent committee meeting to share her ideas and direct the members on what they need to do to put these ideas into action.
<b>Option 3</b>	The Policy Council suggests that they request a joint meeting with the governing body to reach consensus on the new parent engagement strategies that will be implemented in the program.
<b>Correct Answer</b>	Option 1
<b>Correct Feedback</b>	<p>Correct</p> <p>You're right. Consultative decision-making is ideal in situations where a problem is recurring, other strategies have not worked, and the decision will affect many people. Policy Council members will want to seek out the opinions of those who are directly involved in the program and community. Parent engagement is too important to</p>

Decision 3	
	adopt a generic solution or dictate recommendations without gathering diverse input.
<b>Incorrect Feedback</b>	<p>Incorrect</p> <p>Not quite. Since low parent involvement is a recurring issue, the best idea is for the Policy Council to use a consultative approach, seeking a number of different ideas to find the best solutions. Policy Council members will want to seek out the opinions of those who are directly involved in the program and community. Parent engagement is too important to adopt a generic solution or dictate recommendations without gathering diverse input.</p>

#### 4.18: What Would You Do? Decision 4

Decision 4	
<b>Instructions</b>	Read the scenario. Then select the most appropriate decision-making method.
<b>Scenario 4</b>	<p>The Head Start director is interested in pursuing national accreditation. This is a major program decision, as the accreditation process will involve all aspects of the program and all stakeholders.</p> <p>How should this decision be made?</p>
<b>Option 1</b>	The director brings her idea before the Policy Council and governing body for consideration and debate. Accreditation will be valuable to the program but will require a tremendous commitment on the part of all stakeholders in terms of time, energy, and dollars.
<b>Option 2</b>	The director begins the accreditation process on her own and provides regular updates to the Policy Council and governing body.
<b>Option 3</b>	The director knows that a couple of Policy Council members are opposed to her idea. Some people think accreditation is simply too controversial and time consuming to pursue. If opinions vary, a debate could cause disharmony. The director would be smart to simply abandon her idea.
<b>Correct Answer</b>	Option 1
<b>Correct Feedback</b>	<p>Correct</p> <p>Yes. This is a significant decision for the program, and the director will want to include both the Policy Council and governing body in a discussion about accreditation in order to reach consensus. A</p>

Decision 4	
	consensus decision is one that all members are willing to support and implement. This means all members need an opportunity to ask questions and offer opinions.
<b>Incorrect Feedback</b>	<p>Incorrect</p> <p>No. It would be more effective for the director to include both the Policy Council and governing body in a discussion about accreditation in order to reach consensus. A consensus decision is one that all members are willing to support and implement. This means all members need an opportunity to ask questions and offer opinions.</p>

### Activity Conclusion

Many important Head Start decisions are best made through consensus. However, people often want to immediately solve a problem, which can make it hard to convince them to take the time needed to discuss, plan, and reach consensus.

Although consensus building can be difficult, the outcome is worth the effort. The process gives people a sense of ownership, and they end up having a stake in the decisions.

For consensus to work, you must:

- Be open to alternative ideas and viewpoints
- Realize that the solution to a problem oftentimes emerges during group discussion
- Agree that the best decisions are made with input from all

### 4.19: Resolving Conflict

As a participant in a Head Start governance structure where diverse viewpoints are welcomed and differences in opinion are encouraged, you may be involved in decision-making situations where people disagree.

Your response to these situations is critical. When handled properly, disagreements and conflict can provide opportunities to consider new approaches for program improvement.

### 4.20: Separating Interests from Positions

One of the most important steps you can take in learning to prevent or resolve conflicts is to become aware of the difference between interests and positions.

**Interests** are the needs, concerns, and values that motivate each person. They represent **why a person wants something**.

**Positions** are the actions a person will take to meet his or her needs and achieve a desired outcome. They represent **what a person wants to do**.

Focusing on positions rather than interests often creates a competitive, and even combative, struggle in which each party is determined to win.

To avoid conflict, you will want to learn how to focus on interests rather than positions. The exercises that follow will help you to learn this skill.

### 4.21: Separating Interests from Positions

Oftentimes, the same interest can have many positions. Read the interest statement below, and then select each Possible Position to see examples of different positions that relate to the single interest.

**Interest:** We need to make sure that our budget reflects the priorities of this program and that we allocate adequate funds to achieve our school readiness goals.

**Possible Position 1:** We will want to invest a lot more money in nutrition services. Kids can't learn if they aren't well nourished.

**Possible Position 2:** We must plan to invest in the professional development of our teachers so they all use state-of-the-art teaching practices. We can't achieve our school readiness goals if our teachers aren't properly trained.

**Possible Position 3:** We ought to increase the number of family service workers in our program so they can focus on family engagement. Parents need help learning how to support their children in meeting our school readiness goals.

### 4.22: Shift the Conversation

When conversations are focused on positions, they can quickly turn into a power struggle. All of the group's energy is consumed in a battle to determine who is right and who is wrong.

The most effective approach for dealing with potential conflict is to **shift the conversation to underlying interests and needs**, not just possible solutions.

To get below the surface, ask questions that will draw people together rather than set them at odds:

- Why do you feel that the solution you're offering is the best option?
- What is the result you want?
- What is most important to you in this situation?

### Activity Introduction: Position or Interest?

Do you think you could shift a conversation to underlying interests and needs in the face of a potential conflict? The first step is recognizing when others are sharing positions versus interests.

In this activity, you will review a realistic Head Start discussion, determine if the statements reflect an interest or a position, and explore ways to shift the conversation.

### 4.23: Shift the Conversation: Statement 1

I think we would be better off holding a parent event every two weeks at each center. We can ask every teacher and family service worker to be involved in those events.

Consider this individual's statement. Is it an interest or a position?

**Correct** (position)

You're right. This member's **position** is that parent events would be the best way to draw parents to the center.

If you can help her focus on the underlying issue, you may be able to identify many solutions that may be effective. You could ask, "What is it you want to accomplish through these events?"

She might say, "I want to give families more opportunities to be fully engaged in their children's education." That's her interest.

**Incorrect** (interest)

No. It is this member's **position** that parent events would be the best way to draw parents to the center.

If you can help her focus on the underlying issue, you may be able to identify many solutions that may be effective. You could ask, "What is it you want to accomplish through these events?"

She might say, "I want to give families more opportunities to be fully engaged in their children's education." That's her interest.

### 4.24: Shift the Conversation: Statement 2

I want us to hire an outstanding Head Start director so we can achieve our goal of having a high-quality, innovative Head Start program.

Consider this individual's statement. Is it an interest or a position?

**Correct** (interest)

Yes! This member did a great job of clearly stating his **interest**, rather than his position.

Do you see how it opens up the lines of communication and the possibility of agreement?

In contrast, he could have declared, "We need to hire John Smith for this position!" Such a statement might elicit a competitive or even combative response.

If somebody does take a stand that there is "only one choice," encourage a more open mind. You could say, "Yes. That's an option. What else could we consider?"

**Incorrect** (position)

Not quite. This member actually did a great job of clearly stating his **interest** rather than his position.

Do you see how it opens up the lines of communication and the possibility of agreement?

In contrast, he could have declared, "We need to hire John Smith for this position!" Such a statement might elicit a competitive or even combative response.

If somebody does take a stand that there is "only one choice," encourage a more open mind. You could say, "Yes. That's an option. What else could we consider?"

### 4.25: Shift the Conversation: Statement 3

If our Head Start teachers do not do well on the CLASS™ scores, we need to replace them. It's impossible to get teachers to change their performance!

Consider this individual's statement. Is it an interest or a position?

**Correct** (position)

Yes. This is another strong **position**.

In this case, you might consider asking questions to clarify what is motivating this position: "What leads you to believe that teachers can't improve performance?"

You also can try to redirect an individual who has made a negative statement. Shift the focus to a more positive view by asking, "What would it take to make it possible?"

Remember. It's important to separate people from problems. Pointing fingers and placing blame on the teachers isn't helpful. Remember to be soft on people and hard on the problem!

**Incorrect** (interest)

Sorry. This is another example of a strong **position**.

In this case, you might consider asking questions to clarify what is motivating this position: "What leads you to believe that teachers can't improve performance?"

You also can try to redirect an individual who has made a negative statement. Shift the focus to a more positive view by asking, "What would it take to make it possible?"

Remember. It's important to separate people from problems. Pointing fingers and placing blame on the teachers isn't helpful. Remember to be soft on the people and hard on the problem!

### 4.26: Shift the Conversation: Statement 4

We ought not to authorize raises for staff this year. I don't want to put any more money into salaries.

Consider this individual's statement. Is it an interest or a position?

### **Correct** (position)

Yes. Her **position** is that she does not want any pay raises this year.

When faced with a statement like this, which could create conflict, you might ask her to reframe the comment in a more positive way: "What would you like to do?"

Additionally, you could express the common interest that lies at the heart of the position she stated: "We all want to make sure that we are careful with our fiscal resources and allocate funds in the best way possible to achieve our school readiness goals."

### **Incorrect** (interest)

No. She shared her **position**, which is that she does not want any pay raises this year.

When faced with a statement like this, which could create conflict, you might ask her to reframe the comment in a more positive way: "What would you like to do?"

Additionally, you could express the common interest that lies at the heart of the position she stated. "We all want to make sure that we are careful with our fiscal resources and allocate funds in the best way possible to achieve our school readiness goals."

## **4.27: Resolving Conflict: What You Can Do**

Here are additional steps you can take to make sure that individual differences are respected and discussions remain positive and constructive:

- **Make good relationships the first priority.** Stay calm, treat others respectfully, and remain constructive.
- **Keep people and problems separate.** Separate the problem from the person; debate issues without damaging working relationships.
- **Pay attention to the interests that are being presented.** Listen carefully and seek to understand other positions.
- **Listen first; talk second.** Don't start by defending your own position.
- **Establish the facts.** Agree on the data and anything that is nonnegotiable that impacts the decision.
- **Explore options together.** Look for new solutions that honor everyone's position.

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## **4.28: When All Else Fails ... Resolving Disputes**

If you support your decision-making with strong processes, respectful relationships, and good communication, you are likely to avoid many conflicts. Still, seemingly unresolvable conflicts sometimes surface.

Head Start programs must have a formal procedure in place for resolving disputes between the governing body and Policy Council. The procedure includes a definition of what an impasse is and an explanation of how to activate the process for resolution.

This dispute resolution process is developed and approved by both the governing body and the Policy Council.

Make sure you know about your program's impasse policy and how to use it in the event of an impasse.

## **4.29: Make Meaningful Decisions**

As someone who helps oversee a Head Start program, you make decisions that have lasting effects on low-income children and families in your community.

To make meaningful and effective decisions, remember to:

- Give decisions the time and attention they deserve
- Include many voices and diverse perspectives in the process
- Keep conversations respectful and productive

When everyone has a seat at the decision-making table, your program will move in the right direction.

## Activity 5: Envision a Better Future

### 5.1: Envision a Better Future

Are you a person who likes to examine current realities and think about ways to make things better?

Policy Council, governing body, and Tribal Council members are driven by their desire to make a big difference in the lives of low-income children and families in their community. They help the Head Start organization set and achieve goals and objectives for children's healthy development and school readiness, families' economic well-being, and community empowerment. They also support the program in its efforts to make progress and meet expected outcomes.

This activity explores how governance leaders can participate in Head Start program planning. You'll hone your skills in thinking strategically, crafting a vision, and making your organization more innovative.

### 5.2: Head Start's Vision

Head Start began in 1965 as an eight-week "demonstration project" to help disadvantaged preschool children. Since then, it has served **more than 30 million children**.

Head Start's founders had a vision of a better future for our nation's poorest children and families.

[Watch the video](#) to learn more about that vision.

You have the opportunity to build upon the founders' vision in a personal and local way. As a governing body, Tribal Council, or Policy Council member, you play a key role in sustaining Head Start's proud history. You also can shape and support an even brighter vision for the children and families in your community.

### 5.3: What Will You Learn?

This training activity will help you to build the skills you need to create and implement your Head Start vision. It will teach you how to be a leader in program planning and in strengthening management systems so that they support your program in achieving new goals.

After completing this activity, you will be better able to:

- Participate in the Head Start program planning process
- Develop and prioritize program goals and school readiness goals
- Pave the way to achieving new goals by strengthening internal management systems

### 5.4: Yes. You Can Be a Visionary!

So what does it mean to be a visionary?

To be a visionary leader, you need to be able to envision a better future, establish goals to help you achieve that vision, and develop objectives, expected outcomes, and specific plans for reaching your goals.

Let's begin by talking about personal visions. Some people want to advance their education, or maybe purchase a home. They begin by setting a personal goal, something like "earning an associate's degree."

Likewise, effective Head Start and Early Head Start programs engage in goal-setting to achieve their vision.

## **5.5: Program Planning**

If this seems daunting, don't worry. Head Start has a system in place, called program planning. This system helps you think, strategize, and problem-solve to develop broad goals and attainable objectives that can turn your Head Start vision into reality.

While program planning systems may look very different across Head Start programs, successful programs use an organized and effective process to chart their futures.

[Watch the video](#) to learn how one Head Start program engages in its planning process.

## **5.6: The Center of It All**

As you have seen in the Governance Entities Diagram for Head Start governance and management responsibilities, the governing body, Policy Council, and staff leaders share responsibility for providing leadership and strategic direction. This is accomplished through the program planning system.

View [Head Start legislation and regulations](#) related to program planning [PDF, 53KB].

## **5.7: Program Planning in Head Start**

### **Activity Introduction**

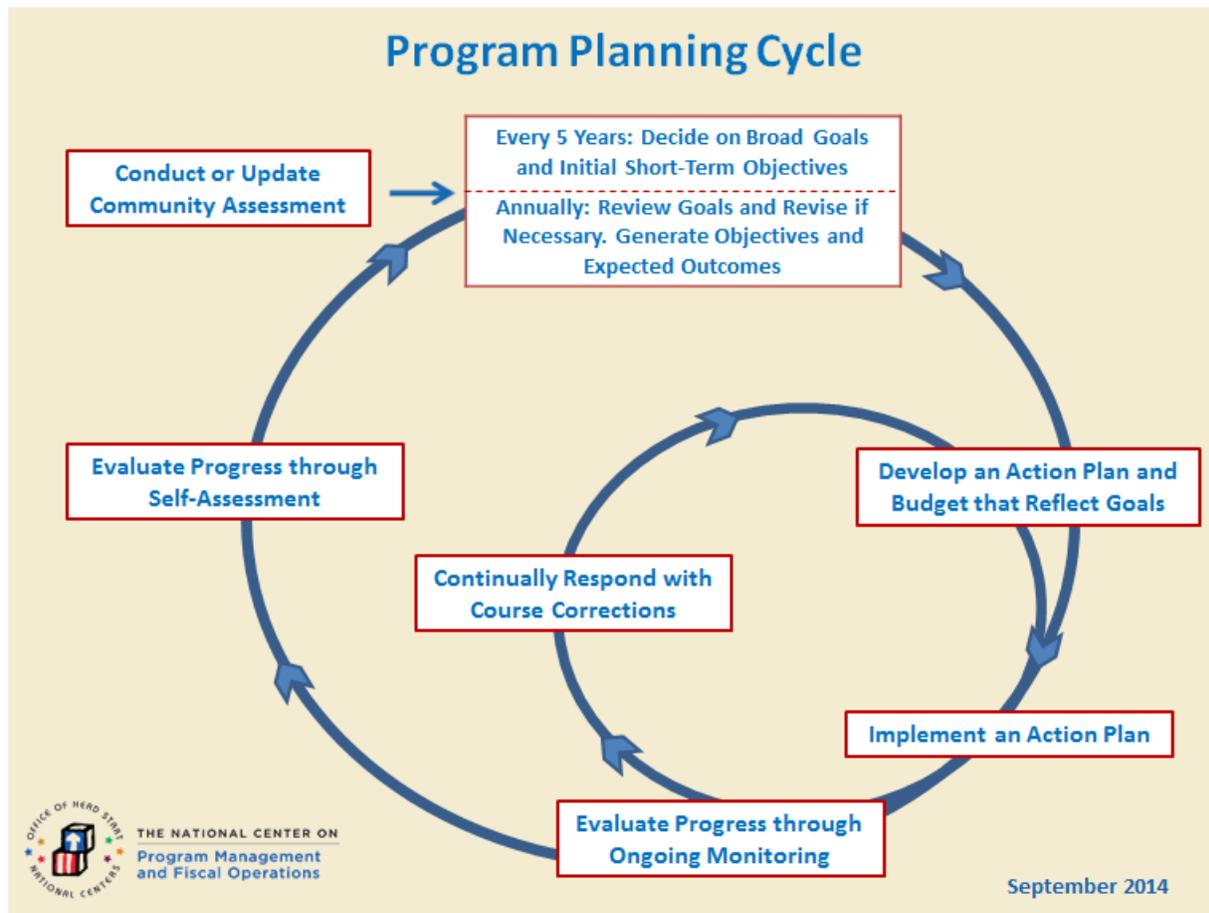
#### **The Planning Cycle: Program Planning Step-by-Step**

The Head Start Program Planning Cycle illustrates the key parts of a predictable planning process. Through this process, programs develop goals, objectives, and expected outcomes and monitor and evaluate progress towards their program and school readiness goals.

In this activity, you will be introduced to the Program Planning Cycle, an ongoing, step-by-step process, so you can learn about the cycle and how you can use it to help your program improve.

#### **Program Planning in Head Start**

Existing programs begin the planning process with Self-Assessment, while new programs begin at community assessment. For this activity, you will begin with Self-Assessment. You may wish to download a copy of the [planning cycle](#) [PDF, 378KB] for future use.



### 1. Evaluate Progress through Self-Assessment

**Self-Assessment** is a process that gives each program an opportunity to take a broad view of its successes and challenges.

Annually, every Head Start program conducts a comprehensive Self-Assessment of its effectiveness. Programs look at data from multiple years and across data sets to uncover patterns or trends that might have implications for the program's future. Policy Council and governing body members join with community partners and stakeholders to take a fresh look at updated community assessment data, data gathered through ongoing monitoring, and other relevant data. They assess the program's progress in achieving its goals, objectives, and expected outcomes, and they identify current program strengths and areas that need strengthening. They also evaluate the program's compliance with federal requirements. Members ask, "Are we doing the right things?" And they make recommendations to management staff.

### 2. Conduct or Update Community Assessment

Head Start programs conduct a **community assessment** as part of their grant application process and then provide annual updates to make sure program services are responsive to changes in the community. Programs collect and analyze information about the communities

they serve. Those involved with community assessment ask, "What is changing in the community and world around us, and what do the changes mean for our program?"

Community assessments include information about new and emerging populations, early childhood services, and family needs, plus information from local school systems that can help inform school readiness goals and transition practices. Comprehensive community assessments may also include a scan of national, state, and local early childhood policies so programs prepare themselves for the future.

### 3. **Every Five Years: Decide on Broad Goals and Initial Short-Term Objectives**

#### **Annually: Review Goals and Revise if Necessary; Generate Objectives and Expected Outcomes**

For their five-year grant applications, Head Start programs identify the BROAD (Beyond Current Expectations, Responsive, Organization-wide, Aspirational, and Dynamic) **long-term goals** they will accomplish during the **five-year project period**. They also identify initial SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely) **short-term objectives** linked to **expected outcomes**. During their **annual** planning process, they review their long-term goals and revise them as necessary. They continue to break down their goals into short-term objectives linked to expected outcomes.

The planning team typically consists of representatives from the governing body, Policy Council, management staff, and community who come together to analyze the information in the Self-Assessment, community assessment, and other important data sources to determine the program's goals and objectives. [Learn about the difference between goals and objectives](#) [PDF, 215KB].

The team also reflects on the differences they expect to make for children and families once their goals have been achieved. These are called expected outcomes. When identifying expected outcomes, planning team members consider the data they will need to collect to measure their progress.

### 4. **Develop an Action Plan and Budget that Reflect Goals**

Once a Head Start program has determined its five-year program goals, school readiness goals, short-term objectives, and expected outcomes, the planning team develops a detailed action plan. This plan is a defined set of steps that outline what a program will do to accomplish its goals and objectives.

At the same time, the management team, in consultation with the governing body, develops a program budget that is aligned with the goals and objectives. Governing body members who serve on a planning team will want to ask, "Do we have the money we need to achieve these goals? Have we allocated funds to support our priorities?" Without sufficient financial resources, it will be very difficult to achieve the program's goals.

## 5. **Implement an Action Plan**

This is the step in the planning cycle where everyone does his or her part to turn the long-term goals and short-term objectives into reality. By committing to the action plan, program leaders make sure program staff do not return to business as usual. The governing body, Policy Council, and management team revisit the plan regularly, chart progress, and celebrate achievements.

## 6. **Evaluate Progress through Ongoing Monitoring**

Head Start managers regularly evaluate program progress. This is called "ongoing monitoring." Every manager of a service area or program system puts in place a comprehensive monitoring system that collects, tracks, and analyzes data. These monitoring systems help Head Start managers identify areas of concern before they become large problems. They ask, "What does the data say about how we are doing? Are we making sufficient progress toward reaching our goals and objectives?"

## 7. **Continually Respond with Course Corrections**

Head Start programs use the information they receive through ongoing monitoring to make course corrections. Governing body and Policy Council members review the results of ongoing monitoring during monthly meetings, when they review program information reports. They use the information in these reports to determine if the program is making sufficient progress toward achieving its goals and objectives. They also ensure the program is taking proper action to correct emerging issues.

In addition, the planning team convenes on a regular basis to mark the program's progress in achieving goals and to help determine when course corrections are necessary. This step in the planning process can occur multiple times as managers, staff, and governance leaders ask, "What can we do differently to improve our progress and achieve our goals and objectives?"

## **5.8: Program Planning in Head Start: A Practical Example**

### **Activity Introduction**

Now, let's imagine that you are a member of a Head Start program planning team. Follow the cycle again to see how your team can engage in an ongoing, systematic process for achieving its vision. In this example, your team wants to see improvements in children's attendance.

### **Program Planning in Head Start: A Practical Example**

#### **1. Evaluate Program through Self-Assessment**

Your program's Self-Assessment shows that child attendance rates have been low during the past five years. Your planning team, which includes governing body and Policy Council members, identifies this trend as problematic because research shows that preschool attendance is linked to school readiness. Your planning team would like to spotlight the issue for staff and families.

## 2. **Conduct or Update Community Assessment**

Your program's community assessment reveals that the public schools serving your former Head Start children also report a significant attendance problem with children in the early grades. Since preschool is often a time when children develop habits for school attendance, this information provides further confirmation that improving child attendance might be an important goal for your program.

## 3. **Every Five Years: Decide on Broad Goals and Initial Short-Term Objectives**

### **Annually: Review Goals and Revise if Necessary; Generate Objectives and Expected Outcomes**

After considering your program's Self-Assessment, community assessment, and school readiness data, your planning team decides that one of your broad, five-year program goals will be to improve children's attendance rates.

In support of this goal, the team determines that a short-term objective will be for the program to strengthen parents' understanding of the essential role that attendance plays in their children's school readiness. The team also comes up with the following expected outcomes:

- Children with improved attendance will show better child outcomes than those with chronic absenteeism.
- Children who had high attendance rates in Head Start will continue to attend school regularly after they transition to public school.

If children and their families learn in Head Start to value good attendance, they are more likely to attend kindergarten and grade school regularly. This means your Head Start program will have made a valuable and lasting impact on the community.

## 4. **Develop an Action Plan and Budget that Reflect Goals**

Your planning team works with program management to draft specific and measurable objectives and expected outcomes in support of the attendance goal. You also develop an action plan, with strategies to boost attendance rates. The governing body and Policy Council offer ideas for strategies.

Examples include:

- During home visits, family workers will share, in family-friendly ways, research on the relationship between regular preschool attendance and child outcomes.
- Family workers will increase the number of home visits to families whose children are not regularly attending the program.
- The program's teachers will regularly review data on children's attendance rates and provide positive reinforcement to family members who have boosted their children's attendance.

In addition, your governing body and Policy Council will review the annual program budget to make sure it supports the action plan. The budget might need extra funds to pay for the additional home visits and the training to prepare family workers for their new role.

#### 5. **Implement an Action Plan**

The management team puts the action plan into place and provides regular progress reports to the Policy Council, governing body, and planning team. These reports provide answers to the following questions:

- Have the family workers been trained in their new responsibilities?
- Have the family workers made additional home visits?
- Has the program adjusted the data system so teachers receive regular attendance information?
- Have teachers developed strategies for celebrating increased attendance rates with families?

#### 6. **Evaluate Progress through Ongoing Monitoring**

The management team monitors and collects child attendance data to find out if attendance rates are improving. Management regularly shares this information with the Policy Council and governing body. The data will show whether increased home visits, better recordkeeping, and new teacher practices result in better attendance.

#### 7. **Continually Respond with Course Corrections**

The governing body, Policy Council, and planning team regularly pay attention to the progress reports pertaining to attendance data. If the action plan and strategies are not resulting in increased attendance, the Policy Council, governing body, and planning team can offer ideas for revising the plan and considering alternative steps. Over time, by continually assessing monitoring data and making course corrections, the program will likely improve attendance.

## **Conclusion**

The Head Start Program Planning Cycle is your guide to the program planning process. Follow its seven steps, and your program will be on its way to continuous improvement.

As you go through the planning process, remember to:

- Review data from your Self-Assessment, community assessment, and periodic reports
- Set BROAD (Beyond Current Expectations, Responsive, Organization-wide, Aspirational, and Dynamic) goals and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely) objectives that are grounded in data and will benefit children and families
- Develop an action plan and concrete steps for achieving your goals

- Make course corrections if you don't see the progress you expect

[Learn the difference between goals and objectives](#) [PDF, 215KB].

## 5.9: Focus on Goals

Let's focus now on one section of the program planning cycle: deciding on goals. Of course, in order to set goals, you will need to consider information from the Self-Assessment, community assessment, and other key data sources.

Master this part of the cycle, and you will be well on your way to becoming a Head Start visionary.

## 5.10: What Kinds of Goals?

You will be making decisions on two types of goals: program goals and school readiness goals. You will then forward both sets of goals to the Policy Council and governing body for approval.

**Program goals** are broad statements that describe what a program intends to accomplish during the five-year life of the Head Start grant.

**School readiness goals** are broad statements that describe the expectations of children's status and progress across five domains of development that will improve children's readiness for kindergarten. These domains are:

- Language and literacy development
- Cognition and general knowledge
- Approaches to learning
- Physical well-being and motor development
- Social and emotional development

## 5.11: Program Goals

**Program goals** start with the phrase, "The program will ..." They are long-term goals that help you achieve the vision for your program.

### Examples:

- The program will strengthen the transition skills of children and families so that Early Head Start children succeed in preschool, and Head Start children succeed in kindergarten and beyond.
- The program will increase child attendance rates so that Head Start children develop the habit of attending school regularly, which is linked to improved academic outcomes.

- The program will implement research-based strategies to support children's language and literacy development so children can maximize their potential to read and be prepared for kindergarten.

## 5.12: School Readiness Goals

**School Readiness goals** start with the phrase, “Children will ... ” They focus on children's status and progress in developing the skills children need for success in school.

### Examples:

- Children will develop and display self-confidence in their abilities and a strong identity that is rooted in their family and culture.
- Children will build, use, and comprehend increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.
- Children will demonstrate control of large muscles for movement, navigation, and balance.

## 5.13: Setting Goals Collaboratively

Setting goals collaboratively is an important part of the Head Start program planning process.

[Watch this video](#) to learn how one Head Start program utilized a team approach to setting its school readiness goals.

## 5.14: Adding Value to the Process: Scenario 1

### Activity Introduction

Adding value to the goal-setting process is both challenging and rewarding. It requires creativity, a data-driven focus, and leadership. It also offers one of your greatest opportunities to shape the vision of your local Head Start program.

In this activity, you'll review realistic Head Start program data and see how members of the planning team respond. Then you'll get a chance to select the recommendations you think add the most value.

### Scenario 1: Reviewing Community Assessment Data

A Head Start program planning team is reviewing the community assessment, which includes the following information about the Latino population in the Head Start service area:

- The Latino population has grown significantly, representing 17 percent of the overall community and 30 percent of the low-income population served by Head Start.
- Based on past trends, the Latino population will continue to grow.
- Currently, 19 percent of children and families served by Head Start are of Latino descent. The data indicate that Head Start services are not effectively reaching children and families of Latino descent.

How does an effective program respond?

Read what two planning team members recommend. Then select the response that is most appropriate and adds value to the goal-setting process.

**Person 1 says:** It looks like we're not serving enough Latino families. We need to figure out how to do that. Maybe the answer is to hire more staff who are Latino and who speak Spanish. We'll certainly want to find out ways to make our program known to more Latino families, but maybe first we should find out from staff about the impression the community has about our services.

**Person 2 says:** Our program is already full, with a waiting list. I do not think that spending more money to recruit more kids for spaces that we don't have is a good idea. My guess is that these children are enrolled in other programs anyway, so we probably don't have to worry too much.

**Correct Answer:** Person 1

**Correct Feedback:** You're right. This is a great recommendation because this individual has responded to data in the community assessment. He has recommended a program goal that makes sense given the growth of the Latino population in the community.

**Incorrect Feedback:** This is not the best recommendation because this individual is relying on her feelings and making an assumption that children who are not in Head Start are enrolled in other programs. That might be the case, but program goals are not based on guesses or assumptions but rather on confirmed information based on data.

## 5.15: Adding Value to the Process: Scenario 2

### Scenario 2: Analyzing Self-Assessment Data

In reviewing Self-Assessment data, the planning team learned that children are making great progress on school readiness goals, with one exception. Progress is lacking on the goal that children will use math regularly and in everyday routines to count, compare, relate, identify patterns, and solve problems.

The Self-Assessment team made the following recommendations for addressing this concern:

- Improve teacher training
- Infuse practice-based coaching strategies into the supervision system
- Purchase additional classroom materials and supplies that children can use to count, compare, relate, identify patterns, and solve problems

What does an effective program do in response?

Read what two planning team members recommend. Then select the response that is most appropriate and adds value to the goal-setting process.

**Person 1 says:** I want the Head Start program to secure new classroom space within the local school district. We need new space, and this will be a wonderful partnership with the public school.

**Person 2 says:** The recommendations of the Self-Assessment team are really enlightening. It is clear to me that we need to establish a long-term program goal that supports this school readiness goal related to math skills. We're going to need to involve all the teachers, families, and the community if we want to help our kids in this area.

**Correct Answer:** Person 2

**Incorrect Feedback:** This is not the best response. Although getting new classroom space in the public school may be a good idea, this member has not explained the relationship between the new space and the Self-Assessment data being discussed. It is not evident that this idea will help children achieve school readiness goals related to math.

In our governance work, we may come across individuals who tend to see everything in terms of a single agenda. When this happens, we need to gently guide them back to the issue at hand.

**Correct Feedback:** Good choice. This member has focused on the Self-Assessment data and on the recommendations of the Self-Assessment team. She has come up with a wonderful program goal to address the issue.

## 5.16: Adding Value to the Process: Scenario 3

### Scenario 3: Looking at Community Assessment and Self-Assessment Data Together

In looking at both community assessment and Self-Assessment data, the planning team found the following:

- A large number of families in the program service area have infants and toddlers who need early education services.
- Many Head Start parents are unhappy with the short-term and unstable care their infants and toddlers receive from neighbors and relatives.
- A long waiting list exists for the 32 Early Head Start spaces that the program operates.

What does a strategic program do in response?

Read what two planning team members recommend. Then select the response that is most appropriate and adds value to the goal-setting process.

**Person 1 says:** Reviewing this data convinces me that we need to expand our Early Head Start services to meet community needs. I recommend that we develop a long-term goal to prepare our program to expand services for infants and toddlers in a responsible way. Our program needs to think about all the steps this will take, such as hiring qualified staff or modifying our classrooms.

**Person 2 says:** Looking at this data too much is going to get us into trouble. I have walked around this building and talked to a few of my friends. I know what this program needs. And it is not more slots for infants and toddlers!

**Correct Answer:** Person 1

**Correct Feedback:** Yes! This member offers a great suggestion. The data are very compelling and support a vision of expanding the program's Early Head Start services. This member also is wise in wanting the program to proceed in a responsible way. Goals are only helpful when they can be realistically achieved.

**Incorrect Feedback:** No, there's a better choice. This member wants to ignore the data and rely on anecdotal information he has heard in conversations with a few friends. This information should not be ignored, but it should not be the only information used to drive the decision-making process.

### 5.17: Prioritizing Program Goals

Considering the comprehensive nature of Head Start and the amount of data that is collected, your planning team is likely to identify a large number of program goals to consider including in your program plan.

As a governing body, Tribal Council, or Policy Council member, you can help your program prioritize this list and limit the program goals to a reasonable number.

Make sure the goals you choose are truly long-term and belong in your overall five-year program plan. You'll also want to make sure the Head Start program has adequate resources to achieve the goals.

### 5.18: Prioritizing Program Goals

When prioritizing five-year program goals, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the goal BROAD?
- Is the goal informed by Self-Assessment, community assessment, and school readiness data, and by any other important data source?
- Will the goal advance our children's readiness for kindergarten and help close the achievement gap?
- Do we have adequate human resources and monetary resources to achieve this goal?
- Will this goal move the program toward innovative practice and help the program achieve its vision?
- Which of the goals will position us for future opportunities based on our analysis of the early childhood policies at the local, state, and national levels?

- What would we like our program's legacy to be? What difference do we want to make for the children, families, and communities we serve?

## 5.19: Prioritizing Program Goals

### Activity Introduction: Which Goals Would You Pick?

Prioritizing goals is a difficult task. We can usually find value in pursuing all the recommended goals. But too many goals can be problematic. Too many goals can result in fragmented resources, which may jeopardize success.

In this activity, you will review a list of recommended goals. Determine which goals have the highest priority.

#### Prioritizing Program Goals: Criteria to Consider

- Is the goal BROAD?
- Is the goal informed by Self-Assessment, community assessment, and school readiness data, and by other important data sources?
- Will the goals advance our children's readiness for kindergarten and contribute to closing the achievement gap?
- Will this goal move the program toward innovative practice and help the program achieve its vision?

Review the following list of goals and use the above to select the two goals that you would prioritize.

**Option 1:** The program will respond to changing community demographics by improving services to special populations, including teen parents, refugee families, and families experiencing homelessness.

**Option 2:** The program will strengthen the transition to kindergarten for children and families so that Head Start children succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

**Option 3:** The program will hold a community-wide multicultural fair and involve other community agencies in the planning.

**Option 4:** The program will send all Head Start staff to a major national conference so they have the opportunity to network with other professionals.

**Correct Feedback (1 and 2 selected):** Excellent! While all the options listed here are worthwhile, the first two deserve top priority. They reflect the definition of BROAD goals, are informed by community assessment data, and advance children's readiness for kindergarten.

**Incorrect Feedback:** Good effort, but there's a better choice. The first two options deserve top priority. Efforts to plan a community-wide multicultural fair and send all program staff to a national conference may be worthwhile. However, they do not meet the definition of BROAD goals.

## Conclusion

Setting and implementing program goals and school readiness goals is essential to being a Head Start visionary. However, too many goals create confusion and stretch limited resources.

Head Start program planning involves setting reasonable and achievable goals, ones that reflect your priorities and that your program can back up with resources and support. When you do these things, your program will prosper.

## 5.20: Understanding Systems

So far in this activity, we have talked about using data to develop and prioritize program goals and school readiness goals. Sometimes the path to achieving your goals involves strengthening internal management systems.

Head Start has 10 core management systems that provide the infrastructure needed to deliver high-quality services. Management systems provide organizations with processes and procedures for everyone to follow.

With strong management systems in place, your Head Start services will be of the same high quality throughout your entire organization. By viewing your program through a management systems lens, you can determine whether one or more of your systems needs to be improved in order for your program to achieve its goals.

## 5.21: Head Start Management Systems

Below is a list of questions you might ask to evaluate the effectiveness of each of your own program's core management systems. Download a PDF that lists these [Head Start management systems and the questions to ask](#) [PDF, 157KB].

### Self-Assessment:

- Does our Self-Assessment team include all sectors of our Head Start program as well as external partners and community members to provide a fresh perspective?
- Does our Self-Assessment entail reviewing and analyzing data over time?
- Does our Self-Assessment look at overall progress in implementing regulations and achieving program goals and school readiness goals?
- Do we use the Self-Assessment results and recommendations to inform our program planning process?

### Planning:

Does our planning system use program data, school readiness data, Self-Assessment results, community assessment results, and other data sources to develop broad, five-year program goals and school readiness goals?

### Governance:

Does our governance system ensure that all governing body or Tribal Council and Policy Council members understand and exercise their roles and responsibilities as Head Start leaders?

**Human Resources:**

- Does our organizational structure support our staffing needs?
- Do our staff members have appropriate credentials and obtain the competencies they need through professional development, supervision, and support?

**Facilities, Materials, and Equipment:**

- Does our system for managing facilities, materials, and equipment ensure that we meet health and safety requirements?
- Do our facilities, materials, and equipment support the needs of children, families, and staff?
- Do we maintain and repair our facilities, materials, and equipment in a timely fashion?

**Recordkeeping and Reporting:**

- Is our recordkeeping and reporting system making adequate use of technology to ensure accurate and timely reporting?
- Is this system generating data that is being used to engage in ongoing monitoring and to improve program services?

**Communication:**

- Does our communication system address both internal and external communication among and between staff, families, and the community?
- Do we use a variety of media to ensure two-way communication and accessibility to diverse audiences?

**Ongoing Monitoring:**

- Does our ongoing monitoring system enable Head Start managers and other leaders to regularly review reports?
- Do we use ongoing monitoring information to initiate course corrections when we see areas where we are not making the progress we had expected?

**Fiscal Management:**

Does our fiscal management system ensure accountability for federal assets, regulations, and internal controls?

**Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA):**

- Does our ERSEA system effectively reach all eligible families in our service area?
- Is the selection criteria tied to our community assessment?
- Do we maintain funded enrollment and ensure 10 percent enrollment of children with disabilities?
- Do we monitor daily attendance, analyze causes of absenteeism, and provide follow-up and support as needed?

## 5.22: Using a Systems Approach

Suppose your car broke down one morning. You might ask a friend to drive you to work that day, or even for the rest of the week. But that's not a long-term solution. Eventually you will need to get your car fixed. Even better, you could adopt a maintenance routine that would prevent future breakdowns.

Calling for a ride puts a bandage on the problem; it offers a temporary solution. Fixing the car and performing preventative maintenance is a systems-based solution.

## 5.23: Asking Questions from a Systems Perspective

Imagine, as a member of the governing body or Policy Council, you learn at your February meeting that your program is not doing as well as expected in the area of family engagement. The program goal was to improve family partnership services, and the objective was to complete home visits for 90 percent of enrolled families by January 1. Program data reports reveal that, as of January 1, only 30 percent of Head Start families received home visits from a family partnership staff person.

Could this issue be resolved by strengthening one or more of your program's management systems? Below is a list of questions you might ask to explore this further.

### **Human Resources:**

Do we know if the family services staff have the skills and competencies they need to feel confident about conducting home visits? Can we resolve this issue by strengthening our training and human resources system?

### **Recordkeeping and Reporting:**

Do we know if the family services staff members are effectively using the computerized data collection system to properly record information about their home visits? Can we resolve this issue by strengthening our recordkeeping and reporting system?

### **Communication:**

Do we know if the family services staff can communicate in the primary languages used by our Head Start families? Let's determine if we can resolve this issue by strengthening our communication system.

### **Ongoing Monitoring:**

Do we know if our system for monitoring family services is working properly? Let's figure out a way to keep on top of our home visits. That way, if the numbers start slipping, we can take corrective action immediately.

## 5.24: Seeking Systems Solutions

### Activity Introduction

When you view your program through a systems lens and look for ways to strengthen Head Start management systems, you are able to create an environment where high-quality services flourish.

In this activity, you will practice looking at issues using a management systems lens. Then you will choose solutions that address the real causes of problems and offer lasting results.

Read each scenario and then select the systems-based approach that will best address the issue.

#### Scenario 1

Your Head Start planning team is examining CLASS™ data that measure teacher-child interactions in your program's preschool classrooms. The CLASS™ scores indicate that many teachers are not reaching the benchmarks set by the program in the important domain of instructional support.

Which of the following statements represents an informed systems-based approach to this issue?

**Option 1:** Let's take a look at our internal system for measuring teacher-child interactions to make sure our scores are accurate. Let's also make sure our system for supporting teachers is robust. I have heard great things about the practice-based coaching model for supporting teachers. Let's ask the Head Start education manager to look into this.

**Option 2:** These CLASS™ scores are a disgrace, and we need better teachers. Let's institute a process for laying off teachers who do not have bachelor's degrees and replacing them with degreed teachers.

**Correct Feedback (Option 1):** Great job! These recommendations represent a systems-based response to the concern. You've asked the program managers to review the recordkeeping and reporting system to ensure all data are accurate. You've also suggested they examine the human resources system to make sure your program's teachers have the support they need to improve their skills and competencies in the area of instructional support.

**Incorrect Feedback (Option 2):** This suggestion does not represent the best approach and may not get at the heart of the issue. The proposed solution of laying off teachers and replacing them with teachers who have bachelor's degrees does not guarantee that the new teachers will have strong skills in the area of instructional support.

A better recommendation would be to ask the program managers to look at the recordkeeping and reporting system to ensure all data are accurate. The managers also might want to examine the human resources system to make sure program teachers have the support they need to improve their skills and competencies in the area of instructional support.

## Scenario 2

The Head Start fiscal year is nearly over, and the governing body finance committee is reviewing a budget report that indicates the program has spent only 80 percent of its Head Start grant.

Which of the following statements represents an informed systems-based approach to this issue?

**Option 1:** This sounds like fabulous news! We will have extra money to carry over to next year's budget and put toward the new playground we want to build.

**Option 2:** Why did it take so long for us to learn that we were under budget in our spending? Is there a problem with our fiscal reporting system that prevented us from being warned that this might happen? Let's find out how we can strengthen this system to prevent this from happening again.

**Correct Feedback (Option 2):** Yes, this response represents a systems-based approach. As a Policy Council or governing body member, you ought to be receiving accurate and regular budget reports so you can see whether the Head Start budget is on track and recommend corrective action when red flags appear, such as being under budget overall (as in this case) or spending too much in a single area. The fact that you were not previously warned that the program's spending was under budget is a sign that the fiscal management system may need to be strengthened.

**Incorrect Feedback (Option 1):** This statement does not represent a systems-based response to the situation. And carry-over funds are not allowed in Head Start.

As a Policy Council or governing body member, you require accurate and regular budget reports so you can see whether the Head Start budget is on track and recommend corrective action when red flags appear, such as being under budget overall (as in this case) or spending too much in a single area. The fact that you were not previously warned that the program's spending was under budget is a sign that the fiscal management system may need to be strengthened.

## Scenario 3

You are a member of a team that is reviewing Self-Assessment data on family partnership services. The report indicates that during the past three years, the Head Start program has not reached its target for family partnership agreements.

Staff had hoped to have partnership agreements in place for at least 96 percent of program families. However, for the past three years, the percentage of families with family partnership agreements has been 67, 75, and 72, respectively.

Which of the following statements represents an informed systems-based approach to this issue?

**Option 1:** We recommend that the Head Start program immediately inform the family services workers that if they do not complete their family partnership agreements, they will face serious consequences.

**Option 2:** Does anyone know why we are having difficulty completing family partnership agreements with some families? Let's examine some human resource issues, such as training and supervision, to

make sure our family services workers have the skills, competencies, and support they need to reach the program's goal for family partnership agreements.

**Correct Feedback (Option 2):** Congratulations. You are a systems thinker! When informed about an issue of concern for your program, you didn't just look to blame someone or find a short-term fix. Instead, you thought about potential improvements to the human resources system that could correct this issue for the long term.

**Incorrect Feedback (Option 1):** This is not the best response. Reprimanding the family services workers represents a temporary remedy that may not correct the situation for the long term. Rather than mandating that workers simply try harder to correct the issue, you could have recommended the program examine one or more of its management systems, such as human resources, to see if changes to the system might fix the problem.

### Conclusion

Remember, Head Start has 10 core management systems that provide processes and procedures to keep your program running smoothly. When issues of concern arise, don't look for the short-term fix. Ask yourself and others to review any relevant systems and make changes that ensure long-term, continuous improvement.

## 5.26: Taking the Big View

As a Policy Council, governing body, or Tribal Council member, you have a wonderful opportunity to make your Head Start program the best it can be.

When working to change the future, use these best practices:

- Follow the systematic program planning cycle
- Use data to develop, establish, and prioritize five-year program goals and school readiness goals
- Analyze and solve problems using a management systems lens

As you develop meaningful goals and put in place improvements that are lasting, you fulfill your role as a visionary in the Head Start organization.

## Activity 6: Be a Head Start Ambassador

### 6.1: Be a Head Start Ambassador

Do you like to work with outside partners? Do you enjoy sharing Head Start's success with everyone you meet?

Ambassadors serve as spokespersons for the Head Start program. They tell the story of how the program makes a difference in the lives of children, families, and the community. They also reach out to build partnerships and bring new resources to the program.

This activity is designed to help you become a more effective Head Start ambassador by strengthening your communication and relationship skills. You'll practice speaking purposefully, listening actively, and making connections among Head Start staff, families, partners, community members, and other groups.

### 6.2: What Is an Ambassador?

As a governing body, Tribal Council, or Policy Council member, you are an ambassador for your Head Start program. You carry the Head Start message to parents, families, and the greater community. You also bring their messages back to the Policy Council and governing body so the decisions you make reflect the needs of the community you serve.

### 6.3: What Do Ambassadors Do?

Along with management, you act as an ambassador in the following ways:

- **Sharing information and achievements.** You serve as a representative of the program and help educate others about Head Start.
- **Gathering information and outside perspectives before making important decisions.** You consider the views and opinions of Head Start families and community stakeholders when making decisions.
- **Connecting the dots.** You use your community connections to support Head Start's community partnership efforts.

### 6.4: What Will You Learn?

This training activity will help you to build the skills you need to be a more effective Head Start ambassador.

After completing this activity, you will be better able to:

- Share information about your program with outside audiences
- Gather and collect data from outside the program to inform internal decisions
- Connect your Head Start program with other community organizations and volunteers

## 6.5: Communicating Inside Out

To be an effective ambassador, you communicate from the **inside out** and from the **outside in**.

When you communicate inside out, you carry information from the Head Start program to families and the larger community.

Information from the inside out might include:

- News about activities, events, and resources
- Head Start's achievements and positive outcomes
- Ways that families and community members can support or expand the organization's activities

## 6.6: Inside Out: Scenario 1 Question 1

### Activity Introduction

When you communicate Head Start's message to others, think carefully about the audience you are addressing and the types of information people are most interested in hearing. Use data and evidence to back up what you are saying, and share personal stories to make your message engaging.

In this activity, you will practice matching the message to the audience.

### Scenario 1

One of the Policy Council's goals is to improve parent participation in the Head Start program. The Head Start director has asked you, as a **parent** and **member of the Policy Council**, to **make a presentation to the Parent Committee** about the importance of family engagement.

**What will you share?** Select an index card, and then get feedback about your choice from a Parent Committee member.

**Card 1:** I will share research findings about the relationship between family engagement and children's success in Head Start and school. I also will share a few personal stories from former parent volunteers.

**Card 2:** I will share information about the program's growth over the past 10 years and the total number of children and families the program has served.

**Correct Feedback (Card 1):** Parent committee member says, "I really appreciate the information you shared about the research. I learned that being engaged in my child's education can help her succeed. Also, the stories you told from former parents made me want to volunteer even more."

**Incorrect Feedback (Card 2):** Parent committee member says, "Although learning about the numbers of children and families served by Head Start is interesting, I don't know what it has to do with family engagement. I wish I had more information on why family engagement is so important. I am very busy these days and am not sure I have time to volunteer, but I do want to be a good parent to my children."

## 6.7: Inside Out: Scenario 1 Question 2

**What will you share?** Select an index card, and then get feedback about your choice from a Parent Committee member.

**Card 1:** I will share information on the different ways parents can participate in Head Start, including examples of home activities they can do with their child.

**Card 2:** I will share information about non-federal share and how it impacts the budget and the formula the program uses to calculate the value of family engagement.

**Correct Feedback (Card 1):** Parent committee member says, "Thanks for sharing real-life examples of the different ways families can be involved with their children and Head Start. At first I didn't think I had much to offer, but now I recognize I can make a difference, and Head Start values everyone's contribution."

**Incorrect Feedback (Card 2):** Parent committee member says, "I found the information about non-federal share and how it is calculated to be quite complicated. I am sure Policy Council and governing body members need to know these things, but I don't know what it has to do with me. I wish someone had provided examples of how I might get involved with the Head Start program. I am not sure I have much to offer."

## 6.8: Inside Out: Scenario 1 Question 3

**What will you share?** Select an index card, and then get feedback about your choice from a Parent Committee member.

**Card 1:** I will share some of my frustrations about parent participation to see if I can light a fire under these people and get some support. I feel like I'm the only one volunteering around here. It's time for others to step up and do their fair share!

**Card 2:** I will discuss some of the ways I have personally been engaged in my child's Head Start education, how those experiences made me feel, and how they made my child feel.

**Correct Feedback (Card 2):** Parent committee member says, "I enjoyed hearing your heartfelt stories about your own experiences volunteering in Head Start and how they have positively impacted you and your child. I find it incredibly moving. You are a role model for me and others around me!"

**Incorrect Feedback (Card 1):** Parent committee member says, "I wish you had not shared your frustrations. Although I understand why you might feel this way, your complaints do not make me want to increase my level of involvement in the program. If I decide to be more engaged, will you end up being frustrated with me?"

## 6.9: Inside Out: Scenario 2 Question 1

### Scenario 2

The local school district is discussing how to strengthen its kindergarten program. Your Head Start program's executive director has asked you, as a **member of the governing body**, to **make a presentation at the school board's next meeting**.

**What will you share?** Select an index card, and then get feedback about your choice from a school board member.

**Card 1:** I will share information about our mission to improve children's readiness for school. I will emphasize the importance of Head Start working collaboratively with the school district to establish school readiness goals that strengthen both programs.

**Card 2:** I will share information about the number of home visits that have been completed by family services staff and the number of parents who have achieved their family partnership goals.

**Correct Feedback (Card 1):** School board member says, "I learned something new about Head Start today! School readiness is very important to Head Start and to us as well. I can see that if we work together on establishing school readiness goals for Head Start children, we will benefit and we will also strengthen our own kindergarten program."

**Incorrect Feedback (Card 2):** School board member says, "What was that all about? Although the information is very impressive, I don't understand what Head Start home visits have to do with strengthening our kindergarten program. Hmm. I am not sure that Head Start can help us improve our program."

## 6.10: Inside Out: Scenario 2 Question 2

**What will you share?** Select an index card, and then get feedback about your choice from a school board member.

**Card 1:** I will share information about the progress our Head Start program has made serving infants and toddlers in center-based care so that low-income parents and family members are able to work.

**Card 2:** I will share information about our program's commitment to successfully transition children from Head Start to kindergarten. I will also discuss how Head Start and the school district can work together to implement effective transition practices.

**Correct Feedback (Card 2):** School board member says, "I like what you said about working collaboratively to ensure a smooth transition for the children. Before this presentation, I was not aware of Head Start's commitment to helping children transition successfully to kindergarten. Now I see that working with Head Start is one important way that we can strengthen our kindergarten program."

**Incorrect Feedback (Card 1):** School board member says, "I think the information about serving infants and toddlers is interesting, but I am not sure what it has to do with strengthening our kindergarten

program. I am starting to think that Head Start may not have a role to play in our effort to improve kindergarten programming."

### 6.11: Inside Out: Scenario 2 Question 3

**What will you share?** Select an index card, and then get feedback about your choice from a school board member.

**Card 1:** I will talk about the accomplishments of Head Start parent leaders and how they can continue as parent leaders when their children enter the public school system.

**Card 2:** I will let them know that Head Start has had to tighten its belt and make tough budget decisions. I will tell them we need to reach out to the community and the school district for additional support.

**Correct Feedback (Card 1):** School board member says, "I like what you said about helping parents continue to be engaged in their children's education beyond Head Start. Improving family participation will definitely help to strengthen our kindergarten program."

**Incorrect Feedback (Card 2):** School board member says, "I appreciate that Head Start needs additional community support, but what does that have to do with strengthening our kindergarten program? Maybe the Head Start program did not understand the purpose of this meeting."

### 6.12: Inside Out: Scenario 3 Question 1

#### The Annual Report

Your program's annual report provides a key opportunity for Policy Council and governing body members to communicate the impact of Head Start.

Let's see what that would look like.

#### Scenario 3

You have been asked to share the **Head Start annual report** at an upcoming Head Start **open house**. **Two hundred parents and family members** are expected to attend.

**What will you share?** Select an index card, and then get feedback about your choice from an attendee.

**Card 1:** I will share information from the report that is most important to parents, such as the health services children received, the family engagement activities we organized, and the agency's efforts to prepare children for kindergarten. I will provide copies of the report's executive summary for people to read on their own.

**Card 2:** I will share the entire annual report. It's important for parents to be aware of these details. I will make presentation slides for every page of the report so participants have all the information available on the successes of Head Start.

**Correct Feedback (Card 1):** An attendee says, "I like what you said about some of the major accomplishments of Head Start. Head Start is doing some great things for families! I am very impressed."

I also appreciate getting a copy of the executive summary so I can review additional information on my own time."

**Incorrect Feedback (Card 2):** An attendee says, "I stopped listening halfway through the presentation. All of those facts and figures made me dizzy. My mind started to wander, and I began thinking about all the work I have to do at home before I go to bed tonight. That was much too much information for me to absorb."

## 6.13: Inside Out: Scenario 4 Question 1

### Scenario 4

You have been asked to share the **Head Start annual report at a town council meeting**. **Town leaders** are deciding if they will continue to allow Head Start to occupy a former school building.

**What will you share?** Select an index card, and then get feedback about your choice from a town council member.

**Card 1:** I will pass out copies of the annual report and give everyone 10 minutes to review it. I will then open the floor for their questions.

**Card 2:** I will develop a presentation that highlights information that will help them make their decision:

- The total public and private funds received by Head Start
- The total number of children and families served
- The agency's efforts to prepare children for kindergarten

**Correct Feedback (Card 2):** A town council member says, "That was a powerful presentation. I have a new and richer understanding of what the Head Start program provides our community. I have the information I need to make my decision, and I vote that we continue to provide space for the program in one of our former school buildings."

**Incorrect Feedback (Card 1):** A town council member says, "Oh my goodness. I wish I had received this report in advance! There's so much information here to process. If someone would point out the key information I need, it would help me make this decision. ."

## 6.15: Communicating Through the Annual Report

All Head Start programs produce an annual report containing detailed information about program services and the impact Head Start is making on its community.

At the very least, this report includes the following information:

- Total amount of public and private funds received by the program, and the amount from each source

- Report of budgetary expenditures in addition to the proposed budget
- The total number of children and families served by the program, the average monthly enrollment, and the percentage of eligible children served
- The results of the most recent federal on-site monitoring review and the most recent audit findings
- The percentage of enrolled children who received medical and dental exams
- Information about family engagement activities
- The agency's efforts to prepare children for kindergarten
- Any other information required by the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services

*Head Start Act. Sec. 644(a)(2)*

## 6.16: Tips for Communicating Inside Out

Remember these tips when communicating inside out:

- Share information and facts that will be meaningful to the audience.
- Tell an appealing story that illustrates the Head Start mission, vision, and services.
- Where possible, include real facts about the impact Head Start has on the community.
- Know your audience. Be more casual when speaking with parents and families; be more professional when speaking with business leaders.
- Combine a logical explanation with an emotional appeal, and end on a positive note.
- Prepare and distribute handouts that provide the audience with important information they can reference at a later time

## 6.17: Communicating Outside In

Remember, as an ambassador, you communicate from the **inside out** and from the **outside in**.

When you communicate outside in, you bring information from community stakeholders back into the organization.

Information from the outside in might include:

- Community needs and concerns
- Opportunities for community partnerships
- Input from parents and families

## 6.18: Outside In: Scenario 1 Question 1

### Activity Introduction

Gathering information from parents, community members, and other stakeholders will help your governing body, Policy Council, and management team make more informed and meaningful decisions. As you go out into the community, be respectful of different points of view and be open to new ideas. Remember, as an ambassador, you represent your program, not yourself.

In this activity, you will practice reaching out to others and bringing information back to your program.

### Scenario 1

You are a member of the Policy Council, which is considering expanding services to infants and toddlers. You have been asked to partner with a staff person and talk with other families to get their opinion on this idea.

**Select a statement below to start the conversation.**

**Option 1:** Have you heard that our Head Start Policy Council has finally voted to explore offering Early Head Start services? It is about time! I have been asking for this since I became a Head Start parent. I really could use this service. Will you support me?

**Option 2:** I am a Head Start parent who could really use Early Head Start services. I wondered if this was the case for others. With the Head Start director's help, I surveyed parents. More than 40 percent of Head Start families have infants and toddlers who would benefit from Early Head Start. That leads me to believe that it would be a good idea for our program to expand into Early Head Start. What do you think?

**Correct Feedback (Option 2):** A parent thinks: "This sounds interesting. This person has really done her homework, and I appreciate being brought into the conversation. I would like to learn more so I can offer an informed opinion."

**Incorrect Feedback (Option 1):** A parent thinks: "It sounds like this person is just thinking about her own needs instead of the needs of all the families. I am not so sure I want to jump on this bandwagon. I will just say that I do not have the time to talk."

## 6.19: Outside In: Scenario 1 Question 2

**What would you say next to make sure you get the information you need?**

**Option 1:** We have to move on this decision quickly so my child will get a year of Early Head Start before he turns 3. I'm sure you agree with me that this service is really needed. Just sign your name on this sheet of paper.

**Option 2:** I know that I personally can use Early Head Start services. But as a Policy Council member, I want to make sure there's a real need and desire for these services in the community. We're taking our

time to do the research and gather facts. Your opinion matters and will help us to make the right decision.

**Incorrect Feedback (Option 1):** A parent thinks: "I am not sure I agree with her, but I am hesitant to offer a different opinion. It seems she is just trying to convince me that we need these Early Head Start services but is not really interested in my true opinion."

**Correct Feedback (Option 2):** A parent thinks: "I appreciate that the Policy Council is not rushing into this decision. Expanding the program to include Early Head Start would be a big change. I will tell her what I think, and maybe it will help the Policy Council make the right decision."

## 6.20: Outside In: Scenario 1 Question 3

**How would you report the information you collected back to the Policy Council?**

**Option 1:** We interviewed 15 families, and 13 of them support offering Early Head Start services. In addition to needing infant and toddler services for their own families, many of the people we spoke with said they know others in the community who need this service as well. We are preparing a summary of the notes we took during the interviews.

**Option 2:** We spoke with a lot of families since our last meeting, and everyone agrees that expanding our services to infants and toddlers is the only way to go.

**Correct Feedback (Option 1):** A Policy Council member thinks: "I am impressed by this report. The team has done a lot of research, and it is well documented. This information, combined with the data we have in our community assessment, convinces me that the program will be stronger if we offer Early Head Start services for infants and toddlers."

**Incorrect Feedback (Option 2):** A Policy Council member thinks: "I know that this Policy Council member really wants Early Head Start. However, I am not convinced that this report represents the views of our Head Start families and community. I will have to ask some follow-up questions so I know exactly how many families they interviewed. I also want to hear some specific examples of the kinds of responses they received during the interviews."

## 6.21: Outside In: Scenario 2 Question 1

### Scenario 2

You are the early childhood education specialist on the governing body. You agreed to serve on the program's Self-Assessment team to help assess the program's progress in achieving school readiness goals. You and the Head Start education manager will meet with the principal of a local elementary school to learn about the results of a partnership between the program and the school. You want to find out if the kindergarten teachers have seen improvements among the incoming Head Start children as a result of the partnership.

**Select a statement below to start the conversation.**

**Option 1:** Thanks for meeting with us. Two years ago, we worked together to establish school readiness goals. Are you seeing a difference in the skills of children entering kindergarten from Head Start?

**Option 2:** I'm here to straighten out some misinformation about the Head Start children entering your kindergarten. You recently reported that language and literacy scores for incoming Head Start children are lower than last year's scores. That does not make any sense, based on the data we have collected. There must be something wrong with your data.

**Correct Feedback (Option 1):** The principal thinks: "Wow! I am impressed! Head Start is interested in long-term outcomes for their children. Our collaboration with Head Start on school readiness is really worth our time and effort."

**Incorrect Feedback (option 2):** The principal thinks: "Oh my goodness! She certainly is coming on strong. I can't believe she is challenging the quality of our data! We have been using data successfully for years, and our systems are quite sophisticated."

## 6.22: Outside In: Scenario 2 Question 2

**What would you say next to continue the conversation and obtain the information you need to bring back to the Self-Assessment team?**

**Option 1:** Your data suggests that the former Head Start children at your school have not advanced in the area of language and literacy; but our data shows that our children have improved. Perhaps you are not using good assessment tools, or your teachers are not measuring skills properly. Can you let me know what you plan to do differently so the next report is more accurate?

**Option 2:** Thank you for sharing your language and literacy data for incoming Head Start children. I have to admit we're surprised, because our internal data show our children have made significant advancements in this area. We are anxious to work with the school department to look into this discrepancy so that in the future our data is more consistent. We may need to strengthen our program plans.

**Incorrect Feedback (Option 1):** The principal thinks: "I am thinking it is Head Start that needs to revisit its data, not us! Head Start is clearly not interested in looking at the real facts. If the information is not positive, the Head Start leaders are going to blame it on poor data and continue doing what they have always done."

**Correct Feedback (Option 2):** The principal thinks: "She presents a good point! If our data does not match the Head Start data, we need to figure out why. And if the problem is on our end, we can correct it so we are providing Head Start with accurate information. I am so impressed that Head Start is using our data during their five-year planning process. They really take this seriously."

## 6.23: Outside In: Scenario 2 Question 3

**How would you report the meeting back to the Self-Assessment team?**

**Option 1:** The school's principal shared some faulty data with us. We know that the kindergarten children who attended Head Start are doing a lot better than the school is reporting. I told the principal we'd just stick with our internal data and not worry about what they say.

**Option 2:** The Head Start education manager and I met with the principal, and we compared our Head Start outcome data with the school's data on incoming children who had participated in our Head Start program. It turns out our children are not doing as well as we thought in the area of language and literacy. Let's review this information; it has strong implications for our Self-Assessment report and recommendations.

**Incorrect Feedback (Option 1):** A Self-Assessment member thinks: "It looks like we may have sent the wrong person to do this job. We really need to consider the data the school department has collected as we develop our Self-Assessment report. I don't think this meeting was very collaborative. What are we going to do now?"

**Correct Feedback (Option 2):** A Self-Assessment member thinks: "We certainly sent the right team to do this job! They were really open to information that did not match their own, and they prepared a great report that will really inform our decision-making process. Look at this strong data they have brought us from the school department! Although it is not what we wanted to hear, it will be very useful in our Self-Assessment process."

## 6.24: Tips for Communicating Outside In

Gathering and sharing input from families and community stakeholders helps guide the Head Start decision-making process. Remember these tips when communicating outside in:

- Listen carefully; seek to understand, not to convince.
- Don't just look for agreement; be open to opinions contrary to your own.
- Take notes during conversations so you can report accurately and fairly.
- Be objective; think beyond your own children to all children in the program.
- Share information in a factual way, and offer possible solutions.

## 6.25: Connect the Dots

Your last job as a Head Start ambassador is to help the Head Start program connect the dots by initiating community partnerships that will support the program in achieving its program and school readiness goals for children and families.

You can make connections across organizations, schools, neighborhoods, and other community groups. Think about the people you know, live near, or work with; ask yourself: How might they help make our program stronger? What skills or expertise do they have that can benefit our children and families?

## 6.26: Connect the Dots

### Activity Introduction

When Head Start and the community come together to work on behalf of Head Start children and families, amazing things can be achieved.

In this activity, the Head Start program has identified a goal to promote healthy living among Head Start families through increased exercise and good nutrition. Program leaders are interested in partnering with other community efforts to achieve this goal.

Explore how you can make connections between people, programs, and possibilities.

Read below how each Policy Council or governing body member brings a unique skill, connection, experience, or passion to the task of promoting healthy living among Head Start families.

**First person:** Our neighbor teaches agricultural classes at the local community college. I know he has worked with some schools around town to help them set up community gardens. He might have ideas about how we could connect our program to their gardens.

**Second person:** In addition to serving on this board, I'm also on the board of the food bank. I suspect that we serve many of the same families. I wonder if there's something we could do together to promote healthy eating. I could introduce the Head Start nutrition manager to the executive director of the food bank.

**Third person:** This is an important issue for Head Start to address. My wife is a pediatrician, and she has seen firsthand the impact of poor eating habits on children's growth and development. Maybe she could lead a parent workshop.

**Fourth person:** I just came back from a Head Start conference. It was a great experience. The speakers discussed two successful approaches to improving healthy living. One is called *Little Voices for Healthy Choices* and the other is *I Am Moving, I Am Learning*. Could we bring these speakers to our program?

## 6.27: Tips for Connecting the Dots

When connecting the dots and building partnerships, remember these tips:

- Make connections among people, programs, and possibilities.
- Coordinate your efforts with the governing body, Policy Council, and management.
- Identify win-win opportunities and mutual benefits; think not only about what you want but about what the other party wants.
- When approaching potential partners, be prepared; do your homework and know what you want to talk about.

- When approaching other organizations, seek common ground around mission, values, and community needs, and focus on the children and families.
- Don't be afraid to state your needs clearly: "This is how we think you could help right now."

## 6.28: What Is Your Niche?

Congratulations on completing this activity and preparing yourself to be a strong Head Start ambassador!

You will have many opportunities to serve as an ambassador. Seek out those situations that best suit you.

- If you are a parent serving on the Policy Council, think about sharing information about your Head Start program with families in your neighborhood (inside out). Bring their needs back to the program to inform future decision-making (outside in).
- If you are a business leader or community representative serving on the Policy Council or governing body, think about sharing Head Start successes and needs with local businesses, organizations, and community groups (inside out). Invite community partners to work with your program moving forward (outside in).

## 6.29: Go Forth and Be a Good Ambassador

### The What ...

As an ambassador, you advance your Head Start program's mission by:

- Sharing information and achievements
- Gathering information and outside perspectives

### The How ...

As an ambassador, you succeed by:

- Telling a compelling story
- Providing useful, relevant, and specific information
- Connecting the dots

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