

Head Start A to Z

Recordkeeping and Reporting

Background

Have you ever worked with a director who spent a great deal of time searching for something that she could never put her hands on? Or with one who wondered whether the claim for reimbursement that he was submitting to the Child and Adult Care Food Program was accurate? Or who was concerned about whether a child had received the correct dose of the correct medication at the correct time? Or worried about whether the program's attendance was at 85 percent? Or who worried even more about whether any children were chronically absent and falling through the cracks? Or who hoped that her governing body and Policy Council would understand and support her proposition to end transportation in one part of the service area but increase it in another? Strong recordkeeping and reporting systems hold the solution to these directors' challenges.

Recordkeeping and Reporting are two intertwined Head Start management systems. They are key to a Head Start/Early Head Start program's ability to gather and use data effectively. It is in the intersection of record-keeping and reporting that programs turn data into information. Accurate, complete, and timely records enable Head Start programs to maintain and transmit their organizational knowledge—they represent an organization's institutional memory. Head Start programs rely on their recordkeeping systems to enable them to verify that they are meeting the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS.)

Good records are the basis of good reports, and Head Start and Early Head Start programs are required to provide a number of reports each month. When effective, these reports are accurate, audience-specific, appealing, and accessible.

The HSPPS (1304.51(g) and (h)) describe the purposes of these recordkeeping and reporting systems. An efficient and effective recordkeeping system enables programs to "provide accurate and timely information regarding children, families, and staff and must ensure appropriate confidentiality of this information." The reporting system must "generate periodic reports of financial status and program operations in order to control program quality; maintain program accountability; advise governing bodies, policy groups, and staff of program progress; and generate official reports for Federal, State, and local authorities as required by applicable law."

Head Start and Early Head Start programs collect many different types of records—fiscal, facilities, human resources, child, family, staff, and program records abound. Programs report regularly to the Office of Head Start, their governing bodies and Policy Councils, partners, funders, staff, and families.

Recordkeeping

Nowadays, there is a whole field of study devoted to records management, also known as information management. In fact, information management has developed its own profession. ARMA International (formerly the Association of Records Managers and Administrators), the professional organization for information management professionals, has promulgated a set of “Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles.” The organization describes the importance of recordkeeping as follows:

“Information, and the systems and records containing it, are inextricably linked with any organized activity. They are a key element in the functioning of any organization, supporting, facilitating, and documenting:

- Day-to-day operations
- Predictive activities, such as budgeting and planning
- Responses to questions about past decisions and activities
- Compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and standards,
- Accountability and transparency¹”

In Head Start and Early Head Start, there are several key elements to effective recordkeeping systems. Programs with effective recordkeeping systems use simple, clear forms so that all information is consistent across their entire program. They make sure that all staff who enter data into the forms have the same understanding of the terms used in the forms so that they are entering the same information. They minimize the duplication of data; for instance, if they collect demographic information on a family at enrollment, they don’t ask the family for the same information when they develop the family partnership agreement or when the family comes to a parent-teacher conference. These programs store information for as long as it is needed but don’t maintain records that are not useful or that are expired.

¹ **About ARMA International and the Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles.**

ARMA International (www.arma.org) is a not-for-profit professional association and the authority on information governance. Formed in 1955, ARMA International is the oldest and largest association for the information management profession, with a current international membership of more than 10,000. It provides education, publications, and information on the efficient maintenance, retrieval, and preservation of vital information created in public and private organizations in all sectors of the economy. It also publishes *Information Management* magazine, and the Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles. More information about the principles can be found at www.arma.org/principles.

They have strong confidentiality policies and share records only with those who need the information. All staff are well versed in and understand the policy. They understand how confidentiality particularly applies in this era of social media and when nearly everyone has a camera on a smart phone. They are careful not to leave records lying around where a parent or volunteer who passes by could see them. They obtain release and consent forms when necessary, such as when transferring information to an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, or from the Head Start program to the local school.

Technology has changed and strengthened the ability of many Head Start and Early Head Start programs to manage their recordkeeping and reporting functions. In its publication *How to Achieve Best Practices: Records Management*, the Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM), the global community of information professionals, cites six functions of technology in record management: to help programs

- a) capture information,
- b) classify and file it,
- c) retain and dispose of records,
- d) access records by being able to search and find what you're looking for,
- e) store records, and
- f) manage email and other communications.

AIIM further emphasizes the importance of training staff to understand the importance of the records they keep. Staff "need to be educated on the benefits that they will experience themselves. Dealing with information and records in a structured way, working with the organization's classification scheme and controlled vocabularies, makes it easier for staff. If these instruments are well thought out, intuitive, and clearly understood by all staff, individuals will not have to 'reinvent the wheel,' or waste time and thought on how to describe and handle information and records."²

AIIM describes four key reasons that electronic records management is important.³ They are:

- **Compliance** with such important aspects as the laws that govern what information a program must collect, how long different records have to be retained, how to manage confidentiality, and more.
- **Effectiveness** in not losing records, sharing records, finding records easily, and getting the complete picture.

² Weise, C. (2012). *How to Achieve Best Practices: Records Management*. AIIM. Retrieved from <http://www.trindocs.com/Portals/3/RecordsManagementBriefing.pdf>

³ *Four Business Drivers for Electronic Records Management*. AIIM Training.

- **Efficiency**, specifically in saving money. AIIM reminds us that when programs use electronic recordkeeping systems, they save money on paper and storage.
- **Continuity** to ensure that information is widely known—not just kept in one person’s head. This reason makes good recordkeeping key to succession planning and helps a program recover more quickly in the case of a disaster.

While the third reason, “efficiency” as defined by AIIM, pertains specifically to electronic records management and the associated cost savings, the other reasons—compliance, effectiveness, and continuity—are key to any functional record-management system, whether it is an electronic or a paper-and-pencil system.

Reporting Requirements

Head Start programs complete several crucial reports annually. The first is the Program Information Report (PIR.) Submitted annually through the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES) by August 30 of each year, this report presents aggregated data about a wide range of items requested by the Office of Head Start—from staff qualifications to curriculum, screening, and assessment instruments; from detailed enrollment data to parent employment information and number of children with dental and medical homes. It’s the soup to nuts of a program’s aggregated data on every child served during the program year so that the Office of Head Start can aggregate data from all Head Start and Early Head Start programs to inform Congress and the public.

The second is the annual report to the public, a requirement of the Head Start Act (section 644(a)(2). This report includes eight required elements:

- (A) The total amount of public and private funds received and the amount from each source
- (B) An explanation of budgetary expenditures and proposed budget for the fiscal year
- (C) The total number of children and families served, the average monthly enrollment (as a percentage of funded enrollment), and the percentage of eligible children served
- (D) The results of the most recent review by the Secretary and the financial audit.
- (E) The percentage of enrolled children that received medical and dental exams
- (F) Information about parent involvement activities
- (G) The agency’s efforts to prepare children for kindergarten
- (H) Any other information required by the Secretary

(“The Secretary” is the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the reports from the events in the federal aligned monitoring are what is being referred to here.)

The HSPPS also require programs to “generate official reports for Federal, State, and local authorities as required by applicable law” (1304.51 (h)(2)). This requirement entails reports to a number of federal agencies, such as the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Department of Agriculture for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), social security and Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA), among other things. If a program has other funding sources, each funding source may require a separate report. State and local governments may have additional reporting requirements.

In addition to these annual reports, Head Start and Early Head Start programs report to OHS and their regional office, and to their governing body and Policy Council on a monthly basis.

Creating Effective Reports

In putting together reports, programs should consider what data they share, how they share it, and when they share it. Different audiences need different views of the data. For instance, the governing body and Policy Council need aggregated, programwide data about child outcomes. Teachers need reports of child outcomes for the specific children in their group. The following questions can help guide a report:

- What is the purpose of your report? Does it need to inform or raise awareness? Will it serve as the basis for a decision?
- What does the audience already know about the topic? Are they novices, experts, generalists, or managers?
- What level of information does your audience need: big picture or tons of detail?

In considering how to share data, it is useful to think about “the four A’s.”

- **Accurate:** Data must be free of errors. The report must convey what the data actually say, not what you wish the data to say. Be sure to proofread your documents to catch any typos.
- **Audience-specific:** Highlight the issues that the audience cares about. Take into account the level of detail the audience members needs as well as their prior knowledge of the topic.
- **Appealing:** Keep the data simple, clear, and visually attractive. Use your information to tell a story in a compelling way.
- **Accessible:** Use an appropriate reading level and avoid jargon that the audience doesn’t understand. If acronyms are essential, be sure to spell them out. Use bullet points rather than long narratives, and use the language(s) spoken by the audience members.

Overarching Theme

This interactive learning session helps new leaders in better understanding Head Start's Recordkeeping and Reporting systems. The session focuses on the importance of creating and maintaining effective recordkeeping and reporting practices in Head Start programs.

Outcomes

- Know the requirements for recordkeeping and reporting in Head Start as well as other pertinent federal, state and local requirements
- Examine the relationship between recordkeeping and reporting
- Appreciate the importance of effective recordkeeping and reporting systems
- Understand the role of each staff member in overseeing and using these two systems

Materials

- *Recordkeeping and Reporting* PowerPoint presentation
- Handouts
 - ✓ Nifty Notes
 - ✓ Key Messages (1 – 2 per group)
 - ✓ Annual Reports
 - ✓ Annual Self-Assessment Report
 - ✓ Head Start Program Fact Sheet (1–2 per group)
 - ✓ Services Snapshot: National All Programs (1–2 per group)
 - ✓ Recordkeeping and Reporting Systems Check
 - ✓ Records Review Exercise
 - ✓ Reporting Requirements
 - ✓ Required Program Governance Reports
 - ✓ Share and Share Alike
 - ✓ Tip Sheet: Making the Most of Technology
 - ✓ The Principles (Executive Summary)
 - ✓ Wall Charts for Record Collection (1 set for chart paper)

Planning Ahead

- This is a two-to-three-hour session.
- Review the **Background** information.
- Make copies of the handouts and make wall charts for the “Your Record Collection” activity. Consider creating a workbook for organizing multiple handouts.
- Be sure you have placed chart paper in the back of the room.

Recordkeeping and Reporting

Let's Get Started:

1. Is R&R Your Thing?

You can open this session by playing upbeat music and asking “Is R&R your thing?”

This is meant to be an upbeat opening to what many perceive as a dry topic.
Take a few responses.



2. Head Start A to Z: Recordkeeping and Reporting

Welcome the participants and introduce yourself. If you have co-facilitators, they should introduce themselves, too.

Say to participants, “*Head Start A to Z* sessions are designed to emulate the concept of the ‘learning organization.’ We recognize the key building blocks of learning organizations: a supportive learning environment, concrete learning processes, and leadership development—all of which reinforce learning.

“Each one of us has an important role to play in the success of this session. Those with experience remind us where we’ve come from and what we must do to maintain our identity and uniqueness. New members bring a fresh perspective and remind us of what we must do to prepare for the future. All roles are essential for Head Start as a learning organization to continue to grow and flourish.

“Head Start A to Z sessions are successful when they help us share the best of what we have to offer with a strength-based focus. As you engage in this session, we hope that you will support one another in the learning process by generously sharing your knowledge, experience, and perspective.”



3. Key Messages

Guide participants to the “Key Messages” handout. Say to participants, “*Head Start A to Z* sessions are based on a set of key messages. For this session on recordkeeping and reporting, we will focus on the key message #7: ‘In order to be useful, data must be presented to decision-makers in such a way that they can relate to the data and act upon the information.’

“The Head Start Recordkeeping and Reporting systems are about the effective use of data. Examining data is a key step in planning for, assessing, and communicating about the quality of services a program provides. It is critical for you to gain skills in collecting, analyzing, and using data at the program-wide level. Similarly, teachers, home visitors, family and health services workers, and other staff need to build and use the same skills in their work with individual children and families. Directors and managers play an important role in creating a culture that supports staff at all levels to use data in their day-to-day work.

Key Messages

In order to be useful, data must be presented to decision-makers in such a way that they can relate to the data and act upon the information.



4. Session Outcomes

Review the outcomes for the session.

Session Outcomes

- **Participants will:**
 - Discuss the requirements for recordkeeping and reporting in Head Start and other pertinent federal, state and local requirements
 - Examine the relationship between recordkeeping and reporting
 - Explore the importance of effective recordkeeping and reporting systems
 - Understand their role in overseeing and using these two systems



5. The Systems Constellation

Before we begin to focus primarily on recordkeeping and reporting, we are going to take a step back and look at all of Head Start’s management systems.

Remind the group that there are 10 management systems; Recordkeeping and Reporting together constitute one of them.

Explain that one of our favorite descriptions is depicted in this graphic, which shows that Head Start and Early

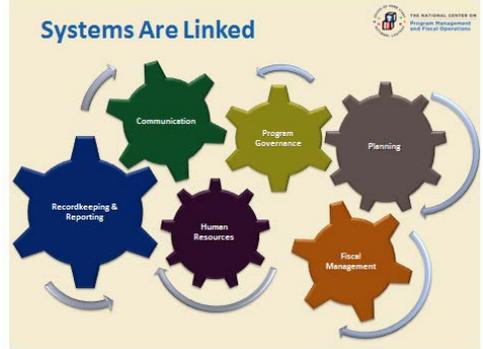


Head Start services are supported by systems that in turn support high-quality services; and high-quality services lead to positive outcomes for children and families.

6. Systems Are Linked

Explain that all of the management systems are linked. Then click the slide to rotate the cogs. Point out that, while all systems are linked, Recordkeeping and Reporting are especially closely linked to the Communication, Program Governance, Planning, Fiscal Management, and Human Resources systems as well as to all Head Start services.

Say to participants, “A system is a set of interacting, interrelated parts that form a complex whole with a specific purpose. When they all run smoothly the whole program runs smoothly.”



7. Systems Are Linked [but not functioning]

Click the slide another time. Then say, “When systems are not functioning properly, things go wrong.” [The cogs/gears are stuck in the animation.]

Continue saying, “When any part is not functioning well, it is likely to be evident within program services. For example, there may be pockets of quality due to the hard work of high-performing staff; but as a whole, services are likely to be inconsistent. Children and families receiving services in one center may receive a totally different experience than children and families across town in a different center. The other thing that might happen is that when a high-performing leader leaves, the quality of the program plummets. Why? Because there are not systems in place that will help the program withstand the change.”

Continue with the following:
 “As we stated, all 10 management systems need to work together. For example, reports need to be clear and easy to understand by members of the governing body and Policy Council; this is an example of how Recordkeeping and Reporting is linked to Communication and Program



Governance. Communication impacts Recordkeeping and Reporting as well as Program Governance.”

8. Family Records

Invite participants to work as groups at tables to brainstorm a list of all of the records and documents in their personal lives. Examples might include their birth certificates, marriage certificates or divorce decrees, social security cards, health records, high school diplomas and college degrees, drivers license, photographs of family events, and so forth

Ask how they use these documents in their daily lives (e.g., need birth certificate to get a passport or new social security card; need driver’s license or other ID to board a plane, etc.)

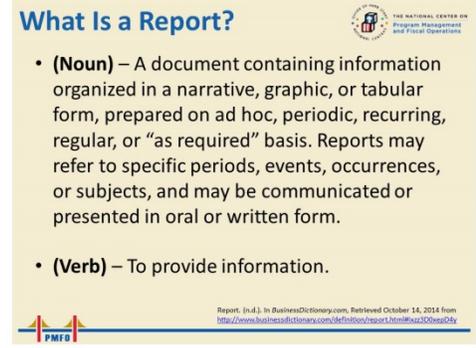


9. What Is a Report?

Use the definition on the slide to encourage a quick dialogue with participants about the following question:

“What kinds of reports do you use in your Head Start program?”

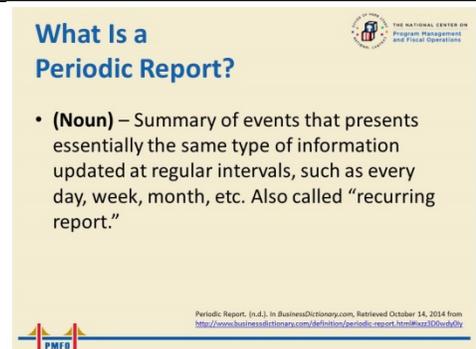
Remind participants to keep this question in mind as the session goes forward and looks at reporting requirements in more depth.



10. What Is a Periodic Report?

Use this definition to encourage a quick dialogue with participants about the following question:

“What are examples of periodic reports in Head Start?”



11. Why is R&R Important?

Review from the slide the key points about the importance of recordkeeping and reporting.

Make the following additional points:

The data systems: Recordkeeping and reporting supports the four data activities (prepare, collect, aggregate and analyze, and use and share). A strong recordkeeping and reporting system reflects effective data management

Documentation of work completed: A good recordkeeping and reporting system forms a strong information trail that informs internal and external Head Start stakeholders. Good documentation tracks a child and family from their point of entry until they exit the program, documenting all of the services received and child and family progress.

Heart of Ongoing Monitoring (OGM) and Self-Assessment (SA): An effective record-keeping and reporting system informs ongoing monitoring and Self-Assessment. Good recordkeeping makes key data accessible for ongoing monitoring. In turn, a strong ongoing monitoring process allows your program to perform an effective Self-Assessment, which allows for good reporting to your Policy Council, governing body, and planning team. R&R leads to continuous improvement.

Knowledge transmission: A strong recordkeeping and reporting system creates a body of knowledge about your Head Start program that educates staff, governing body, Policy Council, volunteers, and community partners.

Institutional memory: By creating a body of knowledge about your Head Start program, you create an institutional memory that can support your program when it experiences transition (e.g., management succession, rapid growth).

Internal and external controls: A good recordkeeping

Why is R&R Important?



- The data systems
- Documentation of work completed
- Heart of ongoing monitoring and Self-Assessment
- Knowledge transmission
- Institutional memory
- Internal and external controls
- Legal issues
- The leadership connection



and reporting system helps your Head Start program respond effectively to internal and external challenges. For example, your facilities reports will indicate the need for new playground equipment (internal issue), while your community assessment will indicate that a new population is now in your target area through resettlement and may mean a jump in enrollment (external issue).

Legal issues. Having well-kept records and clear reports is the best means for a program to demonstrate that it followed the proper procedures in a legal situation (e.g., child abuse).

Leadership connection. Regular reports are one of the most important ways that management staff communicate and connect with the governing body and Policy Council.

12. Recordkeeping and Reporting

Say to participants, “Recordkeeping and reporting go hand in hand. There are two sides of a coin and fit together like pieces of a puzzle.”

Make the point that in the Head Start Program Performance Standard, Recordkeeping and Reporting are shown as two separate systems; but since they are so closely linked, they are often thought of as one management system.

Segue to the next slide, which clarifies the relationship between the two.



13. Relationship Between Recordkeeping and Reporting

Make the following points:

- Records of key events (e.g., classroom and staff observations, capital purchases) inform Head Start management reports.
- Good recordkeeping approaches (e.g., CLASS observations) support your Head Start program’s ability to effectively report its progress to internal and external stakeholder groups.
- Bottom line: an effective recordkeeping and reporting system is a reflection of and informed by effective data management.

Relationship Between Recordkeeping and Reporting



- Records are the basis of reports.
- Good recordkeeping supports effective reporting of program progress.
- **Bottom line:** an effective R&R system reflects effective data management



14. The Four Data Activities

Make the following points:

- The four data activities—prepare, collect, aggregate and analyze, use and share—are all about recordkeeping and reporting.
- Two of the activities—prepare and collect—are closely tied to recordkeeping. You prepare for effective recordkeeping by deciding what kinds of records you collect and keep through your recordkeeping system.
- “Aggregate and analyze” and “use and share” are related to reporting. Through aggregating and analyzing the data, you begin to form the narratives that will be the basis of reports that you share with internal and external Head Start stakeholders

The Four Data Activities



15. Regulations and Requirements

Review the regulations and requirements on the slide.

Regulations and Requirements



- Head Start Act and Head Start Program Performance Standards
 - Monthly enrollment reporting
 - Fiscal records
 - Program governance documents and reports
- Additional federal requirements
 - Records access and retention
- State/Local requirements e.g., (child care licensing, health and safety records)



16. ERSEA (Hot off the Press)

On February 10, 2015, new regulations were issued in the Federal Register for Part 1305 of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (ERSEA)

The changes related only to the eligibility part of ERSEA.

The regulations include new requirements for records that must be kept in relation to determining eligibility. (Elaborate on the bullet points on the slide, emphasizing that these are new recordkeeping requirements.

Previously, programs were not required to keep copies of documents that were used to determine a family's eligibility. "Eligibility determination records" is a new term.

New

ERSEA
(Hot off the press)

- New required records:
 - Eligibility determination records
 - Staff training records for ERSEA and management staff who oversee ERSEA.
- Eligibility determination records must include:
 - Copies of documents used for verification
 - Statements that program staff have made reasonable efforts to verify (by...)

17. Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles

Share with participants the following:
"ARMA International is a professional organization for recordkeeping and information management professionals. It has developed a document that identifies key principles for 'information governance.' The principles, called 'Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles,' are designed to be applicable to information management in all types of settings. We will look at the principles and think about their applicability in Head Start and Early Head Start programs."

Distribute the handout and review the generally accepted recordkeeping principles from ARMA International. Walk participants through the key points in the handout.
Conduct a brief table activity, asking each group to discuss how these principles are addressed in their program.

Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles

- Accountability
- Integrity
- Protection
- Compliance
- Availability
- Retention
- Disposition
- Transparency

Citation:
ARMA International (www.arma.org) is a not-for-profit professional association and the authority on information governance. Formed in 1955, ARMA International is the oldest and largest association for the information management profession with a current international membership of more than 10,000. It provides education, publications, and information on the efficient maintenance, retrieval, and preservation of vital information created in public and private organizations in all sectors of the economy. It also publishes Information Management magazine, and the Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles®. More information about the Principles can be found at www.arma.org/principles.

18. Confidentiality

Discuss the importance of confidentiality in recordkeeping and reporting (tied to the ARMA principles of integrity and transparency).

Note that examples of policies and procedures include personnel policies, volunteer policies, and so forth.

Confidentiality



- Everyone is responsible for confidentiality in recordkeeping and reporting.
- Make sure confidentiality is included in your policies and procedures and in your code of conduct.
- Consider who has access to records and reports.
- Work to avoid carelessness, whether when handling paper reports or working in electronic files.

19. Tips for Clear Documentation

Review and discuss the keys to good documentation, emphasizing how crucial it is to document carefully, objectively, and thoroughly. Suggest to participants that, as a rule of thumb, they document as if what they write will appear in a newspaper or courtroom. Remind participants that, where appropriate, all documentation should be dated and signed.

Bottom line: documentation is a record of what your program has accomplished, and it can contribute to the creation of a continuous improvement plan.

Tips for Clear Documentation



- Be objective.
- Be thorough. Include important details.
- Write as if anyone might read it.
- Write so someone else could use it.
- **Bottom line:** Good documentation enables everyone to know what your program has accomplished.



20. Retention and Disposal of Records

Share the following information: Two of ARMA's Generally Accepted Principles of recordkeeping and reporting are retention and disposition (disposal, destruction) of records. Some records must be retained for a defined period of time; for example, you must retain financial and programmatic records at least 7 years from when an audit was conducted. Other records, such as those of incorporation, are to be kept as long as the organization is in existence. There are additional guidelines for litigation claims and for subcontractors.

Say to participants: "All of these guidelines have legal and regulatory implications. As such, organizations must have a 'retention and disposition policy and procedure' for records. The policy and procedure should include a timeline and a method for ensuring that they are being followed. Your policy should, at minimum, address financial records, personnel records, corporate records,

Retention and Disposal of Records



http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/c5/AS5_file_cabinet.JPG/200px-AS5_file_cabinet.JPG

<http://pixabay.com/en/certificate-certification-credential-31872/>

legal files, legal agreements, and contracts.

“The policy and procedure must apply not only to paper records but also electronic records, including emails. The policies and procedures must comply with the legal and regulatory expectations established by the federal government, including federal funding sources (i.e., 45 CFR 92.42 and the Sarbanes and Oxley Act). Your state may have additional requirements, as well. Be sure to have your auditing firm and a lawyer review your retention and disposition policy and procedure to ensure that you are fully in compliance.”

21. Your Record Collection

Review the types of records that Head Start and Early Head Start programs collect.

Your Record Collection



- Child records
- Family records
- Health/nutrition records
- Human resources
- ERSEA
- Fiscal records
- Facilities and equipment (including transportation)



22. Types of Records

Activity: “What Records Do You Collect?”

Conduct activity as follows:
 Post on a wall prepared chart papers with each of the following headings on a separate piece of paper: child records, family records, health/nutrition records, human resources, facilities/equipment/transportation, ERSEA, fiscal.

Review the instructions on the PPT slide and have participants do the activity. (Allow about ten minutes.)
 When participants have finished, summarize the lists and ask for reflections and questions.

Types of Records



- Take a marker.
- There are 7 charts on the wall.
- Walk around to the charts.
- Write examples of records that you collect related to the types of records on the chart.
- (Read what’s on the chart already before you write. Write something different.)



23. Sound familiar?

Show and comment on the cartoon.

Sound Familiar?



24. Reviewing Your Record Collection

Make the following points:

Sometimes programs do just what the cartoon shows—they collect data without knowing why they collect it or how they are going to use it.

In the next activity, participants will look at the data they collect and consider whether it is data that is used in—and useful to—their program.

Refer participants to (or distribute) the handout “Records Review Exercise.”

Give the following directions:

“Start with the first column. List 5–7 data sources that your program collects.

“Complete the table for those data sources.”

Allow participants 15 minutes to complete the handout, using one of the lists of data sources from the previous activity.

Ask for comments from participants.

Summarize the discussion by reminding participants that it can be useful to look at all of the forms we use to make sure that they are up to date, don’t have redundant information (e.g., Do we ask parents multiple times for the same information on different forms?), and are appropriate for our program options or settings (e.g., Are there forms used in a home-based or family child care option that were developed for use in a center-based option and aren’t appropriate for these other options?)

Reviewing Your Record Collection

Record	Who Enters the Data? (When?)	Who Reviews It? (How Frequently?)	Who Uses It?	How is it Used?	How do you share it? (Audience? Format?)

Tell participants that it can be helpful for them to complete this activity with their program staff, looking at all of their data sources.

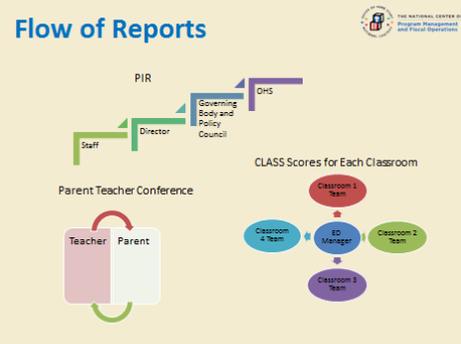
25. Making the Most of Technology

Make the following points:

- “For technology to be used effectively, staff must be onboard in using and maintaining your Data Management System. Consider if your program has the proper staffing and capacity for your tool to achieve its full potential.
- “Focus on aligning your technology or Data Management System with the goals and outcomes of your program.
- “Make sure that the data you are collecting is the data you need, and that you and your staff are consistently keeping track of the system’s ability to generate the necessary reports.
- “If you’re thinking of updating your current software or acquiring new software, identify what you want to achieve with the tool. Getting the most popular and newest software may not leave you with the functions your organization needs to track and report. There are many components and questions you need to consider when updating or acquiring a new tool. For example, the slide displays different solutions for data storage: a paper filing system, internal or external hard drives, and a cloud. When considering each of the options, there are various components you must consider, such as the importance of security, the costs for each options, the need for staff to periodically back up the data, etc.
- “Remember! Technology is just a tool. If your program is not actively maintaining and utilizing the technology or data system you have, it will not contain helpful or accurate data. Align your technology with the goals and outcomes of your

Making the Most of Technology



<p>program to ensure that the system assists in creating your reports.”</p>	
<p>26. Reporting—The Other Half of a Dynamic Duo</p> <p>Segue from recordkeeping to reporting by showing this animated slide that brings the two together.</p> <p>Lead a discussion of the following questions: “Now that you have managed records, what do you do with them? “How do you help staff and governing body members see the relationship between recordkeeping and reporting? “How do you create a culture for data use?”</p>	
<p>27. Flow of Reports</p> <p>Share the following with participants: “As you know, reporting is the process of communicating information to others. So the first things you need to consider are your message, the purpose for reporting the information, and who is involved. Ask the following kinds of questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Is there a process or conduit in which information needs to travel? For example, does it first need to be shared with the governing body, which then needs to give approval to share the information with the staff, parents, and the community (i.e., the annual report)?’ • ‘Does the specific information being reported need to travel in one direction, in both directions, or to multiple stakeholders at the same time?’ <p>“The reporting conduit or information flow is based on policies and procedures for decision-making, which is in turn based on funding standards and regulations as well as on legal and professional constraints and expectations.”</p>	

28. Flow of Reports Venn Diagram

Make the following points:

- “We just talked about how reports get communicated throughout the program.
- “This slide gives an example of how the reports flow from the program’s management staff to the governing body and Policy Council.
- “Note that some reports (e.g., the grant application) must go to the Policy Council prior to going to the governing body. However, many reports can go to both the PC and governing body simultaneously. It’s important to be clear about the flow of reports in your bylaws.”

Flow of Reports

Head Start reports should be shared and reviewed in a particular sequence.

Management generates the reports, which go to the Policy Council for review and recommendations and then to the governing body or Tribal Council for review and approval. This ensures that governing body members hear the perspective of Policy Council members before making their decisions and taking action.

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



29. Reports Are Not a Dead-end Street or a One-time Event!

Make the following points:

- Reports are meant to be used and shared.
- Reports should be shared broadly. It’s especially important to share a final report with all of the people who had input into the content.
- Reports are part of both ongoing monitoring and Self-Assessment. The data and information in the reports you generate and create help you improve your program operations.

Reports Are Not a Dead-end Street or a One-time Event!

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- Talk about them.
- Share them broadly.
- Tie back to everyone who helped create them.
- Use them for continuous program improvement.



30. Reporting Can Be a Two-way Street

Programs receive a variety of reports in addition to the ones they create and share with various stakeholders. It is important to consider how and with whom to share these reports and what programs should do with the information.

Ask the group: “How do you use the reports that you receive?”

Reporting Can Be a Two-way Street

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Examples of reports that programs receive and have to act on:

- Audit
- Monitoring events
- Licensing
- CACFP reviews
- Reports from outside funders



31. Activity: Key Reports

Conduct a quick brainstorming activity. Distribute a piece of chart paper to each group and give participants 60 seconds to list as many reports as they can for each category of reports listed on the slide.

Make the following points:

- Some reports are mandated by Head Start.
- It's important to know when each report is due and how critical it is to submit reports on time.
- While mandated reports—such as the PIR, annual report to the public, and self-assessment report—are important, programs also generate a lot of other reports that inform how their program is doing.
- Reports inform all of your stakeholders (e.g., other funders, governing body and PC, community partners, staff, etc.) about your program's operations.

Activity: Key Reports



- Annual and periodic reports to the governing body and PC
- Financial reports
- Reports to Regional Office and OHS
- Reports to staff
- Other



32. The PIR

The Office of Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) provides comprehensive data on the services, staff, children, and number of families served by Head Start and Early Head Start programs nationwide. All grantees and delegates are required to submit a PIR for Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

Refer participants to the table copies of two handouts, The “Services Snapshot” and the Head Start Fact Sheet. Compiled from data from the Program Information Report (PIR), both handouts summarize key data on Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs demographics and services.

Remind participants of the following: Not only is the PIR information important and useful to the Office of Head Start, but it is also an important internal source of information for your program. PIR information should be shared with your program's leadership: its governing body and Policy Council.

“The Office of Head Start has developed a video clip about how to use the HSES for the PIR. This clip is especially useful

The PIR



- Provides comprehensive background on Head Start/Early Head Start Programs
- Used by OHS to report to Congress and the public and to inform decisions
- Informs leadership about program status
- This video clip on the ECLKC walks through how to use the PIR

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/data/pir/UsingHSESforPI.htm>



<p>for new directors and other leaders who are entering PIR data.”</p> <p>http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/data/pir/UsingHSESforPI.htm</p>	
<p>33. The PIR [continued]</p> <p>Review the key points on the slide.</p>	<div style="background-color: #f9e79f; padding: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: right;">The PIR </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitted annually by the end of August through the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES) • Core Elements include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Program Information – Program Staff and Qualifications – Child and Family Services – Appendix  </div>
<p>34. PIR Tips</p> <p>Because it’s so important, you’ll want to mention again to participants that not only is PIR data valuable for the Office of Head Start, but it is also valuable for their own programs.</p> <p>Say to them: “So entering PIR data is not a one-time event that happens at the end of August in a burst of energy. To make PIR data useful, it should be entered and tracked throughout the year through your program’s Data Management System. Most if not all of the commonly used data systems are attuned to the PIR requirements and make it easy to collect PIR data on an ongoing basis so that they can be entered into HSES.</p> <p>“Like all data, PIR data should be reviewed regularly as part of your program’s ongoing monitoring efforts to make sure it is accurate.</p> <p>“Don’t just collect PIR data. Use it. Review it against required benchmarks. HSES allows you to compare your own data with other grantees regionally and nationally and to compare your current data with your data from previous years.”</p>	<div style="background-color: #f9e79f; padding: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: right;">PIR Tips </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter child and family data in your tracking systems throughout the year and enter frequently into the PIR • Use PIR data to make sure you’re hitting required benchmarks (OGM) • Compare this year’s PIR data with national and state data and your own previous PIR reports to see trends, patterns, and progress  </div>

35. The Annual Report

There are eight required elements to the annual report. They are required by the Head Start Act in section 644(a)(2). Mention to participants that many programs face challenges with their annual report; and when they are monitored, the report is frequently found to be inadequate.” It is important that all eight elements be included in the report.

Distribute the handout, “Annual Reports,” and review the required elements:

- (A) The total amount of public and private funds received and the amount from each source.
- (B) An explanation of the budgetary expenditures and proposed budget for the fiscal year.
- (C) The total number of children and families served, the average monthly enrollment (as a percentage of funded enrollment), and the percentage of eligible children served.
- (D) The results of the most recent review by the Secretary and the financial audit.
- (E) The percentage of enrolled children who received medical and dental exams.
- (F) Information about parent involvement activities.
- (G) The agency’s efforts to prepare children for kindergarten.
- (H) Any other information required by the Secretary.

Clarify that “The Secretary” is the Secretary of Health and Human Services and that the reports from the events in the federal aligned monitoring are what is being referred to here.

36. Self-Assessment Report

Distribute the handout, “Annual Self-Assessment Report,” and review the elements of this report, noting the subparts of each of the elements as described on the handout.

The Annual Report



Key elements that inform the community about your program

Head Start Act Section 644(a)(2)



European Youth Forum. (Producer). (2008, May 13). Annual Report 2009 [Web Photo]. Retrieved from <http://www.flickr.com/photos/europeanyouthforum/4643788317/>(photostream/)



Self-Assessment Report



- Introduction
- Methodology
- Key Discoveries
- Recommendations



37. Program Governance

Distribute the handout, “Required Program Governance Reports,” and review these reports.

Share the following:

Sec. 642(c)(2) of the Head Start Act of 2007 requires that the following reports be shared with Policy Council and governing bodies/Tribal Councils:

- (A) Monthly financial statements, including credit card expenditures
- (B) Monthly program information summaries
- (C) Program enrollment reports, including attendance reports for children whose care is partially subsidized by another public agency
- (D) Monthly reports of meals and snacks provided through programs of the Department of Agriculture
- (E) The financial audit
- (F) The annual self-assessment, including any findings related to such assessment
- (G) The community-wide strategic planning and needs assessment of the Head Start agency, including any applicable updates
- (H) Communication and guidance from the Secretary
- (I) The program information reports

Section 642(c)(2) is titled “Conduct of Responsibilities” and is one the leading areas where programs are most often found lacking during federal monitoring reviews of program governance.

38. Effective Reports

Make the following points:

“Head Start and Early Head Start programs share data regularly. For instance,

- they are required to provide a number of reports each month to the governing body and Policy Council;
- the 2007 Head Start Act requires them to publish an annual report to the public;
- managers share data during management team meetings;
- education managers share CLASS data with teachers;
- teachers share data on children’s progress with

Program Governance



Nine required reports

Head Start Act
Section 642(c)(2)

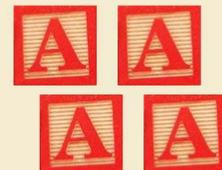


Effective Reports...



Follow the Four A’s

- Accurate
- Audience-specific
- Appealing
- Accessible



parents and families.

“What you share, how you share, and even when you share data depends on your audience. Different audiences need different views of the data. As you write a report or develop a presentation, think about the following questions:

- What is the purpose of your report?
- Does it need to inform or raise awareness?
- Will it serve as the basis for a decision?
- What does the audience already know about the topic?
- Are they novices, experts, generalists, or managers?
- What level of information do they need: big picture, or tons of detail?

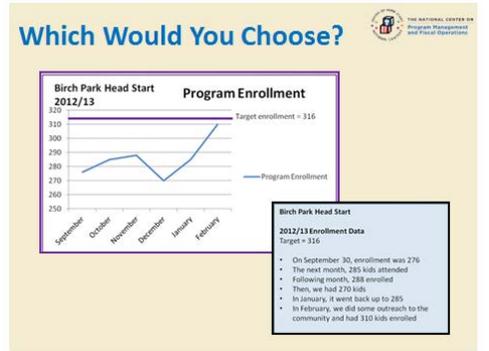
“In considering how to share data, it is useful to think about ‘the four A’s.’

- **Accurate:** Data must be free of errors. The report must convey what the data actually say, not what you wish the data to say. And then proofread your documents to catch typos.
- **Audience-specific:** Highlight the issues that the audience cares about. Take into account the level of detail the audience members needs as well as their prior knowledge of the topic.
- **Appealing:** Keep your report simple, clear, and visually attractive. Use your information to tell a story in a compelling way.
- **Accessible:** Use an appropriate reading level and avoid jargon that the audience doesn’t understand. If acronyms are essential, be sure to spell them out. Use bullet points rather than long narratives, and use the language(s) spoken by the audience members.

39. Which Would You Choose? [charts]

Ask participants to look at the slide. Then say: “Keeping in mind the four A’s, which chart would you choose?” Have participants vote with their fingers, holding up one finger if they prefer the chart at the top left, and two fingers if they prefer the chart on the bottom right.

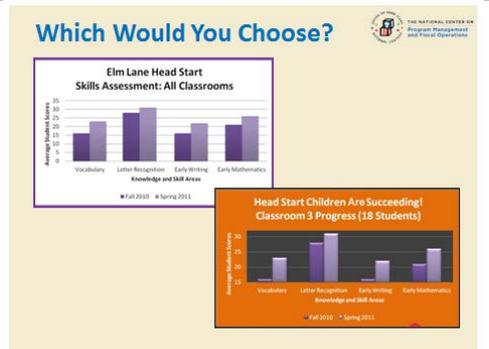
Then say:
“Most people prefer the chart at the top left. It is a visual representation of the bulleted list on the bottom right. The line graph makes it easier to track the ups and downs of enrollment data from September to May. It is more appealing and accessible.
“However, depending on the audience and what they need to know, it may be easier to find some information in the bulleted report than in the graph. For instance, it is easier to see the specific enrollment numbers (276, 285, 288, 270, 285) in the bullets than on the graph where you have to look a little more carefully to figure out the numbers.”



40. Which Would You Choose? [bar graphs]

Again ask which chart participants prefer, and have them vote by holding up either one or two fingers.

Then say:
“Again, most people prefer the graph at the top left, which is more appealing because of its simple display. Overuse of fancy display options (such as the dark background and the 3-D bars) can actually get in the way of reading and understanding a graph. More importantly, the top 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.”



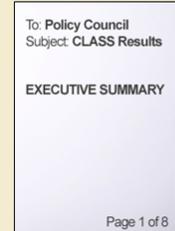
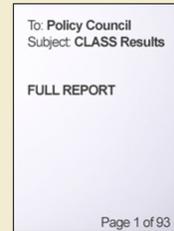
41. Which Would You Choose? [CLASS report]

Have participants vote for the third time on which document they would choose. Make sure they notice that this report is going to the Policy Council.

Then say:

“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 CLASS scores, which measure teacher-child classroom interactions. But for most Policy Council members, a summary of the results would be more appropriate. Most members of the governing body would probably prefer the executive summary as well, though some might be interested in reading the full report.”

Which Would You Choose?



42. To Create Graphs and Charts

This section of the U.S. Department of Education web site (url on the slide) makes it easy to create graphs and charts.

To Create Graphs and Charts

- From the PIR Report select the data to share
- On the following web site select the type of graph

<http://nces.ed.gov/nceskids/createagraph/default.aspx>

43. Share and Share Alike

Tell participants that now they are going to do an activity that reinforces the concept of sharing information appropriately with different audiences. They will have an opportunity to consider how they might share data with different audiences on either the Classroom Assessment System (CLASS), parent meeting attendance, or community assessment.

Lead the small-group activity:

Share and Share Alike



Scenario (CLASS data, Parent Meeting Attendance data or Community Assessment data)	
Audience	
What They Might Want to See	What They Might Want to Do with It

- Distribute the “Share and Share Alike” handout, with scripts/information for three scenarios.
- Assign a scenario to each group.
- Have participants work in teams to discuss what each audience for their scenario might want to see or know about and what each audience might want to do with the information.

Ask volunteers from groups to share.

Note that this activity is adapted from the online module, *Data in Head Start: Creating a Culture that Embraces Data*, and can be found in the *Users and Trainers Guide* for the module. Both are found on the PMFO page on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (If time permits and you have Internet access, you can show how the activity looks in the online module at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/operations/data/guide/guide.html>)

44. What Is Your Role in R&R?

Review the roles listed on the slide.

Conduct the following small-group activity:

Assign one of the roles from the slide to each small group.

Invite each group to brainstorm responses to its assigned role.

Have each group answer two questions:

- What is involved in this role?
- What are some strategies that you use in this role?

Share a few responses with the whole group.

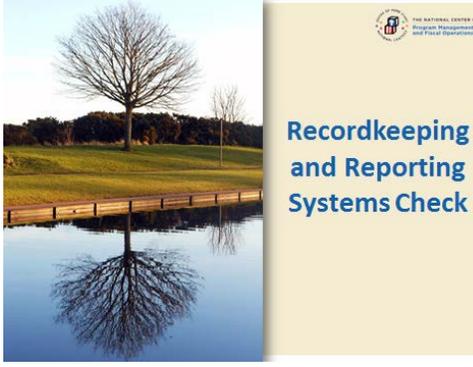
Reiterate any key points, such as confidentiality, that surfaced during the session.

What Is Your Role in R&R?



- You oversee the process of recordkeeping and reporting.
 - Ensure quality (timely, complete, and accurate)
 - Promote transparency and safeguard confidentiality
 - Confirm that your program meets requirements
 - Facilitate effective use of R & R
 - **Bottom line:** You create a culture of embracing data



<p>45. R&R Systems Check</p> <p>Distribute the handout “Key Systems Check” as a tool that directors can use.</p>	
<p>46. Is R&R Your Thing [conclusion]</p> <p>If your recordkeeping and reporting systems are functioning well, you might actually get to go on that vacation! You can enjoy yourself knowing that systems are in place and your program can still function without you.</p> <p>As as people get ready to leave, play upbeat music.</p>	
<p>47. Thank You [and questions]</p> <p>The contact numbers and e-mail address listed on the slide are for the PMFO InfoLine. You can submit questions to the InfoLine at any time.</p>	

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