



Data in Head Start and Early Head Start Creating a Culture that Embraces Data

Text Version

Data in Head Start and Early Head Start: Creating a Culture that Embraces Data is an interactive learning module designed for use by management staff in Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The goals of this interactive learning module are to strengthen leaders' capabilities to:

- Understand how the data collected in your HeadStart or Early Head Start program fit into the annual planning cycle
- Help everyone in the program—from bus drivers and cooks to the Policy Council and governing body members—become enthusiastic about using data
- Become data detectives and base decisions on facts rather than hunches
- Share data appropriately with different audiences and show how each audience can use the information
- Celebrate the good news that data shows and learn from the bad news so you can improve your program

To get started, watch the video montage on the [module home page](#) of Head Start and Early Head Start leaders. In it, they share their excitement about how they created a culture that embraces the use of data to inform decision making in their programs.

Each of the 15-20 minute activities in the module includes a mixture of practical scenarios, real-life examples from the field, and tools and templates. All assist in planning for and implementing effective data use. HeadStart and Early Head Start leaders can work individually through the module activities at their own pace. They may also review and discuss sections during staff meetings and training events.

- **The Introduction** provides an overview of the learning activities.
- **Activity 1: Plan to Succeed**, introduces the planning cycle through a case study example built around attendance.
- **Activity 2: Get People on Board**, addresses how to help people—from staff members to Policy Council members—become data users.
- **Activity 3: Dig into Data**, presents four scenarios in which you have to dig deeper into data to address a problem.

- **Activity 4: Share and Share Alike**, shows how the same type of data can be shared most effectively with different audiences.
- **Activity 5: Celebrate Good Times (Come On!)**, is a brief activity that shows how everybody plays a role in reaching program goals.

The [Resources](#) section includes supplementary materials and **Voices From the Field** video clips.

Activity 1. Plan to Succeed

1.1 Introduction

In programs that have developed cultures that embrace data, data collection and analysis are seamlessly integrated with planning processes.

What does this effort look like? In this activity, you will see how one program manager developed and implemented a clear data collection plan to support the planning processes, develop action plans, and assess progress.

The story is told in the context of the Head Start Planning Cycle, which may already be familiar to you.

1.2 View the Planning Process

Instructions: Select each step in the planning process to see how Cynthia helped her team increase its chances for success by integrating data into the process.

Scenario

Cynthia is a Head Start and Early Head Start director. She and her team think they may have an issue with attendance in their center. The team members were determined to make a difference. See how they did it using data at each step in the process.



Evaluate Progress During Self-Assessment Process:

Knowing that attendance was a growing concern, Cynthia shared multiple data sources with the self-assessment team members to get their help in determining root causes. The team reviewed the data sources related to attendance, including sign-in sheets, daily attendance records, Child and Adult Care Food Program meal counts, and aggregated Program Information Report (PIR) data.

The team members analyzed family service follow-up records to probe for causes of absenteeism. This led them to look at transportation and health data. The team found that although the program met Head Start’s 85percent average daily attendance requirement, 14percent of the children were absent more than 10percent of the time.

Cynthia and her team began to wonder whether the children were absent on a particular day of the week or month. They also became curious as to whether there were children who frequently arrived late and missed breakfast.

As the team analyzed the Child and Adult Care Food Program breakfast meal counts and compared them to attendance, they noticed that there was an issue with children coming late and missing breakfast and early morning activities.

Conduct Community Assessment

Cynthia and her team looked at data from the five schools where the Head Start children from her program attended kindergarten. They found something interesting. Because they were able to track individual children through second grade via a common identification code, they were able to tell that the children who were frequently absent in Head Start were more likely to continue to be frequently absent in the public schools.

Decide on Goals and Communicate to Stakeholders

The team's analysis of attendance data from the program's self-assessment and community assessment confirmed that the program needed a goal to increase attendance. Team members knew that this would have an impact on their ability to meet their school readiness goals. Also, research links regular attendance habits to higher rates of high school graduation and college entry.

This is the goal they came up with:

The program will increase child attendance and decrease absenteeism and tardiness, so that all children will develop the habit of attending school regularly, leading to success in kindergarten and opening doors to college.

Develop Plan of Action and Budget that Reflect Goals

The team members decided to launch an attendance campaign. They developed a two-pronged strategy to cut down on absences. First, they would make sure that the intake workers engaged parents in conversations about program options and the importance of attendance. During parent orientation and home visits, team members would share why attendance is so important and the connection between regular attendance and school readiness. Second, they would begin using a real-time data system to immediately identify children who are absent more than three consecutive days, allowing them to schedule the required follow-up home visit more quickly. They would also track children who are absent more than six days per month or who consistently arrive late. They documented the plan in the [Action Plan Template](#) (PDF 162KB.)

They also thought about their evidence and how the program would appropriately collect data and track progress towards this important goal. Because they knew that all staff would need to play a part in achieving this goal, they added steps for other staff as well. For example, to reinforce the importance of attendance with children, teachers would add a “Let’s see who is here today” ritual to their morning circle times. They decided to adjust their recordkeeping and reporting systems by adding a summary report of every contact that family services staff had with parents.

Implement Plan of Action

The program staff implemented the plan and used existing recordkeeping and reporting systems to collect most of the data. They added a “more than 15 minutes late” column to the attendance sheet and regularly cross-referenced this data with the breakfast meal counts.

Supervisors received training on how to review reports for completeness and accuracy and began to spot-check reports monthly. Attendance became a regular agenda item during management team and service area team meetings. Each group regularly reviewed and discussed the data.

Evaluate Progress through Ongoing Monitoring

Monthly, they reviewed aggregated data to monitor progress and to look for overall trends. They decided that they needed to dig deeper into what caused children to have a pattern of frequent absenteeism, so they looked not only at the aggregated data but also at the follow-up reports for every child who had this pattern.

They discovered two important facts: 1) there were pockets of children who were frequently absent in rural parts of their service area that lacked bus transportation, and 2) five percent of the children who were frequently absent had chronic health needs, especially asthma. The most commonly reported reason for absences is “parent choice” (42percent), followed by illness (29percent) and transportation problems (ninepercent). They also found out that children whose home language isn’t English tended to have higher attendance rates.

Continually Respond with Course Corrections

They revised their plan by adding new steps as a result of their discoveries. In the short term, to make an impact on parent choice, they decided to hold focus groups with parents to determine why they might choose to keep children home. They also added ways to partner with the community health clinic to provide additional services for children with asthma. They identified transportation as a long-term planning issue that they would bring to the self-assessment process, as it might require more substantive program changes.

1.3 Conclusion

The team members could hardly wait for self-assessment time to roll around. They were curious about whether the final data would confirm what they’d been seeing all along through their ongoing monitoring process: that their attendance campaign was a success and was having a real impact on child outcomes and a decrease in absenteeism and tardiness.

What they found:

Because children who attend regularly are able to participate in more teaching and learning activities, there was a big jump in attendance. During the school year, 70percent of the children enrolled in the center-based program attended 90percent of the time, up from 59percent in the previous year.

The improved attendance had an impact on child outcomes, especially on literacy. Of the children with good attendance, 88percent met all of the program’s school readiness goals for the language and literacy domain compared to 65percent of children who did not attend on a regular basis.

Cynthia and her team were able to make a big difference by following the key steps to successfully integrating data in the planning process:

- Make sure your data systems are designed to support the programmatic and fiscal information needs of your planning process.
- Follow a predictable annual cycle in your planning and review process, with intermittent reviews and adjustments along the way.

[Planning Cycle handout \(198KB\)](#).

Activity 2: Get People on Board

2.1 Introduction

Some people take to using data like a fish takes to water. Others, however, are more reluctant—maybe even resistant. It is important to assess what’s stopping the data-stragglers from getting on board and to look for ways to nudge them towards greater understanding, acceptance, and ability to use data.

In this activity, you will look for clues that reveal the underlying fears, needs, or lack of knowledge of four Head Start staff members, and then determine what you might say and do to move them along.

2.2 Staff and Policy Council

1. The Trusting Home-Based Manager

2. The Overwhelmed Health Assistant

3. The Reluctant Teacher

4. The Confused Policy Council Member

2.2 Scenario 1: The Trusting Home-Based Manager

The Scenario

“I don’t understand why I need to review my staff’s individual home visit reports. I look at the monthly tally that shows me the average number of visits and the average length of those visits, and I can see that they are on target. My staff average 10 home visits lasting an hour and a half each week, just as they are supposed to. Besides, I know my staff; I talk to my staff. I don’t need to check on their reports to find out what they’re doing.”

Assess the Situation

What do you think is keeping this person from embracing data?

- She doesn’t realize that an "average" may not give a true picture.
- She prides herself that her relationship with her staff is built on trust. She doesn’t think her staff will take shortcuts and not tell.
- She secretly worries that some of her staff aren’t meeting her expectations. She is afraid to find out what she might learn by spot-checking.

After you have made a selection, proceed to the next section to get feedback on your answer.

Assess the Situation Feedback

If you selected:

- She doesn't realize that an "average" may not give a true picture.

The feedback is:

Like many, this home-based manager is very trusting, maybe to a fault. Measuring individual performance can feel like passing judgment or pointing fingers. For this scenario, let's address the fact that this manager doesn't seem to understand that the "average" number may not give a true picture. Can you help her see that looking at data for each individual can actually enhance trust because it enables us to talk openly and honestly?

If you selected:

- She prides herself that her relationship with her staff is built on trust. She doesn't think her staff will take shortcuts and not tell.

The feedback is:

Like many, this home-based manager is very trusting, maybe to a fault. Measuring individual performance can feel like passing judgment or pointing fingers. For this scenario, let's address the fact that this manager doesn't seem to understand that the "average" number may not give a true picture. Can you help her see that looking at data for each individual can actually enhance trust because it enables us to talk openly and honestly?

If you selected:

- She secretly worries that some of her staff aren't meeting her expectations. She is afraid to find out what she might learn by spot-checking.

The feedback is:

Like many, this home-based manager is very trusting, maybe to a fault. Measuring individual performance can feel like passing judgment or pointing fingers. For this scenario, let's address the fact that this manager doesn't seem to understand that the "average" number may not give a true picture. Can you help her see that looking at data for each individual can actually enhance trust because it enables us to talk openly and honestly?

Say What?

What could you say to support this individual? Choose all that apply.

- "Actually, you might be surprised about what you can learn from looking at those individual home visit reports."
- "When I look at these monthly reports, I can see that, overall, your home visitors are meeting the requirements, but I can't tell if some are going above and beyond while others are doing less than required. Looking at averages doesn't assure me that every family is getting a weekly home visit that lasts an hour and a half."
- "Okay. All we care about are the averages anyway. That's probably all that the reviewers look at during federal monitoring."

After you have made a selection, proceed to the next section to get feedback on your answer.

Say What? Feedback

If you selected:

- "Actually, you might be surprised about what you can learn from looking at those individual home visit reports."

The feedback is:

Many people don't embrace data because they just don't see the hidden nuggets of information that are buried in the numbers.

Averages are valuable, but they can be misleading. Help this person look at the right level of detail to figure out what the data is really saying.

One person might typically conduct two-hour visits, while another usually makes one-hour visits. The manager can use this information to take immediate action if there are problems as well as to recognize outstanding performance.

If you selected:

- "When I look at these monthly reports, I can see that, overall, your home visitors are meeting the requirements, but I can't tell if some are going above and beyond while others are doing less than required. Looking at averages doesn't assure me that every family is getting a weekly home visit that lasts an hour and a half."

The feedback is:

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One person might typically conduct two-hour visits, while another usually makes one-hour visits. The manager can use this information to take immediate action if there are problems as well as to recognize outstanding performance.

If you selected:

- "Okay. All we care about are the averages anyway. That's probably all that the reviewers look at during federal monitoring."

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Many people don't embrace data because they just don't see the hidden nuggets of information that are buried in the numbers.

Averages are valuable, but they can be misleading. Help this person look at the right level of detail to figure out what the data is really saying.

One person might typically conduct two-hour visits, while another usually makes one-hour visits. The manager can use this information to take immediate action if there are problems as well as to recognize outstanding performance.

Do What?

What could you do to support this individual? Choose all that apply.

- Help her develop a plan for spot-checking home-visitor reports and suggest that she engage the home visitors in reviewing their own aggregated data as well.
- Provide training to make sure that she understands what the data really mean.
- Do nothing and hope for the best.

After you have made your selection(s), proceed to the next section to get feedback on your answer(s).

Do What? Feedback

If you selected:

- Help her develop a plan for spot-checking home-visitor reports and suggest that she engage the home visitors in reviewing their own aggregated data as well.

The feedback is:

Helping her develop a plan for reviewing home visit reports and getting her some training on understanding the story that the data are telling are good ideas.

She may not be able to look at every report every month, but she can review everyone's reports several times over the year. That way, she can fix problems before they become patterns and recognize outstanding performance as well. Help her look beyond just the amount of time spent during a home visit. She might also want to find out why home visits sometimes last less than an hour and a half or why they sometimes don't take place as scheduled. She and her team can discuss the many factors beyond their control which affect the timing and scheduling of home visits.

Of course, doing nothing and hoping for the best isn't a good answer. Hope springs eternal, but it doesn't fix problems.

If you selected:

- Provide training to make sure that she understands what the data really mean.

The feedback is:

Helping her develop a plan for reviewing home visit reports and getting her some training on understanding the story that the data are telling are good ideas.

She may not be able to look at every report every month, but she can review everyone's reports several times over the year. That way, she can fix problems before they become patterns and recognize outstanding performance as well. Help her look beyond just the amount of time spent during a home visit. She might also want to find out why home visits sometimes last less than an hour and a half or why they sometimes don't take place as scheduled. She and her team can discuss the many factors—beyond their control—which affect the timing and scheduling of home visits.

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If you selected:

- Do nothing and hope for the best.

The feedback is:

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She may not be able to look at every report every month, but she can review everyone's reports several times over the year. That way, she can fix problems before they become patterns and recognize outstanding performance as well. Help her look beyond just the amount of time spent during a home visit. She might also want to find out why home visits sometimes last less than an hour and a half or why they sometimes don't take place as scheduled. She and her team can discuss the many factors—beyond their control—which affect the timing and scheduling of home visits.

Of course, doing nothing and hoping for the best isn't a good answer. Hope springs eternal, but it doesn't fix problems.

2.2 Scenario 2: The Overwhelmed Health Assistant

The Scenario

"I just finished entering all the data for our vision and hearing screenings. Would you believe I only had a week to do it? The health services manager scheduled all of these screenings a week before the 45-day deadline. One week. Expecting me to enter all of the data in such a short time was pretty unrealistic and very stressful. I did the best I could, but I couldn't and wouldn't swear that it is 100 percent right. I don't think it matters, though, because there is other screening information already in the children's file that staff can use."

Assess the Situation

What do you think is keeping this person from embracing data?

- She doesn't understand that the data that she enters are important because her data are aggregated with data from other staff to inform decisions at the program level.
- She resents having to do so much data entry at the last minute and therefore doesn't care if it's accurate.
- It's not her fault. The screenings were scheduled at the last minute. We can't expect anyone to enter the data accurately under those conditions.

After you have made a selection, proceed to the next section to get feedback on your answer.

Assess the Situation Feedback

If you selected:

- She doesn't understand that the data that she enters are important because her data are aggregated with data from other staff to inform decisions at the program level.

The feedback is:

This health assistant seems to be overwhelmed, especially because the screenings were scheduled at the last minute. She is trying hard to comply with requirements but shows signs of being frustrated by the process.

For this scenario, let's address the fact she doesn't seem to understand the importance of accurate data. Can you help her see how the data she enters connect to the big picture and why her efforts are so important?

If you selected:

- She resents having to do so much data entry at the last minute and therefore doesn't care if it's accurate.

The feedback is:

This health assistant seems to be overwhelmed, especially because the screenings were scheduled at the last minute. She is trying hard to comply with requirements but shows signs of being frustrated by the process.

For this scenario, let's address the fact she doesn't seem to understand the importance of accurate data. Can you help her see how the data she enters connect to the big picture and why her efforts are so important?

If you selected:

- It's not her fault. The screenings were scheduled at the last minute. We can't expect anyone to enter the data accurately under those conditions.

The feedback is:

This health assistant seems to be overwhelmed, especially because the screenings were scheduled at the last minute. She is trying hard to comply with requirements but shows signs of being frustrated by the process.

For this scenario, let's address the fact she doesn't seem to understand the importance of accurate data. Can you help her see how the data she enters connect to the big picture and why her efforts are so important?

Say What?

What could you say to support this individual? Choose all that apply.

- "I understand that you are under pressure, but your job is to get it right."
- "If we don't have good data, we can't provide high quality services for children and families. I know you care about that. Your data help us to build a program-wide picture. They get rolled up with everyone else's data."
- "It's true. You didn't have a lot of time to enter the data. So next time, how important accuracy is, please let us know if you need help."

After you have made your selection, proceed to the next section to get feedback on your answer.

Say What? Feedback

If you selected:

- "I understand that you are under pressure, but your job is to get it right."

The feedback is:

Just telling someone to get it right won't fix the problem and may even add extra pressure. Instead, help staff to figure out how to be more accurate and why it's important. The keys to building staff motivation are:

- Telling them why and how data supports their goals of good service to children and families. It will help them take data entry more seriously.
- Helping them to see their role in the overall planning process is also important. It connects their role to the big picture.

If you selected:

- "If we don't have good data, we can't provide high quality services for children and families. I know you care about that. Your data help us to build a program-wide picture. They get rolled up with everyone else's data."

The feedback is:

Responses 2 and 3 are both good.

Telling staff why data support their goals of good services to children and families can help motivate them to take data entry more seriously. Helping staff to see their role in the overall planning process is also important. It connects their role to the big picture. You can also motivate staff by letting them know that you are listening to their concerns and will work to fix problems that they identify.

If you selected

- "It's true. You didn't have a lot of time to enter the data. So next time, how important accuracy is, please let us know if you need help."

The feedback is:

Responses 2 and 3 are both good.

Telling staff why data support their goals of good services to children and families can help motivate them to take data entry more seriously. Helping staff to see their role in the overall planning process is also important. It connects their role to the big picture. You can also motivate staff by letting them know that you are listening to their concerns and will work to fix problems that they identify.

Do What?

What could you do to support this individual? Choose all that apply.

- Print out a report and look at it with her to have her spot her data entry errors.
- Observe her data entry processes to see if there are ways to make them better.

- Invite the health assistant to provide input into next year's screening schedule and process.
- Reassign data entry to someone who can do it better.

After you have made your selection(s), proceed to the next section to get feedback on your answer(s).

Do What Feedback

If you selected:

- Print out a report and look at it with her to have her spot her data entry errors.

The feedback is:

There are several good things you could do here:

- Help her take a hard look at the frequency of her errors and where they most often occur so that she can make adjustments.
- Look for things that are slowing her down, distracting her, and contributing to errors.
- Involve her in developing a more realistic timeline for completing screenings next year.

Of course, reassigning data entry is not the best solution. Data are everybody's business and should be handled with care.

If you selected:

- Observe her data entry processes to see if there are ways to make them better.

The feedback is:

There are several good things you could do here:

- Help her take a hard look at the frequency of her errors and where they most often occur so that she can make adjustments.
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If you selected:

- Invite the health assistant to provide input into next year's screening schedule and process.

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There are several good things you could do here:

- Help her take a hard look at the frequency of her errors and where they most often occur so that she can make adjustments.
- Look for things that are slowing her down, distracting her, and contributing to errors.

- Involve her in developing a more realistic timeline for completing screenings next year.

Of course, reassigning data entry is not the best solution. Data are everybody's business and should be handled with care.

If you selected:

- Reassign data entry to someone who can do it better.

The feedback is:

There are several good things you could do here:

- Help her take a hard look at the frequency of her errors and where they most often occur so that she can make adjustments.
- Look for things that are slowing her down, distracting her, and contributing to errors.
- Involve her in developing a more realistic timeline for completing screenings next year.

Of course, reassigning data entry is not the best solution. Data are everybody's business and should be handled with care.

2.2 Scenario 3: The Reluctant Teacher

The Scenario

“I know my children's progress reports are important, but I became a teacher to work with children—not to collect data. I barely have enough time to interact with children, much less write observation notes, enter them into a computer, and read hard-to-understand charts and graphs that aren't useful. I can't do one more thing. And why should I?”

Assess the Situation

What do you think is keeping this person from embracing data?

- She has been here a long time, so I can't expect her to do anything new.
- She may think that gathering and using data is just one more thing being forced on her and not something that benefits her.
- She thinks the only reason to do this is that it's a Head Start requirement.

After you have made a selection, proceed to the next section to get feedback on your answer.

Assess the Situation Feedback

If you selected:

- She has been here a long time, so I can't expect her to do anything new.

The feedback is:

This teacher is definitely reluctant, and that could be for a variety of reasons. Teachers have many demands on their time. It is important not to lower your expectations just because she is busy or seems stuck in her ways.

For this scenario, let's address the fact that she feels data gathering is being forced on her. Can you help her see the benefit so that she doesn't feel as though using data is just one more thing to do?

If you selected:

- She may think that gathering and using data is just one more thing being forced on her and not something that benefits her.

The feedback is:

This teacher is definitely reluctant, and that could be for a variety of reasons. Teachers have many demands on their time. It is important not to lower your expectations just because she is busy or seems stuck in her ways.

For this scenario, let's address the fact that she feels data gathering is being forced on her. Can you help her see the benefit so that she doesn't feel as though using data is just one more thing to do?

If you selected:

- She thinks the only reason to do this is that it's a Head Start requirement.

The feedback is:

This teacher is definitely reluctant, and that could be for a variety of reasons. Teachers have many demands on their time. It is important not to lower your expectations just because she is busy or seems stuck in her ways.

For this scenario, let's address the fact that she feels data gathering is being forced on her. Can you help her see the benefit so that she doesn't feel as though using data is just one more thing to do?

Say What?

What could you say to increase this person's enthusiasm for data?

- "It's true that Head Start has added a requirement to aggregate and analyze child outcomes data. But this isn't new in our program. We've always emphasized using child assessment data to plan for individual children and your group."
- "It may require extra time, but you have to trust me that it's important."
- "You're frustrated by all of the demands on your time because you want to be helping your kids. What if I could show you how this would help you to work with your children more effectively?"

After you have made a selection, proceed to the next section to get feedback on your answer.

Say What? Feedback

If you selected:

- "It's true that Head Start has added a requirement to aggregate and analyze child outcomes data. But this isn't new in our program. We've always emphasized using child assessment data to plan for individual children and your group."

The feedback is:

Rather than being apologetic or asking for her to trust you, consider these two tips:

- Use active listening to let this teacher know you heard what she said and how she is feeling.
- Take the time to explain to her why this is so important and how it benefits her and the children in her group.

If you selected:

- "It may require extra time, but you have to trust me that it's important."

The feedback is:

Rather than being apologetic or asking for her to trust you, consider these two tips:

- Use active listening to let this teacher know you heard what she said and how she is feeling.
- Take the time to explain to her why this is so important and how it benefits her and the children in her group.

If you selected:

- "You're frustrated by all of the demands on your time because you want to be helping your kids. What if I could show you how this would help you to work with your children more effectively?"

The feedback is:

You were listening attentively. Many people feel that data puts a heavy strain on them. It's good to express empathy through active listening, but even better to focus their attention on the direct benefits they will experience.

Do What?

What could you do to support this individual? Choose all that apply.

- Recommend training and provide follow-up mentoring and supervision.
- Make sure that she actually sets aside time in her schedule not only to record observations and enter data but to review the data and compare it with other data sources such as children's portfolios and input from parents.
- Talk with her frequently about the child assessment process and help her see that entering data is only the first step. Using it to individualize her weekly plans will have a big impact on children's progress.
- Do it for her.

After you have made your selection(s), proceed to the next section to get feedback on your answer(s).

Do What Feedback

If you selected:

- Recommend training and provide follow-up mentoring and supervision.

The feedback is:

Mentoring and training are both great choices. Training is a good first step. It will help her understand why she needs to collect and use data and how to do it. One drawback is that one-time training is rarely effective. Mentoring is a great follow-up strategy that will help her implement what she learned in training. You could mentor her yourself or find a peer who is already knowledgeable and enthusiastic to work with her.

If you selected:

- Make sure that she actually sets aside time in her schedule not only to record observations and enter data but to review the data and compare it with other data sources such as children's portfolios and input from parents.

The feedback is:

Mentoring and training are both great choices. Training is a good first step. It will help her understand why she needs to collect and use data and how to do it. One drawback is that one-time training is rarely effective. Mentoring is a great follow-up strategy that will help her implement what she learned in training. You could mentor her yourself or find a peer who is already knowledgeable and enthusiastic to work with her.

If you selected:

- Talk with her frequently about the child assessment process and help her see that entering data is only the first step. Using it to individualize her weekly plans will have a big impact on children's progress.

The feedback is:

Mentoring and training are both great choices. Training is a good first step. It will help her understand why she needs to collect and use data and how to do it. One drawback is that one-time training is rarely effective. Mentoring is a great follow-up strategy that will help her implement what she learned in training. You could mentor her yourself or find a peer who is already knowledgeable and enthusiastic to work with her.

If you selected:

- Do it for her.

The feedback is:

It can be tempting to take over and pitch in when you come across someone who is overwhelmed, but this is not a realistic long-term solution. You already know how to use data. Now you need to build her capacity. Training is a good first step. You can follow up with mentoring to help her implement what she learned in training. Helping her understand how the data can help her to be a better teacher and improve outcomes, and working with her on collecting and analyzing data are also good ideas

The Reluctant Teacher: Voices From the Field

See how Head Start and Early Head Start programs look when staff, governing body, and Policy Council members have been brought on board and have embraced the use of data.

2.2 Scenario 4: The Confused Policy Council Member

The Scenario

“I’ve been on the Policy Council for six months. I know that the Policy Council is important in Head Start and that it’s our responsibility to weigh in on a lot of things. All the director and her staff talk about is ‘data-driven decisions.’

What does that mean? There’s so much to read in the report they give us every month. It consists of pages and pages of numbers. Frankly, this is too much for me. I didn’t know that being on the Policy Council would be so hard.”

Assess the Situation

What do you think is keeping this person from embracing data?

- Maybe he doesn’t know how to interpret the statistics that are embedded in the report, and he’s afraid to say that in front of the other Policy Council members.
- If he doesn’t understand data, he shouldn’t be on the Policy Council. I’m going to look at the by-laws and see how soon we can replace him.
- We’ve been talking about “data-driven decision-making” the entire time he’s been on the Policy Council. He should understand by now.

After you have made a selection, proceed to the next section to get feedback on your answer.

Assess the Situation Feedback

If you selected:

- Maybe he doesn’t know how to interpret the statistics that are embedded in the report, and he’s afraid to say that in front of the other Policy Council members.

The feedback is:

This Policy Council member appears to be confused and a little intimidated by the numbers. For this scenario, let’s address the fact that this Policy Council member doesn’t seem to know how to interpret the statistics in the report and is afraid to admit it. Not everybody has the same comfort level with numbers. Can you help him build his knowledge and confidence?

If you selected:

- If he doesn’t understand data, he shouldn’t be on the Policy Council. I’m going to look at the by-laws and see how soon we can replace him.

The feedback is:

This Policy Council member appears to be confused and a little intimidated by the numbers. For this scenario, let’s address the fact that this Policy Council member doesn’t seem to know how to interpret the statistics in the report and is afraid to admit it. Not everybody has the same comfort level with numbers. Can you help him build his knowledge and confidence?

If you selected:

- We've been talking about "data-driven decision-making" the entire time he's been on the Policy Council. He should understand by now.

The feedback is:

This Policy Council member appears to be confused and a little intimidated by the numbers. For this scenario, let's address the fact that this Policy Council member doesn't seem to know how to interpret the statistics in the report and is afraid to admit it. Not everybody has the same comfort level with numbers. Can you help him build his knowledge and confidence?

Say What?

What could you say to support this individual? Choose all that apply.

- "It looks like you didn't get it, in spite of my explanation. I'm going to explain it one more time. If you hear it again I think you'll get it."
- "You just need to speak up if you don't understand something. I'm always telling you that there's no such thing as a stupid question."
- "Thanks for making me think about this. I think we can find a way to share this data that will make it easier for everyone to understand."

After you have made a selection, proceed to the next section to get feedback on your answer.

Say What Feedback

If you selected:

- "It looks like you didn't get it, in spite of my explanation. I'm going to explain it one more time. If you hear it again I think you'll get it."

The feedback is:

Expecting people to speak up and admit they don't understand or saying the same thing over and over again are ineffective ways to build understanding. A more effective approach is to show data visually through charts and graphs. This can often make it easier for everyone, even data novices, to read and understand the information. But don't forget, the charts and graphs may need some explanation at first, too.

If you selected:

- "You just need to speak up if you don't understand something. I'm always telling you that there's no such thing as a stupid question."

The feedback is:

Expecting people to speak up and admit they don't understand or saying the same thing over and over again are ineffective ways to build understanding. A more effective approach is to show data visually through charts and graphs. This can often make it easier for everyone, even data novices, to read and understand the information. But don't forget, the charts and graphs may need some explanation at first, too.

If you selected:

- "Thanks for making me think about this. I think we can find a way to share this data that will make it easier for everyone to understand."

The feedback is:

Great idea. Showing data visually through charts and graphs can often make it easier for everyone, even data novices, to read and understand the information.

You may find that the change from narrative to visual data results in a lot more discussion and a lot more questions from Policy Council members. It's important to make sure that Policy Council members understand context for the data and what the data results are showing, and that there is enough time for discussion and for questions and answers. But don't forget, the charts and graphs may need some explanation at first, too.

Do What?

What could you do to support this individual? Choose all that apply.

- As long as Policy Council members don't raise question or comments about the data, you can assume that they are ready to make a decision.
- You have a lot of decisions to get approved at each Policy Council meeting, so you need to move along quickly. Don't worry about the stragglers, as long as most of the group seems to understand.
- Incorporate training on reading and interpreting data into your Policy Council training calendar.

After you have made your selection(s), proceed to the next section to get feedback on your answer(s).

Do What? Feedback

If you selected:

- As long as Policy Council members don't raise question or comments about the data, you can assume that they are ready to make a decision.

The feedback is:

Remember, silence doesn't imply agreement. Policy Council members who do not understand the basis for your recommendations are more likely to just rubber-stamp your decisions rather than form their own opinions. The ongoing training and coaching you provide will likely encourage Policy Council members to engage in interesting discussions, ask important questions, and form their own opinions based on the facts.

If you selected:

- You have a lot of decisions to get approved at each Policy Council meeting, so you need to move along quickly. Don't worry about the stragglers, as long as most of the group seems to understand.

The feedback is:

Remember, silence doesn't imply agreement. Policy Council members who do not understand the basis for your recommendations are more likely to just rubber-stamp your decisions rather than form their own opinions. The ongoing training and coaching you provide will likely encourage Policy Council members to engage in interesting discussions, ask important questions, and form their own opinions based on the facts.

If you selected:

- Incorporate training on reading and interpreting data into your Policy Council training calendar.

The feedback is:

Incorporating training into your Policy Council training calendar is essential. Remember that the ability to use data may be a new skill for many Council members. So, you may need to revisit the topic more than once and provide individual coaching to some.

The more Policy Council members (and governing body members and staff) understand the data you are presenting, the more likely they are to engage in discussions, ask important questions, and form their own “data-driven” opinions.

2.3 Conclusion

Creating a culture for using data doesn’t happen overnight. How does it happen? Leaders in Head Start and Early Head Start programs that use data well begin by helping staff see the big picture - why we collect data, how we use the data, and how the data helps us provide better services for children and families, a goal that all Head Start and Early Head Start staff share.

To bring people on board with data, it is important to create a comfortable, safe atmosphere for looking at data. Sometimes, it is necessary to diffuse fears; fear of numbers, fear that the data will be used in the wrong way. Professional development on everything from data terminology to how your data collection software works can be helpful too. When staff see how data fits into and supports their work rather than being one more busy-work thing to do, they are more likely to embrace the use of data.

3. Dig into Data

3.1 Introduction

One way to create a culture for using data is for you and your staff to become data detectives together. Detectives

- Dig for the facts,
- Ask a lot of questions, and
- Pursue their hunches, but require clear proof.

When you and your team base your decisions on facts—not opinions or hunches—you will come up with better solutions, you will have clearer priorities, and you may even find it easier to reach consensus when you need to make a decision. Ultimately, you will also provide more effective services for the children and families in your program.

In this activity, you will sharpen your detective skills as you dig for the facts that will make or break your case.

3.2 Scenario 1: The obesity issue

The obesity issue: At the monthly meeting of your governing body, one of the members raises the issue of obesity. He says that it's all over the media, he's been following the "Let's Move! Child Care Campaign," and he just read an article that has him convinced that it's time for your Head Start program to tackle this major health issue.

Is Obesity a problem for this program?

- Yes
- No

Now review the information below to get a different perspective on the situation.

Check with Program Experts

You bring the issue to your Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) meeting, and here's what you discover: The pediatrician on the HSAC says that he has seen a marked increase in obesity in children under 5.

The nutritionist says that she has been reviewing nutrition-related assessment data and information about family eating patterns. The data show an increase in overweight and obese toddlers and their preschool siblings between fall and winter. In addition, families report diets high in sugar and low in fruits and vegetables. They also report high rates of screen time and limited physical activity. Based on this information, she wants to provide parent education activities to assist Early Head Start families with food preparation and nutritional skills to promote more nutritious and balanced meals.

Check quantitative data

- The Body Mass Index (BMI) data on the Program Information Report (PIR) shows that the number of children who fall into the overweight and obese categories has increased, even though enrollment has remained the same.
- 30percent of your families put “lose weight” as a goal in their family partnership agreements.
- In your training interest survey, 25percent of your teachers expressed an interest in forming a weight-loss support group.

Compare your data with other community data

- The public schools are reporting an increase in the BMIs of children entering kindergarten in your service area.
- The local public health department reports an increase in weight-related illnesses such as Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

Now what do you think? Might this be a problem you want to pursue?

- Yes
- No

Now proceed to the next section to get feedback on your choice.

Scenario 1 Feedback

You chose:	Choice Feedback
Yes	<p>Good conclusion</p> <p>You've looked at a variety of data sources, and they all seem to point to an increase in obesity in your program. You started with some anecdotal reports and confirmed them by looking at quantitative data, both within your program and within your community.</p> <p>Your next steps in the planning cycle will be to use the results of your data analysis to develop a program goal and a plan to achieve it, and to make sure that your budget supports the plan. Consider whether there are any tradeoffs if you prioritize this issue. For example, would you need to allocate more funding to train staff on how to increase physical activity in the classroom and on the playground? If so, would you need to take money from another priority?</p>
No	<p>Think again.</p> <p>Actually, based on the data, obesity probably is a problem in your program. You've looked at a variety of data sources, and they all seem to point to an increase in obesity in your program. You started with some anecdotal reports and confirmed them by looking at quantitative data, both within your program and within your community.</p> <p>Your next steps in the planning cycle will be to use the results of your data analysis to develop a program goal and a plan to achieve it, and to make sure that your budget supports the plan. Consider whether there are any tradeoffs if you prioritize this issue. For example, would you need to allocate more funding to train staff on how to increase physical activity in the classroom and on the playground? If so, would you need to take money from another priority?</p>

3.3 Scenario 2, Converting Slots

Scenario 2: As they begin recruitment for the families, your staff reports that there is a drop in the number of people requesting home-based services and an increase in the waiting list for center-based care. As a result, the management team plans to request permission from the Regional Office to convert home-based slots to center-based slots.

Is this a good idea?

- Yes
- No

Now review the information below to get a different perspective on the situation.

Examine the data more carefully

Overall, the recruitment information shows an increased demand for center-based care. By disaggregating your enrollment information, you learn that there are pockets in your community where many parents now have full-time employment and therefore need full-day services rather than home-based.

However, there are some parts of your service area where transportation is limited, and there is still a demand for home-based services.

Make sure your data is reliable

One of your data reports reveals that 75percent of the parents report that nobody had talked to them about a home-based option. You explore this during a family services staff meeting where recruitment specialists admit that they are new to the home-based option and have difficulty explaining it to parents. Therefore, your data are skewed.

Compare your internal data with external sources and look for trends

Your community assessment data shows that the factory where many of the parents are working is going to be shutting down in the next year. The Department of Labor statistics for your community show that unemployment rates have been increasing over the last five years. Based on the factory shut down and other local factors, the Department of Labor estimates that the trend will continue.

Now what do you think? Is changing your slots from home-based to center-based a good idea?

- Yes
- No

Now proceed to the next section to get feedback on your choice.

Scenario 2 Feedback

You chose:	Choice Feedback
Yes	<p>Hmm. You might want to be cautious here.</p> <p>You have some mixed data and unreliable data. It's important to remember that once you convert those slots and build a facility, it's hard to turn back. Your data still show a need for the home-based option in some areas. And once your recruitment staff are better able to explain the different program options to parents, more may choose home-based.</p>
No	<p>Wise conclusion.</p> <p>You might want to be cautious here. You have some mixed data and unreliable data. It's important to remember that once you convert those slots and build a facility, it's hard to turn back. Your data still show a need in some areas for the home-based option. And once your recruitment staff is better able to explain the different program options to parents, more may choose home-based.</p>

3.4 Scenario 3, Developing a Training and Technical Assistance Plan

Scenario 3: You are about to develop your training and technical assistance (T/TA) plan. Every year you survey your teachers' interests. This year, like last year and the year before, they have asked for a “make and take” workshop on “process-oriented” art. They love the presenter. Another annual favorite is “Reading Aloud to Children.” With this in mind, you prioritize these two topics.

Is basing your T/TA plan on the original staff interest survey a good idea?

- Yes
- No

Now review the information below to get a different perspective on the situation.

Aggregate data from staff performance appraisals

Your staff performance appraisals are much more specific than your staff interest survey. They are based on job descriptions. Teaching staff are evaluated along a scale of one to five on a list of specific competencies.

You have been using these evaluations in discussion with teachers about their individual performance plans. However, you have never aggregated the data to look at it program-wide. You decide that the aggregated data from the performance appraisals might be very helpful in developing your program-wide training and technical assistance plan. You decide to find out if your data technology system has the capacity to quickly aggregate the data and produce a report.

Look at the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) data for your center

		Dimension average— all classrooms
Emotional Support	Positive climate	5.7
	Negative climate	1
	Teaching sensitivity	5.67
Classroom Organization	Regard for student perspective	5.25
	Behavior management	5
	Productivity	4.79
Instructional Support	Instructional learning format	5.25
	Concept development	2
	Quality feedback	1.88
	Language modeling	1.83

Look for additional information

After looking at the aggregated data based on the teaching staffs' performance appraisals and at the CLASS data, you decide to get additional information from the teaching staff in addition to surveying what teachers are interested in and excited about. Until now, your staff interest survey has asked open-ended questions about staff's interests. You rewrite the survey questions to link to the competencies on the performance appraisals and the CLASS dimensions in addition to what teachers are interested in and excited about

Now what do you think? Is basing your T/TA plan on the original staff interest survey a good idea?

- Yes
- No

Now proceed to the next section to get feedback on your choice.

Scenario 3 Feedback

You chose:	Choice Feedback
Yes	<p>We disagree.</p> <p>Your original data were very limited and only anecdotal. As part of your ongoing monitoring and self-assessment, you can collect, and aggregate and analyze data from multiple sources. For example, performance appraisals and CLASS data are really good sources of information about teacher training needs and your revised interest survey will provide richer information as well.</p> <p>You will have much more solid information on which to base a T/TA plan after you review these additional data sources. The resulting T/TA plan will be more likely to help you meet the requirements of Section 648A of the Head Start Act, which states that professional development activities “have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and on the teacher’s performance in the classroom.”</p>
No	<p>Good thinking.</p> <p>Your original data were very limited and only anecdotal. You will have much more solid information on which to base a T/TA plan once you include information about CLASS scores, staff performance appraisals, and your new staff interest survey in your thinking. The resulting T/TA plan will help you meet the requirements of Section 648A of the Head Start Act, which states that professional development activities “have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and on the teacher’s performance in the classroom.”</p>

3.5 Scenario 4, Upgrading a Management Information System

Scenario 4: Your information systems manager comes to your weekly meeting all excited. He thinks that it’s time to replace your home-grown Management Information System (MIS), the one he himself invented. He has been reviewing the software available on the market and has a recommendation for one that he thinks will meet the needs of your program. He has concluded that it will make everyone’s life easier by ending a lot of the pencil and paper data entry that staff have had to do with the current system.

Is purchasing an off-the-shelf management information system a good idea for this program?

- Yes
- No

Now review the information below to get a different perspective on the situation.

Assess the capacity of current system

Staff is pretty comfortable with the current home-grown system that your information systems manager developed. He has worked with the teachers, food service staff, and family service staff who do their own data entry, and the data entry clerks your program has hired to input health and facilities data over the years. He is now confident that the data that staff enter are complete and accurate.

On the other hand, there are gaps in the reporting capability of this program. You'd like to be able to generate more detailed reports that staff can review before they go out on a center visit. Maybe one of the popular software systems that other programs are using would have this capacity.

Look at your budget

You raise the idea during your weekly meeting with your fiscal manager and the two of you look at your budget together. She reminds you that, if you purchase a new software system, you might also need additional hardware. In addition, you would have to factor in the costs of staff training on the new system plus maintenance and upgrades as the technology advances.

It may be more cost effective to hire another programmer to fill in the gaps in the reporting system. You agree to do a cost-benefit analysis of the two options.

Talk to your team

You float the idea of purchasing a new software system at your management team meeting and get mixed reviews. Managers are excited about the new system the technology person discovered because it seems to have so many bells and whistles. It looks fairly easy to use and can generate many more reports than your current system.

On the other hand, it still doesn't solve one of your major technology issues: there are still places in your service area where high-speed Internet access just isn't available. Staff in those centers will still need to enter data the old way, using paper and pencil.

Now what do you think? Should this program purchase an off-the-shelf MIS?

- Yes
- No

Now proceed to the next section to get feedback on your choice.

Scenario 4 Feedback

You chose:	Choice Feedback
Yes	<p>We give this a big maybe.</p> <p>There are pros and cons to this purchase and to commercial software vs. software developed specifically for your program. You still have a lot of questions to answer and things to think about such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does your current system meet your needs? What are the gaps? • Can your home-grown system be tweaked to meet these needs or would a new software system be the best solution? • How much training will staff need? • During the transition to the new system, will your data be reliable? <p>Your budget might suggest that a long-term plan is in order here. That way you could take a step-by-step approach to upgrading your technology not only for today but also for the future as new and innovative technology—tablets, hand-held devices, and whatever the future brings—becomes available.</p>
No	<p>We give this a big maybe.</p> <p>There are pros and cons to this purchase. You still have a lot of questions to answer and things to think about such as: What do you want an MIS to be able to do? How well is your current system doing this? What are the gaps? Can your home-grown system be tweaked to meet these needs or would an off-the-shelf solution meet them more quickly? Will your hardware meet the technical requirements of a new system? How much training would staff need?</p> <p>Your budget might suggest that a long-term plan is in order here. That way you could take a step-by-step approach to upgrading your technology not only for today but also for the future as new and innovative technology—tablets, hand-held devices, and whatever the future brings—becomes available.</p>

3.6 Conclusion

Playing hunches might (or might not!) be okay if you're having a friendly card game, but it's definitely not a sound way to run a Head Start or Early Head Start program. Here are some strategies you can use to make sure that your decisions are based on good data:

- Look at the data objectively. Try to see what it does say, not what you wish it said.
- Make sure your data are reliable so you don't base decisions on faulty information.
- Look at your data in different ways. Aggregate and disaggregate. Look for patterns and trends.
- Consider both anecdotal and quantitative data, and see if they tell the same story.
- Look at multiple sources of data and compare them.

4. Share and Share Alike

4.1 Introduction

When you share data with others, it's important to know your audience.

This activity will show how different audiences use Head Start information in different ways and how you can display information to best meet these different needs.

4.2 Scenario 1: Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

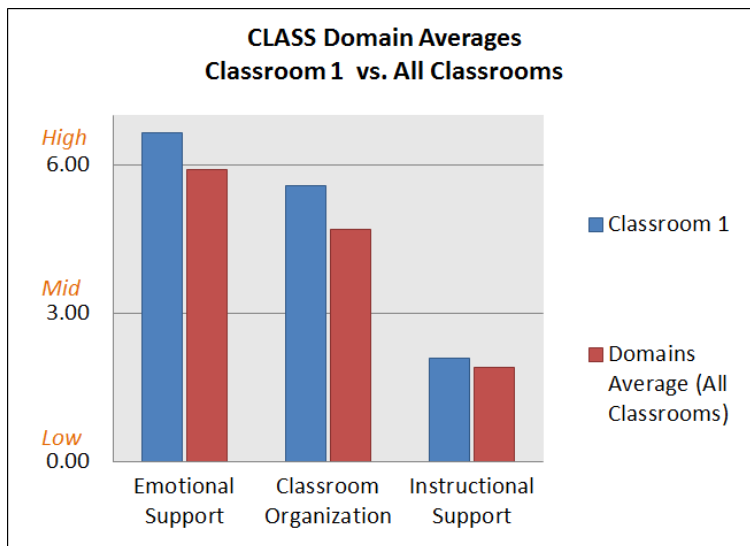
Scenario: Many programs are now using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System to help improve teaching and learning in their programs.

In this scenario, we look at how that data can be used in different ways by different groups.

Review each group to see how it might view and use these data.

Groups: Teachers, education managers, Governing Body

Teachers' Data



Might Want to See Teachers' Data – How They Might Want to See It

The chart shows that Classroom 1 is in the high range and above the average of all classrooms in Emotional Support, in the medium range and slightly above the average for all classrooms in Classroom Organization, and in the low range for Instructional Support, but slightly higher than the average for all classrooms.

Teachers would be most interested in their individual CLASS results. Perhaps

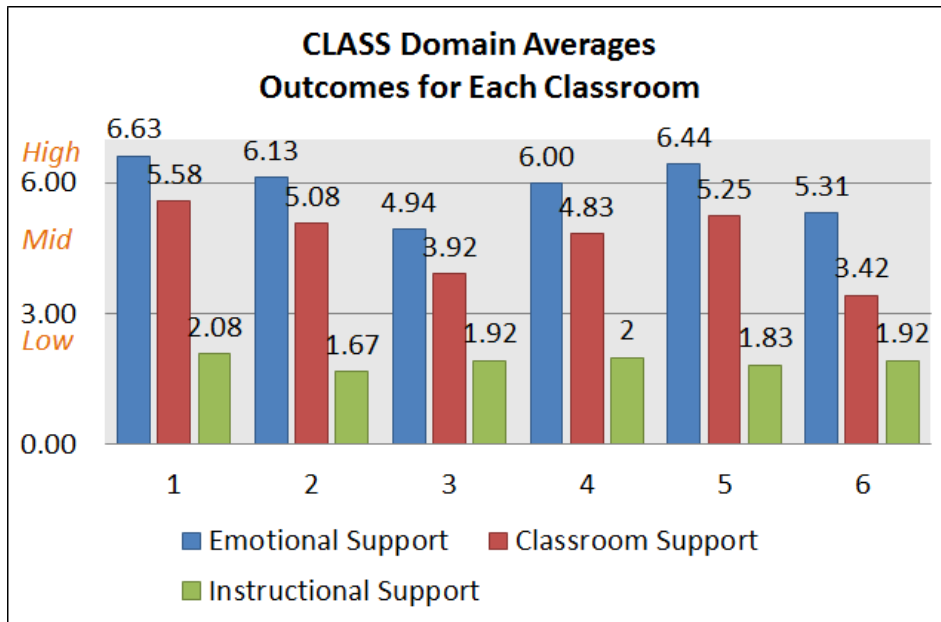
they, like many Head Start teachers, would notice that they are high in the area of Emotional Support but low in the area of Instructional Support.

Might Want to Do **Teachers’ Data – What They Might Want to Do with It**

Teachers will want to:

- Based on the data in the chart which show that the Instructional Support domain is in the low range, reflect with their education coordinator about strategies to improve their instructional support practices.
- Look at the child outcomes data for their group and think about how improving their skills in this area might improve child outcomes.

Education Managers Data



Might Want to See **Education Managers’ Data – How They Might Want to See It**

The chart shows that all of the classrooms fall in the high or mid-range on Emotional Support, in the mid-range on Classroom Support, and in the low range for Instructional Support, with some variance among classrooms for each domain.

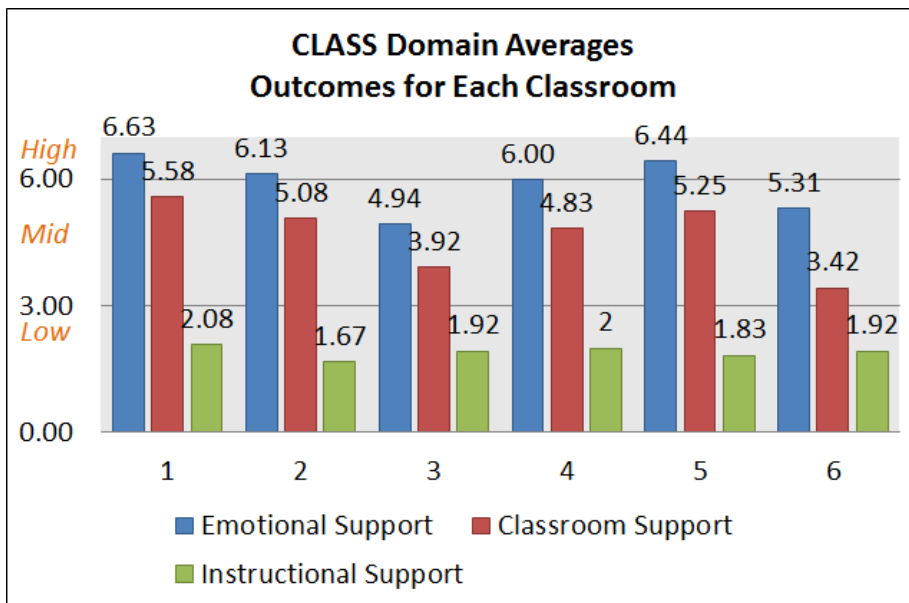
Education managers would definitely be interested in seeing the scores broken out by classroom. In addition, they would be interested in seeing how their program’s scores compare with national averages.

Might Want to Do **Education Managers' Data – What They Might Want to Do with It**

Education managers will want to:

- Use the information in developing their program-wide T/TA plan. In this example, they might focus their training and technical assistance on Instructional Support which is in the low range center-wide.
- Talk with each teacher during reflective supervision about strategies such as training and mentoring to shore up their areas of growth.
- Assess their infant/toddler classrooms and family child care programs using appropriate evidence-based instruments and share those results as well.

Governing Body Data



Might Want to See **Governing Body's Data– How They Might Want to See It**

This chart shows that the program's Emotional Support range is higher than both regional and national average ranges. The program's Classroom Organization average is slightly lower than the other two, and Instructional Support is significantly lower than the other two domains across program, regional and national averages, with the program having the lowest average for Instructional Support among the three.

This aggregated data will be very useful to the governing body. It provides an overall picture of the program and allows governing body members to see how their program compares with other Head Start programs throughout the country.

4.3 Scenario 2: Attendance Reports for Parent Meetings

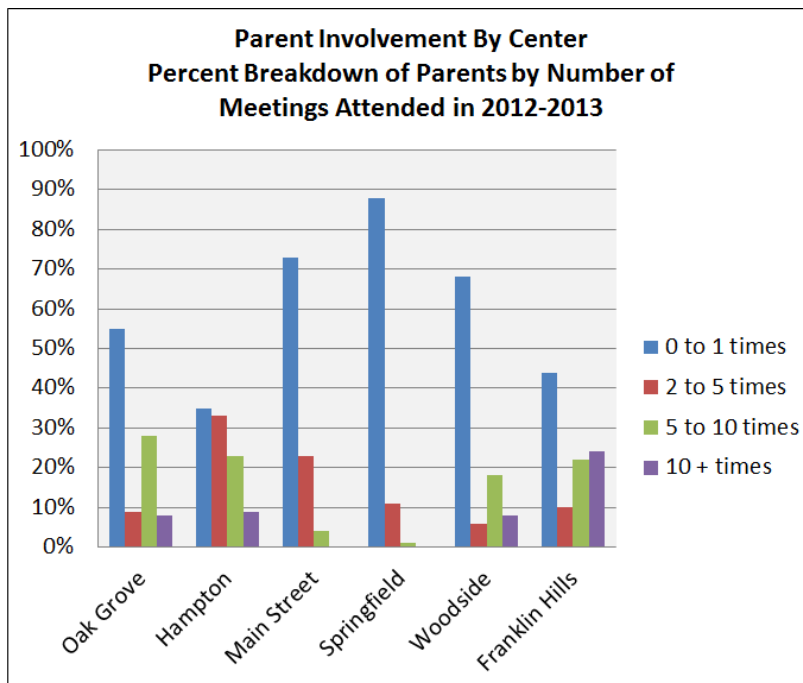
Scenario: One of the ways that programs judge the effectiveness of their parent meetings is by seeing how many parents show up. If attendance is low, increasing attendance might be one of the program’s goals.

Let’s see how these data might be shared and used by different people.

Read how each group might view and use these data.

Groups: Family service managers, center directors, Policy Council

Family Service Managers Data



Might Want to See **Family Service Managers’ Data – How They Might Want to See It**

This chart shows that the majority of parents from all of the centers attended zero to one meetings in the year. The percentage of parents who attended more than one meeting varied greatly by center, ranging from 32 percent to 88 percent.

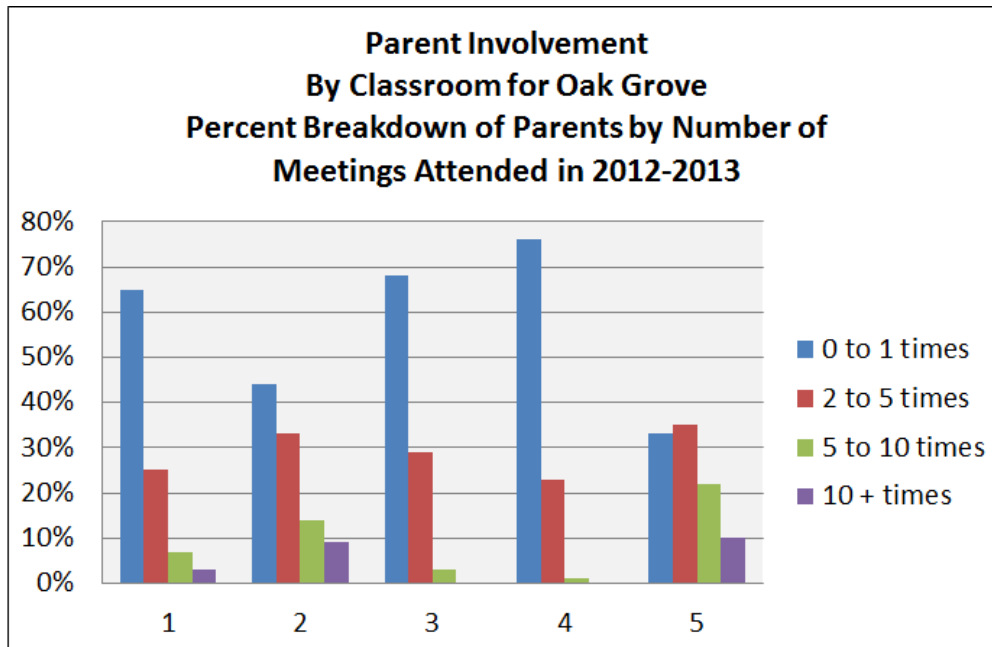
Looking at these data by center helps family service managers compare how well parent meetings are working at different sites.

Might Want to Do **Family Service Managers’ Data – What They Might Want to Do with It**

Family service managers will want to:

- Dig deeper into the data. For instance, they might look at a variety of factors that make some centers' meetings more successful than others. Questions to ask include:
 - Are some topics more successful than others?
 - Is transportation an issue at some sites?
 - Does time of day matter?
 - Do more parents come when food is provided?
- Conduct focus groups and/or surveys to learn more about why parents do not attend or only come once. Look at how centers are letting parents know about the meetings.
- Share the information with a committee of parents who are working to increase attendance.
- Bring the data and committee ideas to the management team to get all managers involved in the solution.

Center Directors' Data



Might Want to See Center Directors' Data – How They Might Want to See It

This chart shows that the majority of parents in four out of five classrooms attended zero or one meeting during the year. Other results vary by classroom.

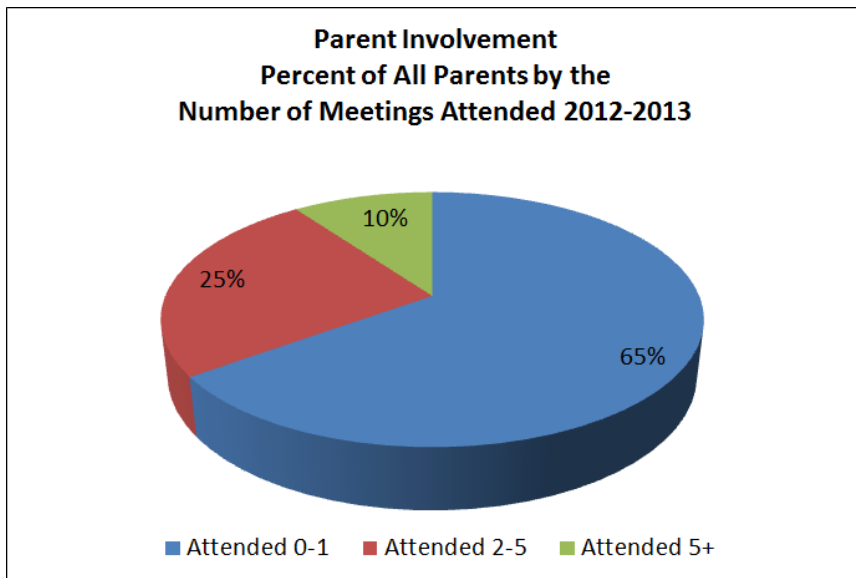
Center Directors will most likely be most interested in the data from their own center, though they may also learn some important things by looking at the overall program data.

Might Want to Do **Center Directors’ Data – What They Might Want to Do with It**

Center Directors will want to:

- Break it down by classroom.
- Work with family service staff and parents to review the disaggregated data and come up with a plan for improving parent meeting attendance at all sites.
- Discuss the data at a center committee meeting and formulate some recommendations to bring to the Policy Council.
- Revise their Parent Interest Survey.
- Work with the management team and Policy Council/Policy Committees to consider ways to collect data on and measure not only the quantity but also the quality of parent engagement and progress towards Parent, Family and Community outcomes.

Policy Council’s Data



Might Want to See **Policy Council’s Data– How They Might Want to See It**

This chart shows that 65percent of parents attended zero to one meetings, 25percent attended two to five meetings, and 10percent attended five or more.

When they wear their Policy Council hat, members would be interested in the program-level view of the data. As parents who attend a center meeting, they might also be interested in the information about their own center.

Might Want **Policy Council’s Data– What They Might Want to Do with It**

Policy Council members will want to:

- to Do**
- Provide input on a new Parent Interest Survey.
 - Talk informally to parents and provide feedback about why parents do or don't come to meetings.
 - Provide ideas on topics, times, and other factors that might encourage more parents to attend.
 - Make sure that the data is shared with the Policy Council so that the council can help shape the next steps in school readiness.
 - Serve as role models for other parents and encourage them not only to attend parent meetings but to be advocates on behalf of their children and to become actively involved in collaborative decision-making.

4.4 Scenario 3: Community Assessment Data -- Arabic Speaking Families

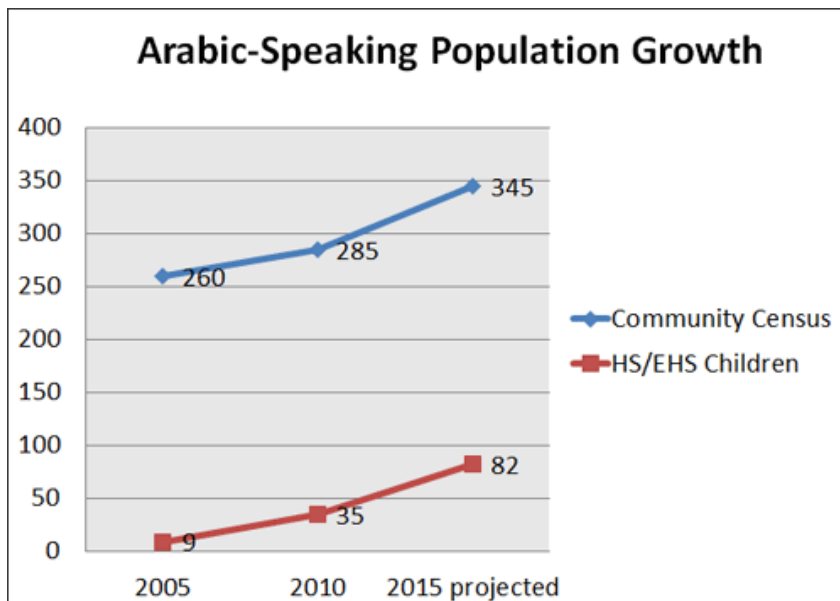
Scenario: Community assessment data provides vital information that impacts many things, from center locations to hours of operation to program options.

In this scenario, we'll look at how one piece of information, an increase in Arabic-speaking families, might be shared and used.

Review each group to see how it might view and use these data.

Groups: Fiscal managers, management team, community partners

Fiscal Managers Data



Might Want to See Fiscal Managers' Data – How They Might Want to See It

This chart shows an actual increase from nine to 35 Arabic-

Speaking children enrolled in Head Start during the period from 2005 to 2010 and a projected increase to 82 by 2015, representing an 800percent increase over 10 years.

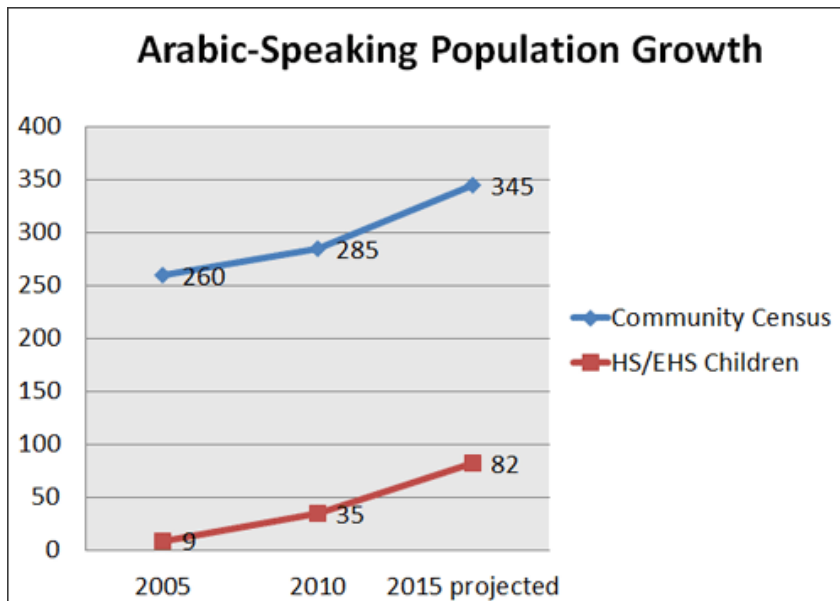
This information from the Community Assessment has budgetary implications. Fiscal managers will want to look at both the community assessment data and their budgets.

Might Want to Do Fiscal Managers’ Data – What They Might Want to Do with It

Fiscal managers will want to:

- Talk to human resources and education managers about the possible need for increased training on cultural sensitivity.
- Talk with the management team about whether there is a need to have additional funds allocated for interpreters and translated materials.
- Look at the materials and equipment line items in the budget to make sure there’s money for purchasing books, puzzles, and other materials that depict children and families from Arabic-speaking cultures.
- Use the projections of future increases in Arabic-speaking children to engage in long-term budgeting linked to the organization’s strategic plan.

Management Team’s Data



Might Want to See Management Team’s Data – How They Might Want to See It

This chart shows an actual increase from nine to 35 Arabic-Speaking children enrolled in Head Start during the period from 2005 to 2010, and a projected increase to 82 by 2015, representing an 800percent increase over 10 years.

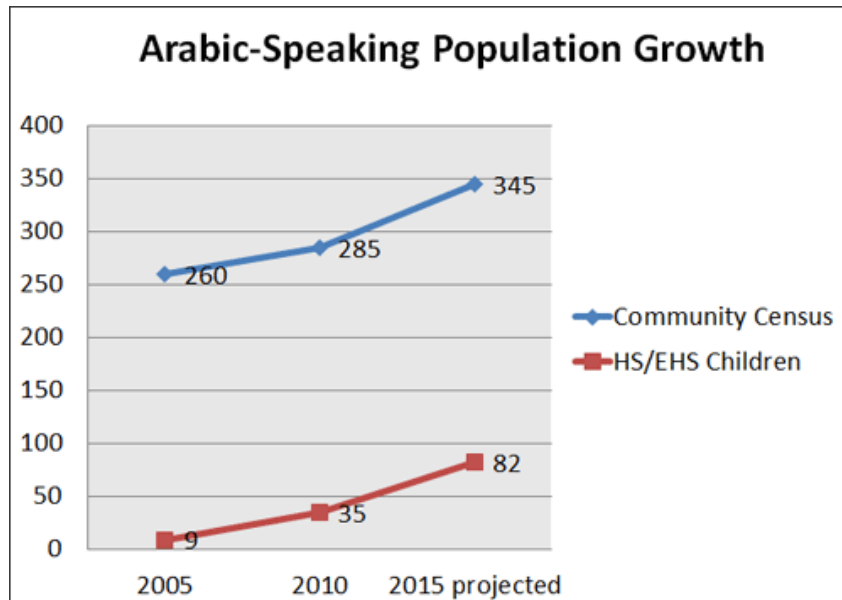
This information is vital to the management team. It has implications for everything from recruitment to community partnerships. Team members need it many ways, rolled up and sliced and diced.

Might Want to Do Management Team’s Data – What Team Members Might Want to Do with It

Management teams will want to:

- Share the information with the governing body and Policy Council so they can weigh in on decisions that may result from this change.
- Review the National Center for Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness’ Program Preparedness Checklist to see what next steps they might want to take to make sure the program’s practices are culturally appropriate.
- Feed this information into their self-assessment. Look for implications for site locations and program options.
- Consider the long-term projections showing a continued increase in Arabic-speaking children and families as part of the program’s strategic planning process.

Community Partners’ Data



Might Want to See Community Partners' Data– How They Might Want to See It

This chart shows an actual increase from nine to 35 Arabic-Speaking children enrolled in Head Start during the period from 2005 to 2010, and a projected increase to 82 by 2015, representing an 800percent increase over 10 years.

If this change is impacting the Head Start and Early Head Start program, it is surely rippling through their entire community. Community partners would want to see this data to determine how they can adjust community services to serve this new population.

Might Want to Do Community Partners' Data– What They Might Want to Do with It

Community partners will want to:

- Compare this data with their own information to see if the facts are consistent.
- Explore ways that their services can be adapted to address the needs of this new population.
- Consider ways to work with Head Start to maximize resources in this effort.
- Identify and engage other organizations or programs that are helping this population.
- Work together to make sure that the community can continue to meet the needs of Arabic-speaking families as the percentage of these families continues to grow over time.

4.5 Conclusion

Always remember to consider your audience when deciding how to share data. Different audiences have different needs.

When you share data in a way that is meaningful to the people who are using it, they understand it better and they can connect with it in ways that will be helpful and useful to them.

Activity 5: Celebrate Good Times (Come On!)

5.1 Introduction

Data can point to problems to solve, and they can also identify program strengths. Ultimately, even bad news can lead to good news. Sometimes as you analyze data, you find bright spots to build on. You can turn bad news into good news if you look objectively at the data, seek to understand why the data are showing poor results, consider what you want to do about it, put a plan in place, and check back frequently to see if your plan is working. After all, that's what continuous improvement is all about.

In this activity, you will see why it is important to share all the news with everyone in the program. This will help everyone see how they can contribute to the success of your program.

5.2 Scenario

Linda, a Head Start and Early Head Start director, has recently discovered that despite all of her staff's good efforts, children's attendance is down. At her next all-staff meeting, she reviews the data with her staff. Together, they create a goal about improving attendance. Linda asks each person to think about how he or she can make a contribution that will help the program reach its goal.

Let's see how each of the following individuals thinks he or she can contribute and play a bigger role.

Omar, Bus Driver

"Sorry, I can't help. All I can do is get the ones that want to be here to the center on time.

On Second thought...

I'll talk to the bus monitor about greeting parents and children with an extra big smile. We can set a welcoming tone right from the start. And when children come back after being absent, we can let them know that we missed them—and so did their teachers and friends. I can keep as close as possible to my pick up schedule and that way I am a role model for promptness. Lastly, if I am late, I can explain why so parents know that I respect their time.

You know, I never realized that I play an important part in improving attendance. I wonder what how else I can help our program reach its goals."

Sue, Family Service Worker

"I wish it were different. I've tried to call some of these parents five times but they never seem to be home.

On Second thought...

I'm going to remember to talk about the importance of attendance in my initial conversations with families. In fact, maybe we can revise our orientation and enrollment protocols so I'll be sure to talk about it. I'm going to remind parents not only at the beginning of the year, but

throughout the year, and let them know that I notice that their children are coming to school more frequently.

You know, since I work with families, I know that I have an important role in making sure that they understand how important it is to send their children to school every day. But I want to think about how I contribute to our other goals that may seem less directly related to my job as a family service worker.”

Georgia, Health Services

“Sometimes our attendance is down because parents keep their children home from school when they’re sick

On second thought...

I wonder if there are things I could do to make sure our children stay healthy so they don’t have a reason to stay home. Maybe it’s time to do training again with children and staff on hand washing and sneezing into their elbows to cut down on the spread of disease. I can also train parents on things like having good sleep routines.

There’s such a strong and obvious connection between good health and attendance. But I wonder if all of our other staff—the kitchen staff, teachers, our facilities manager, for example, see how they contribute to our reaching this goal—and our other goals as well.”

5.3 Summary

As a result of the staff meeting, Linda realized that everybody had a role to play in solving the problem and that sharing the data with the full staff was the best way to start a lively and productive discussion. She decided to make both the brainstorming meetings and posting data regular practices from now on.

A few months later when she put the attendance data in front of the group, they could see the progress the program had made and be proud of the role they had played in making things better!

5.4 Conclusion

All Head Start programs strive to provide high-quality services to children and families. But you can’t fix something unless you know it’s broken. Data—the facts—help you know where improvements are needed. And once you make changes, you can celebrate!