

Capital Area Community Action Agency

2020-2021

Head Start Competitive Grant Application

Year 1 of Grant Cycle

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SECTION I. Program Design and Approach to Service Delivery

SUB-SECTION A. Goals

In keeping with the Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), Capital Area Community Action Agency’s program leadership collaborates with the Governing Body (Board of Directors) and Policy Council to establish strategic long-term Program Goals and Measurable Objectives. These strategic goals support the next cycle of growth for Capital Area Community Action Agency’s Head Start program. Key stakeholders consider program values, data from the community assessment, annual self-assessment, as well as child and family data in the planning cycle. Program goals and school readiness goals work together to strengthen high-quality, comprehensive services to children and families.

Below is a list of the five-year program goals for this grant cycle followed by a brief narrative describing expected outcomes and challenges for a measurable objective.

Goal #	Long Term Goals	Objectives	Expected Outcomes	Measure
1	Become the provider of choice for families experiencing homelessness with children 3-4 years old.	Develop a written plan to support children in families experiencing homelessness. Develop or enhance partnerships with various agencies that will be needed to serve children in families experiencing homelessness. Target outreach efforts directed at families experiencing homelessness to facilitate families’ participation in Head Start. Increase the number of children in families experiencing homelessness served.	Increase the number of children in families experiencing homelessness served.	PIR Count
2	Make Head Start facilities the model for best practice early childhood safety.	Develop a plan to regularly update indoor and outdoor materials and equipment to comply with best practices. Ensure staff receive timely training on environmental health and safety practices. Relocate, remodel, or repair facilities, materials, and equipment when needed to model best practices in environmental health and safety.	Increase the quality of Head Start facilities to set a solid foundation for success for children and their families.	DCF Inspection Reports Incident/Accident Report Data

Goal #	Long Term Goals	Objectives	Expected Outcomes	Measure
3	Encourage and support staff in continually expanding their knowledge and skills to implement the best practices.	Support a teaching staff with credentials in accordance with the revised Head Start Act Requirements. This includes 50% of Teachers with a bachelor degree and 50% of Teacher Assistants with associate degree. Support staff training outside of the agency to enhance employee skills and professional networks. Identify and train staff of special topics that are local, regional, and national issues.	Increase positive student outcomes.	Child Assessment Data
4	Provide families with the skills needed to transition out of poverty.	Increase parental awareness of program offered educational experience designed to increase their self sufficiency. Increase the number of parents whom participate in agency offered educational experiences.	Increase positive family outcomes.	Family Outcomes Tool
5	Broaden the impact and reach of services provided.	Increase the number of Head Start eligible children we can serve. Provide services to ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) families and their children who qualify for subsidized care. Establish and consistently offer a set number of full working day slots.	Increase positive student and family outcomes.	Child Outcomes PIR Subsidized Care Data
6	Promote healthy families.	Provide structured activities to promote physical and mental well being.	Increase positive student outcomes.	Incident/Accident Report Data

In response to the growing number of homeless families living in the service and recruitment area, as well as, input from parents and community members, the first program goal is to “become the provider of choice for families experiencing homelessness with children 3-5years old.” One of the measurable objectives focuses on developing new partnerships with organizations working with homeless families. The expected outcome is developing increased awareness in the community about the services provided through our Head Start program which will result in increased referrals and greater number of homeless children served through Head Start and Community Action. One of the expected challenges is underestimating the impact of serving more families experiencing homelessness may have on program and teaching staff.

School Readiness Goals

	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development
Preschooler Domains	Goal: Children will learn to successfully navigate learning experiences by developing the ability to self-regulate in a variety of situations.	Goal: Children will gain a sense of identity and belonging through social interactions and positive emotional connections in order to experience personal success.
	Objectives: Follow simple rules and routines with increasing independence (1b) Persists with a difficult or non-preferred activity and seeks help when needed (11b) Uses imagination in play and interactions with others to plan, initiate and complete learning activities (11e)	Objectives: Build positive social relationship with peers and adult in a cooperative manner (2a, 2c, 2d) Recognize and use words/expressions of emotion, learn strategies to manage feelings and control impulses with increase independence (1a)
Spring 2018-2019 Assessment Period 3* (AP3*) Outcomes 02/02/2019-04/26/2019	Outcomes: 72% (276/382) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to following simple rules and routines with increasing independence (1b). 68% (258/381) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to persisting with difficult or non-preferred activities and seeks help when needed (11b). 93% (353/381) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to showing flexibility and inventiveness in thinking (11e).	Outcomes: 82% (312/382) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to forming relationships with adults in class (2a). 91% (344/380) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to interacting with their peers (2c). 89% (341/383) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to making friends in class (2d). 82% (312/382) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to recognizing and using words/expressions of emotion use strategies to manage feelings and control impulses with increased independence (1a).

	Language and Literacy	Cognition
Preschooler Domains	<p>Goal: Children will learn and develop both receptive and expressive language skills to build a strong emergent literacy foundation to promote school readiness.</p>	<p>Goal: Children will develop reasoning, memory, problem solving and thinking skills to connect experiences and organize their world.</p>
	<p>Objectives: Listen to, understands and uses increasingly complex language (8a,8b,9a,9b,9c) Utilizes print concepts to understand print (17b) Identify and name letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sounds (16a,b)</p>	<p>Objectives: Uses memory strategies and increased attention (12 a, b) Uses number concepts and operations (20a,b,c) Uses scientific inquiry skills by observing, predicting, comparing and classifying (24)**</p>
<p>Spring 2018-2019 Assessment Period 3* (AP3*) Outcomes 02/02/2019-04/26/2019</p>	<p>Outcomes: 88% (335/381) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to comprehending increasingly complex language (8a) 85% (324/381) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to following directions (8b). 89% (340/381) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to using an expanding expressive vocabulary by class (9a). 90% (341/381) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to speaking clearly (9b). 90% (341/381) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to using conversational grammar (9c). 70% (266/381) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to using print concepts (17b). 93% (354/381) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to identifying names and letters (16a). 97% (371/381) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to using letter sound knowledge (16b).</p>	<p>Outcomes: 78% (296/381) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to using memory strategies to recognize and recall (12a). 87% (331/381) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to make connections (12b). 86% (329/381) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to counting (20a). 75% (284/381) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to quantifying (20b). 80% (303/381) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to connecting numerals with their quantities (20c). 45% (172/382) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to using scientific inquiry skills by observing, predicting, comparing and classifying (24).</p>

Preschooler Domains	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
	Goal: Children will increase gross and fine motor skills and understand self-care skills to fully function and explore in their environment.
	Objectives: Demonstrates increasing control and strengthen gross motor and small muscles manipulation skills (6) Takes care of own needs appropriately (1c) Demonstrates fine motor strength and coordination with increased success (7 b)
Spring 2018-2019 Assessment Period 3* (AP3*) Outcomes 02/02/2019-04/26/2019	Outcomes: 94% (356/380) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to demonstrating gross motor manipulative skills (6). 82% (314/382) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to taking care of their own needs appropriately (1c). 92% (349/380) of Head Start students meet or exceed expectations with regards to demonstrating fine motor strength and coordination with increased success (7b).

SUB-SECTION B. Service Delivery

1. Service and Recruitment Area

Capital Area Community Action Agency Head Start (Community Action Head Start) provides services to more than 378 children and families annually in three cities located in Franklin, Jefferson, and Leon Counties in the Florida Panhandle. The service and recruitment area highlighted below is not contiguous. It includes three separate counties that borders Georgia as well as the Gulf of Mexico.

According to the most recent Community Assessment, the poverty rates for children under five years of age are well documented in the Community Action Head Start service and recruitment area. Data published online (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018) reveals 18% of persons

living in Leon County, 17.7% living in Jefferson County, and 21.3% in Franklin County report being unable to afford a survival budget. The Community Action Head Start centers are in cities where the percentage of families with children living in poverty are considerably higher than surrounding communities.

There are three Community Action Head Start centers located in Tallahassee, the capital city of Florida. Some of the most impoverished families in the city, as well as the state, live within blocks of the Community Action Head Start Centers. Consider that 16,834 households live in the 32304 zip code and this is where there is the highest concentration of children living in poverty in Florida (2018 ALICE Report). Researchers estimate that half of the children, an estimated 1,837, live below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

Franklin County is the smallest of the three counties with a population of 11,815. The Community Action Head Start center in Franklin County is in Apalachicola, where a third of all families with children (33%) report earnings below the FPL (2018 Alice Report). Decidedly rural, Franklin County is a coastal community that historically relied on the Apalachicola Bay's seafood industry for its economy. Unfortunately, it is particularly vulnerable to both natural and human impacts on the environment. Recently, the area was hard hit by a fire in the Apalachicola Forrest and Hurricane Michael causing damage to property and businesses. Drought, increased water demand from Georgia and hurricanes, crippled the oyster industry and resulted in severe economic decline, which persists today.

Monticello, located in Jefferson County, 25 miles east of Tallahassee, is also considered a rural community with a population of 14,000. While agriculture still makes up 24% of the economic base, many families living in Monticello work in Tallahassee. This county reports one in five families are living in poverty. Monticello does not differ from many other cities in Florida

in the frightening fact that the least expensive childcare is more costly than the least expensive rent (Florida ALICE Report and County Pages, 2018).

2. Needs of Children and Families

Community Action’s selection criteria is designed to give priority to families in the following categories: families at or below the poverty level, families involved with any governmental assistance programs, homeless and foster families, grandparents serving as parents, children with disabilities, and any child that was waitlisted for services for over a year.

Eligible Women and Children: Location, Race, and Ethnicity The most recent Community Assessment data indicate a compelling need for Head Start services in the service and recruitment area. Consider that there is a combined total of 309,853 residents living in the three diverse Florida Counties, and, of these, 15,939 are children under the age of five. Relevant data from the most recent Community Assessment is in the table below.

Child Poverty Rate Under 5 Years of Age

County	Number of Children 0 – 4 Years Old	Number of Income Eligible Children
Franklin	484	43
Jefferson	688	42
Leon	14,767	1,762

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2018) data, the poverty rate for single mothers has increased in the last few years. As a group, single mothers are an estimated four times more likely to live in poverty than married couples with children. Overall teenage birth rates in Florida have declined. However, according to the Florida Department of Health Services (2018), teen

pregnancy prevention continues to be a priority because of the significant risk factors linked to both mother and child. Data shows there was a statistically significantly higher than expected number of actual births to females, ages 15 – 17, in Jefferson County, as well as in Franklin County for females 15 – 19 years of age. There was a combined total of 480 births to mothers 15 – 19 years of age in all three counties in 2015-2017.

As seen in the 2018 U.S. Census data, the majority of people residing in Franklin (84.1%), Jefferson (63.1%), and Leon (61.9%) Counties report their race as Caucasian alone. The second most cited race is African American alone with 34.3% of people in Jefferson County, 31.7% in Leon County, and 12.4% living in Franklin County. Whereas, the 2018-2019 Program Information Report (PIR) generated by Community Action Head Start, indicates 89% of enrolled children identified their race and ethnicity as African American. Another four percent of enrolled children identified as biracial or Multi-racial, 3% as Caucasian, non-Hispanic or Latino origin. The remaining children identified as Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian or Alaska Native in descending order of significance.

Dual Language Learners English continues to be the primary language of the family at home in 97% of enrolled families. Another one percent of families speaks Spanish at home. As many as 6.7% of Leon County residents are foreign-born, while both Jefferson and Franklin counties report only 3% of their population are immigrants.

Vulnerable Children: Homelessness The U.S. Department of Education recognizes the impact of early childhood experiences with homelessness on a child's well-being. Several studies describe children who experience homelessness as being at greater risk to also experience high levels of stress, health problems, and need for pediatric care. Community Action Head Start staff provided comprehensive services to 17 children experiencing homelessness during the 2018-

2019 program year. Unfortunately, despite assistance from program staff, only 5 of the 17 families experiencing homelessness acquired housing during the enrollment year. One of Community Action Head Start's long-term program goals is to become the provider of choice for families experiencing homelessness with children 3-5 years old.

Vulnerable Children: Foster Care Sadly, Franklin County was ranked number one in the state for the number of children reported maltreated to authorities during 2016-2017. It is no surprise that some of these children are removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect, and abandonment by their parents and placed into foster care. Community Action Head Start Staff works in partnership with the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) to ensure the safety and well-being of children living within the service and recruitment area. During the 2018-2019 program year Community Action Head Start served 21 children whom were being served or referred by the Florida Department of Children and Families.

Education The number of high school graduates living within the service and recruitment area is higher than the state average in Leon County at 93.2%. Franklin (81.4%) and Jefferson (80.9%) are slightly lower than the 87.6% Florida average. There is a similar trend for adults with a Bachelor's degree or higher with Florida's average at 28.5%, Leon County at 45.5%, Jefferson County at 21.2%, and Franklin County at 18.4%. In stark contrast, 83% of enrolled parents described their highest level of education as a high school graduate or GED or less than high school education (2018-2019 PIR).

Health As noted in the most recent Community Assessment, 20% of Florida's population is uninsured. An estimated one-third of adults, regardless of health insurance coverage, report delay, or go without medical care due to the costs (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2019). Florida's Office of Minority Health and Health Equity cites poor health outcomes for African Americans,

Hispanic Americans, and many other minority groups living in Florida. Minority populations experience higher rates of illness and death from health conditions such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and obesity, to name a few. As seen in the recent PIR, nearly all families enrolled in Community Action Head Start program are considered minorities.

Social Services, Social and Emotional Well-being Repeated exposures can lead to severe and chronic reactions in multiple family members with effects that ripple throughout the family system and, ultimately, society. Research demonstrates that all levels of the family system are impacted. These efforts combined with Florida's Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health utilizes a "no one size fits all" and "no wrong door" approach to service delivery (2018). Big Bend Community Based Care is the Network Management agency responsible for providing quality services to children and their families in northwest Florida for child welfare, substance abuse, mental and behavioral health.

Nutrition Community Action Head Start's Community Assessment describes the food insecurity rates in its service and recruitment area as one of the highest in Florida as well as in the nation. This is particularly true for Leon County, where the food insecurity rate of 19.7% compared to the state average of 13.4%. Consider that 86% of students attending John G Riley Elementary School, near Louise B. Royal and Mabry Head Start Centers, get free or reduced-price lunch. Whereas, the Leon district level reports only 39% of students receive free and reduced lunch. All students living in Monticello qualify to receive free breakfast and lunch from the school district. The Jefferson County School District's approach ensures that every student gets meals which reduces burdens to families living in this community. The Franklin County School District is similar to the statewide average at 53% of students receiving free and reduced lunch.

Child Care Included in the Community Assessment is a list of the child care providers operating within the Community Action Head Start service and recruitment area. Recent statistics released from the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) point to a decrease in the number of licensed child care providers in all three counties. As of August 2019, there are 11 child care providers in Franklin County, 7 in Jefferson County, and 147 child care **providers(why is providers highlighted)** in Leon County. As a result, less than half the eligible children living in rural communities receive early care.

County Child Care Data			
Counties	Franklin	Jefferson	Leon
Providers	11	7	147
Licensed Child Care Capacity	737	336	13,217
VPK Providers	2	4	114
VPK Students Served 17-18	75	55	2054
School Readiness Providers	3	6	92
Gold Seal Centers	1	2	38

Publicly-funded Child Care Free prekindergarten is readily available to all 4-year-olds living in Florida. Parents can choose from private child care centers or public schools as well as school-year or summer programs. There are 114 Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) providers

available in Leon County, four contracted VPK providers in Jefferson County, and two in Franklin County on the approved 2019-2020 list. VPK as a standalone program only provides 540 publicly-funded educational hours to students whereas Community Action Head Start students on VPK receive 1684 educational hours.

Parent Schedules Over half of the single-parent families enrolled in Community Action Head Start, and 84% of the two-parent families reported one or both parents employed in the 2018-2019 program year. One-third of single-parent families and over half of two-parent families are participating in job training or school. There is growing evidence describing the difficulties in balancing the competing needs of work and family life, especially for at-risk families with young children.

3. Chosen Program Option(s) and Funded Enrollment Slots

Capital Area Community Action Agency Head Start program will continue providing center-based services to 378 eligible children and families living in Franklin, Jefferson, and Leon Counties. Policy Council approved 1,144 hours of planned class operations delivered over ten months for 100% of the funded enrollment. Children, ages 3 – 5, are provided 6.5 hours of designed instruction five days a week, for a total of 176 days in the program year. This plan meets the needs of children and families, as well as Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) for center-based service duration requirements. The HS school calendar aligns with the Local Educational Authority (LEA) school year.

In conjunction with the Early Learning Coalition, families can participate in an extended day in Leon county centers. The Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend offers Florida families two distinct programs: Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (specific to four-year old students) and School Readiness (available to three or four-year old youth). In Leon County, up to 160 students

may participate in Early Learning Coalition extended day programs. Centers in Tallahassee operate until 5:15 PM. To assist families in Franklin County the HS program day is extended. Working parents appreciate the coordinated approach to school readiness as well as the high-quality care provided through these wrap-around programs.

4. Centers and Facilities:

Community Action Head Start delivers comprehensive center-based services in 21 classrooms in five centers: Franklin County HS, Jefferson County HS, Louise B Royal HS, Mabry Street HS, and South City HS. Up-to-date information and addresses for each center are available on the “Centers” tab in the HSES system. All facilities and operations meet Florida state child care licensing and square footage requirements, including staff-child ratios, group size, and environmental safety. Qualified staff delivers a full range of services to children and families enrolled in the program.

While there are no proposed changes to service locations, Community Action Head Start is continually reviewing relevant data as well as identifying opportunities for improvement and enhancement. We remain open to community partnerships that align with our commitment to providing quality facilities with safe indoor and outdoor learning environments.

Continuous improvement processes remain in place to ensure children are kept safe at all times in our facilities. All employees at Community Action Head Start follow policies and procedures related to health and safety so that facilities and equipment meet state and federal licensing requirements.

5. Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance

Serving Children with the Greatest Need The Eligibility, Selection, Enrollment, Recruitment, and Attendance (ERSEA) processes are integral to work done by Policy Council

members, enrolled parents, Program Managers, Staff, and community stakeholders to reach and serve the most vulnerable children living in the service and recruitment area. The Board of Directors, Policy Council, and Program Management consider data collected in the Community Assessment to gain a clear picture of current community strengths, needs, and resources when making ERSEA decisions.

The Family and Community Engagement Advisory Committee (which includes enrolled parents, community members, as well as program staff) ensures elements of the ERSEA system, such as updated application and enrollment forms, are reviewed and updated to reflect the approved selection criteria. In addition, this committee meets quarterly to plan and prepare strategies aimed at meeting future family and child needs. Committee members review current processes and community characteristics with a critical eye before putting together annual selection recommendations that prioritize vulnerable children.

Each year the Board of Directors and Policy Council approve a ranking system designed to prioritize children and families with the greatest needs. Current selection criteria ensure priority to children and families living at or below the Federal poverty level or are enrolled in public assistance, children who are homeless, experiencing foster care, eligible for special education and related services, living with grandparents as primary caregivers, children waitlisted for over a year, and single parent households. ‘This is the second time this is stated about the selection criteria.

Recruiting and Serving Vulnerable Children Every effort is made to recruit the children and families most at risk. One of the avenues for outreach to vulnerable families is through collaborative relationships with various community partners like Parents of the Panhandle Information Network (POPIN) to locate and serve parents of children with disabilities.

Other valuable community partners include Cumulus Media, reaching listeners in Leon and Jefferson Counties, and Oyster Radio, broadcasting from the Apalachicola Bay in North Florida. Both these partners, as well as other local television stations, produce quality commercials and public service announcements to promote Community Action Head Start services to a broad audience. Last year, Community Action Head Start children, with the help of Cumulus Media, created a commercial set to a popular country song, *Old Town Road*, that generated increased interest and enthusiasm.

The Cumulus Media partnership also provided Community Action Head Start staff with an opportunity to attend and advertise at Tallahassee's "What Women Want" Expo, a free event with over 100 vendors and 4,000 attendees that features vendors for health and wellness, fashion, and more. Non-traditional venues such as these provide staff with an opportunity to connect with diverse segments of the community.

More traditional methods of recruitment include the following: enrollment banners at all Community Action Head Start Centers, recruitment letters to nearby Early Head Start programs, applications placed with community leaders such as pediatricians, dentists, neighborhood churches, yard signs posted in high traffic areas, and flyers displayed in public schools, clinics, housing communities, community centers, and frequented local businesses. Family Advocates document their efforts while the Family and Community Engagement Manager monitors the program's recruiting activities. These metrics, combined with others, measure the effectiveness of the recruiting processes.

Recruiting and Serving Dual Language Learners A key element in maintaining full enrollment is Community Action Head Start's ability to respond to changing demographics in the surrounding community. Currently, less than 1% of children and families enrolled in the

Community Action Head Start program declare Spanish as the primary language in their home. As more Spanish speaking children enroll in the program, Community Action Head Start is taking a close look at its approach to language and literacy for all children. One component is providing nurturing learning environments that welcome and engage both children and caregivers. In addition to providing written material in English and Spanish, the Dual Language Learner (DLL) Specialist is available to greet families in their home language as well as coach staff in supporting teachers who have Spanish-speaking children in their classrooms.

It was the first day of school, and Roberto was reluctant to leave his child in the classroom until he met the DLL Specialist. She greeted him and his wife in Spanish and began to show the family around the room. It wasn't long before he began to relax and explore the learning environment with his child. Before he left, he approached the DLL Specialist and shared his appreciation for her. He said "I feel better leaving my child knowing that all her needs will be met."

Promoting Regular Attendance In addition to collecting and analyzing attendance data, Capital Area Community Action Agency Head Start program supports regular attendance in several ways. Family services staff receive training on the benefits of consistent attendance and strategies to partner with parents. Families entering the program receive a series of contacts from staff (an invitation to visit the center before school starts, personalized text messages, social media, and similar methods) from family advocates that lay the foundation for positive goal-oriented relationships.

Reaching chronically absent and other vulnerable children There are systems in place to continuously monitor child absences and provide timely follow-up with families. The Family Advocate, Center Director, Family Services Specialist and Teachers coordinate their efforts to

provide individualized support to families, especially to those children who are at risk for missing 10% of the program year. Some examples of the techniques used are regularly monitoring attendance, phone calls to parents, text messages to parents, and one-on-one parent conferences to ensure all Head Start classrooms meet the required 85% attendance percentage each month

6. Education and Child Development

Center-based Curriculum Community Action Head Start will continue using the *Creative Curriculum for Preschool, 6th Edition*, in the upcoming program year. This developmentally appropriate, comprehensive curriculum incorporates current research on the best ways to help children with diverse backgrounds and skill levels succeed. The State of Florida has on adopted Creative Curriculum as on state approved curriculum for early childhood. Community Action Head Start has implemented Creative Curriculum for over 10 years. The State of Florida Office of Early Learning also trains on Creative Curriculum as the curriculum of choice. It features exploration and discovery as a way of learning by intentional teaching and routines, such as a question of the day. The curriculum components include built-in support for all learners, with specific sections of guidance for working with English, and dual-language learners, advanced learners, and children with disabilities.

Supplemental Curriculum The *Conscious Discipline* curriculum integrates social and emotional learning and classroom management. Teachers use this curriculum when planning the learning environment and learning routines. The curriculum materials include songs and routines that facilitate a connection between teachers and students that help children feel safe and ready to learn.

Aligned to Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF): Ages Birth to Five: The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, 6th Edition

As seen on the Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center website (<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/curriculum/consumer-report/curricula/creative-curriculum-preschool-6th-edition>), *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* fully aligns to the ELOF domains and sub-domains. The table below gives a sample of the evidence available to show how

elements in the curriculum support children’s development in each domain. Detailed evidence of teaching strategies is available on the website referenced within the table.

Evidence of Alignment between HSELOF and *Creative Curriculum for Preschool*

Domain	HS.ATL 36-48	Approaches to Learning (36 to 48 Months)
Sub-Domain	Sub-Domain: Cognitive Self-Regulation (Executive Functioning)	
Goal	P-ATL 7.	Child persists in tasks.
Indicator	P-ATL 7.1	<p>Persists on preferred tasks when presented with small challenges with or without adult support, such as continuing to try to build a tall tower with blocks, even when some pieces fall.</p> <p><u>Balls Study</u></p> <p>p. 38 Investigation 2 Day 2 Large Group</p> <p>p. 69 Investigation 5 Day 4 Large Group Roundup</p> <p>p. 69 Investigation 5 Day 4 Small Group</p> <p>p. 70 Investigation 5 Day 5 Large Group</p> <p>p. 68 Investigation 5 Day 4 Large Group</p> <p>p. 70 Investigation 5 Day 5 Choice Time</p>
Full Alignment available at		
https://teachingstrategies.sharefile.com/share/view/s0cb34e67a8248ce8		

Aligned to the ELOF: The *Conscious Discipline* curriculum aligns to the following ELOF Central Domains: Approaches to Learning, Social and Emotional Development, Language and Literacy, and Cognition. This curriculum developed by Dr. Becky Baily is trauma-informed

and outlines evidence-based practices that support positive classroom management, self-regulation, and social-emotional learning.

Evidence of Alignment between ELOF and *Conscious Discipline*

Domain	HS.ATL 36-48	Approaches to Learning (36 to 48 Months)
Sub-Domains	Cognitive Self-Regulation (Executive Functioning) Social and Emotional Development	
Goal	P-ATL 1 P-SE 8	Child manages emotions with increasing independence.
Indicator	P-ATL 7.1 P-SE 8.1 Conscious Discipline Resources, Routines & Structures that Support Goal and Indicator	Expresses feelings in ways that are appropriate to the situation. Safe Place Rock ‘n Roll cube Breathing Commitments Job Chart Greetings I Love You Rituals Feeling Buddies 2 Clear Choices Baby Doll Circle Time
Full Alignment available at https://teachingstrategies.sharefile.com/share/view/s0cb34e67a8248ce8		

Fidelity Over the past program year, the Educational team has taken a deep dive into understanding the importance and role that fidelity has when providing high-quality instruction and responsive interactions to children. Under the guidance of the Training and Technical

Assistance (T/TA) Specialist at Region IV, Head Start created a multi-pronged plan to achieve higher fidelity, provide meaningful individualization, and execute high-quality instruction through intentional teacher-child interactions.

A system of support is in place to develop teaching staff's knowledge and skills to implement the curriculum fully. The program provides teaching staff training on the curriculum. The teaching staff participates in interactive training, where there are opportunities to ask questions and get hands-on practice using the Teaching Strategies GOLD online tools. It is also a chance for teachers to collaborate and discuss teaching and lesson planning strategies with experts and colleagues.

The program has 1 curriculum coach and two practice based coaches. Teachers receive support and feedback from a Curriculum Coach who uses *The Creative Curriculum Preschool Coaching to Fidelity Tool* to assess implementation. After observing, the Curriculum Coach provides teachers with a Teacher Checklist so they can better incorporate new practices into their planning and implementation. The Practice-Based Coach also assesses the implementation of the *Conscious Discipline* curriculum and helps teachers integrate the materials into the classroom environment and daily routines.

Teachers participate in regular CLASS observation cycles and receive mentor-coaching from Practice-Based Coaches. Community Action Head Start was one of the first to implement Practice-Based Coaches which are certified CLASS Observers and have completed the necessary training to fulfill a mentor-coach role. Coaches assist teachers in understanding the data, reflecting on their teaching practices, and developing shared goals and action planning using the Practice-Based Coaching model.

Developmental Screening and Assessment Tools Monitoring how each child grows and

changes over time is part of an overall system to help enrolled children get ready for a lifetime of success. To provide seamless coordination with the Local Education Agency (LEA), Community Action Head Start uses the research-based developmental screening tools used by the LEA in that community.

In collaboration with parents and with prior informed consent, staff located in Jefferson and Franklin Counties complete a developmental screening using the *Battelle Developmental Inventory, Second Edition (BDI-2)*, within the first 45 days. The *BDI-2* is norm-referenced and meets research-based developmental screening requirements as set in the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS).

Children living in Leon County are screened using the *Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning, Fourth Edition (DIAL-4)*. Pearson describes the *DIAL-4* as a “global screener designed to assess groups of children quickly and efficiently.” Like the *BDI-2*, the *DIAL-4* helps parents and teachers decide what course of action to take in planning for each child’s educational needs.

Community Action Head Start preschool teachers are trained to assess and monitor children’s progress to better individualize teaching practices as well as to measure and improve child outcomes. As previously mentioned, Community Action Head Start uses the *Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System*. Teaching Strategies describes this tool as “research-validated and reliable,” it also “provides specific strategies and resources for every type of learner, including dual language learners and those with special needs (<https://teachingstrategies.com/solutions/assess/gold/>, 2019).”

The structured assessments (*Teaching Strategies GOLD*) are given three times each year to all enrolled children. Teachers share results with parents through the *Teaching Strategies*

GOLD online parent portal and in-person either at a home visit or the parent conference at the center. Teaching staff uses the data to individualize instruction for each child and use the aggregated results to inform their teaching practices and lesson planning. Program leadership and Policy Council use data collected through the classroom assessment processes (*Classroom Assessment Scoring System* and *Teaching Strategies Gold*) to inform program planning and goals.

Dual Language Learners Community Action Head Start aims for a coordinated approach to services for dual language learners and their families. The program implements several elements to support effective teaching and responsive care for dual language learners. The program uses a research-based curriculum as well as screening and assessment tools that are culturally and linguistically responsive. Teachers provide welcoming classrooms that reflect diversity through books, and materials that represent families' cultures. The Dual Language Learner Specialist visits each classroom and teaches Spanish to enrolled children. It's not unusual for English speaking children to greet the DLL Specialist in Spanish. In fact, she is known as the "Hola" teacher in one of the centers.

As already described, classes receive regular observations, which also provide insight as to the participation of children who speak a language other than English. The DLL Specialist is an in-house resource to promote culturally and linguistically responsive practices throughout the program.

Family Engagement Effective family engagement practices support children's ongoing development and learning. As such, program staff use everyday interactions and experiences, creative lesson planning, and gathering and sharing information with families in their home and at the center, as core engagement strategies.

In addition to the efforts in section 8 of this grant application, Community Action Head Start takes a number of steps to engage parents. Parents receive access to the Teaching Strategies Parent Portal and are shown how to use the website to view lesson plans and check on their child's progress. This tool increases communication and transparency between teachers and families. There are multiple avenues for parents and caregivers to participate in their child's education, including an annual Meet and Greet to meet their child's current preschool teacher and tour the classroom. Parents can provide input into the curriculum by volunteering in their child's classroom, attending special events, and participating in monthly Parent Meetings. These opportunities may also cultivate relationships with other enrolled parents and develop leadership skills.

Parents and teachers alike enjoy the addition of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) educational experiences that use an integrated approach, and offer hands-on and relevant learning experiences. In addition to introducing the scientific method to classroom interactions, children and parents are given an opportunity to learn about environmental science by attending field trips, hearing from guest speakers, and participating in a science fair. Each of these experiences support families as lifelong educators, and provide parent opportunities to explore and participate in self-discovery with their child.

7. Health

Partnering with Parents Research suggests that lifelong health begins during early childhood. Children develop their cognitive and physical abilities as well as their emotional well-being when they experience safe environments and engage in responsive interactions with supportive caregivers. Community Action Head Start staff teach parents how to support their child's health. Parents learn that this is one of the best ways to help their children learn and grow

up to be healthy adults. Staff partners with parents to meet each child's health needs along with building positive, goal-oriented relationships with parents.

Processes and materials are in place to provide culturally and linguistically responsive services to dual language families. Following best practices, any staff working with families receives training in culturally appropriate methods. We offer a translator during the registration process. Materials are available in the family's native language. Recognizing and accommodating differences, for example, in eating habits and food preferences, demonstrates the strengths-based approach as well as respect.

Up-to-date Child Health Status, Ongoing Care, and Timely Follow-up The Health Services Coordinator and Family Advocates are responsible for collecting, entering, tracking and monitoring health data into a secure encrypted database. Within 30 days of enrollment, staff determine the health status of each child as described in HSPPS 1302.42. If a child does not have access to care, the Family and Community Engagement Team assists families in accessing coverage and care, as soon as possible. Program procedures ensure that the health requirements are met within mandated timelines. Families whose child may have additional medical or oral health needs receive individualized support to ensure their child receives the treatment and care recommended by a healthcare professional. Support may take the form of referrals, scheduling and arranging transportation to healthcare or oral healthcare appointments, obtaining prescribed medication and equipment, or providing funding for care when no other source of funding is available.

It is essential to note the role of the Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) in the program. This group of Community Action Head Start advisory staff, community healthcare professionals, and parents help to foster partnerships with local health providers in the

community. Experts serving in this capacity help inform policy, procedures, and daily practices related to the health, oral health, mental health, and nutrition services provided in our agency.

Oral Health In addition to modeling and teaching good oral health practices in the classroom, Capital Area Community Action Agency partners with the Florida Department of Health Leon County Dental Clinic-Molar Express (serving Leon and Jefferson Counties) and PanCare Mobile Dental Unit (serving Franklin County) to provide preventative oral health care on-site at each of the Community Action Head Start Centers. Children with written parent consent receive dental cleaning and fluoride treatment from licensed dental health staff. Families receive results and a description of recommended follow-up care. Program staff is available to aid with transportation and scheduling to ensure children receive the recommended care.

Nutritional Health For preschoolers attending Community Action Head Start, there is a strong emphasis on between nutrition and physical activity. The Health Services Coordinator and Registered Dietitian provide culturally relevant nutritional services to support families. This process initially takes the form of an in-person interview with parents to gather information as to the child's general health, eating habits, individual, cultural and religious preferences, and allergies. The program also contract with a local sports academy to provide structured physical activity.

Mental Health, Social and Emotional Well-being The program provides a multifaceted approach to children's social and emotional well-being as well as their mental health needs. We communicate with parents early in the year about the mental health resources in the program. These resources include a Mental Health Consultant and a Multidisciplinary Team comprised of teaching staff, a family advocate, and a mental health consultant.

Family Advocates are in a unique position to build positive relationships with parents and

support health and well-being. All parents are encouraged to attend Parent Meetings. These monthly meetings provide information and resources on several topics, including mental health. The program also offers, Parents as Partners meetings which are designed to discuss social issues specific to the participants, which include a Mental Health therapist.

Teaching staff receive support for effective classroom management and creating positive learning environments by way of practice-based coaching and through regularly scheduled support from the Mental Health Consultant. As a matter of practice, parents are informed about the mental health consultation services during enrollment. The Mental Health Consultant performs weekly observations and provides consultation services in the home if needed. Referrals to outside mental health resources and services are provided as necessary. Bi-weekly self-care exercises and activities available to educators provided by the Special Services Coordinator and Mental Health therapists.

Safe and Secure Environments Community Action Head Start is committed to ensuring that enrolled children can learn and play in safe and secure nurturing environments. Staff are receiving training to ensure all facilities operated by Community Action Head Start meet or exceed health and safety standards as outlined in federal and state regulations. High-quality care for young children relies on consistent, basic health and safety practices designed to improve their overall health and well-being. Some of these practices include pre-service training and orientation consisting of first aid and CPR training as well as training in universal precautions and child abuse and neglect education. Procedures in cleaning, routines for oral hygiene, medication administration and storage, and ensuring facilities, supplies, and equipment are monitored to ensure they are safe and in good condition.

8. Family and Community Engagement

Key Strategies to Engage and Partner with Families Parents often enroll their child in Community Action Head Start expecting that this preschool experience will give their child the skills they need to be successful. They may not be aware of the critical role that they, as parents and caregivers, play in their success. At Community Action Head Start, we begin showcasing the significance of their role in the Family Partnership Agreement process. Using a two-generational approach, we assess the enrolled child and family's strengths, needs, and interests. We build relationships with families incrementally through a series of positive interactions that are culturally and linguistically responsive. Initially, these exchanges include how we answer the phone, greet families, and create inclusive environments in which they feel safe.

Everyone in the program, Policy Council, management, instructional staff, health, and family services personnel, play a role in promoting and engaging families. Teachers provide parents with strategies to use with their child at home as well as timely tips (benefits of regular attendance, pedestrian safety) in a monthly handout called Parents Point of Interest, weekly classroom newsletters, and the Parent Engagement Coordinator produces monthly newsletters for parents. The online *Teaching Strategies Gold Parent Portal* connects parents to what's going on in the classroom, along with our *Ready Rosie* active family engagement system. *Ready Rosie* allows families to extend the learning environment into their home through molded moment videos which provide simple to use tools and support.

One final strategy involves getting parents involved in the Family and Community Engagement Advisory Committee. This group of parents and staff work toward improving parent engagement and developing community partnerships at the program level. Each center gives parents an opportunity to sign up and serve throughout the program year.

Father Engagement In the previous grant cycle, the Family and Community Engagement

Manager and Parent Engagement Coordinator developed a male engagement group for enrolled fathers (or father figures) and his children. Activities were planned to celebrate and support fathers as lifelong educators and first teachers of their children. There are plans to continue to provide new opportunities to fathers and father figures.

Parenting Curriculum With input from enrolled parents and the Policy Council, we selected the research-based Incredible Years parenting curriculum. This curriculum teaches parents how to build school readiness skills, practice these skills, and partner with teachers. Skills include learning to give sufficient praise, establishing predictable routines and boundaries to promote responsibility, and strategies to manage negative behaviors. Program staff have witnessed compelling transformations in the parents who practice these strategies.

Consider Gerald, his son James, and James' son Jayden. Before enrolling in the Capital Area Community Action Agency Head Start program, Gerald, the grandfather, may have described his three-generation household as chaotic or at least complicated. As the patriarch of the family, Gerald was a father to his son and his grandson. After prompting from his father, James enrolled Jayden in Head Start, where both father and grandfather participated in the 14-week *Incredible Years* parenting class.

According to both Gerald and James, attending this parenting course was “the best thing we could have ever done.” Not only did it help James become a more engaged parent, but he also strengthened the relationship between James and his father, Gerald. Each week Gerald was so proud to report the changes in his house as he watched his son become a father. Like the time he watched his son help his grandson learn to write his name. A combination of a curriculum implemented with fidelity, support from Community Action Head Start Staff, and

James' effort gave him the confidence and tools to be a great parent.

Family and Community Partnerships Community Action Head Start has developed strong community partnerships within the three-county service area. These partnerships have proven to be invaluable to enrolled parents and families who rely on both formal and informal support to overcome obstacles. The relationships built over the years with public and private service providers foster positive connections. Something as simple as knowing someone's name can make a big difference.

Building positive, goal-oriented relationships with parents starts at intake and enrollment. The Family Advocate learns about each family's hopes and dreams for their future, assesses their strengths and needs, and helps develop these into specific goals with clear action steps and timelines. They also work with the families and recommend if necessary other programs within the agency such as the Family Self Sufficiency Program, Getting Ahead and Weatherization. The Family Advocate aligns the family goals and program activities to Family Engagement Outcomes described in the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework.

Partnerships with families evolve over the program year. Not all families are the same. Initially, some demonstrate little interest in developing goals for their children or themselves. Other families have a clear vision and hope for success. Regardless of how the relationship begins, Community Action Head Start staff communicate and check-in with caregivers throughout the year to encourage growth and support positive change.

9. Services for Children with Disabilities

Ensuring Full Participation Educational Staff, Special Services, and Center Directors ensure full participation for all enrolled children, including children with disabilities, by individualizing instruction. Through the screening and assessment process (completed within the

first 45 days of attendance), teaching staff gets to know each child's interests, needs, and abilities. The educational team partners with parents to create opportunities for learning in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The goal is to build on each child's interest, scaffold learning through supportive interactions, and monitor progress toward goals to support a positive outcome.

Individualizing Services For children with identified disabilities, teachers follow the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) set forth by the Local Educational Agency (LEA); and participate in IEP conferences as part of the child's multidisciplinary team to ensure all needs and services are provided appropriately. These services are not limited to those eligible for services under IDEA, provided parents give written consent to their child receiving special services.

There is no wrong door to begin the assessment and referral process. Any child suspected of a developmental delay or Specific Learning Disability (SLD) under IDEA may be referred for further evaluation upon prior written parental consent. Services may include but are not limited to, speech therapy and occupational therapy. Community Action Head Start ensures that the individualized needs of all children are met so that they may participate in the full range of activities available in the program.

Collaborating with Parents A core component of providing high-quality early care and education is the shared responsibility between families, Community Action Head Start, and community partners to achieve positive child outcomes. Early on in the registration process, Community Action Head Start staff shares information with parents about all of the comprehensive services as well as the screening and assessment process. We encourage a back and forth exchange of information during intake, where we ask questions and listen while parents tell us about their child. Parents are an essential part of the team that considers information about

the child's development, eligibility determination, and appropriate educational goals and services for their child.

The Special Services Coordinator is responsible for maximizing the learning opportunities for children with disabilities in the LRE, along with overseeing the screening and assessment processes. The Special Services Coordinator encourages the parent's role as primary educators and walks them through the eligibility process. Parents must give their informed written consent before any evaluation and have the right to refuse at any time.

Community Partnerships Community Action Head Start partners with Parents of the Panhandle Information Network (POPIN). As described on their website, POPIN "provides parent training and information services that help ensure parents of children with the full range of disabilities have the training and information they need to prepare their children for school and life." Parents receive support from other families who have had similar Experiences and learn how to advocate for their children effectively.

There is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Lead Education Agencies in each of the three counties within the Community Action Head Start service area. These formal agreements are cornerstones that provide clear expectations as to the roles and responsibilities of Community Action Head Start and LEA professionals.

10. Transition

Transition Strategies Teachers, parents, and community members all play a role in helping children succeed across systems. On an administrative level, Community Action Head Start school readiness goals align with state early learning guidelines and the requirements set by local schools. Aligned preschool and kindergarten expectations mean children leave Community Action Head Start ready for school. We use several strategies to support children and families

through transitions.

Transitioning from preschool to kindergarten begins in the fall when parents receive a questionnaire designed to increase their knowledge of the skills their child needs to succeed in elementary school. Teachers provide additional information to parents throughout the year and give them practical ways they can prepare their children. In the classroom, teachers use *Creative Curriculum's "Getting Ready for Kindergarten"* and *Ready Rosie*. The *Ready Rosie* modules include materials that are given to families to use at home to lend additional support in the upcoming transition. Whenever possible, teachers arrange for the children to visit the transitioning classrooms.

Children receiving services through a LEA under IDEA receive additional support from the Special Services Coordinator. These children and families transition according to a timeline that includes collaboration activities with the school district specialists. Transitions are designed to promote positive relationships and prepare both the child and family for the new setting and services.

11. Services to Enrolled Pregnant Women

We continue to provide a center-based Head Start program option for children ages 3 – 5. As such, services to pregnant women are not applicable.

12. Transportation

As reported in the 2018-2019 PIR, Community Action Head Start does not provide transportation services at this time. Currently, all of the Head Start Centers in Leon County are located on a public transportation route, thereby providing access to families with no motor vehicle. Jefferson and Franklin Counties have no mass transit option. As part of the family partnership agreement process, staff works with families to identify needs, including

transportation, to ensure children have reliable transport to support regular attendance.

Parents unable to provide transportation to medical and dental appointments may be provided transportation assistance in many forms depending on their county of residence. Families may request transportation services to attend parent meetings, workshops, or family engagement events. Bus passes are as needed via Family Self Sufficiency Program/ Getting Ahead. When possible, we encourage networking between families and provide public transportation schedules.

SUB-SECTION C. Governance, Organizational, and Management Structures

1. Governance

Structure

The Governing Body (Board of Directors) for the Community Action Head Start maintains compliance with 45 CFR Part 1301 and Section 642(c)-(d) in the Head Start Act by way of By-Laws, written policies and appropriate representation. Currently, the Board of Directors consists of a Financial Expert (Pam Ridley, a successful small businesswoman), an Early Childhood Education Expert (Lauren Johnson, who also serves on the Policy Council), and a Legal Expert (Lisa Edgar, a lawyer and faculty at the University of Florida College of Law). All members of the Board of Directors either reside or work within our service and recruitment area. Additionally, the Community Action Board of Directors meets the legal requirements outlined in the Economic Opportunity Act for Community Action Agencies. According to these federal statutes, the governing board of directors must consist of at least one-third low-income community members, one-third public officials, and up to one-third private sector leaders. This is

known as a tripartite board.

The Board of Directors maintains its legal and fiscal responsibility for ensuring activities and funds are used according to Federal regulations. Budgetary reports and corresponding financial transactions are reviewed and monitored monthly. Members also establish processes to track non-federal share, avoid duplication of funding, provide adequate internal controls, and assess risk. There have been no significant findings on fiscal audits or external reviews in the previous year.

The Policy Council (PC) represents the three diverse counties with parents whose children are currently enrolled in the program elected by families also enrolled in the program. A parent representative and an alternate representative per every 50 children from each center are chosen to serve on the Policy Council. Also included on Policy Council is a representative from the Board of Directors and members at large who include former enrolled parents who still live or work within the program boundaries. Currently, the community representatives also provide linkages to Parents of the Panhandle Information Network, State of Florida's Child Support Division, and Children's Medical Services because of their current employment.

Processes

a. Governing Body

Decision-making Process The Community Action Head Start Board of Directors meets bi-monthly with the Executive Committee meeting in the other month. They receive key information monthly to conduct their work and use data to provide oversight and oversee progress towards program goals. Sources include the community assessment and self-assessment, ongoing monitoring results, financial reports, school readiness results, ERSEA reports, and updated program information. There are policies and procedures in place for sound

fiscal management. The Board of Directors hires an independent auditing firm to prepare and submit a federal program financial audit to the Board and funders.

b. Policy Council and Policy Committee

Sharing Key Information Policy Council is responsible for setting the direction of the Community Action Head Start program. Policy Council representatives serve as leaders and advocates for children and families both in and out of the program. It meets monthly to conduct the required tasks related to the responsibilities as outlined in Section 642(c)(2)(D) of the Act, including hiring decisions and approving recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities.

Policy Council members receive training on how to use data in the decision-making process and apply this to the annual planning cycle. Similar to the process with the Board of Directors, members receive written reports before the regularly scheduled meetings. In addition to the written reports, the governing bodies receive verbal reports from program leadership and content area specialists (Family and Community Manager, Education Coordinator, and Quality Assurance Manager). Both Head Start governing bodies are united in their work to achieve positive outcomes related to the program and school readiness goals.

c. Parent Committees

Collaborative Partnership Parents and caregivers of enrolled children are invited to participate in monthly Parent Committee meetings where they receive updates on program operations. They also hear news from the governing bodies and are given opportunities to provide input into upcoming parent and family activities. For those parents unable to attend Parent Meetings, Board of Directors and Policy Council agenda and minutes are posted online for their review.

Parents are encouraged to share their ideas about their child's education as well as

program operations. Leadership often starts with small steps, which, in turn, leads to bigger steps. For example, recently, parents provided feedback that they wanted to change the parent meeting schedule. This small change resulted in more parents attending regular meetings. At another center, parents expressed a desire for cultural diversity training. This training provided an opportunity to assess the program's current strengths and opportunities for growth in culturally and linguistically responsive services to all children and families. Parents at one of the Tallahassee centers expressed concern about the location and condition of their center. This action led to further fact-finding by the Policy Council, Program Management, and Board of Directors. This data-driven process fueled by parent engagement ended in relocating the center.

Relationships

Training and Technical Assistance Members of the Community Action Head Start Board of Directors and Policy Council participate in comprehensive Governance Training at the beginning of each year. This training includes a review of their roles and ongoing responsibilities, instruction in the shared governance process (including using data found in the Community Assessment and Self-Assessment to inform decisions), ERSEA systems management, Non-federal Share, as well as strategies to ensure sensitivity and culturally responsive service delivery.

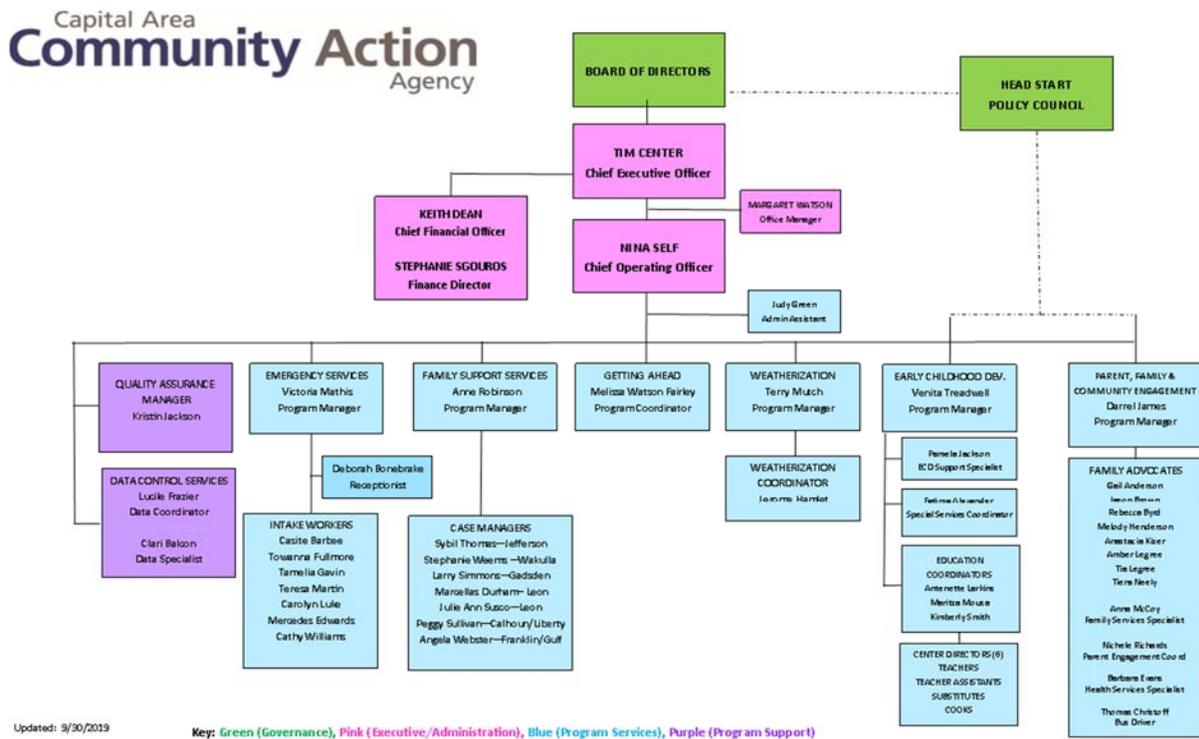
Conflict of Interest Conflict of interest is a critical component of the initial training to the Board of Directors and Policy Council members. Community Action Head Start program policies ensure that governing body members and staff adhere to the highest levels of integrity to ensure that no conflict of interest exists.

Effective Communication Practices such as having a member of the Board of Directors attend Policy Council meetings are an indication of the meaningful collaboration between the

two governing bodies. There is a cooperative working relationship between the Community Action Board of Directors, Head Start Management, and Policy Council members. Head Start Management is open and transparent in all communication with stakeholders.

2. Human Resources Management

Organizational Chart The organizational chart illustrates the flow of responsibility and lines of formal communication within the Community Action Head Start program.



Criminal Background Checks The Board of Directors and Head Start Policy Council approve all new hires contingent upon the screening results from the required Level II criminal background check. There are fail-safe procedures in place to ensure all background screening requirements are met for all staff, consultants, and contractors prior to hire or commencement of a contract. Office staff as well as Center Directors verify that all adults with frequent access to children have had a comprehensive background check before they are allowed access to children in the program. According to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), a Level 2

Background Check screening is a state and national fingerprint-based check and consideration of disqualifying offenses and applies to those employees designated by law as holding positions of responsibility or trust. The screening is flagged for the results to be reviewed for childcare purposes. This triggers the review by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). After reviewing, DCF determines if the applicant is clear to work in childcare and that there were no allegations of abuse, abandonment, or neglect of a child. Head Start employees are required to have a Level II background check updated every five years.

Orientation There is a symmetry between welcoming families into the Community Action Head Start program and welcoming new employees. Both processes focus on building trust and providing them with the information they need to feel prepared and supported. Returning and newly hired program staff and consultants participate in an orientation to learn the goals and underlying philosophy of the program and prepare them for their role in implementing these principles. Orientation and onboarding training are tailored to each position and provided by specialists throughout the organization, the Florida Department of Children and Families, and outside professionals, as needed. In addition to the required training as described in HSPPS 1302.92, staff receive the Employee Policy and Procedure manual, organizational chart, and must agree to abide by the program's Standards of Conduct.

Volunteers receive comprehensive orientation training from their center director or designee to ensure consistency throughout the program. The following is a partial list of the topics covered in volunteer training: Head Start philosophy and program goals, child abuse and neglect reporting, responsibilities and role of the volunteer, dress code, and Standards of Conduct.

Consultants often go through orientation alongside staff, as many of the topics are the

same. Additional topics for consultants include information regarding their state licensure, healthcare liability insurance, fiscal responsibilities and procedures, and required documentation of services. Upon completion of the onboarding process, consultants participate in Advisory meetings, staff training, and parent meetings, as required by their role in the organization.

Professional Development and Mentor-Coaching There are measurable benefits to the Community Action Head Start's systematic approach to staff training and professional development. Chief among these are positive school readiness outcomes for enrolled children and positive PFCE outcomes for enrolled families. Community Action Head Start takes a multi-pronged approach to professional development.

Each year Program Management analyzes data collected from the Self-Assessment, Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observations, aggregated child assessment scores, and PFCE outcomes to identify training and technical assistance (T/TA) needs of all staff. The T/TA plan details the pre-service, in-service, and mentor-coaching opportunities available throughout the program year.

Early Childhood Education leaders use assessment outcomes to inform current practice including the 2018-2019 CLASS scores. Upcoming training plans include further training in the program's curricula to increase fidelity. Components of T/TA plan are outlined in the Program Management and Quality Improvement section below.

Community Action continues to receive individualized T/TA support from the Region IV Specialist. Their expertise in classroom interactions, CLASS, instructional support tools, as well as their support and encouragement, has been invaluable in helping the program gain traction and move toward more significant positive outcomes for children.

In addition, classroom teachers may participate in mentor-coaching which is the highest

level of professional development. The process includes planning and action steps, focused observations, and reflective feedback. It is a proven way to improve teaching practices that lead to positive outcomes for children. Results from a research-based assessment tool (CLASS Observation) identify teachers that would benefit most from intensive coaching. These teachers are placed in Tier 3 and receive the highest level of support. The goal is to bolster each teacher's transformation to high performance, Tier 1.

One challenge to providing quality coaching is working with the few staff who appear resistant to change. Implementing curriculum with increased fidelity and using observational data often results in recommendations that teachers try new strategies and abandon old routines. This process takes energy, dedication, and trust. The Education Coordinators are using these relationships as opportunities to improve their skills and practice different approaches so these few will develop high-quality teaching practices to use in the classroom.

3. Program Management and Quality Improvement

Oversight, Correction, and Assessment In collaboration with the Board of Directors and Policy Council, Program Managers and the Quality Assurance Manager, oversee program operations, carry out program initiatives and monitor the comprehensive services provided to children and families. Continuous improvement procedures are reviewed annually using the self-assessment process to ensure compliance with the HSPPS as well as state and local regulations.

Continuous Improvement in Professional Development CLASS data collected by Community Action Head Start revealed low CLASS scores. Program Administrators shared this data with managers, governing bodies, Policy Council, and staff. Faced with this hard truth (looking at the information), the first step was to acknowledge that current plans to achieve positive student outcomes were not working. Through analysis (, we also recognized that the data

identified agency-wide strengths as well as challenges. The program used the continuous improvement process. We began asking different questions, seeking guidance from Region IV T/TA office, talking about the data, reviewing the research on the importance of teacher-child interactions, and soliciting input from teaching staff. These tasks were necessary to develop targeted professional development plans aimed at corrective action. Listed below is a brief outline of the corrective action plan to improve the quality of teacher-child interactions as measured with the Classroom Assessment Scoring System.

1. Implement a robust coaching system that promotes evidence-based practices and enhances classroom teaching practices. There are currently three coaches: one Curriculum Coach, two Practice-based Coaches.
2. Educational Coaching staff participate in professional development and receive on-going support from subject matter experts on the following: Creative Curriculum Coaching to Fidelity, Conscious Discipline Coaching Rubric for Teachers, engaging classroom environments.
3. Utilize the six CLASS Certified observers on staff to help teachers improve their interactions with students and, in turn, help children make more significant gains.
4. Teaching staff will increase collaboration with Family Engagement team to increase regular student attendance and family engagement in the program. Strategies will include better communication strategies between Classroom Teachers and Family Advocates as well as with parents and caregivers.
5. Head Start Center Directors will participate in leadership training. Center Directors help the program sustain lasting positive change by providing greater accountability and engagement with families.

6. Targeted teacher training to address challenging behaviors, early intervention, and trauma-informed care.

Budget and Staffing Patterns Community Action Management uses data received throughout the program year to drive programmatic decisions to meet current program needs, goals, and objectives. The budget is closely monitored by management staff to ensure that staffing patterns promote continuity of care, provide sufficient time for staff participation in training and professional development, and allow for a full range of services.

A successful cost-saving strategy has been to partner with other childhood education stakeholders in the community to provide high-quality training opportunities on relevant topics such as trauma-informed care, Creative Curriculum, and others. These community partners include Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend, Whole Child Leon, Leon School District, United Partners for Human Services, Florida Head Start Association, Region IV Head Start Association, and our HHS Regional Program Manager Specialist.

Health and Safety Practices A key feature of the program's approach to health and safety is ongoing data collection and monitoring. In order to promote a culture of safety the program has implemented a system where maintenance request and incident/accident reports are recoded into our data management system. Problems are addressed and corrected immediately to ensure safety. However, data from both the maintenance request and incident/accident reports is aggregated and shared with the program's leadership team so the team may use trends in the data to prioritize needs and help design suggestions for improvement. If needed The Quality Assurance Manager oversees follow-up and follow-through of corrective actions and reports the status of corrective actions back to the leadership team.