



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

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Program Performance Summary Report

To: Authorizing Official/Board Chairperson

Mr. Greg Jones
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525 North 4th Street
Vincennes, IN 47591 - 0687

From: Responsible HHS Official

Date: 03/24/2021

**On behalf of Dr. Bernadine Futrell
Director, Office of Head Start**

From February 8, 2021 to February 11, 2021, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted a Focus Area Two (FA2) monitoring review of the Pace Community Action Agency, Inc. Head Start and Early Head Start programs. This report contains information about the grantee's performance and compliance with the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) or Public Law 110-134, *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*.

The Office of Head Start (OHS) would like to thank your governing body, policy council, parents, and staff for their engagement in the review process. Based on the information gathered during this review, we have found your program meets the requirements of all applicable HSPPS, laws, regulations, and policy requirements.

Please contact your Regional Office for guidance should you have any questions or concerns. Your Regional Office will follow up on the content of this report and can work with you to identify resources to support your program's continuous improvement.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE REPORT

Copies of this report will be distributed to the following recipients:

Ms. Karen McNamara, Regional Program Manager
Dr. Bertha Proctor, Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director
Ms. Angela Lange, Head Start Director
Ms. Angela Lange, Early Head Start Director

Glossary of Terms

Opportunity for Continuous Improvement (OCI)	<p>An OCI is identified when the grantee is determined compliant in an area; however, through intentional, continuous improvement strategies, the agency has the opportunity to enhance overall program quality.</p>
Area of Noncompliance (ANC)	<p>An ANC is identified when the grantee is out of compliance with a specific federal requirement. The grantee is given a specified corrective action timeline wherein the ANC must be fully corrected. If not corrected within the specified timeline, the uncorrected ANC becomes a deficiency.</p>
Deficiency	<p>As defined in the Head Start Act, the term "deficiency" means:</p> <p>(A) a systemic or substantial material failure of an agency in an area of performance that the Secretary determines involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a threat to the health, safety, or civil rights of children or staff; (ii) a denial to parents of the exercise of their full roles and responsibilities related to program operations; (iii) a failure to comply with standards related to early childhood development and health services, family and community partnerships, or program design and management; (iv) the misuse of funds received under this subchapter; (v) loss of legal status (as determined by the Secretary) or financial viability, loss of permits, debarment from receiving Federal grants or contracts, or the improper use of Federal funds; or (vi) failure to meet any other Federal or State requirement that the agency has shown an unwillingness or inability to correct, after notice from the Secretary, within the period specified; <p>(B) systemic or material failure of the governing body of an agency to fully exercise its legal and fiduciary responsibilities; or</p> <p>(C) an unresolved area of noncompliance.</p>



Program Management and Quality Improvement

Program Management

The grantee establishes a management structure consisting of staff, consultants, or contractors who ensure high-quality service delivery; have sufficient knowledge, training, experience, and competencies to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of their positions; and provide regular supervision and support to staff.

Ongoing Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

The grantee uses data to identify program strengths, needs, and areas needing improvement; evaluate progress toward achieving program goals and compliance with program performance standards; and assess the effectiveness of professional development.

Program Governance

The policy council is engaged in the direction of the program, including program design and planning of goals and objectives.

The grantee maintains a formal structure of program governance to oversee the quality of services for children and families and to make decisions related to program design and implementation.

Program Management and Quality Improvement Summary

Pace Community Action Agency's management and governance structure supported quality service delivery. The management team contained staff who participated in assessing the program's performance and established goals. More specifically, data was reviewed from staff surveys, reflective supervision, monitoring, child assessments, and classroom observations. Based on these data, professional development opportunities were coordinated to enhance teachers' and home visitors' skills. Staff members were also encouraged to individualize their learning experiences to promote children's development. Additionally, the management team was encouraged to hone their supervisory skills through advanced coursework. The governing board and the policy council, which included parents and community representatives, joined management in overseeing content areas. Both groups participated in internal and external training, including state and national Head Start and Early Head Start conferences, which informed relevant decision-making. Lastly, members of the policy council and board had access to program data reports that allowed them to make decisions in the best interest of enrolled children and families. The oversight and supervision of program operations by the governing bodies and management team led to quality service delivery.

Pace Community Action Agency, Inc. analyzed data to remain responsive to community and program concerns. In collaboration with the policy council and the board, staff members examined enrollment and waitlist data and found a need to reallocate existing program slots to an area where vulnerable families needed services but lacked quality care options. Stakeholders also recognized the importance of retaining staff to offer continuity of care for children and families. Home visitors' exit interviews highlighted their dissatisfaction with using personal vehicles for transportation to home visits. As a result, the grantee purchased program vehicles for home visitors' use and saw the turnover rate for home visitors drop from 40 to 10 percent. The grantee used the same data analysis practices to respond to children and families' service delivery preferences during the pandemic, which led to the implementation of virtual services. The program continuously improved its responsive services through input from the policy council, governing board, and management team.



Monitoring and Implementing Quality Education and Child Development Services

Alignment with School Readiness

The grantee's school readiness efforts align with the expectations of receiving schools, the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF), and State early learning standards.

Effective and Intentional Teaching Practices

The grantee's teaching practices intentionally promote progress toward school readiness and provide high-quality learning experiences for children.

Supporting Teachers in Promoting School Readiness

The grantee prepares teachers to implement the curriculum and support children's progress toward school readiness.

Home-based Program Services

The grantee ensures home-based program services provide home visits, and group socialization activities provide high-quality learning experiences.

Monitoring and Implementing Quality Education and Child Development Services Summary

Pace Community Action Agency, Inc.'s school readiness committee, partnerships with local schools, and scaffolded educational approaches enhanced children's school readiness skills and prepared them for a smooth transition to kindergarten. Pace Community Action Agency, Inc.'s school readiness committee included parents, teachers, public school officials, health officials, and social workers. Working together, committee members used their vast experience and expertise to help the program develop school readiness goals aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, state early learning standards, and receiving schools' expectations. Teachers were supported by receiving individualized coaching and the opportunity to shadow proficient coworkers. They also had access to self-assessments, which outlined their professional needs. These skill-building opportunities helped them create educational experiences aimed at enhancing children's development. Supervisors met regularly with teachers to reflect on their teaching practices, provide feedback on their weekly lesson plans, and ensure the curriculum was implemented as intended. Teachers also analyzed data that captured children's individual and collective progress across several domains. For example, rhyming was identified as an area for improvement based on the grantee's school readiness data, which reflected 50 percent of children met or exceeded this standard in spring 2019. The education specialist worked with teachers to focus on this area through additional activities and support. After these concentrated efforts were put into place, the spring assessment results indicated 74 percent of transitioning children had met developmental expectations for rhyming. As a result of COVID-19, educational services moved to Zoom and E-Learning for Kids platforms to incorporate virtual instruction. Families were provided with HATCH electronic tablets and activities to promote learning within the home, which also increased parent-child interaction. Intentional teaching practices, as well as school readiness goals, were in place prior to and during the pandemic to help children enhance their school readiness.



Monitoring and Implementing Quality Health Services

Child Health Status and Care

The grantee effectively monitors and maintains timely information on children's health status and care including ongoing sources of health care, preventive care, and follow-up.

Mental Health

The grantee supports a program-wide culture that promotes mental health and social and emotional well-being, and uses mental health consultation to support staff.

Oral Health and Nutrition

The grantee maintains and monitors for effective oral health practices and nutrition services that meet the nutritional needs and accommodate feeding requirements and allergies.

Safety Practices

The grantee implements a process for monitoring and maintaining healthy and safe environments.

Services to Pregnant Women

Not Applicable.

Monitoring and Implementing Quality Health Services Summary

Pace Community Action Agency, Inc.'s health and safety practices supported children's growth, development, and safety. At enrollment, family specialists and home visitors met with parents to discuss the importance of maintaining up-to-date medical tests and screenings and reviewed community resources to secure medical and dental homes if needed. Family specialists helped parents obtain health services for children, including arranging transportation to and from appointments. Children's health data were tracked in ChildPlus, and reviewed by the health manager, who monitored health requirements and due dates. The agency identified barriers to families getting well-child checks during the pandemic. To assist families with obtaining exams, the agency collaborated with local nurse practitioners and hosted an outdoor health fair. Despite COVID-19, ten percent of enrolled families took advantage of the opportunity to complete a well-child visit. The grantee also contracted with a licensed mental health consultant who met regularly with the mental health coordinator and staff to conduct observations, share strategies for managing challenging behaviors, and identify interventions. The behavioral support specialist position was newly created and offered teachers additional support for addressing children's mental health and behavioral concerns. Lastly, facilities, playgrounds, and equipment checklists were completed daily, weekly, and monthly. When repairs were needed, maintenance requests were submitted and tracked by the maintenance team to ensure a timely response. The program displayed a system for capturing and tracking children's health needs, enforcing safe facilities, and addressing mental health concerns.



Monitoring and Implementing Quality Family and Community Engagement Services

Family Well-being

The grantee collaborates with families to support family well-being, parents' aspirations, and parents' life goals.

Strengthening Parenting and Parent-Child Supports

The grantee provides services that strengthen parent-child relationships and support parents in strengthening parenting skills.

Family Engagement in Education and Child Development Services

The grantee provides education and child development services that recognize parents' roles as children's lifelong educators and encourage parents to engage in their child's education.

Monitoring and Implementing Quality Family and Community Engagement Services Summary

The grantee supported parents' personal goals and families' well-being. To begin the family engagement process, a family service specialist completed a strengths and needs assessment with parents. From this activity, parents were encouraged to create goals and attainable objectives. As goals were developed, the program provided community resources to support families goal attainment and included referrals to food banks, career planning, housing assistance, and financial literacy training. The program stored documentation and tracked progress toward family goals using ChildPlus. As families attained goals, new ones were created. Using the Positive Solutions for Families curriculum and associated activity handouts, parents learned to facilitate positive interactions with their children. Surveys indicated parents' primary desire was for their children to be ready for kindergarten. In addition to involving parents in their child's educational journey, the program also encouraged their participation in activities to strengthen their parenting skills, including their ability to teach their child. For example, parents learned the value of adding props to enhance storytime and how to incorporate magnetic tiles in learning activities.

A grant-funded literacy program with male volunteers called Super MENTors, read aloud to children in center-based settings. Additional parent connection opportunities included the Mothers, Aunts, Grandmas, and Inspirational Caregivers (MAGIC) organization, family meetings, and participation in the policy council. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the grantee used Zoom to engage parents and host workshops. Sessions were recorded for those who could not attend, which allowed more parents to participate. Because of these family engagement strategies, 14 of 17 job-seeking parents subsequently obtained employment. Multiple resources and engagement strategies helped parents attain their goals, improve well-being, and achieve positive family outcomes.



Monitoring and Implementing Fiscal Infrastructure

Budget Planning and Development

The grantee develops and implements its budget to sustain management, staffing structures, and the delivery of services that support the needs of enrolled children and families.

Ongoing Fiscal Capacity

The grantee plans and implements a fiscal management system that supports the organization's ongoing capacity to execute its budget over time and meet the needs of its organization.

Budget Execution

The grantee's financial management system provides for effective control over and accountability for all funds, property, and other assets.

Facilities and Equipment

The grantee complies with application, prior approval, and reporting requirements for facilities purchased, constructed, or renovated with Head Start funds.

Monitoring and Implementing Fiscal Infrastructure Summary

The grantee's fiscal capacity and structure allowed for effective budget development and oversight of federal funds to improve children and families' outcomes. The chief financial officer began the budget development process with a review of program goals, objectives, the community assessment, and historical data. The Head Start and Early Head Start director provided their input on the budget before a draft was submitted to the chief executive officer. It was then reviewed and submitted to the Board's finance committee. Upon obtaining approval from the finance committee, the budget was provided to the full Board. The chief financial officer used Blackburn Edge Accounting software to account for federal assets, produce financial reports for the policy council and Board, and comply with financial rules and regulations. Financial statements generated by the fiscal staff helped management and program staff understand costs associated with each grant. This helped inform their decisions about resource allocations to promote quality services and goal attainment. One quality improvement initiative discussed by leadership staff was the employment of a behavior support specialist to strengthen the behavior support team's work. Additionally, the program's goal of increasing children's school readiness required adjusting federal resources to meet the state's hourly wage increases and aligning a new wage scale to equalize salaries. These changes also positioned the program to pursue highly qualified teaching staff. During COVID-19, the program used Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds to secure electronic tablets for children's virtual learning. The purchase and use of new technology and practices also improved communication with staff and families. This resulted in children and families continuing to receive services remotely by qualified staff during the pandemic. The grantee maintained a transparent and collaborative fiscal infrastructure to provide quality services to children and families.



Monitoring ERSEA: Eligibility, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance

Determining, Verifying, and Documenting Eligibility

At least 10 percent of the grantee's total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA or the grantee has received a waiver.

The grantee enrolls children or pregnant women who are categorically eligible or who meet defined income-eligibility requirements.

Enrollment Verification

The grantee maintains and tracks enrollment for all participants including pregnant women.

Monitoring ERSEA: Eligibility, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance Summary

The grantee enrolled children based on Head Start Program Performance Standards and developed selection criteria prioritizing children who were most in need of services. All staff members were trained at pre-service to promote integrity and accuracy within the ERSEA process. The agency's policies and procedures manual reinforced this training with disciplinary actions being a consequence of committing fraud. Family service specialists conducted in-person or telephone eligibility interviews and collected documentation for verification purposes. The family service coordinator completed an initial verification and calculation within the ChildPlus software and computed a second calculation of the family's income to promote accuracy. In addition to standard documentation verifying families' household income, the grantee used a wage form from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development to verify that parents' income for the last 3 years aligned with their social security numbers. The grantee exceeded the minimum 10 percent enrollment requirement of children with identified disabilities, as 18 percent of the program's enrolled children had an Individualized Family Service Plan or Individualized Education Program. Despite COVID-19, the program maintained full enrollment, and its steady recruitment efforts resulted in waitlists for all centers. When families left the program, vacancies were filled within 30 days, and a ChildPlus software setting alerted the coordinator of the days remaining to fill the vacant slot. During the pandemic, most interviews occurred by phone, and parents submitted documentation electronically or through secure drop-off boxes. Pace Community Action Agency, Inc.'s ERSEA process included practices for tracking and accurately enrolling families with the highest need and supporting their regular attendance.

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