

**Introduction and Process**

The Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO) has served Rensselaer County and the Greater Capital Region since 1965 as a Community Action Agency and Head Start provider. CEO’s Head Start and Early Head Start programs provide comprehensive services to children and families in 10 locations throughout Rensselaer County. We serve 417 Head Start and 175 Early Head Start children through center-based and home-based programming. CEO’s Early Head Start/Head Start Self-Assessment is conducted annually in accordance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards, which require that at least once each program year, programs conduct a self-assessment. Through collecting and analyzing data and information from a variety of sources within the program, the agency is able to identify program strengths and determine areas that may need improvement. CEO EHS/HS is committed to providing quality services for children and families. Self-assessment will enable the program to achieve the goal of providing the best possible services to children and families.

The self-assessment was conducted in person April 20, 2023. An overview of the self-assessment process and last year’s self-assessment report was provided to the team members. Teams were developed in the following content areas: education, family engagement, health, enrollment and attendance, and program planning. After the self-assessment overview, team leads and members broke into their specific group and presented data and engaged in dialogue around the data and questions presented. This process included families, the Early Childhood Director, Assistant Directors, Content Area Managers, Center Managers, Policy Council members, Board Members, staff, and community representatives. During the self-assessment process the following program data was reviewed to determine the topics and area of focus for each group:

* Survey data
* Program goals
* Program attendance information
* Child health data
* Child outcome data
* Curriculum and education processes
* Child and recruitment data and strategies
* Community Partners
* Lock down process
* Family engagement event topics and data

**Key Insights**

*Program Strengths:*

* Ongoing collaboration with Brightside Up and St. Catherine’s
* New collaboration with Russell Sage college
* Health team follow up and program support
* Re-establishment of program wide parent engagement events and increase parent participation
* Support provided to homeless families
* Increase in staff appreciation days and staff incentives

*Areas in Need of Improvement*

* Staff and child recruitment
* Family awareness and education of the importance of attendance
* Increase specialized support provided to classroom through re-structure of Education Team
* Support and resources for staff for children with increasing Special Education needs
* Increase health education around literacy for families
* Re-define program Family Fun Days

**2023 Self-Assessment Goals**

| **Goal** | **Action Steps** | **Person Responsible** | **Time Frame** | **Progression/Completion** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| To increase specific special education training and provide strategies for staff to support children that are approved for services but not receiving them due to lack of providers. | - Meet with service providers and collaborators to discuss center specific training needs to provide teaching staff with special ed strategies and information (e.g., occupational therapy, physical therapy info and training). | Education Team | January 2024 |  |
| To collect resources and information packets to disperse to each center-based classroom on the specific special education needs of each classroom. | -Develop specific resources for classrooms based on special ed needs (e.g., Autism information packet or busy boxes for children with sensory input disorder or occupational therapy needs) and disperse to each classroom. | Education Team | January 2024 |  |
| To provide staff with tailored cultural and linguistic trainings that will allow for effective communication with families that come from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds other than their own. | -Partner with families to learn more about their traditions and cultural customs to incorporate in classroom environment.  -Work with collaborators (Brightside up, Sage) to offer specific cultural training on cultural communication styles and values of the families we serve.  -Connect with outside agencies that offer resources on cultural education. | Education Team | January 2024 |  |
| To ensure that materials and activities in the classroom reflect the diverse cultural and ethnic values and traditions of the families and children that we serve. | -Complete inventory of classroom materials.  -Culture custom discussions with families (making this a bigger part of the home visit /parent teacher conference form).  -Tailor materials to the cultural backgrounds of the children we serve.  -Shop for materials that represent a variety of cultures.  . | Education Team, Center Managers, and Teaching Staff | January 2024 |  |
| To fully implement the Pyramid model program wide. | -Provide all staff with Pyramid training during pre-service 2023.  -Incorporate Pyramid training, support, and strategies into training throughout the school year.  -Provide specific training and support to centers/sites based on DECA data.  -Pursue program wide implementation of Pyramid by participating in the HUB.  -Continue to collaborate with BSU to maximize support provided to classrooms to effectively implement Pyramid. | Education Team, ECS Director, Director of Center Based Operations, Center Managers, and Teaching Staff | September 2023 and ongoing |  |
| Increase Mental Health Education for families and staff by end of school year 2024. | -Hold a Mental Health Fair/Day.  -Create Health Resource groups for parents and children.  -ACES Education for families- hold a training. | Health Manager and Health Team, Education Team,  Family Engagement Specialist, Center Managers, and Family Advocates, ECS Director and Director of Center Based Operations | September 2023 and ongoing |  |
| Increase opportunities for families to have access and take part in health literacy education/trainings by end of school year 2024. | -Utilize outside Health Care Consultant to facilitate training for parents & staff on paperwork.  - “Meet the Nurses” events at the beginning of each school year and throughout the year  -Offer classes for parents on navigating health. | Health Manager, Health Team, Family Engagement Manager, Family Advocates, Center Managers | September 2023 and ongoing |  |
| Increase education regarding poverty for staff during 2023-2023 school year. | -Utilize CAA resources and training to provide staff with poverty simulation training during the beginning of the school year.  -Embed various trainings around Community Action, CEO services, and the families and children we serve in training throughout the school year. | ECS Director, ECS Director of Center Based Operations, Content Area Managers | Fall 2023 and then ongoing |  |
| Increase participation in Parent Committees. | -Produce a flyer or pamphlet about the parent committee with detailed key facts and pictures of past events.  -Distribute flyers, provide a sign-up sheet, and discuss the parent. committee at orientation.  -Provide incentives for participation. | Family Engagement Manager, Family Advocates, Center Managers, Community Partnership Manager | Fall 2023 and ongoing |  |
| Provide engaging Family Fun Days to increase participation. | -Provide monthly age-appropriate activities in individual classrooms.  -Family Advocates and teachers meet in the beginning of the year to discuss and plan monthly activities.  -Provide program wide activities such as bowling and dances at various times throughout the year. | Family Advocates, Family Engagement Manager, Community Partnership Manager, Center Managers, and Teachers | Fall 2023 and ongoing |  |
| Continue to increase Policy Council support of program wide family engagement events throughout the school year. | -Policy Council will determine monthly program wide parent engagement events/training they will support through the utilization of interest inventory and parent survey results.  -In collaboration with the Family Engagement Manager, Policy Council will create a calendar of events to support during 2023-2024 school year. | ECS Director, Director of Center Based Operations Family Engagement Manager, Family Advocates, Community Partnership Manager, and Policy Council | Summer 2023 and ongoing |  |
| Provide families with information on the importance of attendance to increase overall attendance percentages. | -Increase conversations with families.  -Provide stats/outcomes of regular attendance.  -Provide families with attendance requirements of elementary school.  -Provide staff with information about the importance of regular attendance and help them be able to articulate to families the difference Head Start makes.  -Acknowledge good attendance of children by Enrollment Coordinator sending certificates/letter to families. | ECS Director, Director of Center Based Operations, Enrollment Coordinator, Family Engagement Manager, Family Advocates, Center Managers, and Teaching Staff | September 2023 and ongoing |  |
| Continue to implement creative recruitment strategies to ensure the program has successfully recruited eligible children in all areas of the county. | -Work with Marketing Director to ramp up recruitment efforts in rural areas to ensure program is reaching eligible children and families.  - Utilize recruitment committee to identify innovative strategies for recruitment.  -Each center/location will create and implement an annual recruitment plan that will include a minimum of two recruitment events/strategies each month.  -Connect with community vendors to identify if rural locations can recruit on electronic billboards | ECS Director, Director of Center Based Operations, Enrollment Coordinator, Marketing Director, ECS Management Team, Families, and all Staff | Ongoing |  |
| Continue to implement creative recruitment and retention strategies for staff. | -Continue to offer internal CDA course for potential candidates to assist them in obtaining necessary credentials for positions.  -Continue to promote “why work at CEO” highlights.  -Encourage Head Start families to apply for positions they are eligible for and host various informational sessions around job opportunities.  -Provide paid training and develop robust, comprehensive training plan for new staff.  -Survey CEO staff on current agency retention efforts, identify strategies that are working, and evaluate alternative suggestions. | ECS Director, Director of Center Based Operations, ECS Management Team, HR, Marketing, All ECS staff | Ongoing |  |
| Increase staff training and knowledge around agency lock down procedures. | -Incorporate lock down training into pre-service for all staff by collaborating with local experts to provide training.  -Provide all staff with top 5 strategies they should be implementing during lock down.  -Revisit lock down procedure and training 3-4 times throughout school year with all staff. | ECS Director, Director of Center Based Operations, Management Team, All Staff, and Quality Assurance Coordinator | September 2023 and ongoing |  |
| CEO will successfully submit our 5-year EHS/HS 5-year grant application. | -ECS Director will work with CEO leadership to analyze community needs data and utilize results to drive completion of components of grant application.  -CEO will work with external grant consultant to support grant writing efforts.  -ECS Director will collaborate with stakeholders and utilize program and community data to develop new and/or updated program goals.  -ECS Director will spearhead grant writing efforts and work with key leadership and CFO to complete grant application for December 2023 submission. | -ECS Director, Director of Center Based Operations, President/CEO, CFO, Director of Program Operations, External Consultant, CEO Board and Policy Council, and other identified CEO leadership stakeholders | Summer 2023 with due date of January 2024 |  |