**Introduction and Process**

The Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO) has served Rensselaer County since 1965 as a Community Action Agency and Head Start provider. CEO’s Head Start and Early Head Start program provide comprehensive services to children and families in nine locations throughout Rensselaer County. We serve 323 Head Start and 159 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. The self-assessment is conducted once each year and helps CEO understand the effectiveness of program operations by using program data including aggregated child assessment data, professional development, and parent and family engagement data as appropriate. The self-assessment process provides the mechanism to identify program strengths and determine areas that may need improvement. Our 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 on March 14, 2025. All Early Childhood staff members, CEO Board, and Policy Council members were invited to participate in the self-assessment process with a virtual option for those that were unable to attend. An overview of the self-assessment process was provided as an introduction to all participants. Teams were developed in the following content areas: education, family engagement and ERSEA, health and nutrition, and program planning. After the self-assessment overview, team leaders and members broke into their focus groups based on the content areas identified above. Each group provided feedback on strengths, topics covered in their focus group, and additional programmatic feedback to be considered. The self-assessment was approved by the Policy Council and CEO Board of Directors on June 25, 2025.

**2025 Self-Assessment Goals**

| **Goal** | **Action Steps** | **Person Responsible** | **Time Frame** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| To increase families understanding of the importance of school readiness goals and increase participation in school readiness activities and events.  | * Develop a monthly calendar with broad school readiness goals.
* Send information to families about the goal for the month.
* Develop a weekly activity that can be completed at home.
* Staff will develop a School Readiness activity to do in the classroom for a monthly school readiness fun day.
* Ensure each center has a bulletin board that contains relevant school readiness information.
 | Education Team,Center Manager/Site Supervisor,Family Advocate,Teachers, Family Engagement Manager | Summer 2025 and ongoing |
| To increase support and strategies for staff and children who need special services, but services are not available.  | * Reach out to local colleges to engage in conversations around supporting children who need services.
* Increase staff training on specific services.
* Reach out to medical OT/PT/Speech to see if they can come in and train staff and/or family members.
* Include family members more in what they can be doing at home.
 | Education Team and ECS Director Team | September 2025 ongoing |
| Increase physical activity for children and families. | * Review physical activity and screen time policies and update physical activity and screentime guidelines.
* Offer training for staff on meeting physical school readiness goals based on the objectives from the Creative Curriculum Teaching Strategies.
* Meet with Education team to look at physical development school readiness data and develop training based on data.
* Develop school readiness physical activities for families to do with children at home.
* Education for families on the importance of physical activity in children and families.
 | Health Manager and Health Team, Education Team, Family Engagement Manager, Center Managers/Site Supervisor, Teachers, Family Advocates, ECS Director Team | Summer 2025 and ongoing |
| Increase resources and support in providing families with more healthy food options and information.  | * Provide healthy recipes to families with Nourish NY food distribution.
* Conduct parent cooking classes.
* Conduct recipe contest with families using food distribution items.
* Provide education to families on ways to navigate fussy eating.
 | Health Manager, Health Team, Family Engagement Manager, Family Advocates, Center Managers/Site Supervisor  | September 2025 and ongoing  |
| Increase social connections among families to support mental health needs.  | * Connect families to peer support groups.
* Offer Family Health Education workshops on topics such as Lead Prevention, Mental Health, First Aid and CPR.
 | Health Manager, Health Team, Family Engagement Manager, Family Advocates, Center Managers/Site Supervisor | September 2025 and ongoing |
| Increase engagement in parent meetings and parent committees. | * Schedule meetings 3 months in advance and provide schedule to families.
* Offer incentives to families for participation.
* Complete a mid-year survey to utilize responses to plan for future meeting topics.
* Offer virtual meetings in the evening.
 | Family Engagement Manager, Family Advocates, Center Managers/Site Supervisor, and Teachers | September 2025 and ongoing |
| To strengthen communication between program staff surrounding child absences.  | * Redefine program expectations regarding sharing of child absence reasons between center staff and retrain staff on expectations and process.
* Discuss child attendance at team meetings.
 | ERSEA Coordinator, Family Engagement Manager, Health Manager, Health Team, Family Advocates, Teachers, Center Managers/Site Supervisor, ECS Director Team | September 2025 and ongoing  |
| To continue to promote good attendance throughout the program.  | * Identify strategies to promote family role in child’s attendance success (i.e., gas cards, milk or ice cream cards, bus passes).
* Foster relationships between families to encourage carpooling.
* Post attendance acknowledgement on Learning Genie, classroom and program newsletters, and bulletin boards.
* Assess whether we could collaborate with CDTA to offer lower cost bus passes and brainstorm transportation barrier possibilities.
 | ERSEA Coordinator, Family Engagement Manager, Health Manager, Health Team, Family Advocates, Teachers, Center Managers/Site Supervisor, ECS Director Team | Summer 2025 and ongoing  |
| Increase frequency for the follow up professional development goal planning. | * Assess the current Professional Development Plan process and identify system to check in more regularly on identified goals with staff to update progress more frequently.
 | ECS Director Team | Summer 2025 |
| To evaluate professional development training offered to staff to ensure training courses are relevant and meaningful. | * Conduct evaluations of professional development days and utilize feedback to incorporate into future trainings offered.
* Assess mandated training offered to evaluate if they could be made more interactive.
* Offer in person Universal Precautions training to all staff at beginning of the school year.
* Explore next level of trauma trainings and provide different levels of training to staff based on their knowledge base.
 | ECS Content Area Team | Summer 2025 and ongoing  |
| Increase Early Childhood Service recruitment presence at community events. | * Develop system for identifying community events and create ongoing list of events being offered.
* Invite ECS staff to attend identified events to support program recruitment efforts.
 | ECS Content Area Team, Center Managers/Site Supervisors, Data Specialist, Site staff | Summer 2025 and ongoing |
| CEO will continue to identify creative strategies to increase in-kind match.  | * Create a general volunteer information sheet to send home to families through Learning Genie/Parent Square throughout the school year to encourage families to help spread the word about volunteering.
* Send volunteer information sheets to community partners, Policy Council, and other program committees.
* Create and post a bulletin board at each site/center with volunteer information that list volunteer ideas and a sign-up sheet.
* Highlight a family volunteer and volunteer hours in program newsletter.
* Ensure in-kind is captured for collaborators, student teachers, and volunteers.
* Diversify in-kind collection efforts by reaching out to other HS programs.
 |  | Ongoing |
| Increase Head Start awareness to support program advocacy efforts for continued funding.  | * Utilize NHSA tool kits and resources to promote advocacy.
* Mobilize community, staff, and families to help in supporting Head Start awareness.
* Mobilize Policy Council, Board of Directors, and politicians in supporting Head Start.
* Develop Head Start impact stories to illustrate Head Start success.
 | All CEO staff, families, Policy Council Members, Board of Directors, Community Members | Spring 2025 and ongoing |