

2015-2016

Self-Assessment/Improvement Plan



Early Head Start Mobile!
Gulf Regional Early Childhood Services

Early Head Start Mobile!

Program Description

Gulf Regional Early Childhood Services, Inc. (GRECS) a non-profit, United Way of Southwest Alabama Partner Agency, was established in 1992. The program is located in Mobile County, Alabama. Mobile, the third most populated county, is the only port city for the State of Alabama. GRECS provides Early Childhood Services in southwest Alabama for families seeking early care and education information. This referral process connects children and families with a range of agency and community services. The agency also provides training and educational programs for teachers and caregivers with a focus on children from birth through age eight.

In December of 2009, the agency was awarded ARRA funding for an Early Head Start project. GRECS (previously known as Gulf Regional Childcare Management Agency, Inc.) is the sponsoring agency and grantee. The project initially received funding for 104 infants/toddlers and pregnant women. The objective of this project is to meet the early care and educational needs of at-risk children and families. GRECS Inc. designed Early Head Start Mobile! with the collaboration of four child care centers located throughout Mobile County. Each center has strong community support and longevity designed to ensure sustainability of project services and program objectives. The participating centers include three United Way Partner Agencies, Nina Joseph Child Development Center, Dearborn YMCA Community Child Care Center, and Goodwill Easter Seals Child Development Center. In addition, Lighthouse of Excellence, a faith-based program, is also a participant.

In 2013-2014, sequestration reduced the funded enrollment from 104 to 96 infants, toddlers and pregnant women. Funding was restored in the summer of 2014. In August of 2014 Soaring Eagles became a partner with Early Head Start for the 8 restored slots. To accommodate the reduction in enrollment, Dearborn Y.M.C.A.'s Early Head Start program was reduced from 16 children to 8 children. Funding was restored in the summer of 2014. In August of 2014 Soaring Eagles became a partner with Early Head Start for the 8 restored slots. Each of the child care centers participating in Early Head Start has a stable staff, and a history of supporting professional development for staff. The child care centers have a thorough understanding of the program goals, and are committed to ensuring that the children and staff in their centers maximize the opportunities and benefit from the experiences that Early Head Start provides. The

sites included in the Early Head Start program are also identified as having the administrative and programmatic capacity to meet program expectations and ensure compliance to Head Start Performance Standards and to the Head Start Act, as amended in 2007.

2014-2015 Self-Assessment

Early Head Start Mobile! Self-Assessment is conducted annually in accordance with paragraphs 4 CFR 1304.51 (i) and 1304.50 (d) (1) (viii) of the *Head Start Performance Standards*. *The Head Start Performance Standards* requires that at least once each program year, with the consultation and participation of the policy groups and, as appropriate, other community members, grantee and delegate agencies conduct a self-assessment. The purpose is to collect and analyze data and information from a variety of sources within the program to determine if management systems and program services are being implemented and are working effectively. Management systems (program governance, record-keeping and reporting, ongoing monitoring, self-assessment, human resources, and fiscal management) ensure well-managed programs with integrated systems that meet standards for high quality as they create nurturing child development environments, enhance child outcomes and promote positive parent-child interactions.

Early Head Start Mobile! is committed to providing quality services for children and families in Mobile County, Alabama. This is demonstrated through ongoing training, coaching, and the establishment of monitoring practices. The purpose of the self-assessment is to identify program strengths and to determine areas that are in need of program improvement. This will enable the program to achieve the goal for providing the best possible services to children and families. Each aspect of the program is carefully examined and the outcomes are analyzed. The findings help focus program improvement efforts on areas where improvement may be needed most and target the use of funding in areas of greatest need. All areas needing improvement/strengthening are incorporated into the Program Improvement Plan.

The self-assessment was conducted during the late summer of 2015. Team members included Parents, Governing Board Members, Early Head Start Program Director, Service Area Coordinators, Center Directors, Policy Council members, Parents, School Readiness Advisory Committee Members, and Community Partners. The teams reviewed data from monitoring reports, files, surveys, child outcome data and data related to classroom quality, & safety, meal service, family engagement, governance and fiscal. The process allowed team members to determine if program policy and procedures were consistently administered across programs and service areas. The Early Head Start Staff compiled the self-assessment information and data. Findings were reviewed by each Service Coordinator. A Program Improvement Plan was developed. Both were submitted to the Policy Council and to the Governing Board for approval. The timeline for completion of the Program Improvement Plan will be the 2015-2016 program year.

Program Description

Early Head Start Mobile! is a center-based program which collaborates with five child care centers located in Mobile County. The funded enrollment includes 104 slots.

Nina Nicks Joseph Child Development Center
209 S. Washington Avenue
Mobile, AL 36602
(251) 433-1310

*Goodwill Easter Seals
Inclusive Child Care Program*
2448 Gordon Smith Drive
Mobile, AL 36617
(251) 471-1581

Dearborn YMCA Tot Time Preschool - 31
321 N Warren Street
Mobile, AL 36603
(251) 438-2273

Lighthouse Academy - 32
9930 Cody Driskell Road
Grand Bay, AL 36541-6118
(251) 957-0641

Soaring Eagles-8
1655 Eagle Drive
Mobile, AL 36606
251-470-8603

Self-Assessment Program Summary

Early Head Start Mobile! has experienced, qualified staff. The program is committed to providing quality services to children and families. The program also includes ongoing monitoring systems which are designed to enable the program to successfully reach program goals and to continually improve services for families and children.

Early Head Start Mobile! has a funded enrollment of 104 of which 10% are children with disabilities. Thirteen classrooms are accommodated in four sites licensed by the State of Alabama Department of Human Resources. Recent inspections in all centers have shown full compliance with child care and local licensing regulations.

Program Governance includes the **G.R.E.C.S., Inc. Board of Directors** and the **Policy Council**. Both Board and Policy Council members are properly informed through reporting procedures provided by GRCMA, Inc. Executive Director and by the Early Head Start Director. The Early Head Start Governing Board and Policy Council are active and involved in program planning and decision-making.

Planning and partnering with other community agencies has helped to enhance continuous program improvement.

Many avenues are available to **communicate** with parents, families, and community partners. Memorandums and other correspondences are executed for ongoing communication. Orientations and trainings are facilitated throughout the year for parents. There are also personal contacts with parents through daily news reports, home visits, parent conferences, monthly contacts and/or via phone, center based contacts and daily consultation.

Record-keeping and **reporting** is being maintained. All children's files are locked and include up to date observational information. Files are checked on an ongoing basis by Center Directors and the management staff.

The **ongoing monitoring** systems track program compliance and quality of implementation across service areas. The team analyzes program data to determine training and technical assistance needs. When areas needing strengthening are identified, a work plan is developed. This practice allows the program to evaluate services, correct areas of concern, and make changes to improve program quality.

The **Self-Assessment** is administered each year to allow for re-evaluation of the program in order to enhance services and make changes where necessary for continuous improvement.

The **Human Resource** files are organized and contain required staff information and are monitored annually.

Facilities, materials and equipment are being maintained in all centers. Additional services have been rendered to improve classroom and toileting facilities. Annual inventories are used to identify and prioritize purchases for maintaining and enhancing the learning environments, both inside and outside. Child outcome data, including data for children with disabilities, is used to identify necessary instructional materials and equipment to support school readiness progress, and to provide necessary accommodations for children with special needs.

ERSEA (eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment and attendance) includes effective policies and procedures to ensure program compliance. Applications are processed throughout the year and there is an extensive waiting list. This list continues to grow as a result of the on-site center application process as well as collaborative community partnerships such as Homeless Coalition, Salvation Army, Early Intervention, Penelope House (shelter for battered women), etc. Full **enrollment** is maintained throughout the program year. ChildPlus is used to track and maintain the program wait-list. This tracking system allows for the suitable and appropriate selection and placement of children, ensuring that children and pregnant women with greatest need are given priority.

Creative Curriculum is used as a framework for the educational program. The curriculum is a research - based early childhood program designed to improve classroom quality and promote the **school readiness** of children from infancy through preschool. The curriculum includes objectives for development and learning that are predictive of school success and aligned with *Alabama Early Learning Guidelines*. The quality of each classroom is monitored and observed on an ongoing basis. Classrooms are assessed using environmental rating scales. The **Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) is used for classrooms serving infants and toddlers six weeks to 2 ½ years of age.** The **Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) is used for classrooms serving children ages 2 ½ and older.** Assessments occur twice annually to evaluate the quality of adult-child interaction as well as overall quality of the classroom. Results are used to inform and prioritize training and technical assistance needs.

Teachers work cooperatively with parents to identify goals and develop individual educational plans for all children. Teaching Strategies GOLD is used to formally monitor progress of children toward achieving **school readiness goals**. An alternating schedule of home visits and parent conferences are conducted throughout the program year. Data is analyzed and aggregated three times during the year. It is analyzed and used to track child outcome progress of school readiness. Professional development activities, professional development plans, and technical assistance plans reflect the data analysis and are adjusted during the year to ensure teachers receive support and targeted assistance. Program results are shared with the Policy Council and the Board and are posted on the agency's web site.

Family Engagement activities are integrated across all service areas, thus ensuring that individualized family partnership agreements link children and families to comprehensive community services in order to meet their personal goals and self-sufficiency needs. Community Partnerships (both formal and informal)

facilitate the staff's ability to support strong positive relationships between parents and children and ongoing learning for both parents and children. Family partnership agreements are monitored and updated monthly by teachers and by Family Services staff.

Family engagement is facilitated by Center Directors, Teachers and by Early Head Start Staff. Activities which engage parents include monthly Parent Committee Meetings, classroom interactions, volunteer opportunities and varied training opportunities. Parents are involved through leadership activities on Parent Committees and the Policy Council. They are also engaged in developing their child's educational plan.

Mental Health referrals come from teachers and mental health consultants. Procedures are in place to arrange for further diagnostic testing, examination and/or treatment as needed for mental health issues.

Children with **disabilities** are served in the program and represent at least 10% of the enrollment. Services are provided with a working collaboration with Early Intervention.

Nutritional Services meet the dietary needs of children. A registered dietician reviews center menus and provides recommendations for improvement. She also meets with families about children's nutritional needs and concerns. USDA guidelines are followed and nutritional training is provided for teachers and dietary staff.

Preparation/Process

Self-Assessment participants eagerly engaged in the process and enthusiastically completed their assigned tasks. Resources, recently developed by the National Resource Center on Program Management and Fiscal, were used to focus the streamline the self-assessment process and to take advantage of the data being collected. Throughout the year the effectiveness of program operations and progress made toward program goals is tracked through the ongoing monitoring system. The Self-Assessment process provided the team with the opportunity to reflect on the data collected and to compare data across content areas to address higher-level systemic issues. Attention was redirected from documentation of compliance of individual performance standards to reflection on such questions as:

- Which data highlight our strengths?
- Which data suggest areas of concerns?
- What do the data tell us about our progress in meeting goals?
- Are there patterns across data sources that we need to attend to?

Ultimately, this process has changed the conversation from "are we doing things right" to "Are we doing the right thing for children and families?"

Service Area Coordinators and served as facilitators of the teams and collected data sources and reports for the self-assessment participants to study and to make recommendations for improving the use of data as well as for identifying information or data analysis gaps as well as determining whether program goals are being realized. The Self-Assessment focused on program goals in the following areas: school readiness and early childhood development; family and community engagement, mental health services for families, nutritional services, health and safety within the centers, fiscal policies and procedures and program governance. The teams found no areas of non-compliance. Findings and full recommendations are included in the full report.

Recommended Area for Improvement:

The use of Technology, data collection and usage of data to support data driven decision making emerged as an overall area to focus on for improvement for 2015-2016. This theme ran across all content areas as well as program systems. The transition from a three year grant cycle to the new five year grant cycle has highlighted the need to facilitate data collection, but more importantly to provide support and funding to increase the programs capacity for analyzing and disaggregating data and then to expand capacity to use the data for effectively tracking and evaluating program progress.

The Improvement plan reflects this theme and has been used to inform long term goal setting as well as the identification of short term objectives.

Findings and Recommendations

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The composition of the Governing Body includes at least one member with fiscal management expertise, one member with expertise in early childhood, one licensed attorney, one head start parent, and members with expertise in education, community affairs and business administration. • Policy Council participated in governance training sponsored by the Alabama Head Start Association and governance training at the National Head Start Parent Conference. • Both Policy Council and Board received training on the five year grant application process. • Program governance training is provided for Board members, Policy Council members, staff and parents. • Governing Body is knowledgeable of program implementation. • Final budgets are approved by the Board of Directors and the Policy Council. • Governing body members receive pertinent information in a timely manner in order to make informed decisions and to provide oversight of program implementation. • Policy Council minutes, School Readiness Progress Reports and monthly budget information are posted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to facilitate the use of strategies to accommodate Policy Council and Board member governance training for those who cannot attend trainings (i.e. working parents, Board attorneys, etc.)

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
	<p>on the agency web site after review/approval by the Policy Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Governing Body and Policy Council receive monthly reports which include monthly financial statements (including credit card expenditures) monthly Director’s reports which include program information summaries, enrollment reports, attendance reports, and monthly USDA meals and snacks reports. • The Governing Body and the Policy Council receive copies of the fiscal audit, the annual Self-Assessment and findings, the Community Assessment and updates, the annual Program Information Report (PIR), all communication from the Secretary, all correspondence from the Office of Head Start, Region IV communications, and communication and guidance from the Secretary. • The Board of Directors reviews and approves the Criteria for Selection annually. • In February of 2015 the Policy Council Chair and the Governing Body President work together to complete the Program Governance Screener as required for the Five Year application process • Governing body members participated in online training webinars relative to the Five year grant process. These were sponsored by the Office of Head Start. 	
<p>Policy Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Council meets at least 8 times during the year. • Policy Council members receive ongoing governance training during monthly meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide officer training on site for Parent Committees.

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Policy Council receives information and documents for review prior to the Policy Council Meeting. (Examples: memorandums of agreement, budget reports, credit card expenditures, report on administrative costs, monthly non-federal share report, policies/procedures, and employment recommendations). • The Policy Council receives all communication from Region IV, from Office of Head Start, etc. Communication is reviewed during Policy Council meetings. • The EHS Director provides monthly program information summaries which includes an update on enrollment, attendance data including analysis of absenteeism, professional development activities, and school readiness updates and personnel changes. • The Policy Council receives School Readiness Progress reports at least three times each year. Reports are reviewed and approved by the Policy Council. • The Policy Council receives a copy of the annual financial audit after approval by the governing board. • Community partners serve on Policy Council and Board of Directors. • The Policy Council reviews and approves the Criteria for Selection annually. • The program began using Remind 101 with the Policy Council to enhance communication and as an effort to improve Policy Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the process and forms used for documentation of Parent Committee meetings to facilitate reporting of activities to the Policy Council.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff received training on the 5 year grant cycle during AHSA content area training, Alabama T/TA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the program calendar to accommodate the change needed to.

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
	<p>forums and during Region IV Training Institute, focusing on development of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program conducts an annual self-assessment each year with Board, Policy Council, parents, teachers, center directors, EHS staff and community partners. • A full Community Assessment is completed every three years. An update is completed during year 2 and year 3 to analyze the needs and services of eligible children and families. Results are included in the program application for refunding. • Community partners serve on G.R.E.C.S. Inc. Board, Policy Council, Health Services Advisory Committee and other program planning activities. • Service Plans are reviewed, updated and approved by the Policy Council annually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the role/participation of Community Partners in program planning. • Provide training for staff on use of technology and on data management systems to facilitate planning focusing on program data.
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents receive ongoing communication about their child on a daily basis. Parent conferences are conducted two times annually. Parent home visits are conducted twice annually. • Following each child outcome benchmark period, parents receive reports about their child’s progress toward meeting school readiness goals. Reports identify child outcomes in each domain and include emerging skills. • Parent Communication strategies include phone calls, texting, newsletters, memos, bulletins, home visits, conferences and other electronic means, etc. • A parent satisfaction survey was developed and used mid-year with the parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the training plan for center directors to ensure ongoing communication between Early Head Start Management Team and center directors. • Continue to develop strategies and procedures for increasing the use of technology for maintaining timely communication between families and program staff and between teachers and program staff. • Expand training for teaching staff and Center Directors on ChildPlus, and Teaching Strategies GOLD to ensure timely reporting between centers

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program has a system in place for staff to communicate regularly about services to children and families in an integrated approach. • A yearly calendar is maintained for planning and implementation and to facilitate internal communication. • The program’s <i>Center Compliance Standards Manual</i> supports the delivery of day to day practices and operations and includes program policies and procedures. The manual is posted to the agency web site after review/approval by the Policy Council. • The revised Parent Handbook includes community services information. • The parent bulletin board display in each center reflects Head Start Information Memorandums, Head Start Program Instructions and program related information. • Partnerships are in place with agencies in the community to access needed services for children and families. • The program contracts with translators to ensure that families (Laotian, Cambodian, and Vietnamese) who are not fluent in English can fully participate in the program. • The program contracts with Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind to provide interpreters for deaf parents to facilitate parent participation and communication. • Policy Council minutes, School Readiness Progress Reports, monthly fiscal reports, the monthly Director’s Program Information Summary (inclusive of 	<p>and Early Head Start management team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that each parent completes both mid-year and end-year Parent Survey to identify interests & needs for training & planning in a timely manner. • Expand use of social media as a means for communication

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
	<p>enrollment and attendance data) are posted on the agency web site after review/approval by Policy Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The annual Self-Assessment, Improvement Plan and Community Assessment are posted on the agency web site following approval by the Policy Council. 	
<p>Recordkeeping & Reporting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agency’s annual report includes an explanation of the budgetary expenditures and the proposed budget for the Policy Council for the up-coming year. It also includes school readiness data which support program efforts to prepare children for success in kindergarten and beyond as well as parent engagement activities. • ChildPlus is used as the program’s data system. • The ongoing monitoring plan includes timeline monitoring ChildPlus data entry. • The first weekly team meeting of each month is dedicated to reviewing monitoring reports. This provides the team with opportunities to assess the process for gaps and/or early identification of issues related to data collection and/or entry. • Electronic records are maintained using ChildPlus online management system and TS GOLD. • Policies and procedures are in place to report observations of child abuse and neglect in accordance with local licensing and state statute. • Children’s files are kept in locked cabinets and only viewed by appropriate staff. Procedures facilitate confidentiality requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training for staff and center directors on use of ChildPlus’ monitoring suite and provide immediate feedback on center work plans. • Expand role of Center Director to enter volunteer data into ChildPlus-will require purchase of laptop for centers to use.

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
<p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing Monitoring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruments have been developed to facilitate service area monitoring. • Procedures are in place to monitor all service areas. • The program has established and executed a process of ongoing monitoring of program operations and services. • Teaching staff is supervised and observed to assure that services are delivered with consistent quality. • Services for children with disabilities are tracked and monitored. • The program follows up and corrects any weaknesses identified through on-going monitoring and self-assessment. • Collection of child outcome data occurs three times annually. Data is analyzed and disaggregated to track progress of School Readiness goals. • The program uses Teaching Strategies GOLD online program management systems to collect and track data. These systems facilitate successful ongoing monitoring strategies to assure program compliance. • School Readiness Progress Reports are shared with parents, Policy Council, Board and posted on the agency web site three times annually. • Ongoing monitoring reports are shared at the first weekly team meeting each month. The information is used to ensure that quality program services are consistently delivered. The monthly process provides staff with opportunities to refine systems and to address gaps in data collection in a timely manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training and technical assistance to Center Directors on developing strategies and systems to monitor program delivery in the classrooms. • Prioritize training for teachers and directors on use of management systems to establish and monitor family partnerships & goal setting. • Refine ongoing monitoring plan to include monthly Teaching Strategies Gold reports on school readiness outcomes. • Establish protocols for increasing the use of program data to inform program improvement efforts.

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The monitoring plan provides for evaluation of program records in all service areas. 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Human Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Child Abuse and Neglect training is conducted by the Department of Human Resources trainers. The program has an organizational chart of staff and their functions. Criminal background checks are conducted on all employees prior to employment. Documentation is maintained for all staff. Child Abuse and Neglect reporting policies and procedures align with state and local requirements. Job descriptions for each staff position are in place and include qualifications. The program's established Standards of Conduct for employees include actions to be taken in the event of a violation. The staff receives training on the Standards of Conduct annually during Pre-service. Staff employed after Pre-service receive training during teacher orientation sessions. Contracted consultants meet qualifications outlined in Performance Standards for their strategic job tasks and responsibilities. Program staff meets qualifications for their assigned positions. Opportunities are available for ongoing training and improvement for all staff. All staff members submit documentation of initial health examinations and screenings for tuberculosis prior to their first day of employment. Contracted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a training module for Head Start orientation appropriate for use with staff hired after pre-service. Refine procedures for monitoring and adapting professional development plans for teaching staff periodically throughout the year to include emphasis on school readiness. Develop a plan & schedule for ongoing substitute teacher training; include in annual training plan. Refine recordkeeping procedures to ensure that all staff information, training, certifications, and personal information are entered in ChildPlus in a timely manner.

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centers are required to submit documentation prior to employment in Early Head Start classrooms. Staff submit documentation of re-examinations once every four years as required by the State of Alabama (Section 34-4-290(4) Code of Alabama.)(Department of Human Resources, Minimum Standards, p. 41.) Contracted sites are required to submit documentation of re-examinations for all teachers working with Early Head Start children and families. 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Fiscal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board of Directors has at least one member that has a background in fiscal operations. The budget is submitted to Policy Council and Board for approval. The program has accounting procedures to carry out fiscal operations and responsibilities. Time sheets are submitted and approved by appropriate personnel. Weekly activity reports are submitted to supervisors for review and for monitoring. Program has a qualified fiscal officer. An independent audit is completed annually, approved by the Board of Directors and shared with the Policy Council. A copy is provided for parent access at each center (in the parent resource area). The independent audit has been free of findings. Professional development opportunities and onsite training and technical assistance have been provided to the fiscal staff as related to Head Start Performance Standards and the Head Start Act (amended 2007). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide training funds for Program Operations Director, Fiscal staff and Director to attend Region IV Fiscal Institute to ensure ongoing compliance. Upgrade accounting software to facilitate transition to use of Purchase orders Provide funding for training/webinar for new OMB Super-circular Provide funding in budget for consultant to provide onsite technical assistance to fiscal department accommodate program expansion.

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
<p style="text-align: center;">Facilities, Equipment, Materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governing Board members participated in completion of the Health and Safety Inspections, maintenance and repairs are maintained. • Programs comply with all relevant federal, state, and local requirements regarding facilities. • Required licenses, inspections, and other documents are current in each facility. • Emergency procedures are posted in strategic areas. • Facilities, materials, and equipment are appropriate for the children served. • Teachers clean and sanitize classrooms daily. • A Health and Safety Checklist is completed daily. • Facilities, materials and equipment are accessible and useful to children with disabilities. • Types and uses of materials and equipment support the curriculum. • Facilities are free of toxins. • Annual and quarterly inspections meet licensing regulations (Department of Human Resources). • Toys, materials, and furniture are safe, durable in good condition, and are sanitized as needed. • Staffing patterns support class size and number of adults per class. • Staff, volunteers, and children wash hands after toileting, diapering, etc. Hand washing procedures are posted in classrooms and are followed by children and adults. • Signs are posted in classrooms to encourage hygiene practices. • Cribs and mats are spaced at least three feet apart. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security cameras are needed in four classrooms and Nina Joseph as well as on playgrounds and entrances. • Security cameras are needed for two classroom and for playgrounds at Soaring Eagles Child Development Center. • Upgrades are needed at all sites to accommodate expanding need for on line training and streaming of video. • Provide funding to replace outdoor learning materials and equipment. • Provide funding to develop age appropriate outdoor learning environment at Soaring Eagles.

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All visitors are required to wash their hands upon entering classrooms. Visitors in infant classrooms are required to use booties. • Centers are clean, sanitary and uncluttered. • Inventories are maintained and are updated annually. The system for inventorying was refined during 2013. 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety practices are consistently used by program staff. • Teaching staff received extensive training on Health and Safety Components of revised ITERS and ECERS. • Health Advisory committee members are comprised of health care professionals, parents and community representatives. • The program partners with health care providers in the community to link children and families with needed services. • Program performs age-appropriate screenings within the child’s first 45 days in the program. • Health/Disabilities Coordinator ensures children are referred for follow-up evaluations, as necessary. • Follow-up plans are developed and implemented for health conditions that have been identified. • Policies and procedures are followed when medication is administered. • There is a record maintained of all medications dispensed. • All teaching staff and center directors have received medication training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training for parents on the importance of a medical home, wellness visits, etc. • Refine procedures to include process for assisting parents in keeping children up-to-date on scheduled primary and preventive health care. • Provide funding in budget for vision screener (\$2000) to improve process and of screening. • Refine data collection/tracking of parent participation in health related trainings.

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child health services are tracked and monitored on a monthly basis in ChildPlus online management system. • Prenatal opportunities offer education to pregnant moms on fetal development, labor and delivery, smoking, postpartum recovery, breastfeeding, etc. 	
Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meals served to children meet all USDA regulations. • Accommodations are made for special dietary needs of individual children. • Nutritional services are supported by a registered dietician. • Menus include a variety of foods and meet each child’s nutritional needs. • Teachers communicate with parents daily in reference to the child’s nutritional consumption. • Teachers facilitate family style feeding and proper eating habits are modeled. • Children are encouraged to eat a variety of foods, including cultural and ethnic preferences. • The program refined the monitoring procedures during 2013-2014 to include assessment of family style dining (checklist) to enhance the quality of the experience for the children. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with center staff and nutritionist to provide menus that reflect a variety of ethnic and cultural foods. • Establish a process to provide parents with consistent input into the development of menus. • Provide additional nutrition training for center nutritional/ kitchen staff at each center • Continue to work with center staff to increase the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables for meals and snacks. • Continue to provide training for staff and for parents on nutrition and on meal planning.
Safe Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EHS staff, volunteers and children wash hands as appropriate. • Each center has appropriate space for diapering and toileting. • Playgrounds are arranged to prevent children from getting into unsafe areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a system for maintenance of the natural playgrounds to ensure ongoing compliance with safety standards.

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EHS centers comply with state and local licensing requirements. • Sanitation and hygiene practices are in place and are monitored for diapering, cleaning, etc. • The program staffing pattern provides one teacher to every four children with no more than eight children per class. • Safety Screener was completed and submitted to Regional Office within specified time frame. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide budget for replacement of materials and equipment for outdoor learning activities for playgrounds • Provide training for center directors on monitoring procedures for playground safety which includes director's participation when Deputy Director completes initial playground safety monitoring check. • Have staff monitor fire drills at each site.
<p style="text-align: center;">Disabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program provides opportunities and quality services to children with special needs. • The program consistently provided services to more than 10% of the funded enrollment throughout the year. • EHS provides parents with information and assistance in understanding and advocating for services needed to address special needs. • Families participate in the development of IFSP's (and IEP's as appropriate). • A system is in place to track disabilities services. • The program has a formal partnership agreement with the local early intervention services to enable the effective participation of children with disabilities. • Education Coordinator refined monitoring procedures to ensure that teachers received feedback on an ongoing basis on lesson planning for children with IFSP's. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand parental participation in Early Intervention activities/ training opportunities both state and local and include in the training/TA budget. • Develop strategies to increase parent participation (of children with special needs) in program activities and meetings. • Scaffold training opportunities for teachers to enhance their abilities to plan and individualize for children with disabilities. . • Establish procedures for scheduling home visits and parent/teacher conferences which require coordination between the teacher and the Educational Staff to ensure full in all home visits and parent conferences.

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On line software services were purchased to assure that screenings occurred in a timely manner and that reports were accurate. 	
<p align="center">Parent, Family & Community Engagement (PFCE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers and staff maintain trusting relationships with families. PFCE Family Profiles were used with families to track family progress toward goals. Program provides opportunities for parents to advocate for their child when developing family partnership goals and lesson planning. Partners provide communication and support to families throughout the program year. There are signed partnership agreements in place for each family which include school readiness/literacy goals. Special presenters are scheduled to provide training during monthly Parent Committee Meetings at each center. The Family Resource Center at each site includes parenting materials as well as literacy & home based activities. Program has begun to implement the Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework through updating job descriptions, service plans and data collection. Program has integrated PFCE goals and implementation plan with the School Readiness Implementation Plan. Program expanded the scope of the School Readiness Advisory Committee to include PFCE framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to expand the availability/and depth of training for staff on PFCE framework. Continue to refine program implementation plans, service plans and forms to support full implementation of Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework. Provide technical assistance to teachers on facilitating the development and tracking of family partnership goals including school readiness goals. Provide new teacher training on the use of ChildPlus: data entry/tracking of family outcomes, etc. On survey to identify parent interests prior to development of parent training calendar.. Establish protocol for collecting and analyzing program data on parent training opportunities. Refine the tools and procedures used to report and document parent committee activities.

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are required to participate in Family Orientation prior to enrollment. • Teachers consistently develop and document transition planning and include transition activities in lesson plans. • Survey Monkey is used to provide an online format for parent satisfaction surveys. • Some sites began using Remind 101 as a means of communicating with parents about parent meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require Parent Committees to post the annual parent committee calendar of meetings and activities, including monthly training topics, on center and program web sites to increase awareness and participation. • Increase awareness of the role of the Parent Committees by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ featuring Parent Committee Officers on center web sites; ○ including EHS activities in center newsletters • Require all Policy Council Representatives to bring written monthly reports, of center activities, trainings and participation to the Policy Council.
<p>Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, Attendance (E.R.S.E.A.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications are imputed into ChildPlus in a timely manner. • E.R.S.E.A. Specialist delivers complete enrollment documentation to center directors prior to first day of enrollment. • Translators are provided for all ELL families during the enrollment process (Asian & Hispanic) • Eligibility files are well organized with documents maintained in a confidential manner which includes locked file cabinets housed in locked office areas. • Recruitment flyers and information is available in 3 Asian languages and in Spanish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategies to ensure that absences are coded in ChildPlus in a timely manner. • Expand program emphasis at the center level on attendance to ensure that children meet the 85% attendance goal for Early Head Start Mobile.

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis and is shared during weekly team meetings. • The program maintains 100% of its funded enrollment throughout the year. • Program enrollment includes at least 10% of children with disabilities. • The selection criteria are reviewed, updated and approved annually by the Policy Council. • ERSEA reports are reviewed on a monthly basis using ChildPlus online management system. • Absences are investigated in a timely manner by the teacher, Family Services, and Disabilities Coordinator. • Pregnant women are included in the enrollment. • Family files and child records are maintained in a locked secure environment. • Attendance Policy was refined to emphasize attendance requirements. Attendance plans are developed with parents when a child’s attendance falls below 85%. • Each family includes an attendance goal as part of their school readiness goals. • The program average daily attendance for 2014 was 86.07 up .23%. 	
<p>Education & Early Childhood Development School Readiness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School readiness goals are in place and are embedded in the educational curriculum. • Data analysis of child outcome progress is completed at least three times annually. Teachers receive technical assistance with data analysis and with using data to individualize and plan for each child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise School Readiness goals and plan to reflect new Head Start Early Learning Guidelines. • Work with teachers to increase the variety and availability of materials for children throughout the day.

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers share child-outcome data with parents in a timely manner. • Teachers work cooperatively with parents to identify school readiness goals and develop individual educational plans for their children. • School readiness goals are included in all family partnership plans. • Professional development, training and technical assistance activities/strategies reflect data analysis of child outcome progress. • Mid-point aggregation and analysis of program data and of child outcome data to adapt professional development, training and technical assistance activities so as to support quality school readiness services for currently enrolled children and families. • Teachers work well together and provide responsive caregiving for all children. • Transition plans are developed in a timely manner and are implemented appropriately. • Classroom observations reflected that children were engaged and were seemingly happy. • The curriculum allows the teachers to use their creative abilities to develop plans that meet the needs of individual children. • Teachers encourage children’s self-help skills. • Print-rich classroom environments are maintained throughout the program, as appropriate. • Children used words to express their feelings. They were free to make choices during daily activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with teachers to improve the organization and neatness of child files. • Increase the availability for parents of materials and activities which support school readiness goals for home. • Provide training and technical assistance to support teachers and staff in developing closer working relationships/partnership with parents. • Continue to support the integration of the use of Teaching Strategies GOLD online tools for planning and individualizing for each child through training/technical assistance.

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers effectively plan and interact with children on a consistent basis. • Staff has individualized plans in place for children with disabilities. • Curriculum is individualized based on assessment data. • The program introduces a variety of materials and opportunities for learning, based on children’s developmental level, abilities, and interests. • Home visits are helpful to parents in setting educational goals for their children and in receiving assistance with meeting their own goals. • Interpreters are provided for parents who are not fluent in English and for non-hearing parents to facilitate home visits, conferences, meetings and written communication. • Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) is used to assess adult-child interaction at least two times each year. • ITERS is used to assess overall classroom quality 2 times each year. Data is analyzed & used to assist teachers in developing and/or adapting professional development plans & for planning training and technical assistance at the individual, center & program level. • Teachers were provided extensive training on use of TS GOLD and integration with 	
<p>Mental Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health services are available and easily accessible to families to assist with parenting, trauma, and other life stressors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify community services for ELL families and potential funding sources

Systems and Services	Strengths	Recommendations for Program Enhancement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health consultant has the appropriate license/certification. • The mental health consultant provides reports of services in a timely manner. • Parents are involved in planning mental health services for their child and family. • There is a system for child mental health screening and assessment. • Parents are informed and made aware of the various screenings as they occur. • Classroom practices are responsive to the mental health and behavioral needs of children. • Teachers encourage the development of trust, self-esteem, and identity through respectful and responsive communication. • A process is in place to arrange for follow-up assessment and treatment as needed to address mental health issues. • The program has an interagency agreement with Lifelines for mental health services. 	

2016 Improvement Plan

Use of Data/Technology

Challenge	Person Responsible	Evidence of Completion	Completion
Improve program data driven practices through the use of updated equipment, improved technology and software for continuous improvement	Director Deputy Director	Survey Monitoring Reports Documentation of Training	June 2016
Provide training and technical support for program staff to increase their proficiency in data collection and analysis.	Director IT	Budget Training Plan Registrations/Training Logs	June 2016
Expand the use of technology to support communication across the program	EHS Staff	Parent Surveys Participation Rates	March 2016

System/Service Area: Fiscal

Challenge	Person Responsible	Evidence of Completion	Completion
Continue to provide training funds for Program Operations Director, Fiscal staff and EHS Director to attend Region IV Fiscal institute to ensure ongoing compliance.	EHS Staff	Registration Documentation Training Plan	June 2016

System/Service Area: Health

Challenge	Person Responsible	Evidence of Completion	Completion
Continue to improve the process for assisting parents in keeping children up-to-date on scheduled primary and preventive health care.	EHS Staff	Child health records ChildPlus monitoring reports PIR Data	August 2016
Expand the use of technology to provide alerts for teachers of children nearing the 45 day screening deadline for new children	IT Health Coordinator	ChildPlus Reports	January 2016

System/Service Area: Safe Environments

Challenge	Person Responsible	Evidence of Completion	Completion
Upgrade security systems at each site to accommodate the use of cameras in classrooms, playgrounds and entrances.	Health & Disabilities Coordinator	Health and Safety Inspection Reports	August 2016

System/Service Area: Education & Early Childhood Development/School Readiness

Challenge	Person Responsible	Evidence of Completion	Completion
Revise school readiness goals and school readiness implementation plan to align with the newly revised Head Start Learning Outcomes	Education Coordinator/ Specialist School Readiness Advisory Committee	Revised School Readiness Plan Revised School Readiness Goals	March 2016