



2018/2019

Self-Assessment



Early Head Start Child Care Partnership

Division of Child Care and Early

Childhood Education

2018/2019

Introduction

The Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) was awarded an Early Head Start- Child Care Partnership Grant for \$3,504,165 to serve 168 infants and toddlers in Arkansas from August 2018 to August 2019. The grant is renewable through 2021.

With the community hub model using three of the state's current Early Head Start grantees as hubs, this has brought high-quality EHS-CC partnership slots to the counties that need it most. The "value-added" of this state EHS-CC Partnership model is that it leverages state resources and expands the reach of the federal EHS funding to communities that would otherwise lack access to these services. The Early Head Start Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) grant has allowed existing Head Start programs to partner with local child care centers and family child care providers serving 168 infants and toddlers in 10 centers, 9 cities, 8 counties. The partnerships have supported working families by providing a full-day, full-year program so that low-income children have the healthy and enriching early experiences they need to reach their full potential.

Goals

The purpose of the grant is to development a strong and lasting partnership between DCCECE, Community hubs and local child care providers. DCCECE, along with the help of the Community Hubs, works to enhance the quality of services in local child care centers by providing program support and integrating funds from different sources (e.g., EHS-CCP and CCDF monies) to create, support, and monitor quality improvement plans to move providers to full implementation of Head Start Program Performance Standards.

Our goals:

1. To bring EHS services to areas of Arkansas where there are currently none, and to add slots in areas with an overwhelming disparity between need and available services.
2. To significantly enhance the child development and early learning outcomes of children who will receive comprehensive services and family support through the model.
3. To efficiently layer EHS and child care funding to improve the quality of child care in the target counties to benefit not only the EHS children who are funded under this proposal, but also other children receiving care at the child care partner sites.
4. To leverage state funding and other state programs and resources to create a high-quality intervention for at-risk children under 3 that exists within a unified birth-to-school-entry continuum of care and education.

EHS-CCP Self-Assessment

DCCECE Early Head Start Partnership conducted an annual self-assessment in accordance with Head Start Performance Standard 1302.102(b)(2) to evaluate service quality and work performance as well as influence continuous quality improvement. The

self-assessment includes ensuring accountability in meeting objectives proposed in the application and determining whether resources are used effectively. The self-assessment is an instrumental part of program planning because it helps program leaders understand the strengths, possibilities, and challenges of the EHS-CCP while inspiring ideas and innovations that help improve service delivery. The self-assessment process included data collection methods such as surveys, classroom observations, ITERs evaluations, and document review to check whether child care partners are meeting select EHS standards and identify the programs strengths and weakness.

The different data collection methods are discussed below:

Survey

DCCECE staff developed a survey to provide support to the partner staff based on their needs and level of understanding of the program. The goal of the survey is to give us information on staff qualifications, the children they serve daily, professional development, and their comprehension of assessment, policies, and procedures. We believe that the survey would likely provide open and honest feedback in a more private method. Conducting surveys is an unbiased approach to decision-making.

ITERs Observation

The ITERs is a classroom assessment tool designed to measure the quality of group programs for infants and toddlers (birth to age 3) by collecting data through classroom observations and a staff interview. The ITERs can be used by caregiving staff for self-assessment of the quality of their classrooms, and to determine the areas of high quality and areas that may need additional attention. Each partner site received a baseline assessment during the implementation stages of the grant cycle. An annual assessment was completed on each program that directly services children to track the progress or regression in each classroom. The higher the programs evaluations score enables them to move up levels in Arkansas Better Beginning program and receive additional incentives to continue improving quality in their program.

DCCECE team observations

From the previous year's self-assessment, DCCECE team implemented a plan to improve the communication and relationship with the Hub/partners and to document any changes within the program. Members of the Infant and Toddler team held monthly meetings with each of the three hubs at their main office. Follow-up emails were sent to the HUB staff with an outline of each parties' responsibilities and follow up task(s). Members of the Infant and Toddler team also visited each of the partners at the minimum of once every two months. During these visits, DCCECE was able to gather data and feedback from Hub and partner staff on program improvement.

Self-Assessment Results

The results from the self-assessment will be outlined below. Management will utilize the information to make decisions about program operations that will seek to improve service delivery and close any identified gaps in the program's overall performance.

Survey

There are a total of 168 EHS slots with an average of 42-45 teachers participating in the program (including floaters). Only 30 teachers participated in the survey. Some teachers were out on maternity leave, FMLA, or were not present during the time the survey was given.

The survey revealed the majority (33%) of the teachers have been working in a paid position with children birth to 5 years old for 3-5 years. 90% of those staff have a CDA or higher in Early Childhood. It also revealed that 13% of staff who completed the survey have less than a year of experience and do not meet the minimum requirement of CDA. Majority of the staff reported needing additional training in behavior management, parent and family engagement, and curriculum. The survey revealed that, the less experience a teacher has in early childhood education, the less they are knowledgeable in assessments, policies, and procedures.

Iters

All classrooms had a Iters baseline the first year of implementing the Early Head Start Partnership program. The baseline was used to determine the level of quality for each classroom and identify weakness and strengths.

Each program received an annual assessment to track progress. Majority of the classrooms increased in quality with lower scores in personal care and activities. Some classrooms had a decrease in scores due to high turnover. Overall, the score showed how the partnership grant has increase quality in all of the partner sites.

Program Strengths

1. All ten provider sites have been at full-enrollment during the entire year. There have been no issues with under-enrollment during this program year.
2. Each provider site maintains a waiting list with the names of children who qualify for the program. If a child leaves the Early Head Start program, the providers can easily replace that child with a child from the waiting list.
3. The monthly hub meetings have been successful in helping disseminate relevant information to the hubs and partners.
4. The community hubs provide strong oversight of their provider partners. All partners report positive support from their hubs.
5. The EHS-CCP grant has led to increased quality in the programs it serves. When the EHS-CCP grant program began in 2017, three of the ten partner sites

were at a level 3 in Better Beginnings, Arkansas's Quality Rating Improvement System. Currently six of the sites are at a level 3, with a seventh at a level 2 and working towards becoming a level 3.

6. Of the 55 staff members currently working in the EHS-CCP classrooms, 30 either have a Bachelors' Degree, an Associates' Degree, or a CDA. 2 additional staff members are currently working towards their CDA.
7. All ten of the partner sites have made improvements to their facilities due to their participation in the EHS-CCP grant program. These improvements include their playgrounds, surveillance/safety systems, classrooms, and parking lots.

Improvement Plan

Training and Professional Development

Discovery: Training and professional development preparation

Plan: EHS-CCP will partner with Arkansas State Early Childhood Services to provide the professional development needs of the staffs of the hubs and partners participating in the grant program. Arkansas State Early Childhood Services will develop and implement a Training and Technical Assistance plan which will target the individualized needs of each of the partner sites.

Discovery: Process for identifying staff training needs

Plan: EHS-CCP and Arkansas State Early Childhood Services will review data, such as staff surveys, ITERS results, COPA, and PIR, to identify the staff training needs.

Quality Improvement:

Discovery: Low personal care routines and activities scores on ITERS baseline

Plan: Arkansas State will provide specific training to each partner based on their identified needs from the results of their most recent ITERS assessments.

Discovery: Partners under level 3 Better Beginnings

Plan: Partner sites who reach Level 3 of Better Beginnings will be able to claim up to 100% of their EHS-CCP children as CCDF children. This is a financial incentive that will encourage the partner sites to work towards moving to Level 3. The grantee will continue to leverage layered funds to improve the quality of each location to reach level 3 in quality.

Discovery: More than 50% of teachers are new to CLASS

Plan: EHS-CCP will work with Arkansas State and the hubs to provide additional training for the staff members at all ten partner sites who have not had the CLASS training.

Transitions

Discovery: Tracking method for successful transitions

Plan: Partners will report to the hubs whenever any of their EHS-CCP children turn three years old. The partners will report if the child transitioned into another program or if the child remained in the EHS-CCP program. This information will become part of the monthly reports submitted by the hubs to EHS-CCP.

Management System: Technology & Information Systems

Discovery: COPA, not consistent in tracking child and staff data. Information not updated regularly.

Plan: EHS-CCP will provide a checklist of all the information required to be entered into COPA for each child. This checklist will include a timeline that will indicate when data should be entered. Copies of the completed checklists will be submitted to the hubs and will be available for review by the EHS-CCP staff.

Management System: Ongoing Monitoring & Continuous Improvement

Discovery: Evidence of staff implementing skills attained during training

Plan: Staff members who attend training will be asked to develop a plan indicating how they will implement the skills, strategies, or methods learned from the training into their daily lessons. Site managers or directors will monitor for implementation.

Discovery: Site managers are the only ones attending most trainings.

Plan: When hubs and/or partners are able to schedule trainings, these trainings should be held at times that are convenient for all staff members. Funds should be set aside to compensate teachers when they attend trainings on weekends or after hours. Hubs will assist the partners with providing substitutes when teachers are out for trainings on normal work days.