

## **PROGRAM DECISION MAKING PROGRAM GOALS**

***The mission of The Southwest HRA Head Start is to create and support a safe and caring place of success for children, their families and Head Start staff while meeting and exceeding the national goals of Head Start.***

Southwest HRA Head Start strives to provide services and programs which will enhance the growth and development of children and to prepare them for later academic and social success. We believe the preschool years and the experiences that children have during these years are vital to successful development so we make every effort to provide the highest quality program possible. We believe that growth and development are multi-dimensional so we offer the comprehensive services of education, medical, dental and nutritional health, and social services. We believe that children with disabling conditions both benefit from and contribute to programming for preschool children so we make a special effort to serve and support children with disabling conditions. Finally, we believe that parents are the most important people in the lives of their children and that the support parents give children as they grow and develop is crucial to their future success. As a result of this belief, we involve parents in all aspects of the program, and support them in their roles as parents, and as providers for their families.

An analysis of the data in this year's community assessment pointed out the need for action in several areas.

**State Pre-K:** An increased number of Pre-K classrooms has impacted our program in several ways.

1. Many parents are opting to send their children to state Pre-K for several reasons:
  - A. longer hours
  - B. transportation
  - C. location
  - D. siblings in K-12 county schools
2. Since the state Pre-K cannot serve three year olds, our number of three year olds has increased significantly and our research indicates it will continue to increase.
3. Increased number of three year old children will begin to have an impact on our adult/child ratio as mandated by the Head Start Performance Standards.

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#### **Immediate Short Term Goals**

1. Intensify outreach/recruitment with increased focus on three year olds and disabled children.
2. Continue to develop a relationship with county Local Education Authorities (LEA's) to ensure that Head Start serves the most needy children and families.

#### **Ongoing Short Term Goals**

1. The Head Start Program will continue its commitment to referring parents with day care needs to the Department of Human Services Child Care Broker Program since many of the Head Start parents are employed in jobs that require work in the evenings or weekends.
2. The Agency will continue to advocate for better TennCare services and improvements in the transportation system related to medical appointments. The program will encourage dentists to enroll in the program, and will encourage the managed care organizations to provide the services that have been contracted for in their agreements with the state. It has been noted that requests have been made by parents to staff in securing transportation to distant providers, and that the managed care organizations are in fact responsible for transportation. The Head Start program will continue to use its funds as a last resort while insuring that services are in fact provided in a timely manner.
3. The Agency must continue in its training commitment and efforts to improve recommendations and satisfaction for employees who meet the high expectations of the program. A training program for the Head Start Staff and Policy Council Members that will better inform the public of our Head Start Program activities in the communities that our program operates in. A CDA or credentialed staff person must be in each classroom and the Agency must continue in its efforts to extend the training requirements to teacher assistants who lack the credential and others who directly work with children. At this time all but one (1) of our Family Case Managers have completed the SSCBT process. The Agency should also encourage staff to secure additional training in appropriate areas. As specified in the Revised Performance Standards, the concepts of child services, family services, administration, and community linkages should be considered in improving the management plan.
4. To provide impoverished and/or disabled children the needed medical and dental services required. This process includes coordination of the Family Services, Health, Parent Involvement, and Disabilities Areas. This will be accomplished by providing transportation, purchasing proper equipment and supplies, providing therapists and consultants to aid the children, parents, and teaching staff, and by making referrals and appointments for therapy for the more severely disabled. .

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5. To ensure that the impoverished child and his family are provided the services that are necessary to narrow the gap between them and the more advantaged.
6. To provide the parents with information and training that will help them understand how children learn and grow and how this learning can be extended into the home.
7. To fulfill all efforts to identify, coordinate, integrate and utilize the existing community resources and services in our locality in providing educational, nutritional, health, social, parent involvement, and psychological services for the children and their families.
8. To continue to work with Head Start fathers in promoting involvement in their children's lives. We will continue to strive to provide information and training to help fathers, mothers, kids, and everyone to know that fathers play an irreplaceable role in the lives of their children.
9. To identify and serve more homeless families according to the McKinney-Vento Act.
10. Implement Emergency Preparedness Plan.
11. Train staff to work with parents on importance of dental and medical appointments and follow-ups as necessary.
12. Conduct Agency Board and Head Start Policy Council Training.
13. Ethics and Professionalism Training for staff for the workplace and working with Head Start parents.
14. Ensure Staff is knowledgeable concerning agency and program policies and procedures and Office of Head Start Monitoring System.

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#### **Long Term Goals**

In order to continue providing effective and efficient programs and services to Head Start children and their families, Southwest HRA Head Start has developed the following long range goals.

#### ***Program Expansion:***

Southwest HRA Head Start will continue to monitor data and request expansion funds as necessary when funds are available.

#### **Collaboration:**

Southwest HRA Head Start will continue to build upon existing partnerships and will seek out new partners that will allow us to provide ever improving services and programs to Head Start children and their families.

During the program year our Head Start Program provides emergency funds to assist families who cannot find assistance through other agencies or programs.