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COMPONENT: PROGRAM DESIGN & MANAGEMENT – MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS & PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: COMMUNICATION

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE: To establish and implement systems to ensure that timely and accurate information is provided to parents, policy groups, staff, and the general community. To ensure that effective two-way comprehensive communications between staff and parents are carried out on a regular basis throughout the program year. Communication with parents must be carried out in the parents' primary or preferred language or through an interpreter, to the extent feasible. To ensure that the following information is provided regularly to the governing bodies and to members of their policy groups: Procedures and timetables for program planning; Policies, guidelines, and other communications from HHS; Program and financial reports; and program plans, policies, procedures, and grant applications. To establish mechanisms for regular communication among all program staff to facilitate quality outcomes for children and families.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE:

Communication with Parents

Information shared with parents takes place in many forms which include but is not limited to the following:

- The initial communication between staff and parents takes place during recruitment.
- Parents have opportunities to communicate with staff during home visits, parent-teacher conferences, by volunteering in the classroom, during IEP meetings, through written notes and letters, and/or personal contact. Parents are also asked for input by completing parent evaluations, parent surveys, and by providing input about curriculum.
- Staff communicates opportunities for education, training, and parent involvement during parent meetings. Job opportunities within the agency are posted.
- Parents have opportunities to share concerns and needs with staff, and receive direct services or referrals to agencies that can best meet their needs.

- Information is provided to parents electronically through social media sites, the agency web page, and text messages.
- Parents receive a monthly center newsletter which provides information about their child's classroom and upcoming events.
- Parent Pages are published monthly for sharing of information about programs and activities.
- Parents are encouraged to participate in monthly Parent Committee as well as any special called meetings. One parent representative and alternate are elected by each Parent Committee to serve on the Policy Council. The Policy Council representative shares pertinent information from the Policy Council meetings with their respective Parent Committee.
- Parents are greeted each day at the center and/or bus stop.
- Communication with parents is carried out in the parent's primary or preferred language, to the extent feasible by bi-lingual staff, (if available), utilizing parent and community volunteers, and translating materials.

Communication with Governing Board and Policy Council

- The Head Start Director provides a quarterly written report to the Board and apprises the Policy Council monthly of activities for the preceding month including training, upcoming events, compliance reports, and other relevant information.
- Communication from the Department of Health and Human Services and other pertinent directives are provided to the Governing Board and Policy Council at the regularly scheduled meeting after receipt of the information.
- Board and Policy Council members are invited to attend Head Start planning meetings.
- Policy Council and Board members are given the opportunity to serve on working sub-committees for program planning, policies, and any subsequent needs that may arise.
- The Policy Council minutes, financial reports, CACFP report, ADA report, disability report, and other communication items are provided to the board members monthly.

Communication with Staff

Communication with staff is essential to ensure that performance standards are met consistently in all areas. Communication is important for growth of staff and for decision making. Communication with staff takes place through many forms which include, but are not limited to, the following.

- The Executive Director and Head Start Director have an open door policy where staff are welcome to express concerns, problems, opinions, and suggestions at any time.
- The Executive Director has regularly scheduled meetings with the Head Start Director.
- The Head Start management team meets regularly.
- Office staff communication is through many forms which include, but are not limited to verbal communication, staff meetings, e-mail, memos, and telephone.
- The Head Start Director emails or distributes copies of memos with pertinent information.
- The Family Services Manager and Family Advocates meet regularly for sharing of information concerning families, planning, and program improvement. Family Advocates will discuss suggestions for parent/volunteer activities.
- The Communications Assistant will ensure Policy Council minutes are sent to each classroom to be posted.
- The Health Services Manager and Education Manager meet frequently to communicate regarding Health, Mental Health, Nutrition, and Disabilities pertaining to children.
- Head Start staff receives annual performance evaluations by their supervisor where the employee is provided with strengths, areas for improvement, and training needs.
- Monthly newsletters are emailed for sharing of information.
- An agency web site provides information about agency programs, lists content area plans, policies, procedures and forms.
- Social Media provides useful information pertaining to events, activities, and resources for parents, staff and the community, etc.
- Management staff and other staff when appropriate receive communications from outside regulatory agencies such as Health Departments, Childcare Licensing, and Fire Marshalls, etc.

Communication with the Community

Communication with community members and partnering agencies is essential in the development of resources offered to families served through Head Start. This communication is also instrumental in collaborating services between Head Start and other agencies providing services to the same families. Methods of communicating with the community include the following:

- Public Service Announcements on local TV stations are delivered as part of recruitment activities.
- News releases are sent to local newspapers for sharing of information, activities, and for recruitment.
- The Director and managers attend County Interagency Meetings to network.
- Flyers and announcements are posted in conspicuous places in the communities by the Family Advocates and documentation on the location and date each flyer posted is maintained by the Family Service Manager.
- With input from the parent committees, community members and other agency members are invited to serve as guest speakers or trainers for parent meetings and participate in activities in the classroom.
- Head Start participates in parades, and other community events.
- Family Advocates participate in community meetings on a regular basis to remain informed about community needs and events.