Audubon Area Head Start Outcomes-based Job Description and Performance Appraisal System
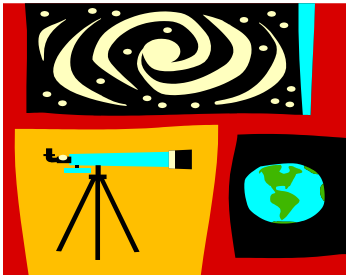
Audubon Area Community Services, Inc.

Head Start Program
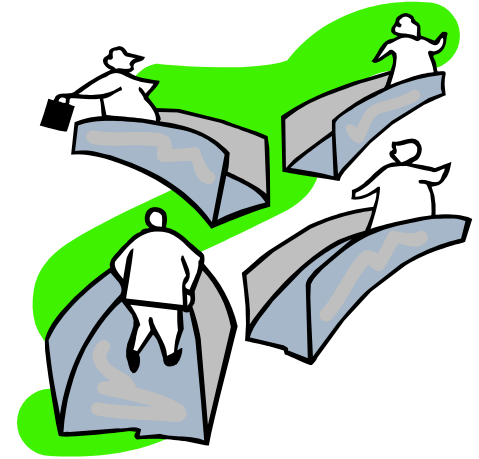
Welcome

- Introductions
- What is your current level of understanding about outcomes in general?
- To what extent is an outcome performance appraisal system used at your agency?

Agenda

- Why Outcomes Instead of Tasks?
- Most Essential
- Establish a Framework
- What Is the Process?
- Tips to Follow
- Steps to Implementation
- Questions and Answers (Q&A) and Evaluations

Training Objectives

- **Participants will:**
  - Gain an understanding of the advantages of outcomes-based job descriptions and performance appraisals
  - Increase their awareness of how to evaluate using outcomes, not just tasks
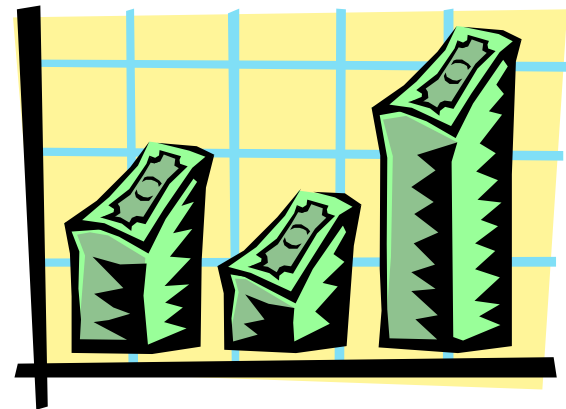
Why Outcomes?

- Aligns job descriptions with core values and mission of the program
- Tracks the successes and results of the position, staff person, and program
- Increases awareness of expectations by management and staff
- All indicators are measurable
- Raises the bar for accomplishments within the program

Limitations of Outcomes

- If outcomes are not being met, it does not show the cause of the problem
- Staff must accept that they control their own destiny, putting an extra burden on the employee
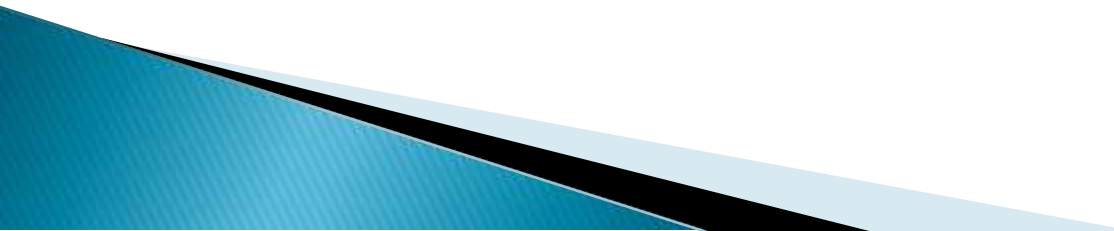- Extra time needed for the performance appraisal

Most Essential

▸ You must achieve buy-in and commitment from:
  ◦ Executive directors, superintendents, etc.
  ◦ Head Start and Early Head Start directors
  ◦ HR directors
  ◦ Mid-level managers
  ◦ Field staff

Establish a Framework

- **Determine Definitions:**
  - **Outcome:** A general statement of benefits for participants during or after their involvement with the program

  - **Outcome Competencies**: The data collected to track a program's successes

  - **Outcome Indicators**: Numerical or measurable objectives for a program's level of achievement toward its outcomes

Establish a Framework

▸ Outcome – *A general statement of benefits for participants during or after their involvement with the program*

Example:

The greatest number of eligible children will participate in the Head Start or Early Head Start program as current funded slots allow.

The Framework

▸ Outcome Competencies – *The data collected to track a program's successes*
  ◦ Examples:
    · Identifies and recruits eligible families and children, including children with disabilities
    · Selects participants for the Head Start program based on established plans and procedures
    · Maintains funded enrollment level in accordance with enrollment requirements
    · Provides appropriate follow-up when absences are frequent

The Framework

- Outcome Indicators to the Competencies. *Numerical or measurable objectives for a program's level of achievement toward its outcomes*
  - Example:
    - Identifies and recruits families and children, including children with disabilities
      - Acceptable:
        - Articulates and implements an effective recruitment plan
        - Establishes target recruitment number based on the recruitment formula in the Family Advocate Reference Manual
        - Maintains a current waitlist of completed applications, as referenced in the Family Advocate Reference Manual
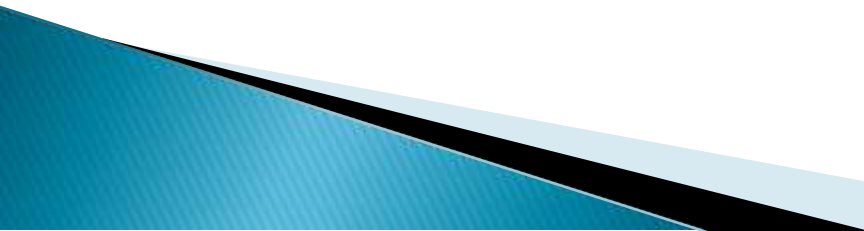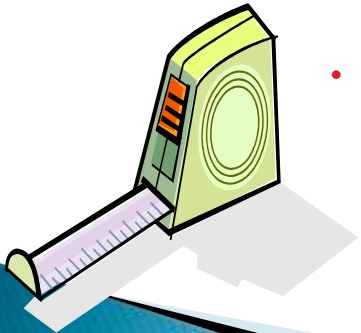
What Is the Process ?

▸ First, form a diverse focus group of staff who are familiar with the Head Start Program Performance Standards and who know the mission, policies, plans, and procedures of the program.

▸ Train them in what you want to accomplish and gain commitment. This is a long process when done correctly.

What Is the Process ?

▸ Train focus group members on the difference between outcomes, competencies, and indicators. Make sure outcomes are results-oriented and indicators are completely measurable.

▸ Determine how many ratings you want to use. We used four: Exemplary, Acceptable, Marginal, and Unacceptable.

What Is the Process ?

▸ Develop an outline for the guidance of assigning ratings. The focus group will set the parameters.

◦ Example: We asked our supervisors to begin at the Acceptable level. If all indicators were met successfully at the Acceptable level, they were then rated as Exemplary; if not, as Marginal. If all items were not met successfully at the Marginal level, the rating became Unacceptable.

What Is the Process ?

▸ Communicate with staff who are performing the work. Learn what they are actually doing and, more importantly, why they are doing it. Make lists.

▸ Condense the job functions into logical areas that make sense. It is not recommended to list more than 10 outcomes per position.

What Is the Process?

Determine the overall **outcomes**, which are general, results-based statements, and then the **competencies**, which are more specific but still somewhat general, for each of the logical areas.

This makes up the actual job description.

What Is the Process?

▸ Next, work on the Performance Guide. Use the outcomes and competencies to determine the **indicators**.

▸ We started with Acceptable and went to Marginal and then Exemplary. Make sure each indicator is measurable.
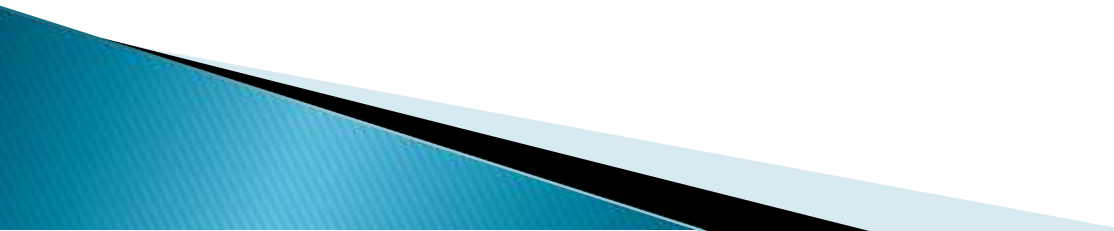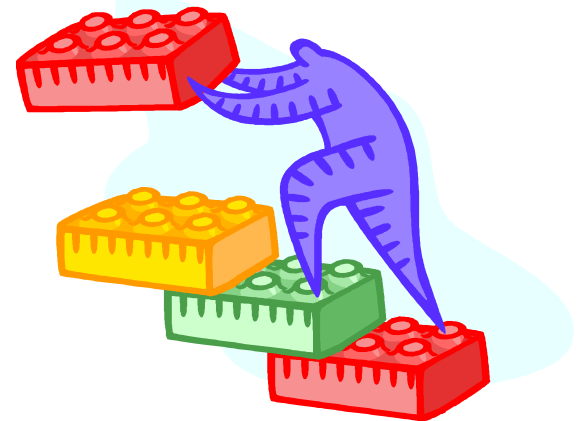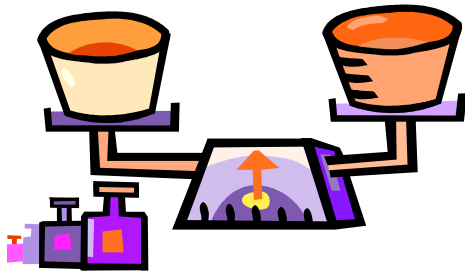
Tips to Follow

- Questions to Ask:
  - Are the outcomes, competencies, and indicator logical? Do they make sense for the work?
  - Does they identify an important component of the job that is performed?
  - How are they measurable?
  - Who will measure it?

Tips to Follow

▸ Cautions:
◦ Be sure to define all words used.

◦ Use words that measure. Avoid using words like "increasing," "attempts," and "improves."

◦ Write outcomes, competencies, and indicators around the "perfect job," not around someone already in that position.
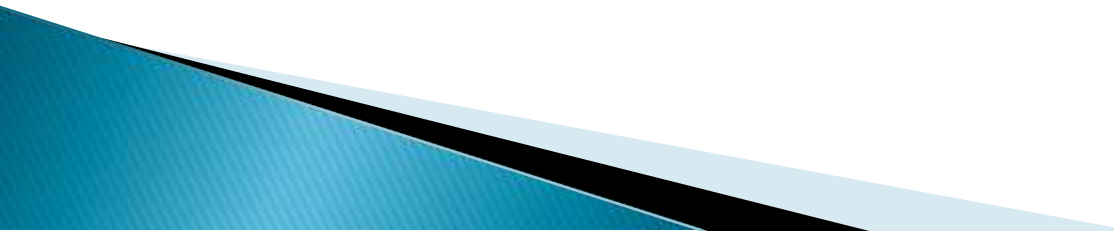
Tips to Follow

▸ Refrain from identifying specific skills in the outcome. Think about the desired **product or results** of the work, not the process.

▸ Take your time! This is difficult work and needs much discussion.

Performance Evaluation

- Using the Performance Guide, develop the performance evaluation. Transfer the outcomes, competencies, and indicators to the desired performance evaluation format.

- See the sample Family Advocate Performance Evaluation.

Steps to Implementation

- 1. Give draft copies of the job description and performance guide to staff for feedback. Listen and adjust as needed.

- 2. Give adjusted copies of the job description, Performance Guide, and performance evaluation to staff one year before they are to be evaluated.
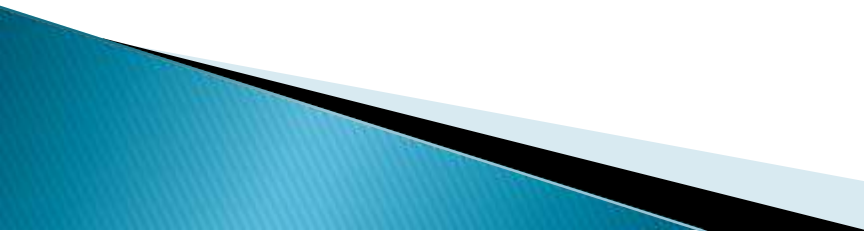
Steps to Implementation

- **3.** Train the staff on how the instruments will be used. Include timelines and guidance on how staff are to document how the outcome was completed.

- **4.** Use the first year as a learning curve. In our pilot, not all supervisors were required to use it the first year.

Steps to Implementation

- **5.** Provide ample training and technical assistance to staff. This process can be intimidating for staff.

- **6.** Have staff keep a portfolio of evidence that shows how they met or exceeded the acceptable outcomes.
  - Ask supervisors to attach documentation when an outcome is not met so a performance improvement plan can be written.

Steps to Implementation

▸ **7.** Evaluate and adjust standards and performance guides as suggested by supervisors and field staff, and as conditions change. They are not set in stone.
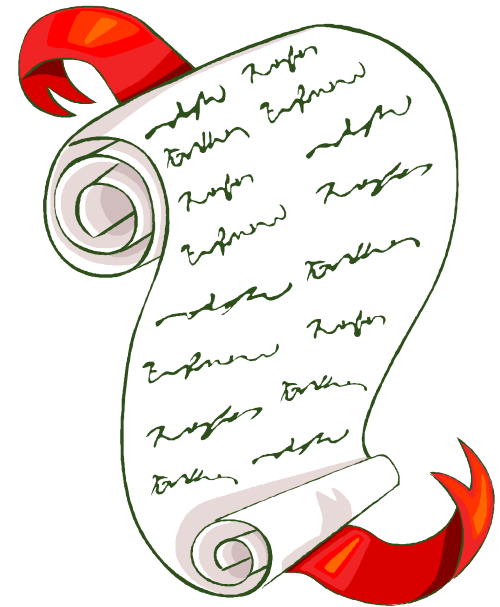
Q&A and Evaluations

Outcomes-based job descriptions and performance evaluations give staff a clear understanding of expectations, resulting in better programmatic outcomes.

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