



THE NATIONAL CENTER ON

**Program Management
and Fiscal Operations™**

Data in Head Start and Early Head Start: Creating a Culture That Embraces Data

Guide for Users and Trainers



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Overview

[Data in Head Start and Early Head Start: Creating a Culture That Embraces Data](#) is the first in an online series on using data in Head Start and Early Head Start. The module includes an introduction and five interactive activities. Each activity includes scenarios that are based on real-life examples from actual Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

Each activity also includes brief video clips, titled "Voices from the Field," that highlight best practices in relation to the content covered in the activity. The video clips showcase Head Start and Early Head Start programs with expertise in building a culture for using data. They represent a variety of program types, including different auspices, regions, sizes, localities, program options, and populations served. The video clips are embedded within the activities and include scenes such as management team meetings, discussions on data use by governing body and Policy Council members, as well as interviews with directors and other management team members.



Audience

The module was developed for use by Head Start and Early Head Start leaders, primarily management staff. It is designed to be used individually by a management staff member working through the module at his or her own pace. Head Start leaders may also want to share the module with others. Parts or all of each activity can be shown and discussed during staff meetings, training events, management team or service area team meetings, and governing body or Policy Council meetings.

Objectives

- Understand how the data collected in your Head Start or Early Head Start program fits into the annual planning cycle
- Help everyone in the program—from bus drivers and cooks to Policy Council and governing body members—become enthusiastic about using data
- Become data detectives and base decisions on facts rather than hunches
- Share data appropriately with different audiences and show each how the information can be used
- Celebrate the good news that data shows and learn from the bad news so you can improve your program

Using the Module

Each activity takes about 15 minutes to complete. No score is kept, and you will learn from both stronger and weaker answers. In fact, selecting a less than ideal response to some questions can sometimes be more fun and interesting.

Using the Guide

This Guide describes each of the activities in the online module. Each description includes a screenshot of the activity. The description is followed by two sections. The first, "Put It Into Practice," offers ideas for how individual leaders might extend their learning on the topic. The second, "Share the Activity," includes ideas for sharing the materials with staff, Policy Council members, and the governing body.

Module Home Page

Data in Head Start and Early Head Start


Module Home Page

[Module Home Page](#)

[Interactive Learning Module](#)

[Resources](#)

Data in Head Start and Early Head Start: Creating a Culture that Embraces Data is an interactive learning module designed for use by management staff in Head Start and Early Head Start programs. To get started, watch this video montage of Head Start and Early Head Start leaders. In it, they share their excitement about how they created a culture that embraces the use of data to inform decision making in their programs.



The goals of this interactive learning module are to strengthen leaders' capabilities to:

- Understand how the data collected in your Head Start or Early Head Start program fit into the annual planning cycle
- Help everyone in the program—from bus drivers and cooks to Policy Council and governing body

Description: The [module home page](#) presents a video montage of short scenes and quotations from program leaders who have created a culture of data use in their programs.

Put It Into Practice

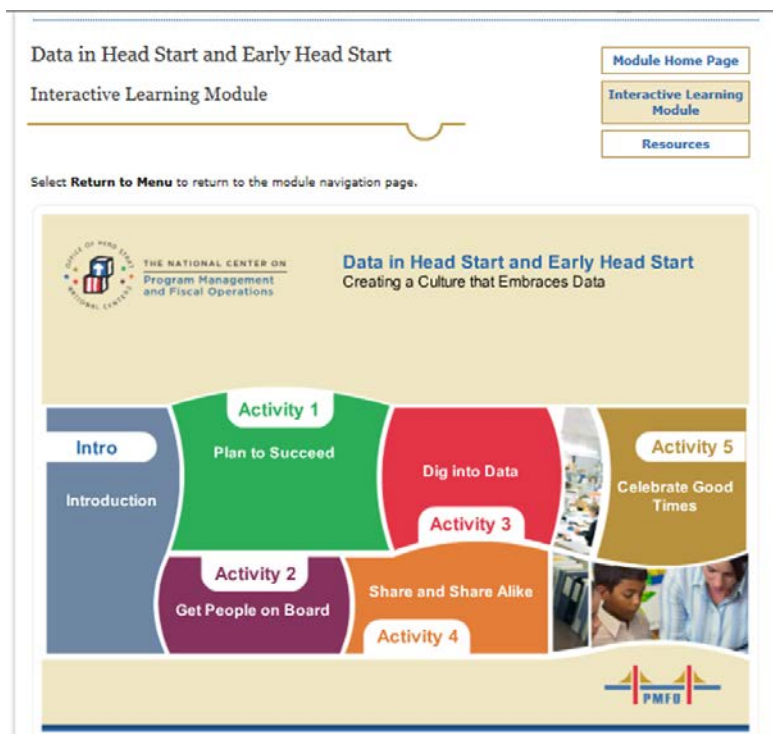
- Watch the video montage and follow along with the transcript. What are some takeaways for you from these data experts?
- Select the [Resources](#) link in the upper-right corner of the home page. Review [Data Resources](#) [PDF, 130KB]. Select and read any of the Head Start and other resources that look interesting to you.
- Select, print, and read the [Tips for Embracing Data](#) [PDF, 148KB] resource. As you read, use three symbols to annotate the tip sheet:
 - + – Affirms my prior understanding
 - ! – Surprises me
 - ? – Provokes a question and/or interest in further learning

Where do you see your program in relation to each of the tip sheet's strategies?

Share the Activity

- Download the PowerPoint Introduction to the online module. Provide it to any staff who will be working through the module independently.
- Show the [introductory video montage](#) at a staff meeting or training event. Invite participants to listen for statements that have meaning to them. Ask participants to share their favorite quotes with the group and explain why they find them meaningful. Divide participants into groups and ask each to come up with a brief statement about why using data is important in your program.
- Select the [Resources](#) link and download the [Tips for Embracing Data](#) [PDF, 148KB] tip sheet and the attached training outline. Conduct the workshop with your staff.

Interactive Learning Module Menu Page



Description: The Interactive Learning Module menu page serves as the navigation for the module. Access it by selecting the [Interactive Learning Module](#) link in the upper-right corner of the home page. From the menu, select from the Introduction and Activity tiles to choose and complete an activity.

Introduction

Introduction [Return to Menu](#)

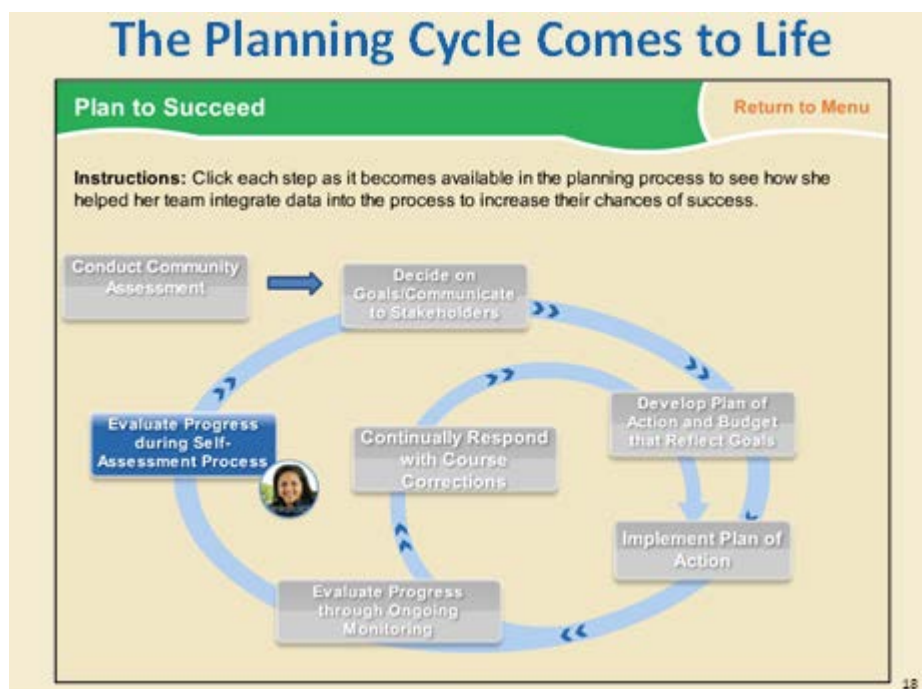
This interactive module is designed to help Head Start and Early Head Start programs create an organizational culture that embraces the use of data to drive decisions.

After this introduction, you'll have the opportunity to complete five interactive activities that show how Head Start and Early Head Start programs can turn data, facts, and numbers into useful and usable information that can help set priorities, inform practice, and drive continuous improvement.

[← PREV](#) [NEXT →](#)

Description: The Introduction provides a brief description of each of the module's five interactive learning activities. Select the "Next" or "Prev" buttons in the lower-right corner to move back and forth between the slides. To return to the main menu, select the "Return to Menu" button in the upper-right corner.

Activity 1: Plan to Succeed



Description: This activity introduces the Head Start Program Planning Cycle combined with data use through a case study about attendance. As Cynthia, a Head Start/Early Head Start director, visits each step of the process, learners see how the planning and data cycles play out.

Put It Into Practice

- Download and review [The Program Planning Cycle](#) [PDF, 277KB] handout.
- Consider this quote from a Head Start/Early Head Start director in Region VIII: "I truly believe that teaching or planning without data is like tossing a handful of darts and hoping that one hits the target, whatever and wherever that might be. The data is like GPS system that guides our planning and hard work directly to the target. How can we miss?" Rate your program. On a scale of 1 – 10 (low – high), how well does your program's use of data help you hit the target?
- Walk yourself through the Program Planning Cycle, substituting a scenario from your own program for Cynthia's.
- Compare the sample action plan from the activity with your program's action plan. Answer the following questions:
 - Does your action plan include all of the elements in the sample plan?
 - How do you review and update your action plan? With whom do you communicate changes?
 - How do you share your plan with your governing body and Policy Council?
- Watch the "Voices from the Field" video clips on the [Resources](#) page. As you watch, consider the following questions:
 - Which ideas and strategies are the most pertinent for your program?
 - Which ones do you believe are already in place in your program?
 - What ideas did you get for strengthening your program's culture of data?

Share the Activity

- Share the activity at a staff meeting or during a training session. Divide staff into groups and invite each group to walk through the planning cycle using a different program goal.
- Present Plan to Succeed at governing body and Policy Council meetings. Invite members to make a list of all of the data sources that they receive at their meetings. Lead a discussion of how members use the data and information to guide their decisions.
- Show the video clips that accompany the activity with your staff, governing body, and Policy Council. Discuss strategies that your program can use to more effectively integrate use of data into your planning cycle.

Activity 2: Get People on Board



Description: Activity 2 addresses how to help people – from staff members to Policy Council members – become data-users. It presents four scenarios. In each scenario, learners assess why the person is hesitant or resistant to using data and then decide what to say and what to do to change the situation.

- The Reluctant Teacher presents a teacher who feels that documenting child progress is just one more thing to do.
- The Overwhelmed Health Assistant is a scenario about a health assistant who doesn't understand the importance of accurate data or aggregated versus individual data.
- The Trusting Home-Based Manager shows a manager who is not reviewing data regularly or using it in reflective supervision with her staff.
- The Confused Policy Council Member is confused by the data that is shared but not explained during Policy Council meetings.

Put It Into Practice

- Reflect on whether there are people in your program who might be: reluctant to embrace data; overwhelmed by their role in using data; not reviewing or using data well; or confused by how data is presented. In each case, consider why this may be happening in your program. What can you say and do to help these individuals? If you have overcome similar situations in the past, think about the successful strategies that you used to resolve the problem. What was the person feeling? What did you say and do that helped?
- Watch the "Voices from the Field" video clips. Identify the strategies that program staff and leaders use to move people forward toward embracing the use of data.
- Revisit with your management team how team members review data to make sure that it is accurate, complete, and timely. Discuss strategies they use to review data with the staff that they supervise.
- Address the issue of making time for data use in your program. Take a look at whether the use of data is embedded in staff roles rather than considered an add-on. Determine whether staff have sufficient time to do required data entry, check their data, review data reports, and use the data in their everyday work.
- From the Resources section, open, print, and complete the handout [Data Activities Inventory: Leader's Level](#) [PDF, 269KB]. Use your own knowledge about your program staff's skills in preparing, collecting, aggregating and analyzing, and using and sharing data to complete the inventory.

Share the Activity

- Present Get People On Board at a management team meeting. Discuss whether management team members have encountered similar situations among staff, Policy Council members, and the governing body regarding data use. Are they reluctance, feeling overwhelmed, not understanding the importance of using data, or being confused by the data as presented? Brainstorm effective strategies team members have used to overcome resistance.
- Share the Confused Policy Council Member scenario at a Policy Council meeting. Conduct a discussion about whether members have ever felt confused by the information your team presents at meetings. Think about strategies that can make the information easier for people to understand. Experiment with various ways of reporting data to the Policy Council and see if some are more successful than others in generating questions and discussion.
- Share the Reluctant Teacher, Overwhelmed Health Assistant, and Trusting Home-Based Manager scenarios at a staff meeting. Invite staff who began as reluctant data users to share what helped them to become enthusiastic data users. Pair these enthusiasts with staff who are still hesitant about data use.
- Distribute the [Data Activities Inventory: Leader's Level](#) [PDF, 269KB] handout to your management team and ask them to complete the inventory themselves. Consider collecting their completed forms and aggregating and analyzing the results to get a program-wide view of your staff's knowledge and skills with data use.

Activity 3: Dig Into Data

Dig Into Data


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One way to create a culture for using data is for you and your staff to become data detectives together. Detectives:

- Dig for the facts
- Ask a lot of questions
- Pursue their hunches, but require clear proof

When you and your team base your decisions on facts - not opinions or hunches - you will come up with better solutions, have clearer priorities, and you may even find it easier to reach consensus when you need to make a decision. Ultimately, you will also provide more effective services for the children and families in your program.

In this activity, you will sharpen your detective skills as you dig for the facts that will make or break your case.



Description: The Dig Into Data activity invites learners to become data detectives. It presents four scenarios in which learners have to make a decision by digging deeper into the data. In each case, they explore three ways of digging deeper: talking with experts, confirming anecdotal data with quantitative data, and making sure the data being used are reliable. After digging deeper into the data, learners must decide whether they have enough data to make an informed decision.

- Scenario 1 – The Obesity Issue: In this scenario, a governing body member recommends that the program prioritize obesity as an issue to address. Learners dig deeper into this topic by talking with their Health Services Advisory Committee; looking at Body Mass Index (BMI) data on the Program Information Report (PIR); reviewing public health department information; looking at goals in Family Partnership Agreements; and comparing the program's data with public school and local public health department information.
- Scenario 2 – Converting Slots: Learners review community assessment and recruitment data to determine whether a program should reallocate slots from the home-based option to center-based slots. Users are asked to review community assessment data and examine data reliability on the parents' choice of the home-based option.
- Scenario 3 – Developing a T/TA Plan: This scenario looks at whether compiling the data from a teacher interest survey is the best way to set priorities for a training and technical assistance (T/TA) plan. Dig deeper by aggregating data from performance appraisals, looking at Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS™) data, and seeking additional information from teachers by revising the teacher interest survey.
- Scenario 4 – Upgrading a Management Information System: In this scenario, an information systems manager recommends switching from a custom-built Management Information System (MIS) to an off-the-shelf system. To inform this decision, learners assess the capacity of the program's current system, review the budget, and receive input from the management team.

Put It Into Practice

- Review the different strategies for gathering additional data that are explored in the activity:
 - Check with program experts,
 - Check quantitative data
 - Compare your data with other community data
 - Examine the data more carefully
 - Make sure your data is reliable
 - Compare your data with external sources and look for trends
 - Aggregate data
 - Look for additional information

Which of these strategies for digging into data have you used in the past? Which additional ones would you be interested in trying?

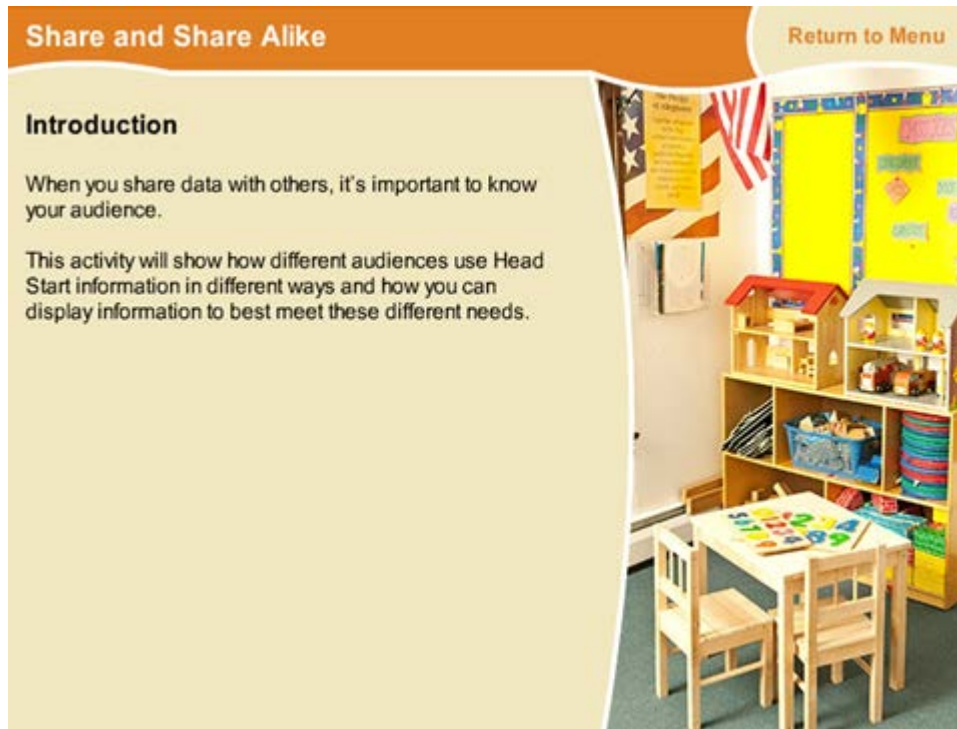
- Identify a concern or question within your program that you would like to dig into more deeply. Reflect on the data that you already have to help you address the concern or answer the question. Consider whether additional data sources exist that you could consult to help you make a more informed decision.
- In one of the video clips in this activity, the program's management team engages in a process called "design thinking" in response to the program's data on chronic illnesses. Learn more about design thinking here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syMYst0fXM&list=PLAD1F87125529A918>. Then, think about how you might use this kind of process to stimulate creative thinking and problem-solving in your own program. You might consider showing the video during a meeting or training event and asking small groups to share an idea or two that they could immediately apply to their work.

Share the Activity

- Share with your governing body the video clip in Activity 4: Share and Share Alike that features three members of a Head Start/Early Head Start program's governing body. Conduct a discussion about how data informed a recent or upcoming governing body decision. Talk with the governing body about the types of data they would like to see presented to inform their decision. You can include an initial brainstorm of the types of known data. Next, have management staff list additional data not identified in the brainstorm. Additionally, engage the governing body in a ranking exercise to prioritize the data they are interested in. For example, list data types on a flip chart and then provide a specific number of marks that each member can place by the listed data; rank the data types accordingly.
- Show the three video clips that accompany this activity at a staff meeting or training event. Both of the Head Start/Early Head Start directors talk about how data was used to help their program make a significant decision. Lead a discussion of a time when data was used to make a significant decision in your program. What did the data say that led to the decision? What has been the impact of the decision on your program?
- Identify a concern or question in your program that you would like to dig into more deeply with your management team or during a training session. Together, brainstorm and reflect on the data that you already have to help you address the concern or answer the question. Consider

whether additional data sources exist that you would like to consult so you and your team can make a more informed decision. If you are doing this activity during a training session, you can divide people into groups and assign a different issue to each group.

Activity 4: Share and Share Alike



Description: This activity shows how the same data (e.g., CLASS™ data, data on attendance at parent meetings, data on languages spoken by children in the program) can be shared most effectively with different audiences. Users look at graphic representations of data tailored to different audiences and read about how these audiences would like to see the information presented and how they might use the information.

- Scenario 1 – Classroom Assessment Scoring System™: Teachers, education managers, and the governing body look at CLASS™ data.
- Scenario 2 – Attendance Reports for Parent Meetings: Family service managers, center directors, and Policy Council members look at data on attendance at parent meetings.
- Scenario 3 – Community Assessment Data: Arabic Speaking Families: Fiscal managers, the management team, and community partners look at data on an increase of Arabic-speaking families in the service area.

Put It Into Practice

- Revisit the reports that you submit each month to the management team, Policy Council, and governing body and/or community. Evaluate them using the following criteria and then consider whether there are ways to improve the presentation of your data:
 - Do the reports provide context when needed to help members understand the data?
 - Are the reports informative?

- Do the reports use visual representation when appropriate?
- Is consistent information reported each time to facilitate comparisons over time?

Share the Activity

- Present Share and Share Alike as a hands-on training activity during a staff meeting or training event. Print the corresponding three-page handout in the Appendix of this guide, which simulates the online activity. Have participants work in small groups to complete the handout. When finished, show the online activity and compare the group's answers with those in the module.
- Share with your Policy Council the video clip found in Activity 2: Get People on Board that shows a Policy Council president talking about reviewing data reports. Lead a discussion with members about whether they have suggestions for how you might change your reports to make them easier to understand and use to inform decisions.
- Share with your governing body the video clip featuring three members of a Head Start/Early Head Start program's governing body discussing data reports and data use. Conduct a discussion about data you recently presented that informed a governing body decision. Or as an alternative, talk about an upcoming decision. Discuss with your governing body members the types of data they need to inform their decisions and how they would like the data to be presented.
- Engage in an activity with your management team about presenting information effectively to different audiences. Think about information from your program that you need to share with different audiences (e.g., Policy Council, teachers, family service workers, governing body). Assign small groups or pairs a topic or specific data. Have them design and develop a report or presentation for a specific audience using what they've learned from the module and the criteria described above. Allow each group or pair to share its report or presentation with the larger group or set of peers for review and feedback.


Activity 5: Celebrate Good Times (Come On!)

Celebrate Good Times (Come On!) [Return to Menu](#)

Introduction

Data can point to problems to solve, and they can also identify program strengths. Ultimately, even bad news can lead to good news. Sometimes as you analyze data, you find bright spots to build on. You can turn bad news into good news if you look objectively at the data, seek to understand why the data are showing poor results, consider what you want to do about it, put a plan in place, and check back frequently to see if your plan is working.

In this activity, you will see why it is important to share all the news with everyone in the program. This will help everyone see how they can contribute to the success of your program.



Description: Activity 5 shows how sharing the good and bad news revealed by data helps everybody in a Head Start or Early Head Start program play a role in reaching program goals. A bus driver, family service worker, and health services staff member each state how they can make a contribution to reducing absenteeism and improving children's attendance.

Put It Into Practice

- Watch the video clip of a Head Start/Early Head Start director talking about how her program staff had an "ah-ha" moment, coming up with great ideas for how each of them, no matter their role, can contribute to achieving program goals and improving outcomes for children and families. Consider whether staff members in your program have had similar "ah-ha" moments and understand how they all contribute to achieving your program's mission and goals.

Share the Activity

- Share the Celebrate Good Times (Come On!) activity as part of a staff training event. Print out the related handout in the Appendix of this guide. Divide participants into groups of four and invite each person in a group to assume one of the roles in the activity. Invite each group to do a role play, using the handout as a script. Lead a follow-up discussion about any new insights participants gained as a result of the role play.
- Present one or more of your school readiness or program goals at a staff meeting or training event. Ask staff members in different roles to brainstorm ideas for how they contribute to achieving your program's goals.

Appendix A:

Handouts

Tips for Embracing Data Activity Directions

Preparation:

- Select the Resources link on the module home page and download the [Tips for Embracing Data](#) [PDF, 148KB] tip sheet.
- Distribute chart paper and markers for each group. You may want to include other art materials as well.

Activity:

- Explain that the tip sheet includes 10 tips that program leaders can use to help their program create a culture that embraces data.
- Assign one of the 10 tips to each group.
- Instruct each group to make a poster or create a brief skit illustrating why their tip is the most important. Allow 5-10 minutes for the groups to develop their poster or skit, depending on the amount of time that you have for the session.
- Invite each group to present. Comment as appropriate, emphasizing or adding to the content.

Share and Share Alike – CLASS™ Data Activity

When you share data with others, it's important to know your audience. In this activity, think about how different audiences use Head Start information in different ways and how you can display information to best meet these needs.

Many programs are now using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS™) to help improve teaching and learning in their programs. Think about how three different audiences might want to see CLASS™ data and how each might use it.

Teachers	
How They Might Want to See It	What They Might Want to Do with It
Education Managers	
How They Might Want to See It	What They Might Want to Do with It
Governing Bodies	
How They Might Want to See It	What They Might Want to Do with It

Share and Share Alike – Community Assessment Data

When you share data with others, it's important to know your audience. In this activity, think about how different audiences use Head Start information in different ways and how you can display information to best meet these needs.

Community assessment data provides vital information that impacts many things, from center locations to hours of operation to program options. Think about how one piece of information, an increase in Arabic-speaking families, might be shared and used.

Fiscal Managers	
How They Might Want to See It	What They Might Want to Do with It
Management Team	
How They Might Want to See It	What They Might Want to Do with It
Community Partners	
How They Might Want to See It	What They Might Want to Do with It

Share and Share Alike – Attendance at Parent Meetings

When you share data with others, it's important to know your audience. In this activity, think about how different audiences use Head Start information in different ways and how you can display information to best meet these needs.

One of the ways that programs judge the effectiveness of their parent meetings is by seeing how many parents show up. If attendance is low, increasing attendance might be one of the program's goals. Let's see how these data might be shared and used by different people.

Family Service Managers	
How They Might Want to See It	What They Might Want to Do with It
Center Directors	
How They Might Want to See It	What They Might Want to Do with It
Policy Councils	
How They Might Want to See It	What They Might Want to Do with It

Celebrating Good Times

Linda

Head Start/Early Head Start Director



I'm a Head Start/Early Head Start director. I recently discovered that despite all of my staff's good efforts, children's attendance is down. At an all-staff meeting, we reviewed the data together, and created a goal about improving attendance. I asked each person to think about how he or she could make a contribution that will help the program reach its goal.

Celebrating Good Times

Omar

Bus Driver



First thought:

"Sorry, I can't help. All I can do is get the ones that want to be here to the center on time."

On second thought...

"I'll talk to the bus monitor about greeting parents and children with an extra big smile. We can set a welcoming tone right from the start. And when children come back after being absent, we can let them know that we missed them—and so did their teachers and friends. I can keep as close as possible to my pick up schedule and that way I am a role model for promptness. Lastly, if I am late, I can explain why so parents know that I respect their time. You know, I never realized that I play an important part in improving attendance. I wonder what how else I can help our program reach its goals."

Celebrating Good Times

Sue

Family Services Manager



First thought:

"I wish it were different. I've tried to call some of these parents five times but they never seem to be home."

On second thought...

"I'm going to remember to talk about the importance of attendance in my initial conversations with families. In fact, maybe we can revise our orientation and enrollment protocols so I'll be sure to talk about it. I'm going to remind parents not only at the beginning of the year, but throughout the year, and

let them know that I notice that their children are coming to school more frequently. You know, since I work with families, I know that I have an important role in making sure that they understand how important it is to send their children to school every day. But I want to think about how I contribute to our other goals that may seem less directly related to my job as a family service worker."

Celebrating Good Times

Georgia

Health Services



First thought:

"Sometimes our attendance is down because parents keep their children home from school when they're sick."

On second thought...

"I wonder if there are things I could do to make sure our children stay healthy so they don't have a reason to stay home. Maybe it's time to do training again with children and staff on hand washing and sneezing into their elbows to cut down on the spread of disease. I can also train parents on things like having good sleep

routines. There's such a strong and obvious connection between good health and attendance. But I wonder if all of our other staff—the kitchen staff, teachers, our facilities manager, for example, see how they contribute to our reaching this goal—and our other goals as well."