



Foundations for Excellence: Planning in Head Start

November 2014

Table of Contents **Planning in Head Start**

Introduction: Program Planning Topics in Head Start **1**

Topic #1: Understanding Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, Progress, and Action Plans **5**

Topic #2: Plans in Head Start **18**

Topic #3: Program Goals and School Readiness Goals—Understanding the Relationship **25**

Topic #4: Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, Progress, and Action Plans—Program Examples **31**

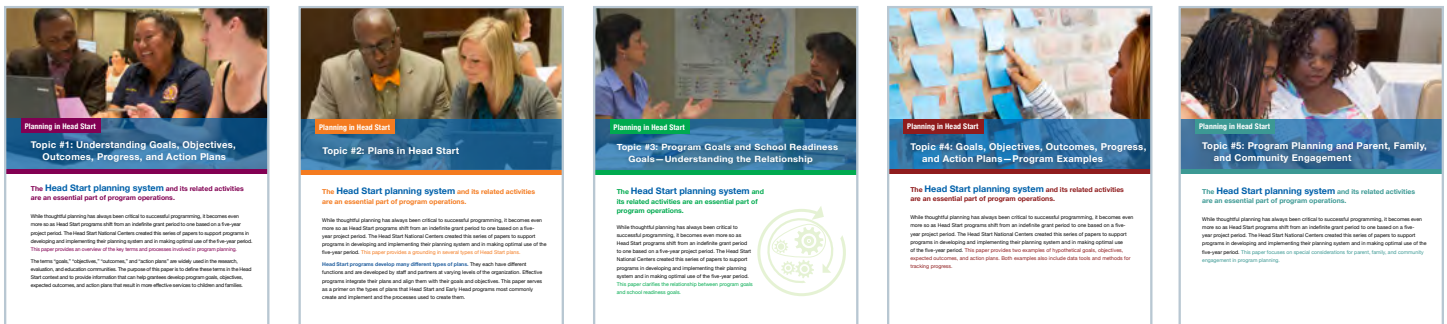
Topic #5: Program Planning and Parent, Family, and Community Engagement **51**

Introduction Program Planning Topics in Head Start

The Head Start planning system and its related activities are an essential part of program operations. While thoughtful planning has always been critical to successful programming, it becomes even more so as Head Start programs shift from an indefinite grant period to a five-year project period. *Information Memorandum (IM) ACF-IM-HS-14-02* and the application instructions for obtaining a five-year grant require programs to

- describe the long-term goals they will accomplish during the five-year period;
- describe short-term objectives;
- describe the expected outcomes aligned with the goals and objectives; and
- define data tools and methods for tracking progress towards their goals, objectives, and expected outcomes.

Grantees report on this progress in their yearly continuation applications over the course of the five-year project period.



The Head Start National Centers developed this series entitled *Planning in Head Start* to support programs in developing and implementing their planning system. The series consists of five papers.

“Topic #1: Understanding Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, Progress, and Action Plans”

defines goals, objectives, outcomes, and action plans within a Head Start context and provides tips for developing each. It emphasizes the difference between goals, which are

BROAD (Bold—Beyond current expectations, Responsive, Organization-wide, Aspirational, and Dynamic) and objectives, which are **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely).

“Topic #2: Plans in Head Start” is a primer on the types of plans that Head Start and Early Head Start programs most commonly create and implement. It explains the process for developing plans, common features of the various Head Start plans, and their different functions. The paper describes those plans that are tied to the planning process—five-year plans, annual action plans, school readiness plans, training and technical assistance (T/TA) plans, and written plans,—as well as a variety of other plans that programs develop: strategic plans, transition plans, emergency preparedness plans, and technology plans.

“Topic #3: Program Goals and School Readiness Goals—Understanding the Relationship” addresses the importance of keeping goals “alive” and the frequently asked question about the relationship between program goals and school readiness goals. After citing the requirements in the Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards for the development of these goals, the paper emphasizes that program goals and school readiness goals work together to ensure high-quality, comprehensive services for children and families. The paper addresses another frequently asked question about the number of goals a program should set by encouraging programs to look at this question through a systems lens. It concludes with a chart that contrasts the two types of goals.

“Topic #4: Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, Progress, and Action Plans—Program Examples” provides two examples of what a program’s goals, objectives, expected outcomes, and action plans could look like. One example focuses on strengthening children’s transitions to kindergarten, and the other focuses on an initiative to promote language and literacy development for all children.

“Topic #5: Program Planning and Parent, Family, and Community Engagement” clarifies the process for setting goals and objectives related to family outcomes. It includes tips and examples of related goals and objectives and suggests data sources and tools for tracking progress toward achieving family outcomes.



Tips for Using the Program Planning Papers

- **Read the papers thoroughly and discuss them with your management team** to arrive at a shared understanding of the information and how you will use it. Talk to your T/TA providers and/or Program Specialist to clarify any questions you have or things that you want to know more about.
- **Share the papers with your governing body/Tribal Council and Policy Council.** Include the planning papers in your training plan. Since both your governing body and your Policy Council work together with staff to develop, plan, and evaluate your Head Start program, it is vital for them to understand the ins and outs of the five-year project period and program planning.
- **Refer to the papers when you are setting your goals, writing objectives and outcomes, and developing your action plans.** Understanding the definitions of goals, objectives, outcomes, and action plans can strengthen your planning process. You may find the templates and format examples useful.
- **Evaluate your current goals, objectives, and action plan** using the ideas in the papers as criteria. Focus especially on writing SMART objectives. Note in particular the “M” in SMART, which stands for “measurable”; the funding announcement and application guidelines require programs to report on their progress in each continuation application, and you can only point to progress on something you’ve measured.
- **Consider both “effort” and “effect”** when identifying the ways that you will measure progress towards achieving your goals, objectives, and outcomes. In addition to collecting data that shows how much your program does and how frequently it does it (measures of effort), think about measures of changes in knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors (measures of effect). Measures of effect can help you understand the positive difference you are making for children and families.



Program Planning Glossary

Terms and Definitions

Action Plan: A defined set of steps that outlines what a program will do to meet its goals and objectives; a description of the activities, services, and other actions needed to accomplish goal(s). An *action plan* often includes measures of progress to help a program know what difference it is making; it includes what will be done, who is responsible, and the timeline for completion.

Actions/Strategies: An individual step that outlines what a program will do to accomplish its goals and objectives.

Baseline Data: An initial collection of information that can be used for comparative purposes. Baseline data can be used as a starting point to understand any changes that happen.

Data: Facts or information used to calculate, analyze, plan, or report something.

Effect: “Measures of effect” measure changes in knowledge or behavior as a result of the activity. They track whether a program’s activities have made a difference.

Effort: “Measures of effort” count what and how much a program provides. They describe whether and to what extent activities were carried out as planned.

Goals: Broad, inspirational statements that describe what you seek to accomplish; targets to be reached. In Head Start, program goals may include goals related to parent, family, and community engagement; finances; service provision; etc.

Impact: The influence or effect. Note: this term is often used to signify the findings from an experimental or quasi-experimental research study. *Impact* refers to how the program, children, families, and/or community changed over the five-year project period as a result of what the program did.

Objectives: Subparts of goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (**SMART**).

Outcome: Something that happened as a result of an activity or process; the actual results achieved each year. The term *outcome* is also used to refer to *expected outcomes*, that is, the results you *expect* to see because of an activity or process.

Progress: Forward movement toward the achievement of goals, objectives, and expected outcomes.

School Readiness Goals: The expectations of children’s status and progress across domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches to learning, physical well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development that will improve their readiness for kindergarten (45 CFR 1307.20).



Planning in Head Start

Topic #1: Understanding Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, Progress, and Action Plans

The Head Start planning system and its related activities are an essential part of program operations.

While thoughtful planning has always been critical to successful programming, it becomes even more so as Head Start programs shift from an indefinite grant period to one based on a five-year project period. The Head Start National Centers created this series of papers to support programs in developing and implementing their planning system and in making optimal use of the five-year period. **This paper provides an overview of the key terms and processes involved in program planning.**

The terms “goals,” “objectives,” “outcomes,” and “action plans” are widely used in the research, evaluation, and education communities. The purpose of this paper is to define these terms in the Head Start context and to provide information that can help grantees develop program goals, objectives, expected outcomes, and action plans that result in more effective services to children and families.

Introduction

Do you want to lose weight, buy a house, get an interesting new job? If so, you may set a personal goal to achieve this. Likewise, effective Head Start and Early Head Start programs engage in goal setting as part of their planning process. Head Start often attracts people who want to make a positive difference in the lives of children and families.

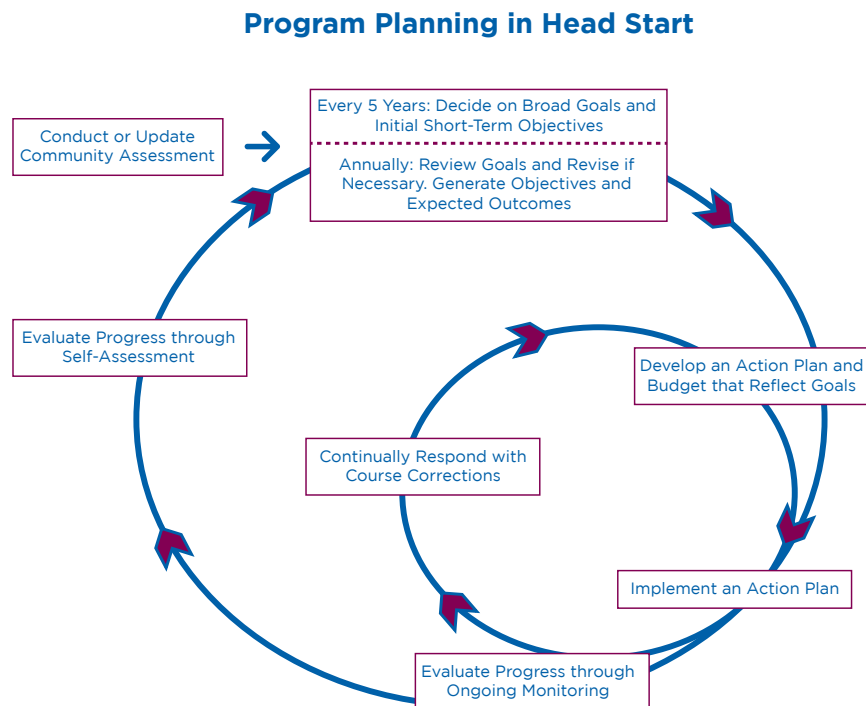
The Head Start Program Performance Standards require programs to develop long-range program goals and short-term program objectives. School readiness goals must be included in a grantee's baseline funding application. A focus on, for instance, family engagement or fiscal accountability can be prioritized as a program goal or can be objectives that support school readiness goals and program goals. In each subsequent year, grantees report on progress towards achieving the goals and objectives.



Source Documents for Head Start Planning Requirements

- > [Head Start Act 641\(A\)\(g\)\(2\)\(A\)](#)
- > Head Start Program Performance Standards
 - [1304.51\(a\)](#)
 - [1307.3](#)
- > [Information Memorandum ACF-IM-HS-14-02, Federal Oversight of Five-Year Head Start Grantees and Delegate Agencies](#)

The Head Start program planning cycle graphic shows how programs take these goals and objectives and, from them, develop an implementation plan that enables them to accomplish their goals.



What Is a Program Goal?

You have probably heard the expression “Keep your eye on the prize.” Goals are broad statements that describe what a program intends to accomplish. Head Start/Early Head Start programs establish program and school readiness goals. Program goals support the program’s mission to serve children, families, and the community; and they may include goals related to parent, family, and community engagement; finances; service provision; and so forth. School readiness goals are a subset of overall program goals and focus on child development and early learning outcomes in the five essential domains. These goals are that ultimate prize you want to keep your eye on!

Keep in mind the acronym “**BROAD**” as you write your goals: **B**old—**B**eyond current expectations, **R**esponsive, **O**rganization-wide, **A**spirational, and **D**ynamic. Then use these **BROAD** qualities to inform the goals you write. These goals will give voice to the shared vision within your program and help everyone (staff, governing body and Policy Council Members) focus on priorities. In Head Start, programs review their goals annually based on a community assessment; Self-Assessment; and related child, family, and community data. Throughout the process, programs modify their goals as needed.

Tips for Setting Program Goals

“If you don’t know where you are going, you’ll end up someplace else.”

—Yogi Berra

“What the mind can conceive and believe, and the heart desire, you can achieve.”

—Norman Vincent Peale

“There are no shortcuts to any place worth going.”

—Beverly Sills

We use our acronym **BROAD** to help organize our tips:

Bold—Beyond current expectations

Think big and reach for the stars: In their 1994 book called [Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies](#), James Collins and Jerry Porras coined the term “Big Hairy Audacious Goals.” They encouraged organizations to dare to think big, to set goals that reach to the stars.

Imagine: Where would you like your program to be at the end of five years? What do you expect to be able to accomplish? What will your program legacy be to the children, families, and communities you serve?

Go beyond compliance: Think “innovation” in addition to “compliance” as you set your goals. What new, exciting initiatives would you like your program to embark on and accomplish over the next five years?

Continuously improve: Generate goals that will help your program not only meet the Head Start Program Performance Standards but strengthen, strive, and innovate for more effective services for children and families.



Responsive

Have an eye on the future. **BROAD** goals aren't accomplished overnight. Most are written to be accomplished during the five-year project period. In most cases, goals stay the same so you can measure progress and impact over the five-year project period. The objectives or the actions/strategies that help you implement your objectives may be more likely to change than **BROAD** goals.

Determine your goals based on your data. Goals should not be a rewritten standard. They are developed based on data and the critical needs that have emerged for children, families, and the community. The community assessment, results of your Self-Assessment process, and other program-specific data sources help your program develop, prioritize, and refine goals.

Make sure family voices are represented. To ensure that the family voice is represented on a program level, programs can look for opportunities to listen, learn, and collect data from parents and family members. Focus groups and surveys designed for family members and administered through Parent Committees and their Policy Council provide ideal vehicles for gathering important information from the family voice. The strengths and needs assessment and the family partnership process can also be forms of input on what is most important for families.

Consider what related research can contribute to efforts to prioritize program goals.

What research or evaluation data in the field is available to inform the development of particular program goals? Take advantage of the Office of Head Start National Centers, which play an informative role in translating research to practice for programs.

Organization-wide

Develop overarching goals that engage all levels of the organization. Program goals require and inspire commitment from many players within the organization, including governing body and Policy Council members and families. The goal of improving attendance and reducing absenteeism is an example of an organization-wide goal. Everyone—from bus drivers and teachers to center directors; eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance (ERSEA) staff; family service and health staff; and most importantly families themselves—can have an important role to play in helping the program achieve this goal.

“Be practical as well as generous in your ideals. Keep your eyes on the stars, but remember to keep your feet on the ground.”

—Theodore Roosevelt

Consider how your program goals relate to your school readiness goals. All of these goals work together. Aligned goals are likely to produce more effective results.

Aspirational

“Try to turn as many soft, aspirational goals as possible into success criteria, and make them specific enough that you can actually tell whether or not you’ve met them.”

—Erin Kissane

Motivate by engaging emotions. In their 2010 book [SWITCH](#), Dan and Chip Heath maintain that change is more likely to happen if both our rational and emotional sides are engaged. Goals that speak to the heart as well as to the head will help with buy-in and the implementation of related plans.

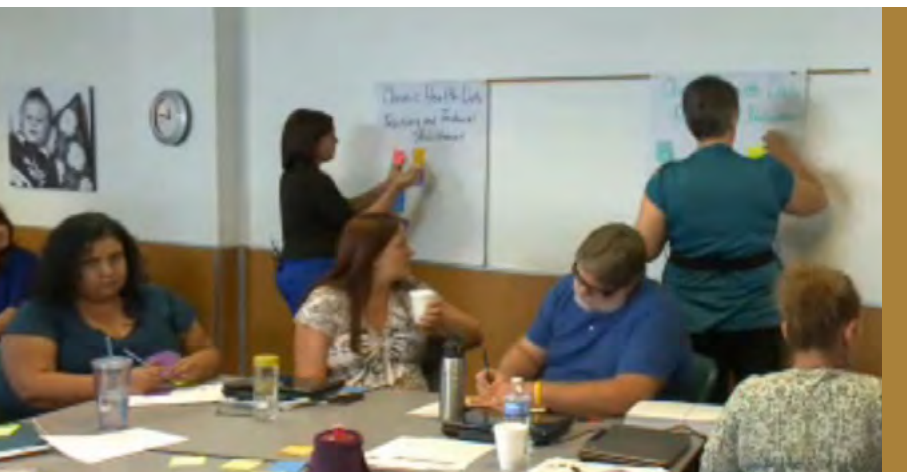
Write them with intention. School readiness goals begin with the words “Children will . . .” In a similar vein, program goals usually begin with such words as “The program will . . .”

Even better, because one of the keys to successful goal setting is to motivate and inspire, consider starting your program goal statement with inclusive words, such as “We, at Always Cutting Edge (ACE) Head Start and Early Head Start program, will . . .”

Dynamic

“One of the ways that Webster’s dictionary defines dynamic is “energetic or forceful.”

Steven Covey, in his video clip, *Goals—Four Disciplines of Execution*, invites us to consider “the energy and creativity that are unleashed when everyone in the organization is committed and involved in achieving the goals.” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQnOMY98fGg>





What Is an Objective?

Objectives are elements of goals. Like goal statements, they are written as things to be accomplished. Objectives support the attainment of a goal by breaking the goal down into **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely elements, often represented by the mnemonic **SMART**. If goals are your destination, objectives are your mile markers along the way.

Tips for Developing Objectives

Break down goals into achievable parts. If goals enable you to keep your eye on the prize, objectives help you hit the nail on the head. One goal is likely to have several objectives.

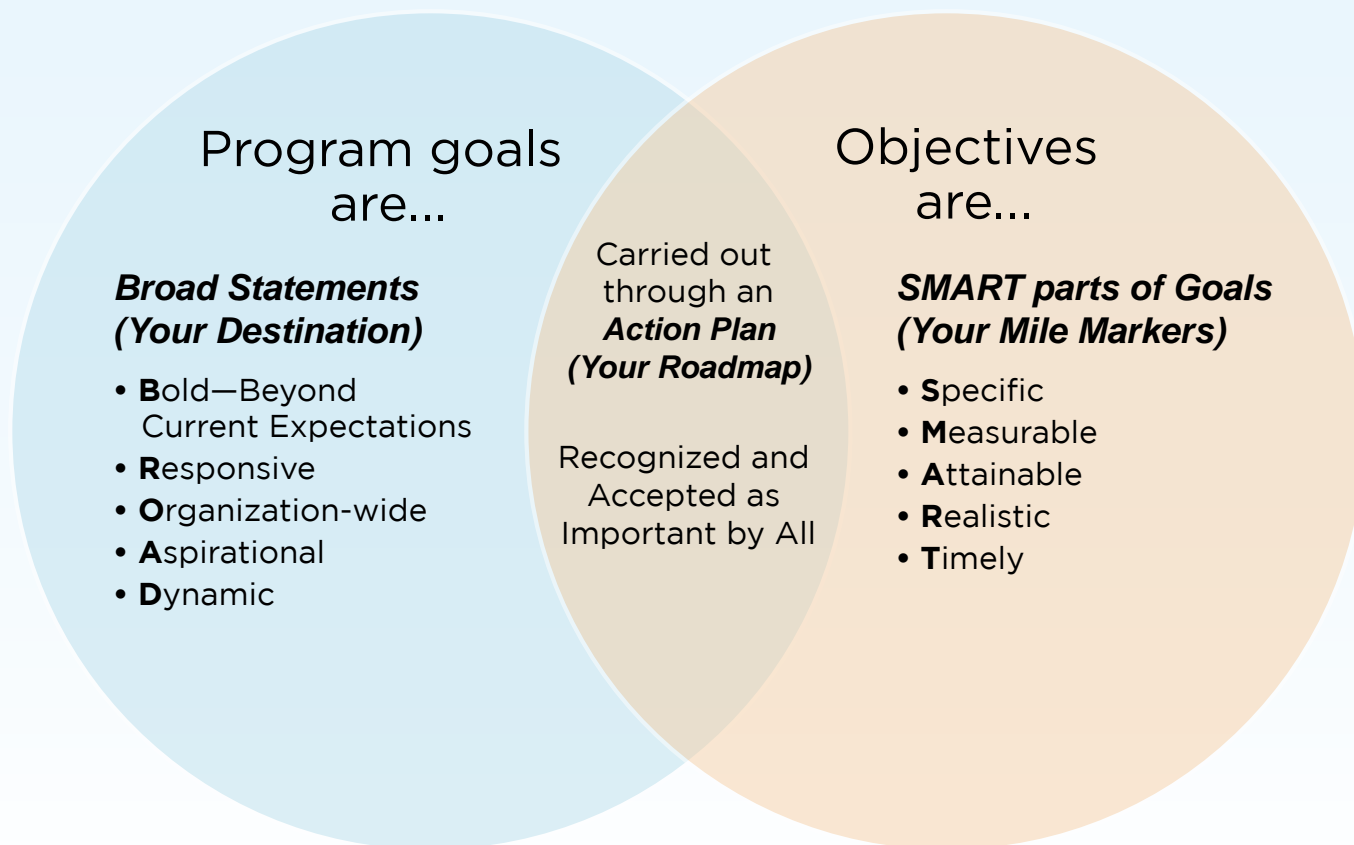
Be careful to distinguish between objectives and actions/strategies. Objectives are really miniature goals. They are still statements of what a program wants to achieve—not yet statements of how the program will get there. That will come in the action plan.

Think of objectives as your yardstick or scale. Objectives enable you to measure incremental progress toward your goal.

Remember to include financial objectives as well as program objectives. Not only is this a requirement in the Head Start Program Performance Standards, but financial objectives ensure that the program is financially committed to its priority goals.

Note: Financial objectives are not necessarily written in the same format as program objectives. They may be represented in your program budget and budget narrative and can appear as the designated and secured source of financing that will support your action plan. Even the best plan, if it requires money, will not happen if that money is not available. In addition, a program might also fashion an independent fiscal goal that is not simply an objective within the scope of an existing goal (for example, securing funds to increase the pay of classroom teachers). If a program has a fiscal goal, it should contribute toward overall program quality through more effective management and use of financial, property, or human resources.

The Venn Diagram below shows the similarities and differences between goals and objectives.



What Is an Expected Outcome?

If a goal tells you where you're headed, an outcome tells you the result of your actions. Very simply, outcomes are the results achieved each year, like making progress toward the achievement of school readiness or the treatment of maternal depression. Remember, outcomes are annual results. Impact shows results at the end of five years.

The term "outcome" is also commonly used to refer to *expected outcomes* or *expected results achieved*. The Head Start application instructions ask programs to specify expected outcomes in their baseline application. For example, the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Outcomes (PFCE) in the blue column of the [PFCE Framework](#) are *expected outcome areas*. Programs might get more specific than this by creating a goal of improving the financial stability of their families (PFCE Expected Outcome: Family Wellbeing). They may have several objectives to support this goal, but they would hope or expect to see an outcome of improved financial stability for the majority of their families.

Tips for Identifying Expected Outcomes

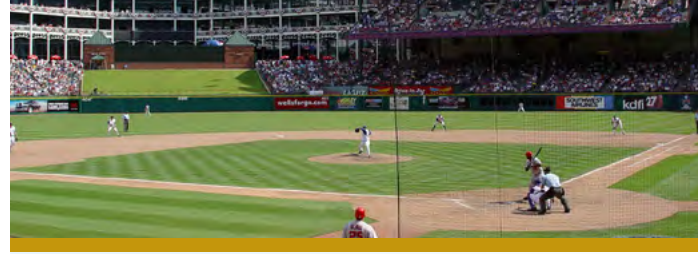
Think of expected outcomes as your program's hoped-for results for children, families, and the community. Frame your outcomes with the answer to this question in mind: "What results do we want?"

Expected outcomes relate directly to goals and objectives. What do you expect to achieve as a result of meeting your objectives? For example, if an agency sets a program goal of developing and maintaining an exemplary system of program governance, one fiscal objective might be to ensure that "governing body members fully understand and effectively use all fiscal information." An expected outcome might be that "all fiscal areas of noncompliance will be eliminated."

Just as one goal might have several objectives, several objectives might lead to more than one set of results or outcomes. The important thing is to identify ALL the expected outcomes you hope to see for a particular goal and set of objectives. Once an action plan is implemented, you can determine whether you have met your objectives and made progress toward achieving your outcomes.

What Is Meant by Progress?

As you enter the five-year project period, your program is required to identify expected, measurable outcomes in its baseline application and to report progress in yearly continuation applications. Progress is defined as forward movement toward achieving goals, objectives, and expected outcomes but remember, long-term progress isn't always even. Progress is demonstrated by data that indicates what, if any, change has occurred. To understand what progress has occurred, you must first know where you started. To understand what progress has occurred, you must first have "baseline data" that can be used for comparative purposes.



Goals, Outcomes, and Impacts: What's the difference?

Try on this sports analogy to help clarify the difference between goals, outcomes, and impacts.

Every professional baseball team wants to be a winning team.

The team's **GOAL:** To win the World Series

The **OUTCOME:** At the end of the baseball season, they've won (or lost) the series. They became the world champions (or not).

The **IMPACTS** (if they won): Fans rally around the team. There is increased interest in baseball in the community.

More children join Little League teams, resulting in a measurable decrease in obesity among children in the community.

Season ticket sales increase. The additional revenue generated by this increase enables the team to contract with higher-priced, better players.

More people come to games. Restaurants and businesses in the area surrounding the stadium report increased sales before and after games, and more restaurants and businesses open in the area.

Tips for Tracking Progress

Identify which data will let you know how you are doing. To be able to report on progress, programs need to first define what change they will measure and what their data sources will be for measuring change.

Build your methods for tracking and analyzing progress into your ongoing monitoring. You already collect data throughout the year through your ongoing monitoring efforts. As you analyze your data, consider the following questions:

- Are we doing what we said we'd do?
- How well are we doing it?
- Do we need to make adjustments to our plan?

Consider consulting knowledgeable evaluators to help you select the right data tools and methods for tracking progress toward your identified objectives and expected outcomes.

Analyzing data can be simple or complex. You may find it useful to enlist the help of professionals or academics who can help you think through program plans and progress measurement.

Go beyond measures that simply count the number of things offered in a program. Counting is important, especially when it captures the number of parents who showed up for an event, for example, or the number of evening classes offered. But going beyond counting is even more important, because then you start getting at the actual effect of your work.

Remember: Measures of effort count what and how much a program provides. They describe whether and to what extent activities were carried out as planned. Measures of effect measure changes in knowledge or behavior as a result of the program's activities. They track whether a program's activities have made a difference.



Examples of Tools or Methods for Tracking Progress

Children	Families
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-Assessment• Community assessment• Child files• Child assessment instruments• Teacher observations, child portfolios, etc.• Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-Assessment• Community assessment• Parent surveys• Family partnership process• Family assessments• PFCE Markers of Progress• Tool for family strength-based assessment• Depression screeners• Parenting intervention tools

What Is Meant by Impact?

“Impact” means “the influence or effect.” To define this term in the Head Start context for program planning, programs can ask themselves, “Are children, families, and the community better off at the end of the five-year project period as a result of our program services?” The data you collect and analyze to measure your progress can also show you the cumulative impact of your program over the five-year project period.





What Is an Action Plan?

An action plan is a roadmap that can help you accomplish your goals and objectives. Just as there are many ways to get to a destination if you are taking a trip, there are many routes a program can take to reach goals, meet objectives, and achieve outcomes.

Tips for Developing Action Plans

Include the three vital elements. Action plans vary, but generally they include “what,” “who,” and “when.” Outline the steps that you will take to achieve your goals and objectives (the “what”), the person(s) responsible (the “who”), and the projected completion dates (the “when”).

Add other ingredients. Additional ingredients might include such things as how you will measure progress, your evidence or data source, places for quarterly status updates, financial supports, and resources needed.

Start each action with a verb. This will remind you that action steps are things to do.

Consider which actions are sequential and which are not. Some actions may be taken in chronological order because a specific action must be completed before the next can occur. However, sometimes actions may happen simultaneously, and some actions may occur repeatedly or be ongoing. Put those that happen sequentially in order in your plan with their related dates for completion. Note in the date column if actions are repeated or ongoing.

“There is nothing more satisfying than having plans.”

—Lalita Tademy

“Although goals are important, having a plan of action is vital to the success of those goals. Having a goal with no plan of action is like wanting to travel to a new destination without having a map.”

—Steve Maraboli

Use the “Plan, Do, Review” process. Many people are familiar with the High Scope process of “Plan, Do, Review.” This concept is equally useful for an action plan. Creating an action plan is a big project. It’s tempting to clap your hands when you complete it and proudly put it on a shelf as a job well done. But an action plan should be a living document that is reviewed and updated at least quarterly as part of the program’s ongoing monitoring process.

Reviewing your plan regularly offers opportunities to identify bright spots, celebrate small and large accomplishments along the way, and consider how your successes can inform your efforts in other areas of your program. It is also an opportunity to refine and adjust your strategies if you find they are not working, rather than waiting until your next Self-Assessment. “Plan, Do, Review” could actually be thought of as “Plan, Do, Review, and Revise as necessary.”

Keep it current. The best-laid plans do change as things go along. Make course corrections by adding additional action steps (or getting rid of ones that turn out to be unnecessary) and by changing timelines as needed. If you couldn’t accomplish something you had planned to do in January but it is now scheduled to take place in February, make sure your updated plan reflects this so that stakeholders are informed.

Conclusion

By understanding goals, objectives, outcomes, progress, and action plans, you can more effectively carry out your vision and mission. As your program engages in the five-year project period, crafting broad, long-range goals, short-term objectives and expected outcomes becomes a critical part of understanding the positive difference your program makes for children, families and the community.





Planning in Head Start

Topic #2: Plans in Head Start

The Head Start planning system and its related activities are an essential part of program operations.

While thoughtful planning has always been critical to successful programming, it becomes even more so as Head Start programs shift from an indefinite grant period to one based on a five-year project period. The Head Start National Centers created this series of papers to support programs in developing and implementing their planning system and in making optimal use of the five-year period. **This paper provides a grounding in several types of Head Start plans.**

Head Start programs develop many different types of plans. They each have different functions and are developed by staff and partners at varying levels of the organization. Effective programs integrate their plans and align them with their goals and objectives. This paper serves as a primer on the types of plans that Head Start and Early Head programs most commonly create and implement and the processes used to create them.

The Program Planning Process

The Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) require programs to develop long-range program goals and short-term program objectives. The standards describe program goals as broad statements that support the program’s mission to serve its children, families, and community.

These goals typically address needs that fall into one of two categories:

- 1) the need to respond to a program-wide or community-based issue (e.g., community assessment data and family intake data reveal a rise in the number of eligible dual language learners); or
- 2) the need to make significant changes in targeted service areas or systems (e.g., ongoing monitoring data reveal that the health services staff continue to struggle with dental referrals in spite of efforts to address the situation).

The HSPPS also require the active participation of parents in the program decision-making process. This important participation is secured in a number of ways. The Policy Council (PC) and/or policy committee gives parent leaders a venue for providing input in the planning process and helping to guide program decisions. Effective programs also

- offer training for parent leaders on their roles and responsibilities as PC members,
- provide opportunities for parents and family members to be involved early in the development of plans so they can review and approve plans with efficiency and timeliness and avoid rubber stamping, and
- encourage parents of diverse cultures to participate in the process by creating an environment that welcomes and values their contributions.



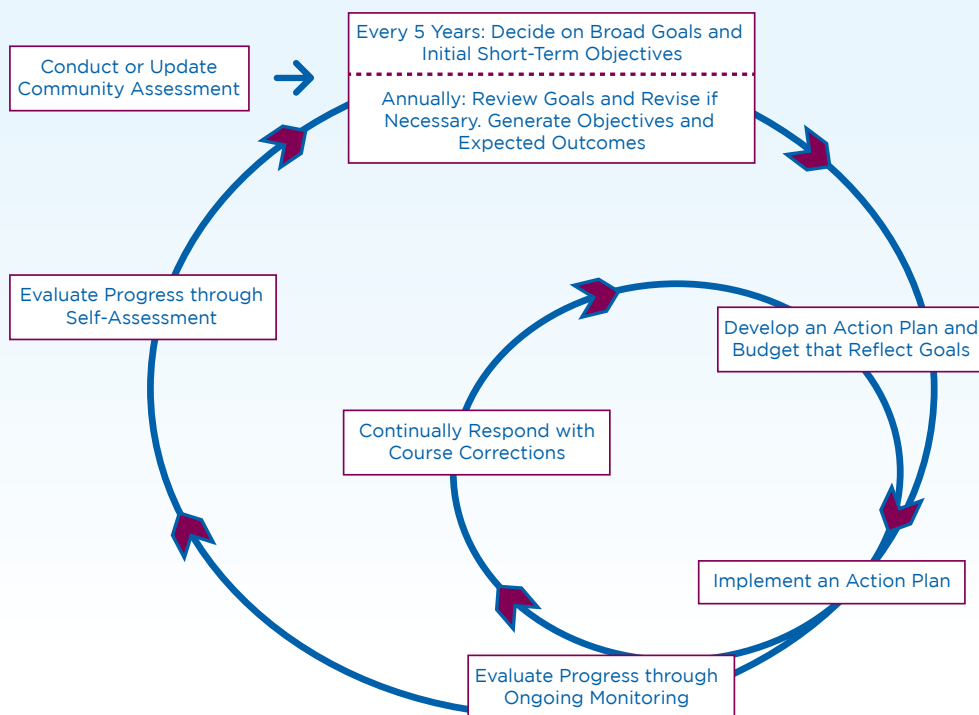
Programs can also use aggregated data from family assessments and family partnership agreements to ensure that a wide range of family voices are represented in decisions. Trends and patterns identified from these aggregated data can inform program goals and objectives.

Effective Head Start programs engage in a cyclical planning process. As the graphic of the program planning cycle (below) shows, programs use the five-year and annual planning process to develop, monitor, and evaluate the effect of program, school readiness, and training and technical assistance (T/TA) plans. Prior to the first year of the five-year project period, the program’s planning team decides on broad, long-range goals that are based on information from the community assessment;

Self-Assessment; and related child, family, and community data. These long-range goals set the course for continuous improvement and innovation.

Programs review progress towards their goals annually to ensure that they will be able to measure their impact on children, families, and their community throughout the five-year project period. Each year, the program planning team uses its planning process to affirm goals set in the first year. The team may also use its annual planning process to set new goals, if needed, in response to new data that reflect an emerging child, family, or community need. A word of caution: most goals should remain constant to enable programs to track progress over the five-year period.

Program Planning in Head Start



Common Features of Head Start Plans

While each plan has a different thrust, all effective Head Start plans share a number of common features:

- Plans describe how the local program intends to implement the Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) to respond to its community’s unique needs and resources.
- Plans are developed with input of and approval by the governing body and Policy Council. Plans are also frequently shaped and informed through feedback from community partners, parents and such groups as the Health Services Advisory Committee.

Organization-Wide Strategic Plans

Head Start programs that operate under the auspices of a Community Action Agency, school district, municipality, or other umbrella agency and/or have multiple funding sources are likely to engage in an organization-wide strategic planning process. Through strategic planning, the organization makes decisions about what it intends to be in the future and how it will get there. This process frequently follows an analysis of **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats—often called a **SWOT** analysis. Strategic plans typically look ahead over a 3–5-year period and link long-term action steps to the organization’s vision, mission, goals, and objectives. While the strategic plan is often written for the organization as a whole, the results of the plan will directly influence Head Start operations. The organizational goals and the Head Start program goals should align, when appropriate. Single-purpose agencies may also consider their long-term planning process to be strategic planning.

Plans Linked to the Program Planning Process

In the sections below, we describe the set of plans that emerges from a program’s planning process.

Five-year Plans. Five-year plans show in broad outlines what the program intends to accomplish over the five-year project period. They establish five-year goals and include expected outcomes. For example, if a program sets a goal to strengthen transition to school for children and families so that Head Start children succeed in kindergarten and beyond, some expected outcomes over the five-year period might be:

- An increase in the number of Head Start parents who attend kindergarten registration. For example, if baseline data indicate that last year 35 percent of Head Start parents with children transitioning to local schools attended kindergarten registration events, the program might propose increasing this number to 55 percent of Head Start parents attending by the second

project year and to have integrated the kindergarten registration into a seamless process so that, by the fifth project year, 95 percent of its Head Start parents attend these events.

- An increase from 10 percent to 80 percent over the five-year period in the number of parents who attend the Head Start parent meeting that PTA representatives attend.
- An increase from 30 percent to 85 percent over the five-year period in the number of parents who accompany their children on site visits to the school their child will attend.
- Participation in a home-school summer reading program that will help mitigate “summer fadeout” between Head Start and kindergarten. Because this is a new initiative, the program expects to have 20 percent of parents participating in the first year and to increase participation by 15 percent each year.

Annual Action Plans. Annual action plans (also known as “program plans”) spell out how a program intends to accomplish its overall goals and objectives from year to year. The program breaks into annual increments the goals and objectives related to its five-year plans or to program improvements that surface during Self-Assessment, ongoing monitoring, or the federal monitoring review. These plans outline the steps the program needs to take in order to achieve objectives and to measure progress.

Annual action plans are typically broader than written plans (also known as “service plans”; see below), which focus on each specific service area. A program’s annual action plan may include overarching goals, such as improving attendance or starting a healthy living initiative that engages participants across individual service areas. Annual action plans break down the goals and objectives from the five-year plan into a series of steps to be carried out over a one-year period by particular, assigned individuals in particular locations.

These plans typically include schedules of events or activities. They focus on when things will take place, where they will happen, and who will carry out the series of steps necessary to achieve the



Resources for Head Start Plans Linked to the Program Planning Process

- > Five-year Plans—<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/grants/5-yr-cycle>
- > Annual Action Plans—<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/operations/docs/sample-action-plan.pdf>
- > School Readiness Plans—<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/sr/steps>
- > Training and Technical Assistance Plans—<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system>
- > Written/Service Plans—http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/health-services-management/program-planning/health_art_00580_090105.html

goal. Annual action plans also include measures of success, including evidence or data sources that confirm that success. They may include places for quarterly status updates, list the resources needed, and identify the necessary financial supports. (For more information, See “Topic #1: Understanding Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, Progress, and Action Plans” and “Topic #4: Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, Progress, and Action Plans—Program Examples” in this series.)

School Readiness Plans. The second step of the four strategic steps for school readiness, outlined in [ACF-Program Instruction-HS-11-04: School Readiness in Programs Serving Preschool Children](#), requires programs to create and implement a plan of action for achieving the established school readiness goals. School readiness plans address school readiness for children from birth to five. The goals must be established in consultation with families whose children are participating in the program. Multiple avenues exist for programs to include family members in decisions about school readiness goals and plans. To meet the requirements in Section 1307 of the HSPPS, many programs form a school readiness committee and invite parents and key family members to participate. In developing their school readiness plans, programs can also draw on aggregated data from such sources as home visit conversations and parent/teacher conferences.

Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Plans. Programs develop a training and technical assistance plan in response to the Head Start requirements that they implement a structured approach to staff training and development (HSPPS Section 1304.52[1][2]) and provide pre-service and in-service training opportunities (HSPPS Section 1306.23[a]). The Head Start Act also requires that any T/TA that programs provide must be of high quality, sustained, and intensive. T/TA plans outline how programs will use their designated T/TA funds and any additional funds dedicated to professional development. These plans align with the goals in the five-year plans, annual plans, and school readiness plans and ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills needed to enable the program to meet its goals and objectives, as required in HSPPS Section 1305.2(l)(3).

Written Plans (or Service Plans). Sections 1304.51(a)(iii) and 1308.4(a) of the HSPPS require programs to develop written plans for implementing services for

- Early Childhood Development and Health Services,
- Family and Community Partnerships, and
- Program Design and Management.

Often called “service area plans,” or “content plans,” these plans typically include protocols, calendars, descriptions, and staff assignments for the activities required to deliver services. The plans often reflect the values that underlie service delivery. They show how the service areas and systems support the program’s overall goals and objectives. These plans must be reviewed and approved annually by the governing body and Policy Council and revised and updated as needed.

Plans Not Directly Linked to the Program Planning Process

Programs develop other plans that are critical to their operations:

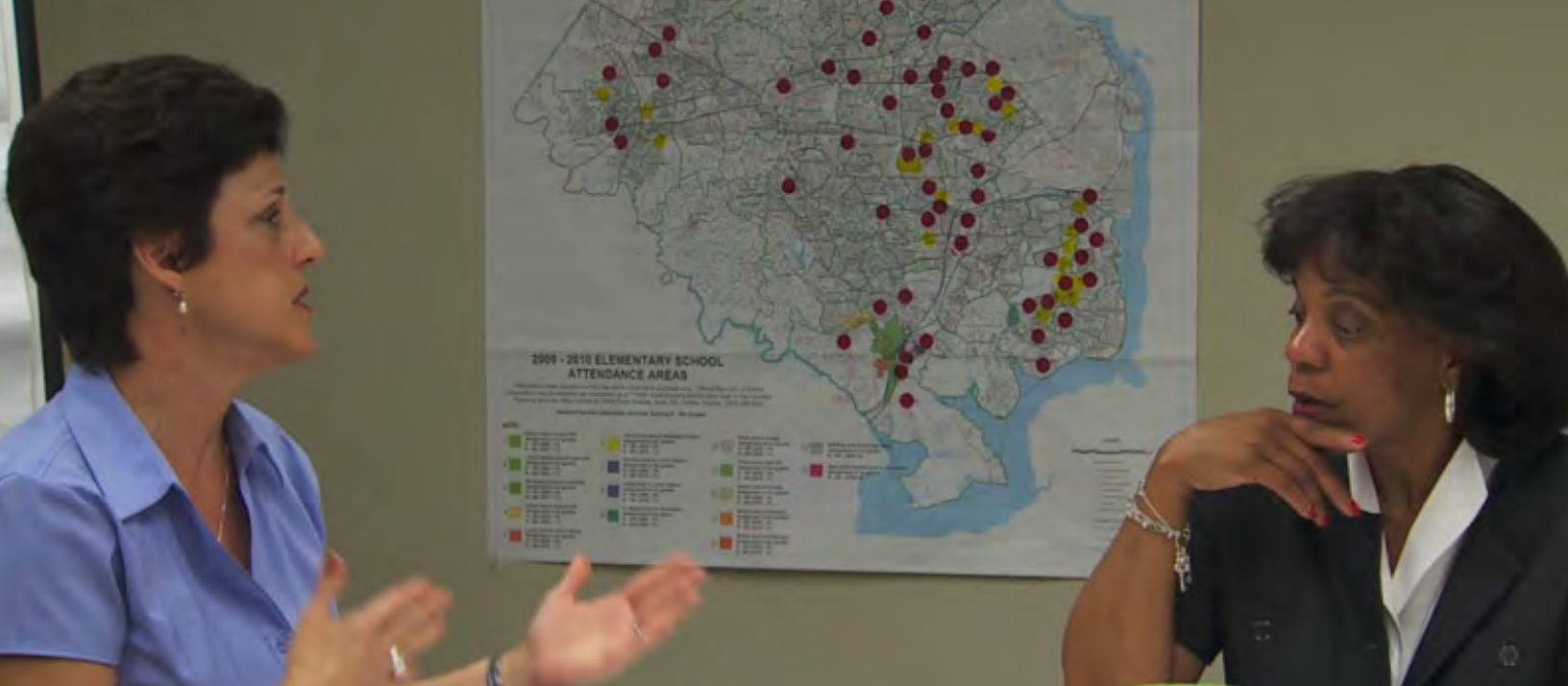
- **Transition plans** describe program processes for supporting children and families as they move from Early Head Start to Head Start, or from Head Start to kindergarten or new early education placements. Transition plans frequently include memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with the receiving Local Education Agencies (LEAs) or local providers. Program leaders can learn more about transition plans from the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning pages on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) (<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/center/transition/plan.html>).
- **Emergency preparedness plans** describe how the program will keep children safe during weather emergencies and other natural disasters and the steps the program will take to minimize any possible risk to children from violence, fire, or other occurrences while they are in the care of Head Start. Programs leaders can learn more about developing emergency plans from the *Head Start Emergency Preparedness Manual* (<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/center/ep/emergency-preparedness.html>).
- **Technology plans** can help organizations make wise decisions about securing up-to-date technology, networks that give access to information, and applications that are appropriate for an organization’s mission. Well-thought-out technology plans can lead to greater productivity, increased staff morale, and improved service to clients. The ECLKC contains several resources to support programs in their technology planning (<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/operations/mang-sys/planning/WhatsInvolvedi.htm>).

Conclusion

Plans—complete with goals, objectives, outcomes, measures of progress, and action steps—ensure that programs bring their ideas and intentions to fruition. The other papers in this series provide program planners with information on how to develop the various components that are part of the planning process.

Resources for Head Start Plans Not Directly Linked to the Program Planning Process

- Transition Plans—<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/transition/plan.html>
- Emergency Preparedness Plans—http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/ep/Head_Start_Emergency_Preparedness_Manual.pdf
- Technology Plans—<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/operations/mang-sys/planning/WhatsInvolvedi.htm>

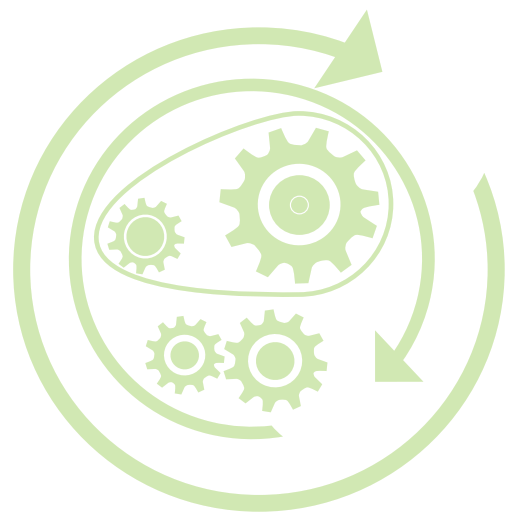


Planning in Head Start

Topic #3: Program Goals and School Readiness Goals—Understanding the Relationship

The Head Start planning system and its related activities are an essential part of program operations.

While thoughtful planning has always been critical to successful programming, it becomes even more so as Head Start programs shift from an indefinite grant period to one based on a five-year project period. The Head Start National Centers created this series of papers to support programs in developing and implementing their planning system and in making optimal use of the five-year period. **This paper clarifies the relationship between program goals and school readiness goals.**



Program Goals

The Head Start Program Performance Standards require programs to develop long-range program goals and short-term objectives. Program goals are broad statements that support the program’s mission to serve children, families, and the community. They ensure the program’s commitment to establishing strong management, fiscal, and service delivery systems. Programs set long-range goals to be accomplished by the end of their five-year project period. The management team and governing bodies review these long-range goals as part of their annual planning process. Most continue as goals throughout the five-year period, while a few may be met in a shorter timeframe or revised. Having stable goals over five years enables programs to measure progress annually and to assess the program impact at the end of the five-year period.

Programs also develop short-term objectives. Objectives support the attainment of a goal by breaking the goal down into **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely elements, often represented by the mnemonic **SMART**.

Program goals are derived from the annual Self-Assessment (SA); community assessment (CA); other child, family, and community data sources; and relevant research. Program goals may relate to health, finances, family engagement/family services, facilities, cultural and linguistic responsiveness, and so forth. Program goals may emerge from SA and CA results in any system or service area, or one single goal may encompass multiple services and systems.



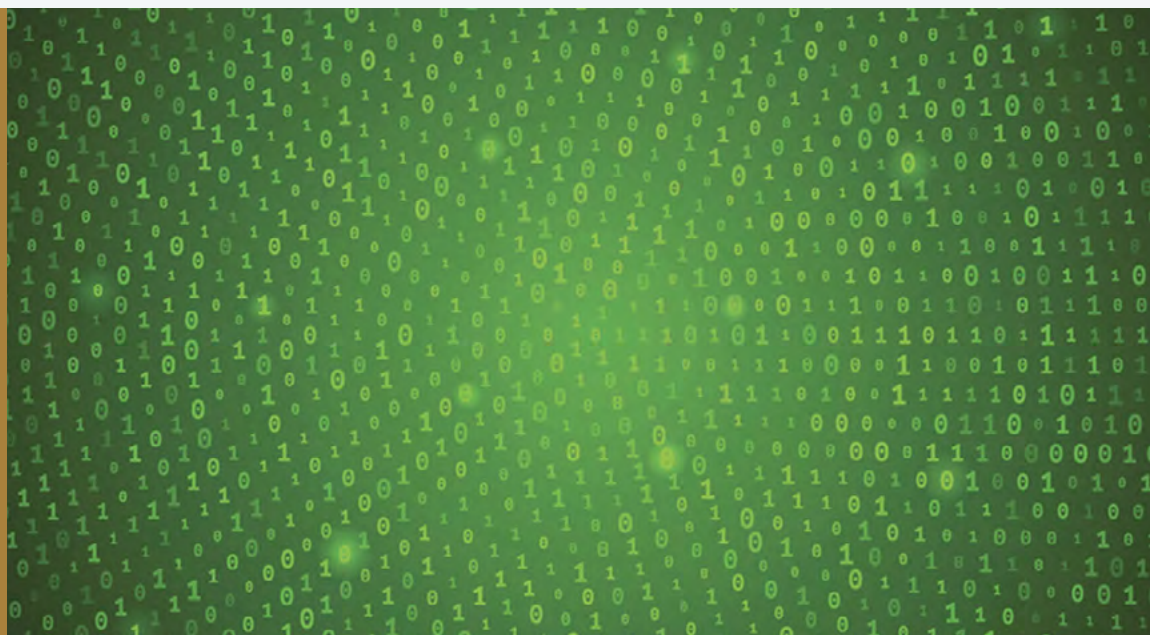
Prioritizing Program Goals

Head Start programs frequently ask how many programs goals they should have. You can answer this question with the juggling test: How many balls—goals—can your program “keep in the air”?

Consider the following questions when you develop your goals and objectives:

- What is your data telling you, and what are the most urgent family, child, and community needs?
- How will you develop and communicate your goals both internally (e.g., to staff, families, governing body, and Policy Council members) and externally (e.g., to community partners and funders)?
- How would each of these stakeholder groups embrace and articulate these goals?
- How are you going to track, monitor, and evaluate activities and progress? How much data do you currently have to measure progress and how much new data will you need to collect to be able to do this?

Your answers to these questions will help you see that you are more likely to achieve your program goals if you, your staff, your governing body and Policy Council members, and your stakeholders are able to remember and continually address them. When you determine your program’s direction, you can prioritize your goals so that you have a manageable number and a clear method for achieving your expected outcomes. Remember, though, that the decision on the number of goals is ultimately guided by your data.



School Readiness Goals



Section 641A(g)(2) of the Head Start Act requires that programs establish program goals for improving the school readiness of children participating in their program. School readiness goals are a subset of overall program goals and focus on child development and early learning outcomes in the five essential or core domains of birth-to-five school readiness: **(1)** language and literacy, **(2)** cognition and general knowledge, **(3)** approaches to learning, **(4)** physical well-being and motor development, and **(5)** social and emotional development.¹ School readiness goals have two

key features. They are broad statements that articulate high expectations for the progress children served in Head Start and Early Head Start will make to be ready to succeed in kindergarten. They also focus on what progress children will make in developing skills and knowledge and how this progress will be measured.

Examples of school readiness goals for preschool children can be found on the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning webpage on the ECLKC (<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/docs/sr-goals.pdf>). Examples of school readiness goals for infants and toddlers can be found on the Early Head Start webpage, at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/docs/school-readiness-goals-infants-toddlers.pdf>. Many programs serving both infants and toddlers and preschool children develop one set of school readiness goals appropriate for children from birth to five.

Section 1307 of the Head Start Act requires programs to establish their school readiness goals in consultation with families whose children are participating in the program. Multiple avenues exist for programs to include family input in decisions about school readiness goals and plans. Many programs form a school readiness committee that includes staff and parents. Programs can also look at data gathered in parent interest surveys, through home-visiting conversations, and by requesting family input on lesson plans. For more information about engaging parents in children's assessment, go to <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/family-engagement-and-ongoing-child-assessment-081111-1.pdf>.

1. Office of Head Start. (2013). *My leadership planner: A professional journal and action plan*. Second National Birth to Five Leadership Institute, 17.

Comparing Program Goals and School Readiness Goals

Program Goals: Characteristics	School Readiness Goals: Characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are broad statements of strategic direction that are compelling and that engage everyone in the program • Answer two questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is to be accomplished? • Why is it important? • Describe the program’s focus and priorities • Support the attainment of school readiness goals (most program goals do this) • May include goals related to parent, family, and community engagement; health and disability services; school readiness; fiscal management; specific groups such as dual language learners or fathers; etc. • Are phrased as statements and begin with words similar to “Program will . . .” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are broad, measurable statements of expectations of children’s status and progress across the five essential domains of the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (HSCDELF) • Reflect the age of the children being served² • Answer two questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is to be accomplished for all children? • Why is the goal important for kindergarten entry? • Describe what we want children to know and be able to do • Encompass the range of children served (e.g., are applicable for children who are dual language learners and children with disabilities) • Are phrased as statements and begin with the words “Children will . . .”
Program Goals: Process for Development	School Readiness Goals: Process for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are typically developed for the baseline application of the Head Start and Early Head Start five-year project period as a result of the organization’s strategic planning and the Head Start planning process • Are developed during the Head Start planning process using the annual Self-Assessment, updated community assessment, and program-specific data sources, including aggregated parent, family, and community engagement data (e.g., summaries of conversations and observations, family strengths and needs, surveys of family satisfaction with services and referrals, and family partnership agreements) • Are developed with input from and approval by the governing body and Policy Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are aligned with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (HSCDELF), • state early learning guidelines, and • the requirements and expectations of schools • Are developed in consultation with the parents/ family members of the children participating in the program • Are developed in consultation with and approved by the governing body and Policy Council • Are mapped to align with indicators of child outcomes from the child assessment system

2. *Head Start Program Instruction ACF-PI-HS-11-04: School Readiness in Programs Serving Preschool Children* provides recommendations on how Head Start grantees can comply with the Head Start Act’s school readiness requirements.

Program goals and school readiness goals work together to ensure high-quality, comprehensive services to children and families.

Program Goals: Revisions	School Readiness Goals: Revisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are reviewed annually • Are revised (or new goals created) as necessary (e.g., in response to program data and/or changes in identified community need) • Are revised as previous goals are accomplished and program priorities are modified • Can also be revised based on a change in context (e.g., national or state priorities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not necessarily change from year to year unless the context changes (e.g., there is a shift in program demographics, a need to realign with LEA or the state, or a need to incorporate parent input)
Program Goals: Tracking and Analyzing Progress	School Readiness Goals: Tracking and Analyzing Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related program objectives break down goals into measurable parts so that programs can understand progress annually and at the end of five years. • Progress toward goals is tracked by using different tools or methods and by analyzing relevant data sources. (See “Topic #1: Understanding Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, Progress, and Action Plans” for examples of tracking tools and methods.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is based on ongoing child assessment data that is aggregated and analyzed three times per year • Includes the measurement of data that reflects such features as teacher-child interaction, professional development, environment, curriculum fidelity, etc.

Conclusion

Understanding the similarities and differences between program goals and school readiness goals is an important part of planning. Ultimately, program and school readiness goals need to work together to ensure high-quality, comprehensive services to children and families. Section 1307.3 of the Head Start Program Performance Standards requires that “programs establish program goals for improving the school readiness of children participating in its program in accordance with the requirements of Section 641A(g)(2) of the Head Start Act.” All program goals support children’s school readiness either directly or indirectly.



Planning in Head Start

Topic #4: Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, Progress, and Action Plans—Program Examples

The Head Start planning system and its related activities are an essential part of program operations.

While thoughtful planning has always been critical to successful programming, it becomes even more so as Head Start programs shift from an indefinite grant period to one based on a five-year project period. The Head Start National Centers created this series of papers to support programs in developing and implementing their planning system and in making optimal use of the five-year period. **This paper provides two examples of hypothetical goals, objectives, expected outcomes, and action plans. Both examples also include data tools and methods for tracking progress.**

Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, Progress, and Action Plans— What Do They Look Like?

When preparing grant applications for the new five-year project period, programs are required to submit an outcomes-focused plan that shows how the services they provide will have a cumulative impact on children, families, and the community. In subsequent years, continuation applications must show the program's progress toward its goals, objectives, and expected outcomes, so that by the fifth year, programs are able to share the difference they have made for children, families, and the community. This creates the need for two skills when planning for a five-year project period: **(1)** the ability to develop and write long-range goals and measurable objectives and **(2)** the ability to translate goals and objectives into an action plan that supports progress toward expected outcomes.

The alignment of goals with clearly defined objectives that are **SMART** (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely) will help programs ensure that they have identified the resources they need to be successful. When their objectives are **SMART**, programs can effectively spell out the exact changes they want to see and when they will occur. The expected outcomes reflect changes in knowledge, behavior, program practice, or community engagement as a result of the program's efforts.

Keep in mind that defining the monetary resources that the program needs is an important part of building an action plan. It's important to make sure that the financial supports are in place so that the program has the personnel, equipment and materials, and training and technical assistance (T/TA) needed to carry out its plan and achieve its goals and objectives. These supports may appear as fiscal objectives or actions steps needed to accomplish the goal.



This paper provides two examples of what a program’s goals, objectives, expected outcomes, and plans could look like. One example focuses on strengthening children’s transitions to kindergarten or other placements, and the other outlines an initiative that promotes language and literacy development for all children. Each of these examples illustrates:

- Broad goals based on data from community assessment, Self-Assessment, and ongoing monitoring
- Overarching goals (such as developing an attendance campaign or a healthy living initiative) that, to be achieved, require contributions from all parts of the program
- Objectives that are **SMART**: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely
- Expected outcomes that show what success looks like if the goal is achieved
- Data tools or methods for tracking progress
- Sequential actions/strategies that outline how the work is to be carried out over the course of the program year

Example 1

SCENARIO

Community Assessment Report: Always Cutting Edge (ACE) Early Head Start/Head Start (Head Start and Early Head Start) program’s update of its community assessment revealed some interesting information. Two new elementary schools had opened in its service area, in two different counties (and two different Local Education Areas, or LEAs.)

During Self-Assessment: Aggregated data from the family satisfaction survey that was completed prior to the program’s annual Self-Assessment pointed to a concern among families of children who will be transitioning to kindergarten. These parents and family members, especially those whose primary language is not English, lacked confidence in how to communicate with school staff. Parents of children enrolled in Early Head Start as well as those whose children are enrolled in Head Start expressed a corollary concern about how their children will do in kindergarten.

During Planning: Based on this data, ACE’s planning committee, consisting of management team members and representatives from the governing body and Policy Council, decided to develop a new program goal to strengthen the program’s transition process. In developing its action plan, the planning committee sought input from representatives of the LEAs and receiving school principals as well as from the governing body member with early childhood expertise.

Sample Program Goal: Always Cutting Edge (ACE) Head Start/Early Head Start program will strengthen transition to school for children and families so that Head Start children succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

The Planning Team developed four **SMART** objectives and identified several expected outcomes for the goal. They also decided on the data sources that they would use to track progress.

Objective	Expected Outcomes	Data Tools or Methods for Tracking Progress
<p>1. ACE Head Start program will develop a process for data sharing between ACE and its eight Local Education Agencies (LEAs). By the end of year one, ACE will have language related to data sharing in signed MOUs with two pilot LEAs. By the end of five years, ACE will have the language included in all eight MOUs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child outcomes data from the Head Start program’s child assessment system will, with parental permission, be electronically transmitted to each receiving school. • The Head Start program will have access to aggregated longitudinal data about Head Start children’s continued progress on the school system’s outcomes through third grade. • Through joint review of data, the school system will have a better understanding of the needs of Head Start children and families as they transition to the schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed MOUs reflecting data-sharing agreement • Longitudinal data received from schools • Reports from school system representatives on their understanding of Head Start children and family needs
<p>2. ACE Head Start program will complete and sign transition plans with all receiving schools. ACE will have signed transition plans with 25 percent of its receiving schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 percent by the end of Year 2 • 60 percent by the end of Year 3 • 80 percent by the end of Year 4 • 100 percent by the end of Year 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children will visit receiving classrooms prior to entering. • Families will feel more welcomed in receiving schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed transition plans • Site visit logs • Parent focus group and parent survey summaries • Reports from kindergarten teachers about the success of the visits

Objective	Expected Outcomes	Data Tools or Methods for Tracking Progress
<p>3. ACE will strengthen parents' understanding of the importance of their role in supporting their children's transition to school as measured by their participation in transitions events. ACE will increase each of the following by 20 percent per year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parents who attend kindergarten registration • Number of parents who attend HS parent meeting with PTA representatives • Number of parents who accompany their children on site visits to the school their child will attend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/family members will attend kindergarten registration and accompany their children on site visits to the school their child will attend; they will express increased satisfaction with transition, especially families whose primary language is not English. • Children will show less "summer fadeout" when they enter kindergarten and exhibit fewer challenging behaviors during the first two months of school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten registration and data from site-visit logs • Parent satisfaction surveys • Results of parent focus group on transition pilot • Reports from kindergarten teachers
<p>4. ACE Head Start program will ensure that Head Start children with special health care needs successfully transition to the receiving school(s) as measured by an increase in the percentage of parents making at least one contact with school personnel to discuss their child's individual health needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In year one, parent contact with the receiving school will increase from 35 percent to 55 percent. • It will increase by 10 percent each subsequent year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with special health care needs will be able to attend school, as schools will be better prepared and able to receive them. • Parents of children with special health care needs will know with whom to communicate and will be able to communicate more frequently with their child's school personnel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of attendance data from receiving schools, including disaggregated data for children with special health care needs • Analysis of parent satisfaction survey, including disaggregated data from parents of children with special health care needs

Remember that this is an example. If your program has a goal related to transition to school, you might write it differently and have different objectives and expected outcomes based on your own program's strengths and needs.

ACE Head Start program then created action plans for each of the objectives. Here is an example of the action plan for **Objective 3: ACE Head Start will strengthen parents’ understanding of the importance of their role in supporting their children’s transition to Head Start and/or school.**

Action/Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Financial Supports
1. Work with receiving schools to ensure that kindergarten registration events are held at places and times convenient for Head Start parents; ensure that materials are translated and interpreters are present as needed.	Head Start director	Late fall	Budget for interpreters.
2. Co-create for and with parents a brochure— <i>Kick Off to Kindergarten</i> —in the home languages of all children in the program.	Education manager and parents whose children have transitioned, including some who do not speak English and/or are recent immigrants	Late fall	Work with LEAs to jointly fund the cost of the brochure design, translation, and printing. Budget expenses accordingly.
3. Distribute brochures to all families whose children are entering kindergarten.	Teachers, family child care providers, and home visitors	Early winter	
4. During home visits and at Parent Committee meetings, engage families about the importance of their role for a smooth transition to kindergarten. Ensure that staff have conversations in families’ home languages about opportunities for family engagement in the new school;	Family engagement staff and home visitors	Winter	Budget for interpreters as needed.
5. Talk with parents about transition from EHS to Head Start/preschool during goal-setting discussions.	EHS and Head Start teachers, home visitors, and family engagement staff	At each goal-setting discussion	

Action/Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Financial Supports
6. Provide parents with a packet of materials that includes information in their home language about all health screening and other health-related kindergarten requirements, and help parents to compile their child's kindergarten health records.	Health services staff, family engagement staff, and home visitors	Prior to kindergarten registration events	Work with LEAs to jointly fund the cost of parent informational materials on health-related kindergarten requirements. Budget for program's portion of translation, printing, and purchase of folders.
7. Work with parents to initiate a summer "book backpack" project. Participate in kindergarten registration events and distribute the book backpacks during these events.	Education manager, family engagement staff, and community partnerships manager	Spring	Obtain community funding for summer book backpacks.
8. Discuss transportation issues and any potential challenges that may occur.	Family engagement staff and home visitors	Late spring	
9. Invite parent association representatives from receiving elementary schools to come to a parent meeting; make sure that interpreters are available.	Director and community partnerships manager	Early spring	Budget for interpreters. Budget for snacks for meeting.
10. Set up visits for transitioning parents and children to their child's elementary school; make sure that interpreters are available.	Education managers with teachers and home visitors	Late spring	Budget for interpreters.
11. Conduct focus groups with a diverse group of EHS/HS families to discuss the transition process and obtain their feedback.	EHS and Head Start family engagement staff and home visitors	Late spring	
12. Review what worked well in the transition process and identify any areas for improvement.	Management team with input from all staff	Very late spring	
13. Revise process as needed.	Management team	Review during ongoing monitoring	

Example 2

This example shows how a program—after it has collected and analyzed school readiness data from multiple years—proceeds to set a new program-wide goal about language acquisition. Its planning process is outlined in the scenario. The grid that follows outlines the steps the program will take based on its planning and review process.

SCENARIO

The Always Be Conscientious (ABC) Head Start Program has had its school readiness goals in place for the past two school years, and its governing body and Policy Council have approved them. The program has collected data and compared child outcomes data, Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) scores, performance on kindergarten entrance assessments, and data from other sources to determine progress on the school readiness goals. The program examines progress each quarter and at the end of the year as well as trends over time.

During ongoing monitoring: The staff review and compare child outcome reports and determine that children in the ABC Head Start Program have consistently scored below the norm on the vocabulary measure used as part of the school district’s kindergarten readiness assessment. An aggregation of last year’s school readiness child data shows that mean scores for Head Start children on all language measures were below the typical scores for children of their age. Scores were in the same range the previous year. While children do make progress on language measures, the majority of children transitioning from Head Start to kindergarten did not reach age-level scores. By reviewing subgroups within the program, the staff could see variability among the classrooms. In a small number of classrooms, children scored at or above age level. The staff determined that they could use the data to make both program-wide and individual classroom adjustments.

During Self-Assessment: ABC’s Self-Assessment (SA) team reviewed the multiyear school readiness data and disaggregated the school readiness results by subgroups: classrooms, experience level, and educational level of teachers; children who were in their first year of Head Start; children in their second year of Head Start; children who transitioned into Head Start from ABC’s Early Head Start vs. those who did not; and children who are dual language learners. After reviewing the data and discussing what is working in the classrooms where children have the higher scores, the SA team recommended that ABC’s professional development focus for the upcoming year be on language and literacy, with an emphasis on increasing children’s vocabularies; that ABC select and implement a supplemental curriculum to enhance the language components of teaching and learning; and that ABC fund a program of coaching support for classroom teachers. The team also recommended that the teachers in the classrooms with higher-scoring children assist with planning language activities and supports across all program areas and through peer coaching with other teachers.

During planning: The ABC planning committee accepts the SA team’s recommendations and sets the following new program goal:

Sample Program Goal: Always Be Conscientious (ABC) Early Head Start/Head Start program will enhance its educational services to improve the vocabularies of enrolled children to maximize their potential to enter kindergarten with a solid foundation for reading success.

Sample School Readiness Goal: Children will comprehend and use increasingly complex and varied vocabularies in their home language and English.

Objective: To strengthen the ability of teachers, family child care providers, home visitors, and parents to improve the vocabulary of enrolled children in their home language and English as measured by improved scores on child assessment measures. Mean scores will improve by 50 percent by the end of the program year.

Expected Outcome: Children will enter kindergarten with age-appropriate receptive and expressive vocabulary in their home language and English.

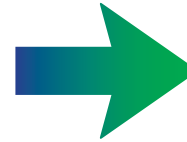
This program organized and wrote its action plans according to area (e.g., teaching and learning; parent and family engagement; community engagement; health services; and program management) so that staff understand their specific roles and responsibilities as they relate to accomplishing this goal. See the example on the following page.



Program Goal: ABC Head Start will enhance its educational services to improve the vocabularies of enrolled children to maximize their potential to enter kindergarten with a solid foundation for reading success.

Objective: To strengthen the ability of teachers, home visitors, family child care providers, and parents to improve vocabulary of enrolled children in their home language and English, as measured by improved scores on child assessment measures. Mean scores will improve by 50 percent by the end of program year.

Expected Outcome: Children will enter kindergarten with age-appropriate receptive and expressive vocabulary in their home language and English.



School Readiness Goal:

Children will comprehend and use increasingly complex and varied vocabularies in their home language and English.

Program Activities That Support BOTH Goals AND Objectives

Who

By When

Financial Supports

Data Tools or Methods for Tracking Progress

Teaching and Learning		Who	By When	Financial Supports	Data Tools or Methods for Tracking Progress
1.	Establish a year-long professional development (PD) plan focused on vocabulary.	Education manager and coach	August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure T/TA funds support PD plan. • Budget for new language curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scores on child assessment measures • Child assessments that measure the growth in home language
2.	Provide small-group coaching using Teachers Learning and Collaborating (TLC) materials focused on language-based responsive processes through the use of 15-minute in-service language suites, “Language Modeling and Conversations”; National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness’s (NCCLR) Planned Language Approach (PLA) trainings; and, when appropriate, the EHS National Resource Center’s Infant-Toddler Supplements and NCCLR <i>Making It Work!</i> for American Indian programs.	Site managers supervised by new coach	Early Fall		
3.	Review current curriculum and consider adding a language and literacy supplement; ensure current curriculum is responsive to dual language learners.	Education manager, site manager, coach, teachers, and home visitors	Late Fall		
4.	Observe classrooms and home visits; support staff and parents’ use of meaningful vocabulary that increases in complexity over time in the home language(s) and English.	Coach	Winter/Spring		

Program Activities That Support BOTH Goals AND Objectives	Who	By When	Financial Supports	Data Tools or Methods for Tracking Progress
Parent and Family Engagement				
1. Conduct family events about the importance of talking with children in the home language; read books and use vocabulary in the home language. Share dialogic reading strategies. Use NCCLR’s <i>Home Language Series</i> to develop trainings (available at http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/ncclrquickguide.htm).	Family support manager	Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure your supply budget will cover cost of book bags. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track parent participation with each effort. • Disaggregate child assessment data for children whose parents participate in each effort. • Track any increase in book reading in home language and English, as reported by families.
2. Partner with families to create and use “book bags” to send back and forth between home and Head Start or to leave with families to use in their homes. These bags include a selection of books that are culturally responsive and are in the home language and English. Refer to the NCCLR’s guides for selecting culturally appropriate books in languages other than English and for using bilingual books (all available at http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/).	Family support manager, teachers, and home visitors	Fall		
3. Invite families to tape their favorite books or stories in their home language(s).	Family support manager and site managers	Late Fall		
4. Collect favorite “words of the week” from staff and families to use in newsletters and/or to post in classrooms in English and home language(s).	Family support manager, site manager, teachers, and home visitors	Winter		
Community Engagement				
1. Develop a partnership with the local library system to increase use of libraries by parents, and increase visits to EHS/HS program by children’s librarians. Share with libraries NCCLR’s resources on selecting culturally appropriate books in languages other than English.	Head Start director and community engagement manager	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed MOU • Parent reports. Aggregate # with library cards, # borrowing books, and # participating in events. • Library report # of visits to centers and homes. • Family reports are tracked to reflect any increase in book reading in home language and English, as appropriate.
2. Pilot library initiative at two local libraries.	Education manager	All year		

**Program Activities That Support
BOTH Goals AND Objectives**

Who

By When

**Financial
Supports**

**Data Tools or Methods
for Tracking Progress**

Health Services					
1.	Coordinate with attendance initiative to make sure children and families participate in home visits and attend school regularly.	Health manager	Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance records • Screening results • Disaggregated child assessment data of children most often absent from school • Home visitors and teachers survey on health vocabulary
2.	Provide home visitors and teachers with age-appropriate, health-related vocabulary in home language(s) and in English.	Health manager and site managers	Winter		
3.	Review results of hearing screenings to make sure that children who did not pass their hearing screening were referred for evaluation and services when indicated.	Health managers and site managers	Late Fall		
Program Management					
1.	Recruit and hire coaches with expertise in working with children who are developing one or more languages; and, when possible, recruit and hire bilingual coaches.	Head Start director and governing body	July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek new funding for coaches. • Budget for more staff time/ substitutes. • Budget for new language and literacy curriculum supplement and for staff training on the curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated budget • PLA planning document compiled • Disaggregated child assessment data on DLLs with teachers who have bilingual coaches
2.	Ensure that teachers and home visitors have time to participate in coaching and to attend other trainings by hiring substitute staff.	Human resource director	August		
3.	Report regularly to governing body, Policy Council, and other stakeholders on progress in meeting goals.	Head Start director and education manager	July		
4.	Identify and purchase a new language and literacy curriculum supplement that is responsive to all children, including dual language learners. Train teachers on the curriculum.	Head Start director and education manager	August		
5.	Provide training for teachers and families on dialogic reading.	Education manager and consultants	Fall/Winter		
6.	Ensure that management staff and other key personnel participate in NCCLR's Planned Language Approach (PLA) trainings.	Director, management team, and site directors	Fall		

Conclusion

Programs write their five-year and annual action plans in many different ways. This paper shows two examples of what a program's goals, objectives, expected outcomes, and plans could look like based on the data that the program collects through its community assessment and Self-Assessment. When writing your own plans, you may find helpful the sample forms that follow. Writing measurable objectives and expected outcomes and considering the data to collect to understand your progress will serve you well in completing your baseline and continuation applications for the five-year project period.

Sample Forms

Action Plan

Program Goal: (165 char.) _____

Objectives: (165 char.) _____

Expected Outcome(s): _____

(1,000 char.) _____

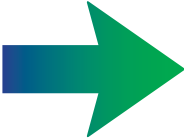
Please note, there is a character limit on the columns below. Column 1: 1,231; Column 2-4: 384

Action/Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Financial Supports
1.			
2.			

Please note, there is a character limit on the columns below. Column 1: 1,231; Column 2-4: 384

Action/Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Financial Supports
3.			
4.			
5.			

Program Goal: (246 char.)
Objective: (246 char.)
Expected Outcome: (246 char.)



School Readiness Goal: (246 char.)

Please note, there is a character limit on the columns below. Column 1: 1,898; Column 2-5: 611

Program Activities That Support BOTH Goals AND Objectives	Who	By When	Financial Supports	Data Tools or Methods for Tracking Progress
Teaching and Learning				

Please note, there is a character limit on the columns below. Column 1: 3,130; Column 2-5: 1,030

Program Activities That Support BOTH Goals AND Objectives	Who	By When	Financial Supports	Data Tools or Methods for Tracking Progress
Parent and Family Engagement				

Please note, there is a character limit on the columns below. Column 1: 3,130; Column 2-5: 1,030

Program Activities That Support BOTH Goals AND Objectives	Who	By When	Financial Supports	Data Tools or Methods for Tracking Progress
Community Engagement				

Please note, there is a character limit on the columns below. Column 1: 3,130; Column 2-5: 1,030

Program Activities That Support BOTH Goals AND Objectives	Who	By When	Financial Supports	Data Tools or Methods for Tracking Progress
Health Services				

Please note, there is a character limit on the columns below. Column 1: 3,130; Column 2–5: 1,030

Program Activities That Support BOTH Goals AND Objectives	Who	By When	Financial Supports	Data Tools or Methods for Tracking Progress
Program Management				



Planning in Head Start

Topic #5: Program Planning and Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

The Head Start planning system and its related activities are an essential part of program operations.

While thoughtful planning has always been critical to successful programming, it becomes even more so as Head Start programs shift from an indefinite grant period to one based on a five-year project period. The Head Start National Centers created this series of papers to support programs in developing and implementing their planning system and in making optimal use of the five-year period. [This paper focuses on special considerations for parent, family, and community engagement in program planning.](#)

Program Goals and Objectives Related to Family Outcomes

Program goals related to family outcomes are broad statements that describe what a program intends to accomplish in its work with (and in support of) families. An objective is an element of a goal. It describes, in a **SMART** way (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely), what the program is intending to do to reach the goal. See “Topic #1: Understanding Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, Progress, and Action Plans” for guidance on setting **BROAD** goals (**B**old—**B**eyond expectations, **R**esponsive, **O**rganization-wide, **A**spirational, and **D**ynamic) and **SMART** objectives.

It is important to be able to distinguish between program-wide goals related to family outcomes and individual family goals that are created with the family through the family assessment and family partnership process. Family goals are based on the personal strengths, needs, and aspirations of each family and on each family’s individual circumstances.



The chart that follows describes the differences between program-level and individual-level family goals.

Type	Definition	Purpose	Informed By
<p>Program goals related to family outcomes</p>	<p>Goals that are designed for all or for specific groups of families in the program (e.g., immigrant groups, dual language learners, fathers) and that support progress toward child and family outcomes</p> <p>Goals that affect all program services and systems</p> <p>Goals that are set at the program level and that may affect all families in the program</p>	<p>To answer the question: What should our program do to make a difference for children and families?</p>	<p>Understanding and analysis of trends and patterns that affect children and families through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community assessment • Annual Self-Assessment • Summary of Family Strengths and Needs Assessments (aggregated data) • Summary of individual family goals from family partnership agreements (aggregated data) • Aggregated child assessment data
<p>Individual family goals based on strengths, needs, and aspirations</p>	<p>Goals set with an individual family to support progress toward child and family outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and parents develop these goals together, based on the family’s strengths, interests, and needs. • These family goals may target adult learning or financial stability and/or child outcomes related to early learning, school readiness, and healthy development. 	<p>To answer the question: How can we partner with this individual family to make progress toward the goals family members set for themselves and their family?</p>	<p>Family discussions about goals, interests, strengths, and hopes</p> <p>Recruitment and application process</p> <p>Family assessment data</p> <p>Child assessment data</p>

In the Head Start and Early Head Start program-planning context, the term “expected outcome” refers to what programs expect the results to be. The term “outcome” refers to the actual results achieved. Here’s an example of how that works:

Sample Program Goal: Moving Forward Head Start Program will ensure that all Head Start and Early Head Start families have the knowledge and skills to effectively parent their children beginning in the pre-natal period through age five.

Objective	Expected Outcome	Outcome
Develop parent cafes in each delegate agency which will run through each program year, with 40 percent participating in the first year, and 10 percent more parents participating in each subsequent year.	Participating parents will have reduced stress, increased parenting knowledge and skills, and increased meaningful connections with other parents.	Thirty percent of enrolled parents participated in the cafes in year one. Of participating parents, 90 percent reported changes in parenting stress levels, increased knowledge about parenting, and more connections with other parents.

The program can tie this to the Outcomes for Family Engagement in the blue column of the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework. The PFCE Framework includes seven Family Engagement Outcomes that are broad areas of practice. Our example relates to two Family Engagement Outcomes: Family Well-being and Parent-Child Relationships.

Tips for Setting Program Goals and Objectives Related to Family Outcomes

Ensure families are a part of the process. Engaging families in Head Start and Early Head Start planning strengthens the design and implementation of program plans and engages parents as leaders and decision-makers. To engage families as program planners, be intentional in building a welcoming environment where families feel valued, supported, and ready to contribute. You can do this by using strength-based attitudes and relationship-based practices that help individual staff have positive goal-oriented relationships with families.

For guidance in relationship-based practice with families, please see *Head Start and Early Head Start Relationship-Based Competencies* and other resources from the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE) at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/center/relationship/practice.html>.

Families can be engaged in all phases of planning, whether it is to develop five-year plans, annual program plans, written plans/service plans, or T/TA plans, among others. (See “Topic #2: Plans in Head Start” for more information about different kinds of plans). Parent input on program plans can be sought through Policy Council and Parent Committee meetings, parent focus groups, staff and parent conversations, parent representation on planning committees, and similar kinds of occasions. Be sure to thoughtfully include the families of dual language learners and different subgroups of families in the process as well (e.g., fathers, immigrant groups, LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender] families, etc.).

In addition, the Head Start Program Performance Standards require programs to include parents and family members when setting school readiness goals. Many programs include parents on school readiness committees and always gather parent input from all parents during periods of child assessment. Regardless of the type of program planning you use, outcomes for children and families are likely to be strengthened when families are involved.

Review and/or collect data from a variety of sources about the strengths, needs, and personal goals of families. Use data collected from the community assessment and the annual program Self-Assessment. You will find that family surveys, input from community partners, summaries of individual family goals, and aggregated child assessments are also good data sources. By using these sources of data, you can identify trends and patterns to develop and set program goals and objectives related to family outcomes.

Staff can also use aggregated information about individual families—including their goals, strengths, and challenges—to set program goals and objectives. For example, what are you learning about the strengths and needs of all families from the Family Strengths and Needs Assessments, the family partnership process, and from child assessments? Programs can also use conversations/discussions with key staff and stakeholders—the Policy Council and Parent Committee and/or observations of staff (e.g., teachers, family service staff, home visitors, health services, bus drivers) who interact regularly with families—as helpful sources of information. Summaries of input from experiences of individual families are valuable data sources, as well, for setting program goals related to family outcomes.



Based on your data, develop program goals and/or objectives that address your priorities.

Program goal setting helps everyone (leadership, staff, Policy Council, etc.) focus on priorities in support of the program's shared vision. Based on your data, consider the following:

- Which PFCE Framework outcomes are most critical to focus on first
- What the timeframe is for this focus (e.g., during one specific year, or in all five years)
- Whether you need a program goal related to one or more of the outcomes in the PFCE Framework

Keep in mind that you may find it more appropriate to develop objectives related to the family outcomes that support *other* program goals and/or your goals for school readiness. To meet expectations for five-year planning, programs need to use their data to prioritize goals and objectives related to their expected family outcomes. It's important to note that programs may have several objectives related to a program goal or school readiness goal. Here are some different examples of how programs may choose to structure their goals and objectives related to family outcomes in Head Start and Early Head Start:

1. Programs could create broad program goals related to one of the PFCE outcomes

- Program goal related to family mental health (PFCE Outcome: Family Well-being)

2. Programs could outline objectives related to family outcomes that support program goals

- Program goal around transitions with a family-related objective
- Program goal around facilities (not family related) with a family-related objective in support of creating a "family room"

3. Programs could prioritize family objectives that support school readiness goals

- Family-related objective that supports children's mental health through targeted parenting workshops

Ensure alignment between the goals families set for themselves and the goals set at the program level. Consider whether you have planned for services that are responsive to families' strengths and needs. At times you may need to change a program goal (or objective) in response to a gap in services identified during your planning process from reviewing aggregated family data.

Tips for Making Progress Toward Expected Family Outcomes

Use the PFCE Framework as a guide to program planning for parent, family, and community engagement. The PFCE Framework challenges programs to explore effective ways to design and implement systems and services to achieve expected outcomes for families and children. The PFCE Framework encourages programs to begin with the end in mind. It is helpful to consider from the outset what you want to achieve for families and children and which outcomes are most important to consider for your families and communities at this time and over the projected five-year period.

Keep in mind that the PFCE Outcomes are broad outcome categories that may need to be tailored to a program’s data-informed priorities. Just as the domains in the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework are made more specific through the development of school readiness goals, PFCE Outcomes can also be made more specific through the development of specific goals and objectives.

If, based on your families’ and community’s priorities, you decide to set a program-level goal for PFCE, consider the objectives that will help you meet your goal and expected family and child outcomes. For effective parent, family, and community engagement, also think about objectives that align with the Program Foundations (Program Leadership, Continuous Program Improvement, Professional Development) and the Program Impact Areas (Program Environment, Family Partnerships, Teaching and Learning, and Community Partnerships). Ideally, your objectives will link across systems and services to support overall program goals related to family outcomes.

Define how you will track progress toward your goals, objectives, and expected outcomes.

Include objectives that address both the effort and the effect of your strategies. Your program’s level of *effort* addresses the type and amount of family programming you offer. Your program’s *effect* addresses whether your program’s activities have made a difference for children and families. To learn more, see the glossary of terms and definitions in the “Introduction to Program Planning Topics in Head Start” and *Measuring What Matters* on the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement webpages of the ECLKC (<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/center/assessing>).

Many additional data-related tools can help both with developing goals and objectives and with tracking progress toward goals and objectives. Some tools may already be part of your program’s ongoing monitoring process, some may be already-developed, published tools, and some may need



to be designed by your program. Here are a few examples of tools that may be useful for tracking progress—depending upon your program’s goals, objectives, and expected outcomes, of course:

- Self-Assessment
- Community assessment
- Parent surveys
- Family partnership process
- Family assessments
- Child assessment data
- PFCE Markers of Progress
- Depression screeners
- Parenting intervention tools

Create your plan of action for achieving goals, objectives, and expected outcomes. Action plans vary, but generally they include the “what,” “who,” and “when.” Outline the steps you will take to accomplish your goals and objective and to measure progress toward achieving them. Be sure to include the persons responsible, and identify the projected completion dates.

For additional support on action planning, see “Topic #1: Understanding Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, Progress, and Action Plans” and “Topic #4: Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, Progress, and Action Plans—Program Examples,” as well as the action plan in the *Using the Head Start PFCE Framework in Your Program: Markers of Progress* (on the ECLKC webpages for the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family>).

Refine goals and plans by examining data for patterns of progress on family and child outcomes. Programs can use data to identify the changes needed to achieve goals for families. For example, while working with individual families to set goals in the family partnership process, program staff may learn about family-specific trends and patterns that may be of value to program-wide goal setting and planning with community partners. Goal setting with families may offer data that programs can use to make timely shifts and monitor the effect of services provided.



PFCE Program Planning: Example

ALL OF US TOGETHER, Inc., has been providing Head Start and Early Head Start services to its community in Michigan for more than 20 years. For the past 6 months, there has been a rumor about the potential closing of two of the largest employers in the community. At community meetings, the Head Start Director has learned that the rumors are true and that the closings may impact more than half of the families in the program.

Program leadership and family services staff were concerned about what these anticipated job losses might mean for families and children. The most recent results from the community assessment, program Self-Assessment, and family assessments, clearly indicated an immediate need to address the well-being of families. There was already an increase in family violence, use of drugs, and stresses related to unemployment. Staff wanted to know: How can we make a difference for our families to help them during this time of change?

To help address this question, staff invited all stakeholders (members of the governing body, staff, family members, and community partners) to join a program planning committee. The group decided that it first needed to gather more

information from families in the program. To do this, staff developed a survey about family well-being. At the program's quarterly scheduled "Family Night Out" event, parents completed the survey with their Family Service Workers (FSW). As a follow-up, FSW contacted families who were not in attendance to complete the survey.

Next, program staff reviewed and aggregated the data from this survey and compared it with other previously reviewed sources. This process allowed the group to identify the following common goal:

BROAD Program Goal Related to Family Outcomes for a Five-Year Period

ALL of US TOGETHER will partner with families and work with community partners to support families' progress toward improved well-being and stronger financial stability. We will pay special attention to the families impacted by the job loss and the changes that these families will experience over the next 2–5 years as a result of the job loss. This goal is tied to the Family Well-Being Outcome of the PFCE Framework.

SMART Objectives for Year One

- 1) Develop MOUs with key community partners that have the capacity to offer job cross-training and apprenticeships.
- 2) Within one month of the start of the program year and continuing throughout the program year, ensure that 100 percent of parents have information about support services available in the community—including mental health counseling and job training—to better cope with job loss. Also ensure that all staff know of the resources available in the community to help support families experiencing these stressors.
- 3) Deliver training in mental health consultation, reflective practice, and supervision to all staff to ensure a better understanding of how job loss and job transition influence such mental health issues as depression and anxiety.

Using this goal and these objectives, the committee created a plan of action in which all stakeholders (governing bodies, staff, parents,

See the [PFCE Framework: Family Partnerships and Community Partnerships](#) and the two related family outcomes, Family Well-being and Families as Learners.

and community partners) could play a role. This plan of action focused on a collaborative process to monitor the program’s progress and evaluate the objectives and strategies planned. Engaging families and key stakeholders in the goal-setting process supported the implementation of the plan of action. As part of ongoing communication with the Regional Office, the program also engaged in regular discussions about the program’s progress toward this and other program goals. The program stayed in close contact with its training and technical assistance specialist to discuss its ongoing planning and to identify or access training and resources to implement its plan to support family well-being.

Refer to the information on **BROAD** goals and **SMART** objectives in “Topic #1: Understanding Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, Progress, and Action Plans.” You can also refer to *Using the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework in Your Program: Markers of Progress* to inform your ideas about goals and objectives. This resource can be found on the ECLKC website at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family>.

Conclusion

Programs and families can set goals at the program or individual family level. Program goals related to family outcomes are intended to address the needs of all families in a program. These program-wide goals emerge from several data sources. Program leadership, governing bodies, community partners, staff, and families work together to set and achieve these goals.

In addition, staff work with families to set specific individual goals for each family in response to its strengths, needs, interests, hopes, and progress. During the goal-setting process with individual families, program staff may discover trends and patterns that are emerging for a majority of families. These trends and patterns inform program-wide goal setting and planning. Goal setting with families offers data that programs can use to make timely changes and to monitor the effect of services provided on families' progress at both program and individual levels.



Planning in Head Start

November 2014



This document was developed by the Head Start National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations in collaboration with the Early Head Start National Resource Center, National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness, National Center on Health, National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement, National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning, and the Office of Head Start.

This document was prepared under Grant #90HC0001 for the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, by the National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations.