An Overview of: “A Resource Guide For Head Start Programs: Moving Beyond a Culture of Compliance to a Culture of Continuous Improvement”
Attributions

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Overview of Presentation

• Background on Head Start Leadership, Excellence and Data Systems (LEADS) Study

• Introduction to the Resource Guide
  • Approach
  • Audience
  • Section by Section Overview
  • Concluding Observations about Use
Head Start Leadership, Excellence, and Data Systems
Impetus and Overview of LEADS

• Goal of the Project
  • Understand the factors in organizational and management systems that promote effective early childhood practice through continuous quality improvement

• Products
  • A literature review and conceptual model
  • A study of practices in local Head Start programs
  • A brief combining findings across the LEADS study and the School Readiness study
  • A resource guide for practitioners
Continuous Quality Improvement Conceptual Framework

Environment
- Government mandates and guidance
- Accreditation, licensing, and professional development systems
- Nongovernmental funders such as foundations
- Time

Organizational Characteristics
- History of improvement efforts
- Size
- Structure
- Program characteristics

Continuous Cycle
- Gather data
- Analyze data
- Review and synthesize
- Prioritize and plan
- Implement plan
- Monitor performance
- Develop and revisit goals
- Evaluate outcomes
- Feedback

Culture of Collaborative Inquiry
- Create safe space
- Share learning
- Engage partners

Leadership
- Be transformational
- Lead change
- Communicate clearly
- Motivate innovation and creativity
- Distribute responsibilities

Commitment of Resources
- Commit leadership time
- Commit staff time
- Finance and sustain technology

Analytic Capacity
- Assess data capital
- Assess technological capital
- Assess human capital

Professional Development
- Understand data systems
- Develop analytic capacity
- Integrate knowledge and beliefs

Analytic Capacity
- Assess data capital
- Assess technological capital
- Assess human capital
A Resource Guide for Head Start: Moving Beyond a Culture of Compliance to a Culture of Continuous Improvement
Our Approach

- Draw from research
- Complement and draw in existing technical assistance materials
- Help Head Start and Early Head Start programs:
  - Understand how data can help them
    - Foster a culture of learning
    - Increase ability to continuously improve quality
Audience

• Primary
  • Leadership, management, supervisory, and data-focused staff and stakeholders in Head Start and Early Head Start programs

• Secondary
  • Technical assistance staff and consultants
Five Sections

• Part I: Background – Compliance only versus Performance in Head Start Context

• Part II: Shifting the Culture to Continuous Improvement

• Part III: Using Data for Internal Program Improvement

• Part IV: Preparing Your Data for Use

• Part V: Strategies for Engaging Staff and Stakeholders
Part I: Compliance-Only vs. Learning

- **Part I** describes the shift from an emphasis on compliance to an emphasis on performance and learning within government-funded programs. It offers definitions of key terms used throughout the resource guide so that all Head Start staff and stakeholders can build a common vocabulary around data use for program performance. It also situates data use in the context of Head Start.
Part I: Compliance-Only vs. Learning

Compliance

We followed all the rules.

Performance

Look at what we accomplished!
Part II: Culture Shift

- **Part II** introduces readers to new ways of thinking about organizational culture based on continuous improvement. This part stresses the importance of curiosity, reflection, and trust among staff at all levels and stakeholders. It also describes the steps to embarking on continuous improvement and the core competencies that define it.
Part II: Culture Shift

**Indicators of a “culture of continuous improvement”**

- **Curiosity** – described as asking the “how” and “why” questions about children and families in your program.
- **Reflection** – a continuous review of program policies and predisposition to seek feedback, applying when necessary to avoid “inertia”.
- **Tolerance of failure and vulnerability** – recognizing when things aren’t working and making appropriate course corrections.
- **Use of feedback** – related to reflection, this indicator is about the use of data to assess whether or not strategies or programs are making a difference for children and families.
- **Systems thinking** – which involves stepping back and considering the broader context in which Head Start programs operate and understanding that change is incremental.

Part III: Using Data

• **Part III** describes the cyclical practice of data collection, analysis, and use for internal improvement. It connects the Program Planning for Head Start cycle with a more detailed description of the steps necessary to improve every day. It provides step-by-step examples of data-informed program learning, including efforts to improve 4-year-olds’ early math skills, teacher-child interactions, and program budgeting.
Part III: Using Data

• **Teachable moments:** When we think about opportunities for children to learn, we see every moment as holding the potential for learning. We can use their daily activities and routines to help them understand new things about the world around them and to change their behaviors.

• **Continuous Quality Improvement** applies the same logic to organizational learning. If you are observing and recording, you will find **learnable moments** every day that you can take action on to improve your organization.
Program Planning Cycle

- Conduct or Update Community Assessment
- Evaluate Progress through Self-Assessment
- Continually Respond with Course Corrections
- Develop an Action Plan and Budget that Reflect Goals
- Implement an Action Plan
- Evaluate Progress through Ongoing Monitoring

Every 5 Years: Decide on Broad Goals and Initial Short-Term Objectives
Annually: Review Goals and Revise if Necessary, Generate Objectives and Expected Outcomes

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Continuous Data Use Cycle

- Develop & Revisit Goals and Objectives
- Gather Data
- Analyze Data
- Review & Synthesize
- Prioritize & Plan
- Implement Plan
- Monitor Performance
- Evaluate Outcomes
- Feedback
Application of Cycle – Three Examples

1. Early Math Skill Improvement for Four-Year-Olds
2. Improving Child-Teacher Interactions
3. Prioritizing Allocations When Budgets Decline
Part IV: Preparing Data for Use

- Part IV provides an introduction to assuring that your data are ready for meaningful use, including by attending to such issues of data quality as validity, reliability, accuracy, and completeness. This section also provides tips for data disaggregation.
## Part IV: Preparing Data for Use

### Table B. Possible Client and Service Characteristics to Use in Disaggregating Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Child Characteristics</strong></th>
<th><strong>Staff Characteristics</strong></th>
<th><strong>Family Characteristics</strong></th>
<th><strong>Classroom Characteristics</strong></th>
<th><strong>Site Characteristics</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Type/Role</td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Age Composition</td>
<td>Direct or Contracted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>Highest Level of Education</td>
<td>Child: Staff Ratio</td>
<td>Partner or Delegate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>Participation in Professional Development</td>
<td>Language Spoken at Home</td>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>Neighborhood Served</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Status</td>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>Head Start Volunteer Status</td>
<td>Presence of Volunteers/Aides</td>
<td>Total Enrollment/Staff Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Insurance Status</td>
<td>Direct or Contracted</td>
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Part V: Engaging Stakeholders

• **Part V** explains the importance of and steps for involving parents, teachers, Policy Council members, governing body members, and other stakeholders. It includes tips on incorporating data into regular staff meetings, board meetings, and parent conferences. It also outlines “data walks,” a new technique for fostering conversation and joint problem solving.
Part V: Engaging Stakeholders

- **Strategies for Engaging Stakeholder Groups:**
  - **Staff:** Data Orientation, Reflective Supervision, Data Review Meetings, Data as Part of Regular Staff Meetings
  - **Policy Council and Board:** Routine Data Updates, the Four A’s of Reporting Data
  - **Families:** Routine Sharing of Child Data
Appendices

• CULTURE
• STRATEGIES
  • Parent/Family Engagement
  • Data Review Meetings
  • Reflective Supervision
• TECHNICAL
• PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND MANAGEMENT
A Few Notes On Use

• Educate on compliance vs. learning

• Pull out various tips and resources for a particular conversation or discussion

• Supplement other TA materials
Related Products

If you have an interest in better understanding the research from which the resource guide was drawn, you may want to read this related, OPRE-funded product.

• **A multidisciplinary literature review:**
  • Data Use for Continuous Quality Improvement: What the Head Start Field Can Learn from Other Disciplines, A Literature Review and Conceptual Framework. OPRE Report # 2014-77
Thank you!

If you have any questions, please contact Urban Institute staff:

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