

HEAD START

MONTHLY REPORT SEPTEMBER 2021



From the Desk of the Head Start Program Director: The weather is perfect for outdoor play this time of year! The sticky summer heat is a thing of the past, well almost, and the cooling breeze brings joy to anyone who is lucky enough to be outdoors. Take some time to play outside with your kids! It will be good for them and you will benefit from it as well.

Policy Council: Elections for Policy Council Representatives from each center have taken place and we have a full council! Thanks to all of the parents who volunteered to serve. We will be having our farewell to the members from last year and the Induction Ceremony for the new members at Casa Maria on October 21st. We are so very grateful to our parents who are willing to serve on the council and advise us as we make decisions about the program. Policy Council meetings are open to all of our parents and the community. Be on the lookout for meeting dates and times via Learning Genie and join us if you can.

You will be in the know regarding what is going on at your child's center and at the program level.

COVID Prevention: We continue to ask parents to wear a mask as they drop their children off. It is equally important for children 2 and older to come to school with a mask on. The number of positive COVID cases we are seeing has gone down slightly, but we cannot let our guard down. We must do everything we can to protect our children, including getting vaccinated ourselves. The Office of Head Start has mandated that all Head Start employees be vaccinated by January 2022.



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Education Team: September has been another busy month for the Education Team. We have been working hard to fill several teaching vacancies we still have at LBT and Hemphill HS. We participated in a Job Fair at Texas State University this month and are conducting interviews. We are hopeful that we will be able to fill some of those vacancies soon. The Education Team has also begun Practice Base Coaching for the EHS and HS teaching staff. We have been working diligently to ensure we are meeting our 45 day deadline for all ASQ and DECA Assessments. Desired Results Developmental Program (DRDP) Observations began this month as well. This is the assessment we use with our Infants and Toddlers to measure their developmental progress. We are also preparing for upcoming CLASS Observations for our Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms. CLASS is an observation tool that measures the quality of the interactions between the teachers and their students.



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School Readiness: Teachers have spent the first few weeks of school getting children used to the rules and routines of the classroom. Early Head Start teachers started their first wave of the DRDP assessment on September 20th. This assessment is ongoing for 6 weeks and the results will be used to individualize for children and plan large group instruction on the lesson plan. Our first round of HS CLASS is set to begin the first week of October.

Professional Development: In September, the management team had on site training with our Child Plus consultant. During this visit we were able to strengthen our overall systems for tracking children with disabilities, the referral process, and also ensuring that teachers and Center Directors are receiving children's IEP/IFSP documentation in a timely manner so that strategies can be implemented. Our Center Directors also attended a management training for childcare licensing. All Early Head Start and Head Start employees completed their initial conference for their annual performance evaluation. We also had 8 of our staff members complete the Child Development Associates (CDA) program in collaboration with Community Action's Adult Education program. The CDA program is sponsored by our Head Start program and we are very proud of them for achieving this accomplishment!

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Mental Health and Disabilities: We have been busy working on our 45 day requirements. This involves making sure all children enrolled have been assessed with the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (developmental assessment) and the DECA-Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (behavioral assessment). Our Team has worked to refine our referral process by clearly identifying each staff's role and responsibility in the process. The Mental Health & Disabilities Coordinator also has been meeting with teachers to ensure we are implementing goals in accordance with child's IEP-Individual Education Plan or IFSP-Individual Family Service Plan. We are required to do this for all children who are currently receiving services from an ECI- Early Childhood Intervention or LEA- Local Education Agency.



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Health: During the month of September the health team continued to screen children for vision and hearing. It is challenging to get this completed with very young children for a variety of reasons such as classroom closures due to COVID and child absences due to illness. CPR class are being offered to our staff on a monthly basis for new employees and re-certification for existing employees. This is a Child Care Licensing requirement. The Health Coordinator was very excited to attend the Child Plus Annual Conference for the first time every. She was able to learn more about the Child Plus software, which is the program we use to monitor compliance on a daily basis.

ERSEA & Transitions: Enrollment continues to be as we work to fill our vacant slots. The Office of Head Start expects us to be fully enrolled by January of 2022 regardless of the pandemic. We've had some classroom repairs at Henry Bush that are now completed, allowing us to fill those slots soon. Attendance is lower than what we would like see. Family Advocates will begin Attendance Success Plans with all families who fall below 90%. We are looking for ways to support children's regular attendance despite the pandemic.

Our current enrollment for the 21-22 school year is as follows:
EHS 159 out of 171 (12 slots still available)
HS 312 out of 362 (50 slots still available)



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Head Start Operations & Safety: HVAC repair and mold remediation has been completed at Hemphill CDC building B. The reconstruction has started this week and the projected completion date is December 2021. Diaper distribution is scheduled every two weeks for families that need supplies for their child due to the building remaining closed.

Diaper Distribution is also in place for any sites that have classroom closures due to COVID. Center staff have been sanitizing the classrooms after a positive case has been reported using our First Responders Technology.

The Operations Coordinator and Operations Specialist are in the process of completing the program's safety checklist for the 2021-2022 school year.

Janitorial supplies, furniture and material are being delivered to sites. The Operations Coordinator is requesting quotes for repairs that are needed currently at A Washington CDC, and Lockhart CDC.



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Nutrition: The nutrition team continues to work hard to distribute meals to children in quarantine while also implementing the new fall menu. The Texas Department of Agriculture approved the 2021-2022 Child and Adult Care Food Program application that was submitted by the Program Nutritionist and Fiscal Officer. The Program Nutritionist is beginning to review child nutrition screenings and schedule follow up appointments with families, when necessary.

Head Start Office Manager:

We would like to thank our Policy Council Members for a great year of dedicated participation. We thank you for your service. We are excited to welcome our new members and looking forward to another exciting and productive year! Fall is in the air! Take your children for a walk.



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Family Services: This month the FA team is working hard to finish the first Home Visit with all of the parents. This visit includes the Family Needs Assessment and the Family Partnership Agreement. The FA reviews the Family Needs Assessment data with the family and works collaboratively with them to set a specific and measurable goal and to develop an action plan to achieve that goal. The FA Team has also been working with the families to make sure they are keeping up with their Well Baby Exams and immunizations. The team is working hard to have all of the required health documentation before the 90 days due date. We have received information about the Turkey Box and will be sending it to all of our families in preparation for the holidays. During this month, the FAs will start working to make sure that they have donors for the Angel Tree program for Christmas. During the next FA meeting, the Family Services Coordinator will provide additional training on Child Plus, our software system. The FS Coordinator recently attended the Child Plus Conference and is excited to share what he learned.



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