Crosswalk of Head Start Ongoing Monitoring and Self-Assessment

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act 2007 and the Head Start Program Performance Standards articulate regulatory requirements regarding ongoing monitoring and Self-Assessment of Head Start and Early Head Start programs. These processes as defined by the HS Act 2007 include:

- **Self-Assessment (SA):** A process used to measure a HS/EHS programs effectiveness and progress in meeting program goals and objectives and their implementation and compliance with regulatory requirements, and to identify areas of strength and for improvement, including school readiness of children. The HS/EHS program compiles the results of the SA into a SA summary report which includes recommendations for program improvement that are later used by the program to develop improvement plans and the program TTA plan.

- **Ongoing Monitoring (OGM):** A measurement process used to ensure that the operation of the HS/EHS program work toward meeting program goals and objectives and compliance with regulatory requirements. The HS/EHS program uses ongoing monitoring to measure program performance identify areas of concern, to make immediate program corrections and to generate reports. The HS/EHS program also uses ongoing monitoring results as a data source for Self-Assessment and Federal Monitoring Review.

In an effort to increase EHS/HS program understanding of ongoing monitoring and Self-Assessment The National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations (PMFO) developed a side-by-side crosswalk, which highlights key aspects of both the ongoing monitoring and Self-Assessment processes. The information provided in this crosswalk is derived from the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act 2007, the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the GAO *Performance Measurement and Evaluation, Definitions and Relationships*. In instances where terms or defining statements within these documents are non-existent, PMFO added strategies reflective of industry best practice and utilized information gleaned from listening sessions conducted with HS/EHS programs in 2012, which are indicated with italics.
### General Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Ongoing Monitoring</th>
<th>Self-Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>See GAO definitions</em></td>
<td>Internal performance measurement</td>
<td>Internal/external program evaluation</td>
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### Purpose

Ongoing and systematic measurement of progress toward meeting program goals and objectives and compliance with program policies and procedures and state and Federal regulations.

An annual comprehensive “big picture” assessment that evaluates the context and achievements of the program, the effectiveness and progress in meeting program goals and objectives and the implementation of regulatory requirements.

### Guiding Questions

**How are we doing?**
- Have we accomplished activities within prescribed timelines that are outlined in our plans?
- Does our program comply with state, federal regulatory requirements and with program requirements?

**What changes do we need to make now?**

What progress have we made in achieving our goals?
- How can we serve children & families better?
- How can we be more responsive to community needs?
- How can we improve working conditions and staff performance?
- What innovations should we consider?

What changes do we need to make in the coming year(s)?

### Responsibility

Program management

Program Director has operating responsibility; the role of the Agency Director is locally determined. Governing Body has general responsibility (Grantee/Delegate.) Policy Council (grantee)/Policy Committee (delegate) must be involved in the development and implementation and approve report.

### Frequency

Ongoing

At least once annually

### Who is involved

Grantee and delegate agency managers and staff.

Grantee and delegate agency staff, with the consultation and participation of the policy groups, and as appropriate, other community members

### Tools

Locally selected or designed

Locally selected or designed

### Metrics (Focus)

Locally designed indicators focusing on performance, compliance with, and progress towards:
- Regulatory requirements (HSPPS, HS Act, and other regulations)
- Program and school readiness goals and objectives

Locally designed broad perspective indicators focusing on effectiveness, progress, implementation and compliance towards:
- Program and school readiness goals and objectives,
- Regulatory requirements,
- Program quality
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<tr>
<td>Overall program and fiscal operations</td>
<td>Development and implementation of strong management systems</td>
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<td>Service delivery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods for collecting and analyzing data</td>
<td>Methods are determined locally and focus on collecting, aggregating and analyzing data. Tools and methods vary from program to program.</td>
<td>Methods are determined locally and focus on aggregating and analyzing existing program data. Tools and methods vary from program to program.</td>
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<td>Methods may include: Systematic review of program/agency records or documents Various aggregated data from interviews, checklists, inventories, and other evaluative tools (locally or externally designed and/or purchased) Management analysis and synthesis of data, including making immediate corrections for identified areas of concern.</td>
<td>Methods may include: Multi-year analysis of various data and/or reports derived from ongoing monitoring, child assessment systems, program/agency records or documents, tracking, surveys and questionnaires, interviews, and nominal group processes (e.g., focus groups, meetings, brainstorming), Federal monitoring reviews and other internal or external data sources. The SA Team focus: aggregate, analyze and synthesize data to answer questions derived from the SA team, compiles a SA Summary report which includes recommendations for program improvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timeframe for collecting data</td>
<td>Ongoing. Timelines are aligned with regulatory requirements when appropriate. Otherwise, frequency and timelines are locally determined</td>
<td>At least once per year. Length of timeframe is locally determined.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Types of Data</td>
<td>Quantitative data – examples: PIR, child outcomes, attendance, child screening and assessment, CLASS scores, eligibility reviews, non-federal share tracking, safety reviews, HR document/file reviews, etc. Anecdotal/Qualitative data – examples: parent notes or reports, anecdotal observation notes.</td>
<td>SA process utilizes data the program already has rather than collecting new data. Quantitative data- Examples: PIR, child outcomes, attendance records, service tracking, staff, parent and community surveys, Qualitative data – Examples: focus groups and interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative data (numerical terms and values correspond to specific labels). Anecdotal/Qualitative data (verbal and narrative)</td>
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National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations (2012), *Analysis of Listening Session for Self-Assessment*, Education Development Center, Inc., Waltham, MA.

GAO (May, 2011) PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION, Definitions and Relationships (GAO Glossary), Washington, DC  

45 CFR 1301-13011, Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations  
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/Head%20Start%20Requirements

Head Start School Readiness Act of 2007, HHS/ACF/OHS  
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards
Ideas for Your Annual Self-Assessment Process

In a few months, the National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations (PMFO) will release a new suite of tools to support programs in conducting their Annual Self-Assessment. The tools will reflect the Office of Head Start’s (OHS) latest thinking on the role of the Annual Self-Assessment in ongoing program oversight and planning. As a preview, we’ve pulled together several ideas for programs that are in the midst of conducting this year’s assessment so that they can begin to think about transitioning to this new approach to the Annual Self-Assessment.

The Annual Self-Assessment is a long-standing element of the Head Start program calendar. Congress affirmed the importance of the process in the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 when it articulated the need for every Head Start grantee and delegate agency to conduct a comprehensive self-assessment of its effectiveness at least annually. OHS sees the Annual Self-Assessment as a crucial element in a grantee’s role in providing effective oversight.

Over the years, programs have conducted self-assessments in a variety of ways that range from adapting a federal monitoring tool to using materials specifically designed for self-assessments. Whatever the instrument selected, programs that conduct meaningful self-assessments include a number of specific practices, such as involving the Policy Council and community members; thoroughly reviewing data; and developing recommendations for growth, improvement, and new directions. Recent PMFO workshops and focus groups revealed that program leaders from across the country continue to use these time-tested practices and that they are experimenting with new approaches that 1) take full advantage of all of the data they have already collected and 2) streamline their self-assessment process. Program leaders have also told us that the Program Planning Cycle graphic (below) has provided them with new insights into how the Annual Self-Assessment informs and strengthens their program’s annual planning process. In the tips below we’ve incorporated some of these innovations and insights along with tried and true practices.

Program Planning Cycle

The inner circle of this graphic represents the ongoing monitoring that is part of the larger cycle of continuous improvement. The outer circle represents key aspects of the Self-Assessment.
**Prepare by strengthening existing data systems.**

Head Start programs collect a massive amount of data about virtually every aspect of program operations throughout the year. When they strengthen the systems that gather this data, programs gain increased confidence because they know that their data is reliable and provides an accurate picture of their program.

Programs are preparing for their Annual Self-Assessment process throughout the year as they collect data and remain alert to the story it is telling. The Annual Self-Assessment then creates the ideal time for programs to examine that data—what they have been gathering during the course of the year, through multiple years, and across different data sets—to uncover patterns or trends that may not be evident through the ongoing monitoring process. Programs use ongoing monitoring to ask, “Are we doing things right (and on time)?” However, they use the Annual Self-Assessment to ask, “Are we doing the right things?”

The Annual Self-Assessment also provides the opportunity for the program to look for consistent data messages from across all areas of operation. However, rather than overwhelm the Self-Assessment team with every piece of data that they collect, effective programs identify the sources of data that best represent the reality of their program. They can begin to determine which of their data they should share with the Self-Assessment team by asking the following kinds of questions:

- Which data highlight our strengths?
- Which data suggest areas of concerns?
- What do the data tell us about our progress in meeting goals?
- Are there patterns across data sources that we need to attend to?

**View the Annual Self-Assessment as a time to focus on the “big” issues.**

Throughout the year, program leaders and staff continually track the effectiveness of program operations and progress towards goals through their ongoing monitoring system. During the Annual Self-Assessment, staff, leaders, parents, and partners reflect on that same data and compare data across content areas to address higher-level systemic issues. By asking pertinent questions—such as “How can we better serve children and families in our community?” “Where are we at risk?” and “How can we improve or streamline operations?”—programs can critically examine the overall direction and impact of their systems and services. Through this examination they can then determine if they are using their human and financial resources to achieve their goals.
Use parents, community members, and partners as “fresh sets of eyes.”
Congress requires Head Start programs to involve their Policy Council in the Annual Self-Assessment; however, that legislative body also recommends that programs involve community members, thus ensuring an outside perspective. Parents and community partners can provide new insights as they work with program leaders to examine data. Governing body members may be recruited as well. In particular, the governing body Early Childhood expert can add value to the review of educational services, while the governing body fiscal expert can critique financial systems.

Let the data lead the way.
Head Start’s array of services is too complex and its environment too fluid to allow programs to rest on their accomplishments. An honest review of program data typically points to a variety of ways that programs can improve, make adjustments, or change direction. In some cases, the Self-Assessment team may conclude that a particular service needs to be re-tooled to meet a need that has been newly revealed by child and family data; in other cases, team members may conclude that management systems need a tune-up. In programs where systems and services are working well, the Self-Assessment team may suggest areas for innovation.

Effective Self-Assessment teams draw conclusions from the review of program data and use those conclusions to direct program leaders to 1) immediately correct any issues in services or systems they identify and 2) recommend new directions—program, fiscal, T/TA, and school readiness—to the program’s planning team.

Summarize the effort.
The Annual Self-Assessment process is not complete until the hard work of the team is summarized in a report that can be shared with the governing body, the Policy Council, program staff, and the funder. While there is currently no required length or format for the report, feedback from Head Start and Early Head Start programs as well as Regional Program Specialists suggests that a meaningful Annual Self-Assessment summary report should do the following:

- List the members of the Self-Assessment team with their titles.
- Briefly describe the process the team used.
- Indicate the data sources the team reviewed.
- Report the findings that the data revealed.
- Share the conclusions the team reached.
- Summarize the team’s recommendations for program improvement.

Continue the cycle.
Because the Annual Self-Assessment is part of a cyclical planning process, the end of one year’s assessment marks the beginning of next year’s planning. When the Policy Council and governing body approve the Annual Self-Assessment report, program leaders and staff convert the Self-Assessment team’s new directions into goals and objectives; they then devise plans for meeting those new goals and objectives.
As they develop the plans that emerge from the Self-Assessment team’s direction—plans for the program, for school readiness, and for T/TA—program leaders take care to ensure that the objectives and activities in each plan align with those of the other plans.

**Example:**
If the Self-Assessment team recommends a focus on improving or expanding services to children who are dual language learners, the program may adopt the following:

- School readiness activities such as a Planned Language Approach that intentionally and systematically supports children’s language and literacy development and increased competency in their home language while developing proficiency in English.
- Program activities that focus on selection of classroom language models based on language of teachers and of the children, which may involve hiring additional classroom staff who speak children’s home languages and working together with families to best support their children’s learning and development through appropriate strategies and activities at home.

T/TA activities that include professional development for classroom and family services staff on not only understanding and communicating the importance of home language development as children learn English, but also on approaches and strategies for supporting children’s language acquisition in both home language and English.

As programs develop their new plans, they also must determine if they need to collect new types of data through ongoing monitoring to 1) track their success in implementing their new goals and 2) later assess the impact of the goals through the following year’s Annual Self-Assessment. This development phase is the ideal time for the program to identify for the coming year the new questions that they would like answered during the next Annual Self-Assessment.

**Sample Question for Dual Language Learning:**
Have we successfully implemented activities to support children who are dual language learners? Have children’s language and literacy outcomes improved?

The program’s Federal and Technical Assistance staff can assist in identifying resources to support accomplishment of new goals. For example, in the dual language learner example above, the program may decide that the interactive Program Preparedness Checklist or A Planned Language Approach resource (developed by the National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness) would provide valuable information to supplement the data they already collect through classroom observations and review of family records.

Finally, with goals, objectives, activities, and data collection plans in place, the program begins the implementation and data collection tasks that set the stage for a new year of ongoing monitoring and self-assessment activities. The cycle of continuous improvement is complete—and begins again.

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When It’s Working Well:
Planning, Ongoing Monitoring, and Self-Assessment

Presented by:
Stacy Dimino, PMFO Co-Director
Jeanie Mills, PMFO Senior TTA Associate
Region V Head Start Conference, Chicago
Nov. 5, 2013
Session Outcomes

• Understand the Planning Cycle and how Data, Self-Assessment and Ongoing Monitoring fit within the cycle
• Understand the differences between Ongoing Monitoring and Self-Assessment
• Reconsider changes to your Self-Assessment process as a result of new thinking
Systems Are Linked

- Planning
- Program Governance
- Self-Assessment
- Ongoing Monitoring
- Record-keeping & Reporting
Program Planning in Head Start

1. Community Assessment
2. Decide on Goals/Communicate with Stakeholders
3. Develop Plan of Action and Budget that Reflect Goals
4. Evaluate Progress through Ongoing Monitoring
5. Continually Respond With Course Corrections
6. Implement Plan of Action

Evaluate Progress through Self-Assessment
Linking OGM, SA and Planning

**Ongoing Monitoring**

**COLLECT:**
- Collect data (PIR, child outcomes data, results of OGM for all systems/services/goals/objectives.

**ANALYZE:**
- Review & Analyze data with Managers

**ACT:**
- Make course corrections
- Determine new data measures

**ENSURE:**
- Evaluate/follow up on course corrections
- Verify accuracy of and summarize OGM data for review by SA team
- Request SA team to analyze persistent system’s issues

**Self-Assessment**

**PREPARE:**
- Design Self-Assessment process
- Orient/Train Self-Assessment participants

**ANALYZE:**
- Analyze information presented (OGM summaries, OHS monitoring results, other info needed)
- Determine and request if further info is needed

**RECOMMEND:**
- Identify strengths and make recommendations for improvement/enhancement

**Program Planning**

**DECIDE ON GOALS:**
- Review and analyze Community Assessment & other relevant data
- Review recommendations from SA report
- Develop long-term program goals and short-term program and fiscal objectives

**DEVELOP A PLAN OF ACTION:**
- Develop service plans
- Develop action steps for goals/objectives
- Identify measures to monitor (Plan for data collection)
- Assure regular progress reports are shared with Management, GB and PC
Program Planning

Decide on Goals
- Review and analyze Community Assessment & other relevant data
- Review recommendations from SA report
- Develop long-term program goals and short term program and fiscal objectives

Develop a Plan of Action
- Develop service plans
- Develop action steps for goals/objectives
- Identify measures to monitor (Plan for data collection)
- Assure regular progress reports are shared with Management, GB and PC
Program Goals and Objectives

Program goals are....

BROAD Statements
(Your Destination)

- Beyond Current Expectations
- Responsive
- Organization-wide
- Aspirational
- Dynamic

Objectives are...

Carried out through an Action Plan
(Your Road Map)

Recognized and Accepted as Important by All

SMART parts of Goals
(Your Mile Markers)

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Timely
Planning for Data Collection

1. What do I want to know?
2. What data will answer that question?
3. How frequently do we need to collect and analyze the data?
Let’s Buzz

Planning:

• Does everyone in your program know your goals & objectives?
• Does your program actively work to achieve goals & objectives throughout the year?
• Do you have a manageable number of broad goals?
• Do you have program and fiscal objectives and are they SMART?
• Do you have an action plan that outlines steps to achieve progress, identifies responsibilities and specifies timelines?
Data Reframed

- Data is collected and analyzed in order to answer critical questions
- Data is used regularly at all levels of the program to help identify and learn from best practices
- Decisions at all levels are informed by high quality data
- Data is interpreted across service areas and fiscal data is included
Community Assessment
- Analyze data
- Share conclusions
- Communicate results to internal and external audiences

Decide on Goals/ Communicate with Stakeholders
- Ensure goals reflect conclusions from key data sources, e.g., community assessment, child records

Develop Plan of Action and Budget that Reflect Goals
- Determine evidence
- Determine data collection methodologies
- Adjust Record-keeping & Reporting Systems

Continually Respond with Mid-Course Corrections
- Use Record-keeping Reporting System to collect data
- Check integrity of data
- Communicate data findings and next steps to internal audiences

Implement Plan of Action
- Use Record-keeping & Reporting System to collect data
- Check integrity of data, e.g., supervisors do spot checks of reports
- Discuss reports at regularly scheduled intervals

Evaluate Progress Through Self-Assessment
- Assess annual progress in achieving goals and objectives
- Assess effectiveness of systems and services
- Examine trends and patterns
- Communicate results to internal and external audiences

Evaluate Progress Through Ongoing Monitoring
- Aggregate data and review for overall trends monthly
- Analyze data monthly (e.g., by center, option, position, etc.)
- Draw conclusions
- Communicate findings

Evaluate Progress Through Ongoing Monitoring
- Use Record-keeping Reporting System to collect data
- Check integrity of data, e.g., supervisors do spot checks of reports
- Discuss reports at regularly scheduled intervals
Let’s Buzz

Using Data:

• Are you gathering the data you need to measure progress on goals & objectives and to test compliance with Head Start and other regulations?

• How do you know if your data is accurate?

• Does your program regularly analyze and share data?
Elements of an Effective Ongoing Monitoring System

- Quality data
- Culture that understands the importance of continuous improvement
- Process for aggregating and analyzing data
- Process for correction of issues
- Skilled managers who embrace their monitoring responsibilities

Effective Ongoing Monitoring
Ongoing Monitoring

COLLECT:
• Collect data (PIR, child outcomes data, results of OGM for all systems/services/goals/objectives.

ANALYZE:
• Review & Analyze data with Managers

ACT:
• Make course corrections
• Determine new data measures

ENSURE:
• Evaluate/follow up on course corrections
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## Performance Measurement Categories

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Trying Hard is Not Good Enough – Mark Friedman</td>
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Let’s Buzz

Implementing Ongoing Monitoring:

• Does your program have a comprehensive plan for monitoring all systems/services?

• Do all members of program/organization understand their monitoring roles?

• Does your program share monitoring results broadly to ensure an integrated analysis of causes and possible solutions?

• Does your program make course corrections based on your data throughout the year?

• How does your program assure follow up to monitoring concerns?
Self-Assessment

PREPARE:
• Design Self-Assessment process
• Orient/Train Self-Assessment participants

ANALYZE:
• Analyze information presented (OGM summaries, OHS monitoring results, other info needed)
• Determine and request if further info is needed

RECOMMEND:
• Identify strengths and make recommendations for improvement/enhancement
# New Thinking: Self-Assessment

| Who’s involved? | A mix of stakeholders  
| Those with an outside perspective |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| What’s different? | Focus on analysis  
| Ask different questions that focus on outcomes |
| How do we do it? | Use data from OGM  
| Review multi-year data  
| Lead with strengths  
| Look at outcomes over 5-years |
| Why do we do it? | For continuous improvement  
| To focus on what is achieved in 5-yr cycle |
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- Quantity: #
- Quality: %

*Trying Hard is Not Good Enough – Mark Friedman*
Let’s Buzz

Self-Assessment:

- Does your program have a diverse self-assessment team including community experts, governing bodies, PC members and staff?
- Does your program already incorporate data from OGM to SA?
- In addition, does your program review multi-year data to identify trends and patterns?
- Does your program identify its strengths during Self-Assessment?
- Does your self-assessment focus on bigger picture questions of quality of services and outcomes for children, families and staff?
Rethinking Your Planning Process: Time for Reflection
Questions