



## **Latin American Community Center: ECAP Program Self-Assessment 2015-2016**

In accordance with paragraphs 45 CFR 1304.51(i) and 1304.50(d)(1)(viii) of The Head Start Performance Standards: The Latin American Community Center's Early Childhood Assistance Program (ECAP) has conducted its annual Self-Assessment for program year 2015-2016. All ECAP employees had the opportunity to take part and community partners were selected to serve as Book Participants. Booklet Teams consisted of LACC staff alongside community partners. These teams had the responsibility of conducting interviews and reviewing documents and then discussed outcomes for each booklet. The EDC Leadership staff summarized the final report and created an Action Plan. The Assessment tool used by the LACC is "Your Foundation for Building Program Excellence" a resource from the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center website ([www.eclkc.ohs.acf](http://www.eclkc.ohs.acf)). Within this assessment, it has 19 booklets requiring staff to view a variety of documents and to interview members of interest for Head Start. Data sources used while conducting Annual Self-Assessment were (1) interviews: personnel, parents, community representatives, policy council, and governing body members. (2) Parent Surveys, (3) The utilization of Community Assessment, children's files, surveys, strategic plans, LACC's ECAP web portal, notes sent in both Spanish and English, ETO data reports / tracking forms, performance standards written plans, immunization records, classroom observations form, fire marshal reports, food service licensure, as well as numerous other documents that pertained to the program.

## **Booklet 1: Management Systems: Program Governance**

The Latin American Community Center ECAP program has a unique governance system because it is part of a larger community agency. Our organizational structure includes a Board of Directors, CEO/President, and Executive Leadership team that oversees the entire agency. In addition, the ECAP program, as a part of the Early Development Center has a leadership team and Policy Council that represent the educational services of the agency.

Each year, our Parent Policy Council is elected after an orientation / training and then during our first monthly parent meeting of the school year the five executive leadership positions are filled. All parents are invited to our parent meetings and are eligible to serve on the Policy Council. Throughout the year the Policy Council is briefed on program. The Family Services Coordinator keeps the minutes of each meeting and plans workshops and trainings with parents.

The Board of Directors for the larger agency has a Lifelong Learning representative who reports on the status of our ECAP and Early Development Center programs along with the Director of the programs. The Director of the Early Development Center and ECAP program serves as a liaison between the Board of Directors and the Policy Council.

### Program Strengths

- Online portal for information access for the Board of Directors and the Policy Council
- Comprehensive training document for Board of Directors and Policy Council taken from the Head Start website (effective use of ECKLC website)
- Parent Handbook is comprehensive
- Agendas / Updates are utilized to share information with the Board of Directors and the Policy Council. Also, a Document Check-off is used for all documents that need to be approved/voted upon.

### Areas for Improvement

- Ongoing Monitoring reports need to be utilized and shared with Board of Directors and Policy Council
- Policy Council doesn't really participate in hiring and terminating employees
- The Board of Directors is not really involved in the Grant Application Process

## **Booklet 2: Management Systems: Planning**

Each year the Latin American Community Center partners with the Delaware Head Start Association to complete the Community Assessment, the most recent assessment having been completed in 2015. This particular assessment includes a dynamic overview of the Wilmington community and characterizes its needs and resources.

### Strengths

- Dedication of management/leadership team which are all new to their positions
- Extensive use of resources (mentors, advisors, T.A., ECKLC, etc.) from Head Start to advise and build leadership capacity.
- Policy Council and Governing Board involvement and training

### Areas for Improvement

- Long-range and short-term goals need to be strategically and purposefully developed to provide the highest quality services for our families and community,
- The Community Assessment should play a bigger role in determining the above mentioned goals.
- The Policy Council should be more intimately involved in the planning process for organizational goals.

## **Booklet 3: Management Systems: Communication**

### Strengths

- As part of a larger community agency, the Early Development Center and ECAP program policies and procedures pertaining to communication are located in our agency wide staff handbook as well as in the Teacher Handbook. As a bi-lingual, bi-cultural agency we ensure that all communication to staff and families is provided in both English and Spanish. This communication is done in many different ways, including but not limited to:
  - Weekly Parent Bulletin for all families
  - Weekly Classroom newsletters and/or daily notes
  - Yearly calendars of important events
  - Monthly calendars of important events
  - Parent Information Boards located within each classroom
  - Family information board located at Sign-in & out area
- The Early Development Center and ECAP Program have monthly staff meetings for teachers and leaders, monthly parent meetings and trainings/workshops, and monthly policy council meetings. These meetings are used to discuss and accomplish three distinct tasks: program strategy, program updates, and program development. All teachers also take part in one-on-one meetings with the Director, bi-weekly co-planning meetings, and coaching sessions.
- For parents, our family services coordinator meets with parents throughout the year to set goals, monitor progress, and seek out any necessary services that the family or student may need. Teachers conduct student growth conferences three times a year to set goals and monitor student development and progress

with families. Together, teachers and family services coordinator conduct two family home visits a year.

#### Areas for Improvement

- Need to develop written policies and procedures on meetings for staff as well as for communication for staff / management
- While it is already occurring in various ways (email, telephone calls, face – to-face), clear written procedures for sharing information between Family Service Workers and teachers need to be developed.

### **Booklet 4: Management Systems: Record Keeping and Reporting**

All records of children and families are maintained by the Family Services coordinator. This system is maintained carefully by monitoring reports for and with parents, bi-monthly file updates, and careful documentation of what and when things need to be updated within a child's file. Our family service coordinator and Director have access to all files. Teachers have access to files and are able to add student growth conference data, individualization examples, etc.

Student files include standardized enrollment forms with information regarding authorization for and medication administration, health needs identifiers and follow ups, child abuse and neglect, transportation permissions, photo releases, and more.

In relation to student outcomes, observation driven data is collected throughout the year and used to inform weekly and long term planning for all age levels. Additionally, three times a year data checkpoints are closed and parents are involved in student growth conferences based on student data and outcomes. Teachers and families set goals for the upcoming checkpoint period. As a center, we review our data collaboratively and use it to inform our planning, expectations, high quality student work norms, and professional development. This is an integral part of our instructional coaching process and our overall professional development and organizational planning. All plans for the center and individual student are used as a working document and are continuously updated based on the specific needs of our students and families. At the end of the year an End of Year report is created for all internal and external stakeholders and partners.

#### Strengths

- All documents are easily accessible
- ETO has clear communication
- FSC has knowledge of all families and can easily provide information on goals, health, etc.

#### Areas for Improvement

- Keeping electronic info up-to-date - paper file is likely difficult and may not be necessary
- Improved quality of program reports for stakeholders (policy council and governing board)
- No evidence of individual student comparative reports for child outcomes that provides information on progress (beginning of school year to middle of school year)

## **Booklet 5: Management Systems: Ongoing Monitoring**

The Early Development Center and ECAP Program at the Latin American Community Center are supported and monitored by ongoing professional development through our Instructional Coaching. Instructional Coaches work with age level teams as well as individual teachers to ensure that services are delivered with constant quality, students are getting individualized attention and planning, and organizational goals are being met.

Students with challenging behaviors are monitored through our RTI program that is teamed by Lead Teachers, Instructional Coaches, the Director, the Family Services and FACET Coordinator, our RTI Coach (external) and outside mental health consultant. This team works to not only identify students with specific needs but also seeks services for students and families and keeps updated records of any screenings, testing, IEPs or IFSPs.

In relation to student outcomes, observation driven data is collected throughout the year and used to inform weekly and long term planning for all age levels. As a center, we review our data collaboratively and use it to inform our planning, expectations, high quality student work norms, and professional development. This is an integral part of our instructional coaching process and our overall professional development and organizational planning. All plans for the center and individual student are used as a working document and are continuously updated based on the specific needs of our students and families.

### Strengths

- Created, executed, and are currently implementing an action plan from last year's monitoring

### Areas for Improvement

- Enhanced documentation of monitoring reports for classrooms, teachers, and students.
- Develop a child outcome system to included acquisition of data and analysis of same data
- Formally write out monitoring system and tracking used

- Create monthly monitoring report for all stockholders
- Use information from reports to take corrective action and make program changes

## **Booklet 6: Management Systems: Human Resources**

Each role in the organization has a specific job description that includes details regarding our philosophy, expectations, required qualifications, roles and responsibilities. Additionally, we have developed a hiring and recruitment committee that manages and engages in our systematic and strategic recruitment and hiring of new staff. Our systems for staff termination are formalized as well based on expectations, roles, and responsibilities that were solidified and agreed upon during the formalized hiring process.

Based on Delaware licensing guidelines, all staff references are verified and background checks are conducted through both the state and at a federal level. In addition, our program follows our agency standards of conduct as well as the Head Start Code of Ethics. Staff sign these standards of conduct, as well as a form that explains our operation as an equal opportunity employer.

At the beginning of each school year the program develops program wide goals and expectations for both the whole staff and individual staff members alike. At the mid-point of the year, the staff goes through performance appraisals to measure their progress and set future goals. These appraisals and goals also serve to inform our professional development plans for the following school year.

### Strengths

- *Teacher Qualifications:* 100% of our ECAP classrooms teachers have at least a Bachelor's degree if not a Master's degree.
- Comprehensive teacher handbook in place
- Solidified orientation process has provided a strong foundation
- Teachers receive much professional development and instructional coaching (from both instructional coaches and community partnership technical assistants)

### Areas for Improvement

- Teacher recruitment process
- Documentation of instructional coaching
- Professional development plans for staff should have a more focused and visible goal for the school year in terms of instruction, professional growth, education, and commitment.
- Agency wide professional development plan (review and analyze data of outcomes and act accordingly)

## **Booklet 8: Child Development and Health Services: Prevention and Early Intervention**

### Strengths

- All student files indicate that our program assessed the student's accessibility to ongoing, continuous health care within the first 90 days of enrollment as well as records of immunizations, screenings, and physical appraisals. If families do not have access to health care, our family service worker refers the family to a service within our larger community agency that provides connections to resources for families, including health care.
- Screenings for developmental, sensory and behavioral concerns are completed within 45 days of entry into our program. All parents participate in these screenings along with teachers in an effort to create a dialogue regarding children strengths and goal areas. Parents are informed about Child Find screening with permission slips at the time of enrollment as well as notification before and after, including results.
- The kitchen is made aware of allergy needs, cultural and ethnic preferences, and dietary needs and provides a diverse and dynamic menu that meets all of these needs. Our menus follow all licensing, USDA and CACFP guidelines for a nutritious, well-balanced meal that are age appropriate for all of our students.
- Student files are well labeled and organized
- All forms are offered in both English and Spanish & staff is bilingual as well
- Comprehensive Teacher Handbook to identify procedures in place
- Multiple preventative screenings
- Supplemental nutrition and healthy lifestyle curriculum utilized in all classrooms on a daily basis

### Areas for Improvement

- Some student files were incomplete (missing signatures, some forms not completed totally, etc.)
- Recruiting and hiring for the position for the licensed mental health consultant nutritionist
- Put action & asthma files in medication logs (as well as food allergy / seizure action plans) Medication plans should be located in medication box.
- Action Plan for indoor recess (gym toys as well as prepared activities)
- BMI – use percentiles instead of exact values (provides more information)

## **Booklet 9: Child Development and Health Services: Tracking and Follow Up**

Parents inform the program of a child's particular health needs and dietary considerations, as well as provide written documentation of any administration of medication needs. Files also ensure all health or developmental concerns are addressed and any action steps necessary are taken. These forms are standardized and allow for

simple monitoring in order to support families to make sure all student needs are met. The Family Service coordinator meets with the Director on a bi-weekly basis to coordinate and integrate services to children and families

### Strengths

- The tracking system for health and developmental services for children ensures that they all children receive all necessary services.
- Family Service Worker is extremely strong and knowledgeable about families and their needs / situations.
- All students are assessed by the ASQ and ASQ-SE by both parents and teachers. Results are discussed between family members and staff to formulate goals.
- Clear procedures for administration of medication (all teachers have Administration of Medication training/certificate)
- Accesses community resources to connect children and families with services needed and follow-up. Evidence of tracking system working effectively

### Areas for Improvement

- More consistent follow up with families in order to make sure children's needs are met and action is taken to meet these needs.
- Shared service plans – explained to all teachers / FSW / other employees as needed
- Promotes communication between and among managers and staff to plan and coordinate follow-up services in an integrated way

## **Booklet 10: Child Development and Health Services: Individualization**

Individualization of services is a core philosophy of the Latin American Community Center's Early Development and ECAP program, both in relationship to educational best practices and as a core component of the Expeditionary Learning framework that is used within our program. Upon entry into the program the Family Services Coordinator articulates the importance of the parent's role as part of the educational process. Our initial information is obtained from parents through our enrollment interviews and fall home visits, in which parents provide information about their children and set goals for their children and themselves. The instructional program at the LACC ECAP program utilizes Teaching Strategies GOLD, allowing for ongoing assessment and a deep understanding of where students are and what supports they need to meet developmental goals.

### Strengths

- Many teacher observations were reviewed – observations occur frequently
- Teacher individualized by planning development and learning reports for each child in November



- Classroom lesson plans showed evidence of individualization and unique strategies were illustrated (i.e. "Adriam's Story" a social story created just for Adriam to help him learn routines and procedures of the classroom)

#### Areas for Improvement:

- Monitoring –there is evidence of a monitoring system or tool – there is no evidence of these systems in use.
- No documentation of monitoring child development – individualization / planning / assessing / re-planning
- Greater engagement of families in this process and seeing it as an ongoing process—there role is critical to our ability to providing ongoing support—all information is important.

### **Booklet 11: Child Development and Health Services: Disabilities Services**

All parents are asked to complete the Ages and Stages questionnaire as a starting point for screening children within the program. This engages parents as partners in the process of understanding their child's needs and the program supporting any needs identified by the parent. Identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs are monitored through our RTI program that is teamed by Teachers, Instructional Coaches, the Director, the Family Services Coordinator, our RTI Coach (external through DOE) and outside behavior and learning support consultants. This team works to not only to support students with specific needs but also seeks additional services for students and families and keeps updated records of any screenings, testing, IEPs, etc.

#### Strengths

- Staff show an "unwavering commitment to children and families in the community".
- Staff are willing to implement any suggestions made/strategies to help children.
- Staff are diligent advocates for the children in your program
- Staff understand and have knowledge of problems/issues that affect your families/children.
- Attention and consideration of the needs of children with suspected and/or diagnosed disabilities
- Communication with families regarding concerns, follow up, etc.
- Collaboration with professionals to meet evaluation and/or treatment needs (i.e. Child Find, ECHMC, etc.)

#### Areas for Improvement

- Establish procedures for follow up
- Offer workshops/education on Trauma/violence and how it affects children
- Increased organizational procedures for referral process and follow up

- Parent and/or staff training on topics relevant to the special education process and to children with complex needs.

## **Booklet 12: Child Development and Health Services: Curriculum and Assessment**

The LACC Early Development and ECAP program uses the Expeditionary Learning instructional framework and Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) curriculum and assessment system. The curriculum and assessment system are aligned to the Head Start performance standards and aligned to best practices in child development and learning practices.

The use of ongoing observational assessment and rubrics to define high quality student work allows for transparency with parents and students about their growth and development. As previously discussed, goals are set with parents for their child and teachers also set goals for students based on assessment and screening data. Parents and teachers meet formally three times a year to ensure consistent communication of goals, expectations, concerns, etc. throughout the entirety of the school year.

The majority of students in LACC's Early Development and ECAP program's home language is Spanish. The program utilizes a dual-language model of instruction in which students, regardless of their home language receive instruction in both English and Spanish. Students in the program are both able to enhance their home language, as well as learn a second language. Assessment is also done in both languages, ensuring that teachers are able to identify student needs regardless of language, with the goal that students will leave the program with developing bilingual and bi-literacy skills.

### Strengths

- Behavioral supports / strategies used in classrooms
- Dual language program supports for children in the classroom as well as families
- Transitions – smooth free choice to circle time and other activities
- Classroom management & systems
- Children's needs are put first

### Areas for Improvement:

- Teacher engagement with materials – intentional teaching ex . math skills
- Materials – need to meet DE Stars standards/requirements
- Extending teaching beyond the planned activity
- Increase involvement of parents in curriculum decisions and classroom expeditions.

## **Booklet 13: Family and Community Partnerships: Family Partnership Building**

The LACC Early Development and ECAP program work collaboratively with families to work towards meeting the goals set forth in their family partnership plan and program commitment.

The program's family services coordinator meets with families monthly to set goals, identify needs, and engage them in creating individual plans for their families and their child. The family services coordinator maintains records for each child (family) in order to track progress towards goals, referrals to appropriate resources in the community, and follow-up regarding familial needs and referrals. The child file and ETO data system contain all necessary information to track the health and wellness of the child as well.

As a comprehensive full-service organization, the family services coordinator is able to make in-house referrals and provide families with services in the following areas:

- Breastfeeding education
- ESL and Adult Basic Education
- Substance Abuse Prevention
- Victims of Crime
- Youth Programs

The family services coordinator also has strong relationships with other agencies within the community to help to support families in meeting their goals for their child and their family.

### Strengths

- Many resources available for families within the organization
- FSW relationships with families is very strong – i.e. an enrolled parent wanted to quit her GED classes, the FSW was able to keep encouraging her to continue; mom now has her GED

### Areas for Improvement

- Leadership needs to familiarize themselves with FPA's Seven Component Areas
- FSW needs to have a much more intimate connection with teachers/leadership in understanding the academic framework and expectations for kindergarten readiness within our program in order to support parents and provide them strategies in line with their readiness goals for their children.

## **Booklet 14: Family and Community Partnerships: Parent Involvement**

The LACC Early Development and ECAP believe that families enter into a partnership with teachers and other staff from the EDC where each understands they play a crucial

role in the child's development and educational life. All parties must work together to ensure that each child grows and learns at a rate that is suitable for their development. The EDC agrees with all current research which shows that children tend to perform better if parents are involved in their educational life.

We encourage and support all parents to become involved in their child's education by encouraging parents to:

- Visit their child's classroom or help the classroom staff prepare activities
- Help plan or participate in center celebrations and field trips
- Attend parent meeting/workshops and Policy Council.
- Participate in planned educational activities with your child at home. Complete the monthly Home Literacy Activity Sheets which list activities to do.

#### Strengths

- Workshops and training planned for parents through the year (providing translators when needed)
- Families and Teachers continuously collaborate to support student learning through our 3 Student's grow conferences.
- Parent/teacher relationship and communication. Teachers communicate frequently with parents about curriculum plans, expectations, and how parents can help.
- Conducts annual survey for families to share information and concerns about student needs, reactions to our programs, and satisfaction with their involvement in our Center.
- Parent participation in Policy Council meetings. The program reduces barriers to parent participation by providing childcare.
- Program use goal-oriented home visits to establish relationships with families and to identify and support their interests and needs..

#### Areas for Improvement

- Encourage and invite fathers to be actively involved in their child's education in our Program. Establish specific goals and give ideas for how to participate.
- Training or technical assistance on the value and utility of father involvement and the important role that fathers play in child development.
- Parents' participation on decision-making (for example when hiring new teachers).
- Monitoring reports.

### **Booklet 15: Family and Community Partnerships: Community and Child Care**

#### Strengths

- The LACC ECAP program has interagency agreements with the following local Head Start programs. These agreements are renewed on a yearly basis.
  - Wilmington Head Start
  - New Castle County Head Start
  - Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center
  - Christina Cultural Arts ECAP
- The leadership has various collaborative relationships with other local childcare programs, in which resources are shared. These relationships help with transitions, staffing support, and increased capacity/knowledge.
- The program also has an interagency agreement with Red Clay Consolidated School District (RCCSD). The LACC resides within this school district and the majority of the programs students attend schools within this district upon entry into the K-12 system. In addition, our program receives support from Red Clay Child Find. We work closely with local elementary schools (both within Red Clay and other local districts) to support transitions for students out of our program.
- While the LACC is a comprehensive service provider, the ECAP program recognizes the importance of other partnership within the community particularly related to health and nutrition.

#### Areas for Improvement

- Utilize a nutrition consultant
- Obtain Mental Health consultant for
  - Mental health screenings & interpreting results
  - Provide written observations and strengths-based feedback to classrooms on an annual basis.
  - Meet with classroom teams to review classroom observations and develop and implement plans as needed.
- Create a stronger support plan for parents as students' transition to elementary school.

### **Booklet 16: Program Design: Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance**

The LACC partners with Wilmington Head Start to complete a community assessment. While this information is used for long term planning, it is imperative that the program uses this program more strategically to recruit families into our program. With the increased number of PreK programs in the surrounding neighborhood, specifically a Wilmington Head Start site and Hilltop Neighborhood Center one block from our location, strategic recruitment and selection will be necessary going forward. During the

2015-2016 program year it has been a challenge to fill all classroom slots in the program at all times.

The community served by the LACC is predominantly made up of families living below the poverty line. Upon a vacancy in the program, the child's seat is filled as quickly as possible. Recognizing the importance of filling this seat, it is the Family Services Coordinator's first priority to follow-up with prospective families and do targeted community recruitment if necessary.

LACC monitors attendance daily, weekly, monthly to ensure that students participating in the program are attending regularly, and the program is meeting the 85% attendance requirement. This is part parent communication, and part education, informing the parents of the importance of attendance to their child's growth and development. When a child is unable to meet the requirements, the Family Services Coordinator intervenes to determine needs of the family and whether the family is able to meet the program's requirements.

#### Strengths

- Exceptionally organized/comprehensive student files
- Availability of Family Services

#### Areas for Improvement

- Identify a Waiting List (program does not currently have one)
- Ranking form needs to be overhauled.
- Review community assessment during summer in order to plan for upcoming program year.
- Create a more comprehensive recruitment plan to ensure that both seats are filled and students from the community are on a waiting list for services once our seats are full.
- Centralized and easy access to Monitoring Reports

### **Booklet 17: Program Design: Facilities, Materials, Equipment and Transportation**

The LACC has an in-house facilities staff who supports the process of ensuring that the ECAP program's physical environment is in good repair. In circumstances that the facilities staff is unable to repair something, external contractors are used to ensure that the process is done to the highest standard. All necessary inspections occur on a regular basis, based on requirements set forth by Federal guidelines. All licenses and certificate of inspections are posted in the appropriate areas. Fire Drill logs are kept by the director and on the agency's shared drive.

Materials and equipment are ordered as needed and in alignment to standards set forth by licensing and Delaware Stars. Items are requested by teachers and the Director is informed through email. The Director completes a purchase request, which is submitted to the finance department for approval. The item is then ordered.

All policies and procedures are incorporated into both the employee handbook and the parent handbook. This is so that all members of the community are aware of what is expected in terms of the following areas:

- Administration of Medication
- Short-term exclusion for health reasons
- Emergency Procedures
- Child abuse/neglect reporting procedures

Our program does not currently provide transportation services. Parents/Guardians pick up and drop off children each day. Transportation services are only used for field trips.

#### Strengths

- Sanitary conditions are excellent
- Safety is observed at every turn
- In-house facilities staff who ensures that the ECAP program's physical environment is in good repair and is clean

#### Areas for Improvement:

- Insufficient bathrooms for the amount of children
- Review employee handbook and parent handbook, ensure that this is an integral part of onboarding process and ongoing professional development for staff.
- Evaluate purchasing process for agency and determine best way to obtain materials in a timely manner.

### **Booklet 18: Using Child Outcomes in Program Self-Assessment**

The LACC ECAP program uses Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) to monitor child-outcomes for all students. The program has created expectations for teachers regarding data collection and use of data in planning, reflection, goal setting and individualization.

All staff have been trained in the Teaching Strategies GOLD system and attend regular webinars to enhance their observational data skills and data analysis skills. Each staff has an individualized professional development plan and participates in ongoing professional development throughout the school year.

#### Strengths

- Has SRG's and has plan of action

- Child assessment documentation is frequent/consistent (evidence of observations entered weekly from August through January)
- Individual child reports / learning and development generated from classroom observations

Areas for Improvement

- No evidence of review of outcomes for program planning
- No system for reviewing data and identifying trends - more comprehensive analysis of data (turning the qualitative into quantitative, etc.)