



# Self-Assessment Report 2016-2017

## I. Introduction

### A. Briefly describe your program (745 characters)

Bennington County Head Start is recognized as a 5-STARS program for high quality early childhood education by the Vermont Agency of Human Services, and in addition to federal regulations the program also follows Vermont State Licensing Standards through the Child Development Division . Bennington County Head Start gives preschool children and their families the right building blocks for learning, parenting, and life. Head Start provides early education classes promoting school readiness and family opportunities to strengthen families to Bennington County residents with sites in North Bennington, Pownal and Manchester.

Children between the ages of 3 and 5 can enroll if their families meet federal income guidelines. All Head Start pre-school services between 8:30 am – 12 pm are FREE for eligible families; however, the early morning and afternoon/full day (7:30-8:30 am and 12 pm – 4:30 pm) is considered child care and there is a fee (state subsidy accepted or parents self-pay). This year, Dose and Duration funding allowed 32 children to receive Full Day Head Start programming 8:30-3:00. Bennington County Head Start is recognized and accredited for quality programs. To deliver the care and enrichment pre-school children need, we carefully plan and evaluate our programs.

**This is a brand new EHS/CCP program that brings together the best of Early Head Start and child care through layering of funding to provide comprehensive and continuous services to low-income infants, toddlers, and their families. EHS-CCP enhances developmental services and supports for low-income infants and toddlers, and their families, by providing strong relationship-based experiences and preparing them for the transition into Head Start and preschool. There will be 2 partner sites, and 4 expansion classrooms.**

### B. Provide a context for your Self-Assessment process ( 870 characters)

Families are surveyed for input.

Staff was surveyed for input at the half day in-service SWOT at the end of the school year in June.

Managers sent out survey monkeys to community members to collect data.

Other Division Directors at UCS were involved for collection and analyzing data: Human Resources, Fiscal/ Finance, Facilities and Health & Safety

Policy Council and the UCH Board were interviewed for input by the Head Start Director.

Each manager complete a self–assessment packet in their area and it is then combined and discussed at follow up meeting.

## II. Methodology

A. Describe the design of your Self-Assessment and identify the members (1,500 characters)

Members:

**Betsy Rathbun-Gunn—Director**

**Rebecca Bishop— Operations Manager**

**Lynne Teker- Education and Disabilities Manager**

**Beth Wallace— Family and Community Partnership Manager**

**Grace Winslow— Health Manager**

**Lisa Biddle— Administrative Coordinator/ Transportation Supervisor**

**Kim Lawlor-Batty— Early Head Start Manager**

**Jenn Galusha— Manchester**

C. List the data collection tools used (730 characters)

- School Readiness Goals
- PIR Data
- Disabilities Data
- Parent observations
- Health Outcomes
- IPDPs
- Child Outcomes
- DECA
- Community Partner Survey
- UCS Employees
- Kindergarten Readiness Survey Data
- Community Assessment
- T&TA Plan
- RBA Report
- Family outcomes
- UCS Employee Survey
- Health and Safety Data
- Human Resources
- Strengthening families surveys
- Staff Meeting Minutes
- CAM meeting minutes
- ASQ-#
- State Licensing
- Let's Grow Kids Data
- VELs and HSELOF Data
- State Licensing regulations
- UCS Facilities and Business

D. List any additional information used during Self-Assessment ( 965 characters)

### III. Key Insights

### STRENGTHS

A. Describe the strengths of the program (965 characters)

- Data tracking
- Family service worker follow ups
- Dental coordination. 3DDs's who will see 0-3 year olds, TT funding
- Several active and reliable HAC members
- Newly renovated kitchens
- Cooking Club involvement
- Having Health and wellness professional development opportunities available
- All staff have completed the med administration course
- Partnership with supervision union around Disabilities and Educational support team.
- Dedication and compassion of the staff.
- Partnership with community organizations that provide educational opportunities to our children. Rec center, Hiland Hall, VAE, libraries and animal shelter.
- Provide support for education staff's professional development– staff working on CDA, Apprenticeship Program, Peer Review for Licensure.
- The Operations Manager, Education and Disabilities Manager and Family and Community Partner Manager are recertified in CLASS.
- 1:12 ratio allows for more individualized attention and the availability to be in the classroom more often.
- The ability to work directly with the teachers and administration at MEMS
- Easily accessible to my parents and those considered part of the public pre-k.
- Strong relationship building with my families.
- Stability and staffing in the program
- Teachers complete education requirements on time and are involved in School Readiness and Outcomes information and planning, as are Policy Council parents
- Positive growth in all domains of learning, great areas of growth in Mathematics and Language
- Teachers ability to participate in professional development opportunities this year, including VAEYC and BCCCA Conferences, and Castleton Institute over the summer
- Assistants progressing toward CDA and two completed Fundamentals course
- Smooth transition to all day services for 32 DD slots + FCC partner

### III. Key Insights

### STRENGTHS

A. Describe the strengths of the program (965 characters)

- **We are fully enrolled with a waiting list. We will be starting with a full week of EHS only pre-service training to introduce this new program to all new staff.**
- Per policy council– loved receiving pictures of their children from FSW
- The program supports children’s social and emotional development with intentional practices.
- If staff are concerned about a child’s social emotional development they; discuss concerns with parents, connect families to resources that can support them and help parents develop strategies for addressing the issue at home.
- Parents have the opportunity to volunteer, participate and contribute to the program.
- Policy council
- BCHS is consistently fully enrolled, with a substantial waitlist. Now with 48 Early Head Start slots, the program continues to keep a lengthy waitlist.
- BCHS offers a multitude of opportunities for families to build strong social connections, as well as bond with their children while learning about child development. Offerings this past year have included Art with Nature, Lego Night, Playdough Night, Spring Bash, Health Bash, Paint with Me, Cooking Club, Literacy Fair, USDA Homeownership, Financial Fitness, soccer, and more. Recruitment activities have evolved to include multiple community events such as the BCCCA Family Fair, Youth Appreciation Day and Fun in the Sun. This year, family service staff were also available on site at the local Walmart during high-traffic times to help capture eligible families.
- BCHS continues a successful partnership with local psychologist, Dr. Bob Hemmer, and this year extended his services by an extra day, allowing for more children to receive support.
- Per policy council Better communication between parents and teachers in regards to classroom activities and program events was suggested as an area to continue to improve.
- Per policy council Receiving the menu monthly is very important to parents.
- Per policy council The Cooking Club and explorer’s club were both highlighted as great events to keep.

**CHALLENGES**

- Communication and follow up regarding health requests in classrooms (hand hygiene, work orders, family style meals and meal management in classroom)
- We have not had new funding for footwear this program year, but continue to use the shoes, boots and slippers that were supplied over the past 2 years. Is this really a challenge? From NB Centers perspective, there is an Overabundance
- Finding qualified and licensed teachers
- Writing new policies that reflect new performance standards and licensing regulations.
- Paperwork requirements from supervisory union around pre-k partnership
- Developing and implementing practice-based coaching
- The parents at one our partner programs feel like they are on an island when it comes to acquiring services (will work on this, but basically its location based). Families keep to themselves here and are less inclined to participate in events.
- Income levels are too high. Basically I see a lot of families struggling and I know could use the services I provide but because their personal income is too high they do not qualify for Head Start services directly but they can utilize me for my knowledge.
- Workload levels and time management continue to be a conversation in supervisions and in employee surveys
- Finding and hiring a CDL driver to provide second bus run in new bus
- For FSWs, in Pownal it was tough this year with the FSW having a dual roles, but the FSWs need to have time in their schedules in order to effectively work with the various parent situations they deal with.
- **We are working on our systems for EHS now and how they will be the same and/or different.**
- **Opportunities for parents to participate in different activities, also having the participation when offered.**
- **Father involvement**
- Staff are not always knowledgeable about the parenting practices of different cultural or ethnic groups.
- The program provides parents with information on the role of all staff members and which staff members can help them with particular issues.

## CHALLENGES

- Lack of accessible, public transportation in our community contributes to attendance challenges. BCHS hopes to alleviate this barrier with the addition of a second bus route in Fall 2018. Parents are provided with both verbal and written encouragement to maintain high attendance, and resources for reliable transportation when available. Parent engagement can also be a challenge for this reason. Family Service staff offer transportation to all Head Start events, however having multiple out-of-town centers can negatively impact parent attendance.
- Turnover and expansion of programming have shed light on the need for a more comprehensive, long-term orientation and training program for new staff and promoted staff.

C. Discuss the **progress** of the program in **meeting its goals and objectives** ( 1,085 characters)

- Fire? See notes in 2015-2020 Self-Assessment
- Nutrition consultant did required civil rights CACFP training August 2017. Parents have participated in cooking club programs in North Bennington, Pownal, and Bennington.
- Two med administration courses have been offered and 100% of new classroom staff who were not previously trained have completed it.
- Parent Cooking Club was implemented and a success
- Assigned assistant teachers complete weekly curriculum for the afternoon time.
- Focus on social emotional domain– year long CSEFEL pyramid training, mental health consult meets with classroom teachers and parents, offered family workshops
- Implement ASQ-3 as a developmental screening tool– devised system with Early Ed to review children’s scores, flag and prioritize steps for observation and evaluation
- Professional development– teacher received AA in ECE, 2 teachers enrolled in Apprenticeship program, 3 teachers in the process of getting CDA
- Head Start Attendance Policy was revised to incorporate Pre-K Attendance Policy. The Education/Disabilities Manager handles attendance for Pre-K and collaborates with the Family and Community Partnership Manager for Head Start attendance meetings.
- The attendance call-in line was established using the phone in the kitchen. The Health Assistant and the Receptionist are responsible for taking off the messages and calling parents when children are not at school. Notes are given to the families to sign and complete the reason for absence for Pre-K.
- Experiences Assistant teachers are paired with new Assistant teachers to provide training and mentoring.
- Classrooms are currently incorporating VELs on classroom newsletters each month.
- Connections with the community and families I will be working with, I now have families I worked with this past school year telling their friends to request me.
- Built connections with the new Rec park director, re-established familiarity with Maple Street School (provided Thanksgiving food baskets and a class sponsored one of my families and provided them with numerous gifts for the holiday).
- **The program is in its roll out process and we have not yet started working with children. We are on target with some of the goals in our time line of roll out for the program to begin.**

C. Discuss the **progress** of the program in **meeting its goals and objectives** ( 1,085 characters)

- All staff have received more training on mental health topics, including Mental Health First Aid, CSEFEL and Understanding a Functional Behavioral Assessment. Deadlines for mental health observations will be listed as part of the contract with Dr. Bob Hemmer beginning in the 2017-2018 school year.
- Family Service Staff now follow an attendance protocol in which they visit the child's home if no contact has been made with parents/guardians after two consecutive absences. BCHS now has an established absence hotline for families to call in the event that their child is sick.
- Head Start and Early Head Start are consistently fully enrolled.
- Parents' attendance and participation in kindergarten transition meetings is positive.
- BCHS enjoys a positive, collaborative partnership with the Department of Children and Families Economic Services Office, Family Services Office and the local Child Care Subsidy office.
- Obtaining a second school bus

## IV. Recommendations

### A. Recommend areas for program improvement (735 characters)

- Emergency/Disaster Plan Development and shelter in place supplies.-Bill has info regarding shorter drill- "Alice"
- EHS Health needs– equipment, playgrounds and training
- Develop system for distribution of family bags- Policy Council also asked why these were not distributed this year and wanted to ensure they are used next year and more educational activities to complete with their children from their FSW
- Continue to recruit licensed teachers
- I suggest we look at partnering with a local childcare and possibly incorporating early head start up in the Northshire because I feel we will be able to reach the most children. Once they enter the public school many parents feel there is no need for the Head Start wrap-around services but many childcare facilities would love to have access to this and the support an FSW could provide their families.
- Greater understanding and use of HS Performance Standards and Licensing Regs for direct service staff (both were new 9/2016)
- Begin cycle of Practice Based Coaching, re-evaluate and make changes as recommended
- Phone list, only 1 of 4 parents at policy council received– prioritize to send earlier and to all who joined.
- Incorporate pets into some type of event where parents can get some education at the same time as having their own personal pet concerns answered.
- Robotics night for men, or something with computers.
- Utilizing parents expertise and have workshops with the parents leading; for example, a builder can do bird houses or a mechanic showing how to do an oil change or even a CPR class.
- **The entire program is new, so all areas will be looked at continuously for areas of improvement.**
- Have activities designed to relieve stress for parents and promote healthy adult relationships. (VT Family Matters)

## **IV. Recommendations**

### A. Recommend areas for program improvement (735 characters)

- Continue to evaluate barriers to both child and parent attendance, and brainstorm strategies to implement in order to increase both.
- Establish a robust orientation program for new Head Start staff.
- Offer more social-emotional related games and activities for families.
- Connect parents to other parents who can share/model positive parenting approaches
- Look at having staff list with job description available to give parents when needed.