



Head Start/Early Head Start Program Director's Report February 2016

General Information

- Working with the Syracuse City School District to check feasibility of a new partnership for approximately 120 Head Start children creating more full day slots for children in Syracuse.

Early Childhood Development

Education

- Classroom observations, goal setting and follow up/feedback at five sites.
- Meeting to update School Readiness Work Plan using the new Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

Health

- New York State Immunization survey requirement due by 3/5/16. The requirement was completed. Each site must report the immunization status of all enrolled children.
- Expansion of dental program for James St and Liverpool has started. Floor plan for these sites have been provided to the Health Center. The next step is state approval of the proposed spaces.

Mental Health

- Attended a Mental Health and Disability cluster meeting in Watertown. There was staff from Madison County and Oswego County, as well as Watertown. Two of the T&TA advisors were also there. It seems they would like to call these meetings "learning communities" rather than cluster meetings so they can address specific concerns and then they can attend. We were surprised by the lack of staff Mental Health providers, but these programs only have a few hundred children. There also seems to be a lack of MH professionals in the advising roles of T&TA across the nation. Our Mental Health and Disability coordinators once again seem to be in advisory roles, as it was with clusters in the past. We were left questioning the use of our time. Some suggestions were ones we had given a few years ago to members of this group.
- Attended a meeting at Elmcrest regarding a potential collaboration, along with other representatives from our functional area. It seems they are interested in collaborating with the children aged 3-5 in their integrated program that works with children who have atypical needs. They offer many services themselves, but it seems that is more for the families of the atypical children. We can add health and nutrition, as well as more parent involvement. It also sounds like they may not offer much MH, or child development information to parents of typical children. They also would like to attract more low income families.
- Assistant MHC created and provided a parent workshop for Liverpool HS based on the children's movie "Inside Out". Engaged parents in a discussion surrounding the difficulty children have with processing feelings/emotions as well as changes within their lives. Provided parents with insight into a child's mindset and ways, as parents, we can be helpful during difficult times and upset. Provided parents with tools and strategies that are currently being used in the classrooms that can also be utilized within the home to promote consistency.
- Attended Children's MH meeting where Evelyn Effinger, a representative from NYS Zero to Three, joined us to talk about recent collaborations 0-3 has been involved with to unify voices for young children. They are working with Winning Beginnings NY; the NYS AEYC, Early Care & Learning Council, Skyler Center for Advocacy. MHC had asked about whether they have a collaboration with Touchpoints and she said they do at the national level, but wasn't sure about the state level. She also spoke about a certificate program for infant MH that was started in Michigan. This Infant MH endorsement system has been adopted by 20 states, is cross

disciplinary, and has 4 levels of training. There is no set curriculum, but does have competencies. They only work with 3 states at a time and NYS is one they are currently working with.

- Attended a workshop on Grief/Loss and Evidence Based Trauma Treatments. Presenter discussed the brain science surrounding trauma and the affects it has on the developing brain as well as tools/therapies that are helpful in reversing the damaging effects of trauma.
- Acquired CRM (Community Resiliency Model) books to loan out to staff that have been trained in these trauma resilience model skills.
- MHC was invited to meet with the regional Touchpoints trainers and asked to join their team.
- 6 alerts to MH and 1 RIC this month

Disabilities

- The Disabilities Coordinator attended a Disabilities/Mental Health Cluster meeting on February 24th in Watertown. It was great to network with other programs in the area, especially with those who have had recent reviews.
- Attended the Preschool Coalition of Young Children with Special Needs community wide event up at Syracuse University on February 26th. ERSEA Coordinator also attended to assist in networking and reaching out to other community members. It was great to have two of us present so that one could man the PEACE table and the other could network with the other community members.
- Attended the monthly socialization/meeting for Children's Consortium. As always, it is a pleasure to work with Children's Consortium and participate in their socializations. It is beneficial to see the progress of children after seeing them on home visits. Children often behave differently in the home than they do at socializations.
- Continue to do home visits with the home base visitors. It is always great to connect with parents in their homes and to see the children in their natural environment. Many parents are interested in the Early Intervention/Committee on Preschool Special Education process and talking about it in their homes is a nice relaxing way to discuss matters that at times can be difficult for families.
- The Disabilities Coordinator has spent a lot of time contacting various providers to assist in the shortage of special education teachers/therapists in the county. The Syracuse City Committee on Preschool Special Education has asked for any help they can get in helping find therapists for children. Often if a therapist is already in one of our Head Start classrooms, they can pick up another child, even if their caseloads are full, because they do not have to include travel in their day.
- We currently have 126 children in HS as a preschooler with a disability and 50 who are in the referral process and 12 children in EHS who have a designated disability and 3 children who were referred to early intervention
- We are low in numbers for children with disabilities in EHS, Disabilities Coordinator has drafted a narrative for a waiver and sent to the director for her to discuss with the regional office.

Nutrition

- Nutrition Coordinator collaborated with staff and student intern, Emily Kratz to develop and present the following topics at sites:
 - Family workers on parent engagement and nutrition activities at sites to present:
 - Eating on a Budget
 - How to be a Healthy Role Model
 - Building a Healthy Meal with My Plate Model
 - Feeding "Picky Eaters"
 - Preparing Healthy Snack Recipes (Bean Dip)
 - Teachers on nutrition education and activities for children in the classroom:
 - Growing Beets and Making Beet Smoothies with "Try Me" activities
 - Growing/Painting Brussels Sprouts and Making Brussels Sprouts Slaw
 - Home Based Visitors on nutrition education and activities for socializations:
 - Nutrition and Oral Health
 - Making veggie pizza with children and parents
- Coordinators to facilitate a case conference for educating staff on best practices in feeding a child with a special and specific medical condition.
- Researched and reviewed emergency readiness strategies for food service.

- Assisted with food and preparation for Sumner's Family Dance Night in the gym.
- Nutrition Program Specialist attended Home Base socialization on 2/9. Assisted families with making their own vegetable pizzas. Our Syracuse University Dietetic Intern provided information to parents regarding dental health and choosing healthy snacks and drinks for young children.
- In collaboration with site nurse, production kitchen, and child's parent, a modified menu was created for a child who recently experienced an injury to his front teeth.

Program Operations

- There was a joint Family & Community/Child Development meeting with Site Supervisors on 2/24/16. F&C Manager attended to discuss the process of RICs done at the site and to clarify who to e-mail them to when complete. The decision is after RIC is complete, copy goes in RIC book at site and it gets e-mailed to the Managers and Director of the exec team. This will help ensure all parties are aware and any further assistance needed by support staff will have this information provided by one of the exec team members.
- Several staff members have expressed an interest in the National HS conference in May. At the meeting Associate Director discussed the process for requesting a conference. SS now know they have the responsibility and authority to deny any staff request based on time of service, number of employee requests from same site, attendance, and/or performance concerns. They will also request from the employee a written statement as to why they would like to attend the conference. The request will include the reason for wanting to attend, and how the information learned will carry out in their job duties.
- The Health Coordinator also attended the joint SS meeting to discuss the serious concern around missing children dentals and expired physicals. She talked about the performance standard and why this can cause us to be out of compliance. At the March program operations meeting, the Associate Director will discuss the highlighted pieces to the performance standards that speak about the above concerns. We will also look at what the standards say about Family Engagement. Hopefully this will assist supervisors to help their staff understand the significance of these standards and why we need to strive to meet all of them.
- One of the new regulations by OCFS is that each site has "Stay in place drills" with the staff and children. Each site will conduct a drill in March and then we will come together to discuss what went well along with areas for improvement. Following this meeting there will be a revised policy.
- OCFS Visits
 - Liverpool – 2/2/16 – scheduled visit to follow-up self-report (ambulance called)
 - Merrick – 2/2/16 – unscheduled visit to follow-up self-report (ambulance called)
 - UUMC – 2/23/16 – scheduled health & safety inspection required for renewal
- Non-scheduled Closings - None
- Vacancies
 - Jamesville – supervisor/case worker out on medical leave
 - James Street – Family Worker
 - LaFayette – Teacher Assistant out on maternity leave
 - Liverpool – Family Worker
 - Merrick – 2 EHS Teachers, 1 EHS T on maternity leave, 1 HS Aide on medical leave.
 - St. Brigid's – Teacher
 - Sumner – UPK Teacher, UPK class aide, EHS Teacher on medical leave
- Transportation - Self-transport days
 - James Street – 2/11/16
 - Liverpool – 2/22/16
 - Merrick – 2/22 & 2/23/16
 - Rockwell – 2/8/16
 - Sumner – 2/29/16

- HS Children transported
 - 2/1 – 2/5 320
 - 2/8 – 2/12 320
 - 2/15 – 2/19 winter break
 - 2/22 – 2/26 318
 - 2/29 – 3/4 318

Family and Community Services

- February enrollment was at 100% for both HS and EHS.
- February attendance shows HS at 82.4% and EHS at 83%. Reasons for absences has been illness, contractual agreements for Collaborations, lack of transportation, and non-compliance or parents just not bringing their children as a no show no call.
- The Data team received 59 referrals and 59 applications
- 2/4 Merrick held a Positive Discipline workshop with Partnerships/Male Involvement Coordinator with 15 parents, 2/12 Atonement held Kindergarten Readiness group with 8 parents, 2/26 Cab Horse celebrated Black History with 20 parents in attendance and Urban Anderson was the keynote speaker. On 2/11 they did “Financial Fitness” with a speaker from the credit union with 8 parents.
- File review at St. Brigid’s and LaFayette in the F&C area looks very good. Merrick and Rockwell reviews showed some missing FPA’s and follow up a work plan was done with family workers to address these issues. Sumner has some minor issues that need to be corrected. James St has a work plan for 1 FW to complete expectations.
- New family worker started at St. Brigid’s on 2/22
- Re-enrollment is happening at all sites throughout the program to secure our enrollment with returning students for next program year.
- Parent Engagement Committee met 2/26 they discussed a mission statement, brought surveys back to their site for next meeting, and set some goals.

Trainings and Staff Development

- NCQTL, Zoning to Maximize Learning for coaching teachers at Merrick 102.
- Beginning Teacher Series, Instructional Interactions for teacher at Merrick 204. Follow up pending.
- Merrick UPK and EPK teachers need B-2 NYS Teaching Certification, so a work plan is needed in conjunction with their current certification of Special Education. Assisted teachers in researching with BOCES to find what is needed to receive the B-2 certification.
- Trained new Atonement teacher in DECA and MH component area
- Provided a mini Conscious Discipline training for new MANOS staff. Discussed the foundation of CD and the tools already being utilized in the classroom.
- 2/3 Transition Coordinator met with Collab family workers to discuss transition from EHS to HS and HS to Kindergarten
- 2/12 family worker was trained on FPA’s and FPA follow up
- New family worker received the following training 2/23 for new staff a review of the file, parent interest surveys, emergency contact sheets with Pick up and Release Policy, classroom visits, introduction letter, she rode the bus and is getting to learn what is in the community for services. 2/25 Parent Engagement Outcomes and Framework. 2/26 Attended the parent engagement committee, 2/29 review of policy and procedures, Performance Standards, and Day Care Regulations.