

Head Start CARES: Site Visit Discussion Guides

A. Head Start Grantee Directors

I. Introductions

II. Key Aspects of Study

1. Provide project overview and ask if there are any questions.
 - a. Benefits of participating
 - b. Overview of grantee and center requirements
2. Review information collected during phone screen to confirm accuracy.
3. Discuss process for selecting programs that will participate in the study
4. Describe process once in study.
 - a. Review process for randomly assigning centers to assure that program understands. Ask if they have any questions or concerns.
 - b. Describe data collection components of the study.

III. Characteristics of Centers

1. Children

- a. What is the racial/ethnic composition of children in the selected centers?
 - b. What proportion of children and families speaks a language other than English as their primary language? What proportion speaks a mix of languages?
2. At each center, has there been change related to program operations in the past two years? If so, please describe?
 3. At each center, is a change in program operations anticipated for the next two years? If so, please describe.

IV. Staffing

1. How many teachers are in the selected centers?
 - a. What are their qualifications (e.g., education, training, experience)?

2. For the selected centers, what is the rate of teacher turnover from one year to the next, as well as within year?
3. How are teachers in these centers trained?
 - a. What are plans for teacher training.
 - b. How do these centers handle teacher in-service training?
4. Is there an Education Specialist/Coordinator on staff?
 - a. If so, what are the roles and responsibilities?
5. Is a mental health consultant working with your program?
 - a. If so, what are the roles and responsibilities?

V. Education Program

1. What classroom curricula are used?
 - a. Does it vary by center?
2. Are other curricula in place, such as math or literacy?
 - a. Does it vary by center?
3. How do the centers individualize instruction?
4. What child assessments are used?
5. How do centers collect and maintain child records and classroom attendance?
 - a. Where are records kept? [Ask to see copies of records if they are at the administrative office.]
6. How much discretion do centers have in operating the programs?

VI. Next Steps

1. Describe what is included in the MOU.
2. Inquire with whom evaluation team should meet, in addition to the center staff (e.g., Board of Directors, Policy Council/Committee).
3. Confirm interest in participating and any local process for formalizing their interest.

4. Describe timeline for next steps.

B. Head Start Center Coordinators

I. Introductions

II. Key Aspects of Study

1. Provide project overview and ask if there are any questions.
 - a. Benefits of participating
 - b. Overview of center requirements
2. Review center-specific information collected during the phone screen and grantee visit to confirm accuracy.
3. Describe process once in study.
 - a. Review process for randomly assigning centers to assure that program understands. Ask if they have any questions or concerns.
 - b. Describe data collection components of the study.

III. Characteristics of the Center

Confirm the following information collected from the grantees during the phone screen and site visit:

1. Calendar of operations (e.g., enrollment dates, start and end dates)
2. Whether center operates double sessions
3. Changes related to program operations in the past two years (and nature of any changes)
4. Changes in program operations anticipated for the next two years
5. Discretion center has in operating the program
6. Classroom curricula used
7. Use of other curricula in place, such as math or literacy
8. How instruction is individualized
9. Child assessments used
 - a. When administered and by whom

10. Nature of any special programs or curricula that focus on children's behavior management or social emotional development
 - a. How they are offered (e.g., single workshop, integrated programs)
 - b. If and how teachers were trained
11. How child records and attendance are collected and maintained
 - a. Where records are kept

IV. Staffing

1. Confirm number of staff at this center. What type of staff are on site (teachers, administrative, other)?
2. How does the Education Specialist/Coordinator work with your center?
3. How does the mental health consultant work with your center?
4. Confirm method for training teachers at this center
 - a. What are plans for teacher training?
 - b. How is in-service training treated?

V. *Characteristics of each Classroom*

1. What are the hours of operation?
2. Children
 - a. How many children are in the class?
 - b. What is the age of the children?
 - c. What is the racial/ethnic composition of children?
 - d. What proportion of children and families speaks a language other than English as their primary language? What proportion speaks a mix of languages?
2. How is this class staffed?
 - a. How are aides used?
 - b. How are volunteers used?
3. What are the qualifications of staff (e.g., education, training, experience)?

4. What is the rate of teacher turnover?

VI. Classroom Observations

1. Is a structured approach to social emotional development observable?

2. Is the class well managed?

VII. Next Steps

1. Confirm interest in participating and any process for formalizing their interest.

2. Describe timeline for next steps.