



**2019-2020
SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT
& ACTION PLAN**

DRAFT

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**Department of Family Support Services – Children’s Services Division
2019-2020 Program Self-Assessment**

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Briefly describe your program

The City of Chicago is committed to providing children across the city with access to high-quality early learning through a comprehensive, citywide system of school and community-based programs known as Chicago Early Learning (CEL). The Children Service Division (CSD) at the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) administers funding to all community-based CEL programs. CSD’s efforts to build this strong system of services are guided by the following three priorities:

- Maximize access to high quality early learning programs by matching investments to the needs of local communities and reducing the barriers to entry for children and families;
- Improve the comprehensiveness and quality of early learning across all programs to ensure that children and families’ needs are met; and
- Create a strong system of service providers by increasing support and reducing the administrative burden for community-based providers of early learning.

CEL programs provide quality early learning and care to children and families in center and school-based settings, licensed family childcare homes, and home-visiting programs. CEL programs implement research-based best practices that support children’s optimal development. The City of Chicago’s Department of Family and Support Services administers CEL programs through its Children Services Division, which is responsible for programmatic oversight.

CEL programs are available at over 350 community-based sites and provide quality early learning and care to over 20,000 young children and their families annually. CEL programs are funded through two major funding streams listed below:

- Federal – Head Start (including Early Head Start, Early Head Start Child Care Partnership, Early Head Start Expansion)
- State – Early Childhood Block Grant (including Pre-School for All and Prevention Initiative)

CEL programs are provided through a network of agencies that have one or more of the funding streams listed above. Head Start services are provided through a network of 46 federally designated Head Start agencies. Agencies are expected to meet Chicago Early Learning Standards (CELS) as well standards associated with their funding stream(s). Agencies must follow the most stringent standards for their funding streams.

All center-based classrooms and family child care homes use Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies Gold assessment system. Head Start and Early Head Start home-based use Parents as Teachers or Baby Talk. Prevention Initiative Home-Visiting may use Parents as Teachers, Healthy

Families, or Baby Talk. For parent engagement, Head Start programs may use Parents as Teachers or Baby Talk.

1. Mission & Vision

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

2. Program Options

CEL Programs are provided through several programs options to meet the needs of the diverse children and families of Chicago. These include full and part day, full and part year center-based programs in community and school-based settings, full-day, full-year in licensed family child care homes, and full year home-based/home visiting programs.

3. Funded Enrollment

Head Start: 7,404 children

Early Head Start: 2,162 infants and toddlers

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership: 1,100 infants and toddlers

Early Head Start Expansion: 200

Pre-School for All: 5,935

Prevention Initiative: 4,754

4. Center Locations & Service Areas

See Appendix page 37 for list of federal delegate agencies

B. Purpose of Self-Assessment

The self-assessment is an integral part of benchmarking and assessing DFSS progress in providing high quality services to children and families. DFSS does not provide direct services to children and families, its self-assessment, albeit not exclusively, focuses on how well DFSS and its delegates meet the needs of their local communities, meet Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), best practice standards, and its program goals and objectives. Self-Assessment findings are used to set program priorities for the coming year, as reflected in the Action Plan.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Describe the design of your Self-Assessment process

The DFSS Self-Assessment Committee consists of internal and external stakeholders, including parents, board members, delegate agency leadership, DFSS front line and management staff that provide recommendations regarding committee structure and self-assessment process. The committee conducts the grantee's annual self-assessment, evaluates strengths and challenges of DFSS' operationalization of the Head Start and early learning programs, and provides recommendations for annual program priorities and action plan goals. The self-assessment is a requirement of the Head Start grant, and as part of the Chicago Early Learning network, PFA and PI-only agencies are also required to submit a self-assessment. DFSS provides agencies a Self-Assessment Narrative template and a comprehensive Delegate Agency Survey that have been derived from committee recommendations. This year's Delegate Agency Survey is accessible via Survey Monkey in order to better capture and aggregate data. As part of the DFSS' self-

assessment, each of its delegates conduct agency level self-assessments and submit reports that demonstrate their findings. These findings are folded into the grantee’s self-assessment.

1. Self-Assessment Committee

Committee-members serve for two years, with staggered terms to ensure continuity. New members are seated in December. The committee will continue to consist of internal and external stakeholders, ensuring that for Children Services Division, there is at least one representative from each content area, and that for agency representatives, there is at least one member representing each program model and option.

Responsibilities

- a) Meet quarterly during the year and weekly during DFSS’ self-assessment process
- b) Provide recommendations for agency self-assessment process and templates
- c) Provide recommendations for grantee (DFSS) self-assessment process and tools
- d) Request data, interview, and document queries in preparation for self-assessment process
- e) Review grantee performance data
- f) Identify program trends and make recommendations for priority program areas
- g) Make recommendations for action plan
- h) Review action plan updates and self-assessment report

Members & Titles

| Representative | Name – Title | Specialty |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| CSD Operations Unit-Manager | (empty due to mid self-assessment resignation) | Generalist |
| CSD Operations Unit-Front Line staff | Ana Guzman, SSC Charles Hall, SSC Twjuana Robinson, SSC | PM ED PM |
| CSD Quality Unit-Manager | Tamela White, Supervisor | ED/FCE/PDM |
| CSD Quality Unit-Front Line Staff | Miriam Chonillo, PDC | FCE |
| CSD Administration Unit-Manager | Zoraya Miranda, Supervisor | Fiscal/Contracts |
| CSD Administration Unit-Front line staff | Jennifer Santana, SSC | Data |
| DFSS Finance/Contracts/Grants/IT/Audits | Glenn Lezon, Director of Accounting | Finance |
| DFSS Finance/Contracts/Grants/IT/Audits | Madeline Shea, Chief Planning Analyst | Grants |
| CSD Operations Unit-Manager | Nicole Craft | ED/FCE/PM |
| CSD Operations Unit-Manager | Jacinta Passamentt, Supervisor | ED/FCE/PM |
| CPPC Member | Mary Ottinot | Parent |
| CPPC Member | Yvonne Hall | Parent |
| HS Delegate Agency | Lakisha Moore, Program Director, Centers for New Horizons | HS/EHS/EHS- CCP/PFA/PI |
| HS Delegate Agency | Azucena Gonzalez, Community Based Programs Partner Director, Carole Robertson Center | HS/EHS/EHS- CCP/PFA/PI |

| | | |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Partner | Heidi Skokal, Executive Director Meagan Schmit, Site Director, Teddy Bear 2 | HS/EHS Partner/PFA/PI |
| HS Delegate Agency | Allison Perkins-Caldwell Allison's Infant & Toddler Centers | HS/PFA/PI |
| HS Delegate Agency | Kenji L. Cotton Henry Booth House | HS/EHS/PFA/PI |
| PI Only Agency | Davonna Brown Project Org + Design Studio | PI |
| HS Delegate Agency | Akua Sarhene Chicago Youth Centers | HS/EHS/EHS- CCP/PFA/PI |
| PFA/PI Only Agency | Stacy Olszewski, State of Illinois Child Development Center | PFA/PI |
| CCUO Member | Marsha Hawley, Ounce of Prevention Fund | Early Childhood Education Management |
| CSD Administration | Beth Stover, Assistant Director | Facilitator |
| CSD Administration | Tosha Smith, Supervisor | Facilitator |
| CSD Administration | Berenice Vargas, PDC | Facilitator |
| CSD Administration | Michael Termar, PDC | Facilitator |

2. Document Review Process

Self-Assessment Committee members received a self-assessment binder in the first quarter meeting that included general self-assessment documents, program related goals and objectives, data, and reports specific to each content area to be reviewed at pertinent meetings. Due to COVID-19, we held quarter three and self-assessment process meetings via GoTo Webinar.

During each two-hour webinar session, the Self-Assessment Committee discussed one or more content areas and/or content area sub-parts. Sessions began by reviewing progress, data, and documents (program goals, strategic framework goals, 2019 Action Plan Goals) related to the content areas discussed.

Self-Assessment Timeline

| Meeting | Date | Activities |
|--|------------------------------|---|
| Quarter 1 Sept-Oct-Nov | January 15, 2020 | Seat new committee members Self-Assessment overview training Review Quarter 1 Action Plan progress Make Self-Assessment tool recommendations |
| Quarter 2 Dec-Jan-Feb | March 11 | Review Quarter 2 Action Plan progress Review Self-Assessment tool recommendations Make requests for additional data, documents, interviews |
| Quarter 3 Self-Assessment Meeting 1 | Wed. July 8 10 AM – 12 PM | Topic: Program Overview + ERSEA Review Quarter 3 Action Plan progress |

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Self-Assessment Meeting 2 | Wed. July 15 10 AM – 12 PM | Topic: Disabilities + Safety (COVID-19) |
| Self-Assessment Meeting 3 | Wed. July 22 10 AM – 12 PM | Topic: Education + Human Resources + Program Development |
| Self-Assessment Meeting 4 | Wed. July 29 10 AM – 12 PM | Topic: Family Community Engagement + Health + Program Governance |
| Self-Assessment Meeting 5 | Wed. August 5 2 PM – 4 PM | Topic: Program Management |
| Quarter 4 June-July-Aug | September 23 | Review Quarter 4 Action Plan progress Review New Action Plan |

B. List the data collection tools used

The committee used Program Information Report data, COPA data, community assessment data, Head Start Program Performance Standards, and Chicago Early Learning Standards, Delegate Agency Survey responses, Parent Survey Responses, and CSD Staff Survey responses. Conversations revolved around the content area data, strengths, challenges and possible recommendations. Data and meeting notes were used to complete the grantee’s Self-Assessment Narrative. There were no changes to this year’s Self-Assessment Narrative template; however, the Delegate Agency Survey questions were updated based on committee feedback and the need to explore the impact of COVID-19. *For Delegate Agency Survey results see Appendix page 86.*

C. Data used during the Self-Assessment

The following content area topics and sub-topics were discussed: Education, Disabilities, Health, Mental Health, Nutrition Health, Safety (COVID-19), Fiscal, Transportation, Family Community Engagement, Ongoing Monitoring, ERSEA, Data, Human Resources, and Program Governance. Meetings were structured to cover the following information:

1. Head Start Program Performance Standards
2. DFSS Strategic Framework Goals and Objectives
3. Content Area Data
4. Self-Assessment Report 2018-2019 Key Points
5. Surveys: Agencies, Parents and Staff
6. Enrollment data
7. Attendance data
8. Teaching Strategies GOLD GOAL data
9. Federal monitoring data (CAP & QIP)
10. PIR data (as available—will include up to April PIR monthly summaries to capture services prior to COVID-19 closings)
11. Services during COVID-19 – summary of agency services, DFSS services
12. Unit data—
 - Operations: Number of monitoring visits; corrective action plans; roundtables
 - Quality: Number of trainings; attendance by agencies
 - Admin: Number of contracts; contract execution average; CPPC events/attendance; CSD Update newsletter (percentage opened by agencies); EDPD meetings (attendance of agencies); deliverables achieved (CELS, website redesign, internal

policies & procedures); community assessment; self-assessment; grants management).

III. KEY INSIGHTS

Prior to the first self-assessment committee meeting, DFSS shared the following general documents and data with the self-assessment committee, and discussed the overarching program goals and objectives, strategic framework goals and objectives, and the 2019 Action Plan.

General Documents & Data Shared

2020 Self-Assessment Plan
Delegate Agency Survey
Parent Survey
Staff Survey
2019 PIR
April 2020 PIR
Five-Year Goals & Objectives
Strategic Framework Update
2019 Action Plan with Third Quarter Updates

Enrollment, Recruitment, Selection, Eligibility, Attendance (ERSEA)

Although the grantee made its enrollment goals for 2018-2019, in 2019-2020 it remained under-enrolled leading up to COVID-19 and the suspension of enrollment requirements, especially in Head Start for which it has more slots than the current community of Head Start funded delegate agencies can bear. DFSS used the RFP as an opportunity to allocate as many HS slots as possible to community-based organizations qualified and interested in providing Head Start, which resulted in an allocation of 7,404 HS slots. Since then one delegate agency, Catholic Charities, has decided to no longer provide Head Start, and returned its slots, resulting in further under-enrollment. Despite this under-enrollment, it should be noted that there are more slots in community-based organizations after the RFP award than before.

Discussing enrollment, the committee highlighted the following points that impact enrollment & Attendance:

- Families just over-income and impact of minimum wage
- Transitions when housing opportunities arise (including out-of-state)
- Competition with CPS (which also did not reach UPK4 expectations)
- Transportation—to enroll, to attend, especially during winter hours

Discussing recruitment, the committee made several recommendations to strengthen recruitment & enrollment:

- Strengthen and expand community partnerships and relationships: The grantee and its delegates should strengthen and expand community partnerships and relationships, especially with unemployment, WIC, and other publicly funded offices and agencies, but also with chambers of commerce and neighborhood businesses, to support recruitment.

As a government agency, DFSS may be able to facilitate agreements with other government agencies.

- Strengthen grass roots recruitment efforts: Agencies do a lot of canvassing at bus stops, CTA stops, door to door. They also rely on COFI, a grass roots organization for parents, to conduct door-to-door outreach, but there is no data in regards to COFI's efficacy in recruiting for community-based programs in particular.
- Strengthen recruitment materials by tailoring and educating: There was discussion around strengthening recruitment materials that
 - Highlight how community-based learning centers differ from CPS and what they have to offer.
 - Discuss the importance of early learning and early learning options to target audiences, including ensuring materials are translated
 - Ensure recruitment materials can be tailored for individual agencies
- Strengthen delegate agencies ability to use resources to support transportation

Data & Documents Reviewed

SA PowerPoint 1-July 8, 2020

FY 19 CEL Outreach Report

FY 19 CEL Hotline Stats

CEL Hotline Stats

Targeted Communities Slide

2019 Enrollment & Attendance Report

2020 Enrollment & Attendance Report

Delegate Agency Survey

Parent Survey

Services for Children with Disabilities

Although the grantee has met the 10% requirement citywide for the past few years, there are still individual agencies who have challenges meeting this requirement, in both EHS and HS.

To facilitate services for children, ages 3-5, needing an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), DFSS-CSD has a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the LEA, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to jointly identify and serve children with disabilities in DFSS-HS funded preschool programs. DFSS' procedures for referral to CPS for evaluation have changed over the years. Procedures have been streamlined, and evaluations have been centralized into two citywide assessment team locations in Chicago. The LEA/CPS timeline for conducting evaluations, issuing IEPs, and supporting parents with services, remains an issue—and since COVID-19 evaluations have halted. There are less concerns with obtaining services for children, ages 0-3. Feedback from agencies indicate that the 0-3 Disabilities Support Service Provider has been available and helpful. In these instances, challenges concern working agencies ensure they have a robust system for referral and supporting parents through the process, including providing them with strategies to support parents who may be skeptical about the process.

The committee discussed the importance of ensuring that parents are well supported through the evaluation process as well as during services. Many agencies have fully functioning

Disabilities Coordinators and Family Service teams that support parents through the referral and evaluation process. The division’s goal is to ensure that families are supported with clear communication about benefits of referral and evaluation—a Head Start parent serving on the self-assessment committee stated, “Children with disabilities only make it when parents make it.”

Recommendations were made to ensure that strategies were implemented to ensure incoming agencies learn from legacy agencies to build effective systems to help parents negotiate process; all staff are trained to work with parents of children with delays, disabilities, medical conditions, etc.; all agencies have access to T/TA to help support full inclusion; and monitor agencies not meeting the 10 percent requirement and assign SMEs to review their policies and procedures and make recommendations to improve. DFSS offers a wide variety of training through its SME contracts, including developmental screening, referral process, role of the Disabilities Coordinator, transitions and individualization for children with disabilities

Documents and Data Reviewed

- SA PowerPoint 2—July 15, 2020
- Head Start Enrollment & Disabilities PY 2019-2020
- Early Head Start Enrollment & Disabilities PY 2019-2020
- Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership PY 2019-2020
- Delegate Agency Survey responses
- Parent Survey responses

Culture of Health & Safety

Due to COVID-19 and the grantee Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), the committee engaged in a full discussion of the culture of safety, including progress on the QIP, impact of QIP related activities, and the impact of and services and guidance during COVID-19.

QIP

In November 2019, there was an incident of corporal punishment at an agency that resulted in a Quality Improvement Plan. The grantee spent the winter and into the spring working with Head Start and STGI to create a Quality Improvement Plan and implement policy changes, training, and technical assistance to improve reporting systems, HR policies and procedures, and active supervision and address other underlying factors that can lead to inappropriate responses to challenging child behavior.

Some of the improvements included:

- Revised policies and procedures around immediate reporting and incident reporting, including a revised form to facilitate gathering of information
- Revised standards of conduct for all agencies
- Announced and unannounced visits (January through March) at delegate agency sites prior to COVID-19 shut-down
 - Reviewing staff wellness plans, environmental safety, and safety and hygiene practices.

- Monitoring of Criminal Background Checks (CBC) for new hires and current staff
- Field trip monitoring was set to begin in spring but suspended due to COVID-19.
- Focus on trauma-informed care and reflective practices for staff to understand their own triggers and reactions and better manage personal well-being

The committee recommended that there be continued opportunities for staff to engage in reflective practices to prevent incidents, especially as staff are in communities impacted by trauma that affects both children and staff.

COVID-19

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the grantee has worked to keep its agencies abreast of developments, including changing policies related to not only Head Start specific programs, but child care facilities and services statewide, and provide resources for them to use with and share with families. During the stay-at-home/shut down order, DFSS worked with agencies to distribute donated supplies, including diapers, wipes, and other critical products, especially after civic unrest impacted community businesses. The CSD Update provided agencies with weekly updates on policies, resources, and guidelines for working with families remotely.

Reopening had gotten underway by the time the committee met, with some of the agency sites reopened, with a reduced class-size for 3-5 year olds of 10. All agencies needed to submit a reopening plan to the grantee and the state, that needed to be approved by state licensing, before agencies reopened, and any outbreak of COVID-19 required reporting to the state CDPH, and DFSS. DFSS had provided agencies with sample cleaning logs and guidelines for them to adapt in alignment with their individual reopening plans. DFSS also distributed child-sized cloth washable masks to all agencies.

At the time of the self-assessment @184 sites had reopened, and there had been 3 COVID-19 incidents at open sites. DFSS was in the process of distributing child-sized cloth washable masks to all agencies. Staff was typically nervous about reopening, but children were happy to be back. Home-visiting programs were looking forward to being able to restart socializations, which had not yet been approved. Socializations are still encouraged to occur in a virtual setting.

Since agencies have begun reopening, DFSS has implemented several strategies to support agencies and families that will be highlighted under individual content areas.

Data & Documents Shared

SA PowerPoint 2—July 15, 2020
 Current QIP with status updates
 Record of monitoring visits prior to COVID-19
 Revised Policy & Procedures, Incident Reporting Form, Standards of Conduct Form
 Child Health & Safety Data 2020
 Be Safe—Child Care—City of Chicago Phase 4 Guidelines
 CARES Act COVID 19 Funding
 Delegate Agency Survey
 Parent Survey

Education

In addition to reviewing Education related HSPPS, CELS 2.0, the committee reviewed the Illinois State Board of Education KIDS Report on Kindergarten Readiness before to contextualize its discussion of education services and child outcomes. The committee had a robust discussion of the different objectives of school readiness and kindergarten readiness and of Head Start and school district sponsored pre-K. There is a consensus on the need to improve the school readiness of children matriculating from Chicago Early Learning programs.

Discussion then centered on the early learning education teacher pipeline. A national shortage in the field continues, with systemic shortages in teacher education programs and program enrollees. There was an increase in cost-per-child for Chicago Early Learning agencies to increase teacher compensation. The department's City of Chicago Scholarship Program currently has 254 recipients that will acquire or further their early childhood education credentials.

Committee members acknowledged that early childhood education is a mission-driven field with many dedicated teachers who work for the personal value. At the same time, committee members emphasized the need to support teachers in multiple ways, not just increased compensation. Agencies need strategies on how to encourage current staff to seek further credentials and policies that impact teachers should be written with input from voices from the field. Lastly, education managers and teachers would benefit from training and coaching that moves beyond "basics" and really addresses classroom strategies, methods, etc.

Ensuring teachers are supported is critical as they carry a heavy load—long hours, low wages, credential expectations, data/document burden, burnout, managing their own families/lives, etc. Teachers do not have enough time for planning, assessments, analysis, reports, training, and reflection. Taken together, it often means that staff does not have the chance to excel since they are overwhelmed, and this in turn, results in a diminishing workforce. This impacts everything from the ability to implement the curriculum to fidelity to managing assessments and planning for individual children.

Agencies commented that during COVID-19 there was the ability to take deeper dives with staff into the curriculum, assessments etc., and that they have had the time to discuss process, since teachers weren't in the classroom every day, and this highlighted how little time they have under "normal" circumstances for trainings, follow-up trainings, processing the training, integrating it into their work, and general reflection. It emerged that some staff find the curriculum and assessment training intimidating, and additional protected time would help with processing training. Without the time for these activities, the impact of trainings is not optimal.

Protected time would also support coaching. Coaching was rolled out to education coordinators and site directors, but their schedules are often filled with substituting in classrooms that need an extra teacher due to workforce shortages. So the protected time is needed not only for teachers, but education coordinators and site directors so they can focus on coaching/mentoring teachers and helping to reinforce curriculum and observation/assessment best practices. Coaches need to be implementation experts, but coaches may have too many sites. DFSS provides training and it is the agency that implements. Every site and classroom is unique and thus DFSS does not want to implement a cookie-cutter approach to teaching to

fidelity. Agencies should work through the tool at their own pace, working with individual teachers/classrooms.

Due to the pandemic and stay-at-home orders, agencies were to connect remotely with families—agencies connected through multiple platforms, especially Zoom and YouTube. Remote learning was more effective prior to parents having to return to work, which impacts the connectivity with children who are still enrolled but at home. Ensuring that there is training for engaging families remotely.

Chicago PrE-Learning is a new online education platform for early learners (from birth to age 5) to easily continue their education outside of the classroom and from the comfort of their home. Chicago PrE-Learning provides families with easy access to the resources they need on one platform. This can be a stressful time for many, especially with the added responsibility of parents being their child’s primary educator while schools are closed.

Documents and Data Reviewed

SA PowerPoint 3 –July 22, 2020
KIDS Report – Illinois State Board of Education
Child Outcomes Reports 2016-2019, Fall 2019, Winter 2020
Services During COVID Report 2020
Family Guidance During COVID 041520
Staying Connected with Families
Round Table Discussions RFP Implementations
Delegate Agency Survey
Parent Survey

Family & Community Engagement

Family engagement is ongoing and touches all program aspects; however, family engagement data has been somewhat difficult to capture in COPA. The committee reviewed the Program Information Report (PIR) data, strategic framework data, and program goals and objectives. 2020 Program Goal: Family Service Worker Case Load Reduction—all agencies have completed a plan to reduce family service worker caseloads. Additionally, the committee discussed concerns related to Family Support Workers having multiple roles/responsibilities, which can undermine capacity to work closely with families.

The University of Illinois-Center for Family Literacy is the subject matter expert and offers multiple resources for families (e.g. Adult Education & Career Transition Program Parent & Youth Outreach, Transitions and Family Well Being, Resource Center for Autism & Developmental Delays)—but there is a need to ensure agencies know the breadth of services offered. The use of services is not captured in COPA, and UIC does not track usage by agency.

DFSS adapted Ready Rosie to support parent engagement and agencies continue to implement their chosen parent engagement curriculum.

During COVID-19, DFSS provided all agencies with guidance for working with families remotely, including supports from Teaching Strategies that could be used by staff and by parents. Agencies continued to work with parents remotely, including using their mental health consultants to address anxieties related to COVID-19.

An ongoing challenge for programs in maintaining enrollment and services with families with changing schedules and a lot of life stressors, multiple work schedules, and families that are difficult to engage (scheduling, attendance, engaging in goal setting). However, those families that stay engaged make progress on goals and objectives.

Documents and Data Reviewed

- SA PowerPoint 4 -- July 29, 2020
- PIR Data
- Support Service Contractor/ SME Quarterly Reports
- 2018-2019 program governance data
- Delegate Agency Survey responses
- Parent Survey Response

Health Suite

Health

The committee looked at Program Information Report (PIR) data as well as other health indicators pulled from the COPA database. Indicators were visualized and discussed. The committee reviewed responses from the delegate agency survey including trends and qualitative responses for health strengths, challenges, strategies to address obesity, and status of agency Health Services Advisory Committees (HSAC).

Program strengths included the ability to access community resources for a health care system and expertise on health needs and documentation; partnership agreements and record keeping/reporting for health, including referrals and follow-up; and utilizing daily health checks and providing information and updates during the COVID-19 pandemic. Several agencies expressed interest in better using their HSACs to address health challenges in their community effectively; however, the COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity for HSACs to work hand in hand with agency leadership to address the concerns of staff and families during the return to in-person attendance. Agencies expressed a need for more guidance on how to best use agency-level HSACs. In addition, DFSS has released an RFP for a support service contractor/SME that will help implement and strengthen the restructured grantee-level HSAC.

Mental Health

Committee members reviewed PIR data as well as other mental health indicators from the delegate agency survey. The committee discussed New Head Start funding for trauma-informed care, reduced caseloads for FSW's (Family Service Workers) and the Mental Health SME (Subject Matter Expert) RFP. The committee recommended follow-up action including ensuring families in neighborhoods with high rates of violence have sufficient access to mental health and that

mental health consultations should continue to occur via remote platforms due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ensuring mental health services meet community needs is a top priority.

An ongoing strength are agency-level active mental health consulting contracts in place or mental health experts on staff. Agency staff is familiar with the procedures in referring children for observation and referrals. During the past two years, agencies have increased their budget for mental health consultation. In addition, grantee and agency staff have engaged in additional training as a result of the QIP in being reflective and intentional about their own mental health status and how it might impact their reactions to child behavior. Head Start Quality Improvement Trauma Informed mental health funding and CARES Act funding will provide more opportunities to build strategies to work with children and families in trauma-informed ways.

Despite increase hours for mental health consulting staff, Chicago's young children and families still face many mental health challenges, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is critical that there are increased mental health services in communities where trauma and violence are impacting children and family mental health.

Dental

The committee discussed ongoing cooperative agreements and partnerships with dental providers. The committee reflected the importance of establishing dental homes for exams and treatment. The dental health RFP was briefly discussed. Data was reviewed from the PIR that compared dental home and insurance percentages for HS, EHS, and EHS-CCP. DFSS and its agencies have worked with the support service provider to strengthen access to dental homes for families and ensure that families have insurance within 30 days. Dental follow-up and treatment is an ongoing challenge, especially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nutrition

The committee discussed strategies to address obesity rates and the results of the delegate agency survey nutrition questions. Dominican University nutrition consultants are utilized in programs and have assisted in structuring meals, portion sizes, and developing plans for healthy lifestyles. Nutrition assessments and feedback for families are provided by consultants—including educating parents on healthy meals and action plans for improvement in diet and physical activity. The nutrition RFP was briefly mentioned. Although agencies work with the consultants and families are engaged in learning about healthy eating, there are structural issues that impact families, including community violence that affect outdoors activity/play, and COVID-19-related isolation and restricted access to i.e., parks and playgrounds.

Documents & Data Reviewed

SA PowerPoint 4 – July 29, 2020

April 2020 PIR Indicators

Delegate Agency Survey Responses

Content Area Support Service Contractor/SME Quarterly Reports

Delegate Agency Survey

Parent Survey

Program Governance

The committee looked at grantee-level program governance data and discussed internal systems related to program governance at of the grantee and delegate agency level. CPPC attendance has decreased over the past two years, despite efforts last summer and during the program year to increase attendance, by providing full day training for delegate agency staff and parents and implementing a meeting reminder system. The attendance trends indicate a higher turnout rate during the first 3 months of the calendar year followed by a drop in attendance. After a fall 2019 meeting during which some attendees behaved unprofessionally, the grantee hired program governance consultants to help strengthen systems and transparency. The introduction of program governance consultants, translation services and additional trainings (outside of those required by HSPPS) provided a step to build a more engaged and trained parent body.

During the course of the program year the grantee Policy Council has received additional support in parliamentary procedures, best practices, understanding policy council role, and revising the bylaws. Policy Council members have created a participation committee to address absenteeism. COVID-19 has, in some ways, resulted in increased participation insofar as parents can engage remotely. To further strengthen grantee level program governance, more monitoring information about agency level program governance systems is needed. Committee members, who include delegate agency and CPPC member representation, discussed parent engagement in program governance, including some of the barriers to participation as well as the successes. In addition, the delegate agency survey asked many questions about program governance to get a better understanding of agency practices (beyond compliance issues). Recommendations were made to engage parents early during the enrollment process, working with partner sites, and strengthening the connection between grantee and delegate agency governance activities.

Documents & Data Reviewed

SA PowerPoint 4 – July 29, 2020

Policy Council (CPPC) Attendance Data PY 2018-2019, PY 2019-2020

Delegate Agency Survey

Parent Survey

Program Design Management

Ongoing Monitoring & Continuous Improvement

The CSD Operations Unit members presented an overview of the monitoring system to the self-assessment committee. They discussed the quarterly monitoring activities, which COPA/data monitoring, announced and unannounced monitoring visits, winter and spring staffings, and the annual roundtables. Monitoring takes a consultative approach. This system was implemented approximately 3-4 years ago to align with the Office of Head Start's move toward consultative monitoring and the reorganization at CSD. There are five monitoring teams: each has a portfolio of agencies and sites, and each includes a subject matter expert from each content area. Content areas are integrated during staffings.

The annual roundtable brings the agencies' self-assessments and CSD's annual monitoring together to determine program priorities for the agency in the coming year. Some of these are

determined by the agency and its individual needs, and some are determined by the grantee. Those determined by the grantee may be system-wide and included as priorities for all programs if CSD notices trends in the field and/or in order to meet CSD program-wide goals and objectives, including its five-year goals and objectives as outlined in the Head Start grant application and below.

During the 2020 Roundtables the Operations Unit noticed three trends:

- 1) Agencies need more support in entering data into COPA and using COPA.
- 2) Human Resources—agencies are at various stages in working on staff credentials. They need to strengthen strategies to engage staff in seeking further credentials and supporting staff in that pursuit.
- 3) Continue to work on agency plans for health and safety, related to QIP and COVID-19

There was some discussion about the under-use of support service contractors; however, as the committee dug deeper into this issue, it was determined that the under-use may be more a case of perception than reality. In fact, support service coordinators are often busy, but there aren't consistent quarterly reporting templates, and the grantee needs to strengthen its internal communication around program and T/TA field activities. The Professional Development Training System RFP will help organize and track professional development through Gateways.

Human Resources/Leadership/ Professional Development

The biggest concern under Human Resources is the ongoing staffing shortages at DFSS. Currently there are 32 vacancies in CSD for 91 positions. Vacancies impact the workload and the quality of the work. The Quality Unit has never been fully staffed.

There was a wide range of response to the staff survey, with many people feeling valued by their supervisors and engaged in the work. According to staff surveys, the division's greatest strength is the staff and their institutional and subject area knowledge. The greatest weakness is internal communication.

Communications

Improving the DFSS Communication System has been an ongoing goal. During the past program year, the external communication system has been strengthened. Finalized CELS 2.0 were released and distributed in September. The CSD Update has been retooled and released regularly (every Wednesday). Agencies report through the agency survey that they find it helpful, although just less than 50% of recipients open it regularly. EDPD meetings have occurred regularly (monthly). Website revision has been delayed, but all forms have been updated, and DFSS continues to post information on the website while planning for its redesign.

Internal Communications remains challenging. All Staff are not aware of what is happening at DFSS or agencies. Although all staff has access to CSD Updates, many may not be reading them (just less than 50% open rate). Sharing documents does not equate communication—especially if staff does not have the time to process documents. Prior to COVID-19, the communications staff had completed focus groups with staff to inform launching a SharePoint page to meet staff needs. During COVID 19, staff became very capable with Teams as a means of meeting virtually and communicating internally. CSD internal policies and procedures are scheduled to be

updated this year and approved by CPPC and CCUO by the end of this program year. The Strategic Communications & Recruitment Support Service RFP was released which should help with some of these projects.

Record-Keeping and Reporting/ Data Management

There continue to be three main challenges around recordkeeping and reporting/data-management: 1) staffing; 2) the data system (COPA); and policies ensure data is circulated widely (internal communication).

The Data Team remains understaffed with only two FTEs who are responsible for helping agencies with the data management system and the online application system, including setting up matrices and working through tickets related to applications. The same staff is also responsible for providing monthly PIR indicator updates and working with agencies to complete the annual PIR. They also provide updated enrollment and attendance reports to stakeholders.

An ongoing challenge in data management is the ability of the COPA system to adjust to and report on several funding streams. After consolidation it became clear that COPA was not capturing easily ECBG data. To that end, the department undertook a data-tech assessment to better understand the specs needed for a fully operating system that met all the department needs, including building a data warehouse.

Regardless of how much data is collected, a system is needed to streamline and circulate critical data to allow all staff to better understand what is happening and to better fulfill their job duties and responsibilities. There is an unmet need for sharing monthly data to keep all stakeholders informed, which would also address some of the internal communication issues.

Community & Self-Assessment

2019 five-year quinquennial Community Assessment was released. Currently the community needs assessment websites are being updated and streamlined. The annual Self-Assessment conducted virtually in 2020. Program Administration and Program Operations related a revised action plan template to be used by the agencies and by the grantee.

Grants & Fiscal Management

Grants—Because there are separate applications for HS (43), EHS (34), EHS-CCP (23), and EHS-EXP (5), all grant events, processing and review, are time consuming. This carries over into contracting, in which separate contracts need to be generated for each award, so one agency may have five separate grant applications, and six (if we include the state funding) budgets and contracts.

Fiscal—The Finance Division hired three new staff to work on CSD related grants and this should allow for the revision of some of the finance reports that are shared with the CPPC/CCUO and improve user-friendliness. The grantee is currently underspent due to vacancies that impact salary/fringe expenses and unassigned Head Start slots for which there is no licensed capacity at current Head Start delegate agencies. A strength this year was the single audit—there were no findings for DFSS and one finding for the city.

Program Planning—Program Goals and Objectives

CEL Program Goals and Objectives emerged from the collaborative work DFSS and its delegate agencies conducted during the year prior to the release of the Chicago Early Learning Requests for Proposal (RFP), released in Spring of 2019 and awarded in the fall of 2019 for a contractual start date of December 1, 2019. During these planning meeting, key issues impacting the early childhood community were discussed, including how to best support quality at city-funded early childhood centers across the city. With the long-term goal of improving school readiness, three interrelated program goals and objectives, and their corresponding work streams, emerged from this work:

- 1) Implementing Continuity of Relationship across all CEL infant/toddler programs
- 2) Increasing teacher credential requirements and compensation
- 3) Reducing Family Service Worker (FSW) caseloads and increasing FSW credential requirements

Beginning in the fall of 2019, DFSS and its agencies began pursuing a learning agenda to support each other in planning and implementing policies and procedures to achieve these program changes within the five years of the RFP contract and Head Start grant.

This work had begun prior to the COVID-19 related shut down and delegate agencies continued to work on and finalize their plans to achieve these goals, which were shared and discussed with program monitoring staff at their annual monitoring roundtables.

In further support of this learning agenda (to implement the five-year program goals), DFSS's training and technical assistance plan includes menus of training to support agencies in implementing these plans. During the spring and summer of 2020, DFSS released a series of Requests for Proposals (RFP) for Support Service Subject Matter Expert in each content area to support the implementation of the learning agenda through training and technical assistance.

Data & Documents Reviewed

SA PowerPoint 5—August 5, 2020

Monitoring Docs, including overview and revised action plan template

DFSS Org Chart

SWOT & Staff Survey Key Points

2017-2018 Annual Report

Monthly Financial Reports through May 2020

Logic Model for the five-year learning agenda related to the five-year goals & objectives

Summary of the five-year goals and objectives

Roundtable Status of agency plans related to five-year goals & objectives

Staff Survey

IV. 2019-2020 Self-Assessment Recommendations

1. Strengthen Recruitment Strategies

- Implement new Strategic Communications RFP
- Better track success rate of recruitment efforts (embedded in RFP)
- Enhance community partnerships and collaborations to recruit hard-to-reach populations

2. Support Delegate agencies not meeting 10% enrollment of Children with Disabilities Requirement

- Continue to track and support efforts at agency level
- Ensure agencies have infrastructure and training to support parents through evaluation process and during services

3. Continue to implement Culture of Health & Safety – QIP& COVID-19

4. Implement New Professional Development System

- Implement system outlined in Professional Development, Training Coordination, and Event Planning RFP

5. Strengthen Supports for Teachers and Education Staff

- Ensure that Education Staff have protected time for lesson planning, training, coaching
- Ensure that Education Coordinators, Site Directors have protected time to work with teachers
- Provide deeper dive trainings into curriculum, classroom practices, etc.
- Support agencies in developing strategies to support staff in achieving professional credentials
- Ensure there are systems of support for teachers (not just increased compensation).
- Help agencies strategize how to encourage current staff to seek further credentials.
- Ensure policies are written with input from voices in the field.
- Provide training that moves beyond “basics” and really addresses classroom strategies, methods, etc.
- Ensure inter-rate reliability and continued T/TA in using the TS GOLD assessment, understanding observations, etc.
- Create a standardized system to pull and align data concerning outcomes/ inter-rate reliability/ CLASS scores/ attendance/ teacher-turnover rates that can be used to better understand what is going on in classrooms and where supports are needed.
- Provide teacher’s ongoing training and technical assistance in the curriculum beyond “introduction” training.
- Ensuring there is training for engaging families remotely.

6. Strengthen Family Engagement

- Need professional development opportunities and dedicated time for staff to implement
- Further training and coaching on integrating curriculum into everyday interactions with families
- Better indicators and tracking of services to understand the needs of families and the long-term impact of professional development
- Training on Parents As Teachers to be tailored for center-based implementation
- Better mapping of programs and resources available for families and their uptake
- COPA, curriculum, other items in African and Southeast Asian languages

7. Mental Health—Implementing trauma-informed strategies system wide

8. Strengthen agency and grantee Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC)
 - Implement new guidelines for grantee HSAC
 - Have Health SME support agencies in utilizing their HSACs

9. Implement Training in the following Health-related areas
 - COVID-19 related (Social Distancing, etc.)
 - Family training on importance of medical and dental check-ups, immunizations, resources.
 - How to use Health Advisory Committee effectively.
 - How to access quality care.
 - In depth training on agency and site-based health requirements.
 - Interpreting Health data for Family Support Specialist who enter data into COPA.
 - Nutrition and healthy eating.
 - Variety of responses to the ease of contacting SME for support.

10. Strengthen Program Governance at Grantee Level
 - Continue to offer opportunities to participate in Illinois Head Start Association activities
 - Implement new CPPC Bylaws
 - Draft revised parent handbooks
 - Standardize internal policies and procedures to support CPPC
 - Ensure subcommittees are up and running (with accommodations for COVID-19)
 - Implement Training for CPPC
 - Implement Citywide PG training, especially for new agencies
 - Create cross-unit communication concerning PG between Operations, Quality, and Program Admin
 - Provide accessible professional development opportunities for parents that supports their interests
 - Evaluate grantee's governance system to ensure effective support to delegate agency governance activities, including the resurgence of program governance cluster meetings and governance process mapping across DFSS Children Services units
 - Develop innovative strategies to increase parent engagement in delegate and grantee governance activities, including parent transportation support.

11. Strengthen Communication Systems—Focus on Internal
 - Complete revision of Website
 - Annual cleaning of CSD Contact List
 - Potential transfer of CSD Update to internal platform
 - Guidelines for revising CELS 2.0
 - Update CELS 2.0
 - Guidelines for Updating Internal PP
 - Update Internal PP

12. Strengthen Record Keeping & Reporting/Data Management
 - Invest in data system is responsive to all funding streams
 - Ensure there are appropriate FTEs for workload

13. Continue GOAL 3: Continue to implement Consolidation through revised Policies and Procedures, Training, and Monitoring (related to CEL Learning Agenda/five year RFP Goals)

- Implementation of agencies' plans across three work streams
- Continued training in Continuity of Relationships
- Support in maximizing budgets
- Strengthen supports for teachers enrolled in credentialing programs

Strengthen strategies to engage staff in furthering credentials

V. 2020 Action Plan Goals – see detailed Action Plan in Appendix pages 24-26

1. Continue to implement the Learning agenda to support the implementation of DFSS's five-year goals and objectives
2. Continue to strengthen the grantee's program governance system
3. Strengthen HSACs at grantee and agency level