

WASHITA VALLEY COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL HEAD START PROGRAM/ EARLY HEAD START COMMUNICATION

Policy:

A communication system ensures the exchange of information that allows individuals to become involved in program activities and to assist in making group decisions that promote a quality program. Washita Valley Community Action Council Head Start will ensure that timely and accurate program information is provided to staff, parents, Governing Board, Policy Council, and the general community.

Procedures:

Communication with Staff

Communication with staff is essential to ensure that performance standards are met consistently in all areas. Communication is important for growth of staff and for decision making. Communication with staff takes place through many forms which include, but are not limited to, the following.

1. The Executive Director and Deputy Director/Head Start Director have an open door policy where staff are welcome to express concerns, problems, opinions, and suggestions at any time.
2. The Executive Director discusses updates and changes with Deputy Director/Head Start Director as needed.
3. The Head Start management team meets bi-monthly and the entire Head Start office staff meets on the last Monday, or alternate date when needed, of the month to discuss current issues, program updates, and program planning.
4. Early Head Start staff will meet monthly.
5. Office staff communication is through many forms which include, but are not limited to verbal communication, staff meetings, e-mail, memos, and telephone.
6. The Head Start Director emails or distributes copies of memos with pertinent information.

7. Family Services Manager and Family Advocates meet monthly for sharing of information concerning families, planning, and program improvement.
8. Head Start and Early Head Start Center staff meetings are held at least once per month, and minutes are forwarded to the Head Start Director with end of month paperwork.
9. Head Start and Early Head Start Center Director/Teacher meetings are held at least every other month.
10. Head Start and Early Head Start staff receive annual performance evaluations by their supervisor where the employee is provided with strengths, areas for improvement, and training needs.
11. A sharing session shall be included on the Center Director/ Teacher agendas for centers to share information and news.
12. An agency web site provides information about agency programs, lists content area plans, policies, procedures and forms.
13. Management staff and other staff when appropriate receive communications from the Department of Health and Human Services and other pertinent directives.
14. Information is shared with staff in written memos, by phone, in the agency newsletter, on the web site and by fax of promotion opportunities, clarification of or changes in employment policies, funding, benefits, or updates in federal or state rules and regulations.

Communication with Parents

Information shared with parents takes place in many forms which include but is not limited to the following.

1. The initial communication between staff and parents takes place during enrollment.
2. Parents have opportunities to communicate with staff during home visits, parent-teacher conferences, by volunteering in the classroom, during IEP meetings, through written notes and letters, and/or personal contact.
3. Staff communicates opportunities for education, training, and parent involvement during subsequent visits. Parents have opportunities to share concerns and needs with staff, and receive direct services or referrals to agencies that can best meet their needs.

4. Parents receive the monthly center newsletter which provides information about their child's classroom and upcoming events.
5. Agency newsletters are published two times per year for sharing of information about programs and activities.
6. Parents may participate in monthly parent committee and special called meetings. One parent representative and alternates are elected by each parent committee to serve on Policy Council. The Policy Council representative shares pertinent information from the Policy Council meetings with their parent committee.
7. Parents may attend staff meetings, in-service training, and serve on committees within the agency. They may share information with their committee members and with other parents outside of the committee.

Communication with Governing Board and Policy Council

1. The Head Start Director provides a monthly oral and written report to the Board and Policy Council of activities for the proceeding month including training, upcoming events, compliance reports, and other relevant information.
2. Communication from the Department of Health and Human Services and other pertinent directives are provided to the Governing Board and Policy Council at the regularly scheduled meeting after receipt of the information.
3. A current or former Head Start parent serves as a member of the governing board and reports activities to each group.
4. Board and Policy Council members are invited to attend Head Start training and planning meetings.
5. Policy Council and Board members are given the opportunity to serve on working sub-committees for program planning and policies.

Communication with the Community

Communication with community members and partnering agencies is essential in the development of resources offered to families served through Head Start. This communication is also instrumental in collaborating services between Head Start and other agencies providing services to the same families. Methods of communicating with the community include the following

1. Public Service Announcements on radio and the local TV station are delivered as part of recruitment activities.
2. News releases are sent to local newspapers for sharing of information, activities, and for recruitment.
3. The Family Services Manager attends county Interagency Meetings to network.
4. Flyers and announcements are posted in conspicuous places in the communities.
5. Staff contacts other community agencies in dealing with specific day-to-day issues facing families.
6. With input from the parent committees, community members and other agency members are invited to serve as guest speakers or trainers for parent meetings.
7. Head Start and Early Head Start participates in many community events.