

NICAO School Readiness Plan

The Head Start Approach to School Readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. Head Start views school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life. For parents and families, school readiness means they are engaged in the long-term, lifelong success of their child. Head Start recognizes that parents are their children's primary teachers and advocates

In order to help prepare children to be successful when they enter school, NICAO Head Start has developed school readiness goals that utilize the core strategies within the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. These goals were developed with the input of parents, teachers, Head Start staff and school district administrators.

The goals are as follows:

Language and literacy development:

Goals

- Name and identifies at least 10 letters, especially the letters in their name
- Demonstrates phonological awareness
- The ability to comprehend and understand language
- Identifies and prints name

Cognition and general knowledge:

Goals

- Recognizes and draws shapes
- Counts Objects 1-20
- Shows ability to ask questions, predict, explain and draw scientific conclusions of the world around them

Approaches to learning:

Goal

- Shows curiosity, interest, initiative and persistence in exploring his/her environment.

Physical health and well-being and motor development:

Goal

- Development of fine motor skills such as using scissors, using pencils/crayons, buttoning and zipping.

Social and emotional development:

Goals

- Positively relates to adults and peers such as listening, following rules, sharing and taking turns
- Able to regulate behavior and express emotions, wants and needs in appropriate ways
- Able to complete self care tasks

The goals were then aligned with the Iowa Early Learning Standards, as well as with our curriculum, Creative Curriculum GOLD.

Creative Curriculum 5th Edition is the curriculum used by NICAO Head Start. This curriculum addresses the essential domains of the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. The curriculum assessment, Creative Curriculum GOLD is web based and allows for teachers and staff to view the progress of each child's development in real time to allow for intentional teaching of students to increase their school readiness goals.

Aggregate and analyze aggregated child-level assessment data

NICAO Head Start will aggregate and analyze aggregated child-level assessment data at least three times per year. The data will be used along with other program data to determine the progress in meeting our goals. The information will be collected and shared as follows:

1. Fall reporting (October) – Team will aggregate data on classrooms and individual children to see what growth is needed in areas of school readiness. Teachers will meet with parents to provide information on their child and to make individual goals based on the needs of the children. Reports are provided for each classroom to show classroom profile and to assist teachers with planning to ensure individualization for children is met.
2. Midyear reporting (February) – Team will aggregate and analyze data for progress that children have made using the information gathered in Creative Curriculum GOLD. Teachers will continue to individualize for each child's continued development and learning. Again, reports will be provided for each classroom to assist teachers in planning for the children's growth and development.

3. End of Year (May) – Team will aggregate data on classrooms and individual children to see what final progress was made by the children in obtaining School Readiness Goals. Information will be shared with parents during the end of year conference.
4. Continually throughout the year as we assess children outcomes and school readiness goals met by children we will assess our systems, curriculum, classroom materials and professional development to be able to enhance practices with children ensuring school readiness goals are met, or the best advancements are achieved by children to obtain school readiness goals.
5. Teachers meet with parents four times during the year, two home visits and two conferences. During these meetings parents are asked for input into what goals they would like for their children to obtain, and are provided information from teachers as to the development of their child into those areas as well as goals obtained using the curriculum. Parents are also provided with information on how to support their child's growth and development at home.

Early learning coaching

Early learning coaching is available to staff through several different avenues. Area Managers are assigned to each classroom to assist with monitoring of the program and mentoring staff. Area Managers are able to sit down with staff and provide input on strategies used in the classroom and how to support staff in developing skills needed in assisting children in their growth and development.

Our Education Specialist provides assistance to teaching staff in providing coaching experiences for staff and providing professional development classes and opportunities allowing staff opportunities for personal growth and development which will enhance classroom outcomes for children.

Area Managers and Program Specialist provide coaching experiences to family workers, cooks, bus drivers, bus aides, and substitutes to allow opportunities for personal growth and development which will enhance services provided to children and families.

An individualized Wellness Plan

To ensure children are healthy and ready to learn Head Start requires children to have a current up to date physical and to be current on all immunizations to begin classes. Families are encouraged to have children complete a dental exam twice a year. We also complete a nutrition assessment of children entering the program and request additional information on changes for children returning to the program. Within the first 45 days children receive vision and hearing screening, as well as developmental screenings. We have a licensed mental health provider assess our classrooms twice a year and provide input into our programming. Our goal is to locate any health, nutrition and/or developmental concerns a child may have so we can assist the family in meeting the needs of their child. We understand the importance that a child who is healthy has

fewer barriers to learning than a child who is not healthy. We support the healthy development of every child.

A parent partnership

Parents are informed of their child's progress throughout the year. Parents are provided two home visits and two conferences to provide them with information on their child's progress. Parents are encouraged to participate in their child's learning experiences. Classroom "Be There" meetings take place with children and families. These meetings provide parents an opportunity to work with their child in the classroom and receive a better understanding of the curriculum used and the outcomes achieved by their child. Parents are also encouraged to take part in parent meetings to provide them with information in becoming involved in their child's educational experience.

A series of classes are provided to parents on topics of parent education to include but are not limited on Child Development, Health and Safety, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, School Readiness, Nutrition, Community Resources, Budgeting, and Transition to Kindergarten.

Policy council allows parents to become active in the leadership role. Being part of Policy Council allows for parents to take part in meetings about procedures and policies, allowing them to be active in making decisions which affect the overall educational services provided to children.

Ongoing communication with communities

During the three times a year that Head Start aggregates and analyzes aggregated child-level assessment data school districts are invited to attend meetings to discuss the overall Head Start program as well as being provided individual reports for children in their district. Plans are discussed on how to improve or enhance the services provided to individual children based on the needs of the child.

Head Start teachers visit with school district kindergarten teachers to provide information on child assessments. Information gathered according to our transition plan is shared with local kindergarten teachers.

Annually the Head Start Coordinator meets with school district principals and superintendants to review services provided to children and to align all services for early learning, health and family engagement activities. Information is shared with staff and families throughout the year to enhance services provided to children and families.

Meetings with local community members and boards to include Policy Council, Head Start Governing Board, Local School Boards, early Childhood Iowa Boards, United Way and other organizations to keep them abreast of services provided to Head Start families and children, and how they can assist Head Start ensuring quality services are continued.

Updated 6/1/2014 CD