



Paladin

SUPPORTING • EDUCATING • BUILDING LIVES

2022/2023
Self-Assessment Report

Head Start of La Porte County

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I. INTRODUCTION

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Head Start of La Porte County, one of Paladin, Inc.'s early childhood programs, has been a staple in the La Porte County community for decades. The program offers center-based services, and is currently dispersed between 2 on-site locations in Michigan City, Indiana and 1 in La Porte, Indiana. Head Start at Niemann Elementary, which is a Michigan City Area Schools site, and Bethany Lutheran Church in La Porte both serve only Head Start children exclusively, while Imagination Station Child Development Center serves children through the Head Start grant and various other funding streams. Paladin's Early Childhood Programs operate through a blended model with the intention to serve all children regardless of socioeconomic status.

CONTEXT FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Head Start of La Porte County conducts self-assessment annually in accordance with Head Start Performance Standard 1302.102(b)(2) to evaluate progress towards program goals as well as to influence future strategic planning.
2. During the month of June, 2023, the program conducted internal self-assessment workshops to address each program goal. During these assessment workshops, participants reviewed data gathered over the year relating to each program goal.
3. Each goal and set of data were presented to conduct further analysis.
4. Participants were tasked with evaluating the data presented to them in their specialized groups in order to collaborate and further analyze.
5. Data sources reviewed include community partner data, family services, child and family outcomes, children's development, health, literacy, school readiness, and program quality data.
6. Discoveries and recommendations will be used to inform program planning and continuous improvement.

II. METHODOLOGY

The annual Self-Assessment is a five phase process, encased by a pre and post phase.

1. Pre-Phase – Review of Program Data
2. Phase 1 – Designing the Process
3. Phase 2 – Engaging the Team
4. Phase 3 – Analyzing & Dialogue
5. Phase 4 – Recommendations
6. Phase 5 – Preparing the Report
7. Post-Phase – Program Planning

Pre-Phase – Review of Program Data

Dates	Action	Purpose
9/2022 -6/2023	<i>Self-Assessment Planning</i>	Collect & prepare program data to determine focus areas for Self-Assessments

The pre-phase consisted of the collection and preparation of program data aligning with our five-year program goals. Each department manager collected data to outline any progress made towards the goals, and utilized sources such as ChildPlus, ASQ, and COR participation records to present to the team. Considering self-assessment areas of focus, the team decided to complete a self-assessment on progress toward each of our 6 program goals, as follows:

Goals	Focus Areas
Increase healthy lifestyles and well-being for children, families, and staff in our service area	Evaluate the program’s effectiveness in providing a rounded staff wellness program, promoting healthy lifestyles through targeted educational engagement opportunities, and remediating lead related issues in our service area.
The quality of Early Childhood Education programs will increase in La Porte County	Evaluate the program’s progress towards earning NAEYC accreditation at all of our centers, increasing the number of qualified staff in our service area, and engaging in professional development opportunities with community providers to increase the baseline knowledge of best practices.
Increase literacy in our service area	Evaluate the program’s effectiveness in promoting family cultures where reading is central to home learning experiences, increasing accessibility of quality literature to families, and supporting adult and dual language learners through an ESL program.
Instill a culture of reciprocal partnerships in our service area where agencies work in concert to meet community needs	Evaluate the program’s effectiveness in increasing the number of active partnerships and joint engagements throughout La Porte County
Improve healthy family functioning in our service area	Evaluate the program’s effectiveness in increasing family engagement by providing a wide range of opportunities that address family’s self-identified needs, increasing employment levels of primary caregivers in our service area, and improving positive parenting strategies in our service area.

School Readiness Goals: Language & Communication/Literacy Development, Mathematics Development & Scientific Reasoning, Approaches to Learning, Perceptual/Physical & Motor Development, Social & Emotional Development, Connections to Global Learning Outcomes

Evaluate the program’s effectiveness in improving children’s language, writing, communication, and literacy skills; understanding of math concepts and sequences; problem solving, conflict resolution, and self-regulation skills; uses of small/gross motor control; managing emotions and promoting self-regulation; and awareness of time, the environment, and critical thinking skills

Phase One – Designing the Process

Dates	Action	Purpose
5/2023	<i>Designing the plan</i>	Ensure enough time to prepare data and coordinate meetings

During phase one, the Self-Assessment plan and timeline were established by the Early Childhood Programs’ Leadership Team. The plan included a cohort of internal employees to perform a self-assessment of our 6 program goals, focusing on the identification of: trends; outcomes for children, parents, and staff; policies and procedures that need improvement; opportunities to improve service delivery; successful practices and achievements; staff T&TA needs; and budget priorities.

Phase Two – Engage the Team

Dates	Action	Purpose
5/2023	<i>Invitations and Detailed Information Sent to Self-Assessment Participants</i>	Invite and orient team members to the process and focus areas

Phase Three – Analyze & Dialogue

Dates	Action	Purpose
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6/26/23-6/27/2023	<i>Meetings – data presentations</i>	Review and discuss Self-Assessment and program data
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During each self-assessment meeting staff and participants reviewed: a program goal, objectives, and strategies, and data pertaining to the goal.

Phase Four – Recommendations

Dates	Action	Purpose
6/26/23-6/27/23	<i>Recommendations and Debriefing</i>	Make recommendations based on discoveries and report to ECE Leadership staff

Phase four required each participant to present and discuss recommendations based on their discoveries. These reports were aggregated by administrative staff and will be used to inform future program planning.

Phase Five – Preparing the Report

Dates	Action	Purpose
8/23	<i>Draft Self-Assessment Report</i>	Discoveries and recommendations from participants were compiled into a comprehensive report.

Phase five entailed the completion of the final Self-Assessment report, which included a compilation of all of the discoveries and recommendations of all participants, as well as strengths and areas for improvement.

Post-Phase Planning

Dates	Action	Purpose
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8/2023

Team Meetings

Make programmatic strategic decisions, complete program planning, and develop improvement plans

Results from the Self-Assessment will be reviewed by the administrative team, Policy Council, and Early Childhood Committee during the month of September to inform programmatic decisions and guide program planning for continuous quality improvement.

III. SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Discoveries and recommendations produced from each Self-Assessment are outlined under each of 6 goals. The administrative team will utilize the information to make decisions about program operations that will seek to improve service delivery and work to close any identified gaps in the program's overall performance. Each recommendation is followed by the category it seeks to address/enhance

1. Increase healthy lifestyles and well-being for children, families, and staff in our service area

- *Discovery: Staff Wellness*
 - Staff wellness efforts have proven effective through the lens of low turnover, high attendance, participation in wellness activities and challenges, and stay interview reports.
- *Discovery: Child and Family Healthy Lifestyles*
 - Families are engaging in social media efforts and newsletters that share healthy lifestyle education and activities.
- *Discovery: Lead Remediation*
 - This objective was found to no longer be a necessary area of focus, and was therefore removed.

2. The quality of Early Childhood Education programs will increase in La Porte County

- *Discovery: Staff Education*
 - Efforts from the past two years to increase tuition assistance, access to scholarships, and wages have resulted in increases in staff enrolling in and completing higher ed degrees.
- *Discovery: NAEYC Accreditation*
 - This is an area of strength, as each site either maintained or strengthened its accreditation this program year.
- *Discovery: Professional Development*
 - While staff are participating in more PD hours than ever, we can improve by consistently tracking efficacy through targeted PD survey

3. Increase literacy in our service area

- *Discovery: Increased Accessibility*
 - Children and families were presented with free books and access to bilingual e-books through multiple platforms throughout the school year.

4. Instill a culture of reciprocal partnerships in our service area where agencies work in concert to meet community needs

- *Discovery: Community Partnerships*
 - This past school year we saw an increase in the number of community partnerships and the quality of interactions with partners.
- *Discovery: Strengthening LEAs*
 - While improving, special focus is necessary to improve the frequency and intentionality of collaborations with LEAs.

5. Improve healthy family functioning in our service area

- *Discovery: Parenting Curriculum*
 - Garner increased participation in Dunebrook's Nurturing Parenting classes for increased outcomes.
- *Discovery: Improving Male Engagement*
 - Male involvement increased exponentially this past year!

6. School Readiness

- *Discovery: Language & Communication/Literacy Development*
 - Decrease on COR assessment
 - Continue successful implementation of Handwriting Without Tears
 - Expand on open discussions with children to assist in verbally forming sounds/words
- *Discovery: Mathematics Development & Scientific Reasoning*
 - Increase on COR assessment
 - Begin implantation of small group math games
- *Discovery: Social and Emotional Development*
 - Substantial increase on COR assessment
 - Track efficacy of new coaching department
 - Provide more materials for children to act out emotions

IV. CONCLUSION

Paladin's Early Childhood Programs will continue to aim for high performance and high-quality service delivery by using the results of this Self-Assessment to inform decision making and continuous improvement planning. The suggestions derived from this assessment will be used to determine appropriate actions to include in our CIP, and will be implemented and tracked this coming school year, wherever possible.