Head Start A to Z

Self-Assessment

Background

The Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) include two systems that entail self-reflection. The first is ongoing monitoring (OGM). The second is Self-Assessment (SA). Whereas ongoing monitoring is a repetitive process that (as its name implies) takes place throughout the year, Self-Assessment involves a specified time for a program to stop and take stock. Ongoing monitoring helps programs answer the question, "Are we doing things right?" Self-Assessment focuses on the big-picture question, "Are we doing the right things?" It is Self-Assessment that helps a program determine if it is doing everything it can to benefit the children and families it serves. Self-Assessment is also a vehicle for innovation. In the context of the 5-year project period, Self-Assessment is the key to programs being able to report cumulatively in each annual continuation application on their progress toward achieving their goals, objectives, and expected outcomes.

Throughout the year, program leaders and staff continually track the effectiveness of program operations and progress towards goals through their ongoing monitoring system. During the annual Self-Assessment, staff, leaders, parents, and partners reflect on that same data; any additional data, such as federal monitoring reports; and the previous year's Self-Assessment report. They begin by looking at what is working in the program, acknowledging successes and progress, and considering how to apply the successful practices they identify to other areas of the program. They compare data across content areas to address higher-level systemic issues. By asking pertinent questions—such as "How can we better serve children and families in our community?" "Where are we at risk?" and "How can we improve or streamline operations?"— programs can critically examine the overall direction and impact of their systems and services. Through this examination, they can then determine if they are using their human and financial resources to achieve their goals.

The Advisory Committee on Head Start Research and Evaluations recommends that "every Head Start grantee . . . become a Learning Organization,"[1] defined as an "organization skilled at creating, acquiring, interpreting, transferring and retaining knowledge, and at purposefully modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights."[2] An effective Self-Assessment process, during which programs engage in open, objective, and deep dialogue, can be instrumental in helping programs transform themselves into learning organizations.

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[1] Advisory Committee on Head Start Research and Evaluation, 2012.
[2] Garvin, 2000.

The idea of looking at program strengths and challenges and using the results for continuous improvement is an established feature of the early care and education community and has also been standard protocol in the nonprofit world for a long time. For instance, the McCormick Center for Early Childhood has developed an instrument called the Program Administration Scale (PAS) that "provides valuable information to directors about the quality of their administrative practices and can be used as a springboard for program improvement efforts."[3] Both the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) include a self-study in their accreditation processes.

Self-Assessment is required by section 1304.51(i)(1) of the Head Start Program Performance Standards. Congress reaffirmed the importance of the process in the *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*. While the regulations require that each grantee conduct an annual Self-Assessment, each grantee is allowed to design its own process. Over the years, programs have chosen to conduct the annual Self-Assessment (SA) in a variety of ways. This session outlines a process for SA that programs can customize for their individual needs. It includes five phases:

1.) **Design the Process:** Set a clear direction for what you want to accomplish and by when. Consult with and obtain approval of the Self-Assessment plan from the governing body/Tribal Council and Policy Council. Select and invite staff, governing body/Tribal Council, and Policy Council members as well as participants who bring outside perspectives to join the Self-Assessment team.
2.) **Engage the Team:** Prepare and deliver an overview of the program, including current goals, objectives, and expected outcomes. Outline the Self-Assessment process. Form subgroups as needed.
3.) **Analyze and Dialogue:** Explore systemic issues and review the program's progress on goals and objectives. Review and analyze current and previous data to uncover trends and patterns. Engage in dialogue about what is going well and why, as well as what could be improved. Formulate discoveries.
4.) **Make Recommendations:** Reconvene the entire Self-Assessment team. Consolidate discoveries across teams and prepare recommendations to inform program planning.
5.) **Prepare Report:** Create a report based on the results of the Self-Assessment process. Share the completed report with the Policy Council and governing body/Tribal Council for approval before submitting it to the Regional Office. Use the report in annual program planning.

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[3] Talan, 2011.

This five-phase process is linked to a preparation phase and a post-review phase that tie Self-Assessment back to the Head Start planning cycle. Prior to Self-Assessment, the management team reviews and summarizes data collected during ongoing monitoring along with other relevant data to provide a focus for Self-Assessment. After Self-Assessment, the recommendations and the Self-Assessment report inform each year's annual program planning.

In *A Practical Guide to Reflective Supervision*, Rebecca Shahmoon-Shanok defines reflective supervision as "a collaborative relationship for professional growth that improves program quality and strengthens practice by cherishing strengths and partnering around vulnerabilities."[4] If reflective supervision fosters this at an individual staff level, program assessment enables it to happen at an organizational level. Used well, Self-Assessment provides a critically important opportunity for a program's staff to:

- come together
- take the time (which can be so hard to find in the hurly burly of daily operations) to reflect
- bring in outside perspectives
- talk openly, honestly, and nondefensively with each other about the very real challenges every Head Start and Early Head Start program experiences in providing Head Start services to our country's most needy children and families
- leverage strengths, and
- think creatively and innovatively about ways to continually improve the quality of services to children and families.

Overarching Theme

This interactive learning sessions supports new leaders in better understanding Head Start's Self-Assessment process. The session focuses on best practices for effective Self-Assessment— a key part of the Head Start Planning Cycle.

Outcomes

➢ Recognize the importance of the Self-Assessment process
➢ Use a strength-based model to assess progress towards goals, objectives, and expected outcomes
➢ Understand how to use the Self-Assessment report as a source of vital data for the planning process

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[4] Shahmoon-Shanok, 2003.

Materials

- ➢ Handouts and Materials
  - ✓ Nifty Notes
  - ✓ Key Messages (a few per table)
  - ✓ Self-Assessment—Truth or Myth
  - ✓ Ideas for Your Annual Self-Assessment Process
  - ✓ Key Full Page Slides
  - ✓ Elevator Speech: Inviting Self-Assessment Team Members
  - ✓ Choosing Your Self-Assessment Team
  - ✓ Orientation PowerPoint as four slides-per-page
  - ✓ Who's Role Is It Anyway? (board game)

Planning Ahead

- ➢ This is a two-to-two and a half-hour session.
- ➢ Review the **Background** information.
- ➢ Distribute "Nifty Notes" before start of session.
- ➢ Make copies of the handouts. Creating a workbook is a good strategy to organize multiple handouts.
- ➢ Make sure you have placed chart paper in the back of the room.
- ➢ Review the two video clips.
  - o *Leading with Strengths* (slide 32)
  - o *Fire and Wheel* (slide 36)
- ➢ Ensure you have Wi-Fi access for the YouTube video.
- ➢ Check audio prior to the session.
- ➢ Print Orientation PowerPoint as four slides-per-page and staple.
- ➢ Make copies of the board game. One for each group of four. (Optional: Copy on card stock for reuse.)

Let's Get Started

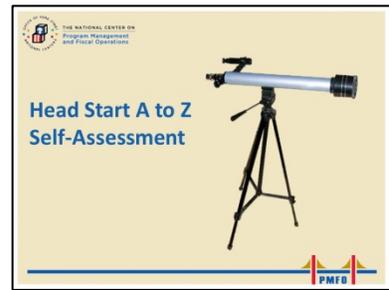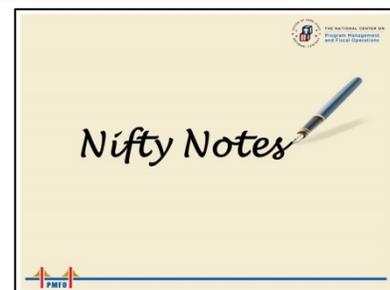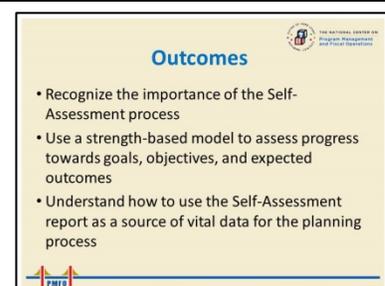|	
1. Head Start A to Z Self-Assessment Introduce yourself. If you have a co-facilitator, that person should introduce her/himself, too. Offer the following beliefs/ideas/facts about Head Start A to Z: Say to participants, "Head Start A to Z sessions are designed to emulate the concept of the 'learning organization.' We recognize the key building blocks of learning organizations: a supportive learning environment, concrete learning processes, and leadership development—all of which reinforce learning. "Each one of us has an important role to play in the success of this session. Those with experience remind us where we've come from and what we must do to maintain our identity and uniqueness. New members bring a fresh perspective and remind us of what we must do to prepare for the future. All roles are essential for Head Start as a learning organization to continue to grow and flourish. "*Head Start A to Z* sessions are successful when they help us share the best of what we have to offer with a strength-based focus. As you engage in this session, we hope that you will support one another in the learning process by generously sharing your knowledge, experience, and perspective." This Head Start Session will help new leaders learn about the process of Self-Assessment.	*(Head Start A to Z Self-Assessment slide with telescope image)*
2. Nifty Notes Distribute the handout "Nifty Notes" for capturing participants' thoughts, "A-ha!" moments, or any new knowledge they may acquire during this session.	*(Nifty Notes slide)*
3. Outcomes Introduce the session outcomes. Read outcomes as they are written on the PowerPoint slide.	**Outcomes** • Recognize the importance of the Self-Assessment process • Use a strength-based model to assess progress towards goals, objectives, and expected outcomes • Understand how to use the Self-Assessment report as a source of vital data for the planning process

4. Key Message 1

Distribute the handout "Key Messages."

Say to participants, "*Head Start A to Z* sessions are based on a set of key messages. For this session on Self-Assessment, we will focus on two key messages.

"The first is that 'Systems-thinking provides a fresh perspective and a big-picture lens that taps into a higher level of analyzing, problem solving, and strategizing.'

"This key message reminds us that Self-Assessment is about big-picture thinking. It is tempting to get caught up in the weeds of daily operations, but Self-Assessment is a time to garner insight and fresh perspective into how your systems are functioning."

5. Key Message 2

"The second key message underlying Self-Assessment is that 'Change requires positive action and buy-in from all levels of the organization.'

"Self-Assessment was never meant to be about a director in her office looking at how things were going. Nor was it meant to be a management team process. Self-Assessment requires the participation and buy-in from both internal stakeholders—including staff, governing body/Tribal Council, and Policy Council members—and people external to the organization who bring related experience and expertise, along with an outside perspective."

6. Child and Family Outcomes

Remind the group that there are 10 Head Start management systems. On the second click for this slide, say to participants, "Self-Assessment is one of them." Explain that Head Start and Early Head Start services are supported by systems; systems support high-quality services; and high-quality services lead to positive outcomes for children and families.
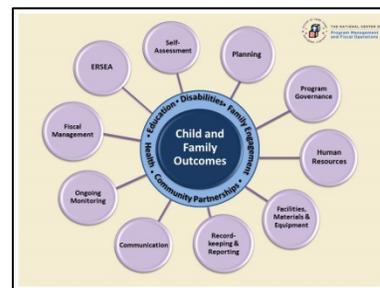
7. Systems Are Linked

All the management systems are linked. Click the slide (the cogs rotate).

Say, "A system is a set of interacting, interrelated parts that form a complex whole with a specific purpose." Stress that when each system runs smoothly, it helps the whole program runs smoothly.

8. Systems Are Linked

On the second click for this slide, say "When systems are not functioning properly, things go wrong" (cogs/gears are stuck in the animation).

"These problems are likely to be evident within program services."

"For example, there may be pockets of quality due to the hard work of high-performing staff; but as a whole, services are likely to be inconsistent. Children and families receiving services in one center may have a totally different experience than children and families across town in a different center. Also in this example, when a high-performing leader leaves, the quality of the program plummets. Why? Because no systems are in place to help the program withstand the change."

Share the following: "As we stated, all ten management systems need to work together. For example, Self-Assessment needs to look at existing data, including the data collected for ongoing monitoring, in order to examine trends and patterns. This is an example of how Self-Assessment is interrelated with Program Planning and Recordkeeping and Reporting, just to name two of the systems."

Note: You may want to ask some probing questions to have participants elaborate on their experiences of inconsistent systems or services.

9. Truth or Myth?

Distribute the handout "Truth or Myth." Conduct this activity as follows:

Say to participants: "We will revisit this activity at the end of the session to make sure all of the answers have been addressed."

Directions to participants: "Read each statement. Indicate in the ''before' column whether you think each statements is truth or myth. The answers will be revealed during the session. When you hear an answer during the session, check the "truth" or "myth" box in the "after" column.

10. Wordle

Make the following points about the "wordle":

- We use a telescope as the symbol for Self-Assessment to remind us that through Self-Assessment we look at the big picture. We dig more deeply into issues and often take a long-range view, comparing data over time.
- Our approach to Self-Assessment, in which we build on existing data gathered during ongoing monitoring, enables us to have a more streamlined yet more effective process.
- Once again, we start with a strength-based approach.
- During Self-Assessment, in addition to looking at the quality of our efforts, we also look at our effect. This perspective will help programs report annually on the cumulative impact they are having on children, families, and the community, as required for the five-year project period.
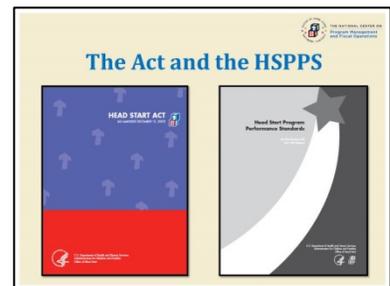
Ask participants what stands out for them. Ask if there are additional words that they would like to discuss.

11. Head Start Requirements

The requirements say:

> *Grantees and delegate agencies . . . must conduct a self-assessment of their effectiveness and progress in meeting program goals and objectives and in implementing Federal regulations.*
> ~ 45 CFR 1304.51 (i) (1)

Neither the Head Start Act nor the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) have ever required programs to conduct their Self-Assessments in a particular way. The program decides how to conduct its Self-Assessment, with approval of Policy Council and governing body.

12. Recommended Practices for Self-Assessment

Share the points on the slide, emphasizing the following:

Recommended Practices for Self-Assessment

- This new thinking offers ways to develop both a streamlined and a more meaningful Self-Assessment process.
- This graphic summarizes the key ideas of who is involved; what happens during the process; and when, how, and why Self-Assessment is done.
- Review the points, being sure to mention that Self-Assessment is *not* about checking on compliance but instead about helping ensure that Head Start Programs are accountable and using resources (human and fiscal) effectively. (Programs check on compliance through ongoing monitoring.)

This session will introduce a five-phase process that is linked to ongoing monitoring and that leads into annual planning.

13. Jigsaw Reading

Distribute the handout "Ideas for Your Annual Self-Assessment Process."

Conduct the activity:

- Instruct participants to count off and group by 4s.
- Assign a portion of the document to each group: "Number 1's will read the section marked #1; 2's will read #2, etc."
- Have each person read their assigned section. Allow about 5 minutes. Because people read at different speeds, check in as the 5 minutes are ending to see if participants need more time. Ask each group to review each section in order, and ask for a summary and thoughts.
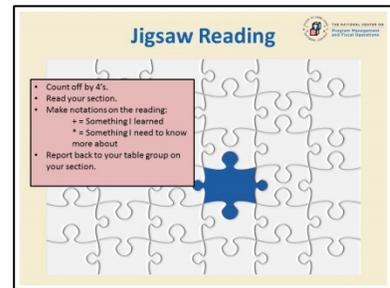
14. Benefits of Self-Assessment

Share the points on the slide, emphasizing "big picture" systems thinking and not getting caught in the weeds or details during Self-Assessment; using fresh perspectives; seeing the strengths and challenges a program has; formulating ideas and innovations to help make the program even stronger; making good use of community resources; making effective use of a program's human and financial resources.

15. The Role Data Play in Self-Assessment

Transition to the next slide. Before you show the next slide, you could ask participants, "How do you think data helps guide the Self-Assessment team?"

16. How Data Link Ongoing Monitoring (OGM)), Self-Assessment, and Planning

Distribute handout "How Data Links OGM, Self-Assessment, and Planning."

Review the graphic, making the following points:

- This visual depicts how these three Head Start systems—planning, ongoing monitoring and Self-Assessment—work together and are linked by data.
- Remind participants about the importance of the integrity of data, from OGM to SA.
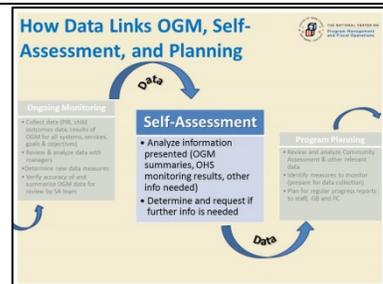
17. Phases of Self-Assessment

Say, "This session introduces a five-phase process to help guide you through your annual Self-Assessment. We will go into each step in more detail during the session. Notice that before the five phases there is a ''pre' phase that links ongoing monitoring to SA, and a ''post' phase that indicates that your Self-Assessment report helps guide program planning."

18. Prior to Self-Assessment

Explain what happens before Self-Assessment begins:

- The director and management team review and summarize program data to help set the direction and provide a focus for Self-Assessment.
- When they have determined the direction and focus, they pull together the related and pertinent data in easy-to-digest ways.
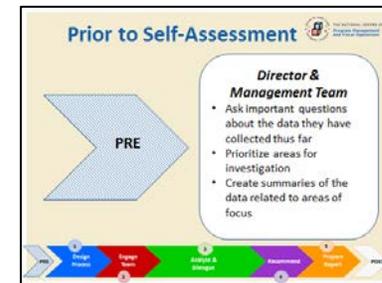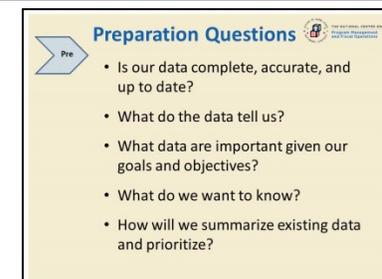
Say, "We will introduce two forms to help streamline this data summary and prioritization process."

19. Preparation Questions

Explain that the director and management team can use the questions on the slide to consider what the Self-Assessment team should address.

Review each question, and then ask, "Can you think of other questions that will help you prepare?"

20. Summary of Ongoing Monitoring Results

Explain, "This slide shows a sample form that can be used to capture data to share with your Self-Assessment team. The form can be completed every quarter and then rolled into an annual summary that identifies areas of strength, concerns, and issues that may need further evaluation by the SA team. The format mirrors the events in the Aligned Monitoring System."

21. Progress on Goals and Objectives: Quarterly and Annual Summary

Say, "During the annual Self-Assessment, you also want to track progress towards your goals and objectives. A form such as 'Progress on Goals and Objectives' is useful for summarizing your progress and identifying big-picture questions and unresolved issues that you want the Self-
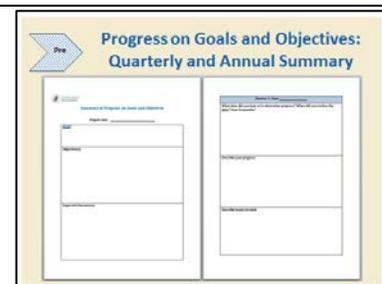
Assessment team to consider."

22. What to Elevate to Self-Assessment

Use this grid as a guide to how everyday ongoing monitoring issues can be elevated to important questions for the Self-Assessment team.

What to Elevate in Self-Assessment

On each click, you will begin from the left lower corner and go up the ladder, one block at a time. Walk through the first ladder with participants, then, in the second two examples, see if they can help determine what data they might bring and what question they might form for the Self-Assessment team.

When programs have a lot of topics they'd like to consider during Self-Assessment, a grid and process such as this might prove helpful in getting from the everyday to the big picture thinking required for Self-Assessment.
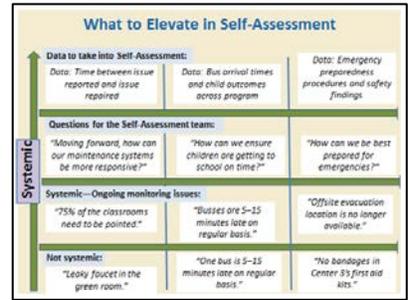
23. Design Process

This is Phase 1 of the SA Process. Review the bullets.

Say, "Now we will look at the parts of this phase in more detail."

24. Develop a Plan

Share the following information.

In developing the SA plan, these are key components:

- Create a timeline for how you will move through the phases of SA. Though there may not be a distinct beginning and end to each phase, it is important to establish realistic timelines to help the process move efficiently.
- It is also important to highlight what data will be brought to the forefront and what priorities you have established in the preparation phase.
- Data need to be summarized in accurate, complete, and easy-to-digest ways (as per tools introduced in the preparation phase).
- All parts of the design will help the director determine if subgroups will be needed on the SA team. This is important because, as you start inviting community members and staff to be a part of the SA team, you will want to include members with special expertise to help with your areas of focus.

    The next slide goes into more detail about an elevator speech.

25. Create an Elevator Speech

Distribute the handout "Elevator Speech." The ideas on this handout can serve as guides when you are ready for this part of the process in your own program. Note the three aspects of a brief speech to get a team member on board. Review the handout together.

26. Invite the SA Team

In the Self-Assessment process, you delegate a big part of the analysis to an independent team. So it's important to invite team members who represent your community, have an interest in what you do, and have the time to devote to participation.

Consider how each individual's unique experience and expertise can bring strength to the team. Selecting a diverse team is important. Your team

will likely include the Head Start director, managers, other internal Head Start staff, parents, Policy Council members, governing body members, and community partners and leaders. The team's discussions, analyses, and the recommendations that result drive the Self-Assessment process.

27. Activity: Choosing a Team

Distribute the handout "Choosing Your Self-Assessment Team," which has three program goals from the Moving Forward Head Start Program. The program goals should help guide which team members would work best. Read the descriptions of possible teammates. Have each group discuss whom they would pick for their team and why. Debrief as a large group, pointing out that individual differences among whom you chose is acceptable and encouraged. Essential members include the director, governing body representative(s), and Policy Council member(s). Additional members can be other parents, management staff, internal non-management staff, and community members who bring expertise related to your program goals.

For fun, challenge participants to come up with another member of their choice, even giving them a fun name like the ones these candidates have!

28. Engage the Team

This is Phase 2 of the SA process. Review the bullets, pointing out the role of the director/manager as well as the role of the SA Team.

Say, "We will now look at the parts of this phase in more detail."

29. Orient the Team

Distribute the handout for the orientation PPT. Since this will only be used to review the content, copies can created with four slides per page.

In this phase of Self-Assessment, Head Start directors and managers orient the Self-Assessment team members to the overall Self-Assessment plan, share ongoing monitoring results and other data, and let the team know about areas that need further exploration during the Self-Assessment process.

The larger SA team may be divided into subgroups assigned to look at specific areas of focus. Team members might start to explore whether additional data may be needed to help them with their investigations. An additional part of this orientation is helping managers understand their role as SA team members. A good orientation ensures that
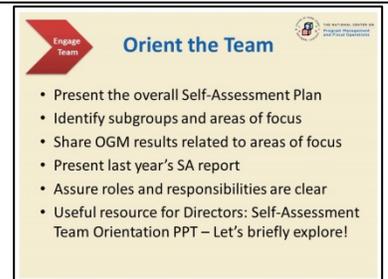
participants are clear about their roles and the tasks ahead of them.

30. Reflect on the Orientation PPT

Refer participants to the handout for the orientation PPT. Tell participants that this PPT is a resource they can use to orient SA team members. They can also customize it for their program. Allow time for participants to review the PPT. Ask, "What are your thoughts about this resource? What do you like? How might you add to it or change it to meet your program's needs?"
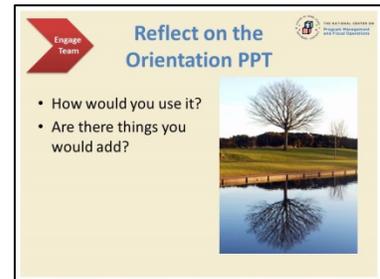
31. Leading with Strengths

Show the **video clip** *Leading from Strengths*. Invite participants to listen for Ron Fry's thoughts about the power of the "strengths revolution."

Invite the audience to share what resonated with them in this video clip and any new ideas they gathered (or old ideas that were reinforced.)

32. Why Strengths-based?

Summarize key points from the video about taking a strengths-based approach to planning.

Relate the experience to being a parent in a parent-teacher conference and the teacher opening the conversation with, "Okay. Here are some problems we are having with your child" rather than opening with, "Let's start our meeting with sharing some of the things your child enjoys doing and where she finds success."

Note that we need to learn from our successes and not jump right into what's wrong.

33. Analyze and Dialogue

This is Phase 3 of the SA process. Review the bullets.
Say, "*Most time* is typically focused on this phase of the process. We will now look at the parts of this phase in more detail."

34. Types of Data in Head Start

Quickly review some of the data you might be examining and what you might learn from each source. Ask for additional data that participants might want to take into Self-Assessment.

35. Dialogue with Team

Explain that dialogue is arguably the most important part of a successful Self-Assessment. The team members dig into the data and asks meaningful and relevant questions about what they see.

Conduct a "Pair-Share" activity at participants' seats:

Ask participants to pair up and do a pair-share with a partner about an involvement they had with a group or team that they felt was especially efficient and effective. What was it about that group or facilitation that really worked?

Ask for their comments. Then share additional points from the slide's bullets:

- **Establish ground rules:** On a flipchart, ask participants to share what ground rules would be important for the SA team. Be sure to include things like "not interrupting," "not judging or making personal comments," "hearing from everyone," "avoiding such distractions as phones and other technology," etc.
- **Hear everyone's voice:** Conduct a "round robin" where the facilitator calls on everyone for a comment or thought. Ask participants to write down their questions or comments if they aren't comfortable sharing. Create a "parking lot" for ongoing questions that come up during the process and for which you need to seek an outside response or collect more data.
- **Stay focused on the big picture:** Create a signal or way for members to identify when they think the team is going off track and needs to get back on track. Avoid side-bar conversations. Keep a list of "to discuss more later" when a topic seems to derail the larger focus.
- **Getting unstuck:** Table a discussion to continue later. Ask the team, "What is the heart of the matter here?" and try to separate positions ("I think we should do this!") from interests ("These matters seem to all relate to health and safety . . . ")

36. Fire and Wheel

Before showing the **video**, say, "Let's watch what can happen when a new idea is presented . . . '

Video link: (**Note to facilitator:** this requires access to Wi-Fi in your training room!)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOtqnc8BER4&list=PLGtDgtrNcR8hOmAEoLuAA9zH-1mYRRmkp

Allow for discussion before moving on.

Fire and Wheel

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37. Being a Good Team Member

Tell participants that you are going to use these six useful tips to guide how to be a good Self-Assessment team member. Review bullets and then tell participants, "We are going to do an activity to stress each of these tips."

Being a Good Team Member

Six Useful Tips...
1) Keeping a Strengths-based Approach
2) Letting go of "control"
3) Including all team members
4) Using multiple strategies to engage team
5) Keep the dialogue flowing
6) Focus on the "big picture" over details

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38. Keep the Conversation Rolling

Follow the instructions on the slide:
1) Stand up and find a partner.
2) On the next slide, one partner reads Partner A aloud. Then, the other reads Partner B aloud.
3) Have a short discussion about which statement works better. You don't have to agree!
4) At the signal, switch and find a new partner and continue with the five remaining slides.

Keeping the Conversation Rolling...

Activity Instructions:
1) Stand up and find a partner.
2) On the next slide, one partner reads Partner A aloud. Then, the other reads Partner B aloud.
3) Have a short discussion about which statement works better. You don't have to agree!
4) At the signal, switch and find a new partner and continue with the five remaining slides.

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39. Be Strength-Based

Say, "Which works best here?"

Allow time for discussion. Then tell everyone to find a new partner before you advance to the next slide.

#1 Be Strength-Based

A) "We've made a lot of progress on goals so far, and with your help, we will continue to grow and thrive!"

B) "We have a long way to go, and some issues to discuss. With your help, we can get through some of our difficulties and thrive!"

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40. Let Go of Control

Say, "Which works best here?" Allow time for discussion. Then tell everyone to find a new partner before you advance to the next slide.

#2 Let Go of Control

A) Thought bubble: "I don't think the team needs to know about this. I'm working on this problem already and I don't want them getting bogged down in it."

B) "Here is an issue I have been working on and wondering about, what do you think?"

41. Include Everyone

Say, "Which works best here?" Allow time for discussion. Then tell everyone to find a new partner before you advance to the next slide.

42. Use Multiple Strategies to Engage

Say, "Which works best here?" Allow time for discussion. Then tell everyone to find a new partner before you advance to the next slide.

43. Keep the Dialogue Flowing

Say, "Which works best here?" Allow time for discussion. Then tell everyone to find a new partner before you advance to the next slide.

44. Focus on the Big Picture

Say, "Which works best here?" Allow time for discussion. Then tell everyone to find a new partner before you advance to the next slide.

After slide 45, back up to slide 40 and review each question. Hear which response folks preferred. Be sure to have someone share *why* they chose one response over the other.

45. Asking the Right Questions SA

Distribute the handout "Asking the Right Questions SA." Review graphic and highlight the five stages for SA and the types of questions asked.

Have each participant choose one of the 17 questions that "speaks" to them as an important question to guide the process.

Ask for a few participants to share why they chose what they chose and how that question might benefit the SA "analyze and dialogue" phase.
Note to facilitator: This graphic is a handout for the session.

46. Recommend

This is Phase 4 of the SA process. Review the bullets.

Say, "We will now look at the parts of this phase in more detail."

47. Reminders to SA Team for Formulating Recommendations

Share with participants that these are important reminders about making recommendations. Review bullets and add these points:

- It is not up to the SA team to "solve" problems, but their suggestions for what might work or innovations to pursue are key to a well-thought-out end report.
- Think about systemic issues instead of smaller details. For example, "What recommendations might improve our overall parent participation or parent trainings" rather than "What recommendations do we have for future topics?"
- Create categories for recommendations to help stay organized and focused.
- Refer to the tool on the next slide as a useful way of organizing recommendations.


48. Example 1: Recommendation

Click through each part of the process used to make a recommendation in the following order:

Say to participants, "Start with the end in mind. First on the slide is the phase we are in: "Recommend." At the lower left you see the three classification areas for your recommendations: "Progress on goals and objectives," "Systemic issues," and "Innovations." Some recommendations may fall into two of these categories, or even all three!

On first click: "Recommend" disappears.

On second through fourth clicks, "Discoveries" loads.
Say to participants, "The Self-Assessment team will analyze and dialogue and eventually come up with discoveries. These discoveries will be pulled together—perhaps from across —subgroups—to help start the process of formulating recommendations."
Read the three discoveries on the slide.
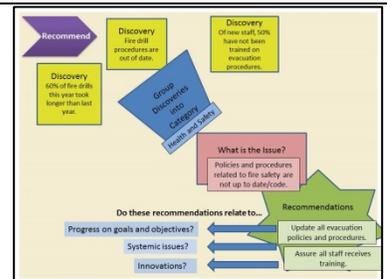
Fifth click produces, "Group Discoveries into Category.."
Say, "Once you have discoveries from the SA team, it is helpful to determine what category each discovery falls into."
Ask participants how they would group these discoveries together.

Sixth click is "Health and Safety.."

Seventh click: "What is the issue?" Ask participants to think about what the issue is at hand. Once you get some responses, click for the eighth time and read, "Policies and procedures related to fire safety are not up to date/code."

Tell participants, "Now it is time to come up with recommendations based on what you have identified." Click for the ninth time and read, "Recommendations."

Have participants work with their groups to come up with some recommendations. Say to them, "For the sake of this example, we have just one. But you could come up with many great recommendations from just a few key discoveries!"

Load the tenth click that says, "Update all evacuation procedures."

The eleventh click says, "Is this recommendation . . . "

The twelfth through fourteenth clicks load three arrows that point to the three categories we started with: progress on goals and objectives, areas for improvement, and innovations. Ask the group: "How would you classify this recommendation?"

Listen to their responses.

Then, on the fifteenth through seventeenth clicks, you'll see that the arrow to "area for improvement" is shaded blue. Say, "Assuming this is not related to one of the program goals, we would classify this recommendation as an 'area for improvement.'"

Say, "Ready to try one more?"

49. Example 2: Recommendation

Click through each part of the process used to make a recommendation. Here is the order:

Say to participants, "Start with the end in mind. First on the slide is just the phase we are in, ''Recommend,' along with the three classification areas for your recommendations: "Progress on goals and objectives," "Systemic issues," and "Innovation." Some recommendations may fall into two of these categories, or even all three!"
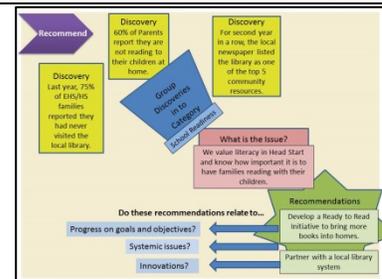
On the first click, "Recommend" disappears.

On the second through fourth clicks, "Discoveries" loads. Read the three discoveries on the slide.

The fifth click produces "Group Discoveries into Category." Ask participants how they would group these discoveries together.

On the fifth click is "School Readiness."

On the seventh click: "What is the issue?" Ask participants to think about what the issue is at hand. Once you get some responses, click the eighth click and read, "We value literacy in Head Start and know how important it is to have families reading with their children."

Tell participants, "Now it is time to come up with recommendations based on what you have identified." Click for the ninth time to see "Recommendations."

Have participants work with their groups to come up with some recommendations.

Load the tenth click that says, "Develop a Ready-to-Read Initiative to bring more books into homes" and "Partner with a local library system."

The eleventh click says, "Is this recommendation . . . "

The twelfth through fourteenth clicks load three arrows that point to the three categories we started with on the screen: "Progress on goals and objectives, "Systemic issues," and "Innovations." Ask the group: "How would you classify this recommendation?"

Hear their responses.

Then, on the fifteenth through seventeenth clicks, you see all three arrows are blue. Say, "Assuming literacy efforts are central to one of the program goals, we would classify this recommendation as 'progress on goals and objectives,' an 'area for improvement,' and an 'innovation.'"

Share that this process is just one way to funnel discoveries into recommendations. Ask participants if they have been a part of a Self-Assessment team and tried other ways to formulate recommendations...

Allow time to share.

50. Prepare Report

Say, "Let's look at how far we've come." (Briefly review the steps leading up to this point.)

This is Phase 5 of the Self-Assessment process. Review the bullets. Say, "We will now look at the parts of this phase in more detail."

51. Elements of SA Reports

Introduce the key elements of a Self-Assessment report:

Introduction: State who was involved; share when it happened.

Methodology: Explain the team's process; tell what data was used.

Key Insights: Share how the team arrived at its findings/recommendations and what the data told them (systemic and innovation findings/discoveries).

Recommendations: List conclusions taken from team recommendations. Identify next steps after SA.

52. How Is the SA Report Used?

This is what occurs after the Self-Assessment is completed. Review the bullets.

53. After Self-Assessment

This is what occurs after the Self-Assessment is completed. Review the bullets.

54. Who's Role Is It Anyway? A Board Game

Count off by 4's.

Tell 1's: You are the Head Start director.

2's: You are a management team member not on the SA team.

3's: You are a SA team member.

4's: You are a Policy Council or governing body member not on the SA team.

Say to all participants, "Get together with your role group. Discuss what you believe this role is in each phrase of the Self-Asssessment process."

Then have participants hold up fingers (without talking) to show their number. Ask them to gather together with one member of each of the 4 groups to share each role.

Review as a group.

Distribute the handout, "The Phases of the Self-Assessment Process," with all phases and bullets for participants to check their answers.
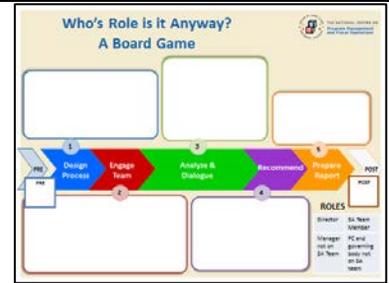
55. The Phases of the Self-Assessment Process
Review the graphic, making the following points:
- This slide shows the phases or process of the SA.
- There are five phases and the boxes next to each phase show the individual or team responsible for these steps.

Say to participants, "Let's take a closer look."

Review the graphic and invite participants to follow along on the handout.
Note to facilitator: This graphic is a handout for the session.
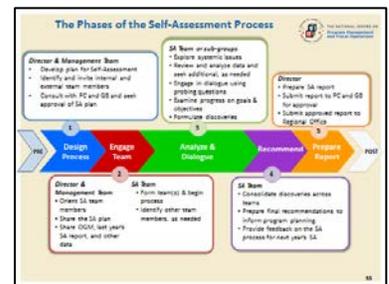
56. Program Planning Cycle
Share the program planning cycle and point out where Self-Assessment falls in the cycle. Stress that planning is a circular process that continues to build and evolve as other parts of the planning cycle come together. The cycle should be thought of as a slow-moving wheel with forward momentum.
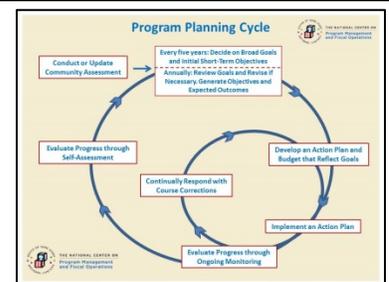
57. Truth or Myth (revisited from beginning of session)

Ask participants to revisit their "before" answers for the "Truth or Myth" activity. Review the answers with the group and ask, "Did anyone have an answer that changed from before the session to after? What did you learn?"

Answers:
1.) The Office of Head Start recommends that programs use the aligned monitoring tools to conduct Self-Assessment. (Myth)
OHS does not recommend that you use the aligned monitoring tools. Self-Assessment is a

locally designed process. There is no specific instrument that is either required or recommended.

2.) Self-Assessment involves gathering a lot of new data. (Myth)
Self-Assessment is focused on reviewing and analyzing ongoing monitoring (OGM) results and other data your program has collected, along with multiyear data.

3.) Self-Assessment team members must have prior experience with data analysis. (Myth, although a tricky one)
Self-Assessment team members need not be well-versed in *using* positive data approaches, but they need to be willing and open to *learning* about the use of positive approaches to data analysis.

4.) Best practice in Self-Assessment is to conduct the process once a year. (Truth)

5.) The director controls the Self-Assessment process at every phase, from designing the process to reporting out. (Myth)
The director is instrumental in designing the process, recruiting Self-Assessment team members, and developing the final report. He or she empowers the SA team to investigate, review, wonder, and dialogue among their own subgroups to move the SA process along efficiently and effectively. He or she does not control the process, though.

6.) Having team members from the community who bring an outside perspective and fresh eyes to the SA team is one of the key features of a comprehensive process. (Truth)

7.) The focus of Self-Assessment is solving problems and confirming compliance. (Myth)
Self-Assessment focuses on the strengths of the program in order to a) highlight progress on goals and objectives, and b) allow for innovations. Self-Assessment is *not* focused on compliance. That is the work of ongoing monitoring.

8.) Training on data-collection techniques (e.g., classroom observations, review of children's files) is strongly recommended for Self-Assessment team members. (Myth, although a tricky one.)
Training on data-collection techniques (e.g., comparison, trends, averages) and on team approaches that promote inquiry is strongly recommended. Data-collection is *not* the focus or intent of Self-Assessment.

9.) If your Self-Assessment team is large, you may choose to form smaller groups (or, subgroups) to focus on a specific topic. (Myth)

Each program can apply its own unique plans for creating and making subgroups out of the larger team, as needed, as well as choosing leaders of the subgroups within the Self-Assessment team.

10.) The Self-Assessment report is used only to report to the Regional Office. (Myth)
The Self-Assessment report informs program planning and ongoing monitoring. Results from the Self-Assessment are used to revisit ongoing goals and objectives and to make plans for innovations. Prior to being submitted to the Regional Office, it must be approved by Policy Council and the governing body.

58. Key Points: Self-Assessment

Summarize the session using the following key points about Self-Assessment:

Key Points: Self-Assessment
✓ Focus on strengths
✓ Note the differences between OGM and SA
✓ Stress data transfer rather than data collection
✓ Look at data in different ways
✓ Dialogue – Ask the right questions in SA
✓ Prioritize recommendations to lead to program planning decisions

- Both ongoing monitoring and Self-Assessment begin by focusing on strengths.
- Ongoing monitoring and Self-Assessment have different purposes and different processes.
- Data that is collected during ongoing monitoring is summarized and transferred to the Self-Assessment team. During Self-Assessment, this data is examined differently from examined differently from ongoing monitoring.
- Allowing enough time for dialogue is crucial for an effective Self-Assessment process.
- Recommendations will help shape the final report.

59. Questions

- Ask for any additional questions or reflections.
- Thank participants and make any final reflections.

Ask participants to complete any evaluation form that you are using.

60. Thank you!

For anyone wanting more information, leave this slide on the screen as participants filter out.

Thank-you!
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Cited Works

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