



School Readiness Plan

Developed by :

Administrative and Management Team of Central Texas 4C

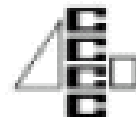
In conjunction with

Classroom Staff and Family and Community Advocates

And

Parents and Community Representatives of the

Central Texas 4C Education Advisory Board



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Purpose and Scope:

Central Texas 4C, Inc is committed to supporting children and their families to become emotionally, socially, and academically ready for a successful continuation in their educational journey. Through responsible fiscal management and an extensive recruitment and selection process, Central Texas 4C ensures that the needs of the most vulnerable families in the communities we serve are met. With the help of parents and community partners, Central Texas 4C has established school readiness goals which define the expectations of children's abilities and advancement across five domains: 1) social and emotional development; 2) approaches to learning; 3) cognitive and general knowledge; 4) language and literacy development and 5) physical health and development. We will honor the fact that each child, family and culture is unique as we work together to help children develop the skills needed for a successful transition into the public school system, including crucial knowledge and mind-set necessary for success in school and for later learning and life. These goals appropriately reflect the ages of children, birth to five, and are aligned with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, the revised Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines and with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Kindergarten to satisfy the requirements of §45 CFR Chapter XIII Head Start Regulation Part 1307.2 and 1307.3 (b)(1)(i), as amended.

Our Mission

*"We are committed to building stronger Central Texas communities,
One child and family at a time."*

School Readiness Goals

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Social Relationships

a) Establishes and sustains positive relationships with adults

For example: Infants will develop a secure attachment to one or more adults, i.e. smile when mom enters the room, and appear uneasy when a stranger holds them.

Toddler will begin exploring the environment, returning to a secure adult frequently, looking for encouragement and safety.

Young preschoolers will begin separating from their parent without distress and continue playing when the caregiver leaves their proximity.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten will engage with trusted adults, sharing mutual interests and engage in conversations, such as discussions about their pets (TS Gold, 2010)

b) Establishes and sustains positive relationships with peers

For example: Infants will respond to environmental stimuli such as the sound of another child's crying by showing some signs of distress.

Toddlers will begin to play near other children, imitating other children's play. Older toddler begins to seek preferred playmates, greets children as they enter the room, and seeks to sit closed to preferred child.

Young preschoolers will begin to develop successful strategies for entering groups, mostly watching what other children are doing and then contributing to the play. Young preschoolers will begin to develop friendship with one or two preferred playmates, joining these friends several times a day for cooperative play.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten will initiate or join in and sustain interactions with a small group of two or three children for an extended period of time. Older preschoolers will develop friendships with one or two other children, but these friendships may only last for a short period of time. Older preschoolers will talk about having friends and activities they share with their friends (TS Gold, 2010).

2. Regulates own emotions and behavior

For example: Infants will cry when in distress, respond to changes in adult's voice and will calm when touched or rocked.

Toddlers will comfort self by seeking a special object or person, seek to do things by themselves and accept redirection from adults.

Young preschoolers will begin to delay gratification, follow simple classroom routines and rules with some reminders and will begin to demonstrate confidence in taking care of own needs.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten will be able to control their emotions most of the time, verbally express their wants and needs, and apply familiar rules to new but similar situations (TS Gold, 2010).

3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations

For example: Toddlers will begin to recognize needs and wants of others. A toddler may give a stuffed animal to a child that cries. Toddlers will begin to express feelings during conflict, such as scream or look down when pushed by another child.

Young preschoolers will seek the help of an adult when encountering conflict. Young preschoolers begin to follow simple classroom rules, needing frequent reminders. Young preschoolers begin to play cooperatively, taking turns and reminding others of rules.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten will begin to initiate the sharing of material, allowing others to use materials and then asking for the material back when it is their turn. Older preschoolers will begin to solve social problems, such as deciding who will push on the swing first and then switch roles (TS Gold, 2010)

APPROACHES TO LEARNING

1. Shows curiosity and motivation

For example: Infants will turn their head towards the sound of their mother's voice or reach for an object. Older infants will repeatedly shake a rattle to make a sound and attempt to move closer to touch an object.

Toddler will place items in a wagon and then dump them out repeatedly. Watch others perform tasks and then try to complete them independently, such as using a spoon or stacking toys.

Young preschoolers will begin to stay on task even if there are minor distractions, such as continuing to draw a picture even after a playmate took a favorite marker. Young preschoolers will imitate how others solve problems, such as ask another child to hold his cup while he pours milk.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten will begin to think problems through before beginning to solve them, such as looking at a variety of blocks before deciding which shape and size piece to use. Older preschoolers begin to develop simple hypothesis and ways to test results, such as watching a bean sprout with or without light. Older preschoolers start to develop interest in a variety of topics and begin to seek information about a variety of topics utilizing resources such as books and props. (TS Gold, 2010)

2. Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking and problem solving

For example: Infants will begin to reach for a toy that is just out of reach and will attempt to move closer. Older infant will grunt when a cube gets stuck in a shape sorter in order to obtain adult assistance.

Toddlers observe others and begin to imitate others, such as imitating a playmate placing a bucket on the head or looking in a box for a toy.

Young preschoolers begin to engage in dramatic and pretend play using substitute items such as using a blanket over a chair instead of a tent.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten start to change their plans when someone offers a better idea, such as building on a hard surface when a block tower built on soft ground keeps falling. Older preschoolers begin to engage in simple board games requiring some memory and problem solving such as "Memory" or "Sorry". (TS Gold, 2010)

3. Persists and continues with activity when not successful on first try, especially with adult assistance

For example: Infants will begin to repeat actions to obtain a result, such as continue to hit a toy to repeat a sound, catching a deep breath during a game of peek-a-boo or waiting for the action to be repeated.

Toddlers will request that a caregiver read a book over and over, anticipating certain highlights in the story. Toddlers will build a block tower repeatedly just to watch it fall down. Young preschoolers will begin to repeat actions until mastery, such as attempting to solve a simple puzzle, asking for help from the teacher until he is able to complete the puzzle independently.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten will begin to develop a plan initiating help from their peers, such as trying to utilize a large variety of blocks in specific ways to build a defined structure. (TS Gold, 2010)

COGNITIVE AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE:

1. Count, quantify, and connect numbers with quantities

For example: Infants listen to teachers reciting finger plays and songs involving rote counting. Tactile stimulus is added by touching the infant's fingers or toes when counting.

Toddler will begin to join in rote counting finger plays, but do not always name the numerals in the correct order (says: "One, two, ten, ..."). Toddlers begin to understand the meaning of "More", asking for more food at mealtime.

Young preschoolers begin to rote count to ten. Young preschoolers can correctly count items in small sets (up to five). Young preschoolers begin to identify numerals and match to sets.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten will verbally count to twenty, or further, depending on the children's individual learning rate, and tell what number comes next in order. Older preschoolers can identify numerals, identify small quantities without counting, and can match larger numbers to sets (6-10 objects). Older preschoolers are able to solve simple addition and subtraction activities using props or counters. (TS Gold, 2010)

2. Explore and describe spatial relationships and shapes

For example: Infants experience being picked up and being placed back down. Visual displays and toys with clear colors and shapes are provided as visual and tactile stimuli. Toddlers start to follow simple directions related to position, such as "place the toy in the box, climb up the stairs, or slide down the slide." Shape sorters and simple puzzles are available for matching and exploring.

Young preschoolers start to follow directions related to proximity, such as "walk beside me, stand next to me and place the toy between the blocks." Young preschoolers are able to identify and name basic shapes (circle, square, and triangle).

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten will begin to use positional words indicating direction, location, and distance. Older preschoolers will begin to identify more complex two and three-dimensional shapes, even if they are presented in a new orientation, or in a non-traditional form (Identifies a pizza slice as a triangle, a square box as a cube, or a round bead as a ball). (TS Gold, 2010)

3. Use scientific tools for measuring and comparing

For example: Toddlers experiment with puzzles and matching toys identifying bigger and smaller items. Also pour from one container to another experiencing volume and weight. Young preschoolers begin to compare items, such as who build the taller tower, jumped the longest distance or ran the fastest. Young preschoolers begin to measure by placing items

next to each other, or using non-standardized measuring tools such as blocks to make comparisons. Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten begin to use standard measuring units and tools to compare items. Older preschoolers begin to measure liquids with standard cups, compare weight with the aid of a scale, and utilize linking cubes to determine standard measure expressed in numerals. (TS Gold, 2010)

4. Connect new experiences to experiences in the past

For example: Infants begin to recognize familiar voices, smells, and touch. Consistent caregivers and routines help instill an early sense of safety and predictability. Dropping toys that are promptly retrieved by an adult and games such as peek-a-boo teach object permanence.

Toddlers begin to make connections with familiar gestures and routines. For example, waving "bye-bye" indicates someone is leaving, putting on shoes and jacket indicates the toddler is going outside. Toddlers begin to develop a simple vocabulary to talk about objects that are not present, "Mama come back." Toddlers begin to associate sounds with items, such as a motorcycle passing.

Young preschoolers begin to recall events from the past and tell stories about objects, events, and people not present. These simple stories often have limited details and sometimes lack a conventional beginning, middle, and end.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten start to identify common events and routines, and start to be able to identify what comes next. Older preschoolers begin to recall events from the past with a logical order that includes many details. Older preschoolers become aware that people and places change over time, and retell stories referring back to "When I was a baby." Older preschoolers begin to understand that time can be measured and begin to use words such as yesterday, today, tomorrow, day, week, month, minute, hour. (TS Gold, 2010)

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY:

1. Demonstrates phonological awareness and sound recognition

For example: Infants listen to teachers reciting finger plays and songs with a variety of repetitive sounds and slogans.

Toddlers begin to participate in songs and finger plays with repetitive sounds and slogans such as "baby bumblebee," clapping to words and syllables.

Young preschoolers will continue to participate in songs, finger plays, and stories with repetitive sounds and slogans, moving a variety of body parts to sounds and syllables. Young preschoolers are allowed to fill in missing rhyming words and create silly words and word-strings.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten start to differentiate whether two words rhyme, and match up pictures of rhyming words. Older preschoolers begin to identify beginning sounds and group items according to their beginning sound. (TS Gold, 2010)

Finger plays and songs reflecting children's native languages will be used in classrooms with Dual Language Learners (DLL).

2. Develops and understands complex and increasing vocabulary

For example: Infants begin to turn their head towards people who are talking and start to recognize familiar voices and change in tone of voice. Infants use squeals and cries to accompany their mood, and start to imitate language by producing babble strings.

Toddlers start to identify familiar people, animals, and objects when prompted. Toddlers respond to simple verbal requests, especially when accompanied by gestures. Toddlers begin to use one- or two-word sentences to express themselves, and engage in simple back and forth exchange with others, such as shaking head for "No" or waving "bye-bye."

Young preschoolers start to follow two-step directions and respond appropriately to specific vocabulary and simple statements, questions, and stories. Young preschoolers begin to follow conventional rules of conversation, participating in a brief exchange of ideas and utilizing appropriate eye contact. Young preschoolers begin to form short three to five word sentences, and retell simple stories, omitting many details, and confusing order of events.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten follow detailed instructions, with multi-step directions. They begin to respond appropriately to complex vocabulary, statements and questions. Older preschoolers begin to retell stories and events in detail and are understood by most people, but may mispronounce new, long, or unusual words. (TS Gold, 2010)

Children that are acquiring the English language (DLL) will be given time to observe the classroom environment. Stable routines will help children to be able to follow classroom routines. Songs and story time are available in English and Spanish. Teachers will utilize gestures and visual aids to accompany words and phrases. Proper pronunciation is modeled but not required from children.

3. Uses and appreciates books

For example: Infants are allowed to explore a variety of books (cloth books, washable soft books, board books) independently. Additionally teachers will engage one or two infants at a time in lap reading sessions, allowing the child's interest, mood, and temperament to guide the topic and duration of the reading session.

Toddlers are provided free access to a variety of sturdy books small enough for toddlers to carry with them throughout the room and larger books that allow for easy shared reading. Teachers will allow the toddlers to control the book, look at and touch the pictures and identify pictures of familiar items.

Young preschoolers are taught the proper orientation of books as well as the different parts of a book. The concept that every book has an author, illustrator, and publisher is introduced. Younger preschoolers begin to ask questions about pictures or contents in story. Younger preschoolers will pretend to read and begin to retell familiar stories with the help of pictures and prompts from adults.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten start to identify story related problems and connect them to real life experiences. Older preschoolers begin to make predictions towards the outcome of events, and are often able to recite simple stories, closely matching the written text, using reading like pronunciation and pointing to words on the page. (TS Gold, 2010) Books and printed materials in the classroom reflect the languages spoken by the children (DLL).

4. Demonstrates knowledge of print and its use

For example: Infants are introduced to print through lap reading as well as print in the environment. Simple manipulative toys are provided to encourage the development of wrist movement and pincher grip needed for pre-writing activities.

Toddlers, through observation of adults, begin to understand that the spoken word can be written down. Large easy grip crayons and markers are provided for toddlers to use independently.

Young preschoolers will begin to imitate print, writing letter like forms and letter strings. Younger preschoolers start to print letters of their name and recognize some letters in the names of classmates. Younger preschoolers begin to name up to ten letters and make some letter sound connections.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten will start to write their complete name, although not always correctly. Older preschoolers will identify 11-20 upper-, and 11-20 lower case letters in random order when asked. Older preschoolers begin to write words and sentences using inventive writing, often using the correct initial and final sound of words.

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT:

1. Physical Health Status

a) Establish a medical home

For example: During enrollment process the Family and Community Advocate (FCA), together with parent/guardian, determines if the child has an ongoing source of continuous, accessible health care.

If a child does not have a source of ongoing health care, the FCA will assist the parents in establishing a medical/dental home.

b) Participates in health and development screenings

For example: With parent/guardian consent, all children will receive preventive and primary health care, including medical, dental, vision, hearing, immunizations, developmental and mental health screenings/exams. The FCA will work with families to ensure screenings and exams are completed according to Texas EPSDT schedule. Every effort is made to ensure children receive follow-up care as needed.

c) Eats nutritious meals

For example: Infants are fed on demand setting their own schedule. Solid food is introduced at the recommendation of a registered dietitian or the child's physician.

Toddlers will participate in family style meals, tasting a variety of healthy foods. Concepts relating to good hygiene, such as hand washing, and independent feeding are introduced. Young preschoolers are introduced to good hygiene and table manners through family style meals. Young preschoolers begin to classify type of foods and understand that foods have different health values. Young preschoolers begin to understand that a variety of foods is needed for a healthy lifestyle. A variety of ethnic food choices are introduced to the children during meals. Young preschoolers begin to understand that exercise provides health benefits, and they participate in structured and unstructured exercise daily.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten begin to recognize that personal health practices such as eating nutritious meals and getting sufficient rest affect the overall well being. Older preschoolers are able to identify and name healthy foods. Older preschoolers are able to prepare simple foods and can verbalize the need for healthy food choices.

2. Health Knowledge and Practices

a) Demonstrates knowledge about self

For example: Infants participate in finger plays and songs identifying body parts and emotions.

Toddlers begin to identify basic emotions in self and others, and realize that events can influence emotions. Toddlers start to identify body parts and can point to eyes, ears, and nose when prompted.

Young preschoolers describe themselves in terms of age, gender, physical traits, behavior, preferences, and role in the family. Young preschoolers start to demonstrate an understanding that each person has the same basic needs, but also that people have unique characteristics that make them different from others.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten begin to develop ethnic identities and notice differences in culture, family and social settings. Older preschoolers begin to participate in personal story telling, utilizing information obtained by interaction with family members as their source of self-knowledge and cultural identity. (TS Gold, 2010)

b) Takes Care of own need appropriately

For example: Infants cry to show discomfort, hunger, or tiredness. Infants will open their mouth when food is offered, and begin to raise knees to chest when getting a diaper change. Toddlers start to do things for themselves. They pull off their shoes and socks, and attempt to clean up toys when prompted. Toddlers assert own needs by pointing, gesturing, or talking, and begin to develop self-help skills such as eating finger foods or holding hands under faucet to wash them.

Young preschoolers will start to dress themselves, utilize eating utensils and begin to pour liquids. Young preschoolers will wash their hands and use a towel to dry with little or no help from adults, dress themselves, and start to participate in simple chores taking care of their environment. Young preschoolers start to approach difficult tasks with confidence and remain involved in an activity that is of interest.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten will stay with a task for an extended time, even when encountering difficulties. Older preschoolers can take care of personal belongings, such as taking of their coat and hanging it up, or putting personal artwork in a designated place. (TS Gold, 2010)

3. Gross Motor Skills

a) Moves purposefully from place to place

For example: Infants begin to move to explore the environment. Infants begin by lifting and turning their head, rolling over, sitting with support and reaching for toys. In time, they will scoot and crawl to explore their surroundings.

Toddlers experiment with different ways of moving, such as walking along furniture, or using push toys to move, and then walk across the room. Toddlers squat to pick up toys or stand on tiptoes to reach something. Toddlers begin to get in and out of chairs and climb over low obstacles such as the edge of the sandbox.

Young preschoolers will walk up and down stairs, jump off low steps, ride tricycles while using pedals.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten will run smoothly and quickly, change directions and stop and start with control. Older preschoolers can gallop and skip with ease, walk on beam forward and backward, and attempt to jump rope.

b) Manipulates balls and similar objects

For example: Infants reach for objects, push a ball across the floor, and drop or swipe items off a table.

Toddler grasps a ball or other large object with two hands and outstretched arms and flings smaller items such as beanbags with stiff body movement.

Young preschoolers throw a ball by pushing it with both hands, and catch with straight arms.

Young preschoolers kick a stationary ball and can carry a large ball while moving.

Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten can manipulate a ball or similar object with a full range of motion, catching a ball with both hands in front. Older preschoolers can throw a ball while stepping forward, and kick a moving ball while running. (TS Gold, 2010)

4. Fine Motor Skills

For example: Infants reach for objects and hold objects with a fist. Infants can transfer objects from hand to hand, and release objects voluntarily.

Toddler will release objects into containers, place shapes in shape sorter, rotate knobs, and tear paper. Toddlers will grasp drawing tools with whole hand, jabbing at paper or using whole arm movement to make marks.

Young preschoolers begin to snip with scissors and string large beads. Young preschoolers can button, zip, and lace, and are able to use eating utensils. Young preschoolers hold writing and drawing tools using a three-finger grip and may hold the instrument too close to one end. Older preschoolers ready for transition to Kindergarten start to use small precise finger and hand movement. Older preschoolers can string small beads, attempt to tie shoes, and can cut simple pictures with scissors using a correct scissor grip. Older preschoolers use three-point finger grip and efficient hand placement when writing and drawing. (TS Gold, 2010)

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. Evidence Based Curricula

Central Texas 4C is implementing the *Creative Curriculum* as its Core Curricula. The *Creative Curriculum* is directly linked to the assessment tool, Teaching Strategies Gold. It

provides the teaching staff with suggested activities and materials for individual children, directly related to the assessment.

The *Creative Curriculum* provides activities and information to be shared with families. The curriculum is open ended and other curricula requested by the LEA can be integrated with the *Creative Curriculum* approach.

ISD Implemented Curriculum

Classrooms integrated with the Local Education Agency (LEA) will utilize the curriculum requested by the LEA in their weekly planning

Supplementary Resources (0-3 year olds):

To provide the teaching staff with a wide variety of age appropriate activities, reference materials listed are the selected supplementary curricula that are used for Early Head Start classrooms. Activities to encourage individual development documented on the lesson plans may be chosen from these thirteen sources:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) Active Learning for Infants | 8) The Comprehensive Infant Curriculum |
| 2) Active Learning for Ones | 9) The Comprehensive Toddler Curriculum |
| 3) Active Learning for Twos | 10) Brain Games for Babies |
| 4) Active Learning for Threes | 11) Brain Games for Toddlers and Twos |
| 5) Active Learning for Fours | 12) Teach Your Baby to Sign |
| 6) Active Learning for Children with Disabilities | 13) Simple Signing with Young Children |
| 7) Simple Steps | 14) High Five Mathematize |

Supplementary Resources (3-5 year olds):

In support of the Creative Curriculum, Central Texas 4C provides the following supplemental curricula to addresses all aspects of the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (HSCD/EL Framework):

Supportive Curricula:	Connecting Content, Instant Curriculum, Creative Resources, ISD Pre-K Curricula
Mental Health:	Exploring Feelings, Adventures in Peacemaking & I Love You Rituals, Growing Strong
Nutrition:	HS Nutrition Education Curriculum & Chef Combo
Dental	Head Start Dental Curriculum, Superbrush & Cavity Free Kids
Multicultural:	Anti-Bias Curriculum & Creative Resources Anti-Bias Classroom

Math	One, Two Buckle My Shoe, More Than Counting, High Five Mathematize
Science:	Mudpies to Magnets, Everyday Discoveries
Literacy	Creating Readers, STEP & C.I.R.C.L.E. Manuals
Constructions	Block Play
Dramatic Play:	Prop Box Play
Health:	Healthy Me, Growing, Growing Strong
Gross Motor:	Great Games for Young Children
Transportation:	Transportation Safety Education Curriculum, Growing Strong

2. High Quality Learning Environment:

a) Clean, Safe and Inviting

Clean, safe, and inviting classrooms provide an environment where children feel safe and happy, families feel confident in leaving their child, and teachers look forward to coming to work each day. Central Texas 4C ensures that our classrooms are maintained at a high standard by conducting a great variety of safety inspections

- Daily Checklist - The center director ensures that the environment is clean, supplies are well stocked, and all safety measures are in place.
- Monthly Building Checklist – completed by the center director and forwarded to the Program Director; work orders are submitted to the maintenance team.
- Quarterly Safety Check - The Health Coordinator inspects all buildings, playgrounds, and premises for proper maintenance and repairs. Maintenance work orders are initiated should a need be identified.
- ADA accessible - All Centers will be assessed by the center directors using the ADA checklist and monitored by the Mental Wellness & Disability Coordinator.

b) Assessment using ECERS-R and ITES-R

Central Texas 4C will use the revised Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R) and the revised Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITES-R) to rate the classroom environment.

The Education Coordinator and Early Childhood Specialist use the result of this assessment as a guideline to purchase material, train staff, and initiate mentoring.

c) Best practices

During the annual procedure manual training, classroom staff is trained on implementing Best Practices as outlined in the Head Start and Early Head Start Curriculum Plan (GERMS).

This training includes, but is not limited to the implementation of an age and developmentally appropriate daily schedule, implementation of learning centers, and positive guidance techniques.

3. Valid and Reliable Assessment Tools

a) Screenings (Ages and Stages (ASQ -3))

Every child enrolled will receive a developmental screening (ASQ - 3) within the first 45 days of attendance. The ASQ - 3 assesses children's abilities in the areas of communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, personal-social, and overall development. These screenings are completed by the primary teacher in conjunction with the parent, preferable during the Orientation Home visit. The Mental Health & Disability Coordinator monitors children who scored below the cutoff score and together with the parent and teacher initiates the appropriate next step.

b) Ongoing Assessments:

Teaching Strategies Gold: Central Texas 4C uses Teaching Strategies Gold as its primary assessment tool. Teaching Strategies Gold is an observation based assessment aligned with the Core Curriculum, Creative Curriculum. The Assessment can be completed in English and Spanish, is norm referenced, and allows for the integration of family input

TSR (Texas School Ready): In addition to the ongoing assessment implemented by Central Texas 4C, Children dually enrolled in Head Start and the local public pre-school program are also assessed using the assessment tool implemented by the local LEA.

4. Highly Individualized Planning:

a) IDP/MDP

Teaching staff utilizes ongoing observations to determine children's developmental strength, needs, temperament, and interest. This information then is used by the teaching staff to develop activities for individual children, to reflect the children's unique character and developmental state. Teachers document the desired goal on the IDP/MDP form. Planned activities to support these IDP/MDP goals are reflected on the weekly lesson plan.

b) IEP/IFSP/ Positive Behavior Support Plan

Teaching staff will implement activities to support goals developed by the professionals for children receiving disability services. A Positive Behavior Support Plan will be designed for children identified with behavioral concerns. The team will consist of the teachers, family members, Education Coordinator and Mental Health & Disability Coordinator.

c) Lesson planning

Teaching staff develops weekly Lesson Plan Units. These units reflect the chosen curricula and include activities for individual children, as well as activities for indoor and outdoor play, transitions, group activities and cultural influences.

5. Effective Teacher/Child Interactions

a) CLASS Assessment

Teacher child interaction in our Head Start and Early Head Start Classrooms will be monitored by certified staff using the CLASS instrument. Results from the CLASS assessment will be monitored by the Education Coordinator and classroom staff will receive immediate feedback about areas of strength and suggestions for improvement. Additionally, information gathered using the CLASS assessment tool will be used to plan staff training and implement a mentoring plan.

c) Conscious Discipline

To ensure a positive classroom climate and provide teaching staff with routines and techniques that help teach children social emotional skills, such as getting along with others and managing emotions, Central Texas 4C has adopted Dr. Becky Bailey's "Conscious Discipline" program as the primary Mental Health Curriculum.

d) Mentor Program

Whenever possible, a peer coach is assigned to help ease the transition for newly hired teaching staff. Additionally, at the recommendation of Education Coordinator, Early Childhood Specialist, or Center Director, teachers may be paired with a mentor teacher to improve outcomes, increase teacher child interaction, or develop techniques to deal with difficult children. Recommendations may be based on assessment results, classroom observations, or teacher request.

e) Mental Health Observations

A mental health consultant is available to observe Classrooms if deemed needed by the Mental Wellness Coordinator. This professional will assess children for behavioral or emotional concerns, and will evaluate effectiveness of teacher child interactions. The results from the Mental Health observations may be used to assess and develop improved classroom management techniques as well as a Behavior Management/Positive Support plans.

f) Sufficient Planning Time

Teaching staff is provided with designated time daily to prepare the environment, discuss ongoing success of the curriculum, and develop plans and lessons to increase children's development.

g) Staff Development Planning Monitoring & Assistance

Individual Staff Development Plans are developed utilizing data from observations and assessments and may include training needs and mentoring support recommendations.

6. Effective Referral Process:

If the result of the physical, developmental screening, mental health observations, or parent information suggests that there is a reason to suspect a disability, Head Start will make referrals to the Local Education Agency (LEA); Early Head Start will make referrals to Early Childhood Intervention (ECI). Should it be necessary to refer the family to a different provider, Central Texas 4C will work with other agencies to provide needed services. Referrals for in-depth screening or disabilities services can be initiated by the parent, or based on teacher observations.

Referrals will be initiated by the FCA under the guidance of the Mental Health and Disability Coordinator, after discussing the identified concerns with the parent/guardian and obtaining the family's input and consent.

Staff Development

1. Ongoing, in classroom technical assistance

Based on the results of the CLASS assessment, ECERS/ITERS result, Ongoing Assessment, classroom observations, or teacher request, a variety of in-class and training support is available to teaching staff.

ISD/TSR Mentors are assigned to classrooms integrated with the LEA. These Mentors assist the teaching staff with planning and implementing of lessons, as well as classroom management and room arrangement. The Mental Wellness/Disabilities and Education Coordinator conduct classroom observations and utilize the result to provide the teacher with suggestions, resources, and materials needed to improve any noted concerns.

Peer and mentor teaching are utilized to help staff learn new concepts and acquire needed skills that are especially sensitive to family cultures. In addition, the center director is available to help teachers during critical situations and when in need of immediate or short-term support.

2. Observations/Assessment tool implementation training

To ensure the ongoing assessment tool is implemented successfully and teaching staff is able to use the tool as an effective aid in planning individual lessons the following training steps are implemented.

a) Procedure Training (Including Teaching Strategies Gold Procedures)

All teaching staff participates in a yearly procedure manual training. During this training, procedures in the effective technique to observe children and document their progress to summarize children's progress, and retrieve reports helpful in the planning of individual development activities and measurable developmental profile activities are explained.

In addition, procedures to include families in the evaluation of the individual child's progress, and planning and implementing of future educational activities are included in the training.

b) Training Based on Outcomes

Small group and individual training sessions are implemented to help teaching staff improve their observation and planning skills. Based on the ongoing assessment outcomes report, including results for dual language learners, additional training is implemented with the goal of increasing children's development in specific areas of concern.

c) Pre-service Training (Ensure qualified staff)

Yearly pre-service training is provided to all staff. The pre-service training is designed to meet state and federal mandates, help staff learn new developments in best practices, become

familiar with current research in child development, be knowledgeable about health and safety practices, and prevention/recognition of child abuse.

d) Online Tutorials

Online tutorials, explaining the use of the Ongoing Assessment Tool are available to the staff and can be accessed at any time.

Additionally, staff may access online courses for childcare workers through the Texas Department of Agriculture.

e) Secondary Education (College)

To help the staff become more effective and knowledgeable teachers, Central Texas 4C will help with college tuition up to a Bachelor Degree in Early Childhood Development.

3. New Staff training

New staff receives a wide variety of training, to help newly hired staff become familiar with agency expectations and procedures, and ease the transition for the parents and children.

a) New Employee Orientation

All newly hired staff will participate in a new employee orientation. During the New Employee Orientation, staff will be instructed on child abuse law, agency resources, and minimum standards.

b) Procedure Manual Training

Newly hired teaching staff will participate in a two-day procedure manual training. During this training, staff will become familiar with agency procedures as well the curriculum and ongoing assessment tool.

c) Teaching Strategies Gold Training

Following the procedure manual training, newly hired teaching staff will receive hands on training utilizing the online databank to gather individual children's information, retrieve reports for planning purposes, and develop individual developmental goals and supporting activities.

d) Conscious Discipline Training

Newly hired teaching staff will participate in video training concerning the implementation of effective classroom management techniques and ways to help children develop appropriate social skills.

e) Pre-service Training (Texas Workforce)

As legally mandated by the State of Texas, newly hired teaching staff that does not have experience working in a licensed childcare center, will participate in a Workforce sponsored Pre-Service training. During this training, such topics as supervision, child abuse, shaken baby syndrome, and disease prevention are introduced.

f) First Aid and CPR certification

All newly hired staff is offered the opportunity to become First Aid and CPR certified.

g) Video Training (Best Practices)

Depending on the individual need of newly hired staff, video training concerning teaching environment, effective large group sessions, or learning through play will be initiated.

e) Online Workshops/Tutorials

There are numerous online training opportunities available to the staff provided by the Texas Workforce Commission, Loving Guidance, as well as TS Gold. These training opportunities cover a wide array of topics and skills and are accessible to the teaching staff at all times.

4. Staff Recognition:

A steady and dedicated workforce is the heart of our organization. To ensure staff feels appreciated, management and administrative staff uses positive encouragement and praise whenever possible.

Central Texas 4C has implemented the following formal awards and policies:

Betty Neill Award for outstanding Head Start and Early Head Start classroom, Leadership Award, CDA recognition (Pins), Longevity awards and pay increases based on educational achievements/milestones.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Central Texas 4C will make every effort to provide parent with information (Oral or written) in the language the parent prefers.

1. Family well-being:

a) Agency will ensure a culture of respect towards all parents and the community

All families and community partners will be embraced in a manner that ensures respect, acceptance, inclusion, importance, and safety. Family cultures will be honored.

b) Develop on-going positive relationships

Ensuring knowledgeable & skilled staff sensitive to parents' values and culture, staff will develop knowledge and skill in supporting families. This process begins at the enrollment process and is on-going.

c) Assess families' strengths and needs

During enrollment, the FCA asks the parent/guardian a variety of questions concerning the family's current well-being. This information provides the foundation for identifying family strength and needs and is used as a starting point towards strengthening the environment in which the child grows. The Family and Community Coordinator will work closely with the FCA to ensure needed services and resources are available.

d) Develop community partnerships

Community agreements are established with agencies that will be assisting our families. Staff is also engaged in community meetings to get the Head Start information out, and getting community information to our families.

e) Begin the goal setting process and make referrals (initiate FPA)

Families are assessed after enrollment to understand the family's strengths, needs and goals. The referral process begins and is followed up monthly. (i.e.: Housing, safety, health, mental health, employment and job skills, budget and finances.)

2. Positive parent-child relationships

a) Prenatal care and education

Expectant mothers are provided information on health screenings, fetus development, and the importance of breast feeding.

b) Family involvement (father, mother, etc.)

Parents are recognized as the primary nurturer and advocates of their child. Opportunities will be given to parents to participate in the programs as volunteers, advisory members. Inclusion of other family members (i.e. grandparents) is also encouraged.

c) Parent Education

Families will be given opportunities to enhance their parenting skills, gain knowledge and understanding of educational & development needs of the children. Parents can share concerns and achievements about the child; this is done by daily communication (i.e. child development, guidance, mental wellness).

d) Engage with parents as equal partners

4C encourages all families to engage in policy and program decisions.

3. Families as lifelong educators

a) Encourage daily reading

All centers have lending libraries that are accessible for families to check out books and read to their child at home. Parents are given the reading logs which encourages reading daily, which in turn are given volunteer time. The logs are available in the family's language.

b) Weekly Home activities

Teachers will provide parents with activities that families can do at home; these activities will enhance the knowledge of the weekly lesson and are in the family's language.

c) Parent Involvement (home visit/center visit, volunteers)

We acknowledge the parents as the primary educator of the child; we engage them in the education of their children, during visits, meetings and through daily conversations with families.

d) Parent Workshops

Monthly workshops are provided in each center. The topics are chosen by the parents based on their needs.

e) Parents as Partners – shared decision making

Once parents are involved in their child's education at the center level, 4C encourages them to participate in the decision-making process at the program level, (i.e., parent input concerning education, policies, and procedures).

4. Families as learners

a) Agreements with education entities and organizations

Community agreements and Memorandum of Understanding's (MOU's) are established (i.e.: Community College for GED, ESL)

b) Provision of computer labs

4C has provided families with computer labs in Temple, Belton, and Killeen to assist them with employment, education, information.

c) Inclusion in parent meetings and learning

Staff provides all families with a monthly newsletter that informs them of all upcoming events within the agency and center.

d) Parents as volunteers

Parents that want to participate in the classroom setting are given the required volunteer orientation, and a background check is completed (TDFPS requirement). By volunteering, parents receive on-the-job training, and a good reference of experience. Many staff employed by Central Texas 4C were/are Head Start parents.

e) Supportive Staff

Training is developed to support staff in helping families reach their goals. FCA's have monthly case-management meetings to discuss concerns that cannot be resolved. The new report card process with Mid-management team offers assistance to staff on services with families.

f) Provision of Handouts and Workshops upon parent request

Families are provided with a 'family handbook' in their home language which provides community resources and information. At enrollment, parents discuss workshops that they feel are needed for self development.

5. Family engagement in transitions

a) Enrollment

Information is provided during this process about the whole family, the family partnership process begins at this time.

b) Orientation

4C provides families with the policy and procedures of the Head Start program during the first home visit, as well as the Open House.

c) Parent Meeting

During the Open House, staff will explain the Head Start program and ways families are involved. This is the time families bring their child to the center to become familiar with the classroom and teachers.

d) Placement/Fieldtrip

Once the child's next placement has been established, a schedule to visit the future location is arranged. This visit should include child, parents, and staff.

e) Transition Folders

When a child leaves our program, staff will provide pertinent information about the child. With the parents permission, this information is shared with the child's next placement (Kindergarten, Head Start, childcare, or home). To ensure a smooth transition for children that are dually enrolled with the local LEA and Head Start, the FCA will ensure all needed documentation is current.

f) Follow up Support

At parents' request, Central Texas 4C staff will visit with children at the next placement. After the child has left our program, 4C will continue to support families and provide services to the best of our abilities should family member indicate a need.

6. Family connections to peers and community

a) Meetings/workshops

Monthly center meetings are created to get parents involved in group discussions, parental input, and suggestions. Providers from the community are invited to speak with families about topics chosen.

b) Referrals to community resources

Community agreements and contracts are established from a variety of community resources that will assist with the needs of our families.

c) Community assessment – updated on-going

CT4C's community assessment is updated continuously throughout the year. This gives us the data to understand and plan to meet the needs of the community.

d) Parent work area (safe/inviting)

All centers have a 'Parent Work Area'. This area is a safe, quiet, and inviting area. Parents can look at the Parent Notebook for prior meeting information, find resource materials, work on things needed by classrooms, etc.

e) Parent Involvement (committees, volunteers)

We acknowledge the parents as the primary educator of the child; we engage parents in the education of their children, during visits, meetings and through daily conversations with families. Parents are encouraged to participate with their child inside the classroom as

volunteers, becoming members of the center committee, 4C Policy Council and Health/Education Advisory Committees where translators are available.

f) Peer recruiting (program, activities)

Parents are the best at recruiting other parents into our program, this happens by word of mouth, advertisement, etc.

7. Families as advocates and leaders

a) Committee Meetings

Once parents are involved in the program, we encourage them with making decisions about are program, (i.e.: parent input concerning education, policies, and procedures).

b) Parent Leadership Workshop

Officers are elected at the center level, policy council, and advisory committees, these officers are given information on how to conduct a proper meeting, how to write proper minutes, and the ‘Roberts Rules of Order’.

CHILD OUTCOMES

1. Data Collection Tools

a) Ongoing Assessment Tool: Teaching Strategies Gold

Central Texas 4C uses Teaching Strategies Gold as its primary assessment tool. Teaching Strategies Gold is an observation-based assessment aligned with the Core Curriculum, Creative Curriculum, the HSCD/EL Framework, and the Texas Pre-K Guidelines.

The Assessment can be completed in English and Spanish, is norm referenced, and allows for the integration of family input.

b) Health and Family Data Tracking: PROMIS

Central Texas 4C uses the Program Resources and Outcomes Management Information System (PROMIS), a web-based data management system, to track service for families and children. Services tracked include enrollment information and waiting lists, developmental and health screening results and follow ups, daily attendance, as well as family goals establishment and progress.

c) Teacher Child Interaction: CLASS

Central Texas 4C monitors teacher-child interaction in all Classrooms using the CLASS Assessment tool administered by trained CLASS Observers.

d) Positive Environment: ECERS-R/ITERS-R

Central Texas 4C monitors classroom environment, including room arrangement, labeling, provision of toys, daily schedule, and implementation of routines using the ECERS-R scale in the Head Start Classrooms and ITERS-R scale in the Early Head Start Classrooms.

2. Data Analysis & Implementation

a) Administrative Reports:

Using the tools described above, data is aggregated and analyzed three times yearly for Head Start and four times yearly for Early Head Start. The result is shared with staff, parents, management & governing boards, and community partners. Community partners include representatives of the local LEA, representatives of the child development department of collaborating colleges, local health care providers, and ECI.

Results of data analysis is used to develop and implement a program improvement plan which may include changes to policies and procedures, staff training recommendation, parent involvement, and purchase of materials and supplies.

Data included in the report are analyzed for the agency as a whole, to identify specific areas of concern as well as trends. Outcomes for specific classrooms are analyzed. This information is used for the planning of staff development and teacher placement.

Additionally, data for individual children are analyzed to ensure all children receive optimal services and educational support.

b) Individual Child and Classroom Specific Reports:

In addition to the Outcomes Report, aggregated every three months, child specific data is available to the FCA and teaching staff on an ongoing basis through PROMIS and TS Gold. This data support the staffs' ability to monitor progress and initiate continuous individual services.

3. Collaboration with local school district

a) Dual enrollment of children

Many of our pre-school age students are dually enrolled in Head Start and the local Independent School District (ISD). This allows for easy sharing of information between the LEA and Head Start and a smooth transition to Kindergarten for our Head Start student. Additionally, many resources, such as facilities, learning materials, and classroom equipment are shared between the agencies.

b) ISD integration teachers

Many of our preschool classrooms have a teaching staff provided by the local LEA who works hand in hand with the Head Start staff. This allows for an optimal implementation of individual and small group instruction, as more teaching support is present.

c) Participation with Texas School Ready (TSR)

Through a Grant from the Texas Workforce Commission, several classrooms participate in the TSR program. This grant evaluates children's academic skills and needs. The grant also provides Lead Teachers with tools and training to enhance school readiness in relation to the whole group as well as working with individual children.

4. Publication of Assessment results

a) Agency Report:

Data related to school readiness are analyzed quarterly and a program improvement plan is developed. Teaching staff will receive feedback concerning the outcomes result in several ways:

- A written memorandum informs teaching staff of areas of concern and follow up measures, such as training or policy changes.
- Results of the data analysis are discussed during a variety of management meetings (i.e. Director Meeting, FCA meeting). Center management will then share results with the teaching staff at their site.
- Results are shared with the Board of Directors, 4C Policy Council, Health Advisory Committee, and the Education Advisory Committee.

b) Classroom report:

At any time, the teaching staff may access a report demonstrating the overall developmental level of children in the classroom. The classroom staff can use this report to identify specific

areas of strength and weakness and, together with the Education Coordinator, plan corrective measures if indicated.

c) Individual Child report:

The data related to individual children's school readiness are analyzed quarterly by the classroom staff. The teaching staff, together with the parent, develops a plan establishing future goals for individual children and ways the parent can support the child's learning at home. Additionally, teachers can access child's current data more frequently.

TRANSITIONS

1. Family involvement

a) Parent chooses next placement

Once the child's next placement has been established then a schedule to visit the future location with the child, parents, and staff. Staff supports the parent by providing information and setting up appointments at the parent's convenience.

b) Parent meeting (allow for questions and voice concerns)

A parent meeting is scheduled at the end of the HS school year, for all families that have children transitioning to Kindergarten. A representative from the ISD will come to explain the expectations and requirements for the next school year. This gives families an opportunity to ask questions and voice any concerns.

c) Provision of information

Families are provided with the registration dates for Kindergarten, field trips are scheduled to visit the Kindergarten classroom, information will be provided about school expectations, and summer activities.

d) Future support (follow-up on next placement, 4C Alumni)

Once the child has left our program, if a parent shares with the agency that they are having concerns with their child, we will visit child/family/teacher to offer assistance.

2. Child engagement

a) Visit/Fieldtrip to next site:

Whenever possible, the FCA will work with the child's next placement site to arrange for the child to visit the future classroom in the company of a familiar, trusted adult.

b) Classroom activities to prepare children

Children ready to transition to Kindergarten are provided with the opportunity to explore their next placement with the use of dramatic play props, such as cafeteria trays, pencil boxes and book bags. Story time and shared writing activities are utilized as conversation starters to help alleviate some anxiety and help the students develop a positive outlook towards school.

c) At parent request, 4C staff visits child at new placement/school

Head Start staff will attempt to follow up with parents of children that left the program to ensure former students experienced a pleasant transition. Should the parent express any concern with the new placement, the Head Start staff will make themselves available to visit the student at the new school and work with the teaching staff to help ensure school success for the student.

3. Head Start - School connection

a) Provision of needed information

Parents of children ready to transition to Kindergarten are provided with copies of the child's health and immunization records, assessments, legal documents such as birth certificates, and any other documentation requested by the parent.

b) Joint training of ISD staff and HS staff (TSR, Region 12, Pre-service)

Head Start staff is provided access to a variety of training provided by the local LEA, such as the Texas School Ready initiative, Conscious Discipline training sessions, and training for specific skills offered by Region12. In return, LEA staff is invited to attend Pre-service training, First Aid and CPR certification, as well as training sessions developed to improve child outcomes.

c) Joint services for children with special needs, transition meetings

Children suspected or identified with disability receive services from trained professionals and therapists through the local LEA.

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