THE POLICY EQUITY GROUP

EMPOWERING THE SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS

Simple Steps for Using Data to Improve Program Quality

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Getting to know your presenter…

- Former Senior Policy Advisor for Early Childhood Development and Education at the Administration for Children and Families
  - Worked with Office of Head Start and Office of Child Care
  - Led the development of the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework
- Former Vice President, Public Policy and Research at Teaching Strategies, developer of early childhood curriculum and assessment
- Former Urban Institute researcher in the area of early childhood care and education
- Bring a research, policy, and assessment perspective to the use of data for program improvement

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Context: Why is the analysis of data important for program improvement?

- The collection and analysis of data is a systematic way of getting to know your program, your teachers, and your children
  - Data is not scary or cold, it is just a way of summarizing what is going on

- It gives you a credible body of evidence that you can use to:
  - Recognize and respond to gaps in programming
  - Prioritize how funds are spent, particularly around PD and TA
  - Make other decisions about program quality

- One of the ~~proposed~~ elements of re-competition policy

  "A determination by ACF that an agency has not established and taken steps to achieve its goals for improving school-readiness and has not analyzed individual child-level assessment data in accordance with the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework…"

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Learning Objectives

1.) Participants will begin to use available data "with the end in mind"
   - The "end" is school readiness as defined by the new Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework

2.) Participants will learn about the various factors that play a role in a child's school readiness and how these factors are measured

3.) Participants will become familiar with a framework to assist them in developing school readiness goals

4.) Participants will gain a stronger knowledge of the sources of data collected by Head Start programs and how that data can be used together to tell a story about a program

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The Big Picture: Factors that Affect Child Development

Child Characteristics	+	Type and Intensity of Instruction and Services	+	Classroom Quality	+	Family Characteristics	=	Child Outcomes

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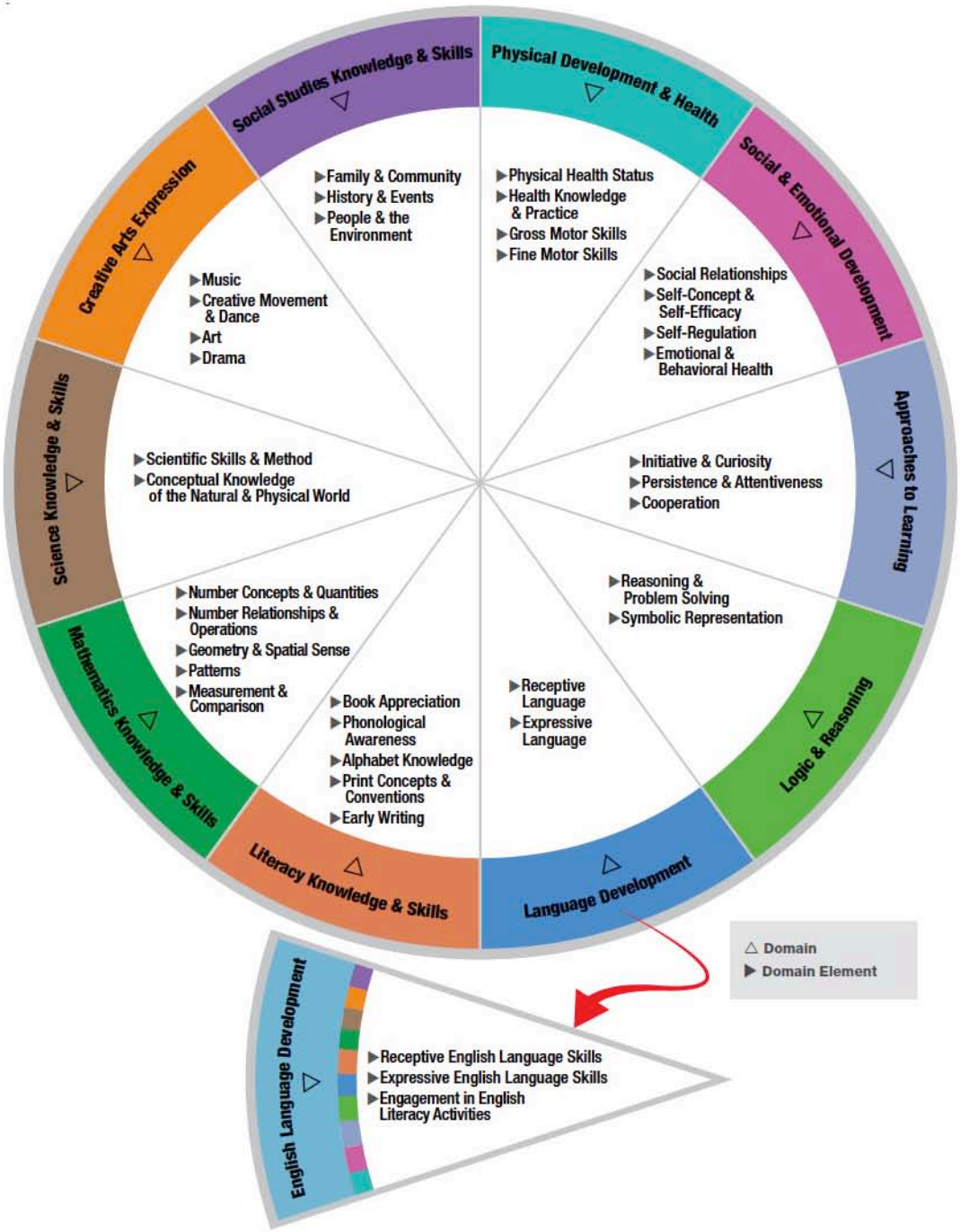
The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework



Step 1: Have a strong working knowledge of the domain elements of the HS Child Development and Early Learning Framework

- Know the domains, the domain elements, and examples and be able to explain them to teachers and parents
  - Framework presents the domains in a circle because each is equally important and together they make up holistic child development

- Framework provides introductions that outline why each domain is important; definitions of each domain and domain element; and, examples

- The Framework is intended to be the “grounding” upon which Head Start programs are built

- The intent of the revision of the Framework was to “jump start” programs into thinking about the key elements of school readiness and how to children school ready

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Step 2: Establish reasonable expectations for child progress in your program

- **Need a baseline or point of reference by which to judge the progress made in your program**
  - **Did I see "enough" progress among the children? In what areas was the progress "good enough". In what area was it not?**
- **Ways of establishing a baseline**
  - **What are the expectations for children in your state's early learning guidelines?**
  - **What "age anchors" does your assessment use when determining "typical" developmental for a child of a certain age?**
  - **How much progress was made children in your program the year before?**
  - **What are the expectations of parents and schools?**
- **This is as much of an art as a science**

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Setting expectations for your program

- **Unlike the goals you set for individual children, program goals are framed in the aggregate**
  - **"70 percent of my children will be at their age-expected level in Expressive Language skills"**
  - **Most easily and clearly expressed in terms of items on the assessment**
- **Don't have to address every domain element of the Framework, but need to reflect expectations of the community/parents and program priorities**
- **Because these are value judgments, expectations need to be grounded in a strong rationale**
- **Key considerations**
  - **What are the characteristics of the children in your program?**
  - **What type of program do you have? Full-day? Home-based? Migrant?**

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Setting alphabet knowledge school readiness goals for four-year-olds using the HSCOF in Washington state

Study HSCOF domain elements	WA Early Learning and Development Benchmarks	Factor in Context	Set school readiness goals
Alphabet Knowledge	**Children demonstrate awareness of the alphabetic principle.**	**Primary Considerations**	**School Readiness Goals:**
*Understands that the letters of the alphabet are a special category of visual graphics that can be individually named and have distinct sound(s) associated with them.	*Recites all letters of the alphabet.	*High percentage of children who are Dual Language	*By end of the program, 50 percent of my children will identify and name all upper- and lowercase letters (Level 8 on the GOLD).
*Attends to the beginning letters and sounds in familiar words.	*Knows that alphabet letters are a special category of symbols/ pictures that can be individually named.	*A very small percentage of my children know any letters in English	*All my children will be able to identify at least 10 letters (Level 4 on the GOLD).
*Identifies printed letters and associates correct sounds with printed letters.	*Associates the names of letters with their shapes.	*Children face a number of barriers to learning, including hunger and stress at home	
	*Correctly identifies ten or more letters of the alphabet.		

The Big Picture: Factors that Affect Child Development

Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework

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Getting More Specific: Factors that Affect Child Development

Child Characteristics	+	Type and Intensity of Instruction and Services	+	Classroom Quality	+	Family Characteristics	=	Child Outcomes

-Dual Language
-Disability
-Health Status
-Nutrition
-Level at program start

Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework

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Getting More Specific: Factors that Affect Child Development

Child Characteristics	+	Type and Intensity of Instruction and Services	+	Classroom Quality	+	Family Characteristics	=	Child Outcomes
-Dual Language -Disability -Health Status -Nutrition -Level at program start		-Curriculum -Assessment -Structure of day -Social service provision						Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework

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Getting More Specific: Factors that Affect Child Development

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-Dual Language -Disability -Health Status -Nutrition -Level at program start		-Curriculum -Assessment -Structure of day -Social service provision		**Structural** -Teacher quality -Training and TA **Process** CLASS Dimensions and Items				Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework

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-Dual Language -Disability -Health Status -Nutrition -Level at program start		-Curriculum -Assessment -Structure of day -Social service provision		**Structural** -Teacher quality -Training and TA **Process** CLASS Dimensions and Items		-Maternal education -Family structure -Risk factors		Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework

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Step 3: Identify and organize data

Red = PIR
Yellow = Other
Blue = Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
Green= Child Assessment

Child Characteristics	+	Type and Intensity of Instruction and Services	+	Classroom Quality	+	Family Characteristics	=	Child Outcomes
-Dual Language -Disability -Health Status -Nutrition -Level at program start		-Curriculum -Assessment -Structure of day -Connection to social services		**Structural** -Teacher creds -Training and TA -Class size/ratio **Process** Teacher/Child Interaction Sensitivity Instructional support Management		-Maternal education -Family structure -Risk factors		Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework

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Step 4: Assess and analyze

- **Programs should be using an observation-based assessment tool to assess children's development level and progress**
  - **(e.g., DRDP, Development Continuum/GOLD, Work Sampling, COR)**
  - **Alignment to new Framework should be available from publishers**
- **Determine how the data should be grouped**
  - **Should look at all children together, but also at specific groups of interest**
- **Initial assessment data is used to figure out where children are and to determine whether goals are reasonable**
  - **Can do this because both goals and assessment instrument are aligned to Framework**
  - **If your goal is 50 percent of children knowing all letters, and 45 percent know all letters at program entry, goals should be revised**
- **Assess mid-year to determine if on track to meet goals**
  - **Not just assessing three times a year, but analyzing the data as well**

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Step 5: Relate child-level data back to program characteristics

Scenario	Major Child Outcome Findings	CLASS Scores	Structural Indicators	Services	Child Factors	Family Factors	Curriculum	Potential Program Response
1	Did not meet math and literacy goals	Good	Good staff cred	Needs met	High DLL, at-risk	Poverty, single-parents, immigrants	Low fidelity and few DLL supports	Investigate curriculum and curriculum training
2	Did not meet social/ emotional goals	Low Sensitivity	Good staff cred	SS gaps	Abuse and neglect	Military, high-education; depression	High fidelity	MH support for families; SE curriculum for children
3	Did not meet most goals	All low	Low staff qualifi. and PD	Needs met	All DLL	Recent immigrants	Low fidelity	TA help with CLASS; staff training; mentor/coach, new hires
4	Did not meet most goals	Good	Good	Needs met	At-Risk	Single-parent; low education	Strong with high fidelity	Ensure new staff get up to speed; Revisit goals

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Summary and Final Thoughts

Provided a broad overview of how a program might use data for program improvement

- Using the new HS Framework to help with school readiness goals
- Factors that affect outcomes
- How to measure those goals
- Putting data together to tell as story

There are many ways to use data, but the more specificity the better

- The ideal would be to know all of the factors acting on each child and how well the improve overall well-being

Data is a tool, and not an end in itself

- It won't make teachings practices better or services better, but will provide clues as to what is working and what is not

Good luck!

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