



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Office of Head Start | 4th Floor – Switzer Memorial Building, 330 C Street SW, Washington DC 20024 eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov

Program Performance Summary Report

To: Authorizing Official/Board Chairperson

Mr. Lou D'Allesandro
Southern New Hampshire Services, Inc.
40 Pine St
Manchester, NH 03103 - 6207

From: Responsible HHS Official

Date: 07/21/2021

**On behalf of Dr. Bernadine Futrell
Director, Office of Head Start**

From May 24, 2021 to May 28, 2021, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted a Focus Area Two (FA2) monitoring review of the Southern New Hampshire Services, Inc. Head Start and Early Head Start programs. This report contains information about the grantee's performance and compliance with the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) or Public Law 110-134, *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*.

The Office of Head Start (OHS) would like to thank your governing body, policy council, parents, and staff for their engagement in the review process. Based on the information gathered during this review, we have found your program meets the requirements of all applicable HSPPS, laws, regulations, and policy requirements.

Please contact your Regional Office for guidance should you have any questions or concerns. Your Regional Office will follow up on the content of this report and can work with you to identify resources to support your program's continuous improvement.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE REPORT

Copies of this report will be distributed to the following recipients:

Ms. Marina Winkler, Regional Program Manager
Mrs. Donnalee Lozeau, Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director
Ms. Sarah Vanderhoof, Head Start Director
Ms. Sarah Vanderhoof, Early Head Start Director

Glossary of Terms

Opportunity for Continuous Improvement (OCI)	An OCI is identified when the grantee is determined compliant in an area; however, through intentional, continuous improvement strategies, the agency has the opportunity to enhance overall program quality.
Area of Concern (AOC)	An area for which the agency needs to improve performance. These issues should be discussed with the grantee's Regional Office of Head Start for possible technical assistance.
Area of Noncompliance (ANC)	An area for which the agency is out of compliance with Federal requirements (including but not limited to the Head Start Act or one or more of the regulations) in one or more areas of performance. This status requires a written timeline of correction and possible technical assistance or guidance from the grantee's program specialist. If not corrected within the specified timeline, this status becomes a deficiency.
Deficiency	<p>As defined in the Head Start Act, the term "deficiency" means:</p> <p>(A) a systemic or substantial material failure of an agency in an area of performance that the Secretary determines involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a threat to the health, safety, or civil rights of children or staff; (ii) a denial to parents of the exercise of their full roles and responsibilities related to program operations; (iii) a failure to comply with standards related to early childhood development and health services, family and community partnerships, or program design and management; (iv) the misuse of funds received under this subchapter; (v) loss of legal status (as determined by the Secretary) or financial viability, loss of permits, debarment from receiving Federal grants or contracts, or the improper use of Federal funds; or (vi) failure to meet any other Federal or State requirement that the agency has shown an unwillingness or inability to correct, after notice from the Secretary, within the period specified; <p>(B) systemic or material failure of the governing body of an agency to fully exercise its legal and fiduciary responsibilities; or</p> <p>(C) an unresolved area of noncompliance.</p>



Program Management and Quality Improvement

Program Management

The grantee establishes a management structure consisting of staff, consultants, or contractors who ensure high-quality service delivery; have sufficient knowledge, training, experience, and competencies to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of their positions; and provide regular supervision and support to staff.

Ongoing Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

The grantee uses data to identify program strengths, needs, and areas needing improvement; evaluate progress toward achieving program goals and compliance with program performance standards; and assess the effectiveness of professional development.

Program Governance

The policy council is engaged in the direction of the program, including program design and planning of goals and objectives.

The grantee maintains a formal structure of program governance to oversee the quality of services for children and families and to make decisions related to program design and implementation.

Program Management and Quality Improvement Summary

Southern New Hampshire Services, Inc. supported qualified staff and analyzed data to determine program offerings and deliver services for children and families in the Nashua area. The skilled and tenured staff used their education and experience to manage and oversee program services. The management team also supported staff with ongoing supervision and classroom observations. Program staff received training in active supervision and completed professional development plans to enhance their skills. Additional program-wide and individual training and support was provided based on child outcomes data, which was analyzed three times per year. The program's data-driven approach supported staff in delivering quality services.

With assistance from the policy council and governing board, the program used data to design services and guide continuous improvement efforts. The annual self-assessment was used to evaluate progress toward program goals. The policy council and the board participated in the self and community assessment process and regularly reviewed program data, including enrollment, attendance, child outcomes, and school readiness goals. Self-assessment data indicated a concern with recruiting qualified staff. In response, the program created a partnership with Workplace Success Group and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Program to help low-income families gain education and job skills for obtaining gainful employment by working for the program. Further, a Board member who was on the faculty at the local college made suggestions on which courses would help them gain the knowledge and skills to apply for positions within the college's early childhood programs. Southern New Hampshire Services, Inc. delivered quality education services designed to meet the needs of enrolled children and families.



Monitoring and Implementing Quality Education and Child Development Services

Alignment with School Readiness

The grantee's school readiness efforts align with the expectations of receiving schools, the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF), and State early learning standards.

Effective and Intentional Teaching Practices

The grantee's teaching practices intentionally promote progress toward school readiness and provide high-quality learning experiences for children.

Supporting Teachers in Promoting School Readiness

The grantee prepares teachers to implement the curriculum and support children's progress toward school readiness.

Home-based Program Services

The grantee ensures home-based program services provide home visits, and group socialization activities provide high-quality learning experiences.

Monitoring and Implementing Quality Education and Child Development Services Summary

Southern New Hampshire Services, Inc. aided children's school readiness by understanding receiving schools' expectations, individualizing services, and supporting staff. The program collaborated with six receiving school districts to gather information on their expectations for children entering kindergarten. Understanding these expectations allowed the program to design services to help children attain desired skills. The program selected curricula aligned with New Hampshire's Early Learning Standards to guide education services and teaching strategies. The program also collected and analyzed child assessment data to drive instruction. Staff received support in creating inclusive learning practices and environments. In addition to curriculum tools, teachers received guidance to promote children's school readiness from the early childhood education specialist, social-emotional specialist, licensed social worker, and content area specialist. This support came from Practice-Based Coaching, intentional supervision, and ongoing training, which was vital in helping the staff create inclusive learning environments for dual language learners and children with disabilities and improve children's school readiness outcomes. The program supported school readiness through curricular alignment and instructional support.

The program continued to support children's school readiness during the COVID-19 pandemic. Families could select in-person or hybrid services based on their needs. Within both settings, teachers planned activities and experiences based on each child's developmental level, tracked individual outcomes using Teaching Strategies GOLD, and partnered with families to support home-to-school learning connections. As a result of the program's flexibility and attention to child assessment data and individualized instruction, children demonstrated school readiness growth, despite COVID-19.



Monitoring and Implementing Quality Health Services

Child Health Status and Care

The grantee effectively monitors and maintains timely information on children's health status and care including ongoing sources of health care, preventive care, and follow-up.

Mental Health

The grantee supports a program-wide culture that promotes mental health and social and emotional well-being, and uses mental health consultation to support staff.

Oral Health and Nutrition

The grantee maintains and monitors for effective oral health practices and nutrition services that meet the nutritional needs and accommodate feeding requirements and allergies.

Safety Practices

The grantee implements a process for monitoring and maintaining healthy and safe environments.

Services to Pregnant Women

Not Applicable.

Monitoring and Implementing Quality Health Services Summary

Southern New Hampshire Services, Inc. supported the health and wellness of children and families. During the application process, staff collected data on child health immunizations, screenings, and eating and sleeping patterns. Entered into a locally designed health checklist and ChildPlus, this data allowed the program to individualize services and identify follow-up needs. Data indicated 95 percent of enrolled children had up-to-date immunizations, 92 percent had hearing and vision screenings, 96 percent had completed well-child exams, and 78 percent had lead screenings. Access to medical and dental care was limited during COVID-19, with many practitioners providing emergency services. In response, the program partnered with Women, Infants, and Children for lead screenings and with dental providers for on-site screenings and exams. The data-driven approach helped to provide families with access to health services.

The program employed a full-time mental health consultant to support staff, children, and families' mental health needs. The consultant completed classroom observations at the beginning of the year, and feedback was provided to the classroom staff. Southern New Hampshire Services, Inc. also partnered with a licensed social worker for staff and family consultations. To support the social-emotional needs of children and provide resources to parents, the program implemented the Pyramid Model and provided staff ongoing training to ensure it was implemented with fidelity. The program recognized families faced additional stressors during COVID-19 and partnered with the University of New Hampshire to offer virtual parenting groups, social skill groups, and individual consultations provided by Master's of Social Work interns under the supervision of the licensed social worker. The program's approach to service delivery helped families access mental health resources and services.



Monitoring and Implementing Quality Family and Community Engagement Services

Family Well-being

The grantee collaborates with families to support family well-being, parents' aspirations, and parents' life goals.

Strengthening Parenting and Parent-Child Supports

The grantee provides services that strengthen parent-child relationships and support parents in strengthening parenting skills.

Family Engagement in Education and Child Development Services

The grantee provides education and child development services that recognize parents' roles as children's lifelong educators and encourage parents to engage in their child's education.

Monitoring and Implementing Quality Family and Community Engagement Services Summary

Southern New Hampshire Services, Inc. implemented responsive family engagement services to improve family well-being. Families completed the Family Strengths and Need Assessment and used results to create goals. Staff monitored data at least twice a year to measure outcomes and progress. The grantee, a community action agency, provided families with easy access to internal housing assistance, weatherization services, and workforce training. The program also created a guide of available community services and helped families identify supportive resources. Family goal setting data indicated the highest area of interest was building parenting skills. In response, the program increased family engagement opportunities by hosting parent groups that allowed parents to complete parent-child activities, interact with their peers, and observe interactions modeled by staff. During COVID-19, the program continued to work with families to meet their needs and improve their well-being. Staff used various virtual platforms to communicate with parents, host meetings, and encourage their participation in their child's education. The program also provided educational supplies and coordinated meal distributions to help families access services during the pandemic. The program's family support and engagement approach and flexibility led to the ongoing support of family goals and positive outcomes for enrolled families.



Monitoring and Implementing Fiscal Infrastructure

Budget Planning and Development

The grantee develops and implements its budget to sustain management, staffing structures, and the delivery of services that support the needs of enrolled children and families.

Ongoing Fiscal Capacity

The grantee plans and implements a fiscal management system that supports the organization's ongoing capacity to execute its budget over time and meet the needs of its organization.

Budget Execution

The grantee's financial management system provides for effective control over and accountability for all funds, property, and other assets.

Facilities and Equipment

The grantee complies with application, prior approval, and reporting requirements for facilities purchased, constructed, or renovated with Head Start funds.

Monitoring and Implementing Fiscal Infrastructure Summary

Southern New Hampshire Services, Inc.'s qualified financial management staff and governing bodies oversaw the budget and safeguarded Federal funds. The finance department comprised nine members with various qualifications who used the Blackbaud Financial Edge Accounting System to manage funds. The budget planning, development, and execution process were completed with the board and the policy council's input. The governing board comprised key community representatives, and the grantee leveraged their expertise specifically for budget development and alignment with the goals. The governing bodies were equipped to perform budget oversight and fiscal duties and were regularly supported by pre- and post-service training. During the pandemic, the financial division, augmented by the agency's executive leadership and its key management team, continued to function to ensure the continued flow of services and the protection of Federal funding. During an examination of financial documents, it was determined the program had clean A-133 audits during the last 12 years. The program's management system ensured fiscal oversight and supported the capacity to deliver quality services.



Monitoring ERSEA: Eligibility, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance

Determining, Verifying, and Documenting Eligibility

At least 10 percent of the grantee's total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA or the grantee has received a waiver.

The grantee enrolls children or pregnant women who are categorically eligible or who meet defined income-eligibility requirements.

Enrollment Verification

The grantee maintains and tracks enrollment for all participants including pregnant women.

Monitoring ERSEA: Eligibility, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance Summary

Southern New Hampshire Services, Inc. enrolled eligible families with the greatest need by implementing and monitoring ERSEA services. The program had a two-step verification process to ensure the accuracy of all eligibility determinations. The process also included using a points-based selection criteria worksheet to rank eligible families based on their level of needs. The program's enrollment procedures prioritized enrollment for refugees and children with disabilities, in foster care, or experiencing homelessness. Over-income families were placed on the waitlist and offered a slot only after all income-eligible applicants were exhausted. To ensure compliance to ERSEA regulations, the staff received annual training on ERSEA policies and procedures and were informed about the consequences of intentionally erroneously enrolling a child. The May 2021 enrollment data indicated 15 percent of children enrolled in the Early Head Start program and 12 percent of children enrolled in the Head Start program were receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The program's trained staff and ERSEA practices helped qualified families participate and benefit from services.

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