Community Assessment: Why is it important?

Yvette Sanchez Fuentes,

National Alliance for Hispanic Families, BUILD consultant

Yvette@hispanicfamily.org

What kinds of decisions do you make everyday in your program?

Money?
Budgets?
Transportation?
Hours?
Demographics?
Languages?
Data?
Children?
Families?

Staff hiring?
Staff training?
Eligibility services?
Teachers?
Curriculum?
Supplies?
Food?
Screenings?

How do you make those decisions?

- Spur of the moment . . . .
- Data . . . .
- Child and family's individual situation . . . .
- Time . . . .
- Money . . . .
- With a team or individually . . . .
- Your own ability or capacity . . . .
- Based on what you think you know about the situation or the individual . . . .
- Interpretation of regulations and policies of funders. . . .

Does your programs use . . .

- Data?

- Community assessment process?

- Process evaluation?

- Surveys of parents and communities?

- Focus groups with partners?

Community assessment is important because . . .

- It identifies new or underserved populations in the service area

- *It assesses their needs and available community resources*

- It recognizes demographic changes

Head Start. (2007, December). Five Steps to Community Assessment: A Workbook for Head Start and Early Head Start Programs Serving Hispanic and Other Emerging Populations, Version I. Retrieved from: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/operations/docs/CA%20Workbook_v1_final%20PDF.pdf

Community assessment helps programs to . . .

- Meet their mission to serve the most underserved children and families

- Identify new or underserved populations in the service area, assess their needs, and identify available resources during the community assessment

- Know who children and families are in each service area and how they can best be served

- Understand the needs and resources of families, the program, and the community within the service area

- Honor local and regional nuances

- Incorporate family culture in the curriculum and overall program

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Partners

- Partnering programs
  - Multi- purpose community action programs
  - Other early childhood providers

- Social Service Agencies
  - Food Banks
  - Community Health Clinics
  - Catholic Charities
  - Legal Aid

- City/County Government
  - Transportation
  - Housing
  - Public Schools

- Expert Consultants

Five Steps to a Community Assessment

Step 1: Plan and organize the CA team, the CA content, the service area, a timeline, tips for getting started

Step 2: Design data collection the definition of data, different kinds of data, sources of data, developing questions, quantitative and qualitative data, visual presentation of the data

Step 3: Gather data methods of data collection, guidelines for getting started, cultural considerations, large databases

Step 4: Review and analyze what is data analysis, its purpose, how to plan data analysis, analytic procedures

Step 5: Make decisions based on the CA data, guidelines for recommendations and priorities, trend data, the CA Report Each Step is discussed in depth and examples are given

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Community assessments should be conducted to . . .

advance quality through racial equity and culturally and linguistically responsive program practices in *all aspects* of early care and education programs and services.