Helping Children and Families Succeed

STEP Head Start

Strategic Plan
2012-2016

Early Learning Pathway To Success
STEP Head Start Program Vision
The vision of STEP Head Start is to be a catalyst for inspiring positive change and fostering hope in children, family, and community.

STEP Head Start Philosophy
We believe:

1. Children’s educational achievement and growth are key to their success in life.
2. Children must be understood in the context of their family, community, and culture.
3. Children and their families must be well to do well.
4. Children’s potential is best realized when they are healthy, well nourished, and nurtured; when their parents are active partners in their educational experiences; and when they are supported by their communities.
5. Parents are a child’s first and most important teacher. We respect them and honor their love and care for their children.
6. Communities have a moral, ethical, and practical responsibility to help low-income children and families succeed.
7. Staff investment of time, energy, resources, care, and compassion foster hope, growth, self-sufficiency, and social competence in children and their families.
8. Staff can inspire positive change. We are proud of our staff, of who they are as human beings, of their commitment to children, families, and the program, and the high quality of the work that they do.
9. Our program is enriched by our individual differences and the diversity of our children, families, staff, and communities.
10. Head Start is a sound investment in the future. We take seriously our responsibility as stewards of public funds.

STEP Head Start Program Mission
The mission of STEP Head Start is to foster hope, growth, self-sufficiency, and social competence in children and their families through partnerships with parents and community.

STEP Head Start Program Values
STEP Head Start is committed to:

Quality: Excellence in operations, services, and environments based on universally recognized standards and skills.

Comprehensiveness: Multi-faceted services driven by a holistic view of each individual child/family, strengthened by our diversity, and supported by community partnerships.

Accountability: Responsibility for achievement of outcomes driven by the vision and mission of the organization.

Teamwork: Collaborative spirit, respect, trust, healthy interdependence.

Growth: Always learning, striving for excellence, progressing toward goals, and reaching for dreams.

Hope: Positive belief in a better future.
STEP Head Start
Strategic Goals

The following seven strategic goals define the direction of our program’s efforts for the period August 1, 2012 through July 31, 2016.

GOAL 1
Provide services that are responsive to the changing needs of children, families, and community based on systematic analysis of data and funding priorities.

a. Evaluate child, parent, and community service needs.

b. Analyze the gap between identified needs and program capacity, design, and services.

c. Modify services delivery systems accordingly (options, child care, innovative program designs to be developed).

GOAL 2
Establish and enhance effective collaborative alliances to maximize services, supports, and resources for children and families.

a. Strengthen existing partnerships with schools.
   1) Reach out to those districts less involved with us now.
   2) Strengthen transition process with selected school districts.
   3) Inform school districts about benefits of quality pre-k services.
   4) Include school personnel on Head Start advisory and self-assessment teams.
   5) Promote collaborative services for children whose families are homeless.
   6) Increase parent participation and encourage meaningful involvement in parent-teacher organizations and local school boards.

b. Colleges and universities to explore graduate assistantships and develop training materials.

2) Secure support from community partners to develop strategies for supporting children with significant developmental delays and challenging behaviors.

3) Recruit and develop new partnerships:
   a. Infant and toddler mental health evaluations and follow-up.
   b. Infant and toddler dental services.
   c. Susquehanna Health and Geisinger Health System to support the health literacy and other wellness initiatives.
   e. Local housing authorities or tenant groups to facilitate parent advocacy efforts.
   f. North Penn Legal Services to address advocacy and legal issues.

4) Formalize community collaborations by updating and creating Memoranda of Understanding.
c. Enhance and increase collaboration within STEP.
   1) Market the STEP brand to Head Start stakeholders.
   2) Continue to foster intergenerational operations and experiences.
   3) Expand on the collaboration with the Early Learning Pathway programs.
   4) Increase staff awareness of STEP program functions to more effectively meet customer's needs.

GOAL 3
Develop a data-driven organizational culture characterized by ongoing data collection, synthesis, and analysis to guide decision-making.

a. Gather needed data.
   1) Identify data needed – what do we want to know and why.
   2) Determine data sources (Program Information Report, Teaching Strategies GOLD, program database, Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance, parent surveys, research, community assessment, self-assessment, monitoring, staff wellness survey, homelessness, e.g.).
   3) Determine data currently collected.
   4) Identify common data gathered across all programs.

b. Aggregate and analyze collected data.
   1) Use CLASS and Teaching Strategies GOLD data to inform training and technical assistance planning and drive individual and group child planning.
   2) Use data to fully understand family needs in order to inform program design and options.
   3) Use program database and the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework to categorize and aggregate Family Partnership goals and track progress in order to inform staff and family training and technical assistance planning.
   4) Use data collected during the implementation of the Health Care Institute initiative to inform staff and family health care literacy training and technical assistance.

c. Use data systematically and strategically to inform program decision-making.
GOAL 4
Promote school readiness.

a. Utilize Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment to track children’s progress and provide instructional support to achieve school readiness goals.

b. Provide opportunities that engage and support families in guiding their children’s learning (health literacy, framework, etc.).

c. Strengthen the transition process by shared training, including school personnel on advisory and self-assessment teams and participating in school districts’ initiatives.

GOAL 5
Provide a seamless continuum of services for children and families.

a. Develop strategies for enhanced communication and planning among Head Start and Early Head Start managers and staff.

b. Promote the concept of comprehensive prenatal to age five services for children and families within the community and among staff.

GOAL 6
Retain, recruit, and support highly-qualified, well-trained staff to foster hope, growth, self-sufficiency, and social competence in children and their families.

a. Identify the reasons for staff turnover and develop a realistic plan to decrease turnover.

b. Recruit and support highly-qualified staff with diverse backgrounds reflecting the diversity of Head Start families.

b. Develop and implement emergency and defined succession plans to ensure continuity in program leadership.

c. Redesign the comprehensive training and technical assistance plan to merge Early Head Start and Head Start professional development.

d. Meet and exceed regulatory mandates for staff training and qualifications.

e. Review and revise job descriptions to reflect qualifications mandates.

f. Provide compensation based on qualifications and work responsibilities.

GOAL 7
Acquire facilities for long-term occupancy and design state-of-the-art environments that effectively serve children, families, staff, program, and community.

a. Identify facilities and negotiate contracts that allow for long-term occupancy of buildings.

b. Design and create state-of-the-art facilities and environments that are responsive to the program’s plans and needs.

c. Achieve Keystone STAR Level 4 designation.

d. Make space available in Head Start facilities for other STEP, Inc. programs to better meet the needs of children and families served.

e. Develop appropriate disaster and emergency preparedness responses for new facilities.

Approved by the STEP Head Start Policy Council and by the Lycoming-Clinton Counties Commission for Community Action (STEP), Inc. Board of Directors.
STEP, Inc., engages diverse individuals, families and communities in the pursuit of social and economic success.
Success Through Engagement and Partnership

STEP does not discriminate in its enrollment, employment, programs or activities on the basis of age, sex, color, religion, ancestry, disability, or national origin.