



OZARK OPPORTUNITIES, INC.

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Head Start

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE PUBLIC

Program Year 2015-16

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I. Program Summary- PY 48

A. REASON FOR THIS REPORT:

This report has been prepared in order to comply with the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007.

The Act states that:

“Each Head Start agency shall make available to the public a report published at least once in each fiscal year that discloses the following information from the recently concluded fiscal year, except that reporting such information shall not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual child or parent:

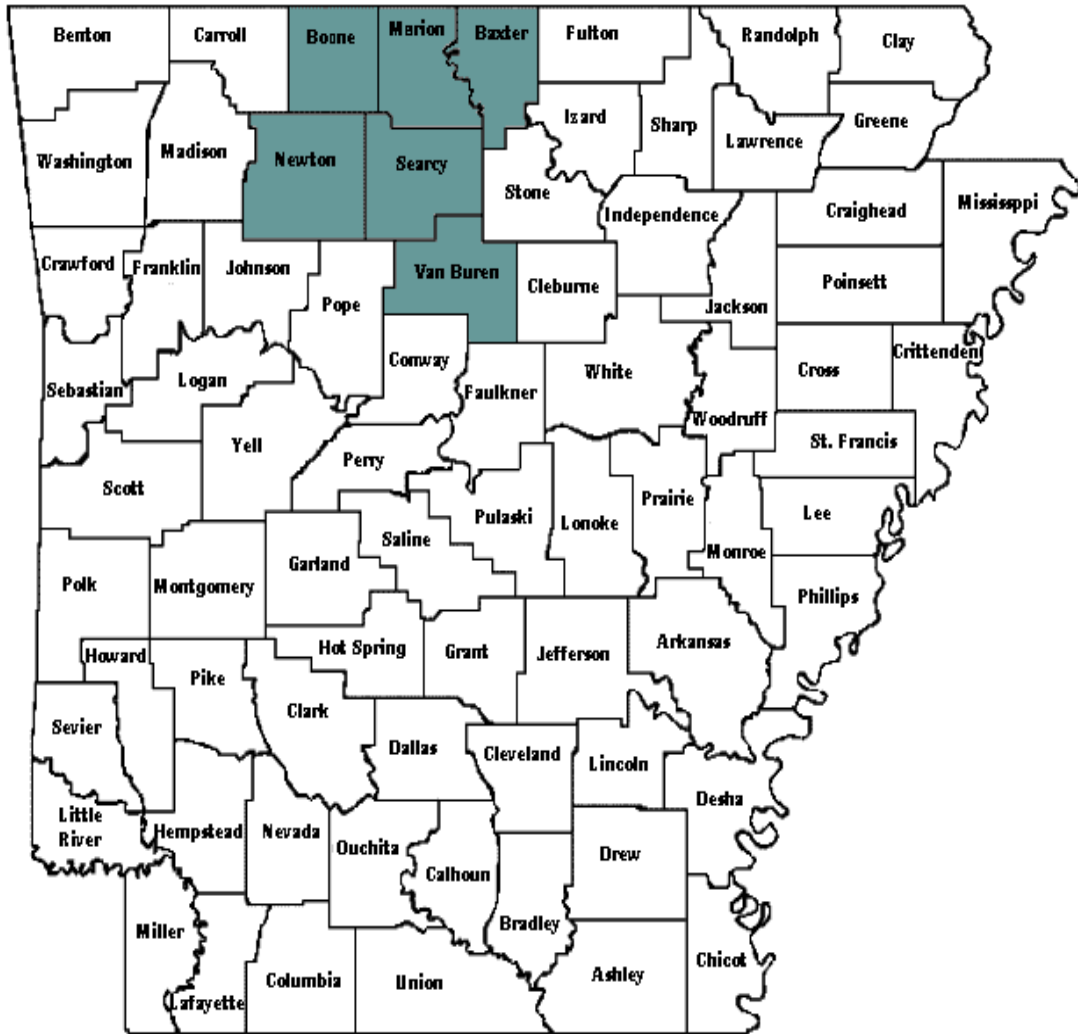
- (A) The total amount of public and private funds received and the amount from each source.
- (B) An explanation of budgetary expenditures and proposed budget for the fiscal year.
- (C) The total number of children and families served, the average monthly enrollment (as a percentage of funded enrollment), and the percentage of eligible children served.
- (D) The results of the most recent review by the Secretary and the financial audit.
- (E) The percentage of enrolled children that received medical and dental exams.
- (F) Information about parent involvement activities.
- (G) The agency’s efforts to prepare children for kindergarten.
- (H) Any other information required by the Secretary. (Not applicable.)

B. HISTORY:

Ozark Opportunities, Inc. (“OOI”) Head Start has been in existence since the summer of 1966, and has a legacy of providing quality, nurturing education for 3-5 year old children in a six-county service area. OOI is a Community Action Agency (a private nonprofit incorporated in 1969) that provides Head Start and Community Services (energy assistance, commodity foods, etc.) to low income individuals and families, as well as involvement in community development activities.

The mission of OOI is *to partner with organizations, families and individuals to provide services and empowerment opportunities for those with limited means to improve their quality of life.* This mission meshes well with that of Head Start, and the agencies’ programs work well together to assist families to learn; not only how to assist their children in the learning process; but also to improve the families’ opportunities to better their situation and work their way out of poverty.

The service area of *Ozark Opportunities, Inc.* Head Start is in the Ozarks of North-Central Arkansas. The area is largely populated by families that have made the Ozark Mountains their home for many generations, and poverty has been a constant companion over the years. Counties served include: Baxter, Boone, Marion, Newton, Searcy, and Van Buren.



With a median income range of \$25,397 to \$37,007 per household (Arkansas average is \$37,887), it is easy to recognize that a broad range of resources (and deficiencies) exist. When one digs further, the need for quality pre-school becomes apparent, as poverty and situational poverty (thanks in part to the “Great Recession”) have continued to increase.

Poverty is prevalent. For example, the two most sparsely populated counties in the region (Searcy and Newton) have over 22% poverty population (at 100% of the poverty level). If a higher percentage of the poverty level is used (as many government programs have gone to 200% poverty), it could be argued that over 40% of the population is living below the poverty line.

C. HEAD START:

Locations: The majority of our Head Start Centers are located on a school campus with the exception of Harrison which are in OOI owned buildings. The location of centers corresponds appropriately to the population density in the service area, and is based on the need of each community for Head Start services.

OOI Head Start Center Locations 2015-16

#	Location	County
1	Cotter	Baxter
2	Mt. Home I Rm 1	Baxter
3	Mt. Home 1 Rm 2	
4	Mt. Home 2	
5	Mt. Home 3	
6	Mt. Home 4	
7	Norfolk	Baxter
8	Norfolk	
9	Harrison Rm 1	Boone
10	Harrison Rm 2	
11	Harrison Rm 3	
12	Harrison Rm 4	
13	Harrison Rm 5	
14	Alpena	Boone
15	Valley Springs	Boone
16	Flippin	Marion
17	Bruno Pyatt	Marion
18	Yellville	Marion
19	Jasper	Newton
20	Western Grove	Newton
21	Marshall	Searcy
22	St. Joe	Searcy
23	Clinton Rm 1	Van Buren
24	Clinton Rm 2	
25	Shirley	Van Buren

Program Philosophy: The Program Philosophy of the OOI Head Start program is that of continued, ongoing evaluation and improvement. We have implemented several new systems and supports in the past few years with the direct intention of improved learning by the children, and additional support of teaching staff to insure they have the tools they need to create the best learning environment for every child. We believe that the right mix of staff, technology, and partnerships (schools, community, parents, staff, etc.) will result in a strong, vibrant program that is an integrated part of the school system, and is “in-touch” with the distinct needs of each school district. Planning has become a crucial part of the program, and monitoring and compliance are pieces of the program that are receiving an upgrade as the staff work to insure program outcomes meet the expectations of the funder, families, and communities we serve.

Primary Goal= School Readiness. The primary objective for *Ozark Opportunities, Inc.*, Head Start program is to insure the families and children in our program are ready for school. This is accomplished by our program acting as an advocate for children and their families through partnering at the individual, community, and state level to provide quality services. The OOI Head Start program strives to provide a safe, healthy environment in which every child has the maximum opportunity and support in developing to their full potential. The child’s effectiveness in dealing with their environment will help foster social competence, which will aid with responsibilities in school and life. Our goal is to provide a system to improve the quality of life for each child, commencing with the family unit. We strive to educate and promote social proficiency, while taking into account the interrelatedness of cognitive and intellectual development, physical and mental health and nutritional needs of each child.

Community-Based. Many aspects come into play in meeting our long range goals including availability of resources. We have been working more closely with the schools over the past few years, and have made a concentrated effort to not only meet the Performance Standards and Head Start Law, but also upgrade our technology, staffing (training & responsibilities), and facilities. Partnerships will continue to be crucial to our program success, and a dedicated plan of parent, family and community engagement (“P,F,CE”) goals and action steps will be implemented over the next five years as we better understand the interconnectedness of all aspects of our work.

II. Required Elements:

A. Budgetary Information:

1. The total amount of public and private funds received and the amount from each source.

Dept. of Health & Human Services- Federal	\$	3,644,714.00 *
USDA (CACFP) Nutrition Program- Federal	\$	326,169.00
Non-Federal Match (In-Kind)- Public	\$	911,179.00
	\$	4,882,062.00

2. An explanation of budgetary expenditures and budget for the fiscal year.

Cost Category	TOTAL BUDGET 3/1/15-2/29/16	TOTAL EXPENSES
Salaries	\$ 2,382,937.00	\$ 1,767,161.00
Fringe Benefits	\$ 697,915.00	\$ 497,296.00
Contractual	\$ 81,111.00	\$ 73,669.00
Travel	\$ 23,215.00	\$ 30,964.00
Supplies	\$ 104,990.00	\$ 90,032.00
Equipment	\$ 42,500.00	\$ 0
Other:	\$ 638,215.00	\$ 504,944.00
Federal *	\$ 3,970,883.00	\$ 2,964,066.00
Non-Federal Match	\$ 911,179.00	\$ 911,179.00
TOTAL	\$ 4,882,062.00	\$ 3,875,245.00

***Note: Our 12 month grant period end date was extended from 2/29/16 to 6/30/16; the above budget includes additional Federal funding in the amount of \$982,396.00 for that period.**

B. ERSEA Data; 2015-2016 School Year:

The total number of children and families served, the average monthly enrollment (as a percentage of funded enrollment), and the percentage of eligible children served (funded for 440 for HS)

- **Total children served: 491**
 - 2 years old: 46 (Children were enrolled after turning 3, but were age 2 by PIR calculations)
 - 3 years old: 163
 - 4 years old: 282

- **Total families served: 459**
 - 60.3% (277) Two parent households
 - 39.7% (182) single parent households

- **Average Monthly Enrollment:**
 - August 2015 – 93.9% (413 students)
 - September 2015 – 96.6% (425 students)
 - October 2015 – 95% (418 students)
 - November 2015 – 96.8% (426 students)
 - December 2015 – 98% (431 students)
 - January 2015 – 98.6% (434 students)
 - An Underenrollment Action Plan was developed and submitted to Office of Head Start in Feb 2016. This plan established strategies to ensure program would reach full enrollment by end of February.
 - February 2016 – March 2016 - 100% (440 students)
 - April 2016 – 98.9% (435 students)
 - May 2016 – 94.5% (416 students)
 - Per Performance Standards 1305.7 (b) A program may elect not to fill a vacancy when 60 calendar days or less remain in the program's enrollment year. This included April and May totals.

- **Enrollment by Income Category:**

▪ Eligible- 100% of poverty	69.2%	(340)
▪ Eligible 101-130% of poverty	17.7%	(87)
▪ Eligible Over-Income	8.4%	(41)
▪ Eligible Foster Care	1.2%	(6)
▪ Eligible TANF/SSI	3.1%	(15)
▪ <u>Eligible Homeless</u>	<u>0.4%</u>	<u>(2)</u>
TOTAL:		491

C. Audit- Results of the most recent review by the Secretary and the financial audit.

The Single-Agency Audit for *Ozark Opportunities, Inc.* for fiscal year (ended February 28, 2015) reflected the following findings:

Financial Statement Findings:

- Significant Deficiencies **No matters reportable.**
- Material Weaknesses **No matters reportable.**

Federal Award Findings and Questioned Costs

- Significant Deficiencies **No matters reportable.**
- Material Weaknesses **No matters reportable.**

SUMMARY:

After an intensive review of all eligibility documents, student files and payment documents for: payroll; payroll tax payments; fringe benefit payments (employer match for social security, medical, dental, life insurance, AirEvac and retirement); student health, dental and ADA screenings and supplies; staff training; travel reimbursement; vehicle maintenance & fuel; utilities; telephone; postage; insurance; student and adult food; invoices for classroom materials and supplies; copy expenses; Board and Policy Council expenses; and licensing inspections and fees, **there were no findings or questioned costs(!)**

D. The percentage of enrolled children that received medical and dental exams.

C.19; Number of all children, including those enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP, who have completed a professional dental examination since last year’s PIR was reported	441/491= 89.8%
C.5; Number of children with an ongoing source of continuous, accessible health care	459/491= 93.5%
C.8; Number of all children who are up-to-date on a schedule of age-appropriate preventive and primary health care, according to the relevant state’s EPSDT schedule for well child care	438/491= 89.2%
C.11; Number of children who have been determined by a health care professional to be up-to-date on all immunizations appropriate for their age	480/491= 97.8%

****It should be noted that some children did not stay enrolled long enough to have exams completed; therefore 100% of children enrolled receiving services is an impossible goal to attain.***

E. Parent, Family, and Community Engagement:

As the key element of a child's life, family engagement is critical to the full development of a child's potential. Our Head Start program is committed to helping each child and family achieve success through a comprehensive partnership. Parent engagement begins at enrollment. Parents are welcomed into the classroom and encouraged to observe or assist with daily activities. Helping the child with handwashing and "Journal Time" are both excellent examples of how this is implemented. Routinely scheduled home visits and conferences provide regular conversations on children's progress to enhance parents' role as educators.

Parents, Family Support Workers, and teachers work cooperatively to set goals. Home Tasks are sent home with the family to support their child's growth and development. In the 2015-2016 school year, **536** parents/family members volunteered their time or talents to our Head Start program through volunteering in the classroom and **782** parents/family members participated in at home activities with their child.

Opportunities for parents and families to advance their own learning interests exist through education, training, and other experiences that support their parenting, career, and life goals. During the 2015-2016 school year, a total of **728** parents attended trainings offered at monthly Parent Meetings or education related events. Some training topics included: Child Development, Nutrition, Mental Health, Healthy Exercise, Fire Prevention, Kindergarten Readiness, Dental, and Advocating for the Disabled child. In addition, parents are invited to attend staff trainings and in-services.

Parents and families can participate in leadership development, decision-making, or program policy development through participation in Standing Committees and/or the Policy Council. This year, **34** parents were elected to serve as Policy Council Representatives. Through active participation, parents provide valuable input on curriculum planning, policy development, and program improvement plans.

Participation from the community is critical to our success. During the 2015-2016 school year, a total of **174 community members** volunteered their time and talents.

Ozark Opportunities, Inc. is proud to have great participation from both our families and our community in an effort to build a successful future for our Head Start students and their families.

F. The agency’s efforts to prepare children for kindergarten’ i.e.

“Progress Toward School Readiness Goals”

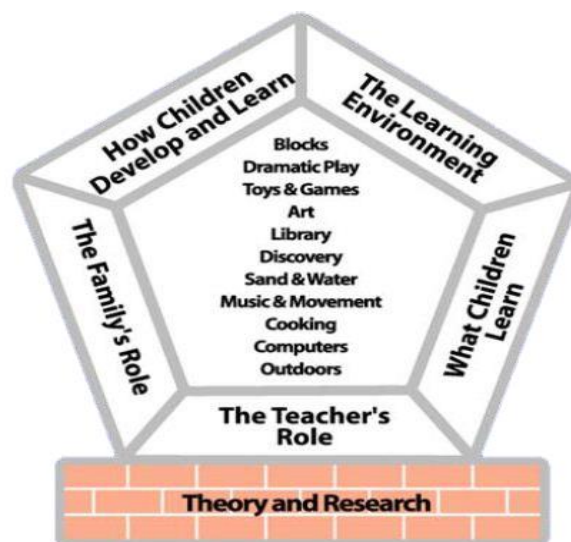
“School Readiness” involves more than just children; in the broadest sense it is about children, families, early environments, schools, and communities. Children are not innately “ready” or “not ready” for school. Their skills and development are strongly influenced by their families and through their interactions with other people and environments before coming to school. It is our goal to implement and initiate school readiness goals in our organization.

Ozark Opportunities Inc. Head Start currently provides services for up to 267 Head Start and 32 Arkansas Better Chance children and families. The program serves a six-county area, and has embarked on an ambitious program improvement effort to set School Readiness Goals and improve teacher-child interactions in its classrooms.

The Lesson Plans for our classrooms align with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, and the Arkansas Frameworks for Quality Care and Education for Children from three to five. Our classrooms use a curriculum blueprint called “Creative Curriculum” that is supplemented with “Adventures in Learning”. The “Creative Curriculum” blueprint is used as a foundation for all of the other supplemented curricula we incorporate into our classrooms.

NOTE: This document is an update on “Progress Toward School Readiness Goals” and is included in the *Annual Report to the Public* which is uploaded to our agency website, our Facebook page, and emailed to all Board, Staff, and Policy Council Members. All “progress” is written in bold black text to give emphasis to those areas.

Creative Curriculum™ Objectives for Learning



The following are the 38 objectives we strive for our Head Start students to achieve:

Social–Emotional

1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors
 - a. Manages feelings
 - b. Follows limits and expectations
 - c. Takes care of own needs appropriately
2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships
 - a. Forms relationships with adults
 - b. Responds to emotional cues
 - c. Interacts with peers
 - d. Makes friends
3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations
 - a. Balances needs and rights of self and others
 - b. Solves social problems

Physical

4. Demonstrates traveling skills
5. Demonstrates balancing skills
6. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills
7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination
 - a. Uses fingers and hands
 - b. Uses writing and drawing tools

Language

8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language
 - a. Comprehends language
 - b. Follows directions
9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs
 - a. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary
 - b. Speaks clearly
 - c. Uses conventional grammar
 - d. Tells about another time or place
10. Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills
 - a. Engages in conversations
 - b. Uses social rules of language

Cognitive

11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning
 - a. Attends and engages
 - b. Persists
 - c. Solves problems
 - d. Shows curiosity and motivation
 - e. Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking
12. Remembers and connects experiences
 - a. Recognizes and recalls
 - b. Makes connections
13. Uses classification skills
14. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present
 - a. Thinks symbolically
 - b. Engages in socio-dramatic play

Literacy

15. Demonstrates phonological awareness
 - a. Notices and discriminates rhyme
 - b. Notices and discriminates alliteration
 - c. Notices and discriminates smaller and smaller units of sound
16. Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet
 - a. Identifies and names letters
 - b. Uses letter–sound knowledge
17. Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses
 - a. Uses and appreciates books
 - b. Uses print concepts
18. Comprehends and responds to books and other texts
 - a. Interacts during read-aloud and book conversations
 - b. Uses emergent reading skills
 - c. Retells stories
19. Demonstrates emergent writing skills
 - a. Writes name
 - b. Writes to convey meaning

Mathematics

20. Uses number concepts and operations
 - a. Counts
 - b. Quantifies
 - c. Connects numerals with their quantities
21. Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes
 - a. Understands spatial relationships
 - b. Understands shapes
22. Compares and measures
23. Demonstrates knowledge of patterns

Science and Technology

- 24. Uses scientific inquiry skills
- 25. Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things
- 26. Demonstrates knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials
- 27. Demonstrates knowledge of Earth's environment
- 28. Uses tools and other technology to perform tasks

Social Studies

- 29. Demonstrates knowledge about self
- 30. Shows basic understanding of people and how they live
- 31. Explores change related to familiar people or places
- 32. Demonstrates simple geographic knowledge

The Arts

- 33. Explores the visual arts
- 34. Explores musical concepts and expression
- 35. Explores dance and movement concepts
- 36. Explores drama through actions and language

English Language Acquisition

- 37. Demonstrates progress in listening to and understanding English
- 38. Demonstrates progress in speaking English

***Conscious Discipline™* Goals for Teachers and Children**

The seven powers of Conscious Discipline™ provide a foundation that facilitates our access to the integrated executive brain state where all higher-order thinking occurs. From this state, we can override impulsive and reactive tendencies. Any classroom management or discipline system that fails to address the conscious awareness and emotional intelligence of the adult is ultimately doomed. The Seven Powers for Conscious Adults create long-term, lasting success by guiding us to become conscious, present, attuned and responsive to the needs of ourselves and children. The effects that these Conscious Discipline™ techniques have on young children are proven to increase social and behavioral skills among the children we serve.

PROGRESS: We are beginning our third year of using the *Teaching Strategies Gold* assessment. *Teaching Strategies Gold™* assesses the key developmental areas as well as creating an open line of communication with our families. New Teachers received 12 hours of Professional Development training on our new assessment in August of 2016 and all other teaching staff received a refresher training at Pre-Service. In 2015-16, teachers began GOLD™ Online Interrater Reliability Certification and will continue to work on these certifications each year. Teaching staff will also expand on their anecdotal records they keep for each child by writing anecdotal records in each content area. During pre-service, all teaching staff attended a Conscious Discipline refresher course on the seven powers of Conscious Discipline to implement into their classrooms.

Adventures in Learning™

“Adventures in Learning” is a comprehensive curriculum for children from three to five that was developed through a grant from the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education of Arkansas. The curriculum features 40 topics of study in nine focus areas. Each topic is introduced with familiar children’s books and has a strong language and literacy emphasis.

“Adventures in Learning” is a curriculum that includes language and literacy, science/discovery and math activities, food/nutrition experiences, movement/physical education, ideas for learning centers and outdoors, transition activities, family activities, and patterns for teacher-made materials. The curriculum also includes the following features:

- **An optional Weekly Plan Sheet for each Topic of Study.**
- **Designed for licensed and registered child care programs in Arkansas.**
- **Includes activities based on the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework Developmental Learning Strands and Benchmarks.**
- **It has links to resources available from the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.**

PROGRESS: Teachers continue to receive specialized hands-on training on how to complete lesson plans and how to implement higher level thinking activities into their weekly plans. Our Education and Practice Based Coach will work individually with teachers to improve lesson planning and higher order thinking skills. Each teacher was also trained on how to access the “Adventures in Learning” curriculum on-line to utilize the curriculum to the fullest extent possible and to gain valuable information to add to current lesson plans to improve the education component.

School Readiness Implementation Plan

The Objectives, Implementation Strategy, and Evaluation Plan all combine to create the “School Readiness Agenda” which can be found in the table below:

Domain	Goals	Implementation Plan	Evaluation	Monitoring
Social and Emotional Development	Children will demonstrate positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships) by interacting with staff.	Lesson in AL’s Pals (See attached sheet) discuss emotions, attention, impulses and behavior. “Adventures in Learning” lesson plan includes stories and discussion questions regarding this topic	Child’s Portfolios Documenting conversations. Anecdotal records written by the teachers Lap-3 assessment	Education Coordinator Lap 3 results Mental Health Coordinator
	Children will recognize and regulate emotions, attention, impulses, and behavior	Lesson in AL’s Pals (see attached sheet) discuss emotions, attention, impulses and behavior. Adventures in Learning” lesson plan includes stories and discussion questions regarding this topic	Monitored through the AL’s Pals lessons and research and conversations with teachers. Documented in portfolios through children’s drawings and pictures. Lap-3 assessment	Education / Mental Health coordinator
	Children will verbally express displeasure with another child rather than hitting, kicking, or pushing.	Lesson in AL’s Pals (See attached sheet) discuss emotions, attention, impulses and behavior. “Adventures in Learning” lesson plan includes stories and discussion questions regarding this topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitored through the AL’s Pals lessons and research, conversations with teachers and observation/Follow-up reports 	Education Coordinator Lap 3 Results Mental Health Coordinator
Language Development	Children will comprehend increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New words are added to lesson plans weekly Teacher will write and explain new vocabulary words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of the Class will determine if the staff is increasing the children’s vocabulary Lap-3 Assessment Tool 	Education Coordinator Lap 3 results
Literacy Knowledge and Skills	Children will associate letters with their names Children will recognize that print becomes words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hanging their coats, sitting at a table, and leaving the circle area the child will recognize their names. Part of the Adventures In Learning Lesson Plans and Creative Curriculum Hanging their coats, sitting at a table, and leaving the circle area the child will recognize their names. Recognizes common words in their environment Part of the Adventures In Learning Lesson Plans and Creative Curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observation and documentation by teacher Lap-3 assessment tool Observation and documentation by teacher Lap-3 Assessment tool 	Education Coordinator Lap 3 results Education Coordinator
Approaches to Learning	Children will demonstrate persistence and attentiveness by completing projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During center time the teacher will monitor the projects the children complete Part of the Adventures In Learning Lesson Plans and Creative Curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teachers will assist the children who do not complete the projects and add this information to the anecdotal record. Lap-3 Assessment 	Education Coordinator Lap 3 results

Cognitive and General Knowledge	<p>Children will use math in every day to count the number of children in the class, the days of the week, and other items in the class.</p> <p>Children will identify Geometric shapes, such as circle, square, triangle, and rectangle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of the Adventures In Learning Lesson Plans and Creative Curriculum Part of the Adventures In Learning Lesson Plans and Creative Curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This skill is part of the classroom ongoing assessment. The Lap-3. This skill is part of the classroom assessment. The Lap-3 	<p>Education Coordinator</p> <p>Lap 3 results</p> <p>Education Coordinator</p> <p>Lap 3 results</p>
Physical Development and Health	<p>Children will demonstrate control of large muscles for movement by jumping, skipping and running.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of the Adventures In Learning Lesson Plans and Creative Curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is monitored on the Lap-3 assessment. This is documented through pictures and anecdotal records. This is part of the developmental screening at the beginning of the year. 	<p>Education Coordinator</p> <p>Lap 3 results</p>
Parent, Family & Community Engagement Plan Goals	<p>Families as first and lifelong educators</p> <p>Family engagement and intentional transitions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing information with parents regarding their child's readiness for school and the skill levels of their child. Sharing information with parents regarding their child's readiness for school and the skill levels of their child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home visits, parent teacher conferences, Home Task, and Parent meetings Home visits, parent teacher conferences, Home Task, and Parent meetings 	<p>Education Coordinator</p> <p>Lap 3 results</p> <p>Education Coordinator</p> <p>Lap 3 results</p>

PROGRESS toward the *School Readiness Implementation Plan*:

➤ **Social and Emotional Development:**

- **We have at least one staff member in each classroom that is trained in the AI's Pals curriculum. Teaching staff that were not trained in AI's Pals were introduced to new strategies to teach socio-emotional lessons which were then included in weekly Lesson Plans.**
- ***Ages and Stages* Developmental Assessments were conducted to find developmental issues a child in our program may be experiencing.**
- **Staff were trained on all seven domains of *Conscious Discipline* to cut down on behavioral problems and to allow our teaching staff to teach children how to deal with feelings and regulate emotions. Staff will continue to receive on-going training via the Practice Based Coach as well as Google Drive Trainings.**
- **In 2016-17, teaching staff will prepare anecdotal records on all 38 objectives for the *Creative Curriculum*.**

PROGRESS toward the School Readiness Implementation Plan- continued:

- **Language Development:**
 - Word Walls are being used in each classroom to increase phonics skills and sight word awareness.
 - We are continuing distribution of new books into our classrooms that are interactive and appealing to the students we serve. Teachers are also receiving coaching on how to implement the Interactive Big Books into the curriculum. Another installment of Big Books went to each classroom this year.
 - Teachers are being coached and mentored to be aware of the importance of music in language development and are using song as a key element in teaching sounds and using rhyming repetitions.

- **Literacy Knowledge and Skills:**
 - Interactive big books are being used in our classrooms as well as each room received at least 30 new books for their classroom libraries.
 - “Lending Libraries” with books and DVD’s are in each center to promote parent involvement- to get them engaged in reading to their children at home. Each library has a minimum of 50 books and 8 DVD’s they can check out and use at home. We are currently replenishing these libraries as new books flow in.
 - Teachers are encouraged to read books directly aligned with each topic from the Adventures in Learning Curriculum. They received training at pre-service on how to access the on-line website to locate a book list focused on each weekly topic of discussion.

- **Approaches to Learning:**
 - Teachers are having increased daily activities that are similar to what children will experience in Kindergarten to insure they are challenged and ready to learn when they go to public school. This is a direct result of our extended time and allows teachers an additional 30 minutes of learning throughout the day.
 - Teaching staff are evaluated through CLASS in this area to give insights into areas of improvement and strength. Teaching staff are expected to be engaged during all transitions and time periods throughout the school day including meal times and outdoor play. Each staff member will have a CLASS plan in the 2016-17 school year as well.

- **Cognitive and General Knowledge:**
 - Teachers all have a Bloom’s Taxonomy chart in their classrooms to access on needed basis.
 - Teachers also have access to higher order thinking materials such as HOT cards to increase cognitive thinking skills and concept development.
 - Teachers received additional training on Bloom’s Taxonomy to increase higher level thinking skills in and to improve their conversations with students.
 - Teachers continue to implement “five frames” and “ten frames” to improve math skills with students.
 - CLASS Evaluations assess how well our staff are teaching cognitive skills, and they are given strategies and ideas to implement in their classrooms to increase our scores. We have particularly focused in on Instructional Support for our teaching staff.
 - Teaching Staff will complete Google Classroom assignments directly aligned with CLASS for professional development throughout the 2016-17 school year.

PROGRESS toward the School Readiness Implementation Plan- continued:

➤ **Physical Development and Health:**

- **Our students are continuously engaged in learning activities and lessons that promote healthy lifestyles as well as parent meetings that make the information available for parents.**
- **Students fine and gross-motor skills are assessed at a minimum of three times throughout the year as well as being documented in anecdotal records.**
- **Outside learning time will be extended in the 2016-17 school year by at least 30 minutes.**

➤ **Parent, Family & Community Engagement Plan Goals:**

- **Staff, Policy Council, and the Governing Board were trained on the new PCEF plan on how we plan to engage each sector.**
- **Staff were trained on the importance of parent involvement and given strategies to increase parent's participation in the program. Each center began the year with a parent meeting in which officers were elected in all 17 classrooms.**
- **We have an "open door policy" with all families to promote involvement and feedback. Volunteer sign up sheets were distributed to all classrooms and teachers were strongly encouraged to get parents and guardians involved as well as pushing for more male involvement.**
- **We utilized our School Readiness Committee to improve upon our School Readiness Agenda. Our goal is to continue to increase the amount of members throughout the 2016-17 school year.**

Classroom Assessment Scoring System ("CLASS")

The *Classroom Assessment Scoring System*[™] (CLASS) is an observational tool that provides a common lens and language focused on what matters—the classroom interactions that boost student learning. Data from "CLASS" observations are used to support teachers' unique professional development needs, set school-wide goals, and shape system-wide reform at the local, state, and national levels.

Based on research from the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education and studied in thousands of classrooms nationwide, the "CLASS" tool does the following:

- focuses on effective teaching
- helps teachers recognize and understand the power of their interactions with students
- aligns with professional development tools
- works across age levels and subjects

The "CLASS" tool works. "CLASS"-based professional development tools increase teacher effectiveness—and students in classrooms with higher "CLASS" scores achieve at higher levels than their peers in classrooms with lower "CLASS" scores. The "CLASS" tool assesses the teachers on three domains: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support.

Progress toward improving Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) implementation:

- Teaching staff received additional CLASS training at pre-service in all three domains of the instrument by Tamara Brickey (Region 6 T &TA).
- Teaching staff are being coached and mentored by the enhancement coordinator to increase our overall scores in each domain.
- We are utilizing the Google Classroom for professional development opportunities in using the CLASS instrument. Teachers and Teacher Assistants have are completing mandatory training hours throughout the 2016-17 school year.

Ozark Opportunities Inc. Head Start **“CLASS” Implementation Plan 2016-17**

OOI Head Start’s “CLASS” Plan is designed to be ongoing and well documented so that our teaching staff can provide exceptional classroom and child outcomes. This year the plan includes six key steps in order for our staff to become fully aware of the importance of emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support on a higher level in their classrooms. Our key domain we will be focusing on is instructional support. We will implement numerous strategies, techniques, and evaluations to increase this domain.

➤ **Step 1**

Timeframe: August Pre-Service

All staff will be refreshed and retrained on how “CLASS” is used in their classrooms and how they will be assessed using this tool. They will also be reminded of the importance of instruction support and how to increase this domain.

➤ **Step 2**

Timeframe: September

All staff will be assessed in the first thirty days of school to get an idea on how they are performing in their classrooms.

➤ **Step 3**

Timeframe: Early October

Scores for each teacher will be used to formulate a plan for each classroom based upon need or area in which they scored below mid-range. Individual training may be required in certain areas as well. Each teacher will be given an overall summary of their first assessment.

CLASS Implementation Plan- continued:

➤ **Step 4**

Timeframe: November

New teachers and teachers who scored below mid-range on the first assessment will be assessed again to insure changes are being implemented into the classroom.

➤ **Step 5**

Timeframe: January

All classrooms will be assessed for a final time.

➤ **Step 6**

Timeline: February

Scores for each room will be used to further develop a plan for the teacher to follow and make adjustments if necessary in the classroom.

PROGRESS toward the “CLASS” Implementation Plan:

We completed each component of our CLASS Implementation Plan for 2015-16. Our overall scores in Instructional have continually increased and during the 2016-17 school year, we plan to ensure all three domains continue to increase over the course of the year. Teachers will continue to receive feedback, training, and staff support to supplement the Instructional Support Domain. Our Practice Based Coach and Education has continually provided training and learning opportunities for teaching staff to increase their scores in all three CLASS Domains.

Curriculum and Assessment- Action Plan & Evaluation

1. Align and establish the pre-school goals from the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Frameworks with the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework Benchmarks.
 - Continue Adventures in Learning and Creative Curriculum as a basis for Lesson Plans used in classrooms. This is monitored by the Education Coordinator and Enhancement Coordinator monthly.
 - Continue to implement *Al's Pals* and *Conscious Discipline* curriculum in the classrooms and monitoring by the Health/ Mental Health Coordinator.

PROGRESS: We have continued to implement both of these goals over the past two years and plan to keep building on these goals in the future with teaching staff through professional development.

2. Implement and maintain the plan of action to achieve School Readiness.
 - Use the "CLASS" information to improve teacher-child interactions.
 - Continue to investigate what curriculums and teaching skills that will improve the quality of the classroom.
 - Continue open communication between Head Start and local school districts. Sharing information on an annual basis (regarding TSG Assessment).
 - Provide professional training to increase staff knowledge base and share information regarding updated Federal Guidelines.

PROGRESS:

- We are continuing to focus on CLASS achievement and the importance of teacher-child interactions. Teachers are being held responsible for poor CLASS performance and each teaching staff member has a current plan of action to increase scores.
- We are continuing the use of Creative Curriculum because it is the number one curriculum being used nationally in Head Start. The curriculum will also serve us well as we transition into the Early Head Start realm.
- All school districts continue to work with us and implement our memorandums of understanding that we work as a team. Each school district also agreed to help us implement "Project Follow Through" in which we will be tracking our students as they move into the primary grades.
- Staff members are provided with all the training we can budget to provide them with as many training opportunities we can find to utilize.

3. Use of Program Data to Improve Child Outcomes :

- Using the TSG Assessment Tool, screening tools, observations, and portfolios; *Ozark Opportunities, Inc.* Head Start will determine “Areas of Improvement.” This information will be analyzed after the 45 day screenings, assessments and observations.
- This information will be analyzed again at the mid-point, and at the end of the year to determine the child’s progress. This information will provide progress using a norm or criterion-referenced data.
- Individualizations will be incorporated into the child’s curriculum and shared with the child’s parent during Parent/Teacher Conference and Home Visits.
- Professional Development will be planned and implemented to incorporate the information provided from the assessment.
- Patterns & Trends (such as age, attendance, family issues) will be studied to determine improvement in group areas (and will be tracked via the Self-Assessment process.)

PROGRESS: We used the Teaching Strategies Gold™ Assessment for the second year. This new assessment has allowed us to be able to break down individual areas in a child’s development and growth. We can also use this data to focus in on an individual teacher’s strengths and weaknesses to provide the appropriate professional development.

2016-17 OOI Head Start *School Readiness Action Plan*

School Readiness Goals	Action Steps	Who is Responsible?	Time Line	Evaluation Strategy
#1. Staff Training	1. Train staff more thoroughly on each goal and how it should be measured. 2. Meet with school Principals and/or Superintendents to discuss readiness goals and other issues related to transitioning children to Kindergarten. 3. Train the parents at orientation about our goals and how they can help us obtain these goals at home as well. 4. Encourage parents to bring their children to school five days a week and on time daily to maximize learning time.	1. OOI H.S. Coordinators 2. Education Coordinator 3. Teachers and Coordinators 4. Teachers and Family Service Workers	1. Throughout the program year 2. August 2016 3. August 2016 4. Throughout the program year	1. Child Plus, TAPP Registry Form, Certificates of Attendance, and sign in sheets. 2. Signed Memorandum of Understanding Form 3. Parent Signature and Observation of Meeting by Coordinators 4. Parent Signature and Observation of Meeting by Coordinators
#2. School Readiness Agenda	Coordinators will regularly update the School Readiness Agenda and implement all the procedures within.	Coordinators	Throughout the program year	Documentation of Procedures and Actions
#3. Children will demonstrate early knowledge and skills that lay the foundation for reading and writing.	Teachers will create a learning environment that is rich in print, book opportunities, model reading, and teaching the alphabet as well as their sounds. Teachers will be trained and observed to insure they are doing this.	Teachers Monitored by Education Coordinator	Throughout the program year	On-site Monitoring Lesson Plans CLASS Observations

<p>#4. Children will learn and be able to demonstrate the importance of health and safety routines.</p>	<p>Children will brush teeth daily, wash hands, follow safety rules, and learn why these are important.</p>	<p>Teachers and Assistants Monitored by Safety & Health Coordinators</p>	<p>Throughout the program year</p>	<p>On-site Monitoring Lesson Plans</p>
<p>#5. Children will develop motor control and balance for a range of physical activities including both fine and gross motor skills.</p>	<p>Teachers will utilize the TSG Assessments to see what fine and gross motor skills need to be taught to individual children.</p>	<p>Teachers and Assistants Monitored by Education Coordinator</p>	<p>Throughout the program year</p>	<p>On-site Monitoring, Lesson Plans TSG Results</p>
<p>#6. Children will demonstrate the ability to make successful decisions, finish jobs, and meet goals by seeking multiple solutions to a question, task, or problem.</p>	<p>Teachers will create an environment that allows children to feel comfortable speaking and being independent.</p>	<p>Teachers and Assistants Monitored by Education and Mental Health Coordinator</p>	<p>Throughout the program year</p>	<p>On-site Monitoring Lesson Plans Daily Schedule</p>
<p>#7. Children will develop and demonstrate the ability to begin and finish activities with persistence and attention either individually or cooperatively.</p>	<p>Teachers will utilize their training on <i>Conscious Discipline</i> and their <i>CLASS</i> training to create an environment that promotes these attributes as well as being encouraging to all students in the classroom.</p>	<p>Teachers and Assistants Monitored by Education and Mental Health Coordinator</p>	<p>Throughout the program year</p>	<p>Ages and Stages TSG Results Anecdotal Records CLASS Assessment</p>
<p>#8. Children will be able to use a range of mathematical strategies, such as recognizing numbers and quantities, reciting numbers in the correct order, and using numbers to describe relationships and solve problems.</p>	<p>Teachers will utilize the <i>Creative Curriculum</i> to better understand early mathematics learning and how to teach the skills and concepts children need to become successful mathematical thinkers.</p>	<p>Teachers and Assistants</p>	<p>Throughout the program year</p>	<p>Numbers and Shapes Checklist TSG Results</p>

<p>#9. Children will demonstrate knowledge of geometry, spatial sense, patterns, measurements, and comparison.</p>	<p>Teachers will utilize the <i>Creative Curriculum</i> to better understand early mathematics learning and how to teach the skills and concepts children need to become successful mathematical thinkers.</p>	<p>Teachers and Assistants</p>	<p>Throughout the program year</p>	<p>Numbers and Shapes Checklist TSG Results</p>
<p>#10. Children will learn and be able to demonstrate the ability to gather information about the natural and physical world and organize that information into knowledge and theories.</p>	<p>Teachers will utilize the <i>Creative Curriculum</i> to learn how to teach scientific inquiry skills, characteristics of living things, properties of objects and materials, use of technology, and knowledge of the earth's environment.</p>	<p>Teachers and Assistants</p>	<p>Throughout the program year</p>	<p>TSG Results CLASS Assessment</p>
<p>#11. Children will use creativity and imagination to manipulate material such as instruments and art supplies and assume roles in dramatic play situations.</p>	<p>Teachers will be trained on how to use the <i>Creative Curriculum</i> in their classrooms to create Learning Centers and create a variety of activities for their <i>Adventures in Learning</i> units.</p>	<p>Teachers and Education Coordinator</p>	<p>Throughout the program year</p>	<p>TSG Results Developmental Screenings</p>
<p>#12. Children will develop skills necessary to foster secure attachments, maintain healthy relationships to positively self-regulate, and to develop a healthy concept of personal identity.</p>	<p><i>Conscious Discipline</i> will be fully implemented into each classroom, and staff will receive further training in the approach. Each classroom will be given and instructed to read the <i>Conscious Discipline</i> book. Staff are encouraged to provide feedback and discussion on the concepts at "in-service" & as needed.</p>	<p>Teachers and Assistants</p>	<p>Throughout the program year</p>	<p>On-site Monitoring CLASS Observations</p>

OOI Head Start Component Areas

A. Parent, Family and Community Engagement:

All staff members are essential in engaging families and supporting school readiness through various PFCE activities throughout the agency. From building trusting relationships with the families, assisting them with what documents are needed for transitioning into the school system, to providing them with opportunities to set goals for their child/family, as well as being integral in linking them to needed community resources. This process starts as early as when the parent receives the application and continues until the child transitions into the public school system.

Parent Engagement (involvement) is a major key to School Readiness. We work as an agency to encourage parent involvement- it begins with each and every staff member on our team. Each center provides an environment that is welcoming and has an open door policy to parents. Staff invites each parent to volunteer in the classroom and attend monthly Parent/MAD (Make a Difference) meetings. Staff also encourages parents to complete the Home Tasks with their children as this will prepare them even farther in becoming a valuable asset to their child's future. If parents learn to become involved in their child's education in Head Start, this will transfer over to elementary school in the future, as the parents are invited to be a part of the transition as well. The Fatherhood Initiative strives to get dads and male role-models involved in their children's education.

Parents are educated about the importance and benefits of children attending class regularly as well as school requirements regarding attendance. Throughout the year, parent meetings and conferences are held that educates, encourages and gives families information how best to advocate for their child as they continue their education.

PROGRESS: Volunteer data continues to show a substantial increase in parent involvement from the previous school year. Volunteer hours improved due to the fact that we are encouraging teachers to get our families involved in their child's education. Parent involvement has been and will continue to be one of our number one priorities for the future. Overall, we have done a better job at communicating with parents and guardians on what is expected of them while receiving Head Start services and how important their volunteering and completion of home tasks are to our program.

B. Community Partners:

OOI identifies other community resources that provide services for families and children in our 6 county service area. Through these partnerships referrals are made, training is provided, requirements are met, and needed services for families are received when needed.

PROGRESS: Community Partnership is an ongoing component that we continually utilize in each area that we serve. This may include families who need food, shelter, financial help, or need medical attention. We had over 200 community partner agreements this past year, and are continually reviewing the accessibility for families to services.

C. Disabilities:

With parental consent all children enrolled are screened for vision, hearing, speech and developmental testing through Interagency Agreements with 3 Co-op (LEA) agencies, and 1 preschool program. They provide screenings as well as continued services for those children that qualify.

Staff members use a Monthly Activity calendar in order to work with children that qualify for services and are on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Information received from the Co-Ops or Preschools are used on the calendar to identify individual goals to build School Readiness Skills for each child receiving services. Staff members received additional training at pre-service to better complete the monthly IEP calendar and on how to conduct individualizations on their students.

End of year conferences are completed on each child with an IEP, which includes input from parents, teachers, Co-op agency and any additional professional needed. If a child is 5 and going into Kindergarten, the conference is held at the school the child will be attending. At that time, the Co-Op, Parent(s), Head Start staff, and school representative will complete end of the year conference and transition the child into the school system. The school takes responsibility during this conference to ensure continuity of services to the child as they enter the public school system.

PROGRESS: Every child was screened on time and IEP's were implemented for those children in need. Documentation in Child Plus has substantially improved over the last year.

D. Nutrition:

Children are encouraged to make healthy choices and learn to become self-reliable. They learn to carry their own food trays and choose their own milk. Parent meetings are held throughout the school year that educates parents about healthy foods and how to help their families live a healthier lifestyle.

Parents are also engaged through “Home Tasks” which include a monthly exercise activity to complete with their children, and the curriculum includes “healthy food activities” that are implemented into each classroom monthly.

PROGRESS: Home tasks and healthy food activities were sent home on a monthly basis. Also, there is a unit on eating healthy in our curriculum that we implement. A parent meeting was also held regarding nutrition.

E. Safety:

Safety is emphasized immensely throughout the school year to parents and students. There is a week of study integrated into the curriculum for the students. For parents, there are a minimum of two safety-based parent meetings a year.

PROGRESS: Each classroom had a safety week in which safety was the topic. Parent meetings were held as regular including the safety meetings.

F. Transportation:

Child transportation also is stressed to the parents with seat belt and car seat meetings. Bus Safety is presented to every center as supervisors bring a bus to each site in April- the bus driver talks about bus safety and shows the children what they should be doing when they start kindergarten. The children are allowed to board the bus, and get a feel for what it will be like to be a “big kid.”

PROGRESS: Parents were trained on car safety and we utilized local schools to teach bus safety.

G. Health:

Within the first 45 days with parental consent, the children are tested for lead. The lead testing is only done on the children who are new to Head Start and have not had lead testing done.

The staff teaches the children about health and wellness by teaching the children to brush their teeth and wash their hands. This is something that is done daily from the beginning to the end of the school year. Signs are placed in each center to help demonstrate to the children the steps and procedure to wash their hands.

PROGRESS: All children received lead testing that was due to receive it. Children and families continue to receive training on personal hygiene and wellness.

H. Mental Health:

A Mental Health Specialist comes to observe each center within the first 90 days of school. They identify children that have behavioral issues and may need extra help with behavioral problems. A conference is held with the parents of the children who have been identified with behavioral concerns, and the teacher meets with the specialist to learn new ways to deal with each child's specific needs and situation. If needed (with the Parent or Guardian's consent) children may be referred to a Mental Health Specialist for extra assistance with their behavioral problems.

PROGRESS: All children were observed in the 2015-16 school year. We have to ensure that we the documentation process in streamlined to match our files in the center and Child Plus. We have also created a plan to get to classrooms that have more challenging behaviors by working together with coordinating staff. This ensures that a teacher or teacher assistant knows we are there to help and get a referral for a child if one is needs as they enter our program.

I. Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA):

Eligibility- Families of children between the ages of three to five years are age eligible to participate in OOI's Head Start Program. Income documentation must be received from the parents in order to determine how a child is deemed eligible.

- Types of Eligibility
 - Income below 100% of the federal poverty guidelines
 - Public Assistance recipient: such as TANF/TEA, SSI
 - Status as a foster child
 - Status as homeless
 - Overincome

Recruitment- Ozark Opportunities, Inc., Head Start Preschool Program develops a recruitment plan each year to identify families whose children may be eligible for Head Start services, inform them of services, and encourage them to apply for enrollment into the program.

Selection- OOI has a formal process for selection of children to ensure we are enrolling those with the greatest need for Head Start services, including children with disabilities.

Enrollment- Children are enrolled into Ozark Opportunities, Inc., Head Start Preschool Program from center waiting list which rank children according to points assigned from the established selection criteria.

Attendance- In order to give each child the full benefit of the Head Start Program including building the School Readiness Skills that are required for Kindergarten, it is important that parents have their children in attendance and on time every day the center is open, unless illness or unforeseen circumstances prevent them from attending. Programs must monitor and maintain attendance averages.

PROGRESS: Parents, community partners and social media (facebook), continue to be a recruiting asset to the program. We will continue to educate staff on the recruitment process to ensure we meet our enrollment numbers. ERSEA Final rule has been implemented and training will continue to be provided for all staff and governing bodies.

Key Elements toward School Readiness:

- Students will have take-home folders this year the same as our Kindergartens use to keep an open line of communication with parents on their child's progress.
- Updates to our classrooms including math manipulatives, puzzles, magnets, interactive books, big books, and the newest manipulatives on the market to increase cognitive knowledge and skills.
- *Lending Libraries* at each center to get parents involved in Literacy at home as well as increasing our parent involvement hours for in-kind.
- Teachers are being encouraged to take advantage of all trainings in their area to supplement our professional development training that is provided during pre-service.
- Newsletters are sent out each month to teaching staff with strategies and techniques to increase higher level thinking skills and our overall CLASS scores.
- We reached out into our communities to gather members for our School Readiness Committee and we plan to continue utilizing these members for the betterment of our Head Start program.
- We continue to strive to increase male involvement in our classrooms.

Conclusion

Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Head Start will continue to update our *School Readiness Agenda* as new information is gathered, and we will continue to work with community members, families, teaching staff, and the children we serve to provide the best outcomes possible. We have a commitment to train our staff and keep them up-to-date with new strategies and techniques that benefit the children and families we serve. Our teachers are doing a great job educating the children we serve in order for them to make a smooth transition into the kindergarten setting, and we look forward to implementing a new Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Plan in conjunction with the School Readiness Agenda that will wrap around these efforts to have an even more profound effect on the children and families we serve. We also plan to utilize our Community Services side to empower our Head Start families as well through the SUCCESS Program and Utility Assistance Program.