



## **OZARK OPPORTUNITIES, INC.**

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# *Head Start/Early Head Start*

## **ANNUAL REPORT TO THE PUBLIC**

*Program Year 2016-17*

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# I. Program Summary

## 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:

“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:

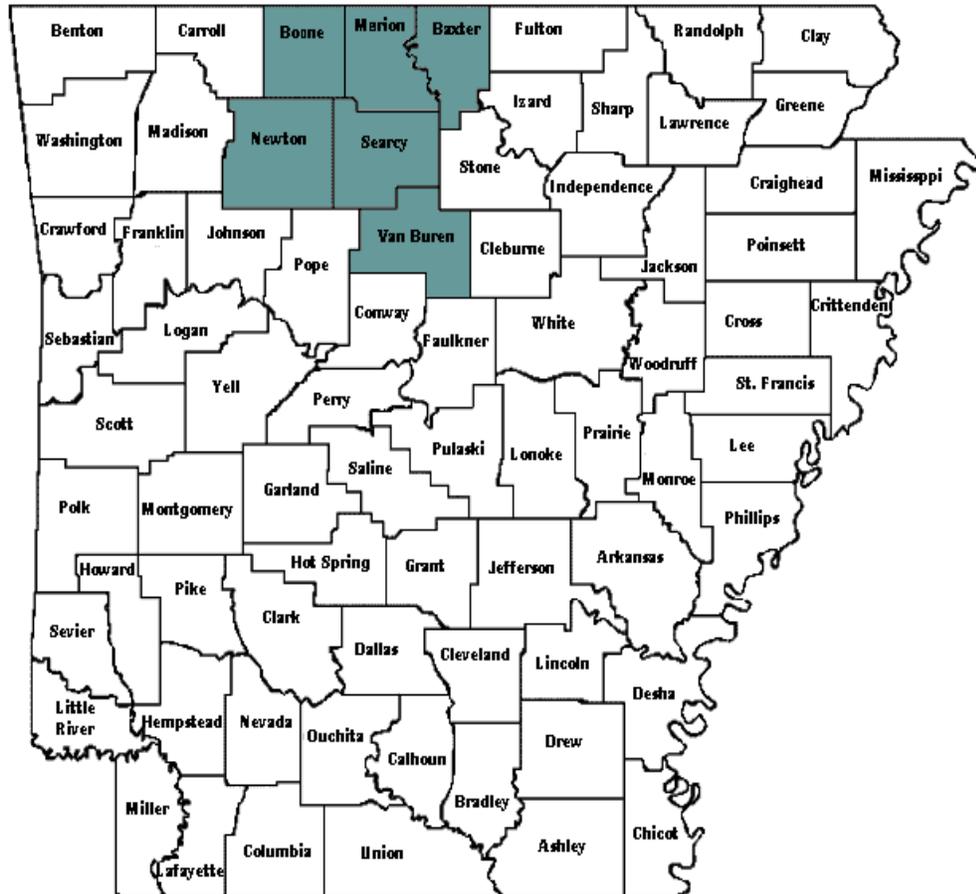
- (A) The total amount of public and private funds received and the amount from each source.
- (B) An explanation of budgetary expenditures and proposed budget for the fiscal year.
- (C) The total number of children and families served, the average monthly enrollment (as a percentage of funded enrollment), 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.

([https://www.census.gov/did/www/saiepe/data/interactive/saiepe.html?s\\_appName=saiepe&map\\_yearSelector=2015&map\\_geoSelector=aa\\_c&s\\_state=05&s\\_county=05009,05005,05089,05101,05129,05141&menu=grid\\_proxy](https://www.census.gov/did/www/saiepe/data/interactive/saiepe.html?s_appName=saiepe&map_yearSelector=2015&map_geoSelector=aa_c&s_state=05&s_county=05009,05005,05089,05101,05129,05141&menu=grid_proxy)).

**C. Head Start/Early Head Start:**

1. **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 & Early Head Start Center Locations 2016-17**

#	Location	County
1	Cotter	Baxter
2	Mt. Home 1	Baxter
3	Mt. Home 2	
4	Mt. Home 3	
5	Norfork	
6	Harrison Rm 1	Boone
7	Harrison Rm 2	
8	Harrison Rm 3	
9	Harrison Rm 4	
10	Harrison Rm 5	
11	Valley Springs	Boone
12	Bruno-Pyatt	Marion
13	Yellville	
14	Jasper	Newton
15	Western Grove	
16	St. Joe	Searcy
17	Shirley	Van Buren
18	Clinton Early Head Start (EHS)	Van Buren
19	Harrison Early Head Start	Boone
20	Mountain Home Early Head Start	Baxter

2. **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.

3. **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.
4. **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	\$	3,000,511.00
USDA (CACFP) Nutrition Program- Federal	\$	251,525.00
Non-Federal Match (In-Kind)- Public	\$	750,128.00
	<b>\$</b>	<b>4,002,164.00</b>

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

Cost Category	TOTAL BUDGET	
	3/1/16-2/28/17	TOTAL EXPENSES
Salaries	\$ 1,807,420.00	\$ 1,603,502.00
Fringe Benefits	\$ 564,664.00	\$ 431,046.00
Contractual	\$ 13,671.00	\$ 63,818.00
Travel	\$ 5,186.00	\$ 19,144.00
Supplies	\$ 136,744.00	\$ 240,440.00
Equipment	\$ 84,500.00	\$ 64,047.00
Other:	\$ 639,851.00	\$ 553,156.00
Federal	\$ 3,252,036.00	\$ 2,975,153.00
Non-Federal Match	\$ 750,128.00	\$ 680,907.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 4,002,164.00</b>	<b>\$ 3,656,060.00</b>

## B. ERSEA Data; 2016-2017 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 261 for Head Start and 48 for Early Head Start= 309 Total.)*

- **Total children served: 51 (Early Head Start) 309 (Head Start)**
  - Early Head Start
    - Under 1 year: 19
    - 1 year old: 18
    - 2 years old: 14
    - 3 years old: 0
  - Head Start
    - 2 years old: 20 (Children were enrolled after turning 3, but were age 2 by PIR calculations)
    - 3 years old: 125
    - 4 years old: 164
  
- **Total families served: 45 (Early Head Start) 285 (Head Start)**
  - Early Head Start
    - 38% (17) two parent households
    - 62% (28) single parent households
  - Head Start
    - 58% (166) two parent households
    - 42% (119) single parent households
  
- **Average Monthly Enrollment:**
  - Early Head Start (Program started in January for Harrison/Clinton, and February for Mountain Home)
    - January 2017 – 97% (31 students – MH not open, 1 slot left open in Clinton for foster child)
    - February 2017 – 98% (47 students, 1 slot waiting for foster child)
    - March 2017 – 100% (48 students)
    - April 2017 – 100% (48 students)
    - May 2017 – 100% (48 students)
    - June 2017 – 100% (48 students)
  - Head Start
    - Maintained 100% Enrollment of 261 children each month from August 2016 – May 2017

- **Enrollment by Income Category:**

▪ Early Head Start (51 total)	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>
○ Eligible- 100% of poverty	92%	(47)
○ Eligible 101-130% of poverty	2%	(1)
○ Eligible Over-Income	0%	(0)
○ Eligible Foster Care	0%	(0)
○ Eligible TANF/SSI	4%	(2)
○ <u>Eligible Homeless</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>(1)</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>51</b>
▪ Head Start (309 total)		
○ Eligible- 100% of poverty	72.5%	(224)
○ Eligible 101-130% of poverty	18.8%	(58)
○ Eligible Over-Income	4.2%	(13)
○ Eligible Foster Care	1.6%	(5)
○ Eligible TANF/SSI	2.3%	(7)
○ <u>Eligible Homeless</u>	<u>0.6%</u>	<u>(2)</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>309</b>

**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, 2016) 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.**

### **1. Head Start**

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.	276/309= 89.3%
C.5; Number of children with an ongoing source of continuous, accessible health care.	306/309= 99%
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.	283/309= 91.6%
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.	301/309= 97.4%

***\*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.***

### **2. Early Head Start**

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.	39/51= 76.5%
C.5; Number of children with an ongoing source of continuous, accessible health care.	50/51= 98%
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.	46/51= 90.2%
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.	48/51= 94.1%

***\*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. Some infants were not age-appropriately due for dental exams for C.19/C.20.***

### 3. Head Start and Early Head Start Combined-

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	315/360= 87.5%
C.5; Number of children with an ongoing source of continuous, accessible health care	356/360= 98.8%
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	329/360= 91.4%
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	349/360= 97%

***\*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. Some infants were not age-appropriately due for dental exams for C.19/C.20.***

### 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, **444** individuals volunteered their time or talents to our Head Start program through volunteering in the classroom and **552** 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 **928** 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, **35** 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 2016-2017 school year, a total of **209 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**

"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: The following Five Year Plan- Outcomes to Date was included in our 2017-18 Application for funding, and is the best way to document "Progress Toward School Readiness Goals" of our program, as the Five Year Goals (and accompanying "School Readiness Agenda") compose the roadmap to School Readiness for the OOI Head Start & Early Head Start Program. On the far side of the Five Year Plan please look at the "Outcome to Date" column for the progress to date.**

## OOI Five Year Plan 2015 to 2020- Outcomes to Date

**Goal I: School Readiness for Children-** Early/Head Start children will receive high quality comprehensive health, nutrition and developmental learning essential for overall growth to prepare children for school readiness.

- **Domain A:** Continue to improve professional development that supports our current curriculum to foster children’s physical, educational, social emotional and nutritional development.

	Action	Who	When	Outcome to Date
<b>Year 1</b>	Provide professional development to teaching staff to strengthen our current Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment. (Documentation on TSG Objectives)	Education Coordinator/Enhancement Coordinator	Fall 2016	Teachers received hands on training on how to complete in-depth anecdotal records in TSG by the Education Coordinator and the Mentor Coach. Teachers were also trained on the new Child Development and Learning Framework during Pre-Service.

- **Domain B:** Implement age and developmentally appropriate school readiness goals from the results of our TSG child assessments.

	Action	Who	When	Outcome to Date
<b>Year 1</b>	Analyze and aggregate data from Teaching Strategies Gold Assessments to develop new school readiness goals.	Education Coordinator/School Readiness Committee	Fall 2016	The School Readiness Agenda was updated using TSG results from the 2015-16 school years. Literacy, Mathematics, and Science continue to be areas in need of professional development. A High Five Mathematics training was provided to teachers during pre-service as well as materials to enhance all of these development areas.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Domain C:</b> Continue to train our teaching staff in Language and Literacy Development to assist English language learning students as well as Dual Language Learners.</li> </ul>				
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcome to Date</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Train FSW's and Teaching staff on the new Dual Language Learner Plan.	Education Coordinator	Fall 2016	In Process; planned for December 2016.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Domain D:</b> Implement effective home visiting and parent teacher conferences to develop an open stream of communication to facilitate continuous learning.</li> </ul>				
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcome to Date</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Train all staff on home visiting techniques that help strengthen the bond between our agency and families.	Education Coordinator/ Teaching Staff/ FSW's	Fall 2016	Family Support Workers were trained on a new home visiting form as well as techniques in engaging parents. Teachers were trained during pre-service on which reports from TSG were most beneficial to share with our Head Start parents.
<p><b>Goal II: Parent and Family Development-</b> Families are participants in their child's education and engaged in their own personal growth and development.</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Domain A:</b> Families demonstrate consistent involvement in their child's education based on PFCE plan.</li> </ul>				
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcome to Date</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Develop new strategies to get our parents involved in completing home tasks.	Education Coordinator/Enhancement Coordinator/Teaching Staff	Fall 2016	Teachers Assistants were training during Round Robin Pre-Service on how to create home task activities that would get parents involved as well as tying them directly to the Adventures in Learning curriculum. Teacher Assistants from high achieving classrooms shared information with all staff on how they were able to perform so high in this area.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Domain B:</b> Family goals are connected to the seven outcome areas of the Parent Family &amp; Community Engagement (PFCE) framework.</li> </ul>				
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcome to Date</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Develop family goal setting training to implement the PFCE Framework.	ERSEA Coordinator/FSW's/ Parent Engagement Coordinator	Fall 2016	The ERSEA Coordinator has worked hands on with FSW's on how to set goals both beneficial to the parents and the Head Start students. They were also trained on how to better document a family's progress in the Child Plus Database.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Domain C:</b> Parents engage in parent trainings and financial literacy activities to support self-sufficiency, advocacy and school readiness for themselves and their children.</li> </ul>				
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcome to Date</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Research effective parent trainings that have a proven impact upon the lives of Early/Head Start Parents. (Parent Input)	Program Manager/Parent Engagement Coordinator/ERSEA Coordinator	Fall 2016	Parents were asked at the first parent meeting and at orientation on what kind of trainings they would like to see. The Parent Engagement Coordinator also polled the teaching staff on which training topics had the best attendance over the 2015-16 school year.
<b>Goal III: Staffing-</b> Employ and retain staff that are skilled, meet required certifications and assist them to make strides in their classroom performance and professional development.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Domain A:</b> Expand opportunities for professional development.</li> </ul>				
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcome to Date</b>
<b>Year 1-5</b>	Continue to ensure new and current staff are trained in the education field and maintain the credentials to work in the Early/Head Start Program.	Corporate Services Director/ Program Manager	2016-2021	All staff received updated Ar. Minimum Licensing Training as well training on pertinent HSPPS. Staff have also begun training on CLASS and classroom management on the Google Classroom we use for on-going prof. development.

**Goal 3; Domain A: Expand opportunities for professional development; CONTINUED:**

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcome to Date</b>
<b>Year 1-5</b>	Develop and provide a high quality curriculum for Preschool, Infant, and Toddler CDA candidates.	Education Coordinator/ Enhancement Coordinator	2016-2021	Pre-School CDA curriculum is continuing to be provided by Arkansas State University. OOI has developed a well-rounded curriculum with help from other Early Head Start programs to initiate to new employees in November and December of 2016. Candidates will not only have a vigorous amount of coursework, but also a minimum amount of hands-on work experience in infant, toddler and pre-school classrooms for up to 120 hours.
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcome to Date</b>
<b>Year 1-5</b>	Provide current staff with every available opportunity whether it is financial or benefits to retain them in our program.	Early/Head Start Director	2016-2021	All staff were offered continuing employment with the agency as it underwent the transition from Head Start to Early Head Start in some of our service area. OOI was able to retain a great deal of staff as well as offer a cost of living raise over the summer of 2016.

**Goal 3; Domain B: When funds are available, staff will be encouraged to pursue educational goals to further their credentials or degree status- CONTINUED:**

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcome to Date</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Update current Professional Development Plans to foster improved child outcomes if applicable and/or professional evaluations.	Program Manager/ Staff Supervisor/ Enhancement Coordinator	Fall 2016	Professional development plans are currently being updated and will be completed by the end of December 2016. Teaching staff members are also completing a self-evaluation during the month of November 2016 that will be directly tied to their professional development plans.

• **Domain C: Retain quality teachers based upon skill level and classroom performance.**

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcome to Date</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Research different strategies on how to maintain/retain high skill level staff.	Early/Head Start Director/ Program Manager	Fall 2016	The administrative staff has researched and discussed ideas on how to further maintain current highly skilled staff. Outcomes for a high accomplishment level can be attributed to a good work environment an staff being treated well financially with contracts similar to a public school teacher in our service area.

**Goal IV: Empowerment and Support-** Ozark Opportunities, Inc. continues to implement strategies that support wrap around services from Community Services to facilitate all aspects of the organization.

- **Domain A:** Increase the number of Early/Head Start families receiving wrap around services agency wide.

	Action	Who	When	Outcome to Date
<b>Year 1</b>	Increase the number of current Early/Head Start families served by Community Services by a minimum of 10%	Community Services/ All Coordinating Staff	Fall 2016	FSW's have been trained on how to engage families and direct in the right path to receive all the agency has to offer from our SUCCESS program to our overall Community Services system. New data on this will be gathered in January 2017.

- **Domain B:** Create a process to support remote trainings and webinars for parents, community members, and teaching staff.

	Action	Who	When	Outcome to Date
<b>Year 1</b>	Research topics that will spark parental interest and design a system to provide training on these topics.	Parent Engagement Coordinator	Fall 2016	Numerous flyers and posters have been distributed to Head Start families notifying them of trainings provided by our Co-Ops in the region. Trainings ranging from behavioral management, financial education, and mental health have been made available as resources to engage families.
<b>Year 1-5</b>	Create virtual trainings that members of the community and families can access via the internet.	All Coordinating Staff/ Community Services	2016-2021	Trainings on-line by the state extension office have been provided to families including trainings in disabilities and parenting.

<b>Goal IV; Domain B: Create a process to support remote trainings and webinars for parents, community members, and teaching staff- CONTINUED:</b>				
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcome to Date</b>
<b>Year 1-5</b>	Engage the community as a whole and educate them on the services we provide not only to children but to families as well.	All Coordinating Staff	2016-2021	Members of the community have been engaged through parent meetings, board meeting, HSAC, and the School Readiness Committee to let the public know what we are providing for families at Ozark Opportunities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Domain C:</b> Maintain facilities that are safe and in good condition while continuing to improve areas in available technology.</li> </ul>				
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcome to Date</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Research new and innovative technology that we could utilize in our classrooms. (Smartboards, tablets, interactive equipment)	All Coordinating Staff	Fall 2016	All classrooms were equipped with larger additional tablets in the beginning of the 2016 school year. Teaching staff have been trained and advised on how to implement the new technology with existing technology.
<b>Year 1-5</b>	Provide monthly on-site monitoring to ensure safety in all aspects of the program at each location. (On-Site Monitoring Plan)	All Coordinating Staff/ Safety and Licensing Coordinator	2016-2021	All sites are continuously monitored to ensure that all learning centers are safe and well equipped. A new tracking system on the Google drive allows all administrative staff see what and where needs to be monitored as well as issues that need immediate attention.

**Goal V: Tracking and Student Progress-** Ozark Opportunities, Inc. plans to implement strategies that track students as they leave our program through ‘Project Follow Through’ and implement more efficient tracking procedures while children are in the program.

- **Domain A:** Find ways to ensure data management procedures are completed and followed through.

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcome to Date</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Develop a process to document a child’s progress through the third grade. (Surveys, Conferences, Filing System)	All Coordinating Staff	Fall 2016	Families who signed an agreement with the agency will be called in the Spring of 2017 to gather data on educational progress and behavioral data on their children. FSW’s will be trained in early January on how to track and document this data.
<b>Year 1-5</b>	‘Project Follow Through’ tracks children as they progress through elementary school with parent and elementary school consent.	Program Manager/Education Coordinator	2016-2021	Families who signed an agreement with the agency will be called in the Spring of 2017 to gather data on educational progress and behavioral data on their children. FSW’s will be trained in early January on how to track and document this data.

- **Domain B:** Continue to improve the tracking process both in Child Plus and Teaching Strategies Gold to improve child outcomes and data management.

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcome to Date</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Create a distinct plan on how we plan to use the data that we collect through both programs.	All Coordinating Staff	Fall 2016	All Head Start staff including Teachers, FSW’s, and Coordinating have had several mini trainings on the importance of entering key data to ensure we have a virtual map of all outcomes in each component area.

**Goal V; Domain B:** Continue to improve the tracking process both in Child Plus and Teaching Strategies Gold to improve child outcomes and data management- CONTINUED:

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Outcome to Date</b>
<b>Year 1-5</b>	Implement new initiatives to check data accuracy in Child Plus.	All Staff	2016-2021	FSW's have on-going cross-checking of children's file and Child Plus Data. Coordinating staff also utilizes the new Google Drive Tracking Sheet which contains an overall summary of all data and a date in which it is was entered into the Child Plus Database.
<b>Year 1-5</b>	Provide all necessary trainings for Child Plus and research other methods of collecting and documenting child/family data.	All Coordinating Staff	2016-2021	All staff received a minimum of three hours of Child Plus Data entry training during pre-service. The ERSEA Coordinator and Education Coordinator clarified who was responsible for different data tracking in the system.

# 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 invite 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: Policy Council representatives are serving as Parent Engagement Leaders in the classroom. They are kept updated on the statistics and are going back to the classrooms encouraging families and creating ideas with teaching staff. Our community involvement is growing. Staff are consistently spreading the word and inviting community members to visit and educate both children and families.**

## **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.**

An added benefit OOI has is being a Community Action Agency (CAA) and having additional funding sources that provide programs that have extra benefits to the children and families the Early Head Start & Head Start Program serves. This allows outreach workers funded through Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) for example, to go into classrooms and talk with parents about programs that they are potentially eligible. This wrap-around “bundled services” technique allows for families to be served on an even greater scale and assist them in becoming more self-sufficient each year.

### **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 children that qualify.

Staff members use a Monthly Activity Calendar 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.

Early Head Start children receive screenings just like Head Start Pre-K. They are tested for vision and hearing, and have the Ages and Stages-3 screener completed by parents and staff. Any child that qualifies for services will be referred to *First Connections* in Little Rock (with parents permission.) We have a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with *First Connections* whereby they agree to do additional testing, as well as provide necessary services for qualifying children from the three EHS locations. If an *Individual Family Service Plan* (“IFSP”) is written, staff complete a *Monthly Activity Calendar* for that child. At the end of the year, a conference is held with parents and staff to discuss progress made, and future steps (depending on whether the child is staying in the program or transitioning into Pre-K.)

**PROGRESS: Every child was screened on time and IEP’s and/or IFSP’s were implemented for those children in need. Documentation in ChildPlus 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.

Facilities are always an issue, as constant maintenance and repair to keep them safe is necessary. We have spent a considerable amount of time and resources to insure that our centers, classrooms, and playgrounds are safe for the children in our care and their families.

**PROGRESS: Each classroom had a safety week in which safety was the topic. Parent meetings were held as regular including the safety meetings. Facilities are maintained and repaired on a regular basis, and updates are budgeted to insure they are completed.**

#### **F. Transportation:**

Child transportation is stressed to the parents at Parent Meetings with seat belt and car seat safety trainings. 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 teach 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 were eligible. 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 2016-17 school year. We are doing a better job at ensuring that we are properly documenting the process, and it is more streamlined and matches the files in both the center and ChildPlus. We are now using a plan for classrooms that have more challenging behaviors whereby they request additional assistance from the Mental Health Coordinator and/or outside consultants; 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 (agency webpage and 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.**

## Conclusion

*Ozark Opportunities, Inc.* Head Start will continue to update our *Five Year Plan* and *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.