School Readiness Agenda

The mission of Ozark Opportunities, Inc. is to partner with organizations, school districts, families, and individuals to provide services and empowerment opportunities for those with limited means to improve their quality of life.

The vision statements for Ozark Opportunities, Inc. are based on the three categories of impact our Community Action Agency has on our region. These statements identify the high impact outcomes that agency strategies will foster in the future:

- Family (& Individual): Individuals and Families are healthy, well-adjusted, financially secure, educated, and community minded and engaged.
- Community: Resources are available and readily accessible; there is adequate information available, and people and organizations work together to provide necessary support to those in need.
- Agency: The Agency will be able to adjust and evolve over time to meet the needs of the population as it changes.

School readiness involves more than just children. School readiness, in the broadest sense, 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 provides services for 471 Head Start children and families. The program serves a six-county area Ozark Opportunities Head Start 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. Below is the blueprint.

10/25/2013

Serving Baxter, Boone, Marion, Newton, Searcy, and Van Buren counties in Arkansas
## Social/Emotional Development

**Sense of Self**
- Shows ability to adjust to new situations
- Demonstrates appropriate trust in adults
- Recognizes own feelings and manages them appropriately
- Stands up for rights

**Responsibility for Self and Others**
- Demonstrates self-direction and independence
- Takes responsibility for own well-being
- Respects and cares for classroom environment and materials
- Follows classroom routines
- Follows classroom rules

## Physical Development

**Gross Motor**
- Demonstrates basic locomotor skills (running, jumping, hopping, galloping)
- Shows balance while moving
- Climbs up and down
- Pedals and steer a bicycle (or other wheeled vehicle)
- Demonstrates throwing, kicking, and catching skills

**Fine Motor**
- Controls small muscles in hands
- Coordinates eye-hand movement
- Uses tools for writing and drawing

## Cognitive Development

**Learning and Problem Solving**
- Observes objects and events with curiosity
- Approaches problems flexibly
- Shows persistence in approaching tasks
- Explores cause and effect
- Applies knowledge or experience to a new context

**Logical Thinking**
- Classifies objects
- Compares/contrasts
- Arranges objects in a series
- Recognizes patterns and can repeat them
- Shows awareness of time concepts and sequence
- Shows awareness of position in space
- Uses one-to-one correspondence
- Uses numbers and counting

## Language Development

**Listening and Speaking**
- Listens and discriminates the sounds of language
- Expresses self using words and expanded sentences
- Understands and follows oral directions
- Answers questions
- Asks questions
- Actively participates in conversations

**Reading and Writing**
- Enjoys and values reading
- Demonstrates understanding of print concepts
- Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet
- Uses emerging reading skills to make meaning from print
- Comprehends and interprets meaning from books and other texts
- Understands the purpose of writing
- Writes letters and words
“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.

While Adventures in Learning is a comprehensive curriculum, it can also be a supplement to an established curriculum. The curriculum is flexible and allows teachers to choose from 40 topics of study and to decide when to explore the topics with the children. This curriculum aligns with the Arkansas Frameworks, the Head Start Frameworks and Creative Curriculum. Incorporated in each lesson plan is the framework learning standards and benchmark number. Also, we are corresponding with the new “Common Core Standards” that are being implemented into our local schools.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a set of shared K-12 learning expectations for students in English language arts and mathematics. The standards are the result of a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governor’s Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The CCSS for grades k-12 were developed in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including content experts, state education leaders, teachers, school administrators, and parents.

The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn in K-12 mathematics and English language arts. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. The CCSS supports the college and career ready expectations. We are implementing all the necessary skills we can into our curriculum to prepare our students for the “Common Core” goals they will encounter upon entering kindergarten.

The Benchmarks directly connect to the thirty-eight Kindergarten Readiness Indicators developed by the Arkansas Department of Education. These indicators identify the skills and knowledge that a child should have in order to be prepared for kindergarten. As you engage the children in the activities in Adventures in Learning, which are based on the Benchmarks, you are also including the Kindergarten Readiness Indicators.
Implementation Plan

The Objectives, Goals, Implementation Strategies, and Evaluation Plans all combine to create the “School Readiness Agenda” which can be found in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Implementation Plan</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 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.  | OOI H.S. Coordinators                                                   | Evaluation Strategy         | All Coordinators             |
|                           |                                                                      | Education Coordinator                                                                 | Child Plus, TAPP Registry Form, Certificates of Attendance, and sign in sheets. | Signed Memorandum of Understanding Form | Education Coordinator      |
|                           |                                                                      | Teachers and Coordinators                                                            | Parent Sign and Observation of Meeting by Coordinators                     | All Staff                   |
|                           |                                                                      | Teachers and Family Service Workers                                                 |                                                                            |                             |
| Social and Emotional Development | Children will demonstrate positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships) by interacting with staff.  
                                    | 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 | Child’s Portfolios child documenting conversations. Anecdotal records written by the teachers Lap-3 assessment | Education Coordinator     |
|                           |                                                                      |                                                                                     | 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 |                             | Mental Health Coordinator  |
|                           |                                                                      |                                                                                     |                                                                            |                             | Education / Mental Health coordinator |
|                           |                                                                      |                                                                                     |                                                                            |                             |                             |
|                           |                                                                      |                                                                                     |                                                                            |                             |                             |

- Monitored through the Al’s Pals lessons and research, conversations with teachers and observation/Follow-up reports
- Lap-3 assessment
- CLASS assessment
| **Language Development** | Children will comprehend increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.  
  Children will learn to listen and understand.  
  Children will learn to speak and communicate.  
  Children will build, use, and comprehend increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.  
  Children will use and comprehend oral language for conversation and communication.  
  Children can identify and discriminate the sounds within words, as separate from the word itself. | • New words are added to lesson plans weekly  
  • Teacher will write and explain new vocabulary words  
  • CLASS strategies  
  • Pre-K Ella Training | • Monitoring of the Class will determine if the staff is increasing the children’s vocabulary  
  • Lap-3 assessment tool  
  • CLASS assessment | Education Coordinator  
  Lap 3 results |
| **Literacy Knowledge and Skills** | Children will associate letters with their names  
  Children will use and understand print as a system of visible marks that represent the sounds within words and words themselves.  
  Children will engage with literature in developmentally appropriate ways.  
  Children who are dual language learners (DLLs) will demonstrate increased competency in their home language while developing proficiency in English. | • 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 | • Observation and documentation by teacher  
  • Lap-3 assessment tool  
  • Observation and documentation by teacher  
  • Lap-3 assessment tool  
  • CLASS assessment | Education Coordinator  
  Lap 3 results  
  Education Coordinator |
| **Approaches to Learning** | Children will demonstrate persistence and attentiveness by completing projects. | • During center time the teacher will monitor the projects the children complete  
  • Part of the Adventures In Learning Lesson Plans and Creative Curriculum | • The teachers will assist the children who do not complete the projects and add this information to the anecdotal record.  
  • Lap-3 assessment  
  • CLASS assessment | Education Coordinator  
  Lap 3 results |
| **Cognitive and General Knowledge** | 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.  
  Children will identify Geometric shapes, such as circle, square, triangle, and rectangle | • Part of the Adventures In Learning Lesson Plans and Creative Curriculum  
  • Part of the Adventures In Learning Lesson Plans and Creative Curriculum | • This skill is part of the classroom ongoing assessment. The Lap-3.  
  • This skill is part of the classroom | Education Coordinator  
  Lap 3 results  
  Education Coordinator  
  Lap 3 results |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers will implement CGI or Cognitively Guided Instruction into their curriculum.</th>
<th>Resources sent out by Education Coordinator.</th>
<th>assessment. The Lap-3 CLASS assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Development and Health</strong></td>
<td>Children will demonstrate control of large muscles for movement by jumping, skipping and running.</td>
<td>Part of the Adventures in Learning Lesson Plans and Creative Curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This is monitored on the Lap-3 assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This is documented through pictures and anecdotal records.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This is part of the developmental screening at the beginning of the year.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parent, Family and Community Engagement Plan Goals</strong></td>
<td>Families are first and lifelong educators</td>
<td>Sharing information with parents regarding their child’s readiness for school and the skill levels of their child.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Family engagement intentional transitions</td>
<td>Sharing information with parents regarding their child’s readiness for school and the skill levels of their child.</td>
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<td></td>
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Lap-3 Alignment to the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework
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’s 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
• 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.

OOI (CLASS) Implementation Plan 2013-14

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 seven 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.

➢ **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.
“CLASS” Boot Camp: August 9th- Training for entire staff including substitutes.

➢ **Step 2**
Timeframe: September 2nd - 20th
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: September 23rd - October 7th
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.

➢ **Step 4**
Timeframe: October 28th - November 15th
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 20th-February 7th
All classrooms will be assessed for a final time.

➢ **Step 6**
Timeline: February 17th- March 7th
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.

➢ **STEP 7**
Timeline: March- April
In-Service day provided to discuss the “CLASS” assessment tool in their classroom and provide further in-depth training to staff. Staff will also discuss future professional development training to aide them in the “CLASS” assessment.
Evaluations and Tracking

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 monthly.
   - Continue to implement Al’s Pals and Conscious Discipline curriculum in the classrooms and monitoring by the Health/ Mental Health Coordinator.

2. Implement and continue 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 Lap-3 Assessment).
   - Provides professional training to increase staff knowledge base and share information regarding updated Federal Guidelines.

3. Aggregated Data
   - Using the Lap-3 assessment tools, screening tools, observations, and portfolios; Ozark Opportunities Head Start will determine “Areas of Concern.” 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 referenced 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 (such as age, attendance, family issues) will be studied to determine improvement in group areas (and will be tracked via the Self-Assessment process.)
Other Head Start Components & School Readiness

- **ERSEA, Family Services & Parent, Family and Community Engagement (PFCE)**

  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 school system.

  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.

- **Disabilities**

  With parental consent all children enrolled are screened for vision, hearing, speech and developmental testing through Interagency Agreements with 3 Co-op agencies, and 3 preschool programs. 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.

  End of year conferences are completed on each child with an IEP, which includes input from parents, teachers, Co-op agencies and any additional professionals needed. If a child is 5 and going into Kindergarten, the conference is held at the school that the child will be attending. At that time, the Co-op, parent, 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.

- **Nutrition, Safety, and Transportation**

  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. Also, the curriculum includes healthy food activities that are implemented into each classroom monthly.

  Safety is emphasized immensely throughout the school year to parents and students. There is a whole week of study integrated into the curriculum for the students. For parents, there are a minimum of two safety parent meetings a year. Child transportation is also 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 and the children are allowed to board the bus. The bus driver talks about bus safety and shows the children what they should be doing when they start kindergarten.

- **Parent Involvement**

  Parent involvement is a major key to school readiness. We work as an agency to push for improved parent involvement. This starts 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 meetings. Staff also encourages the 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, hopefully this will transfer over to elementary school in the future. Last, both parents are invited to be a part of this transition as well. The Fatherhood Initiative strives to get dads involved in their children’s education.

- **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 has 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.

- **Mental Health**

  A mental health specialist comes and observes 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 problems. With the parents' consent, the child may be referred to a mental health specialist for extra assistance with their behavioral problems.