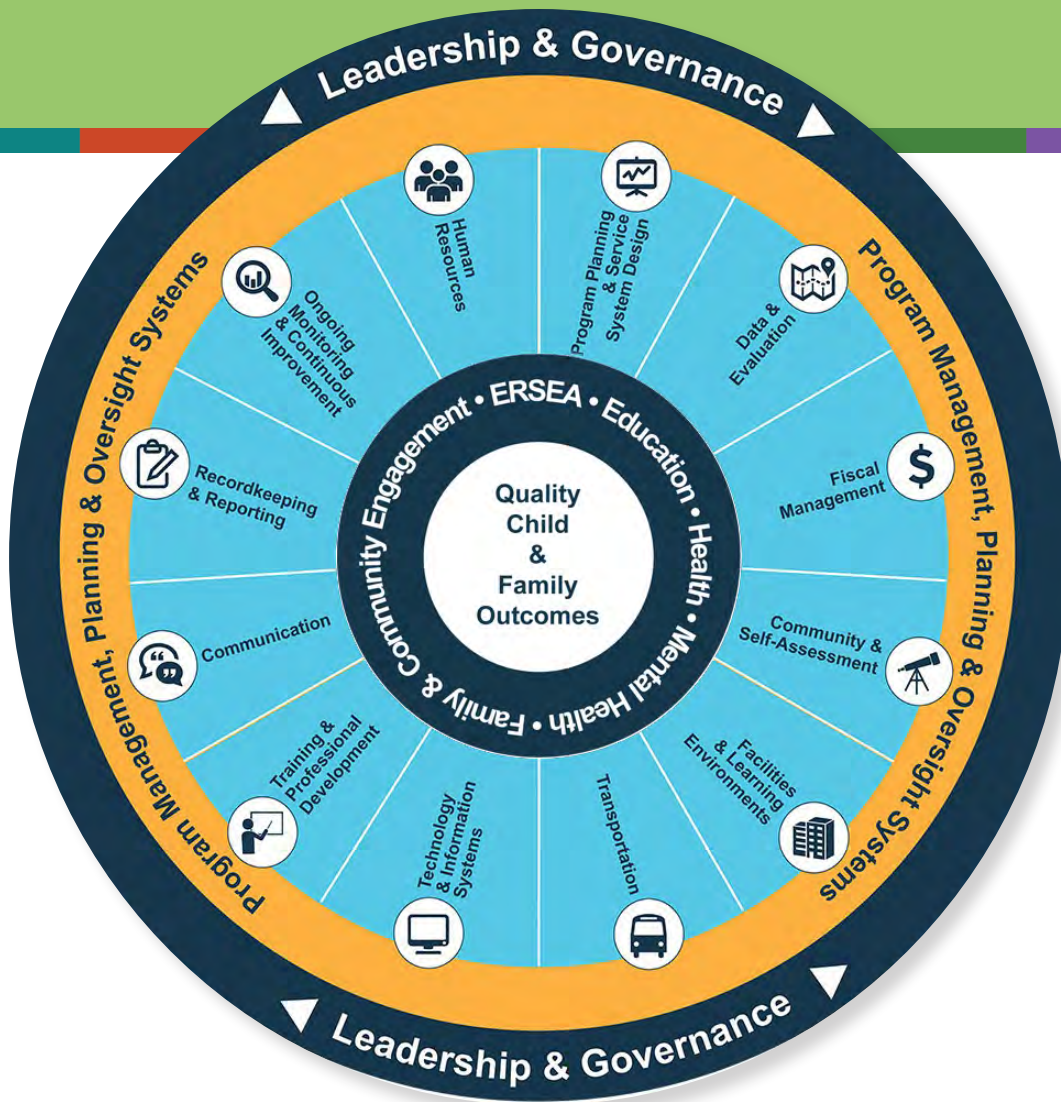




# Guiding Questions for Active Supervision and Safety



National Center on  
Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety



The Head Start [Management Systems Wheel](#) is a visual representation of the 12 management, planning, and oversight systems that are critical to sound program infrastructure and high-quality service delivery. These management systems are crucial to effective operations in several services of the Head Start program — education; health; mental health; family and community engagement; and eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance (ERSEA). Implementing effective health and safety practices across the 12 systems makes sure children are kept safe at all times.

Programs that think systemically about child supervision use [active supervision](#) strategies to create safe learning environments for infants, toddlers, and preschool children in all Head Start settings. They make sure that staff have the knowledge and skills to keep children safe at all times. They also share information with the governing body/Tribal Council and Policy Council to ensure effective ongoing oversight of child safety. A systems-thinking approach encourages high-level analysis and problem-solving that support the implementation of consistent and effective safety practices throughout the agency.

Programs can use the following questions to evaluate existing strengths and areas for improvement in their Head Start program operations. Follow these steps to use the tool.

- Review the bulleted questions for each management system to assess the effectiveness of your child safety and supervision practices.
- Then, answer the question in the text box.
- As indicated by your answer to that question, consider corrective actions to strengthen your management systems.



### Leadership and Governance

- How do we orient and train governing body/Tribal Council and Policy Council so they understand their oversight role includes responsibility for the safety of the children in our program?
- How do the governing body/Tribal Council, Policy Council, and key management staff communicate about active supervision and child safety?
- How do the governing body/Tribal Council, Policy Council, and key management staff support the development of program goals and measurable objectives that include effective health and safety practices?
- If there is a safety incident, how do we engage the governing body/Tribal Council and Policy Council in a corrective action process to ensure the problem does not occur again?

**Do the governing body/Tribal Council, Policy Council, and program management work together to make sure that children are safe when they are in our program's care?**



### Program Planning and Service System Design

- How do we address active supervision and child safety in our program planning?
- How do the management team, staff, Policy Council, and the governing body/Tribal Council address child safety in our:
  - Community assessment
  - Service delivery system
  - Goal development and measurement
  - Coordinated approaches
  - Ongoing monitoring
  - Self-assessment
- What roles and responsibilities do the following stakeholders have in designing services to keep children safe?
  - Program staff
  - Governing body/Tribal Council
  - Policy Council
  - Parents
  - Community partners
  - Health Services Advisory Committee

**Do our program planning efforts guarantee effective safety practices?**



### Data and Evaluation

- How do our data management activities inform our approach to active supervision?
- How do we use our injury and incident data in program planning and decision-making?
- How do we ensure the availability, usability, integrity, and security of our injury and incident data?
- How do we aggregate, analyze, compare, use, and share data to eliminate hazards, identify effective safety practices, implement them throughout our program, and continuously improve our performance?

**Do we use our data to reduce the risk of injury to children and improve our safety practices?**



### Fiscal Management

- How do we address adult-child ratios and child supervision issues in our fiscal management decisions?
- How does our budgeting process address and inform resource development, including training on active supervision and child safety?
- How do we budget for ongoing maintenance and repairs to our facilities and equipment?
- How do we budget for major expenditures if we identify significant health and safety issues?
- How are fiscal management concerns communicated from staff to management, management to staff, and from the fiscal team to others?

**Have we allocated the fiscal resources that we need to make sure all Head Start environments are safe for children?**



### Community and Self-Assessment

- How do we collect, use, and share community assessment data about child, family, and community risk factors so children with adverse childhood experiences can participate safely in our early learning environments?
- What are we doing to recruit safety experts for our self-assessment teams (e.g., playground safety inspector, fire safety expert, first responders, and experts on emergency preparedness)?
- What program strengths and concerns regarding active supervision and child safety did we identify during our self-assessment? How can we leverage strengths to address concerns?
- How does the child safety data we collect during ongoing monitoring inform our self-assessment and help us improve our health and safety practices?

**Do we collect the right data to inform our safety practices and identify improvement strategies if needed?**



### Facilities and Learning Environments

- How do we know that our facilities and learning environments are free of toxins?
- How do we know that staff regularly inspect, document, and resolve concerns about the safety of our facilities, materials, and equipment?
- How do we know that our systems and procedures ensure the timely maintenance and repair of facilities and equipment?
- How do we know if we need to make facility modifications or purchase additional materials or equipment to ensure children's safety?
- How do we decide whether to make technological improvements to enhance the safety of our facilities and learning environments (e.g., door/bus alarms, video cameras for surveillance)?
- How do we communicate the process for inspecting, reporting, and responding to facility concerns to all stakeholders?

**Are our facilities and learning environments safe for children?**



### Transportation

- How do we make sure Head Start transportation staff and contractors use active supervision and accurate child attendance rosters to make sure they can account for all children during and at the end of every trip?
- How do we engage families about their role in transportation safety?
- How do we maintain up-to-date contact information to make sure that we only release children to an authorized adult?

**Does our transportation system move children safely from one location to another and ensure that we can account for children at all times?**



### Technology and Information Systems

- How do we use our technology and information systems to collect program data about active supervision and child safety?
- How often do we review our technology and information systems to make sure they are working properly?
- How do we train staff on technology and information systems to ensure that our systems are current and staff know how to use them?
- How do our technology and information systems support in-house and mobile communications across environments, including on Head Start vehicles, so that staff can obtain assistance in an emergency?
- What policies and procedures are in place to ensure the security and confidentiality of our data?

**Do we have the technology we need to operate our program safely?**



### Training and Professional Development

- How do we onboard new employees to make sure they have the knowledge and skills to use active supervision strategies to keep children safe?
- How do we provide ongoing training for staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers on active supervision?
- How do we make sure that staff maintain child ratios at all times and only release children to an authorized adult?

**Do our professional development activities ensure that all staff receive an orientation on active supervision within their first 90 days and ongoing training throughout the year?**



### Communications

- How do we communicate to all stakeholders that child safety is our top priority?
- How do we exchange information between and among Head Start managers, staff, and families to make sure the children in our care are safe from the time they leave their home until they return to their family?
- How do we create a climate where it is safe to acknowledge challenges and ask for additional support?

**Do we encourage transparency and honest communication about safety issues?**



### Recordkeeping and Reporting

- How do we use our recordkeeping and reporting system to know where children are at all times in a Head Start facility, on a field trip, or in a Head Start vehicle?
- How do we ensure our attendance records accurately capture children's arrivals, departures, and transitions during the daily routine, safety drills, and emergency evacuations?
- How do we use our recordkeeping and reporting system to monitor the safety of our facilities and early learning environments?
- How do we use injury and incident reports during ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement activities?
- How does our reporting system provide program leaders, the governing body/Tribal Council, and Policy Council with the information they need to oversee child safety?

**Does our recordkeeping and reporting system generate accurate and timely reports about child safety for program leaders, our governing body/Tribal Council, and Policy Council?**



### Ongoing Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

- How do we use ongoing monitoring activities to inform our program operations and program planning process regarding the quality of our child supervision practices?
- How often do we conduct ongoing monitoring activities to make sure that staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers know and consistently use active supervision?
- How do we engage all stakeholders in a program-wide approach to active supervision?
- How do we use our injury and incident data to reduce the risk of injury to children and improve our safety practices?

**Do we use ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement activities to make sure our program is safe for children?**



## Human Resources

- How does our program address child safety and active supervision in our recruitment materials, job descriptions, personnel policies, staff orientation, and ongoing professional development activities?
- How do we make sure all staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers adhere to our program's standards of conduct regarding child supervision and policies to release children to authorized adults?
- How do we respond when staff, consultants, or volunteers violate our program's standards of conduct related to child supervision?
- How does our approach to staff supervision ensure that staff receive the support they need to keep children safe?
- How does our program promote staff wellness so staff can consistently focus on children's safety?

**Does our agency demonstrate a commitment to active supervision and child safety at all levels of the organization?**



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