Head Start a to Z

Head Start A to Z, 2.0
Community and Self-Assessment

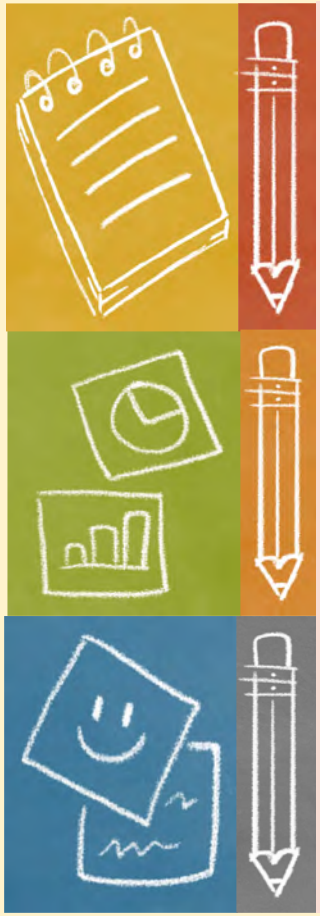
Part 1: Community: Building Responsive Programs

Early Childhood National Centers

NATIONAL CENTER ON
Program Management and Fiscal Operations

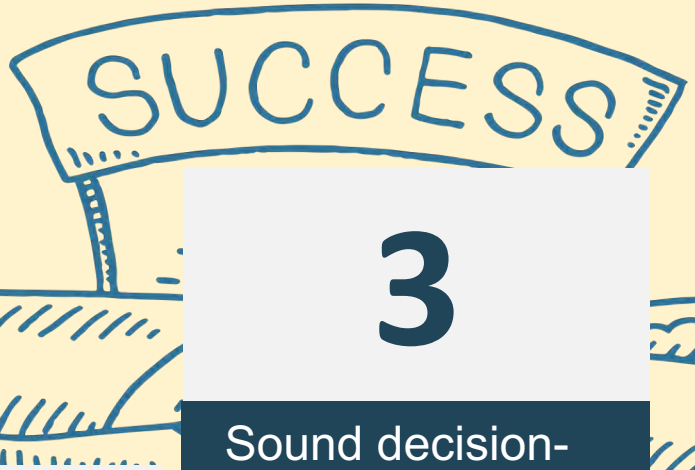
Learning Objectives

In this module, participants will:



- Understand the requirements for community assessment
- Explore the recommended process for conducting a community assessment
- Recognize the importance of the community assessment as a planning tool
- Identify strategies and resources for supporting the community assessment

Six Guiding Principles for A to Z, 2.0



1

Successful programs are learning organizations.

2

The effective delivery of services grows out of strong systems.

3

Sound decision-making is informed by quality data.

4

Relationship-building is at the heart of transformational leadership.

5

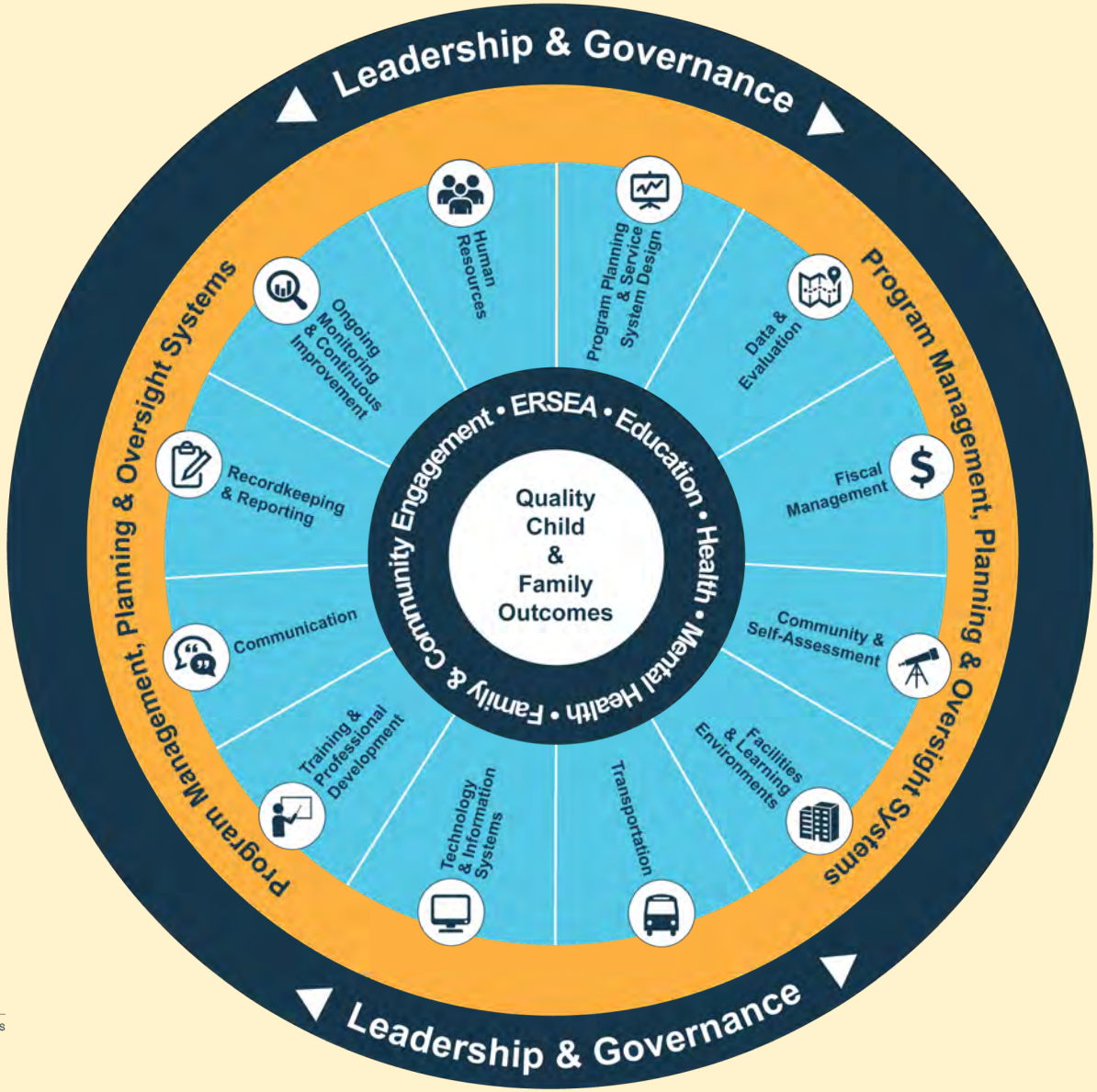
School readiness for all is our driving goal.

6

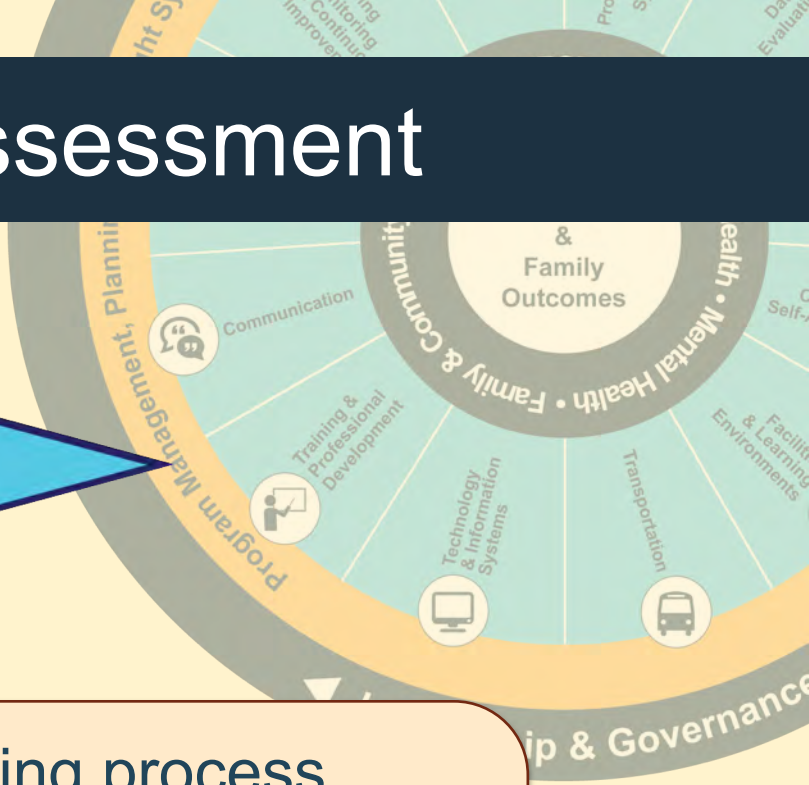
Culturally and linguistically diverse organizations rely on intentional, specific, and coordinated approaches.

Overview

Head Start Management Systems Wheel



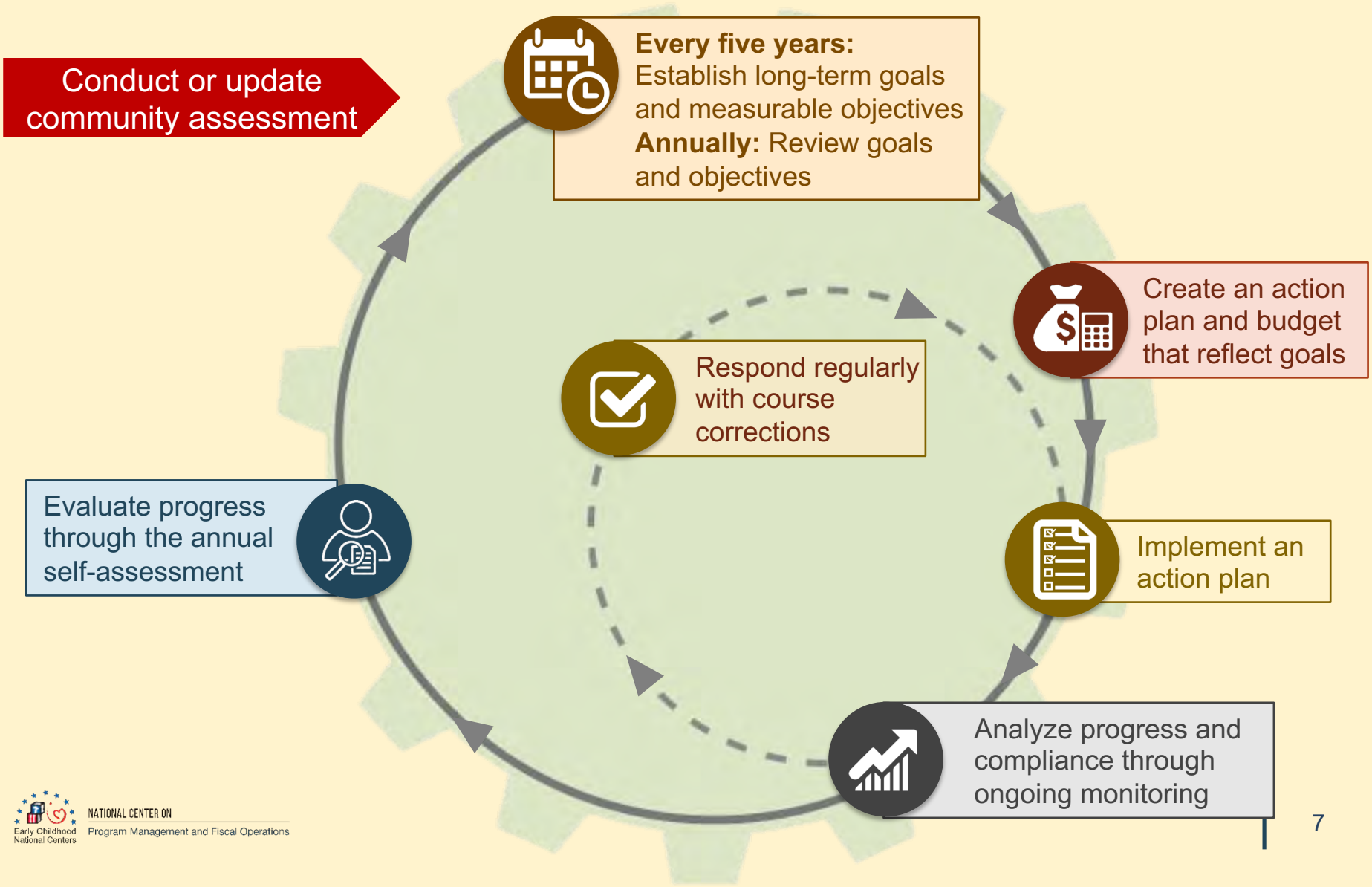
Community and Self-Assessment



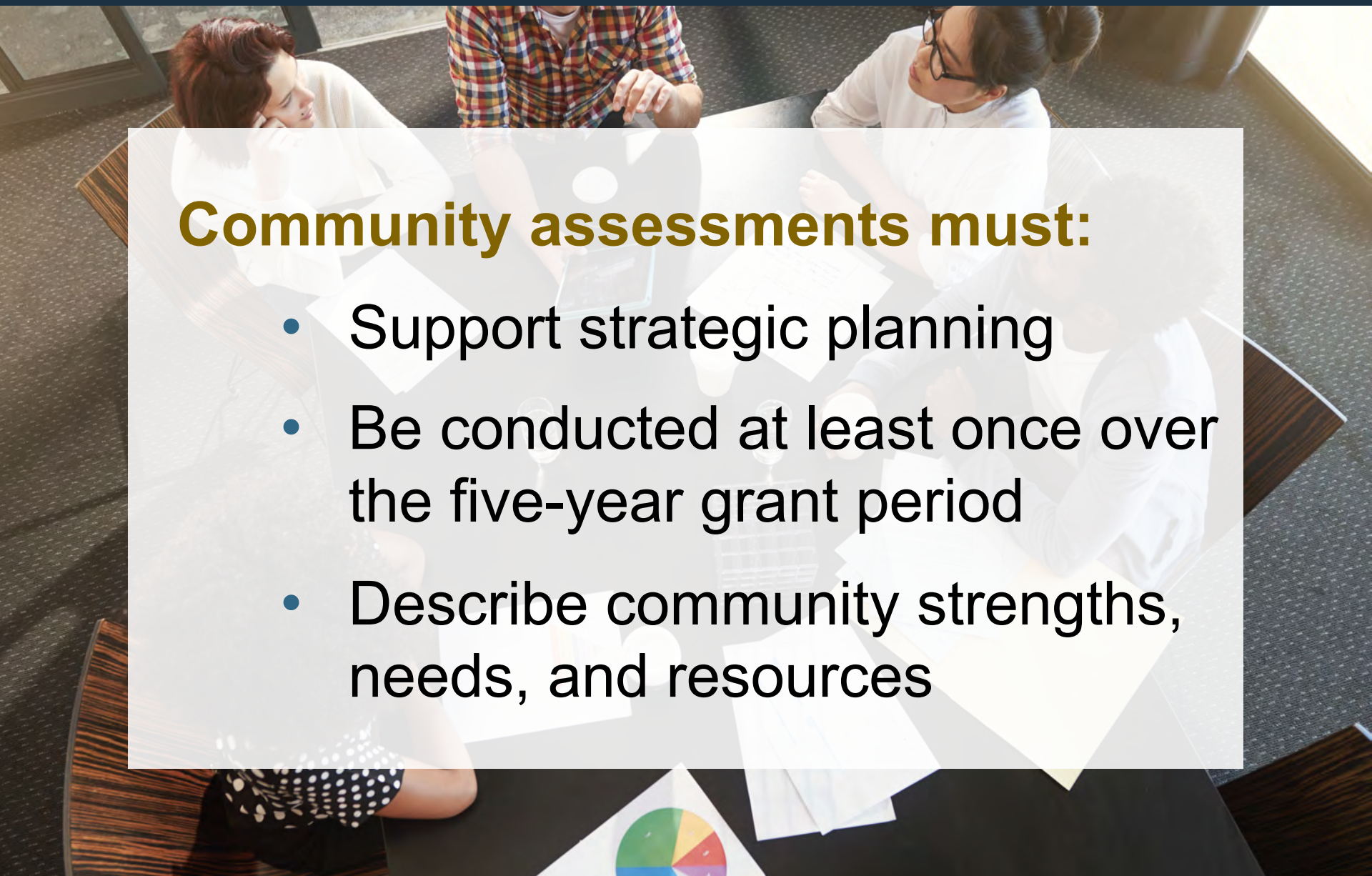
- Initiates the program planning process
- Provides the right services to the right population
- Supports continuous quality improvement

45 CFR §1302.11(b)
45 CFR §1302.102(b)(2)(i-iii)

Program Planning Cycle



It All Starts with a Community Assessment



Community assessments must:

- Support strategic planning
- Be conducted at least once over the five-year grant period
- Describe community strengths, needs, and resources

Community Assessment: Key Elements

Aligned with five-year project period

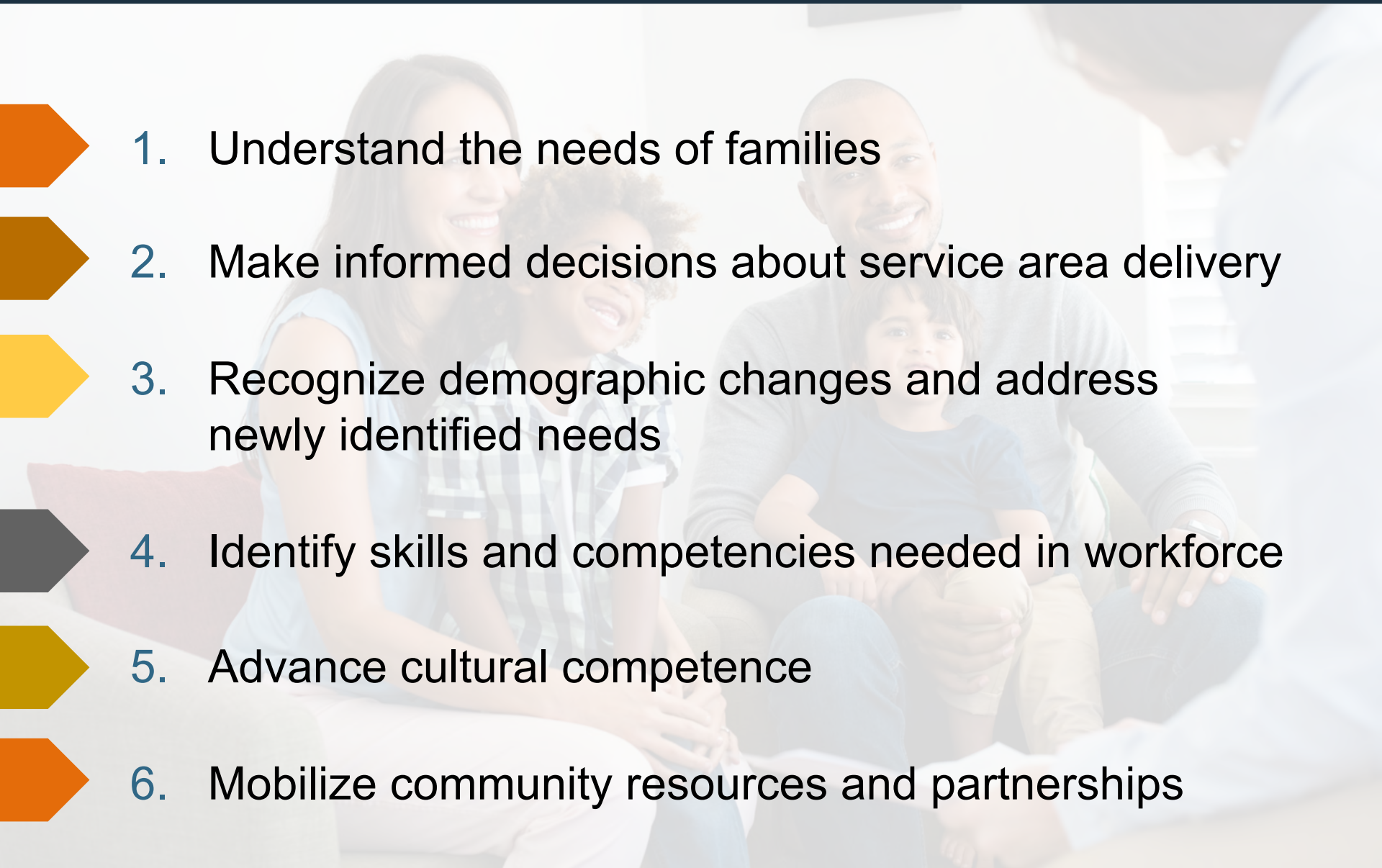
Strengths -based

Focuses on diverse needs of children and families

Requires data on vulnerable populations

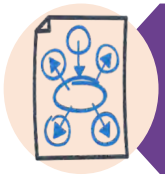
Must be updated annually

Community assessments help programs:



1. Understand the needs of families
2. Make informed decisions about service area delivery
3. Recognize demographic changes and address newly identified needs
4. Identify skills and competencies needed in workforce
5. Advance cultural competence
6. Mobilize community resources and partnerships

Community Assessment:
The Foundation for Program Planning



STEP 1: Plan and Organize

STEP 2: Design the Work

STEP 3: Gather Data

STEP 4: Analyze and Make Decisions

STEP 5: Communicate and Incorporate

Step 1: Plan and Organize

- Form a community assessment team
- Identify necessary resources
- Establish a timeline
- Communicate a community assessment process

Step 1: Plan and Organize

- Engages more community members in planning and implementation
- Increases access to more data sources
- Establishes relationships that will be important for leading actions identified in the community assessment findings

Step 2: Design the Work

- Determine data needs
- Identify internal and external data
- Identify sources
- Develop questions

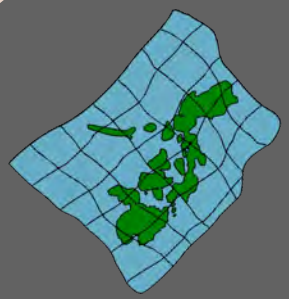
Step 2: Design the Work

What is data?

1 2 3
Numbers

text
Words

Pictures


Maps

Media
Reports

Step 2: Design the Work

Types of Data

Internal and External

Quantitative and Qualitative

Step 2: Design the Work

Data Collection Strategies

- Collected from multiple sources
- Gathered over several years or many times over a single year
- Relevant to the client population
- Include historical, internal service provision, enrollment, and Program Information Report data

Step 3: Gather Data

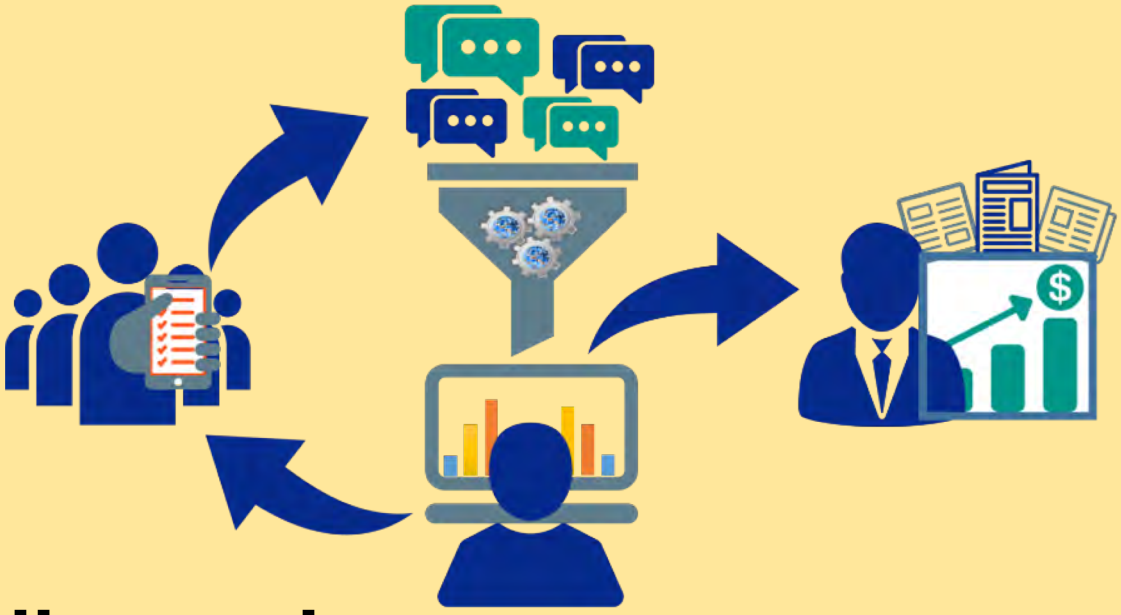
Determine:

- Data collection methods
- The logistics each method requires
- How you will keep stakeholders informed
- How the data you collect will be managed and organized

Step 3: Gather Data

Methods for Data Collection

- **Survey:** web-based or on paper
- **Interview:** in person or by phone
- **Focus group**
- **Large-group discussion**



Step 3: Gather Data

Survey and Group Process Design

Step 3: Gather Data

Data Collection Considerations

Step 4: Analyze and Make Decisions

- Review data analysis purpose and procedures
- Identify trends, strengths, and needs
- Make decisions

Step 4: Analyze and Make Decisions

Addressing Important Issues

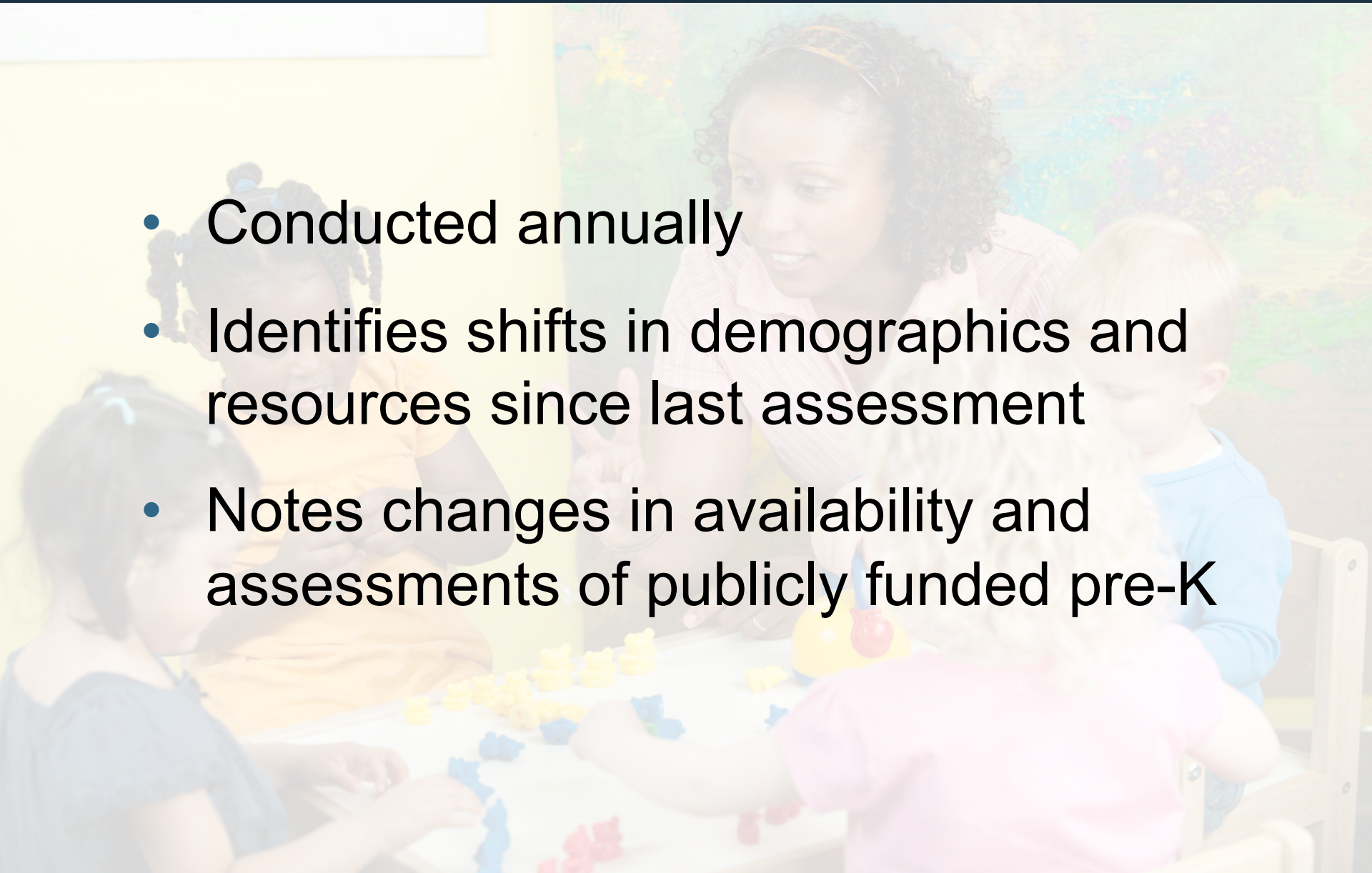
- What do the data show?
- How will the data affect our program?
- How do these findings influence our decision-making?
- On what new issues do we need to focus?

Step 5: Communicate and Incorporate

- Prepare the community assessment report
- Communicate the report, with recommendations, internally and externally
- Review and update the community assessment annually
- Incorporate the community assessment process into the program's strategic and ongoing planning

Decision Areas Informed by Community Assessment Data

The Community Assessment Update



- Conducted annually
- Identifies shifts in demographics and resources since last assessment
- Notes changes in availability and assessments of publicly funded pre-K

Conducting the Update

- Reconvene the Community Assessment Team or subcommittee
- Design your data collection strategy
- Identify internal and external data sources
- Assess the impact of new data
- Incorporate new data into planning cycle

Key Messages

Conducted once every five years and updated annually

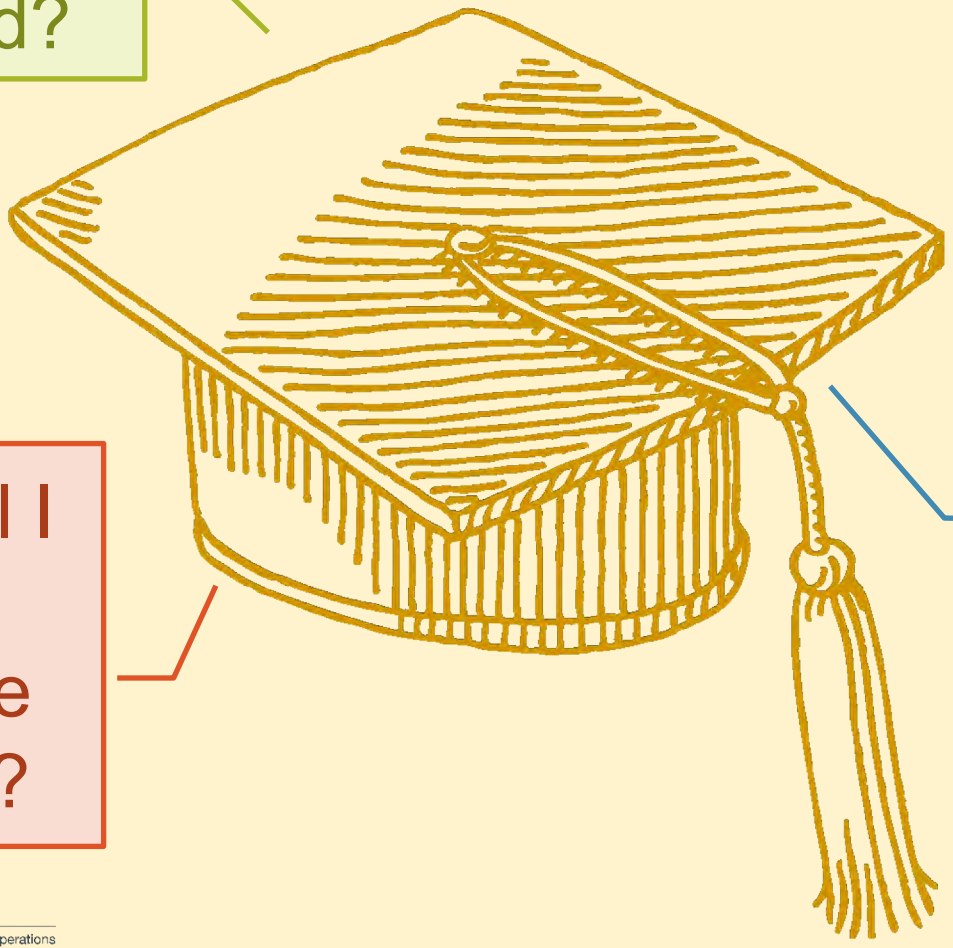
Looks outward at the community

Employs a five-step process to collect many types of data from numerous sources

Informs program planning and supports continuous improvement

Closing Reflections

What have I learned?

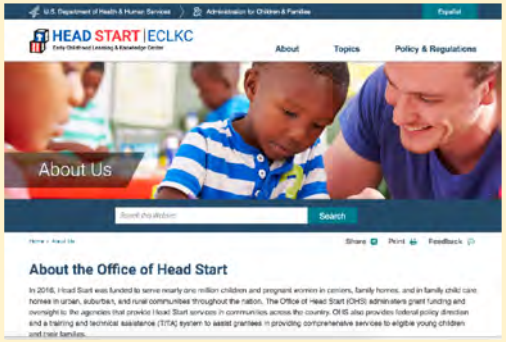


What will I do with what I've learned?

What excites or concerns me about what I learned?

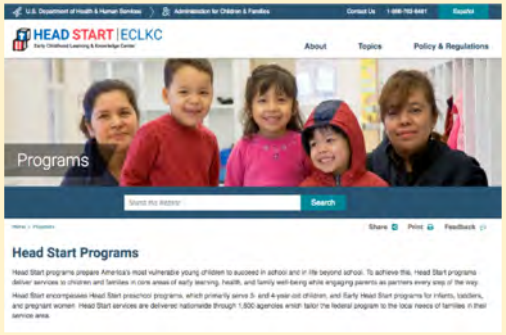
*Adapted from: Professional Development Guides for Implementing PFCE

Related ECLKC Resources



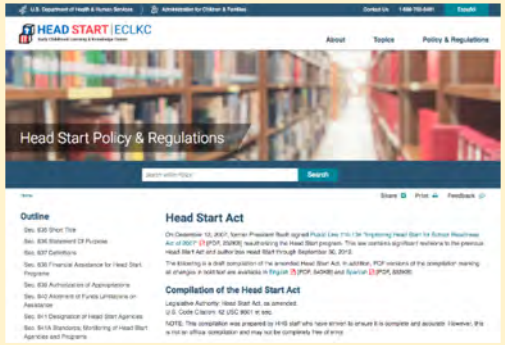
About the Office of Head Start

https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/office-head-start-ohs



Head Start Programs

https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/programs/article/head-start-programs



Head Start Act

https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/head-start-act

Contact PMFO

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Call us: 888-874-5469

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Early Childhood National Centers

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