

Self-Assessment: Truth or Myth? **Answer Key**

1. The Office of Head Start (OHS) recommends that programs use the aligned monitoring tools to conduct self-assessment. **(Myth)**
OHS does not recommend that you use the aligned monitoring tools. Self-assessment is a locally designed process. There is no specific instrument that is either required or recommended.
2. Self-assessment involves gathering a lot of new data. **(Myth)**
Self-assessment is focused on reviewing and analyzing ongoing monitoring results and other data your program has collected, along with multiyear data.
3. Self-assessment team members must have prior experience with data analysis. **(Myth, although a tricky one)**
Self-assessment team members need not be experienced in data analysis, but should be open to learning some of the basics. Program leaders should provide explanation and coaching as necessary for team members. ECLKC has several resources that can help orient teams. Consider using the interactive modules available at: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/organizational-leadership/article/data-head-start-early-head-start-series-home-page>.
4. Best practice in self-assessment is to conduct the process once a year. **(Truth)**
5. The director controls the self-assessment process at every phase, from designing the process to reporting out. **(Myth)**
The director is instrumental in designing the process, recruiting self-assessment team members, and developing the final report. He or she empowers the team to investigate, review, wonder, and dialogue among their own subgroups to move the process along efficiently and effectively. He or she does not control the process, though.
6. Having team members from the community who bring an outside perspective and fresh eyes to the self-assessment team is one of the key features of a comprehensive process. **(Truth)**

7. The focus of self-assessment is solving problems and confirming compliance.
(Myth)
Self-assessment focuses on the strengths of the program in order to a) highlight progress on goals and objectives, and b) allow for innovations. Self-assessment is not focused on compliance. That is the work of ongoing monitoring.
8. Training on data collection techniques (e.g., classroom observation review of children's files) is strongly recommended for self-assessment team members. (Myth, although a tricky one)
Training on data analysis techniques (e.g., comparison, trends, averages) and on team approaches that promote inquiry is strongly recommended. Data collection is not the focus or intent of self-assessment.
9. If your self-assessment team is large, you may choose to form smaller groups (or subgroups) to focus on a specific topic. (Truth)
Each program can apply its own plans for creating and making subgroups out of the larger team, as needed, as well as choosing leaders of the subgroups within the self-assessment team.
10. The self-assessment report is used only to report to the Regional Office.
(Myth)
The self-assessment report informs program planning and ongoing monitoring. Results from the self-assessment are used to revisit ongoing goals and objectives and to make plans for innovations. Prior to being submitted to the Regional Office, it must be approved by Policy Council and the governing body or Tribal Council.

