Communication System

Purpose: A communication system ensures that an exchange of information allows individuals to become fully involved in program activities and to make group decisions that promote a quality program. To be effective, information flows to and from parents, staff, governing bodies, and community partners.

The system ensures that information is timely and accurate. Materials should be translated into the primary language of the family at a level that all can understand and comprehend. In addition, families should be matched with staff who meets the cultural and linguistic needs of the major population groups within the service population.
If that is not possible, skilled interpreters will be provided.

Within the Head Start Agency (including WIC, CCR&R, Healthy Start, USDA, etc.) there are many ways in which communication takes place. However, we still struggle with timely and cost effective communication. Below is a list of the methods of communications available for use. Some have to be used in place of others, depending on the circumstance. This list appears in the order of Agency preference due to cost effectiveness, with a schedule of when intra-agency mail will be transported from Hermiston to outlying areas (Pendleton Office and Milton-Freewater Office) and from outlying areas to Hermiston. Team Leaders/ Operations Directors need to coordinate with their staff members, a person responsible for seeing that outgoing mail is at the central pick-up point (Pendleton or Milton-Freewater) prior to scheduled pick-up times. Team Leaders/ Operations Directors also need to coordinate with their staff for pick-up of incoming mail after scheduled drop off times.

Form of communication	Comments
1. Face to Face	Always preferred, not always possible
2. E-mail/Web Access	All centers have access to e-mail and UMCHS website. Use of this communication system will reduce the telephone expenditures. Please take time to use the e-mail/website. Team leaders/Operations Directors coordinate with staff time to access the center computer for email/website access.
3. Intra-Agency Mail	Milton-Freewater center will have mail pick-up, at least, every Monday. WIC staff will know in advance if WIC staff from Pendleton or Hermiston is to be in Milton-Freewater or other days. WIC Staff will notify Team Leader so that all staff will be aware of other intra-agency mail days.

Mail at the Hermiston Administrative Office for Pendleton needs to be ready by 4:30 PM for transport to Pendleton. Mail at the Pendleton Office for Hermiston needs to be ready by 4:30 PM for transported each morning to Hermiston.

Intra-Agency Mail that cannot be picked up or delivered in a week's time is mailed to that center from the Hermiston office on Fridays. As a rule, all staff members from your center/office, going to or coming from the Administrative Office, are responsible to pick-up and drop off mail from/for your center/office. Always check before you travel!

4. Regular Mail

At times, especially with cooks, paperwork is due earlier than other center month end reports. To insure that it arrives at the main office on time, you can send it regular mail. If you mail it from the Pendleton Post Office by 5:00 PM, it will be delivered in Hermiston by 1:30 PM the next day. So paper work due to the fiscal office by 8:00 in the morning must be mailed 2 days before. Outlying areas (Grant and Wallowa Counties, will use this regularly, in place of intra-office mail.)

5. Fax Calls

If paperwork needs to arrive more quickly than intra-agency mail, and you can=t send it as an attachment over email, use the fax. Remember to log the fax calls. Time sheets can be faxed, but the original needs to be sent also. Fiscal Department needs the original with signatures for filing purposes.

6. Telephones

Long distance calls can be a major expense. If you are calling long distance, be prepared and keep conversations brief. When calling the Main office (long distance or toll-free) check with staff at your office/center to see if anyone else needs to talk with persons in the main office. This will cut down on expenses. No personal long distance calls! Remember to Log all long distance calls. Email first, when possible.

Community - through a variety of community interagency committees, information flows to the community about the UMCHS programs and their role in the community. Through the involvement in these community groups, the agency is able to partner with a variety of different agencies and avoid duplication of services. Listed below is a sample of

community groups on which the agency participates:

Interagency meetings:

Community Interagency Network (East & West End)
Family Support & Connections
0-8 Early Childhood Partnership Team (Umatilla and Morrow Counties)
Umatilla Chapter of Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children
Mental Health Advisory Council
Chamber Leadership Seminars
Stop Smoking Task Force
Zero to Five Interdisciplinary Team
RAPP (Reduce Adolescent Pregnancy Program)
Prevention Team of Morrow County
School Board (Each School Board is assigned a Head Start representative to attend their meetings)
Commission for Children and Families
Wraparound Project with ESD

Staff - through a variety of communication methods, information about the organization is shared with staff. Listed below is a list of ways in which communication is shared with staff:

Management Team (all supervisors) meets every other month for information updates, supervisory training, and clarification of agency issues.

Administrative Team (all staff who report directly to the Executive Director) meets every Tuesday morning for planning, issue discussion, and program updates.

Team Leader Meetings (all center staff who report directly to Operations Directors) meet monthly.

Team Meetings (each center staff) meet monthly.

Staff Meetings (all agency staff) meet together four times per year for training, Staff Development Association, component training and committee work. (August, October, February, and April)

Staff Development Committee (made up of 15 representatives of staff) meetings occurs quarterly. At staff meetings the Staff Development Committee chairperson facilitates a meeting of all staff to give reports regarding Program Information, Oregon Head Start Association meetings, and information sharing from centers.

Information memos are sent out to staff in writing, via e-mail/website, in the agency newsletter, and by fax to inform staff of promotion opportunities, clarification of or changes in employment policies, funding, committee meetings, or updates in federal or state rules and regulations.

Parents

Information in the primary language of the family is shared with parents through:

Newsletters
Information Memos
Center Committee Groups
Policy Council
Committee work
Phone and e-mail
Home Visits

Policy Council

Information is shared with Policy Council through:

Annual Orientation with Board of Directors in September
Monthly Trainings
Monthly meetings
Committee meetings (Budget, Personnel, Selection, Curriculum)
Monthly Financial and Program Reports
Participation on Self Assessment
Policy Council Handbook
Phone and e-mail

Board of Directors

Information is shared with the Board of Directors through:

Annual Orientation with Policy Council in September
Monthly Trainings
Monthly Financial and Program Reports
Monthly newsletters
Committee meetings (Budget and Personnel)
Participation on Self Assessment
Board meetings which occur every other month
Board Handbook
Phone and e-mail