

OBJECTIVES, NEEDS FOR ASSISTANCE and GEOGRAPHIC AREA

Sullivan County is located roughly 90 miles northeast of New York City and is bordered by Orange and Ulster Counties to the south and east/northeast respectively. Its western border is formed by the Delaware River with the State of Pennsylvania located on the western bank. Delaware County is located northwest. Generally speaking, this area is rural with over 80% of the land wooded. Sullivan County comprises a total of 1,011 square miles and is made up of 15 separate townships. Primary population centers are centered around New York State Route 17. The highway cuts through the center of Sullivan County running north and south.

The Key to Sullivan County's reliance upon tourism and recreational use lies in its proximity to the New York City Metropolitan Area. Even the most extreme portions are within approximately 100 miles of New York City. Access is provided by means of over 200 miles of state highways, approximately 386 miles of county roads, and town roads, comprising over 1,300 miles. Due to the rural nature of the area, automobiles are considered the primary means of transportation. Public transportation is limited with no available train service. The Shortline Bus Company, privately owned, provides services along the Route 17 corridor primarily with some second local services available.

Historically, Sullivan County has been known for its large resort hotels, seasonal bungalow colonies, and numerous motel/inns. Due to increased declining tourism in the county, most of the larger resorts have faced financial difficulties. The largest, The Concord Hotel, closed its doors in 1999 and the resulting decline in business had a devastating effect on the resort industry as well as a domino effect on other local businesses. There were between 400-500 residents that lost their jobs at the Concord and

The percentage of Sullivan County residents living in poverty jumped to 17.2 in 2008 from 13.8 a year earlier several points higher than the poverty rates of most upstate counties and the state counties and the state as a whole, according to the latest census bureau estimates. Only two of the 33 upstate New York counties included in the bureau's annual survey – restricted to places with populations of at least 65,000 – had higher poverty rates than Sullivan County.

A great many low income families are single parents with the mother as head of the household or in many cases the grandmother is the legal guardian and is rearing grandchildren. Our working parents often work split sessions. Most jobs available to minimum skill or high school graduates are low-paying and do not include benefits (e.g. dishwashers, custodians, health aides, etc).

A large number of the population is employed in retail trade (Walmart and newly opened Kohl's) with the general trend of seasonal, part/flex time employment (e.g. waiters in hotels) reaching peak in summer. However, the low wages, lack of transportation, and lack of child care make finding and keeping jobs difficult.

Finding affordable, reliable quality child care is a very pressing problem. Our working parents often work split sessions, part-time, seasonally or extra-long hours. All of these conditions make it even more difficult to find appropriate child care. These are a few registered day care providers that offer sliding scales and equally few slots that are receiving Sullivan County Department of Family Services reimbursements.

Based on the 2000 Census the impact of Welfare Reform on Sullivan County has decreased public assistance rolls down from 1,744 to 819 making the demand for affordable quality reliable, full-day child care even more of a pressing problem.

Private daycare centers in our county (e.g. nursery schools, Sullivan Diagnostic) are too expensive for low income families, and the lack of transportation is often a major factor in not being able to arrange for child care.

At present Sullivan County Head Start, Inc., operates Head Start and Early Head Start programs serving 300 children and families age 0-5 and 11 pregnant women. Sullivan County Head Start, Inc serves children and families in two sites, one in Monticello and the 2nd in Woodbourne. At present we serve children from the following areas: Town of Thompson, Village of Monticello, Village of Liberty, Town of Woodbourne, Woodridge, Mountindale, Hurleyville, Loch Sheldrake. These areas have the largest populations.

The Early Head Start Program located at our Woodbourne complex in Woodbourne, serves 14 infants and 15 toddlers in 4 classrooms. We serve an additional 16 children at our Waverly Avenue Head Start Site and 11 pregnant women for a total of 56.

Sullivan County Head Start, Inc, is funded to serve 255 Head Start children ages 3-5. The Woodbourne complex serves 108 children, in 6 class rooms.

At our Waverly Avenue site in Monticello, New York we offer 4 double session classes and five full day classes, serving a total of 147 children ages 3-5. Our long range plans are to convert double sessions to full day as funds become available.

Our normal hours of operation are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. However, staff is available from 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. to accommodate families with a need to drop-off early and pick-up late (school training or job requirement). In cases where longer hours cannot be accommodated we try and help our families to find appropriate and affordable childcare.

Due to the relocation of low income families from the Livingston Manor area because of lack of employment opportunities we were forced to close the Head Start site located in

Livingston Manor. However, due to the shift in our target population we have since opened another 1 classroom center in the Township of Fallsburg to accommodate the increasing Hispanic population attracted to the chicken processing plant.

In September 2009, Sullivan County Head Start enrolled 108 children in the Head Start program and 29 in Early Head Start program located in Woodbourne. We presently have a waiting list of approximately 300 children combined.

We expect to be serving 32-35 children who will be classified and receiving services through CPSE, Early Intervention and Head Start Speech.

Our goal is to provide parents with the opportunity to pursue employment, continue education or receive training. Full day care will allow participants to try to reach their potential without the added burden of trying to secure reliable child care.

2. PROGRAM APPROACH AND RESULTS OF BENEFITS EXPECTED

Sullivan County Head Start, Inc., recruits through referrals from Public Health, W.I.C., Sullivan County Department of Family Services, medical offices, Catskill Regional Health Center, as well as other local agencies and school systems. Information on the program will be disseminated and posted throughout the community as well as in newspapers and on radio. Experience has taught us that our present parents are our best recruiters since they are so pleased with the high quality of our programs.

The benefits the pregnant women receive from Early Head Start is the securing of a medical home, insurance, nutritional health and pre/post natal care. Once enrolled each pregnant woman will be assessed for a medical home and insurance. A tracking sheet will be maintained on each pregnant woman. We will continue to use the "Partners for Healthy Babies" curriculum and tailor it to each individual woman and their needs. The

Head Start School nurse and family worker will track each visit (doctor's and home) and progress on an in-house tracking sheet. Contact notes will be kept in each woman's folder. Brochures, training tapes, and trainers will be available to assist pregnant women with their roles of pregnancy and motherhood.

In helping each family that we serve secure a medical home, we are insuring not only medical services, but dental, vision and mental health as well. In our community, we currently have local dentists and a dental van available to us for performing dental screening and follow-up on our Head Start as well as our Early Head Start children. Teachers are taught by the hygienist on how to properly care for the children's gums, teeth and mouths. - Infant's gums are wiped after each feeding and toddlers brush after each meal by the Teacher/Caregiver. The Pediatrician performs the initial dental screening prior to entry into the Early Head Start program. For the pregnant women, they are encouraged to visit their dentist regularly. We help make appointments and provide transportation to the dentist. All parents have the option of visiting their own dentist instead of using the dental van.

For our pregnant women, after acceptance into our Early Head Start program, an initial home visit from our nurse and family worker is conducted. During the visit, the mother's health is assessed by the nurse and pertinent information is gathered. The pregnant woman is given information concerning pre-natal care and its importance. Regular home visits are made by the family worker and the pregnant woman are encouraged to keep all medical, dental, vision and mental health appointments.

Information is given throughout the pregnancy so that the women and her family can be knowledgeable regarding what to expect during the pregnancy. Services needed by

pregnant women are sought out and secured for them. We partner with many agencies in the community and act as a referral agency and advocate for our pregnant women. Training our pregnant women is given in forms of brochures and workshops. Pregnant women will be encouraged to visit and volunteer in our current Early Head Start program where they can see teachers interacting with newborns and gain first hand experience in parenting skills.

- After the baby is born, services are continued for the family. Postpartum depression is given much attention during this time period. Our mental health professional is also available to the parents. The first visit by the Early Head Start nurse is conducted 2 weeks after the baby is born and every-2 weeks until baby is 6 weeks old. At that time the infant can enter the Early Head Start program.

We will assist our families by educating pregnant and breast feeding women through training brochures, bulletin boards, discussions, and other means. Topics will include: proper health and nutrition and the effects of substance abuse on fetal development. We will assist prospective parents in enrolling in assistance programs such as W.I.C., support groups and relevant classes. We will encourage parents to keep all medical appointments and provide transportation when necessary. We will work with the Health Services advisory Committee to develop linkages in the community. We will provide all families with our resource book that lists all community agencies, support groups and treatment programs.

We are currently using the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum with our Head Start program to measure child outcomes. In the future we hope to implement such a system with the Early Start Program.

“The Creative Curriculum, Caring for Infants and Toddlers” proved to be the model that was most developmentally appropriate and embodied the Head Start philosophy. The Creative Curriculum provides a framework to create an environment where a child can feel safe, develop a sense of belonging, a sense of competence, a sense of initiative and eventually learn autonomy and self control. Staff will have the flexibility to adapt the model to best meet the needs of the individual children in each group setting. We understand that at the early stages of development a child learns to trust or mistrust environment and that infants and children who receive consistent loving care learn that their environment can be trusted. They know they will be fed, changed and comforted when they are upset. They learn that parents go away but they come back. It is crucial to help develop this sense of trust so the child can move on and begin to develop a sense of independence.

Quality prenatal education is key to the success of any Early Start Program. Prospective mothers must have the opportunity to develop their parenting skills prior to the birth of their babies. They should be exposed to relevant theories on fetal development. Sessions will be given on relaxation techniques and developmental stimulation. We understand the stress inherent in all pregnancies can be magnified in our program participants and every effort will be made to boost their self-esteem. This will be accomplished through support groups, workshops, mini-lectures and role-playing situations. Leaders will be staff members, mental health and health professionals and seasoned moms.

Our strong emphasis on volunteering gives parents life skills and promotes the work ethic. When job vacancies occur in our agency qualified parents are given priority. We

work closely with the Department of Employment and Job training in finding placements through this agency. Workshops on job readiness related skills are offered.

We assist our parents to become their own advocate by helping learn about available community resources and services. Staff is always available to accompany parents on initial visits and help make appropriate contacts.

Public Health will provide our children with early and periodic screenings, immunizations and nutritional assessments. Many of these services will be provided on site, but when this is not possible transportation will be provided. All families, upon acceptance into the program, will be assisted in finding a medical home.

For parents to be independent they must acquire the necessary training and skills needed to progress in society. A Family Partnership Agreement is utilized to determine all needs and goals. Forms are also completed to gather information from the parent pertinent to physical and mental health education, economics, housing, nutrition and community needs. This will be used to determine any specific services the family may require.

All family assistants receive training on developing Family partnerships. Additional training will be offered both to new and established staff. We understand that this process must establish mutual trust and be firmly driven. Appropriate information will be obtained from the family and other agencies so that collaborative planning can occur.

We have a system in place for collaborating with the early intervention program and this form of operation will continue. It is understood that developing relevant working family partnerships is a long term process that we intend to work on continually. Information on child support services will be made available as per the New York State Child Support Enforcement Program. Family assistants will assist parents to effectuate the system.

Family services area is committed to providing support to families as they work to strengthen their family units and improve the quality of their lives. One of the main functions of the Sullivan County Head Start Family Service is to serve as a link between the family, the program and the community.

It is the responsibility of the Family Service area to provide families with information about support services available in the community, to assist families in locating and securing needed services, and to serve as advocates for Head Start and catalysts for change within the community. To this end the Family Services area has completed a community resource booklet containing resources and services available in Sullivan County and the surrounding area.

Parent Involvement encompasses all aspects of our program. There are a variety of opportunities provided to parents for participation. Parents are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom. In addition to improving adult child ratio, volunteers strengthen their parenting skills and become more aware of age appropriate behavior activities that can be carried over into the home.

A specific area has been set aside in each center for parent socialization. Coffee, snacks and reading materials are provided. Parents have the opportunity to have private discussions amongst themselves. As a result strong friendships are also formed.

Sullivan County Head Start has hired a Licensed Creative Arts Therapist; Board Certified Music Therapist with a BA in Psychology; BME in Music Therapy; MS in Special Education, This person works with the children in their classroom and consults with teachers about children they have identified as having problems; observes and works with children with identified problems; observes children and identifies any need for extra

attention or problems; makes recommendations for classroom activities and strategies that will help the child; conduct activities to help that child as well as the other children in the class; help facilitate evaluation process if needed; consult with teachers about general problems; check in regularly with all classroom teachers and go regularly to all classrooms; conduct in services as requested; attend parent meetings and for consultation; contact parent/guardians to discuss their concerns about their children; help with emotional problems or concerns; attend CPSE meetings as requested by parents, teachers, administrators; identify Mental Health related resources for the children and for the family members; make home visits as requested; keep regular progress notes on all activities.

Community Services of Sullivan County is available for referral where necessary.

Sullivan County Head Start, Inc. works in close conjunction with all the programs offered through Public Health. These include immunizations, clinics, home health care, pre and postnatal care, W.I.C. health screenings and workshops. All of these services are offered on an in-kind basis and in many cases at our Head Start sites.

Staff will build positive, trusting relationships with children and families, plan and manage a developmentally appropriate program, promote children's learning and development, continuously learn about their children and families, continuously improve and update their professional knowledge and expertise, maintain professional standards in all dealings with families, and be advocates in support of the families and children in their care. Caregivers will provide crucial attention to children in responding to their needs. Verbal offerings will be expanded on to help the child maximize language growth. The environment will be arranged in such a way as to provide quiet space, active

space, promote a variety of materials for child use, support symbolic play, allow for “noisy” times, and allow for special attention at transition and other difficult times for the child during the day. Toys and books will be consistently stored in the same place so children will know where to find them.

Children will learn about themselves, their feelings, and others around them. They will develop communication skills appropriate to their level. They will develop gross and fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination, and self help skills appropriate to their respective ages and functional level. Thinking skills for understanding concepts, relationships, solving problems and applying knowledge to new situations will be developed.

The environment has a large impact on the development and growth of the child. Good pre-natal care, warm and loving attachments between children and adults, and positive, age-appropriate stimulation from birth make a big difference in the child’s development for their whole lifetime. Positive interactions with loving, care adults stimulate development in areas – intellectual, social, emotional, and physical. As we do these and other things with toddlers we foster their growth. Above all we realize and will convey to others, that children **SHOULD** be seen, heard and loved!

Parents will be encouraged to view themselves as the primary educators of their children, and we will provide strategies and support to help them in working with their children at home as well as at the program. We will ensure that the home cultures of the families reflect in what goes on in the program. This may take the form of using the home language(s), including objects and customs from home in the program environment etc. We will actively seek the parents’ help in learning about the children’s home cultures.

Every effort is made to employ caregivers fluent in the primary language of the children and families to be served.

Parents/families will be encouraged to volunteer in the classroom and team with their child's teacher in planning their child's education. Teachers will also be modeling with the child for the parents to learn. Teacher/parent contacts will be noted in the child's folder and recorded on a weekly in-kind sheet. Brochures, training tapes and trainers will be available to assist parents.

In addition, parents are invited to spend time with their children and staff before leaving their child. Other family members are encouraged to visit and spend time as well. Staff will work with parent and child to promote and strengthen their interaction and bonds. Time for training parents in appropriate stimulation and interaction with their child will be incorporated into the program's day. Teaching staff will be assigned specific children to attend to so that the children can more closely bond with the individual and not be overwhelmed by a parade of strangers.

All income eligible children will be accepted into the Head Start Program as they age out of Early Head Start. Families who are referred to us through the Early Intervention Program will be accepted into Head Start, if eligible or assisted in choosing appropriate placement when their child reaches the age of three (3).

Every effort will be made to assure continuation developmentally appropriate services for those children reaching age three after going through Early Head Start. Children and families enrolled in Early Head Start will automatically be considered for enrollment to Head Start.

The Education manager has instituted a transition plan to better ease our Head Start children into the public schools. The great majority of our children enter either the Monticello, Liberty or Fallsburg, Central Schools, all of which have been very supportive. Our children visit the public schools prior to the Kindergarten screening.

Meetings are arranged between Head Start and Kindergarten teachers at the beginning of every year to share program information and expectations. At the end of the year to share program information and expectations. At the end of the year each child's strengths and weaknesses are again discussed. Parental approval is required for all forwarding information. Transition activities between Early Head Start and Head Start take place in June each year to assist children and parents from Early Head Start to prepare entering Head Start classes in September.

Our staff visits the kindergartens and kindergarten teachers are invited to see our program in action. Our children are invited to visit the public school, lunch is provided along with a tour of the building to help bridge the transition for those children entering kindergarten in the Fall of next year.

Our strong networking within the community has resulted in in-kind services from medical, dental and legal professionals. This includes dental and vision screenings as well as emergency follow-up treatment. This service will continue with participants in the Early Head Start program. Local service clubs (Rotary, Lions and Kiwanis) have also sponsored special projects for Head Start. As outlined throughout this narrative and supported by attached documentation, Sullivan County Head Start, Inc, is presently involved in many agreements and has developed strong partnerships with public and

private agencies to provide high quality child health and developmental services to our children and families in Sullivan County.

Sullivan County Head Start, Inc., is a related service provider through the Sullivan County Office of children with Special Needs. The county commissioner of Social Services expressed strong support for Head Start and the Early Head Start programs. The commissioner is very much aware of the lack of quality childcare available, especially for infants, thus making their efforts to move families off the Welfare rolls futile, when there is no placement for the children. Sullivan County Head Start, Inc., will continue to collaborate with the Sullivan County Division of Health and Family Services in an effort to obtain funding in order to allow an extended -day program whereby parents are able to pursue full-time employment and/or training.

Sullivan County Community college has a highly recognized Department of Early Childhood Development that uses our program for field experience. This serves not only to benefit the college students, but provides us with additional volunteers. We also benefit from in-kind training and workshops from Sullivan County Community College professors. Sullivan County Community College has worked with us in making available late day Early Childhood classes for the staff in Early Head Start program who are pursuing their AA degree and furthering their education beyond the required AA degree. Careful documentation and tracking will ensure that we continually strive to reach our stated objectives. We will utilize our agency's Community Assessment to assess trends in the county; Family Partnership Agreement for measuring where individual families are in realizing their stated goals; Strategic Plan to measure the program's

goals/achievements; and our own program self-assessment to measure our strengths and weaknesses in the delivery of services.

Staff collects information throughout the month and produce monthly reports that include information, such as the following: number of children enrolled, number of developmental screenings completed, number of ongoing assessments, number of referrals for further evaluation, number of mental health observations, number of families receiving emergency services, number of families receiving TANF, number of referrals made to outside agencies, and the most current health and immunization information available.

These reports are then compiled into a monthly program report and the on-going status of this information is tracked cumulatively throughout the year. Managers utilize these reports to ensure the follow-through and necessary services are provided to parents and children. In addition, Board and Policy Council receive the same report monthly.

We provide a comprehensive educational program to the children and families we serve. Our 10 Full Day Head Start classrooms each have an average enrollment of 18 children. Each class is staffed by a teacher who has earned Bachelors degree in Early Childhood Education, a Teacher Assistant, Foster Grandparent and a Parent Volunteer. We thereby provide an excellent adult to child ratio.

Early Head Start has an average class enrollment of 7-8 children. Staff has an AA degree in Early Childhood Education with a team of 2 in each classroom. The Education Manager, in conjunction with the other area managers work closely with the classroom staff in developing individualized programs to meet the needs of each child. This is based upon observations, Denver screenings, Fluharty screenings and anecdotal records

in the Head Start and observation, The Ages and Stages Questionnaire screening every 2-3 months and anecdotal record in the Early Head Start.

We follow the guidelines of the "Creative Curriculum" developed by Diane Dodge. This curriculum provides a basic structure for a sound, environmentally developmentally appropriate program. Because we know that young children learn best through active interactions with their physical and social environment, teachers support learning and creativity by continually changing and enriching the environment.

Education staff complete initial developmental screenings; as well as speech and language assessments in the Head Start within 45 days of enrollment. Anecdotal records and activity plans are recorded on an ongoing basis. Assessments are done periodically to do an individual plan for each child. Two case reviews per year are conducted for each child. All information gathered is shared with parents.

There is a strong link between home and school fostered by parent workshops, home visits, newsletter articles, parent conferences and classroom volunteering. Teachers make a minimum of 2 home visits that stress the importance of working together and 2 times per year formal conferences are held in the classrooms. Monthly lesson planning meetings are regularly scheduled and provide teachers with family insights and parents with additional information on appropriate activities. Parent classroom volunteer activities are carefully planned to assure the parents' comfortable and to strengthen skills.

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A tracking system provides the following to all families enrolled in both Head Start and Early Head Start:

1. Comprehensive health care, including extensive screening for all children, provided by his/her doctor throughout our program.
2. Health education will be provided for all enrollees and their families by the Health Manager, during training sessions provided for parents and staff.
3. Each family will be provided with such information needed to assist in the adequate health care of their child, including the location of available health care facilities in the community and other pertinent information which will enable families to continue good health practices after their involvement with Sullivan County Head Start inc., has ended.
4. Each child has his/her immunization status assessed and updated as needed in accordance with New York State Law. The Health Manager has set up immunization clinics, in conjunction with Public Health. These clinics will be held at the Head Start center to ensure children are properly immunized.
 - Each child will receive a health screening within the first three months of entering; the screenings are in the following areas: vision, dental, blood pressure, speech, and anemia.

The Health Manager in charge of carrying out and or coordinating screenings will utilize all information gathered from the screenings done elsewhere (doctor, W.I.C. hospital, Well child Clinic) to track follow-up services that will be needed for each child.

A growth assessment is done on each child within the first two months of entering. Those children charted found to fall over 95% percentile and below 5% will be considered overweight or underweight and a plan will be developed with the parent to work with or eliminate the identified problem.

Each child is screened for speech problems by his/her teacher with referrals going to our Special Services Manager for follow-up. Sullivan County Head "Start, Inc., subcontracts for speech therapists.

Health Education for the Family includes good dental health and proper nutritious snacks and foods. In the classroom, daily tooth brushing is encouraged and supervised as is the periodic usage, of disclosing tablets to teach better and more thorough brushing habits.

Proper nutrition is an integral part of our Head Start program. Nutrition is included in the classroom curriculum, as well as, nutritious meals are served daily (breakfast, lunch and snack). We have contracted with Cornell Cooperative Extension who provides Head Start with who provides Head Start with a nutritionist that oversees menu planning training to staff and parents, and sign-off on the monthly menu. At present our food supplies are paid for through the Department of Agriculture (CACFP) and all Head Start enrollees are free.

Sullivan County Head Start, Inc provides a fluoride supplemental program to all Head Start children. This will be the daily 1 mg tablet to be chewed for 30 seconds, swished for 30 seconds and then swallowed. No eating or drinking for ½ hour afterward. The swishing and swallowing method enhances the benefit of the fluoride and the development of the permanent teeth.

Information and teaching is given to all parents as this is a voluntary program, although all parents are encouraged to allow their child to participate, unless he/she is already on a supplement at home. This program has also been reviewed and approved by Dr. Gavis our Health consultant.

The usual vision screening done for Head Start is the Snellen "E" exam, although on occasion, we use the flash card vision test of familiar objects.

Hearing screening will be done on all children, not previously diagnosed as hearing impaired, by the Health/Nutrition Manager at the Head Start center. Each child will receive an impedance (pure tone) exam on the audiometer have been prepared in the classroom with listening and response games. Children who at first present poor results will be retested after further preparation. If a child fails the second test, then a referral will be made. Hearing referrals should be first sent to a physician to rule out the presence of and infection which may influence the test and then to the clinic for tympanometry. Follow-up will be coordinated by the Health/Nutrition Manager and the Special Services Manager.

This program year 2009-2010, we are serving 34 children who have already been classified by local committees on Pre-School Special Education as pre-school children with a disability, and 8 children who receive services through Early Intervention. Of these 8 children 1 may transition to the CPSE as of January 2010. This number is in line with what we have seen in the last couple of school years. In addition we have identified 24 Head Start and 8 Early Head Start children in all classrooms since we began in September whom we feel are in need of special services. Of these 35, 3 are now receiving services at Sullivan County Head Start and 32 are in the process of being evaluated. We expect that at least half of these will be receiving services in 2010.

Our ties to local agencies, such as the Red Cross, NYS Electric and Gas, Salvation Army and Alternatives to Family Violence, have provided invaluable assistance to our families when they have faced moments in their lives of dire circumstance.

The churches in our county work hand in hand with us to make holidays memorable by providing food baskets. The inmates at Sullivan and Woodbourne Correctional Facilities make toys in their woodworking shops; the print shops produce our school calendar yearly. Local business and agencies adopt classrooms and provide funds to purchase additional enrichment materials. Community Service organizations such as Lions, Rotary, Alcohol Anonymous, and Kiwanis, donate money for various projects needed.

Some of the factors considered are employment status, single parenting, high risk families, and referrals from other agencies. The procedures insure that children with greatest needs are given priority.

After the children are selected, the family assistants will make a home visit to verify the document and complete a health history, obtain forms and provide the parent with additional information about the program.

All parents will have many opportunities to become involved in our program. Parents will be made to feel welcome by our open door policy. An orientation program will be held to acquaint parents with our program's philosophy and our need and desire to work together. There will be careful explanation of the policy council and center committee as well as written information that can be referred to throughout the year. Parents will be encouraged to volunteer or just visit. Monthly center committee meetings will be held at various times to encourage more participation. Refreshments, child care and transportation will always be provided. Parents can decide on various activities, workshops and classes that most interest them. Policy Council meetings will also be held monthly with minutes going to members. As per our policy council and procedures

already in place, elections will be held at center committee meetings to place representatives from each group of 18 children on Policy Council.

Policy Council is composed of two representatives from each classroom which have been elected by center committees. Any new classrooms established will follow same format for selecting representation to Policy Council. Policy Council has responsibilities for programmatic issues and concerns that come up within the program operation.

The Sullivan County Head Start, Board is composed of 11 members drawn from the community at large. They meet once per month and are responsible for the legal and fiscal operation of the program.

Decision making skills are strengthened through participation in center committee, policy council, and the board of directors meeting. Being involved gives parents the opportunity and responsibility for making program wide decisions that specifically affect their children. Skills developed have allowed our parents to become informed and involved community members. Parents coming from our program now sit on other boards in the community.

Policy Council and Board training regarding shared governance is provided by Executive Director and outside consultants each year.

Parents are directly involved in the Program Self-Assessment. This assessment process helps parents to better understand the philosophy and goals of the program.

The training needs of the education staff are assessed through evaluations, classrooms observations and current trends in education practices. New staff is paired with "buddies" in a mentor system that has very positive results. This allows for informal tutoring, skills and confidence building with frequent feedback on a regular basis. New

staff receives orientation both to the agency's goals, objectives, regulations and philosophy as well as specific training appropriate to the individual's service area. Mandatory pre service is provided in August to all staff. In service days are held on eight Fridays, during the school year as well as staff meetings. At this time the entire staff from all centers meet at the administration building. An hour is set aside for staff interaction or staff meeting followed by either training appropriate for all staff or service area workshops. This training is provided either by paid consultants, community professionals or staff members. The new Head Start teaching staff will be supervised by our Education/Special Services Manager and the Early Head Start staff will be supervised by the Early Head Start Manager.

Sullivan County Head Start, Inc. owns six buses that meet Department of Transportation regulations, are fully equipped with child restraint and seats, and all drivers CDL licensed. Because of the rural areas we serve, transportation must be provided in order to make the program accessible to most families. Vans are available to arrange and transport parents to medical and other appointments. Sullivan County is a rural area with no public transportation system. One of the reasons Sullivan County Head Start, Inc., is successful is due to the fact that we provide transportation from home to our program as well as for medical screenings, appointments, workshops, training, and emergencies.

The Fire and Building Inspector from the Office of children and Family Services Architect, along with Director and Managers at Head Start held a meeting last week to confirm space needed for (4) additional Early Head Start classrooms and to affirm that all requirements are included and are being met on a regular basis. The local Building

Inspector is in the process of inspecting all buildings that are to be utilized in housing the expansion.

A feasibility study with time table has been completed. The above committee will meet on a continuing basis to keep track of the progress and to make certain we are meeting the projected deadlines.

Recruitment is an ongoing at Sullivan County Head Start and at present we have a total of 340 children on the waiting list from the surrounding areas we serve. At present we are selecting and accepting children for the new expansion enrollment.

One classroom at our Waverly Avenue site in Monticello, New York has been licensed by Children and Family Services and is presently available for occupancy. This classroom will be operational within a month. We will continue to network with agencies to formalize more extensive collaborative efforts. We are currently advertising for employees. All new staff will be hired within a timely manner allowing ample time for training to take place. All newly hired employees are required to view the following tapes and attend in-service training before entering the classroom along with any other mandated requirements.

- Head Start Building America's Future
- Child Abuse and Neglect – A Prevention and Reporting Guide
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- First Aid and CPR for Infants and Children
- Shaken Baby
- SIDS and Brain Development

All newly hired staff will be assigned a shadowing buddy mentor for a period of 3 months. Sullivan County Head Start only hires N.Y.S. Early Childhood Degree Teachers. AA or CDA Certified Early Head Start Teachers, this is a policy of Sullivan County Head Start and will be strictly adhered to. The neediest of the needy children will be selected from present waiting list. The Executive Director along with Program Managers will be responsible for monitoring progress, timetable to ensure we are meeting goals and objectives. Our program uses Promis, a web based data entry program.

The funding of this grant would enable Sullivan County Head Start, Inc, to employ 14 additional staff. The renovations associated with this project would also generate income to all involved from the architect to the contractor and their vendors. It would be a needed boost to the economy in Sullivan County.