



**90% of the brain
is developed by
the child's
5th birthday.**

2024-2025

Self-Assessment Summary

Introduction

The Head Start Program Performance Standards require two systems of self-reflection: ongoing monitoring and self-assessment. Ongoing monitoring takes place throughout the year and helps answer the question, "Are we doing things right?". Self-Assessment, on the other hand, is a dedicated time for programs to pause, reflect, and ask the bigger question, "Are we doing the right things?"

Throughout the year, program leaders and staff monitor operations through the ongoing monitoring system. The annual Self-Assessment builds on this work by using program data to assess progress towards strategic goals.

The Self-Assessment is conducted in two phases: 1) internal reviews within the content areas; and 2) the Collaborative Session. This joint session brings together a variety of parties with different levels of program involvement and interest.

The Self-Assessment process begins by highlighting successes and identifying practices that can be applied more broadly across the program. We look closely at what's working well, where we can improve, and how we can meet the changing needs of our families and the community. By looking at program-wide data, we are also able to examine systemic issues and explore solutions at a higher level.



The 2024–2025 Self-Assessment Collaborative Session, conducted in the spring of 2025, uses a partnership- and data-driven approach. This year, over 100 individuals joined in and participated across five sessions, focusing on the areas of Education, ERSEA, Family Services and Mental Health, Health and Nutrition Services, and Organizational Success. The diverse groups included program staff, leadership, parents, Policy Council members, Board members, and community partners.

Each focus area group reviewed performance data, compliance measures, and stakeholder feedback to identify strengths, challenges, and priorities, which were used to develop program-wide quality improvement plans for the 2025–2026 program year.

The following summary provides an overview of how our program operated during the past year. It highlights key accomplishments and successes that demonstrate our progress, as well as areas where further growth and improvement are needed. By reviewing this document, readers will gain a clear understanding of the program's overall performance and the steps we are taking to strengthen services for children and families moving forward.



Process

Self-Assessment is required by section 1304.51(i)(1) of the Head Start Program Performance Standards. Even though Self-Assessment is required, the process may look different from one program to the next. Geminus Head Start follows a standardized process for the annual Self-Assessment that includes the following:

1. Design the Process: Set a clear direction for what we want to accomplish and by when. Consult with and obtain approval of the Self-Assessment plan from the Board of Directors and Policy Council. Select and invite staff, Policy Council members, Board members, as well as participants who bring outside perspectives, to join the Self-Assessment team.

2. Engage the Team: Prepare and deliver an overview of the program, including current goals, objectives, areas of focus, and expected outcomes.

3. Analyze and Dialogue: Explore systemic issues and review the program's progress on goals and objectives. Review and analyze current and previous data to uncover patterns and trends. Engage in dialogue about what is going well and why, as well as what could be improved. Formulate discoveries.

4. Make Recommendations: Consolidate discoveries across teams and prepare recommendations to inform program planning.

5. Prepare Report: Create a report based on the results of the Self-Assessment process. Share the completed report with the Board of Directors and Policy Council for approval of the improvement plans. Use the report to inform annual program planning and quality improvement initiatives.

Vision

Geminus Head Start will be an organization that inspires, empowers and ignites children, families, and the community to reach their full potential.

Mission

Geminus Head Start is the Northwest Indiana leader in early childhood education impacting the lives of young children and their families. We anchor ourselves in the community, providing health, education, and family services through collaboration, comprehensive services, resources, and support, resulting in greater opportunities for personal growth and community connection.

2024–2028 Strategic Plan

Goal 01

Strive for Organizational Success

- Review and revise internal communication and feedback processes
- Strengthen Continuous Quality Improvement Model (CQI) to make data-informed decisions
- Partner with Regional Care Group Communications Department to develop a marketing and communications plan for Geminus Head Start
- Explore additional funding opportunities to innovate and expand program services
- Achieve National Head Start Association (NHSA) Program of Excellence Accreditation

Goal 02

Provide High-Quality Program Services

- Prioritize a culture of safety
- Prioritize wellness, diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Deliver intentional services based on trends in child, family, health, and monitoring outcomes



Goal 03

Secure, Sustain, and Support a Strong Workforce

- Continue High Performing Organizations efforts to create a positive work culture
- Increase recruitment efforts for qualified staff
- Enhance the professional development program structure

Goal 04

Enhance Strategic Partnerships

- Increase community presence and networking
- Create a structure for identifying and fostering strategic partnerships
- Increase engagement in industry affiliations





Program Strengths

Geminus Head Start made strong gains across all content areas over the last program year. Children showed growth in cognitive development, math, and social-emotional skills, while supports for children with disabilities exceeded requirements. Enrollment stayed at full capacity thanks to streamlined systems and an easier application process. Family Services expanded mental health supports, relaunched male engagement events, and improved staff onboarding and wellness programs. Health and Nutrition strengthened dental partnerships, increased dental and physical exam completion, and boosted community health efforts. Community health efforts included connecting families with primary doctors and assisting them in obtaining insurance. Professional development exceeded requirements while maintaining services that ran smoothly and remained accessible.

Everything's better when we work together.

Improvement Needs

- Strengthen language and literacy outcomes through targeted curriculum supports, training, and monitoring.
- Refine the disability referral process to ensure timely evaluations and services.
- Improve family understanding of school readiness goals.
- Increase accuracy and timeliness of data entry for better decision-making.
- Boost in-person family engagement while maintaining virtual engagement success.
- Elevate coordination with local school districts for smoother transitions to kindergarten.
- Evaluate enrollment application process to ensure timely responses.
- Expand mental health supports to families in need.
- Increase completed dental exams.



**Teaching children.
Serving families.**



Education

Methodology

During 2024–2025, the Education team used monthly meetings to review Self-Assessment data, track progress, and share successful strategies. Feedback from staff and families identified three main priorities: improving family communication about school readiness, increasing training to better support children with disabilities, and clarifying kindergarten transition procedures. These insights will guide future training, program improvements, and family partnership strategies to strengthen outcomes for children and families.

Strengths

- **Curriculum is aligned to School Readiness Goals.**
Creative Curriculum is utilized for Geminus Head Start center-based programs.
- **Individualized Support and Inclusion**
The education team prioritizes inclusive practices by providing tailored supports for children with disabilities and those with suspected delays. Individualization ensures that each child receives appropriate resources to thrive.
- **Family Engagement in Learning**
Families are engaged as partners in education through conferences, home visits, and goal-setting meetings. Efforts are made to communicate school readiness goals and involve parents in supporting learning at home.

Areas for Improvement:

- Increase parent understanding of school readiness goals.
- Provide training on Disabilities, focusing on a deeper understanding of the disability.
- Establish a working transition plan between Head Start and the Local Education Agencies (LEAs).



Summary

During the Self-Assessment Collaborative Session held in the spring of 2025, participants talked about ways to help children grow in language, literacy, and math, and to ensure our program follows the curriculum as planned. They discussed improving the process for referring children with disabilities, making sure data is entered on time and correctly, and finding new ways to get more families involved in person. They also looked at how to better support families in understanding school readiness, expand mental health resources, and work more closely with local schools to make transitions to kindergarten smoother.

ERSEA



Methodology

Over the past year, the Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) department brought together staff, parents, and community volunteers to review progress, share data, and identify strengths, as well as areas for growth. Through three Professional Learning Community (PLC) sessions, participants reviewed last year's goals, selected priority focus areas, and analyzed data on enrollment, recruitment, and attendance. They brainstormed improvement ideas, shared successful site-level practices, and learned from each other. In preparing topics for the larger Self-Assessment Collaborative Session, the team focused on how external stakeholders view the program, discussing attendance barriers, sharing strategies to effectively reach families, and gathering feedback on recent program changes.

Strengths

- **Complete Full Enrollment Initiative (FEI)**
The ERSEA team increased enrollment over the past program year and reached the required 97% enrollment.
- **Centralized enrollment team located in the Geminus Corporate building**
This change has helped to streamline the enrollment and application process.
- **Application appointments can now be conducted over the phone or via a video call**
This has removed the transportation barrier for families.
- **Adoption of DocuSign to obtain parent signatures on forms and application documentation collection**
DocuSign has helped speed up the application process for families and staff.
- **Improved communication**
Weekly meetings are conducted virtually with Child Care Partners (CCPs) to ensure enrollment is current.

Areas for Improvement:

- Evaluate the application process to increase efficiency and flexibility for families, timely processing of applications, and effective follow-up to families and site staff.
- Implement the new Head Start Performance Standard to include an adjustment to a family's annual gross income when they pay annual housing costs over 30% of their income.



Summary

In 2024–2025, Geminus Head Start reached 97% enrollment and streamlined services by centralizing the enrollment team. The ERSEA team improved access with virtual appointments, DocuSign, and updated translated forms. The Collaborative Sessions generated strategies to boost attendance, expand outreach, and enhance recruitment through varied communication and distribution of family-friendly materials. Upcoming plans focus on refining application processes, exploring electronic options, improving communication, and implementing new income-adjustment rules with staff training and updated procedures.



Family Services & Mental Health

Methodology

For the 2024–2025 Family Services Self-Assessment, data gathered from reports, audits, family/staff surveys, and feedback from staff and families, along with updated Head Start Performance Standards, were used to identify strengths and areas for growth. Focus areas were chosen based on the highest needs from the data, while building on existing strengths. The Collaborative Sessions with staff and stakeholders provided additional insights and will guide planning for the next program year.

Strengths

- **Behavioral Support**
The Family Services team offered behavioral support to the Geminus and Child Care Partnership Head Start classrooms by facilitating the AI's Pals social-emotional curriculum.
- **Resources and Referrals**
The Family Advocates utilized the Family Outcome Assessment, motivational interviewing, and relationship building with the families they serve to offer individual resources and referrals. The Family Advocates also front-load families with resources to strengthen and build relationships.
- **Family Engagement**
Family engagement efforts have increased at the Head Start sites, resulting in higher virtual adult education views and slightly higher in-person engagement attendance.
- **Behavioral Health**
The Behavioral Health Services consultants have provided ongoing support for individual family referrals and consistent monthly classroom management support.
- **Family Advocate Supports**
Family Services Managers have strengthened the support they give Family Advocates using a real-time family services dashboard and other data reports generated on an ongoing basis.

Areas for Improvement:

- Family Services would like to formulate a structure to strengthen in-person family engagement opportunities and attendance.
- Family Services aims to strengthen and expand mental health supports by enhancing current services, increasing access to resources, and deepening partnerships with mental health providers to better serve both families and staff.

Summary

Family Services built stronger engagement opportunities, streamlined processes, and expanded wellness and mental health supports in 2024–2025, while prioritizing flexible, family-centered events, and cross-team collaboration to address participation, staffing, and resource challenges.



Health & Nutrition



Methodology

The Health and Nutrition team used this year's Self-Assessment to identify strengths, challenges, and improvement opportunities, with a focus on boosting the accuracy and timeliness of health and nutrition data. Oral health emerged as a key area needing attention, prompting collaborative discussions on effective strategies, partner support, and new ideas such as utilizing a mobile health unit. Additional topics included immunizations and lead testing. Feedback from the 2024-2025 Self-Assessment Collaborative Session will guide future development of strategies to better support sites and families.

Strengths

- **The Health team utilized a mobile dentist to provide care onsite.**
Mobile dentists' units help bring needed dental care to children enrolled in Geminus Head Start and Early Head Start.
- **Families received oral health literature before the arrival of the mobile dentist.**
Geminus Head Start provides a variety of resources to families, including dental flyers and referrals.
- **Health Specialists visited the sites to perform specific health assessments and screenings.**
Being able to visit Head Start and Child Care Partnership sites while serving children directly has been a vital part of the Health team, ensuring that children receive health assessments and screenings promptly.

Areas for Improvement:

- Increase the number of oral exams across the program.
- Ensure that all children receive fresh fruit daily and monitor for substitutes accurately.
- Ensure that children with allergies can start class in a timely manner by receiving proper documentation from their doctor.

Summary

This year's focus was on improving health compliance (particularly oral health), implementing mobile healthcare units, and meeting Strategic Plan Goals. Progress included timely dental exams, greater mobile unit use, and stronger staff-family communication on oral care. Strengths included high family engagement and staff adaptability to new procedures. Challenges such as gaps in follow-up care and limited family awareness of early prevention will be addressed by expanding mobile services, enhancing staff training, and increasing health data audits. Nutrition efforts will be targeting the availability of fresh (not canned) fruits and vegetables through vendor partnerships.



Organizational Success



Methodology

This year's Self-Assessment emphasized ongoing, organization-wide dialogue through focus groups, weekly touchpoints, and increased site visits. Feedback from staff, stakeholders, and surveys shaped Self-Assessment Collaborative Session topics, leading to rich cross-program discussions and ideas such as job shadowing between newer and more experienced teams. Moving forward, we will maintain regular touchpoints, host town hall-style meetings, and launch a job shadowing initiative to strengthen alignment, communication, and onboarding across the program.

Strengths

- **Effective Communication Systems**
Communication among Geminus Head Start departments and with Geminus/Regional Care Group administrative services has strengthened over the past year through regular meetings, touchpoints, and updates. These ongoing connections have led to clearer alignment, faster problem-solving, and stronger operational consistency. In addition, communication channels for staff and families were expanded through QR code surveys available throughout the year, allowing both groups to share input, questions, and concerns.
- **Collaborative Decision-Making**
Geminus Head Start continues to encourage meaningful participation from staff, families, and community partners in shaping program priorities. Focus groups, surveys, and other feedback opportunities have provided participants with avenues to share their experiences and perspectives. These collective insights have informed planning and improvement efforts, fostering shared ownership and trust across all levels.
- **Leadership Visibility and Support**
The Head Start Leadership Team made a concerted effort this year to maintain a consistent presence at recipient, delegate, and child care partnership sites. Regular visits have strengthened connections between field staff and senior leadership, providing opportunities for direct communication, responsive support, and timely problem-solving. This increased visibility has helped bridge gaps between program operations and leadership decision-making.

Areas for Improvement:

- Internal communication barriers/challenges need to be improved upon.
- Family engagement participation levels need to be increased.
- Methods of family communication need to be enhanced.

Summary

The 2024–2025 Organizational Success Self-Assessment focus area emphasized stronger communication, collaboration, and alignment across the program. Through the use of focus groups, surveys, site visits, and weekly touchpoints, they identified strengths in leadership visibility, inclusive decision-making, and improved systems. They recognized the need for clearer internal communication and expanded mentorship. The Collaborative Sessions addressed challenges like family information overload and the need for timely feedback. Progress was made on prior improvement plans. Three new initiatives will enhance internal communication and parent engagement through centralized calendars, structured mentorship, and targeted communication follow-ups.



Professional Development



Methodology

The Professional Development team's 2024–2025 Self-Assessment prioritized aligning work with long-term goals for a high quality, data-driven training system. Key achievements included launching role-specific onboarding plans to strengthen new hire readiness and refining post-training evaluations for more reliable impact data. Additional efforts focused on streamlining processes, improving data monitoring, and enhancing follow-up support after trainings. Insights from cross-content focus groups and staff survey feedback will guide 2025–2026 planning to ensure trainings remain targeted, effective, and responsive to staff needs.



Strengths

- **Development and implementation of role-specific onboarding workflows**
The Professional Development team successfully designed and piloted position-specific onboarding timelines that include sequenced training, job shadowing, and system access. These workflows have improved clarity, consistency, and relevance for new hires.
- **Improved feedback tools and data-driven decision making**
Post-training evaluation questions were revised to improve the quality, reliability, and usefulness of feedback. This allowed the team to gather more meaningful data to guide training decisions, monitor impact, and identify follow-up needs.
- **Successful collaboration to meet NAEYC accreditation standards**
In partnership with content area directors, the Professional Development team revised policies and procedures to align with National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards—particularly Standard 6D. These efforts directly contributed to the Head Start site at Ridge View earning NAEYC accreditation, with all standards fully met.

Areas for Improvement:

- Collaboratively design workflows that outline the sequence of steps for onboarding new hires that include position-specific onboarding timelines.
- Creation and implementation of a process for individualized professional development.

Summary

The Professional Development team advanced strategic goals this year by moving from process creation to full system implementation. Key achievements included launching role-specific onboarding workflows, enhancing post-training evaluation tools for more actionable data, and aligning policies with NAEYC standards to achieve full compliance at Ridge View. These efforts improved new hire readiness, strengthened supervisor support, and informed targeted training follow-ups. Ongoing priorities include increasing post-training reinforcement, expanding Vector system tracking, and building structured feedback loops at 30/60/90 days. The focus for 2025–2026 will be on refining these systems, ensuring consistent implementation, and maintaining strong cross-team collaboration to meet compliance and performance goals.

Strengthening Operations Through Collaboration

In addition to the core Head Start content areas, this year's Self-Assessment also included input from Regional Care Group departments that directly support Geminus Head Start operations. These departments—Communications, Facilities, Finance, Human Resources, and Information Services—play a critical role in ensuring that services run smoothly and families receive the support they need.

Communications leads advertising, marketing, and public relations efforts, promoting awareness of Head Start services while ensuring families, staff, and the broader community remain informed and engaged. Facilities ensures classrooms and sites are safe, well-maintained, and welcoming. Finance manages purchasing, budgets, and resources to keep operations sustainable, and Information Services provides the technology and data systems that drive efficiency and accountability. Human Resources supports staff recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and professional growth, ensuring that our program has a strong and capable workforce. By including these departments in the Self-Assessment process, we were able to capture the full picture of how daily administrative services operations contribute to program quality, family experience, and long-term success.

The goal of early childhood education should be to activate the child's own natural desire to learn.

- Maria Montessori -



Nurturing young minds. Inspiring curiosity.



Communications

Methodology

As part of this year's Self-Assessment, the Regional Care Group Communications team reviewed Geminus Head Start's marketing and outreach strategies to ensure families can easily access program information. Efforts included digital campaigns such as Google search ads, Facebook and YouTube ads, geofencing near school sites, and providing materials in Spanish, along with direct mail campaigns to reach households with limited internet access. By analyzing performance data like impressions, clicks, and click-through rates, the team identified which strategies are most effective in raising awareness and connecting families to Head Start services. This data-driven review highlighted successes, such as strong digital engagement, while also pointing to opportunities to refine outreach so that it remains inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the needs of families with young children.

Strengths

- **Strategic Targeting**
Communications' targeted approach ensures campaigns effectively reach and engage families who are most likely to benefit from Head Start services, including those who are eligible and/or are in the greatest need.
- **Visibility Increased**
By reviewing past campaign results, the Communications team concluded that Head Start's visibility continues to increase steadily year over year. As a result, more individuals are aware of Head Start and its services, which have the potential to drive higher enrollment rates.
- **Campaign Reports**
Insights from campaign reports empower the Communications team to assess past campaign performance, identify areas of improvement, and refine future marketing campaigns for optimum reach and engagement.

Areas for Improvement:

- Improve consistency around campaign lengths. Develop a marketing campaign for 2026 enrollment, outlining start and end dates of campaigns across all platforms.
- Track mailing by developing a simple tracking system to better understand direct mail reach and response rate.



Summary

Over the past year, the Communications team focused on evaluating the effectiveness of Geminus Head Start's outreach efforts, particularly in relation to our goals of increasing awareness, engagement, and enrollment among eligible families. The team's primary focus included digital marketing performance, with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as impressions, clicks, and click-through rates (CTRs) analyzed across multiple platforms, including Google Paid Search, YouTube Ads, Social Ads, and Display Ads. Direct mailers were also used to ensure outreach inclusivity for households without reliable internet access, though direct data for this channel was not available for evaluation.



Facilities

Methodology

The Regional Care Group General Services Manager and Director of Facilities met with the Director and Manager of Head Start Quality Assurance to discuss areas for review during the 2024–2025 Self-Assessment. Together, they identified two key priorities: the updated work order system (EAGLE, CMMS) and the new monitoring tool (DataSay). The work order system allows staff to submit and track facility requests more efficiently, helping ensure that classrooms and sites remain safe, well-maintained, and responsive to families' and staff's needs. Meanwhile, the DataSay monitoring tool provides improved tracking and reporting capabilities, giving leadership real-time insights into facility operations and overall program quality. These updates represent an important step toward creating more transparent, accountable, and data-informed processes that strengthen day-to-day operations and ensure that the physical environment continues to support the learning and well-being of children and families.

Strengths

- **Work Orders**
Facilities has a strong work order system/process with a completed number of work orders being 8303 (from 10-23-2023 to 5-15-25).
- **Collaboration and Communication**
Good collaboration between the Quality Assurance team and the Geminus Facility team.
- **Inspections**
Inspections are current/up to date. (Fire Alarm, Sprinkler System, Fire Marshal, Licensing, Backflow, and Health)

Summary

For the 2024–2025 Self-Assessment, the Facilities team concentrated on evaluating two critical systems: the work order process and the use of the DataSay monitoring tool. The review highlighted that while the current work order system (EAGLE, CMMS) is functional and has supported day-to-day needs, it requires redesign to better meet the expectations of site staff. Staff noted the importance of a system that is more user-friendly, provides quicker turnaround on requests, and ensures clearer communication about the status of work orders. Addressing these needs will not only improve efficiency but also strengthen staff confidence that facility concerns are being addressed promptly and effectively.

Areas for Improvement:

- Site Directors need to be able to put work orders in, but are having issues with entering service requests into the Work Order System.
- Communication between DataSay and site staff needs to be addressed. Uploading DataSay inspections and follow-up can be difficult for inspectors and site directors.





Finance

Methodology

The Finance department's Self-Assessment was conducted by the Regional Care Group Senior Accountant and Chief Financial Officer using guiding questions provided by the Head Start Quality Assurance Director, which were aligned with Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), Uniform Guidance (2 CFR Part 200), and agency fiscal policies. This review examined grant files, fiscal documentation, and master files for all federal, state, and local awards, as well as budgeting, purchasing, and payment processes to confirm compliance and strengthen internal controls. It also evaluated segregation of duties, payment authorizations, and document retention practices, along with the collection, evaluation, and reporting of In-Kind contributions. Finance staff collaborated with program leads to ensure fiscal management supported operational goals, while areas for improvement were identified using evidence from budget cycles, drawdown records, and payment review data.

Strengths

- **Policies and Procedures**
Documented policies and procedures are consistently followed, promoting compliance and accountability. Master files and supporting materials are well-maintained for all federal grants and awards.
- **Monthly monitoring**
Monitoring of budget-to-actuals ensures strong fiscal oversight and supports data-informed decision-making.
- **Budgeting**
Structured budgeting and reporting protocols that include participation from program leadership, Policy Council, and the Board of Directors. Regular engagement with program departments aligns fiscal activity with program goals.
- **Internal Controls**
There is segregation of duties, clear payment authorization, and consistent oversight, reducing the risk of error or misuse.

Areas for Improvement:

- The drawdown process needs to be streamlined and better documented.
- Enhance community partnerships to better support In-Kind contributions and reduce reliance on waivers.



Summary

The Finance Department ensures strong fiscal management through compliance with federal regulations, transparent reporting, and collaborative budgeting. Monthly financial statements and budget-to-actual comparisons are shared with the Policy Council and the Board of Directors, supporting accountability. Budgets are developed with program input and approved by leadership, Policy Council, and the Board of Directors before submission to the Office of Head Start. Procurement follows federal and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) standards, and an In-Kind waiver was submitted due to limited community resources. A revised drawdown process is being implemented to improve efficiency and accuracy.



Human Resources

Methodology

The Regional Care Group Human Resources department's 2024–2025 Self-Assessment was guided by the human resources components of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), supplemented by supporting documentation from the Office of Head Start (OHS), and internal strategic goals. The Human Resources team reviewed internal policies, procedures, and metrics related to recruitment, onboarding, background checks, performance management, training, and volunteer coordination. Collaboration with the Head Start leadership team ensured alignment with program-specific expectations. Exit interview data, onboarding feedback, as well as Relias and Vector training reports were analyzed for insights on trends and compliance.

Strengths

- **Recruitment**
There is proactive and effective recruitment collaboration between Human Resources and Head Start leadership.
- **Onboarding**
The Human Resource team has well-documented and executed onboarding and orientation processes.
- **Pre-Employment**
Geminus corporation has robust background check protocols and pre-employment screening systems.

Areas for Improvement:

- Human Resources sees the need for better integration of skills-based assessments in the hiring process.
- Human Resources needs a more reliable means to track background checks. Manual tracking of background check renewals risks delays in re-screening compliance.

Summary

Over the past year, the Human Resource department partnered closely with Head Start leadership to strengthen hiring, onboarding, and staff support. Key successes included timely recruitment, standardized training through Relias and Vector, structured background check tracking, and strong coordination with managers. In-person pre-screening boosted candidate engagement, and compliance with credentialing remained high. Challenges such as limited use of skills-based assessments, manual background check renewals, and weak alignment between professional development and school readiness goals were identified, with plans underway to automate renewals, expand skills-based hiring tools, and better connect professional development with program priorities.





Information Services

Methodology

During the 2024–2025 Self-Assessment, the Regional Care Group Information Services (IS) department reviewed policies, procedures, and resource allocation to strengthen data systems and support. Key priorities included enhancing data security (encryption, MFA [Multi Factor Authentication], HIPAA/HITECH compliance), improving user access governance through a formal Request for Service process, and centralizing Help Desk operations for more responsive support. The team also addressed hardware and infrastructure needs such as backups, virus protection, and device lifecycle management, while emphasizing succession planning through cross-training and reducing reliance on staff-specific custom reports to ensure continuity and sustainability.

Strengths

- **Security & Compliance**
All child/family data is encrypted at rest and in transit, housed in a locked, badge-access-controlled data center, and supported by MFA and password management protocols.
- **Access Management**
Access to GoEngage and all major systems is reviewed by the subject matter experts (SMEs) through the request for service process, with permissions built on a need-to-know basis and role designations.
- **Infrastructure Health**
Infrastructure is stable, scalable, and well-managed, with updated operating systems, dual-layer backups (on- and off-site/cloud), and antivirus protection.
- **Help Desk**
The IS Help Desk supports all Head Start programs with a centralized team of technicians and a supervisor available during business hours.
- **Strategic Planning**
The migration of GoEngage to the cloud reflects a commitment to modernization, scalability, and data reporting governance beyond customization and patchwork fixes.

Areas for Improvement:

- The Information Services department needs to add security to the utilization of the GoEngage application.
- They will reinstate and maintain a regular hardware and device rotation schedule.



Summary

Information Services plays a vital role in Head Start operations by ensuring secure, reliable infrastructure and support. The 2024–2025 Self-Assessment confirmed that core systems are well-managed, compliant, and responsive to program needs. A key initiative underway is migrating GoEngage to a cloud-based environment, which will improve performance, reliability, and security while replacing custom reports with standard dashboards for clearer, more accessible reporting across departments.



What's Next

Each of the content areas is responsible for tracking the implementation of their Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) and Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) throughout the 2025–2026 program year. Progress will be monitored through ongoing data reviews, regular departmental check-ins, and a mid-year evaluation, with adjustments made as needed to ensure continuous improvement. Their regular meetings will also ensure concerns are addressed in real-time, instead of waiting until the end of the school year. Together, these components — from ongoing monitoring and mid-year internal reviews to the culminating Collaborative Session in the spring — form the complete Self-Assessment process that strengthens services for children and families enrolled in Geminus Head Start.



 **GEMINUS**

HEAD START

