Rethinking DATA Use - Action Plan

1. Prepare

Something to think about:

Planning for data collection ensures that programs know up front what data they need to collect to make sure they are completing tasks in a timely manner and to track progress towards their goals and objectives. If you don't think ahead, you may not be able to retrieve missing data. Planning ahead for data often eliminates data paralysis, which happens as a result of collecting too much data. Remember in preparing for data it also is important to consider the role of leadership.

New Ideas

What's working well?

What do you want to strengthen?

How will you improve your abilities in the preparation stage of data collection and use?

INITIAL thoughts for your ACTION PLAN

2. Collect

New Ideas

Something to think about:

Head Start programs are required to collect a lot of data. This wealth of data can be both a blessing and a curse. Sometimes Head Start programs are so inundated with data that data paralysis results. To be effective, data collection must be intentional and organized. Follow the "Goldilocks" principle for collecting data. Too much data is overwhelming. Too little may not provide what you need. Collect "just right" data, and only collect data that will be used. Use a variety of methods to collect data. You will want to have multiple sources of data to inform your decisions.

What's working well?
What do you want to strengthen?
How will you strengthen your ability to collect data?
INITIAL thoughts for your ACTION PLAN

3. Aggregate and Analyze

Something to think about:

"Aggregate and analyze" means putting the data to use by looking at it in different ways. This is where you begin to turn data into usable information. You examine data in different ways to identify what is working and what is not working; identify trends and patterns that pinpoint needs, strengths, and challenges; connect different types of data and sources to get a bigger picture; and compare data—such as conducting a longitudinal analysis that compares the same data from year to year or comparing Head Start data to external local, regional, state, or national data. Do you allow enough time for meaningful dialogue, asking broad questions that focus on outcomes?

New Ideas

What's working well?
What do you want to strengthen?
How will you strengthen your ability to aggregate and analyze data?
INITIAL thoughts for your ACTION PLAN

4. Use and Share

Something to think about:

"Use and share" are the most relevant parts of the data process for Head Start leaders. This is where programs continue to turn data into information and then use it to make significant program decisions, guide program improvement efforts, solve problems, and identify new critical questions based on the results of their data analysis. It is how you know that your organization is basing its decisions on sound information rather than on hunches, where you move from "We think" or "We believe" to "We know."

New Ideas

What's working well?
What do you want to strengthen?
How will you strengthen your ability to use and share data?
INITIAL thoughts for your ACTION PLAN

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Goal Statement:				
Strategy	**Action Steps**	**Person(s) Responsible**	**Resources Needed**	**Timeline**

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Goal: _____

SMART Objective: _____

Outcome: _____

Action/Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Timelines	Data Source(s)	Status