

Review and Discussion of the 2021-2022 Head Start Program Family Meetings





Requirements

1302.52 Family partnership services.

A program must implement intake and family assessment procedures to identify family strengths and needs related to the family engagement outcomes as described in the Head Start Parent Family and Community Engagement Framework, including family well-being, parent-child relationships, families as lifelong educators, families as learners, family engagement in transitions, family connections to peers and the local community, and families as advocates and leaders.

A program must offer individualized family partnership services that:

- Collaborate with families to identify interests, needs, and aspirations related to the family engagement outcomes described in paragraph (b) of this section;
- Help families achieve identified individualized family engagement outcomes;
- Establish and implement a family partnership agreement process that is jointly developed and shared with parents in which staff and families to review individual progress, revise goals, evaluate and track whether identified needs and goals are met, and adjust strategies on an ongoing basis, as necessary, and;
- Assign staff and resources based on the urgency and intensity of identified family needs and goals.

In implementing this section, a program must take into consideration any existing plans for the family made with other community agencies and availability of other community resources to address family needs, strengths, and goals, in order to avoid duplication of effort.

Family Partnership Process: Family Meeting and Goal Setting

The Family Partnership Process will help program staff:

- Learn about families and their evolving strengths, challenges, and priorities
- Build trust to establish and maintain positive, goal-oriented relationships
- Engage families in effective goal-setting
- Gain sufficient and meaningful information to complete a Family Partnership Plan

This process is initiated during the Family Meeting where Family Support workers learn and gather information about the family's needs and begin to build trust. It is during this meeting FSW work to identify family's aspirations, hopes, and dreams for themselves and their families through active listening. This meeting is held with families once they are identified to participate in the program, however, this isn't the first time the families have been made familiar with what documents are requested to participate in the program. At the Family Meeting, the FSW will request these documents and/or support the family in obtain the documents from providers. An example of a document needed would be the child's physical. If a family is struggling to obtain or schedule a physical, the FSW will assist in scheduling or work with the family to identify and remove any barriers to obtain the child's physical. If a family is in need of resources, the FSW is also prepared to provide the information to the families as well.

The Family Meeting, under normal circumstances, is conducted in the family's home. However, due to the need for social distancing in response to CoVID, FSW have completed these visits virtually and through the phone. Convenience and comfort for the family is always taken into consideration when meeting with the family via phone, virtual, or face to face.

Another opportunity the FSW will have to learn and gather information about the family is through a Family Assessment. The purpose of the assessment is to identify a family's strengths and resources as well as identify a family's need for resources and supports. During these assessments FSWs learn:

- what matters to families and what they hope to accomplish,
- which services their family members already receive from other agencies, and
- what child and family goals they are already working on.

It is the role of the FSW to provide support to the family for them to reach their goal(s). FSWs work with families to identify goal based on parent's interest and may yield one of the 7 family outcomes from the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework. When relationships are strong, families and children are more likely to achieve these outcomes. Together, the FSW and family discuss the skills and strengths that each can contribute toward the family's goals and consider the stressors that may impact the process. These discussions help them work together to develop strategies and action steps for family members to reach their goals.