



Subpart E

Family and Community Engagement Program

Standard Operating Procedures

*Aligned with the 2024 Head Start
Program Performance Standards
(Standards 1302.50 -1302.53)*

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INTRODUCTION (Standard 1302)

The focus of the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement program is on the child, the family, and the community as a group of interacting personalities. The role of the staff is to provide support to the child and family. Social Services/Parent Engagement staff also serves as a resource to the family by serving as a liaison between the Head Start Campus and Early Head Start Center, the family and the community. Out of this interaction; empowerment, enhancement of problem solving skills, and self-reliance is the desired outcome for each family system. (See **Family Engagement Operating Manual** for more information).

Head Start Family Services/Campus Staff also perform the following roles:

1. Provide support and serve as a resource to *families*.
2. Act as a bridge between, the family and the community.
3. Provide training and education to families in using available resources and services, and in locating those that are unavailable or inaccessible.
4. Serve as a resource within the Head Start program for other *staff* members.
5. Maintain accurate records for the benefit of families and other staff members.
6. Act as an advocate of the children and families enrolled in the program, both within the Campus and in the community.
7. Involve parents in the process of making decisions about the nature and operation of the Head Start program.
8. Involve parents in the classroom as paid employees, volunteers or observers.
9. Assist parents in working with their children in cooperation with the staff.
10. Involve parents in planning activities for themselves in the Campus and in the Community.
11. Work with donors that make in-kind contributions to the Head Start program.
12. Work with Administration, campus teams, parents, and community volunteers in generating the program's 20% non-federal share annually.

During a state of emergency triggered by the Federal, state and/or local governments these administrative policies and procedures as well as the Operating Manuals, the Finance Manual, and the Personnel Policies and Procedures will be amended to include instructions from the Federal, State, and Local Governments. Copies of these amended policies and procedures will be included where necessary.

Subpart E – Family and Community Engagement Program

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT. (Standard 1302.50)

(a) Purpose. A program must integrate parent and family engagement strategies into all systems and program services to support family well-being and promote children’s learning and development. Programs are encouraged to develop innovative two-generation approaches that address prevalent needs of families across their program that may leverage community partnerships or other funding sources. This includes communicating with families in a format that meets the needs of each individual family.

(b) Family engagement approach. A program must:

(1) Recognize parents as their children’s primary teachers and nurturers and implement intentional strategies to engage parents in their children’s learning and development and support parent-child relationships, including specific strategies for father engagement;

(2) Develop relationship with parents and structure services to encourage trust and respectful, ongoing two-way communication between staff and parents to create welcoming program environments that incorporate the unique cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds of families in the program and community;

(3) Collaborate with families in a family partnership process that identifies needs, interest, strengths, goals, and services and resources that support family well-being, including family safety, health, and economic stability;

(4) Provide parents with opportunities to participate in the program as employees or volunteers.

(5) Conduct family engagement services in the family’s preferred language, or through an interpreter, to the extent possible, and ensure families have the opportunity to share personal information in an environment in which they feel safe; and

(6) Implement procedures for teachers, home visitors, and family support staff to share information with each other, as appropriate and consistent with the requirements in part 1303 subpart C, of this chapter, FERPA; or IDEA, to ensure coordinated family engagement strategies with children and families in the classroom, home, and community.

PROCEDURE

1. Family Service Staff will recognize parents as the child's primary teachers. Parents will be encouraged to be their child's primary teachers throughout the school year. Training will be made available to support the parent/guardian(s) in this area.
2. Communication with the parent/guardian(s) will begin during the application process and will continue to build through the orientation into the program.
3. Applications and orientations will be made available in the families preferred language, when available, and an interpreter from Head Start or the local LEA will be available to parents that need this service.
4. During the orientation process, parent/guardian(s) will complete the Family Partnership Agreement which includes the agencies needs assessment. Completing the Family Partnership Agreement at orientation allows Family Service staff to have adequate time to work with families on their goals and provide resources to the family for any needs that may be available.
5. Interpreters, when available, will be used at Parent Engagement Trainings and Parent Meetings so that all parents will feel welcome and comfortable during attendance.
6. Family Empowerment Advocates will encourage parent/guardian(s) to participate in volunteer opportunities on campus. Parent/Guardian(s) will be welcome in the campus and staff will ensure that parent/guardian(s) are aware of job opening in the program and areas volunteers are needed.
7. Family Service Staff, Campus Staff, Management Team will collaborate as much as possible to ensure that parent family engagement strategies are used in the classroom, home, and the community.

PARENT ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE CHILD LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT.
(Standard 1302.51)

(a) A program must promote shared responsibility with parents for children's early learning and development, and implement family engagement strategies that are designed to foster parental confidence and skills in promoting children's learning and development. These strategies must include:

- (1)** Offering activities that support parent-child relationships and child development including language, dual language, literacy, and bi-literacy development as appropriate.
- (2)** Providing parents with information about the importance of their child's regular attendance, and partner with them, as necessary, to promote consistent attendance; and
- (3)** For dual language learners, information and resources for parents about the benefits of bilingualism and biliteracy.

(b) A program must, at minimum, offer opportunities for parents to participate in a research-based parenting curriculum that builds on parents' knowledge and offers parents the opportunity to practice parenting skills to promote children's learning and development. A

program that chooses to make significant adaptations to the parenting curriculum to better meet the needs of one or more specific populations must work with an expert or experts to develop such adaptations.

PROCEDURE

1. Parent/Guardian(s) will participate in the literacy programs each school year.
2. Parent Engagement staff will provide training resources in areas of literacy at Parent Meetings.
3. Family Service staff will attend the parent meetings and Home Visits and stress the importance of their child's attendance. Family Service staff will also discuss the importance of parents attending their child's Campus Parent Meetings.
4. Research-based Parenting Education trainings provided by Family Service Staff, Mental Health Providers, and/or County Extension Agents will be available to Parent/Guardian(s) throughout the school year.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP SERVICES. (Standard 1302.52)

(a) Family partnership process. A program must implement a family partnership process that includes a family partnership agreement and the activities described in this section to support family well-being, including family safety, health, and economic stability, to support child learning and development, to provide, if applicable, services and supports for children with disabilities, and to foster parental confidence and skills that promote the early learning and development of their children. The process must be initiated as early in the program year as possible and continue for as long as the family participates in the program, based on parent interest and needs.

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

(c) Individual family-partnership services. A program must offer individualized family partnerships services that:

- (1) Collaborate with families to identify interests needs, and aspirations related to the family engagement outcomes described in paragraph (b) of this section;
- (2) Help families achieve identified family engagement outcomes;
- (3) 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.

(d) Approaches to family partnership services. A program must:

- (1)** Ensure the family assignment process takes into account the varied interests, urgency, and intensity of identified family needs and goals;
- (2)** Ensure the planned number of families assigned to work with staff that conduct family partnership process and work on family, health and community engagement services is no greater than 40:1. A program must maintain this ratio, except:
 - (i)** When the responsible HHS official grants a waiver if the program can demonstrate staff competencies at 1302.92(b)(4); program outcomes at paragraph (b) of this section; and reasonable staff workload as described in paragraph (d)(3) of this section.
 - (ii)** During temporary periods of staff absence or attrition; changes in daily operations related to start-up or transitional activities; or extenuating circumstances related to emergency response and recovery.
- (3)** Ensure meaningful employee engagement practices to address family services workload experiences, in accordance with 1302.101(a)(2).

(e) Existing plans and community resources. 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, strength, and goals, in order to avoid duplication of effort.

PROCEDURE

1. Family Service staff have no more than a 40:1 ratio.
2. Family Partnership Agreements are completed at time of orientation giving Family Service staff adequate time to work with the family to meet their needs.
3. The Family Partnership Agreement includes the needs assessment.
4. Trainings for the parent/guardian(s) will be based off the needs assessments and parent interest survey.
5. Family Partnership Agreements will be taken on the first home visit in October. Family Service staff and parent/guardian(s) will jointly develop a plan on how to assist the family with achieving these goals and inform parent/guardian(s) of any resources that may be available to them.
6. Home Visits will be entered into Child Plus, along with each goal the family has, with a plan of action outlining the steps that both the parent/guardian and Family Service staff.
7. A follow up home visit will be conducted in January (*See Education Manual - Home Visit for procedure in scheduling home visits*)

8. A final home visit will be conducted in April and any goal adjustments will be made at this time. *(See Education Manual – Home Visit for procedure in scheduling home visits)*
9. Home Visits will be conducted in the parent/guardian(s) home when possible. However, if parent does not agree to a Home Visit or there is a significant safety hazard to Family Service staff an alternate location can be used to conduct the home visit. *(See Education Manual – Home Visit for procedure in scheduling home visits)*
10. Parent/Guardian(s) will be given a parent handbook at the beginning of each year that contains a community resource directory.
11. Family Services will discuss with the family regarding any services that they are currently receiving from other agencies so that there will not be a duplication of services.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP SERVICES AND COORDINATION WITH OTHER EARLY CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS. (Standard 1302.53)

(a) Community Partnerships.

(1) A program must establish ongoing collaborative relationships and partnerships with community organizations such as establishing joint agreements, procedures, or contacts and arranging for onsite delivery of services as appropriate, to facilitate access to community services that are responsive to children's and families' needs and family partnership goals, and community needs and resources, as determined by the community assessment.

(2) A program must establish necessary collaborative relationships and partnerships, with community organizations that include:

(ii) Health care providers, including child and adult mental health professionals, Medicaid managed care networks, dentists, other health professionals, nutritional service providers, providers of prenatal and postnatal support, and substance abuse treatment providers.

(iii) Individuals and agencies that provide services to children with disabilities and their families, elementary schools, state preschool providers, and providers of child care services;

(iv) Family preservation and support services and child protective services and other agency to which child abuse must be reported under state law.

(v) Education and cultural institution, such as libraries and museums, for both children and parents.

(vi) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, nutrition assistance agencies, workforce development and training programs, adult or family literacy, adult education, and post-secondary education

institutions, and agencies or financial institutions that provide asset-building education, products and services to enhance family financial stability and savings;

(vii) Housing assistance agencies and providers of support for child and families experiencing homelessness, including the local educational agency liaison designated until second 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq);

(viii) Domestic violence prevention and support providers; and,

(ix) Other organizations or businesses that may provide support and resources to families.

(b) Coordination with other programs and systems. A program must take an active role in promoting coordinated systems of comprehensive early childhood services to low-income children and families in their community through communication, cooperation, and the sharing of information among agencies and their community partners, while protecting the privacy of child records in accordance with subpart C of part 1303 of this chapter and applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws.

(1) Memorandum of understanding. To support coordination between Head Start and publicly funded preschool programs, a program must enter into a memorandum of understanding with the appropriate local entity responsible for managing publicly funded preschool programs in the service area of the program, as described in section 642(e)(5) of the Act.

(2) Quality Rating and Implementation System. A program, with the exception of American Indian and Alaskan Native Programs, should participate in its State or local Quality Rating and Implementation System, to the extent practicable, if a State or local QRIS has a strategy to support Head Start participation without requiring a program to duplicate existing documentation from Office of Head Start oversight.

(3) Data systems. A program, with the exception of American Indian and Alaska Native programs unless they would like to and to the extent practicable, should integrate and share relevant data with state education data systems, to the extent practicable, if the program can receive similar support and benefits as other early childhood programs.

(4) American Indian and Alaska Native programs. An American Indian and Alaska Native program should determine whether or not it will participate in the systems described in paragraphs (b)(2) and (3) of this section. Not Applicable to CSNT Head Start.

PROCEDURE

1. Parent/Guardian(s) are provided with a community resource directory at the beginning of each school year.
2. A formal and informal network of contacts have been developed with community organizations.
3. Agreements and MOU's have been established with various state and community agencies.
4. Community members serve on the Policy Council, Advisory Committees and as volunteers.
5. Referrals are made to WIC and Texas Department of Health and Human Services when needed.
6. Informal and formal agreements have developed with Health Providers and Nutritionist.
7. A Disabilities/Mental Specialist is available to parents.
8. Staff receives training on child abuse/neglect and the reporting procedures.
9. Head Start cooperates with local reporting agencies for child abuse.
10. There are hands on activities with books and other manipulatives in the classroom.
11. Parents are invited to help with cultural activities in the classroom.
12. Representatives from state and local agencies are encouraged to participate on Policy Council and provide trainings for parents during parent meetings.
13. Agency completes MOUs with local school districts to form partnerships in providing early childhood services to children that are dually enrolled in the Head Start Program and the school districts.
14. The Head Start program shares data and information with local public school districts on children that are dually enrolled in both programs.
15. CSNT Head Start does not participate in the QRIS System at this time. The State of Texas does not recognize Head Start quality and has not provided QRIS for children served through the Public School Systems.
16. CSNT Head Start will continue to monitor progress of the QRIS System in Texas and the program's ability to participate in the system.
17. CSNT Head Start shares data with local public education agencies. However, Texas does not collect data from Head Start at this time.