



## **Family Services Home Visits**

### **POLICY/APPROACH:**

Family Advocates conduct home visits in order to build rapport and establish trusting relationships with families. Every effort must be made to explain the advantages of home visits to the parents. Southern Oregon Head Start does not require that parents permit home visits as a condition of the child's participation in center-based program options.

SOHS staff will schedule home visits at times that are mutually convenient for the parents or primary caregivers and staff. If parents in center-based programs ask that the home visits be conducted outside the home, or in cases where a visit to the home presents significant safety hazards for staff, the home visit may take place at the center or at another safe location that affords privacy.

Staff will behave as guests in the family's home, and treat parents and children with courtesy and respect. The principles of Motivational Interviewing, strengths-based case management, and parent-driven change will inform the interaction.

Policy Council Approval 8/19/2014  
Board Approval 8/21/2014

<p><b>Head Start Performance Standards</b> <b><i>1302.50 (b)(5) Family Engagement</i></b> <b><i>1302.52(a) and (b)(1,5) Family Partnership services</i></b></p>
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### **PROCEDURES:**

#### **FAMILY SERVICES HOME VISITS**

Specialists & Home Based Home Visitors must refer to and follow the EHS Home Based Procedure for home visiting.

The Family Advocate (FA) will utilize opportunities to explain their role and the benefits of family services support to parents whenever possible and relevant – including during initial calls and conversations, when scheduling home visit appointments, and during the first home visits with the family.

Some of those benefits include:

- An opportunity to discuss the child and family's strengths and progress
- Meeting school staff at home makes the child feel safer at school
- Having a more private environment to talk in
- Head Start supports **all** family members, including dual households
- To assist and educate the parent/s, as the child's forever teacher
- Offer needed items / education / resources
- Children whose parents have strong relationships with schools tend to be more successful throughout life

Home visits are a direct service option that you will use to support families with high needs (priority 1 and 2). In addition, you are expected to attend a minimum of 1 family conference for **each** child/family to establish and maintain a strong family-school partnership. Best practice for Family Advocates is as follows:

- Attend as many IHVs as possible, prioritizing new and higher needs children and families
- Attend as many conferences as possible, prioritizing new and higher needs children and families, with a **minimum** of one conference per year, per child
- Offer additional Home Visit services and more frequent communication with high needs families, as needed

Family Advocates will complete Home Visits based on the individual needs of the family, and the level of FA support needed will be dependent upon the Family Strengths Self-Assessment and FSA scores, conversations and input from the families, and the discretion of the family advocate. Families with the highest needs should be prioritized for additional home visits.

As family circumstances change – they may transition from one priority level to another resulting in changes in family advocate services. [Refer to the caseload management section of Family Partnership & Goal Setting Policy & Procedure.](#)

### **A. Initial Education Home Visits**

Initial Home Visits are teacher-led and designed as an opportunity to complete ASQs and gather child and family information required for the child to begin classroom services. The role of the Family Advocate at the Education Initial Home visit is to begin establishing a connection and deeper understanding of the family, in partnership with the teacher. The FA will be present to provide support and resources as needed. [See the Scheduling Call section of the \(Education\) IHV procedure for instructions and documentation steps.](#)

Family Advocate will:

- Have access to the teacher's calendar
- Attend as many Initial Home Visits as they can, in partnership with the teacher, prioritizing new families and families determined to be high needs through self-assessment, the Scheduling Call, previous case notes, open house observations, and critical thinking skills.

### **B. Family Services Home Visit Protocol**

Staff will behave as a guest in another's home by demonstrating respect for the family's culture, values, beliefs, and diversity. Maintain unconditional positive regard and practice a strength-based approach.

If there is a staff safety concern:

- Family Advocates and teachers may partner together on visits and/or find an alternative location.
- Family Advocates may request a consultation with PFCE and Site Manager if partnering or locations are a challenge.

If parents do not wish to conduct the visit at their home, it may take place at the center, or another mutually convenient location which is reasonably private.

## DOCUMENTATION

### A. Initial Documentation/Planning Notes

Family Advocate will create a new **Family Services Home Visit** case note, in the Family Tab, for each family prior to the child starting services.

Documentation of a home visit, or the reasons why a home visit was not scheduled, must be completed by the agency's due date: 30 days after enrollment for priority 1 (High), 60 days after enrollment for priority 2 (Moderate).

The planning section (main case note body) of the case note will include the following information:

- Determination of family service need (Priority 1: high, Priority 2: moderate, or Priority 3: low) based on provided Family Strengths assessment or other known information
- Attempts at scheduling visits
- Details of scheduled visits (date & time)
- Changes or cancellations, no shows, and re-scheduled times
  - Three attempts will be made to schedule a home visit at a mutually convenient time for families identified as needing home visit support. Attempts will be documented in the body of the **Family Services Home Visit case note** and can include in person conversations, phone calls, emails, and/or texts.
  - any changes to service plans (i.e., pausing or resuming home visit services based on priority level changes), in the Family Services Home Visit case note body

### B. Ongoing Documentation of Services

The Family Advocate will offer, and document, resources and support for the family to access education, counseling, substance abuse treatment, literacy opportunities, parenting education, social service, and/or crisis intervention services in the data management system.

A comprehensive summary of each completed visit will be documented as a **follow-up note** under the original Family Services Home Visit case note within 24 hours of the visit. You may utilize the Family Goals, Need Identified case notes, and/or Emergency/Crisis case notes for additional documentation of family circumstances and staff support.

- Documentation should reflect a positive working relationship with the family.
- *Remember - if it's not documented, it didn't happen!*
- Ensure PIR (Performance Indicator) is completed within the relevant goal or case note.

## DUAL HOUSEHOLDS AND CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS

It is the FA's responsibility to attempt to engage both parents/caregivers of dual households and split/shared custody.

- A separate Family Services Home Visit case note should be created for each household, with services and planning notes tracked separately
- The FA may conduct home visits in both households
- Each household may develop their own family goal in the family goal section in SHINE

*If a child is in foster care, and a ward of the court, home visits may be conducted with the foster parents. A Home Visit may be done with the birth parents, only if permission is given by the DHS Child Welfare case worker.*