

HOME VISIT GUIDELINES

Purpose: Home visits are a vital component to the EHS program experience for families. They provide the opportunity for families to receive individualized education and support, develop goals for their children and family, and identify community resources to help meet their family's needs.

The following Head Start Program Performance Standards capture some of the key elements of this service model:

1306.30(b) states that "The major purpose of the home visits is to enhance the parental role in the growth and development of the child."

1306.33(1) states that "The purpose of the home visit is to help the parents improve their parenting skills and to assist them in the use of the home as the child's primary learning environment."

1304.40(i)(5) states that "Home visits in Home-Based program option (which includes the home visit model in the combination program options) must be conducted in the family's home."

1306.33(b) states "...the content of the home visit is to be jointly planned by the home visitor and the parents. Home visitors must conduct the home visit with the participation of the parents (legal guardians). Home visits may not be conducted by the home visitor with only baby-sitters or other temporary caregivers in attendance."

Duration of the Home Visit: Home visits are to be scheduled for 1.5 hours and are delivered according to the frequency required for the program option the family is enrolled in (see the *EHS Program Service Guidelines* for the frequency and number of home visits provided in each EHS program option).

Elements of a Home Visit:

The home visit must be child-focused and promote the parent's ability to support the child's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. Although home visits are also individualized to meet the emergent needs of families. The home visit should include the following elements. The following timeframes provide a general guide.

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Parent/Child Interaction Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greeting • Review plan for home visit • Provide parent/child interaction and play experience based upon parent input and child goals • Emphasize parent participation, cue taking, routines, observation and sharing developmental information 	40 minutes
Parent Education, Information and Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strategies that promote emergent literacy and support the development of literacy and language skills for dual language learners (see Effective Parent Education Tracking for topics) • Provide Birth to Three child development strengths-based parent education including strategies which encourage parents as their child's first teacher. • Provide Follow-up on health, nutrition, disability, mental health and child development needs • Provide Individualize educational approach based on parent's learning style. 	20 minutes
Health/Nutrition Education and Follow-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide parent results of hearing and vision screenings • Facilitate and remind parents of scheduled well child exams, dental exams, and other health follow-up exams and evaluations. • Provide health and developmental education to families • Provide nutrition and growth assessment education 	
Support, Advocacy, Resource and Referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify family needs • Provide community resource information and referrals • Provide parent support 	20 minutes
Planning for Next Home Visit & Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicit parent input into next home visit plan • Review needs (e.g. shots, well-child exams, etc.) • Provide closure song, book or other activity. 	10 minutes

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Home Visit Plan and Summary: Home visits are carefully planned to include the elements described above, and a summary is completed that documents what took place and the plan for the next home visit. Staff uses the “Home Visit Plan/Summary Form” to record this information.

Alternate Locations for Home Visits:

There are some circumstances in which alternate plans may be arranged for home visitation. General guidelines for these circumstances follow:

Safety Concerns in the Home: If a home visitor is concerned about safety issues in the home environment, this person must contact their supervisor immediately to discuss the issue. The Center Supervisor will confer with the EHS Program Manager to determine the proper course of action. Together, they may determine the need for a Special Services Plan to conduct the home visit at the center or another safe location. A priority of the home visitor will be to provide ongoing support to assist the family toward the home becoming safe.

Supporting Individualized Child/Parent Goals: In the event that a child’s goals need environments outside of the child’s home in which to meet them, an alternative location may be chosen on occasion as the home visit site (e.g. a child with gross motor goals living in a small space with inadequate areas for gross motor activities). The alternate location chosen should, whenever possible, be a safe part of the child’s neighborhood (extension of the home).

Another example is helping a parent meet their family or self sufficiency goals (e.g. getting a library card or reducing their social isolation by building playtime experiences with another parent and child). In this event an occasional a home visit could take place at a location other than the home, but generally not more than once per month. A meeting to request an alternate location must take place with the center supervisor, who will contact the program manager to discuss the request. The request must be approved before implementing a temporary change of home visit location.

When considering any change in location of a home visit, the safety and appropriateness of the location for infants and toddlers must be a priority. A safe infant/toddler friendly location will support the purpose of the home visit – to provide opportunities for parents to support their child’s growth and development through nurturing and rich early learning experiences.

Home Visit Documentation in Genesisearth: All scheduled home visits are documented in Genesisearth within 48 hours of the visit whether the visit was completed or not according to the following procedure:

1. Go to “Child Information” screen in Genesisearth.
2. Scroll down the screen and click on either “Home Visit Completed” or “Home Visit Not Completed” (doesn’t matter which one).

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3. Click on “Add New Home Visit” (not center visit) If the scheduled home visit was not completed, note the scheduled home visit date and time, and enter the reason the home visit did not take place. Then, scroll to the bottom of the entire form; enter your name after “Completed By”. (note: “Completed By” means the name of the person entering this information.) HIT SUBMIT (otherwise all your data entry will not be saved).
4. If scheduled home visit was completed, note the scheduled home visit date and time, and click on “home visit completed”. If the home visit was completed by someone other than the child’s assigned Specialist (e.g. an early intervention provider), note who completed the visit and if this was a shared family in the “comments” box following item #1. Scroll to the bottom of the form and click on “Set as Completed”. (It is very important to click on this, because it adds to the tally of home visits required.) Next, enter your name after “Completed By” and hit submit. (note: “Completed By” means the name of the person entering this information.) HIT SUBMIT (otherwise all your data entry will not be saved).
5. Record all family needs and referrals provided to the family in the “Family Needs and Referrals” section of Genesisearth.
6. Update any new family goals, or progress in meeting family goals, in the “Family Partnership Agreement” section of Genesisearth.