

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.

Head Start Performance Standards:

1302.50 (b)(5) Family Engagement

1302.52(a) and (b)(1,5) Family Partnership services

Procedure:

Family Advocate Home Visits

Home Based Home Visitors must refer to and follow the [EHS Home Based Procedure for home visiting](#).

Family Advocates are required to complete a minimum of one home visit per family during the program year. The due date for completing home visits will be set by the PFCE department. Meeting with families offers essential opportunities to establish and strengthen partnerships. The Family Advocate (FA) will explain their role and the benefits of family services support to families whenever appropriate-such as during initial calls, while scheduling home visits, and during the home visits. Some key benefits include:

- Discussing the child and family strengths and progress.
- Making the child feel safer by meeting school staff at home.

- Supporting all family members, including dual households.
- Offering needed items, resources, and education.
- Educating parents as lifelong teachers strengthens parent-school relationships and boosts the child's success.

An FA home visit is defined by the Parent, Family, & Community Engagement (PFCE) department as a **significant amount of time** spent with a family member/caregiver in which information is exchanged. This interaction does not have to be in the home and may occur in a variety of locations and methods. It is best practice to meet families in person, if attempts are unsuccessful, you may utilize other methods.

- Initial Home Visits (IHV's) with teachers and/or Family Conferences.
 - If the FA has substantial time to explore family strengths and needs and offer any appropriate support.
 - Substantial time and information exchanged must be demonstrated within documentation.
- Family Advocates home visits: Visits scheduled separately outside of initial home visits or conferences.
 - This method is **preferred** for higher need families.

Although families may decline this service, all attempts to schedule a home visit must be documented appropriately in SHINE to ensure the services have been offered. A minimum of three documented attempts are required.

- Documented attempts are visits with the family that have been scheduled, cancelled and rescheduled, or conversations regarding scheduling a visit.
- Documented attempts should not include "to do's". For example, "FA will call to schedule home visit" is not an appropriate planning note.

This guidance outlines the minimal expectations for Family Advocate home visit services. Additional home visits and meetings may be offered to families who need extra support, such as families in crisis or supporting a child/family on a guidance plan.

A. Family Services Home Visit Protocol

Staff should respect the family's culture, values, and diversity, using a strength-based approach.

To the best of your ability, make intentional efforts to engage fathers or male figures in services and conversations.

For safety concerns, FAs and teachers may visit together or find another location. FAs can consult with PFCE and the Site Manager if needed.

If parents prefer not to conduct visits at home, the visit can take place at the center or another private location.

Visits should focus on:

- Asking open-ended questions to understand needs and track changes using the Family Strengths Self-Assessment (FSA).
- Sharing information about services and resources.
- Completing accurate documentation, including case notes, goals, health follow-up, and FSA updates.

DUAL HOUSEHOLDS AND CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS

It is the FA's responsibility to attempt to engage both parent/caregivers of dual households and shared custody. Home visits may be conducted for both households.

- A separate "Family Services Home Visit" case note should be created for each household, with services and planning notes tracked separately.
- Each household may develop their own family goals and can be documented separately in the "Family Goal" section of SHINE.
- **Maintain confidentiality and professional boundaries** when supporting families in split or dual households. Ensure that information shared by one parent or guardian is not disclosed to the other without explicit consent. Approach each household with respect, neutrality, and a focus on the child's well-being, while honoring the privacy of each parent or caregiver.

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 birth parents, only if permission is given by the ODHS Child Welfare case worker.

DOCUMENTATION

[See also home visit documentation screenshot guide](#)

Planning Notes

- Family Advocates will create a new “Family Services Home Visit” case note, in the Family Tab, for each family.
- The planning section (main body of the case note) will include:
 - Attempts at scheduling a home visit.
 - Details including date, time & location.
 - Changes, cancellations, no shows, and re-schedule times.

Completed Visits

See also case note 101 guide

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. Utilize other areas of the database to document relevant information, such as goals, need identified, health or mental health follow-up, etc.

- Documentation should reflect a positive working relationship with the family.
- Ensure PIR is completed within the relevant goal or case note and dated.
- Update FSA scores to reflect any changes or updates.

Any attended conferences or Teacher Initial Home Visits that do not meet the requirements to count as a Family Services Home visit will be documented as an “All Family Communication” case note.