

Family Partnership and Goal Setting

Policy/Approach:

Southern Oregon Head Start engages in collaborative partnership building with parents to establish mutual trust and to identify family goals, strengths, and supports. This process begins as early after enrollment as possible and is respectful of each family's readiness and willingness to participate. The Family Partnership Agreement is a process, not merely a series of forms. From the first contact with a family, the Family Advocate will build rapport and create a trusting relationship in order to understand, as early as possible, the strengths, ambitions, skills and hopes of family members. Family Advocates will aim to engage all parental figures in the partnership process, remaining sensitive to the differing needs, roles, and interests of each individual.

We offer parents opportunities to develop individualized family partnership agreements that describe family goals, responsibilities, timetables and strategies for achievement, as well as progress in achieving them.

To avoid duplication of effort, we obtain any pre-existing family plans from the family and other community agencies. SOHS coordinates, to the extent possible, with families and other agencies to support the accomplishment of goals in the preexisting plans.

Head Start Program Performance Standards:

1302.52 (a-d) Family partnership services

DELIC Grant Agreement for Preschool Promise Part 4: Family Engagement

Procedures:

Family Partnerships

Family partnerships are shaped by our mission to equip all children, regardless of family or community background, with the skills and attributes necessary for kindergarten readiness. We use the Family Strengths Self-Assessment, and other tools, to gain information about **family strengths/practices/circumstances/needs**, as research shows that stable family life practices are associated with positive child outcomes.

The four categories captured through the assessment are:

- Family Life Practices that Promote Healthy Child Development
- Support for Families with Children with Chronic Health Conditions or Special Needs

- Family Self-Sufficiency
- Family Health and Well-being

Family Advocates and Home-Based Home Visitors can establish much of the needed information through positive conversations about family routines and traditions and can utilize the home visit guide to expand conversations to gather needed information.

A. Family Strengths Assessment Scoring

- Information obtained through the enrollment and home visiting processes and through the Family Strengths Assessment will be cross-referenced with the Family Success Rubric and scoring guidance to determine the family's overall Family Strengths Assessment score.
- The Family Strengths Assessment provides an objective assessment of a family's status in various categories.
- The scores will be continuously assessed to prioritize services and support for high-needs families and will be updated at least 3 times a year.
- Family services staff use the assessment scores and other information to determine the level of need for each family.

B. Caseload Management

- The FSA score, as well as other information, will be used with each family to determine what services and support will be required of the Family Advocate and ensure that family circumstances that could put children at risk are immediately addressed.
- The Family Advocate/HBHV will offer, and document, resources and support for the family in the data management system.
- FA/HBHV should feel empowered to manage their caseload in a way that best supports all families – offering services that meet each family's unique needs while meeting minimum expectations outlined by the Family Services department.
- FA/HBHV will utilize Family Strengths Assessment scores, and other available information, when considering which families to prioritize for more immediate support services.

Goal Setting

Staff will honor each family's unique strengths, needs and circumstances and collaborate with each family to set and achieve goals. FA/HBHV must attempt to

engage each family in the goal setting process, as evidenced by active family goals, or case note documentation of conversations if a goal was not set.

- Each family goal **MUST** be individualized and should correspond to low scoring areas on the FSA.
- Families drive the goal-setting process with support from the FA/HBHV, and goals should be achievable in two to three months.
- Progress will be reviewed and recorded every 30 days in the child file database.
- If changes are made to a family's goal, the Family Advocate will document the reason for the change, including updates related to the family's strengths, needs, priorities, or circumstances.
 - If a family chooses not to continue a goal or the goal is no longer relevant, documentation should reflect the family's decision and any next steps discussed.
- A goal sheet is available for families to fill out and display at home, and any changes to goals require additional information and details.
- At the end of the program year, all family goals will be updated to be inactivated or marked as completed.
- Family Advocates will follow-up on goals that are 6 months or older to determine if it should remain active, that the steps accurately reflect the family's current circumstances, and that the goal can be reached in 2-3 months.

Informal Goal Setting

In some situations, the Family Advocate may not be able to complete the formal goal-setting process due to the family experiencing an emergency, crisis, or other circumstances impacting their ability to participate at that time.

If the family is in crisis, the FA will:

- Document the family's circumstances, identified needs, and supports/resources offered.
- Continue to partner with the family and revisit the goal-setting process when the family's situation stabilizes.

In some situations, families may choose not to participate in the formal goal-setting process. Family Advocates will document family conversations, support offered, and continued efforts to engage the family in the process.

If the family is otherwise unwilling to set a goal, the FA will:

- Continue to make reasonable efforts to build a connection and relationship to uncover needs and/or learn more about what the family is working towards
- Follow-up periodically throughout the year to encourage their engagement in the goal setting process

C. External Agency Family Plans/Goals:

Families in our program may be receiving services from other agencies. If a goal or plan has been made with another agency (ODHS Self-sufficiency, ODHS Child Welfare, Maslow Project, etc.), the FA will offer to support the family in attaining these goals.

- The Family Advocate will discuss the existing goal/plan with the family to determine if they would like additional support or coordination.
- With family consent and appropriate releases completed, the Family Advocate may collaborate with the partnering agency to obtain relevant information and support alignment of services.
- The Family Advocate will document the family's goal, identified steps, timelines, and ongoing progress according to family goal procedures.