Family Advocate 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.

PROCEDURES:

- The Family Advocate (FA) will explain the benefits of home visiting to parents at registration, orientation, and when scheduling home visit appointments. 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
- FA will behave as a guest in another’s home by demonstrating respect for the family’s culture, values, beliefs, and diversity.

DOCUMENTATION

- A family services home visit case note will be created upon enrollment of each child.
- Only attempts to make home visit appointments, and documentation of re-scheduling and no-shows will be recorded in the original family services home visit case note body.

Policy Council Approval 8/19/2014  
Board Approval 8/21/2014
If a new goal is set, the FA is encouraged to support families in filling out a goal sheet for the family to reference steps and track/celebrate progress.

Each additional visit will be documented as a separate follow-up note under the original family services case note within 48 hours.

Decisions to not complete a second home visit will be documented in the main case note body.

Initial Home Visit

FA will confirm the scheduled Home Visit with family in person, via phone, Remind messaging system, and/or email.

FA will complete an initial Home Visit with each family as soon as possible after enrollment and by the deadline set by the agency.

Three attempts will be made to schedule a home visit at a mutually convenient time. Attempts will be documented in the data management system and can include:

- Sign-up at orientation/registration
- In person conversations
- phone call
- email
- postal service

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.

If the child’s parents are separated, and have dual or joint custody, the FA may conduct home visits in both households. Each household may develop their own goal.

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 from the DHS Child Welfare case worker.

The Advocate and participating parent/s will assess family strengths and needs and develop goals utilizing the Home Visit Questionnaire.

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 as a Goal OR Needs Identified OR Emergency Crisis case note. *Ensure PIR (Performance Indicator) is completed within the relevant goal or case note.

Additional Home Visits

Family Advocates will complete additional Home Visits based on the individual needs of the family. The purpose of an additional Home Visit is to follow up on previous discussions, address family concerns and needs, progress on established goals, setting new goals if desired, and Family Progress Reports.

Prior to the Home Visit, the Family Advocate will review goals, case notes, prior Home Visit questionnaire, medical, dental, vision, mental health and disability status.

Additional Home Visits in partnership with the teacher are an effective means of modeling Head Start’s team approach and may be utilized when two separate visits are inconvenient for the family or impossible to schedule.

Additional visits or documentation supporting the reason for no visit must be completed by the agency’s due date.