



Office of Head Start Monitoring Protocol

Family and Community Engagement and ERSEA Guides

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Interviews

FCE Coordinator—Interview

Family & Community Engagement Key Indicator #1—Partnerships with Families

- ▶ Ask the FCE Coordinator to describe the process used by the program to engage parents in a strengths-based collaborative partnership-building process. Ask the coordinator how staff perform the following:
 - Seek to establish mutual trust with parents
 - Help parents identify family goals, strengths, and necessary services and other supports
 - Begin the family partnership process as early after enrollment as possible

Document information on whether the partnership process takes place throughout the year and how the program tracks/documents staff attempts and family participation.

Note: Please document whether the program's efforts to engage families in a collaborative partnership-building process are one-time efforts or ongoing. A Family Partnership Agreement is not merely a form; it is the process through which programs support families in Head Start. Thus, it is an interactive experience that happens over time and can include many different types of interactions. This process is not a one-time "event," such as a formal meeting; it should begin as early in the year as possible, considering the family's willingness and readiness to participate.

- ▶ Determine the process used by the program to assist parents, either directly or through referrals, in obtaining resources and services that are responsive to families' identified needs, goals, or interests and how it ensures these resources have met the families' needs.

Ask the coordinator to describe the process in place for follow-up to determine whether referrals and/or resources provided were effective.

Family & Community Engagement Key Indicator #3—Parents as Their Child's Educators

- ▶ Determine how the program provides home visits and parent-teacher conferences. Ask the coordinator to describe how home visits and parent-teacher conferences are conducted. Ask how the program ensures that all parents receive the required home visits and parent-teacher conferences.

Note: If it is early in the program year, discuss when and how home visits and parent-teacher conferences were completed in the previous program year and the plan for providing these services in the current year (i.e. projected timeline for completion).

Note: Applies only to programs with a center-based program option



Family & Community Engagement Key Indicator #5—Community Partnerships

- ▶ Determine whether the program has established ongoing collaborative relationships with community organizations.

Ask the FCE Coordinator about the community partners he or she works with. Determine whether the program has established relationships with all of the required service providers referenced in 1304.41(a)(2)(i-ix). Document the providers with whom the program has and has not developed partnerships.

Discuss with the FCE Coordinator the following:

- How these organizations are responsive to community needs
- How these relationships promote access to services by children and families served by the program
- How the program promotes ongoing relationships with these organizations

Child Health & Safety Key Indicator #6—Transportation and Supervision

- ▶ Ask the FCE Coordinator to describe the processes the program has in place to ensure that children have transportation to attend program activities.

Ask the FCE Coordinator for the program's recruitment materials that describe the types of transportation assistance available to families. If necessary, are these materials translated into the preferred languages of prospective families to enable them to clearly understand the information?



FCE Staff—Interview

Family & Community Engagement Key Indicator #1—Partnerships with Families

- ▶ Determine how they learn about each family’s diversity and cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds. Ask them to provide examples of how they use this information to build relationships with families and demonstrate respect for their cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds.
- ▶ Ask FCE Staff to provide examples of how they have helped parents identify and access resources to support families’ needs, goals, and interests.
- ▶ How do program staff follow up to make sure that the resources or services provided were effective? How do they handle situations when services may not have been effective?

Family & Community Engagement Key Indicator #2—Parent-Child Relationships

- ▶ Determine how the program ensures that parents have an opportunity to enhance their parenting skills and foster the growth and development of their children. Ask the staff to describe how the program provides opportunities for developing parenting skills and knowledge in the following areas:
 - Expectant parenting and pre-natal health (as applicable)
 - Strategies to support their children’s development, including development of individual child goals and strategies for preparing their children for school
 - Ensuring the health and safety of their children
 - Providing input and sharing concerns regarding their children

Family & Community Engagement Key Indicator #3—Parents as Their Child’s Educators

- ▶ Determine how ECD and FCE Staff encourage parents to be full partners in the education of their children. Ask them to describe and provide examples of how they do the following:
 - Explain and share information obtained through screenings and assessments with parents
 - Share specific learning strategies with parents to promote their children’s learning during routines and play time
 - Invite families to partner in planning activities in the program or home to promote their children’s development and learning
- ▶ If the program serves children who are dual language learners, either currently or in the past, ask the staff to describe the following:
 - How they identify children who are dual language learners
 - How they inform the children’s parents about the ECD services available to dual language learners
 - How they share information with parents about children’s educational progress in the five essential domains, in addition to the acquisition of English.



- ▶ Determine whether the program has provided opportunities, either directly or through referral, to both children and families to increase their access to materials, services, and activities essential to literacy development. Listen to determine whether the program used the following approaches:
 - Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children
 - Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teachers of their children and full partners in the education of their children
 - Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency and financial literacy

Family & Community Engagement Key Indicator #4—Parents in Transitions

- ▶ Ask FCE Staff about how they support and engage families in the transition process, and ask them to answer the following:
 - What procedures do they use to support successful transitions? What agreements do they have with community partners to assist in transitions (e.g., LEAs and local school districts)?
 - What types of education and training are provided to parents to prepare them to exercise their rights and responsibilities concerning the education of their children in the school setting?
 - How do FCE Staff assist parents in communicating with teachers and other school personnel (or staff in new early care and education programs, such as a childcare center) so that parents can participate in decisions related to their children's education?
- ▶ Determine how the program takes into account each of the following in transition planning for children enrolled in EHS:
 - Begins at least 6 months prior to the child's third birthday
 - Assesses each child's health status and developmental level
 - Determines the progress made by the child and family while in Early Head Start
 - Determines the availability of Head Start and other child development or childcare services in the community
 - Provides evidence that the program made a determination as to whether the child should remain in EHS for additional months until he or she can transition into Head Start or another program

Note: Applies only to programs serving infants and toddlers



ERSEA Coordinator—Interview

ERSEA Key Indicator #1—Recruitment and Selection

- ▶ Does the program have an effective system for recruitment that includes the following:
 - Defines the recruitment area, establishes recruitment goals, and develops recruitment plans using program data (e.g., Community Assessment, Self-Assessment)
 - Conducts outreach within the community
 - Ensures recruitment efforts and materials include efforts to reach families with children with severe disabilities
 - Ensures EHS program recruitment efforts and materials include efforts to reach pregnant women

- ▶ With the ERSEA Coordinator, review the program’s policies and procedures to determine whether the program has selection criteria and practices that ensure the program is prioritizing children for enrollment based on:
 - Child age
 - Family income/categorical eligibility
 - Availability of kindergarten or first grade for the child
 - Locally determined priorities

If the ERSEA Coordinator indicates that the program does not have selection criteria, ask the coordinator to explain how children are selected for enrollment.

- ▶ Review the program’s documentation related to the selection of children for enrollment, including wait lists and documentation of children who are currently enrolled. Ask the coordinator to walk you through the process of how the program ensures that children who are income- and categorically eligible are enrolled prior to children who are above 100 percent of the poverty guidelines. Describe this process.
- ▶ Ask the ERSEA Coordinator to describe the program’s selection process and how it ensures that priority is given to children from families whose pursuit of agricultural work required them to relocate most frequently within the previous 2 years.

Note: Applies to migrant programs only.



ERSEA Key Indicator #2—Eligibility

- ▶ Interview the ERSEA Coordinator about the program's enrollment process. Ask him or her to describe the program's enrollment process in detail and provide you with information on how enrollment decisions are made.

Prior to the program enrolling children whose families exceed the low-income guidelines, the AI/AN program must ensure that:

- All children from Indian and non-Indian families living on the reservation that meet the low-income guidelines and who wish to be enrolled in Head Start are served.
- All children from income-eligible Indian families native to the reservation but living in non-reservation areas approved as part of the Tribe's service area, who wish to be enrolled in Head Start are served by the program.

Note: Applies only to AIAN Programs

ERSEA Key Indicator #3—Enrollment

- ▶ With the ERSEA Coordinator, review the program's enrollment documentation and ERSEA tracking system to determine the percentage of children enrolled in the program (actual enrollment) with disabilities.
 - If the program has a waiver for the 10% disabilities requirement, document the date the waiver was granted and the period for which the waiver was granted.
 - If the on-site monitoring review occurs between October and January of the current program year, ask the ERSEA Coordinator to provide enrollment documentation confirming the actual program enrollment for the previous program year was at least 10% children with disabilities.
 - If the on-site monitoring review occurs between February and September of the current program year, ask the ERSEA Coordinator to provide enrollment documentation confirming the actual program enrollment for the current program year is at least 10% children with disabilities.
 - If the program is a migrant program, ask the ERSEA Coordinator to provide enrollment documentation confirming the actual program enrollment for the previous program year was at least 10% children with disabilities.



- ▶ With the ERSEA Coordinator, review the program’s waiting list and selection criteria. Determine whether the program maintains an active waiting list at all times on which children are ranked according to the program’s selection criteria and whether the program uses the waiting list to fill vacancies as they occur.

Ask the ERSEA Coordinator to describe how the program:

- Develops a waiting list and how it ranks the children who are listed on the waiting list using the selection criteria
- Maintains a waiting list throughout the year, including how vacancies are identified and children are selected to fill vacancies within 30 days
- Conducts ongoing activities and community outreach efforts to identify underserved populations to ensure that eligible children enter the program as vacancies occur

PS 1305.7(b) allows programs to elect not to fill vacancies within 60 calendar days of the end of their program years. If the on-site monitoring review takes place within 60 calendar days of the end of the program year, document the date the program year ends.

Note: If a program is under enrolled, it is not required to maintain a waiting list; however, this does not preclude the program from having selection criteria and a process for the creation of a wait list.

ERSEA Key Indicator #4—Attendance and Participation

- ▶ With the ERSEA Coordinator, review the program’s daily attendance records to determine whether, for children with four or more consecutive unexcused absences, the program made efforts to initiate appropriate family support.
- ▶ With the ERSEA Coordinator, review the program’s monthly attendance reports for center-based and FCC classrooms to determine whether the program tracks and records instances when attendance falls below 85% and examines patterns of absences, reasons for absences, and the number of absences that occurred on consecutive days.

For instances when the monthly average attendance fell below 85%, ask the ERSEA Coordinator to describe how the program analyzes the patterns and causes of absenteeism and develops plans for addressing attendance issues.



Mental Health Services Coordinator—Interview

Family & Community Engagement Key Indicator #2—Parent-Child Relationships

- ▶ Ask the Mental Health Services Coordinator about the types of training and materials that are shared with parents. Collect information about how the mental health professional and/or staff share observations with parents, discuss concerns, and provide information for parents related to mental health and children’s behaviors.
- ▶ Determine what types of educational resources related to mental health issues are provided to staff and parents by the program. Ask how the mental health professional is involved and whether consultation is provided on-site.

Child Development & Education Key Indicator #3—Individualizing

- ▶ Ask the Mental Health Coordinator to describe how the program uses the services of the mental health professional to identify and provide interventions to address mental health concerns and how frequently these consultations occur.



Mental Health Consultant—Interview

Child Development & Education Key Indicator #3—Individualizing

- ▶ Interview the Mental Health Consultant to determine the type of services he or she provides to the program. Ask the Consultant about the schedule of onsite mental health consultations. Describe how the consultant is involved in the design and implementation of program practices.



Parent—Interview

Family & Community Engagement Key Indicator #1—Partnerships with Families

- ▶ Determine how the program welcomes them at all times, whether they are encouraged to observe their children as often as possible, and whether there is a requirement that they participate in program activities as a condition of their children’s enrollment.
- ▶ Determine how the program demonstrates respect for each family’s diversity, including linguistic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds and ensures that language does not create any barriers to parents’ and families’ full participation in program activities.

For parents whose primary language is not English, ask them how the program makes sure that there is a regular staff or contact person available who speaks their language.

- ▶ Ask parents to describe the opportunities the program provides to parents and families regarding the following:
 - Identification of their strengths and needs
 - Creation and implementation of individualized goals for their families
 - Identification of services and supports needed to meet goals

Ask them when they were offered this opportunity in order to determine whether the program initiated the process of family goal-setting soon after enrollment. Determine whether the program has made a one-time effort to help the family set goals or whether the efforts have been ongoing.

- ▶ Determine how the program has assisted parents, either directly or through referrals, in obtaining resources and services to meet their needs, goals, and interests.
- ▶ Ask parents about their satisfaction with the resources and services provided through referrals outside of the program and how the program follows up with them to ensure their expectations are met. Note any instances in which the program has not effectively followed up.
- ▶ Determine how satisfied parents are with the resources and services provided by the program in response to families' needs, goals, and interests.

Family & Community Engagement Key Indicator #2—Parent-Child Relationships

- ▶ Determine how the program ensures that parents have an opportunity to enhance their parenting skills and understand their children’s educational and overall developmental needs and activities. Ask the following questions:
 - What types of information have they received about their children's developmental strengths or opportunities?
 - Do they have an opportunity to partner with staff in developing goals for their children?
 - How does the program share information about their children’s progress?
 - Are they provided opportunities to share concerns about their children’s development?
 - What information has the program shared about how they, as parents, can help promote their children’s success as they get ready to enter school?



- ▶ Determine how parents are encouraged to share their concerns and are supported in understanding appropriate responses to their children’s behaviors to support their children’s mental health. Ask parents for examples of:
 - How program staff share observations of their children’s behavior
 - How they are encouraged to share observations about their children’s behavior
 - Strategies program staff have shared to help them develop nurturing, supportive relationships and environments for their children, both in the home and in the program
- ▶ Ask parents to describe how program staff share information and educational resources regarding children’s mental health and wellness. Determine whether they have access to the Mental Health Consultant.

Educational resources on mental health should be provided to groups and individuals as needed. Focus on the type and quality of services and information provided to individual or groups of parents.

Family & Community Engagement Key Indicator #3—Parents as Their Child’s Educators

- ▶ Ask parents about parent-teacher conferences and teacher home visits, focusing on the scheduling of services and the information shared with families.

Note: Applies only to programs with a center-based program option
- ▶ Ask parents to share their experience in working with program staff for each of the following:
 - Discussion of results of screenings and assessments with staff
 - Discussion of learning strategies with staff to promote their children’s learning during routines and play time
 - Working with staff in planning activities in the program or home to promote their children’s development and learning
- ▶ Ask the parents of dual language learners to share their experience in working with program staff to understand the educational services the program provides and their children’s educational progress in the five essential domains, in addition to the acquisition of English.
- ▶ Ask parents for examples of family literacy activities that are provided by the program and how the program helps them access literacy materials, services, and activities that engage the entire family. Listen for examples of the following:
 - Supporting parents in their role as their children’s first teacher by giving them strategies for interactive literacy activities at home and/or in the community
 - Giving parents strategies they can use that support their children's language development



- ▶ Ask parents for examples of activities or strategies that the program uses to help support families' financial stability and financial literacy, including activities that support knowledge about budgeting, financial resources, tax assistance, and access to benefit programs such as:
 - Tax credits, such as the EITC
 - Debt reduction
 - Benefits programs, such as TANF and SSI
 - Financial education classes
 - Individual development accounts (IDAs) supported by local programs that match families savings
 - Help in setting up bank accounts for parents and children

- ▶ Ask parents of children with disabilities to share examples of how the program has provided information to help them develop their knowledge about their children's disabilities. Listen for examples of how the program did the following:
 - Informed them of their rights under IDEA
 - Engaged them in activities or communication aimed at building their self-confidence, skills, and knowledge in accessing resources
 - Informed them as to how to advocate to ensure the special needs of their children are met

Note: Applies only to programs serving preschool-age children

Family & Community Engagement Key Indicator #4—Parents in Transitions

- ▶ Discuss the support the program provides when children are transitioning out of the program or from one program option to another (e.g., parents of children who are transitioning into EHS or Head Start or another new education setting). Ask parents to describe the transition process and how the program provided the following:
 - Information, training, and connections to future early care and educational settings to help facilitate the transition process for both the parents and children
 - Assistance in communicating with teachers and other school personnel so that they can participate in decisions related to their children's education
 - Assistance with understanding their rights under Federal and State laws to prepare them to exercise their rights and responsibilities concerning the education of their children

ERSEA Key Indicator #4—Attendance and Participation

- ▶ Ask parents to state whether the program charges fees in exchange for enrollment or participation in Head Start. Examples may include paying late fees, registration fees, money for field trips, etc. If parents are required to pay fees, determine the extent to which this affected their ability to participate in the program.

If parents are required to pay fees, verify with the Fiscal Reviewer that these fees are required. Work with the Fiscal Reviewer to collect documentation of the required payments and include them as part of your evidence.



Child Health & Safety Key Indicator #1—Access to Health and Dental Care

- ▶ Ask the parents you are interviewing whether their child had a suspected or identified health or developmental concern. If so, were they promptly notified by the program? What information did the program provide to them about the health or developmental concern?

Ask the parents you are interviewing whether their children experienced an emergency (e.g., a visit to the emergency room) during program hours. If so, were they notified of the emergency in a prompt and timely manner and who from the program notified them?

Child Health & Safety Key Indicator #2—Screening and Referrals

- ▶ Interview parents about their involvement in the screening, referral, and evaluation process for their children. The program is required to inform them of all of the following:
 - The different types of screenings (should be provided prior to the child receiving the screening)
 - Results of screenings
 - The purpose of further evaluation (should be provided prior to the child receiving the evaluation)
 - Results of the evaluation

If their children were in need of IEPs or IFSPs, ask the parents how the program included them in the process of developing the IEPs or IFSPs.

Child Health & Safety Key Indicator #3—Safe Physical Environments

- ▶ Interview parents to determine whether the program requires them to provide items such as equipment, toys, materials (including diapers and wipes), and furniture. Have parents experienced instances when the program has asked them to provide items or supplies? If yes, please ask parents to describe the types of items and supplies.

Child Health & Safety Key Indicator #4—Healthy Practices and Routines

- ▶ Ask parents whether the program has asked them to provide information about their children's health and safety needs. If so, ask them to describe their experience sharing this information with the program. What type of information did they share?

Child Health & Safety Key Indicator #6—Transportation and Supervision

- ▶ Interview parents to determine how the program provides reasonable assistance to families to ensure children have transportation to and from program activities.

If parents mention any transportation challenges, ask them to describe the challenges and how the program worked or did not work with the family to overcome any transportation-related challenges to their children's attendance at program activities.



Document Reviews

Family Services—Document Review

Family & Community Engagement Key Indicator #1—Partnerships with Families

- ▶ With the program staff, review the documents used to track family services. Determine whether there is evidence of:
 - The program working collaboratively with the parents to identify and continually access services and resources
 - The program following up with the families to determine whether the kind, quality, and timeliness of services received through referrals, when necessary, met the families' expectations and circumstances.

Interagency Agreements—Document Review

Family & Community Engagement Key Indicator #5 – Community Partnerships

- ▶ Review the program's Interagency Agreements with all the LEAs and other agencies (including Part C agencies for programs serving infants and toddlers) within the grantee's service areas and determine whether they include the following:
 - Referrals for evaluations, IEP/IFSP meetings, and placement decisions
 - Transitions
 - File and resource sharing (e.g., school readiness goals and assessment information)
 - Current dates and signatures

Mental Health—Document Review

Child Development and Education Key Indicator #3—Individualizing

- ▶ If applicable, review the Consulting Agreement with the mental health professional to determine the types of services the professional is responsible for and the frequency with which he or she visits the program. If there are discrepancies between the content of the Consulting Agreement and the results of interviews, describe the discrepancies; and follow up as appropriate.



Summary

Family and Community Engagement and ERSEA Summary

Management Systems Key Indicator #6—Strengths and Summaries

- ▶ Summarize the results of your review of the program’s provision of Family and Community Engagement and ERSEA services. Determine whether the program has effective systems in place to actively engage families and community members in meaningful ways so they both contribute to and actively participate in program activities as is required by the Head Start Program Performance Standards and regulations. Provide support for your determination. Describe any patterns you found, areas of strength, and areas in need of improvement. Remember to consult with other Reviewers (e.g., CHS and CDE Reviewers) about their findings, as appropriate.