

1c. Family Engagement Policy and Procedure

- Created 11/2020
- Revised 03/2026

Policy

LCC Head Start /EHS/ECEAP believe that engaging families is one of the most important aspects of the program. We respect parents/guardians, recognize that they are the first and most important teachers in their child's life, and are responsible for their child's well-being.

Procedure

LCC Head Start HS/EHS/ECEAP will facilitate family engagement by:

1. Offering opportunities for parents/guardians to participate in a research-based parenting curriculum that builds on parent's/guardian's knowledge and offers parents/guardians opportunities to practice parenting skills.
 - a. Parenting curricula will be reviewed for relevance each year in the Family Engagement Committee. Curricula will be reviewed yearly in the spring with parents for program planning and fall implementation.
2. Opportunities will be provided for families to volunteer and engage with their child, such as: volunteering during class time, joining a classroom mealtime with their child, accompanying their child on the class field trip, completing out of class projects (cutting, prepping projects),etc.
3. Expressing to parents/guardians that participation in family engagement opportunities is encouraged but is not a condition of a child's enrollment.
4. Investing in professional development to strengthen staff skills and practices. Offer staff development and reflective practice opportunities to address biases and attitudes that address biases and attitudes that interfere with building positive staff parent/guardian relationships.
5. Valuing fathers' role in strategic planning and continuous program improvement. Analyze and use program self-assessment and community assessment data to set strategic long-term goals to provide family and father engagement services.
6. Staff will encourage that the following under-represented parenting population(s) are advocated for in all aspects of our program, specifically:

- a. Families whose primary or home language is not English;
 - b. Parents or guardians working full time;
 - c. Fathers or father figures;
 - d. Family members who are not living at home, including deployed or incarcerated parents or guardians;
 - e. Other underrepresented families as applicable.
7. Advocacy for under-represented populations (fathers, cultures we serve, incarcerated adults) will occur by the following actions and other actions deemed appropriate by the program during the school year:
- a. Using direct communication with nonresident family members (specifically nonresident fathers and other family members not living at home) and extending a personal invitation to participate in program services.
 - b. Creating family-friendly environments with welcoming pictures, materials, and furniture specific to under-represented populations.
 - c. Promoting inclusive communication. Using gender-neutral forms for information about parents without reference to mothers or fathers. Requesting information about non-residential parents.
 - d. Ordering and offering materials created for under-represented populations.
 - e. Presuming that all parents/guardians of enrolled children, especially those whom are under-represented, have a high-interest in their children's school readiness and family engagement opportunities.
 - f. Recognizing and reinforcing under-represented populations' contributions.
 - g. Learning what the populations our program serves, what they are interested in and bringing the relevant information to them. (FSPE 8f - Family Connections Tool).
 - h. Finding out about and responding to under-represented populations' individual circumstances.
 - i. Offering resources to achieve parenting and related goals.
 - j. Engaging under-represented populations in programming, either in concert with or separate from maternal family visits or parent/ teacher conferences.
 - k. Seeking to understand family celebrations from the fathering perspective. Using and looking for moments of opportunity to engage fathers when they are especially motivated (e.g. baby's birth).
 - l. Forming under-represented populations' groups that plan activities and informal networks of fathers.
 - m. Ensure flexible staff schedules if needed to accommodate under-represented populations for meetings.
 - n. Be welcoming of all cultures, languages, and alternative family arrangements.
 - o. Provide understanding that the experience of a parent being incarcerated can be overwhelming for both children and caregivers.

- Being sensitive to topics in the classroom such as current events involving crime or arrests for those who have a family member who is incarcerated.
- p. Having staff establish themselves as a trusted and caring adult who challenges the stigma and shame that can be associated with having a parent in prison.
8. As connections with families are established, Head Start/EHS/ECEAP will connect with other staff and leadership to facilitate and grow connections for families. The following are examples of such connections made:
- a. Attending and/or serving on Parent Committees/Parent Meetings;
 - b. Attending and/or serving on Advisory Committees;
 - c. Attending and/or serving on Policy Council;
 - d. Attending and participating in family engagement activities;
 - e. Attending workshops, conferences;
 - f. Training opportunities;
 - g. Attending Parent Committees/Parent Meetings and Family Nights;
 - h. Voluntary participation in classroom or at site; and
 - i. Participating in school readiness home learning activities.
9. The program assesses Family Engagement and Family services for continuous learning and quality improvement.