

8a. Head Start Family Contacts Policy and Procedure

- Created 12/18
- Reviewed 09/26

Policy

Staff initiates the partnership process with parents to establish mutual trust and begin the process of getting a picture of the family in order to discover: the family's strengths, identify goals, and identify needed or wanted services and other support.

General Home Visit Procedures

- I. All Family Home Visits and School Readiness Home Visits are to be conducted in the family home. When the family requests visits to be conducted outside the home or in cases where a significant safety hazard exists for staff, the family home visit may take place on site or at another safe and confidential place. **The staff will discuss these situations with their Area Manager.**
- II. Home visit location and time should best meet the needs of each individual family. Home visits, conferences and school readiness home visits should be done in family home language whenever possible. Family Home Visits, School Readiness Home Visits and parent/teacher conferences should be conducted separately. Tips for a successful visit include:

1. Be punctual and prepared.
 2. Confirm with the parent upon arrival the length of the visit (90 minutes) to determine any challenges, which may interfere with the visit.
 3. Sit next to the parent, but never between the parent and child.
 4. Keep good eye contact, look at and relate to parents and acknowledge others who may be in the home.
 5. Clearly state the purpose of the visit.
 6. Get to know the family. Ask questions. Be a good model when you interact with them by being willing to share about yourself in an appropriate manner.
 7. Use family friendly language. Do not assume all parents can read and write. Show enthusiasm and acceptance.
 8. Share classroom rules and expectations to encourage consistency between home and school.
 9. Encourage parents to serve as facilitator in leading activities with their children and siblings.
 10. Encourage parents to utilize materials and routines in the home for educational purposes.
Encourage parents to create written and verbal stories in their home language.
- III. Prior to the home visit, the staff will examine the contents of the file and online case management for pertinent information related to the following areas:
- a. Social Service/Mental Health
 - b. Attendance
 - c. Education
 - d. Parent Engagement
 - e. Health/Nutrition
- IV. Follow-up with families about requested handouts or referrals. Discuss how the information or referral met the parent's needs. If there were any problems with referrals that were made, problem-solve with the parent/guardian or agency any barriers to those services. Some questions that might be asked are:
1. Did the services match your family's individual needs and expectations?
 2. Did the service agency treat you with understanding and respect?
 3. What problems, if any, did you encounter at the agency?
 4. Do you have suggestions for what staff could do to improve the process of referring families to services?
- V. Review the Contact Information Form (Childplus report 1520) and update any emergency information or address/phone number changes. Complete the Change of Status form and distribute copies accordingly.
- VI. Staff will review material needed to discuss with the family, the [Form Log for Head Start Families FSPE 8d \(lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/d-form-log-for-head-start-families\)](https://lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/d-form-log-for-head-start-families) and follow up at the home visit.

School Readiness Home Visit #1 (Head Start – Teachers)

- I. In order to welcome families to Head Start and share vital information about their child's transition into the Head Start program, Lead Teachers will conduct 1st School Readiness Visits (welcome visits) with all families enrolled for the current year. The Lead Teacher should complete the school readiness home visit after or before class for part day Head Start sessions. For the full day and working day Head Start sessions, the lead teacher will complete the school readiness home visit after class and will contact their Area Manager in the event of extenuating circumstances.
- II. The staff will call families to set up a schedule for home visits. This visit must be scheduled and completed prior to parent orientation.
- III. Families coming into the program after September will receive their First Home Visit (welcome visit) and orientation at the same time. This visit is to take place in the home setting in order to establish initial rapport and build trust with the family. Following initial intake, it is the responsibility of staff to schedule First Home Visits within three days after initial intake.
- IV. Staff will welcome the family to Head Start Program and explain the role of the Family Advocate and Teacher.
- V. Staff will explain the frequency and duration of home visits, conferences and other contacts.
- VI. Items that need follow up from the intake will be flagged for follow up and placed in the red folder of the child's site file.
- VII. The staff will review the child's file and ChildPlus.net prior to the home visit to familiarize themselves with the information already shared by the parent and/or agency that may have referred the family.
- VIII. Using the Family Contact Form as a guide, the Lead Teacher will discuss each area with the family. [Reference the Family Contact Form Procedure and outline \(FSPE 7a2\) \(lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/07-general-3-to-5-home-visit/a2-plan-form-procedure\)](https://www.lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/07-general-3-to-5-home-visit/a2-plan-form-procedure) .
- IX. The Lead Teacher will review material needed to discuss with the family off of the [Form Log for Head Start Families FSPE 8d \(lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/d-form-log-for-head-start-families\)](https://www.lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/d-form-log-for-head-start-families) and follow up at the home visit.
- X. The Lead Teacher will facilitate a parent/child school readiness activity.

First Family Visit – HS Family Advocate

- I. The staff will review the child's file and ChildPlus.net prior to the home visit to familiarize themselves with the information already shared by the parent and/or agency that may have referred the family.
- II. Staff will welcome the family to the Head Start Program and explain the role of the Family Advocate and Teacher.

- III. Staff will explain the frequency and duration of home visits, conferences and other contacts.
- IV. Using the Family Contact Form as a guide, the Family Advocate will discuss each area with the family.
- V. Reference the [Family Contact Form Procedure and outline \(FSPE 7a2\)](https://lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/07-general-3-to-5-home-visiting/a2-plan-form-procedure) (lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/07-general-3-to-5-home-visiting/a2-plan-form-procedure) .
- VI. The Family Advocate will review material needed to discuss with the family off of the [Form Log for Head Start Families FSPE 8d](https://lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/d-form-log-for-head-start-families) (lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/d-form-log-for-head-start-families) and follow up at the home visit.
- VII. Discuss and document any follow-up that may be needed on the child's well-child exam, dental exam, mental health, lead level screening, family and child health insurance status (screenings, follow-up appointment, treatment appointments). Staff will review the health database prior to the home visit. Staff will provide support to complete outstanding exams and any treatment follow-up needed. All efforts will be documented in Case Management and include follow-up services, challenges and plans of action. (See Case Management Procedure).
- VIII. Through conversation and discussion with the family, staff will utilize the [Family Connections Tool \(FSPE 8f\)](https://lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/f-family-connections-tool) (lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/f-family-connections-tool) .
- IX. Using information gathered from conversations, the parent and staff will identify an obtainable goal using the Family Connections Tool. [Reference Family Partnership Agreement Policy and Procedure \(FSPE 8e\)](https://lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/e-family-partnership-agreement-policy-procedure) (lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/e-family-partnership-agreement-policy-procedure) .
- X. In the areas where the family has identified needs, the staff will utilize their professional knowledge, provide the family with a paper copy of the community resource directory and where appropriate, will utilize the Linking Cowlitz County on-line resource directory to make referrals.
- XI. The staff will discuss, with the family, the importance of having emergency information and a fire evacuation plan in place for the home. In addition, parents will be given a home emergency card, a fire escape plan in their home language, and staff will review and provide a home fire drill handout. (See [Home Emergency Card, FSPE 10a](https://lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/10-home-safety-info/a-Home-Emergency-Information) (lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/10-home-safety-info/a-Home-Emergency-Information) , [Home Safety Checklist FSPE 10b](https://lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/10-home-safety-info/b-Home-Safety-Checklist) (lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/10-home-safety-info/b-Home-Safety-Checklist) , and a [Home Fire Escape planning sheet FSPE 8f](https://lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/f-family-connections-tool) (lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/f-family-connections-tool)).

Parent Teacher Conference #1 – (Head Start–Teachers)

- I. Share TS Gold Report Card and selected TS Gold Observations.

- II. Samples of Child's Portfolio.
- III. The Lead Teacher will facilitate a parent/child school readiness activity
- IV. Review the School Readiness Individualized Learning Plan and update with teacher and parent information in child strengths, areas of growth and Goals/ Objectives/Planned Activities.
- V. Discuss activities that parent can complete with child. [EDUC 1a \(lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/EDUC/01-assessment/a-individualization-policy-guidelines\)](https://www.lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/EDUC/01-assessment/a-individualization-policy-guidelines)
- VI. Remind parent about completing School Readiness Home Learning In Kind.

Second Family Visit – HS Family Advocate

- I. Update the [Family Connections Tool \(FSPE 8f\) \(lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/f-family-connections-tool\)](https://www.lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/f-family-connections-tool) Reliance with the parent/guardian. Discuss changes, new information, referrals to agencies and record these updates. Staff will utilize [Form Log for Head Start Families \(FSPE 8d\) \(lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/d-form-log-for-head-start-families\)](https://www.lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/d-form-log-for-head-start-families) to ensure completeness of the HS 2nd Family Visit.
- II. Follow-up with families about requested handouts or referrals. Discuss how the information or referral met their needs. If there were any problems with referrals that were made, problem-solve with the parent/guardian or agency any challenges to those services. Some questions that to be asked are:
 1. Did the services match your family's individual needs and expectations?
 2. Did the service agency treat you with understanding and respect?
 3. What problems, if any, did you encounter at the agency?
 4. Do you have suggestions for what HS/EHS staff could do to improve the process of referring families to services?
- III. Discuss and document any follow-up that may be needed on the child's well-child exam, dental exam, mental health, lead level screening, family and child health insurance status (screenings, follow-up appointment, treatment appointments). Staff will review the health database prior to the home visit. Staff will provide support to complete outstanding exams and any treatment follow-up needed. All efforts will be documented in Case Management and include follow-up services, challenges and plans of action. (See [Case Management Procedure FSPE 3a \(lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/03-case-management/a-policy-procedure\)](https://www.lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/03-case-management/a-policy-procedure)).
- IV. In the areas where the family has identified needs, the staff will utilize their professional knowledge, provide the family with a paper copy of the community resource directory and where appropriate, will utilize the Linking Cowlitz County on-line resource directory to make referrals.
- V. Review the Family Partnership Agreement (SMART Goal). If the family was not ready to identify a goal at the previous home visit, offer one now and continue discussion. Evaluate where they are at in their steps to complete the goal. Problem-solve any challenges to completing steps. Family Partnership

Agreement will be noted on the Family Contact Form. If a FPA goal is completed, assist family in setting a new goal. Reference [Family Partnership Agreement Policy and Procedure \(FSPE 8e\) \(lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/e-family-partnership-agreement-policy-procedure\)](https://lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/e-family-partnership-agreement-policy-procedure).

- VI. Discuss plans to transition the child who may be going into kindergarten:
 1. Advise the parent/guardian of information such as kindergarten registration dates and required information needed to register their child at their neighborhood school.
 2. Discuss with the parent/guardian any needed support to complete the transition process to elementary neighborhood school (such as need for birth certificate).
 3. Discuss plans to transition the child who may not be going into kindergarten:
 - Summer care plans for the returning child.
 - Care/extended care plan/preschool plan for children not transitioning to kindergarten but 5 years old.

School Readiness Home Visit #2 – (Head Start–Teachers)

1. Share TS Gold Report Card and selected TS Gold Observations.
2. Samples of Child's Portfolio.
3. The Lead Teacher will facilitate a parent/child school readiness activity.
4. Review the School Readiness Individualized Learning Plan and update with teacher and parent information in child strengths, areas of growth and Goals/Objectives/Planned Activities.
5. Discuss activities that parent can complete with child. [EDUC 1a \(lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/EDUC/01-assessment/a-individualization-policy-guidelines\)](https://lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/EDUC/01-assessment/a-individualization-policy-guidelines)
6. Remind parent about completing School Readiness Home Learning In Kind.
7. The Lead Teacher will review material needed to discuss with the family off of the [Form Log for Head Start Families FSPE 8d \(lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/d-form-log-for-head-start-families\)](https://lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/d-form-log-for-head-start-families) and follow up at the home visit.

Third Family Visit – Family Advocate

- I. Review the Family Connections Tool Family Interest Survey with the parent/guardian. Discuss changes, new information, referrals to agencies and record these updates. Staff will utilize Form Log for Head Start Families to ensure completeness of the HS 3rd Family Visit.
- II. Follow-up with families about requested handouts or referrals. Discuss how the information or referral met their needs. If there were any problems with

referrals that were made, problem-solve with the parent/guardian or agency any challenges to those services. Some questions that to be asked are:

1. Did the services match your family's individual needs and expectations?
 2. Did the service agency treat you with understanding and respect?
 3. What problems, if any, did you encounter at the agency?
 4. Do you have suggestions for what HS/EHS staff could do to improve the process of referring families to services?
- III. Review the Family Partnership Agreement (SMART Goal). If the family was not ready to identify a goal at the previous home visit, offer one now and continue discussion. Evaluate where they are at in their steps to complete each goal. Problem-solve any challenges to completing steps. Family Partnership Agreement will be noted on the Family Contact Form. If a FPA goal is completed, assist family in setting a new goal. Reference [Family Partnership Agreement Policy and Procedure \(FSPE 8e\) \(lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/e-family-partnership-agreement-policy-procedure\)](https://lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/08-head-start-home-visiting/e-family-partnership-agreement-policy-procedure) .
- IV. Discuss and document any follow-up that may be needed on the child's well-child exam, dental exam, mental health, lead level screening, family and child health insurance status (screenings, follow-up appointment, treatment appointments). Staff will review the health database prior to the home visit.
- Staff will provide support to complete outstanding exams and any treatment follow-up needed. All efforts will be documented in Case Management and include follow-up services, challenges and plans of action. (See Case Management Procedure FS/PI 3a).
- V. Assist parent/guardian in completing application for eligible siblings and notify family of needed income verification.
- VI. Discuss plans to transition the child who may be going into kindergarten:
1. Advise the parent/guardian of information such as kindergarten registration dates and required information needed to register their child at their neighborhood school.
 2. Discuss with the parent/guardian any needed support to complete the transition process to elementary neighborhood school (such as need for birth certificate).
 3. Discuss plans to transition the child who may not be going into kindergarten:
 - Summer care plans for the returning child.
 - Care/extended care plan/preschool plan for children not transitioning to kindergarten but 5 years old.
- VII. In the areas where the family has identified needs, the staff will utilize their professional knowledge, provide the family with a paper copy of the community resource directory and where appropriate, will utilize the Linking Cowlitz County on-line resource directory to make referrals.

Parent Teacher Conference #2 – (Head Start–Teachers)

- I. Share TS Gold Report Card and selected TS Gold Observations.
- II. Samples of Child's Portfolio.
- III. The Lead Teacher will facilitate a parent/child school readiness activity.
- IV. Review the School Readiness Individualized Learning Plan and update with teacher and parent information in child strengths, areas of growth and Goals/Objectives/Planned Activities.
- V. Discuss activities that parent can complete with child. [EDUC 1a \(lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/EDUC/01-assessment/a-individualization-policy-guidelines\)](https://www.lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/EDUC/01-assessment/a-individualization-policy-guidelines)
- VI. Remind parent about completing School Readiness Home Learning In Kind.

Fourth Family Contact – HS Family Advocate

- I. Review the Family Partnership Agreement (SMART Goal). If the family was not ready to identify a goal at the previous home visit, offer one now and continue discussion. Evaluate where they are at in their steps to complete each goal. Problem-solve any challenges to completing steps.
- II. Discuss and document any follow-up that may be needed on the child's well-child exam, dental exam, mental health, lead level screening, family and child health insurance status (screenings, follow-up appointment, treatment appointments). Staff will review the health database prior to the home visit. Staff will provide support to complete outstanding exams and any treatment follow-up needed. All efforts will be documented in Case Management and include follow-up services, challenges and plans of action. (See Case Management Procedure FS/PI 3a).
- III. Complete application for eligible siblings and notify family of needed income verification.
- IV. Follow up with plans to transition the child who may be going into kindergarten:
 1. Advise the parent/guardian of information such as kindergarten registration dates and required information needed to register their child at their neighborhood school.
 2. Discuss with the parent/guardian any needed support to complete the transition process to elementary neighborhood school (such as need for birth certificate).
 3. Discuss plans to transition the child who may not be going into kindergarten:
 - Summer care plans for the returning child.
 - Care/extended care plan/preschool plan for children not transitioning to kindergarten but 5 years old.
- V. Staff will close out the file noting in case management any preference that the family has made about classroom change requests for returning children.

Following each Home Visit

- I. Following the Home Visit, staff will:
 - Use the (See [Case Management Procedure \(FSPE 3a\)](https://www.lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/03-case-management/a-policy-procedure) ([lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/03-case-management/a-policy-procedure](https://www.lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/FS-PE/03-case-management/a-policy-procedure)) , for guidance in documenting family contacts into an electronic case management system. The computer database guide will be used as a template for documentation. (Items such as: Date of visit, brief description of the visit, any concerns, challenges, referrals, action plan and follow-up. Document completion in case management, make entry of outcome, and records all attempts to contact the family, List all follow-up that is needed and who will do it. Share any concern or information that came up at the visit with other staff members as appropriate).
 - Areas of assistance the family stated as needing assistance in will be followed up in on a timely manner.
 - Using a confidential envelope, the staff will send resource information in the areas the family indicated a need for assistance.
 - If there is a problem with literacy level of the parent/guardian, staff will hand deliver and review the information with the parent.