

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC.  
HEAD START**

**Family and Community  
Partnerships**

**Programmatic Procedures Implementing Performance Standards**

FCP Procedures  
Policy Council Approval: July 10, 2007  
Board Approval:

Head Start participates in partnership building efforts with parents to jointly identify family strengths and needs and to support family goals.

**(a) Family Assessment**

- i. At the time of intake, intake worker and family complete the family assessment, identifying initial family needs, strengths, and goals.
- ii. Per intake procedure, immediate referrals are made/services provided as needed and noted in intake documentation.
- iii. Intake worker specifically informs family that the FA will follow up with them after enrollment. If they have identified goals at intake, follow up on family goal is indicated in intake documentation.
  - (1) Intake worker informs family that the family advocate will follow up on identified needs, referrals, or goals after the child begins Head Start.
  - (2) Early indication of intensive need for FA involvement is indicated on tracking sheet under Social Services.

**(b) Family Partnership Agreement**

- i. Within 90 days of enrollment, the family advocate will contact the family either via home or office visit to review the family assessment done at intake.
- ii. A Family Partnership agreement will be written with the family and will reflect social services provided, goals/timelines set by advocate and family, and any needed health requirements. For those families who have no social service needs, goals or program requirement needs, the advocate will agree to initiate contact with the family two times during the year. Additionally, the advocate will request the family contact the advocate should they wish to pursue advocacy services.
- iii. A family partnering efforts takes into consideration the family's readiness and desire to partner with Head Start toward sufficiency goals.

**(c) Family Partnership Documentation**

All efforts to partner with families toward supporting their identified goals and needs, and honoring and promoting their strengths, are documented.

Initial Family Partnership Documentation is contained on the Family Assessment and on the Family Partnership Agreement. Documentation done after the first contact with the family will be contained in Child Plus. Because family needs and goals change over time, the formal partnership agreement will only reflect the family's agreement at a particular moment in time. The social service documentation done throughout the year will be a more accurate reflection of partnership efforts over time.

**(d) Family Partnership and Collaboration**

Family Advocates meet with other professionals both in Head Start and in the community to reduce duplication of efforts and ensure integration and collaboration in assisting families to meet their sufficiency goals.

- i. Family Advocates meet one time monthly with education staff to go over family goals, needs, progress, etc.
- ii. Advocates meet as a team once monthly to address common family concerns, issues, etc.
- iii. FA attends staffing two times yearly to assure integration of partnership efforts.
- iv. Family Partnership Agreements must take into account pre-existing family agreements with other agencies. As needed, and with parent consent, FA will meet with other agencies to coordinate efforts.

**FCP 2. RESPECTING FAMILY DIVERSITY, CULTURE AND BACKGROUND**  
**(PS1304.40 a5)**

*Honoring diversity is more than a collection of procedures or activities; it is a philosophy embraced by this Head Start program. Respecting family diversity, culture and background is embedded in all practices involving staff, children and families.*

**(a) Program Design and Management**

- i. All policies take into account Head Start's commitment to honoring diversity, culture and the family makeup.
- ii. The Head Start Holiday Policy specifically speaks to the program's commitment to honoring diversity in seasonal celebrations.
- iii. Code of conduct policy supports respect for cultural, ethnic and other diversities within our staff and families.
- iv. Specific staff training reflects the program's commitment to heightening awareness of practices that enhance diversity.

**(b) Early Childhood Development and Health**

- i. Initial Home Visit document requests parent input on honoring diversity.
- ii. Cultural and ethnic diversity will be honored in classroom and program curriculum.
- iii. Lesson plans indicate classroom activities that support diversity.

**(c) Family and Community Partnerships**

- i. Family Partnership efforts and activities are parent driven, respecting family traditions and honoring family preferences and practices.
- ii. Family Interest Survey requests family input on activities and training opportunities specific to culture and ethnic practices.
- iii. Family Literacy books are chosen which reflect diversity.

### **FCP 3. PARENT INVOLVEMENT (PS 1304.40d)**

Parent involvement and education activities reflect the ongoing expressed needs of parents.

#### **(a) Parent meetings**

- i. Parent meetings are held monthly, beginning with orientation.
- ii. First Parent meeting is largely devoted to elections of Policy Council representatives and Parent leaders, as well as completing a parent interest survey.
- iii. Parent leader for each classroom is elected and assists in planning and running future meetings at the center level. Teacher and Family Advocate offer support as needed.
- iv. Parent meetings involve parents in planning parent and child activities. Parents and staff engage in an exchange of ideas regarding curriculum, so that parents understand the Head Start curriculum, and understand what their child is learning and how it relates to the child's overall development.
- v. Parent leaders receive specialized training at time of PC training.
- vi. FCP manager and the Parent Involvement Coordinator work with parent leaders on a monthly basis, providing training and resources which enable them to carry out their duties.
- vii. Parent Involvement Coordinator offers 1:1 support to teachers and advocates in order to assist them in carrying out their roles to involve families.

#### **(b) Parent Training/Education**

- Family Assessment requests specific information regarding parent-training needs.
- Family Advocates follow up with families individually when the FPA is developed.
- Family Interest Survey is given to every parent within first 30 days of program year. Results are used to plan program-wide parent education activities.
- Results of Family Interest survey are provided in October to PC, parent leaders and program staff.
- Training Rosters are kept which indicate parent involvement.
- File is maintained by administrative staff which has copies of all notices/information sent to parents.
- Calendar shows parent events.
- In-Kind sheets are filled out whenever parents participate in program.
- This & That advertises parent events and contains parent education articles.

#### **(c) Parent Volunteers**

- Parents are encouraged by Education Staff at the initial Home Visit to become classroom volunteers.
- Parents are recruited to serve on management teams.
- Program and classroom staff recruit parent volunteers as needed.
- Documentation: In-Kind sheets are explained at orientation and at home visits and are filled out daily.
- Program administration procedures encourage parents to apply as substitute and intermittent employees. See PDM work plan.

## **FCP 4. Transition (PS 1304.41c)**

Head Start supports successful transitions for enrolled children and families into Head Start and from Head Start into elementary school.

### **(a) Transition into Head Start**

- i. Throughout the program year, prospective parents are invited to observe classes and to bring child to observe classes if desired.
- ii. Staff schedules an initial classroom orientation visit so that the family and child can meet the teacher in the classroom, allowing the child to become comfortable with staff and the classroom setting and giving parents the opportunity to ask questions regarding transition into Head Start. During the orientation visit, the teacher and family advocate provide information to parents about Head Start and the role of the parent in the Head Start program. Along with classroom and program information, parents are provided information about starting their child in preschool.
- iii. Parents are asked to transport children to Head Start the first day to allow child to feel safe with new environment.
- iv. Transportation staff makes home visit to meet family and child to allow child to become acquainted with transportation staff and see the bus, as well as to confirm pick up and drop off schedule and location.
- v. Children with disabilities are typically transitioned through CST/IEP meetings. Special accommodations for transition are planned for at the IEP meeting, with full Head Start participation and implementation.

### **(b) Transition to Public School**

#### Ongoing

- Release of Information for school district is obtained at intake
- Neighborhood school information is kept current in the child file & Child Plus
- Anecdotal notes/ongoing assessment reflect child readiness.

#### January

- Children eligible to go to public school are identified. Neighborhood school is confirmed.
- In January, parents receive registration forms and a reminder to register from School District #1.
- This & That and Parent Calendar request that parents register children for kindergarten.

#### February

- Advertise Kindergarten registration in This & That and on Parent Calendar
- At February P/T Conference parents are again reminded to register child for Kindergarten and registration forms are provided.

#### March

- Orientation dates are given to parents at the time they register their child in their neighborhood school.

#### April

- Transition theme is carried out in classroom curriculum, center committee curriculum and other parent events as identified and planned by centers and program. Optional events include:
  - Field Trip to Kindergarten.
  - Invitation to Kindergarten teachers to observe in classrooms.
  - Give parent option of inviting Kindergarten teacher to Parent/Teacher conference.
  - Children create transition envelopes which will go to parents at Home Visit with all Kindergarten information.
  - Hold Transition to PreK/K panel for parents
- Lists of enrolled children expected to register at a given neighborhood school are sent to each building administrator.
- Packets are created with general transition information (coloring book, calendar, parent brochure).
- Copy immune record and give original to teacher to deliver to parents at Final Home Visit.
- Permission to transition, Transition protocol, and permission to track child to third grade are obtained at Final Home Visit (FHV).
- FHV also includes other information related to transition as shown on FHV documentation form.
- Teachers returns FHV and Transition documentation to administrative staff, who file it according to Neighborhood School.
- Education staff and special services staff ensure transition documentation notes whether child is on IEP or 504. Children with disabilities are transitioned by the LEA on a IEP. However, Head Start still transitions them as participants in the Head Start program. For those children, Head Start staff provide them with a copy of their rights and responsibilities under IDEA.
- School District #9 sends notices scheduling DIAL3 screening dates – parents register for Kindergarten at the screening.

## May

- Transition meetings are scheduled between Head Start teachers and Public School staff. Several documents are provided to the public schools at the transition meetings:
  - Permission to transition
  - Permission to track child to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
  - Transition protocol
 A copy of the transition protocol is also provided for Gesell screeners and given to school reps at Kindergarten exchange.

### Two principals guide the information provided by Head Start to the school:

- *While Head Start often has access to a great deal of family information, it is imperative Head Start share only what the permission forms authorize us to share: child development information. If parents wish for other information to be shared, they indicate that on the transition protocol.*
- *Head Start must share information in such a way as to build a foundation for a strong school/parent partnership. Focusing on strengths and conveying empathy rather than judgement (e.g. presenting a child as needy rather than problematic) allows others to develop empathy for the child and family.*

- Teachers are requested to provide to Head Start administration the names of any school age eligible children being considered for another year at Head Start by either the parent, the Head Start staff, or school district special services staff.
- A Multi-disciplinary team meets to staff those children being considered for another year of Head Start even though they are age eligible to move to public school. The primary decision made at this meeting is to utilize set criteria to determine if Head Start is an option from the program's perspective. This needs to be done early enough to provide information to schools at transition meetings for those children who are screen low on Kindergarten screening.
- Documentation of MDT meeting is in child's file.

#### August/September

- Be available to assist parents and school staff with transition as requests arise.

## **FCP 5 COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROCESS (PS1304.41)**

Head Start continually works to strengthen partnerships with community agencies to collaboratively plan and provide services for children and families.

### **(a) Planning partnership**

- i. In conjunction with Community Assessment, which is done every three years and reviewed yearly, Leadership Team and management teams evaluate existing collaborative efforts and needs for additional partnership or modifications in existing partnerships.
- ii. Management teams set collaborative goals based on the overall strategic plan as defined by the community assessment and as noted in grant goals and objectives. They may develop focus groups or task forces specific to community partnership efforts.
- iii. Leadership Team ensures that management team plans are carried out.

### **Collaboration Efforts**

- A community partnership notebook is maintained in FCP office. Notebook contains sections for major agencies with which Head Start collaborates. Documentation of community meetings attended is maintained in the partnership notebook.

## **FCP 6.HEALTH SERVICES ADVISORY (PS13044.41B)**

RMDC Head Start will maintain a Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) whose purpose shall be advising in the planning, operation and evaluation of the health area of the program.

1. Health professionals shall be recruited using letters, personal visits and phone calls to explain Head Start's policies. These professionals will be garnered from the medical, dental, mental health and nutrition fields. A one year commitment to the Advisory Committee is requested.
2. One policy council representative, the person whose position is the Treasure, and one parent whose child is currently enrolled are recruited to join the committee for one year. These parents will contribute, as well as the others on the committee, in the health area of the program.
3. The Health Services Advisory Committee meets two times a program year, fall and spring. Members include the ECDH Manager, Health Coordinator, Nutrition Coordinator, and Special Services Coordinator. The Program Director is invited to attend and has input in agenda items, as deemed necessary by his or her position.
4. Meetings are scheduled to conclude within one hour, in respect to community and enrolled children's family member's schedules.
5. Agenda is set by Health Coordinator with input from the ECDH Manager and Program Director and sent out to each member prior to each meeting.
6. Minutes are taken at each meeting and mailed to each member prior to the next meeting. Minutes are maintained by Head Start Administrative Support Services staff and are kept in a notebook entitled, 'HSAC Minutes' in the Administrative Support Services area for access as needed.

## **FCP 7. Literacy Program (PS1304.40e4, e41, e411)**

RMDC Head Start Family Literacy Program supports the emerging literacy skills of children, educates adults in the benefit of reading to young children and helps adults seek services in enhancing their own literacy skills.

1. Family Reading Nights are scheduled yearly on the Head Start calendar.
  - i. Themes are chosen for each family reading evening, and events are planned around those themes (e.g., nutrition, use of library, etc.)
  - ii. The family reading events include dinner.
  - iii. Activities associated with the family reading nights provide education to parents about literacy practices.
  - iv. Each Family Reading Night includes a book giveaway for those children who attend.
2. The RIF coordinator is responsible for carrying out the Reading is Fundamental program, through which every child in the program receives three books to take home annually. The RIF coordinator records the number of adults and children participating in the literacy programs and the number of books purchased and distributed. Additionally, the coordinator uses a team approach to book selection, recruiting assistance from staff, parents, and the children's librarian. Through the RIF program, all children in Head Start receive three free books per year to take home. The book giveaways involve parents, and include motivational activities as specified in the RIF guidelines.
3. The Coordinator works, with the local libraries to strengthen the connections between parents and the library.
4. This & That advertises educational family events.
5. Head Start sponsors a A Reading Instead of Television month in February of each year.
  - i. Kick off event includes free pancake breakfast, book distribution.
  - ii. Families receive copies of tracking sheets and an explanation of the RIOT program.
  - iii. School Business Partner matches minutes for money, which is then used to purchase more books for children.
6. Monthly School to Home projects are developed and distributed to bring interactive literacy practices into the home. School to Home materials always include educational information for parents about what children are learning by doing the project.
7. Family Advocates encourage adults to pursue their own educational needs by making referrals to Career Training Institute and the Adult Learning Center.

## **FCP 8. Community Volunteer Involvement (PS1304.41a3)**

Head Start encourages volunteers from the community to participate in the program in a variety of ways.

### **(a) Recruitment of Volunteers**

- i. At the onset of the program year, and ongoing as needed, recruitment is targeted at agencies who have provided either volunteer, work study, or community service workers to Head Start in the past.
- ii. Presentations are made throughout the year to classes/agencies who may wish to place volunteers in the program.
- iii. Potential volunteers contact the Head Start program (Volunteer coordinator) who interviews each volunteer for area of interest.
- iv. High target agencies are Carroll College, CTI, ALC, Foster grandparents and OPA.

### **(b) Enlistment of Volunteers**

- i. All potential volunteers are interviewed by the volunteer coordinator, who ensures appropriate documentation is in order. Coordinator also gathers information regarding volunteers' strengths, what they wish to contribute to the program, and their expected schedule.
- ii. Volunteers are oriented using the volunteer packet and/or a volunteer training video. Volunteer training is provided to all volunteers at the beginning of the program year.
- iii. All regular volunteers complete a packet of paperwork which personnel requires of volunteers and employees, including background and reference checks, abuse prevention, confidentiality and code of conduct.
- iv. Information provided by Head Start to volunteers includes work/volunteer expectations, classroom procedures, an introduction to the classroom and documentation requirements.
- v. Documentation of current TB, MMR and TD is mandatory, in accordance with licensing requirements. Documentation is maintained in the administrative office.
- vi. All volunteers must go through a criminal background check in accordance with state childcare licensing policies and procedures.

### **(c) Placement of Volunteers**

- i. Volunteers are placed in classrooms according to the individual needs of the classroom staff and the resources already placed. Classroom teachers often request predictable or consistency volunteers and this is taken into consideration.
- ii. A roster is maintained of volunteer placements.
- iii. Teacher will refer all prospective classroom volunteers to the FCP manager.
- iv. Community volunteers are sometimes scheduled to visit the classroom (e.g., Montana Power, FWP, etc.) If the teacher is absent on the day of the scheduled visit, she must inform her supervisor of the date and time that visitors are expected.

### **(d) Documenting Volunteer Involvement**

Notebook with the following information is maintained in the Administration office:

- Current roster of placements
- Carroll Work Study placements (including copies of applications)

- Foster grandparent placements
- Volunteer Information sheets
- TB/MMR/Td record
- Background checks

**(e) Volunteer Appreciation**

Each spring, the FCP manager will arrange an appreciation event to honor all volunteers.

**FCP 9 - Community Resource Directory Procedure (PS 1304.40 g1ii)** - A Community Resource

Directory is a listing of agencies, individuals, and programs that may be of assistance to Head Start families. It provides staff a means for assisting with referrals. The Directory is a valuable tool in conducting the Community Assessment. The Directory is compiled by the FCP team.

- 1) Each spring review and update the directory.
  - Contact each listing by letter or phone.
  - Use the telephone directory to double check phone numbers for providers.
  - Place a particular Family Advocate in charge of cutting community updates out of the local newspaper.
  - As newsletters are sent to families with directory updates, attach those updates to a central CRD for easy access in the spring.
- 2) FCP manager will assign a particular Family Advocate to collate all the information and get it to the Administrative Assistant for clerical revision.
  - The Administrative Assistant will assign the clerical task
  - The Administrative Assistant will assure the CRD is copied and collated by August 15 for parent packet compilation.
- 3) Each family is given a CRD with an explanation of how best to access the information within.
  - Families receive the CRD at Parent Orientation. Families entering the program later in the year are given the CRD at the time of enrollment and the family advocate explains how to use it.
- 4) Each staff member is given a CRD at pre-service training with an explanation of how to use it. Staff employed later in the program year will be given a CRD and an explanation by their supervisor as part of their orientation.
- 5) Montana Head Start collaboration project receives a copy of the CRD, and three more are sent to state congressman/congresswoman offices.
- 6) Outlying sites maintain a CRD that includes community specific information, as well as the larger program CRD.