

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 13

Family and Community Partnerships: Family Partnership Building

Core Question to guide the Self-Assessment team:

How does the grantee engage in a process of collaborative partnership-building with families?

Purpose:

The objective is to support mothers and fathers as they identify and meet their own goals, nurture the development of their children in the context of the family and culture, and advocate for communities that are supportive of children and families of all cultures (Introduction to 1304.40, p. 125).

This booklet will help the Self-Assessment team determine if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to working with parents. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.20(e); 1304.21(a)(2); 1304.23(b)(4); 1304.40; 1304.50(a)(1); 1306.30(b); 1308.19(j); 1308.21.

As you conduct your assessment of the program's services in the area of family partnerships, pay close attention to:

- The approach that the program uses to build a partnership relationship with families
- How staff works with families to identify family goals, strengths, necessary services and supports to formulate a family partnership agreement
- The program staff's knowledge of community resources
- The system the program uses for tracking and follow-up with families
- How the program provides assistance to pregnant women so they can obtain comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care (for Early Head Start programs)
- If the program adopts a broad and inclusive definition of family
- The inclusion of mothers and fathers in meaningful ways

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

- A family partnership written plan
- A sample number of family records (In order to maintain confidentiality, only a staff member serving on your Self-Assessment team can review these files)
- A listing of the community resources most commonly used to support families
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals

Use the questions below to assist your document review.

Has the written plan been updated within the past year to reflect how the program will respond to any new needs of families?

Yes No Comment: _____

Is there evidence of the family partnership agreement process in the majority of family files that describe:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ⇒ individualized developmental approach | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| ⇒ family goals | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| ⇒ strength-based | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| ⇒ timetables | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| ⇒ strategies for achieving the goals | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| ⇒ progress in achieving goals | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| ⇒ inclusion of fathers | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| ⇒ family driven approach | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Do file notes and reports indicate that families are being referred to appropriate resources in the community?

Yes No Comment: _____

Do family services staff conduct follow-up with families to determine the quality of services received through Head Start referrals?

Yes No Comment: _____

Is there evidence of family involvement in identifying and participating in appropriate community resources?

Yes No Comment: _____

Do community resource listings include resources for:

⇒ emergency or crisis assistance Yes No

⇒ counseling services Yes No

⇒ education and employment training Yes No

⇒ prenatal health services (Early Head Start) Yes No

Interview:

The Self-Assessment team member should interview:

- The manager of family partnership services and members of his/her staff
- A number of families
- The Early Head Start manager and staff (if appropriate)

Use the questions below to assist you with interviews:

Questions for managers:

How do you document and monitor family partnership activity to ensure that services are being delivered according to the written plan?

Where do you think you should focus your attention and resources to further improve family partnership services in the program?

Questions for family partnership staff:

How do you build partnerships with families? What are the first things you do?

Can you describe the process you use for obtaining information on pre-existing plans so that they can be integrated into the Family Partnership Agreement?

How often do you meet one-on-one with families to review the Family Partnership Agreement, assess progress in attaining goals, and make adjustments?

Can you describe any goals you have with families that are related to family literacy? How about goals related to school readiness?

Can you talk about some of the resources that work best for families in this community? How do you find out when resources are not working? Can you name any that are not working? What are you doing about it?

What are some of the new or emerging needs of the low-income families that you work with? Describe how you are able to assist families in meeting goals in this area.

How do you help families transition from Early Head Start and other early care and education programs into Head Start or from Head Start to public school?

Questions for staff providing Early Head Start services to expectant families:

Describe how you assist pregnant women to access comprehensive prenatal and postpartum health care. Provide one or two examples.

How does your program provide for prenatal education? What does that education include?

How does your program include expectant mothers and fathers in services?

The *Performance Standards* require programs to provide early and continuing risk assessments. How is that done in this program?

How does the program educate pregnant women about the benefits of breastfeeding?

Describe your procedures for transitioning families into a program option after the birth of the child.

Questions for Head Start and Early Head Start families:

Tell me how you first learned about the family services that Head Start provides.

Can you describe how you have worked with family services staff throughout the year? What goals have you been working on? How have staff supported you in reaching those goals?

Questions for Early Head Start expectant families:

Briefly describe the types of services you have received from the Early Head Start program. (Listen for evidence that the program is honoring family input and providing for risk assessments, timely referrals to community resources for prenatal and postpartum health care as well as mental health services, as appropriate.)

Other Family Service Considerations

Interview

Ask the manager responsible for coordinating family services:

Are some of your program's families considering marriage or having difficulty with their marriage? If so, what services, either offered directly or by referral, are available? For those families that wish to participate, how do you connect them to these resources?

How do you talk with parents about issues and concerns that are affecting older siblings of their Head Start children?

Have you identified supportive services for youth in your community? How do you link older siblings of Head Start children to these resources?

How do you provide opportunities for young children to get involved with your Head Start program (e.g., reading books to children, volunteering in classroom)?

Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Family Partnership Building

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

Areas where the program needs improvement:

Additional areas of concern:
