



City of Chicago
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To: Head Start/Early Head Start/Child Care
Executive/Program Directors

From: Madeline Cancel-Hanieh *Proct.*
Director
Children Services Division

Date: September 19, 2007

Subject: FAMILY PARTNERSHIP BUILDING PROCESS:
INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

The Head Start/Early Head Start Performance Standard 1304.40 Family Partnership Agreement) requires that all parents be offered opportunities to develop and implement Individualized Family Partnership Agreements that describe their family's goals, responsibilities, strategies, and timetables for achieving their objectives. The family partnership building process starts at enrollment with the establishment of a collaborative relationship with parents to learn their wishes and goals for their children, families and themselves. The process depends on the family's readiness to engage in establishing a partnership agreement.

By October 31st, the COPA Strengths and Needs Assessment and the Individualized Family Partnership Agreement (FPA) forms must be completed for all families. Although the FPA may have been signed by the parent, it is a document that must be updated with the family throughout the family's enrollment in the program. For parents who may not be ready to enter into an agreement, there must be documented contact with the parent to encourage their participation in the process. Returning families can build upon their existing agreements from the previous year; however, they must have a current Family Partnership Agreement on file.

Only **one assessment is required per family**. This assessment is built upon throughout the family's enrollment in Head Start/Early Head Start. After the initial meeting with families, there must be at least quarterly contact with families to revisit the assessment to determine the course of established goals or any new concerns for the family. Document all follow up information from the assessment in the Case Notes Section on the COPA system.

Head Start Family Information System Forms (HSFIS) must not be used or included in child/family files. All information should be inputted into the COPA system and copies must be kept on-file

Please use the following instructions when completing the social service (family partnership) process with families.

- 1) Complete the COPA **Strengths and Needs Assessment**. All areas in the assessment should be addressed with the parents during the interview process and completed by October 31st. Print a copy of the assessment and store it in the social service file.



- 2) After finishing the Strengths and Needs Assessment, complete the documentation for the Family and Community Partnership building process on COPA. Assist families in identifying goals **under "Family Goals" link**. Identified goals must include description of goal, steps, support needed, responsibilities, strategies and time frames, to support families in achieving their goals. Social service workers must *provide parents with a copy of the identified "Family Goals", during the initial meeting and quarterly, thereafter*. Follow-up with families on the status or progress in achieving their stated goals, and document the contact in the Case Notes.
- 3) When presented with a resistant family, the social service worker must document every effort made to engage and build a trusting relationship with the parent. This effort should be documented as a case note on the COPA system. To begin a new case note, click on the "Case Notes" link then **click on, New Case Notes**.
- 4) All Family Partnership Agreements must be current and have the original signatures of the parents and staff. To print the Family Partnership Agreement, **click on the "Case History" link on the Family Data sheet and click print at the bottom of the page. Provide parents with a copy of the Family Partnership Agreement**.
- 5) When collaborating with parents, staff must offer a variety of opportunities to meet and interact with the parents throughout the year. During these meetings workers must continually assist the family in identifying and accessing services. Depending on family needs, the services provided to families should include any of the following: crisis intervention, continuing education, employment and training, counseling, mental health, substance abuse, child abuse and neglect prevention, domestic violence, parenting services or any other need expressed by the family. Document all services offered to families, **under the "Case Notes" link**.
- 6) Appropriate referrals should be made in a timely manner and there should be follow-up with families to determine if the referral was appropriate and met the family's expectations. This information must be documented **on the COPA "Referral & Services" link**.
- 7) Information must be documented in the COPA system on a daily basis, however, updated "Case History" forms must be printed and filed in the Family Service file at least by the following dates: December 3rd, March 3rd, and June 2nd or as requested by grantee.
- 8) Copies of the questions used for the Strength and Needs Assessment and the Family Partnership Agreement may be obtained on the COPA "Enrollment" page. Once these forms are completed, the information must be immediately entered into COPA. It is imperative that both the family service worker and the parent sign the Family Partnership Agreement and store it in the social service file.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact your assigned Support Service Coordinator, Griselda Chavez at 312-743-1530, LaTrice Berry at 312-743-1690 or Cecelia Robinson at 312-743-1319.

Thank you for your continued support.

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Citywide Parent Policy Council