

Preschool Conferences and Program Transition Services

Head Start Performance Standards

§ 1302.33 (b)

§ 1302.71

§ 1302.34 (a) (b) (1) (2) (3) (4)

§ 1302.72

§ 1302.70

Policy

Community Action uses **SmartTeach™** to document observations and evaluate the developmental level of each child. At the end of each quarter, Teachers complete assessments by selecting the developmental level for each child on the continuum of “widely held expectations” for typically developing children of their age. Teachers then create the **SmartTeach™** Report Card, which tells parent(s)/guardian(s) if their child is Progressing Toward Expectations; Meeting Expectations; or Exceeding Expectations for their age. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are asked to provide additional insight and information regarding the child’s strengths, interests and areas of concern to empower them as the child’s first teacher and actively involve them in planning for their child’s education and development.

Community Action Head Start requires Teachers to conduct conferences every quarter the child is enrolled or as outlined in the appropriate version of the **Home Visit and Conference Timelines for Later Enrolling Children**. Staff will maintain the ordinal number of the conference event, regardless of when the conference occurs. For example, if a child begins in February, the **1st** conference will be in April; the **2nd** in May; and the **3rd** will be the Transition Conference at the end of the program year.

Duration Teachers will complete assessments in the Fall, Winter, and Spring cycles. Full Day Full Year (FDFY) Teachers will complete Fall, Winter and Summer Conferences. Because the time period is so short between the Spring and Summer quarters, the Spring Conference is optional for FDFY preschool only. Refer to the Home Visit and Conference Timelines for Later Enrolling Children version appropriate for their program model when scheduling Home Visits for children who start after September of the program year. If a child leaves the program during the school year, every effort will be made to schedule a Transition Conference before the child’s last day in the program.

Teachers will conduct a Transition Conference for every child who will be **5 years old on or before Sept.1** of the next program year. Teachers will initiate transition planning at the first home visit. Transition planning will be noted on the home visit record and in the communication log as appropriate. Staff must review additional transition information at each conference. Staff will conduct a Transition Conference for all children transitioning out of Head Start to another program model or out of Community Action Head Start at the end of the program year. Teachers will initiate the Transition Event in ChildPlus following the first meeting with the family and mark it complete following the Transition Conference.

- For children with special needs, see the **Transition for Children with Special Needs Policy and Procedure** for additional requirements.

All conferences will be documented in ChildPlus under the education tab with the date of the conference. Teachers will attach a copy of the Report Card with supporting observations to the conference event.

Forms Referenced:

[Parent-Home Visitor or Teacher Conference Form,
Emergency Contact, Parent Report or Report Card Comments Handout
Strengths and Needs Assessment and Family Partnership Agreement,
Preschool Duration Home Visit and Conference Timelines for Later Enrolling Children]

Procedure

Community Action center-based classrooms use **SmartTeach™** to document observations and assess the developmental level and progress of each child. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are asked to provide additional insight and information regarding the child's strengths, interests, and areas of concern to empower them as the child's first teacher and actively involve them in planning for their child's education and development.

Teachers will complete assessments in the Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer cycles. Refer to the **Timeline for Home Visits and Conferences for Later Enrolling Children in Center-Based Programs** form appropriate for the program model when scheduling Home Visits for children who start after September of the program year. Teachers will complete a conference with the family following each quarterly assessment of children's development and progress; the Spring Conference is optional for FDFY preschool only.

For the Fall and Summer conferences, Teachers will schedule time to meet with the family at the center. Teachers will offer to reschedule in the event the previously scheduled conference cannot take place. If rescheduling creates a hardship for the family or circumstances are such that the situation will not be resolved in a week or two, or the family is unable to meet in-person at any time in any location, **with approval from their direct supervisor**, the conference may be completed virtually or, as a last resort, by phone. Staff must document the reason for the virtual or phone conference. See **Center-based Home Visit Policy and Procedure** for guidelines regarding frequent cancellations.

For children enrolled following the completion of assessments *and more than four weeks before the next assessment cycle*, the alternate **Parent-Teacher or Home Visitor Conference Form** will be used instead of **SmartTeach™** Report Card with supporting observations. When using the alternative Parent-Teacher Conference Form, follow the same procedures for printing observations.

Because the time period between the Spring and Summer assessments is so short, the Spring cycle is **optional**. EHS Teachers may choose to provide parents with a copy of the current Report Card at pick up or drop off following the completion of Spring assessments and invite parents to contact them with any questions or concerns they may have.

At the first home visit, Teachers will begin transition planning with the family for every child who will be **5 years old on or before September 1st** of the next program year. Staff will confirm the child will be going to kindergarten and ask if the family knows what school the child will attend. Then, at each subsequent conference, Teachers will use **Making the Move Together** handout as a guide to continue developing the Transition Plan as outlined below and document progress on the **Home Visit Record** or Communication Log in ChildPlus as appropriate. Teachers will adapt the schedule of topics for discussion for later enrolling children as needed to ensure kindergarten enrollment is completed and the family has all the information they need from Making the Move Together for a successful transition.

At the first home visit, Teachers will begin transition planning with the family for every child who will be 3 years old on or before September 1st of the next program year. Staff will ask if the family wishes to enroll the child in the Community Action Head Start program or will be transitioning to another early childhood education program for the following year. Regardless of where the child will be going, at each subsequent conference, Staff will use **Supporting Transitions Early Educators Partnering with Families** handout as a guide to continue developing the Transition Plan as outlined below and document progress on the **Home Visit Record**. For **all** children who will be transitioning **out** of Community Action Head Start to another early childhood program, Teachers will initiate the **EHS Transition Event** in ChildPlus. See **Documenting Conferences** on page 5.

For children with special needs, see the **Transition for Children with Special Needs Policy and Procedure** for additional requirements.

Forms Referenced:

[Parent-Home Visitor or Teacher Conference Form,
Emergency Contact, Parent Report or Report Card Comments Handout
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To facilitate transitions between HS and kindergarten, Teachers and Program Area Supervisors (PAS) will:

- Develop working relationships with school kindergarten teachers when the HS classroom is located in an elementary school.
- At the beginning of the school year, collaborate with the appropriate public-school representatives about presenting HS program information during school staff meetings or other events.

All conferences will be documented in ChildPlus under the education tab with the date of the conference. Teachers will attach a copy of the Report Card with supporting observations to the conference event.

Fall Quarter-1st Conference

After the first assessment cycle, the Teacher will create the Report Card and print observations. For children enrolled following the completion of assessments *and more than four weeks before the next assessment cycle*, the alternate **Parent-Teacher or Home Visitor Conference Form** will be used instead of **SmartTeach™** Report Card with supporting observations. When using the alternative Parent-Teacher Conference Form, follow the same procedures for printing observations.

To create a Report Card:

- From **SmartTeach™** Reports menu, select Report Card
- Select the appropriate Assessment Period
- After selecting the appropriate classroom and child (children), select the desired quarter.
- Select All in the Social Emotional, Cognitive, Literacy and Math domains.
 - In the Physical domain, select all and then deselect #6.
 - In the Language domain, select and then deselect #9b and 9c.
 - If Language and Literacy were assessed in Spanish, Select All and then deselect #9b and 9c in Language and all in Literacy. Otherwise, Deselect All.
 - HS staff will Deselect All the Science and Technology, Social Studies, and The Arts domains. Then Select #24 Uses scientific inquiry skills in Science and Technology and #29 Demonstrates knowledge about self in the Social Studies domain.
- Be sure the box for “Include ‘Not Yet’ Ratings remains Unchecked.
- Select English as the language to print the report.
- Click on Generate Report.
- Add some comments in order to save the report. It may be as simple as “Add Comments” to save the report for later editing. The report will not be saved until comments are added. Staff will edit the comment section to include information from the parents regarding their child’s progress after the conference.
- Print the form in English. For Spanish speaking families, another copy in Spanish may be printed for their records.

To print observations supporting the assessment of a child’s progress:

- Click on the Assess icon.
- Click on Filter Documentation.

Forms Referenced:

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- Select the site, class, staff member and the child to print the desired observations.
- Select the Assessment Period and then Filter Documentation.
- Teachers may Select ALL or check the boxes next to the specific observations to share. Then click on Print Documentation
 - Group observations list all the children observed, so they may **not** be included until they have been individualized.
 - **Before printing photo observations:** Check the consent form for permission to share another child's picture. If any parents did not consent to **any** photos, staff must remove any photos which include their child before printing another child's observation print out.
 - If any parent(s)/guardian(s) did not consent to publicity photos, staff **must** ask permission from those parent(s)/guardian(s) before including photos of their child in someone else's observation print out.

After the first assessment cycle, the Teacher will create the **SmartTeach™** Report Card.

Scheduling the Conference

Teachers will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) in person or by phone two to seven days in advance to schedule the conference. Offer several options for parent-child activities, using materials commonly found in the home as much as possible, if any materials are needed. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will select an activity to do during the home visit.

Begin Documentation

Create the Conference Event in ChildPlus and enter the date the Conference will occur (in the future). **This date will not change.** Add the appropriate notes in the notes section. For all future attempts to schedule/reschedule the conference, use **Add Action** to the event in ChildPlus and enter the notes there any time there is a change to the initial time and/or date of the Conference. There may be one several Actions associated with each Conference. If a family cancels or reschedules the conference more than twice, contact the Education Services Supervisor for assistance.

The Conference

Teachers will bring the following items to the conference:

- The Report Card and printed observations.
- Portfolio work samples.
- **Emergency Contact** form to review and update as needed.
- The **Strengths and Needs Assessment and Family Partnership Agreement** form (the same form in which the Preliminary Assessment of the Strengths and Needs portion was completed at the home visit)
- Teachers will bring the most recent ASQ and ASQ-SE results if they were not reviewed at the last home visit.

Forms Referenced:

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At the Conference the teacher will:

- Review the Report Card and observations with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and discuss the child's strengths and areas needing support. Ask the family for their observations and input regarding the child's abilities. Document their comments on the bottom of the form. If they have not already done so, the Teachers will review the most recent ASQ and ASQ-SE results at the conference.

Together with the parent(s)/guardian(s), identify two education goals for the child and record them in the Comments section of the Report Card.

- See **Individualizing Policy and Procedure** for guidelines regarding establishing individual education goals, planning to support those goals, follow up with parent(s)/guardian(s) and documentation of progress.
- Brainstorm with families to create a list of ideas to support the child's continuing development toward achieving the goals the parent(s)/guardian(s) can do with their child at home as well as a list of ideas for experiences and activities to do in the classroom.
- Include a short paragraph about the child's education goal as discussed at the parent(s)/guardian(s) conference. **Example:** "Mom says Jonathan likes to draw with crayons on the wall. We came up with the idea to cut open paper grocery sacks and tape them to a portion of the wall, so Jonathan has a defined space to color. She also said he loves to dump water from cup to cup in the bath. He really likes to help her make tortillas. He will do both activities for a very long time, and he is really relaxed and calm during and after cooking and bathing."
 - Use sentences or bullet points to include information about what the child enjoys or finds calming.
- For children with behavioral concerns, include sentences or bullet points to provide information about strategies which help the child succeed, if appropriate. See the **Parent Report or Report Card Comments Handout** for additional guidance in writing the comments.
- Keep the Report Card with you. Inform the family a copy will be sent home to them after the information is added to the database if they wish.

Transition Services

For children who will be **5 years old on or before 9/1** of the following program year, staff must review additional transition information in each Conference and Home Visit. Teachers will:

- Identify the school where the child will attend kindergarten. Encourage the family to contact the school to begin the enrollment process.
- Review the **Fall** and **Winter** section of **Making the Move Together** transition information handout with the family.

Family Partnership Agreement

- Introduce and complete the Family Partnership Agreement on the same Strengths and Needs Assessment and Family Partnership Agreement form in which the Preliminary Assessment of the Strengths and Needs portion was completed previously. See the **Family Partnership Agreement Family Goals and Plans Policy and Procedure** for guidance in completing the family goal setting process.

Forms Referenced:

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Emergency Contact, Parent Report or Report Card Comments Handout
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Documenting the Conference:

1. Create **New Education Goal** event in ChildPlus for each education goal selected.
2. The Status will be set to “**Continue to Monitor**” until observations show the child has met the goal.
3. In the description will be the goal, Use the **exact language** from the **SmartTeach™ Objectives for Development**. Use the notes section to add any additional information if necessary.
4. In the notes section, click on the clock to add the Staff member’s name, date, and time. Enter “See notes on Home Visit Record or Conference Attachment.”
5. Once the goal is met, change the status of the goal to **Complete**.
6. Add the New Education Goal set with the parents at the conference as described in steps 1-4.
 - See **Individualizing Policy and Procedure** for guidelines regarding establishing individual education goals, planning to support those goals, follow up with parent(s)/guardian(s) and documentation of progress.
 - For children with behavioral concerns, include sentences or bullet points to provide information about strategies which help the child succeed, if appropriate. See the **Parent Report or Report Card Comments Handout** for additional guidance in writing the comments.

Send the conference documentation to the Education/DMH Administrative Assistant to upload and complete the conference documentation and event.

See **Individualizing Policy and Procedure** for guidelines regarding establishing individual education goals, planning to support those goals, follow up with parent(s)/guardian(s) and documentation of progress.

If the child withdraws, see the **Transition Conference** on page 8.

Winter Quarter-2nd Home Visit and 2nd Conference

Preparing for the Home Visit/Conference

Create the Report Card and print observations as before. Teachers will call 2-7 days in advance to schedule a Home Visit.

The Conference portion of the Home Visit

- Review the Report Card and observations as before. Document the parent(s)/guardian(s) observations and comments about the child’s progress and interest in the activities they have been doing at home to support those goals on the conference form.
- Update the child’s progress regarding the educational goals with a clear indicator of the status of each goal. For example, the goal ‘continuing’, ‘progressing’ or ‘complete’ or the goal ‘needs more time’, ‘going well’ or ‘met’.
 - If a goal is met, change the status of that goal to Complete. Use Add Action for any additional notes and save.
 - Set a new educational goal if the child has completed a previously set goal and develop a list of activities to support this goal as before. For children with an IFSP, at least one goal must align with the goals on the IFSP.

Forms Referenced:

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Transition Services

- Confirm the elementary school the child will attend for kindergarten. Give the parents the school website information. Look at the website with them if possible. Check to see if the family has begun the enrollment process. If not, encourage the family to contact the school to begin the enrollment process.
- If known, share the Kindergarten Orientation or Kinder fair for their child is scheduled and support families in completing the enrollment process. If not yet known, let the family know it will be sent home when it becomes available.
- Provide information about how they can continue to be involved in their child's education through Parent Teacher organizations or other opportunities to participate in their child's school.
- Review the **Fall and Winter** section Making the Move Together transition information handout with the family. Consider making a checklist of the next transition steps with the family.

Family Partnership Agreement

- Complete the Mid-Year Assessment of the **Strengths and Needs Assessment** form. Review and update the status of the family goals on the Family Partnership Agreement. See the **Family Partnership Agreement Family Goals and Plans Policy and Procedure** for guidance in documenting the updated information.

Documenting the Home Visit/Conference

Document the conference as before.

Spring Quarter-3rd Conference

Prepare the Report Card as before, including the observations and your updates on the child's progress toward the educational goals.

- Give the documents to the parents to review at home and offer to answer any questions they may have. This is a brief update before the final conference in a few weeks.
 - **For children going to kindergarten:** Confirm the child is registered for kindergarten. Confirm the family attended or plans to attend Kindergarten Orientation. Answer any questions the family has.
- Ask them to review the **Summer** Section of Making the Move Together. Give them another copy if needed.

Transition Conference

Transition conferences will be held near the end of the program year or for children withdrawing earlier in the year, prior to the child's last day in the program whenever possible.

- Prepare the Report Card and observations as before.
- Update progress on the educational goals. Give the families ideas for activities to continue their child's learning and development over the summer.
 - Use strengths-based language when giving information about how best to support a child with behavioral concerns. See the **Parent Report-Report Card Comments Handout** for additional guidance in writing the comments.

Forms Referenced:

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- For **children returning to Head Start**, confirm the family completed and returned an **Intent to Return Form**.
- **For children going to kindergarten**, bring and review the rest of Making the Move Together. Confirm the child is registered for kindergarten. Confirm the family attended or plans to attend Kindergarten Orientation. Answer any questions the family has.
 - Complete the **Transition to Kindergarten Letter** and **Head Start to Kindergarten Transition Questionnaire** forms with the parent(s)/guardian(s).
 - Print the completed forms.

Family Partnership Agreement

Review and update the status of the family goals on the Family Partnership Agreement. See the **Family Partnership Agreement Family Goals and Plans Policy and Procedure** for guidance in documenting the family goal setting.

Documenting the Transition Conference

- Update the Education Goals in ChildPlus if the child achieved the goal by changing the status to “Complete”. Otherwise leave them as “Continue to Monitor”.

Document Conference as before.

For children turning **5 years old on or before 9/1**, open the Transition Event. Change the status to “Complete”. Use **Add Action** to add any additional comments.

- Scan the completed **Transition to Kindergarten Letter** and **Head Start to Kindergarten Transition Questionnaire**, Report Card and observations all together to make one PDF of all the documents and save it using the child’s **last name, first name**.
- Upload a copy of the PDF to ChildPlus as an attachment to the Conference event.
- Upload a copy of the PDF to the elementary school folder on the Google drive for that school district. Contact the Education Services Supervisor for access to the Google drive.

See **Program Transition Services Policy and Procedure** and **Transition for Children with Special Needs Policy and Procedure**.

Forms Referenced:

[Parent-Home Visitor or Teacher Conference Form,
Emergency Contact, Parent Report or Report Card Comments Handout
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