

Duration Weekly Family Updates

Head Start Performance Standards

§ 1302.50 (b) (6)

Policy

The Duration Weekly Family Updates facilitate the sharing of information among teachers and family support staff, as appropriate and in accordance with Head Start Performance Standards, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA); and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Duration Weekly Family Updates are designed to promote coordinated and consistent family engagement strategies across the classroom, home, and community settings, ensuring effective collaboration and support for children and families while safeguarding their privacy rights.

Family Services Teachers (FSTs) and Teachers will hold Weekly Family Updates meetings at least 3 times a month. Their class list can be divided into 3 meetings to review 6 files each time. Each family should be discussed at least once per month. Assistant Teachers are invited to participate in these meetings as feasible.

If a parent/guardian has more than one child in either Early Head Start and/or Head Start, the Home-based Home Visitor/Head Start FST will hold a Sibling Family Services Check-In meeting once a month with HCDC Teachers/Home Visitor to review family's strengths, family goals, assessments, expressed needs and supports. For guidance, see **Sibling Family Services Check-in Policy and Procedure**.

All Weekly Family Update meetings will be scheduled at the beginning of the program year for the entire program year and documented in the staff Outlook Calendar.

If staff encounter any barriers to scheduling these meetings, they should reach out to their immediate Program Area Supervisor for support.

Procedures

The purpose of Weekly Family Update meetings is:

- To give staff a set time to seek input and collaborate around resources and family needs and to ensure staff are not duplicating services.
- To allow the staff to discuss and brainstorm ideas about helping and empowering families.
- To identify families with increasing needs and provide referrals and support as appropriate.
- To ensure that we are meeting our responsibilities to families.
- To enable us to establish the best possible method(s) for providing services to the child and family.
- To create an opportunity to communicate within the team about family progress and outcomes, as well as barriers to services or progress that a family may be encountering.
- To identify any required health screenings or other follow-up needs that are incomplete and identify who will follow-up.

Weekly Family Updates begin in October. Staff should prioritize families with higher needs, while families not covered in September will be scheduled for October. During these meetings, staff will use the **Performance Panel** to guide discussions. They will review the family's strengths, needs, and progress, as well as any barriers to advancement that may require additional resources or services. Staff will also examine relevant documentation and engage in conversations to coordinate support and follow-up with the family.

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The topics of conversation will include unmet health requirements (physical, dental, and hearing), attendance concerns, review of SNA results (preliminary or mid-year), and an assessment of the support needed to achieve family goals. Additionally, staff will evaluate the current needs and determine how support will be provided to promote ongoing progress.

During the check-in meeting, participating staff should share any communication and experiences they have had with the family, such as:

- Information about required screenings, attendance, and behavioral concerns.
- The Strengths and Needs Assessment (SNA) results.
- Identified strengths and needs.
- Family well-being checks' status.
- Any referrals already in place and the family's progress or barriers towards their ongoing goals.
- Child Abuse reports.

Additional Weekly Family Update meetings may be scheduled when staff are working with a family whose needs are increasing or nearing the prevention threshold of the Family Services Pyramid. If the situation requires more urgent attention, the FST will contact the parent or guardian immediately to discuss the family's needs and arrange follow-up.

Documentation Standards

Document notes and follow-up entries in ChildPlus as soon as possible after the encounter, but no later than 36 hours following the meeting.

To ensure consistency and objectivity across records and throughout the program, refer to the **Documentation Standards** article in ChildPlus for guidance on applying proper documentation practices to all updates.

All staff participating in the meeting share responsibility for documenting the entry in ChildPlus. For detailed instructions on documenting meetings, see the Family Services section of the ChildPlus Portal, specifically the **Document Weekly Family Update Entry** article.

When completing follow-up with the family, staff should also record any follow-up actions and progress status within the specific events in the appropriate component module. For example, if a need related to a dental exam was discussed, document any additional actions under that specific event.

At the start of the program year, the Teacher, Assistant Teacher, and Family Services Teacher are required to set up their Performance Panel in ChildPlus. Program Area Supervisors will verify with each staff member that their Performance Panel has been established and will help as needed.