

Strengths and Needs Assessment

Head Start Performance Standards

§ 1302.52 (b)

Policy

The **Strengths and Needs Assessment (SNA)** is designed to identify family strengths, areas of potential need and how program staff can support families in pursuing their goals. Cumulative family needs and risk factors can have a detrimental impact on young children's social and emotional development and future school readiness. Identifying family risk and resilience factors can be a first step in linking families to needed services.

The **SNA** is divided into sections related to family engagement outcomes as described in the Head Start Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework and Head Start Program Performance Standards (§1302.52), including family well-being, parent-child relationships, families as lifelong educators, families as learners, family engagement in transitions, family connections to peers and the local community and families as advocates and leaders. Once the **SNA** is completed with the family, staff use the results to guide the goal setting process with the family. The **Family Partnership Agreement (FPA)** form is used for setting family goals with the family. See **Family Partnership Agreement Family Goals and Plans Policy and Procedure** for more information on completing the **FPA**.

The **SNA** is conducted twice per program year to evaluate family strengths, needs, and progress on meeting identified needs.

The Family Services Teachers and Home Visitors are the primary staff responsible for completing **SNAs** with families with the Teacher serving as the secondary staff member responsible for this task. Staff will connect Head Start families to proper resources within Community Action and other community agencies.

The Family Services Teacher/Home Visitor completes the **SNA** with parent(s)/guardian(s).

Procedure

- The **SNA** is completed at the first and second Educational Home Visits with families. **The Head Start Timeline Calendar** includes **SNA** due dates. For late enrollees consult the **Timeline for Later enrolling Children** by program option. See Home-based and Coffee Creek sections below for timelines and information specific to those program options.
- The Teacher/Home Visitor will explain to families the purpose of conducting **SNAs**. When completing the Strengths and Needs Assessment with families, staff should approach the process in a **conversational style** and collaborative manner. For additional support or guidance, refer to the **Completing the Strengths and Needs Assessment with Families** document.
- Parents/guardians or caregivers should be encouraged to consider each item, and scoring should be mutually agreed upon using the following selection: 1 Safe/Self Sufficient, 2 Attention Needed, 3 Support Needed and 4 Immediate Need.
- Consider and respond to all items; however, they may choose not to respond if any areas feel too personal.
- Consider the selection that best fits the family's current situation.
- Identify items as areas where immediate support is needed, or concerns are noted.
- Use the comments section for each section to record additional information that will help staff better serve families, especially when a score is higher than 1 or when a column warrants further

Forms Referenced:

[Completing the Strengths and Needs Assessment with Families,
Family Partnership Agreement (FPA)]

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explanation. In some cases, you will also need to provide additional details even when the score is 1. For guidance on when to include this information, refer to the **Completing the Strengths and Needs Assessment with Families** document.

- If the family has identified needs that can be easily addressed with resource and referral, the Family Services Teacher/Home Visitor will locate the appropriate resource(s) and share them with the parent(s)/guardian(s). For guidance on making referrals, see **Definition and Documentation of Family Referrals Policy and Procedure**. Staff should document any resources or services offered in ChildPlus by creating a need identified event(s) as appropriate to monitor progress and outcomes. For additional information about locating community resources and services, see the **Community Resources Policy and Procedure**.
- If the family refuses to complete the **SNA**, the Family Services Teacher/Home Visitor tries to understand why and whether their concerns can be addressed. If the family still refuses, document in ChildPlus that the family refused and why.
- The Family Services Teacher/Home Visitor will review the **SNA results**, document all Preliminary and Mid-Year SNA results in ChildPlus under the Family Services Module-Family Services Information tab and the Family Outcomes tab. The SNA is available in a fillable format if staff prefer to use it. The staff completing the SNA is responsible for uploading the form directly to ChildPlus in the Family Services Attachment tab.
- Family Services Teacher/Home Visitor will use the **SNA results** to inform and guide the goal-setting process. This goal-setting discussion is expected to take place during the first parent conference.

Home-based Early Head Start

The Home Visitor must complete the SNAs in a conversational manner with the parent(s)/guardian(s) twice per year during home visits. The first SNA should be attempted once the Home Visitor has established rapport with the family. The Preliminary SNA must be completed within the 45-day deadline.

Coffee Creek

Since mothers and children can enroll and begin the Coffee Creek program at any point during the program year, the Family Service Teacher will complete the initial **SNA** with the mother within 45 days of enrollment. This assessment will be based on the mother's current circumstances and needs.

If a mother and child are enrolled in the Coffee Creek program for six months or less within a program year, only one **SNA** will be conducted. During this time, the Family Service Teacher will work to connect the family to the appropriate resources.

For families enrolled for more than one program year, a SNA will be completed annually, with the final SNA conducted six months prior to the mother's parole.

For **SNAs** that are not completed according to the overall program timelines, in ChildPlus under Family Outcomes tab, check box "Not Assessed" and select "Coffee Creek Exception" as the reason and add notes for either the Preliminary or Mid-Year assessment.

If appropriate and with the caregiver's consent, the Family Service Teacher will request the child's caregiver to complete an SNA assessment at enrollment, at the 6-month follow-up, and 6 months prior to the mother's parole.

If the caregiver(s) identifies needs, the Family Service Teacher will assist in connecting them with appropriate resources within their county. Need-identified events will be created to monitor progress and outcomes.

The completed SNA with the caregiver will be uploaded as an attachment in the Family Services module under the attachments tab and documented in the preliminary or mid-year SNA if appropriate.

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Other Considerations for Siblings and Later Enrollments

If a parent/guardian has more than one child enrolled in either Early Head Start and/or Head Start, only one Preliminary and one Mid-Year SNA are required for the entire family. The Home Visitor is responsible for completing these SNAs with the family. The Family Services Teacher and Home Visitor will review the results together and collaborate on follow-up resources and family goals during their monthly sibling check-ins.

For families with multiple children in the same program option (e.g., HCDC Full Year), teachers will jointly decide who will conduct the SNA, review the results collaboratively, and work together on follow-up actions. These discussions will take place during Sibling Check-In meetings and will be documented as part of the entry process.

For families who enroll later in the school year, the preliminary SNA should be completed within 45 days of their start date. The Mid-Year SNA must be completed before the end of the program year. For children enrolled before Spring Break, the preliminary SNA should be completed at the transition conference, with the date documented in ChildPlus. For children enrolled after Spring Break, the Mid-Year SNA should be completed within 45 days of enrollment.

When a child enrolls toward the end of the program year, efforts should be made to complete an SNA to connect the family to resources before program closure. If ChildPlus calculates a due date for the SNA that falls after the program year ends, record the Mid-Year SNA as “Not Assessed” and select “Scheduling Conflict.” Add notes in ChildPlus (e.g., child not enrolled long enough to complete a second SNA, or due date falls after program end). Refer to the **Timeline for Later enrolling Children** by program option located in the intranet under Education forms and documents.

Ongoing Monitoring

Family Services Teachers and Home Visitors will review the ChildPlus Family Outcomes Analysis report (4220). Staff will share report status with Program Area Supervisor (PAS) for the respective site/class. The PAS will ensure that any incomplete or overdue SNAs are completed.

Refer to the *Family Services **ChildPlus Portal Training** for detailed guidance on how to document SNAs.