

Family Well-Being Checks

Head Start Performance Standards

§ 1302.34 (b) (2) (6)

§ 1302.41 (a)

§ 1302.46

§ 1302.50 (a) (b) (2) (3) (5)

Policy

- Family Services Teachers are primarily responsible for making at least one family contact or communication entry per month to promote ongoing communication between the school and home. During these contacts, staff will foster positive, goal-oriented relationships with parents/guardians and provide services that build trust and respect. These interactions should encourage continued two-way communication. All such communications must be documented in ChildPlus within the Family Services module using the Family Well-Being Checks event type. Additionally, include relevant notes in other modules as appropriate.
- Family Services Teachers will use the **Family Well-Being Checks Guide and Prompts** document as a support to help them understand what areas they should be covering in their communications with families.
- Family Services Teachers will become familiar with the following handouts to increase their positive goal-oriented relationship skills with families: [Positive Goal-Oriented Relationships](#) and [Guide to Developing Relationships with families](#) from ECLKC website.
- The Duration Assistant Teacher collaborates with the Family Services Teacher to conduct follow-up and complete well-being checks monthly, tailored to the family's needs, with the goal of preventing duplication of services and ensuring effective support.
- Documentation of family contact will be precise, concise, and factual.
- The information documented in ChildPlus will create a comprehensive narrative that encompasses the family's history, current family composition, health and developmental status, identified strengths and needs, and any other factors influencing the child's and family's participation in the Head Start/Early Head Start program.

Procedures

Family Contacts/Family Well-Being Checks

- Introduce Family Well-Being Checks during the Orientation/Enrollment process, explain what to expect from when you call and set a monthly recurring schedule if possible. In addition, contact the family at least one week prior to the intended date for the 1st well-being check to confirm set schedule is still convenient for the family. Well-being checks will be scheduled during the Teacher's office hours. Staff are not *required* to offer well-being checks outside of the standard workday.
- Well-being checks are scheduled for at least 15 minutes making sure that the time is mutually convenient for staff and family members.
- **Starting in October** (or, for later enrollees, as soon as the child enrolls in the program), family contacts/Family Well-Being Checks will begin. Family contacts are opportunities to develop

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relationships with parents/guardians, check on the well-being of the family and offer resources as appropriate. These family contacts may include discussions about services and resources that support family well-being, including family safety, health, nutrition, children's developmental stages, transportation, medical or dental needs, economic stability, attendance and follow up on their family goals. In addition, staff can invite parents/guardians to incorporate their culture, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds of their family in the classroom.

- Use the **Family Well-Being Checks Guide and Prompts** to help guide the conversation with each family.
- Use conversation style of communication to find out what is going well for the family and what are some areas that they could use support with. Using conversation style, begin to build your resources to offer the family as well as any referrals to other programs if needed. Use positive language to celebrate milestones they are sharing.
- It is important to have meaningful conversations around the child's health and wellbeing. Please see health P&P's for reference on requirements and screenings. Use health prompts to follow up on health requirements and screenings.
- Family goals are set with the family during the 1st conference. While reviewing the Family Partnership Agreement with the family document any progress they have made since working on this goal. Document any barriers or resources they have requested to help complete this goal. Celebrate with them their mini goal steps!
- It is essential for staff to actively listen during interactions with families to identify emerging needs, such as requests for information, referrals, or resources.
- If the family has increasing needs, several needs not easily remedied by resources or referral, is experiencing barriers accessing or receiving services or is currently in crisis, this family will benefit from extra support and follow up. Have staff conversations about the situation at the next Weekly Family Update meeting to develop ideas for how best to support the family. See **Duration Weekly Family Updates Policy and Procedure** for more information.
- If a parent/guardian has **more than one child in either Early Head Start and/or Head Start**, staff will collaborate and coordinate accordingly during Siblings Family Services Check-Ins to ensure they are not duplicating services and supports. See **Siblings Family Services Check-Ins Policy and Procedure** for more information.
- If there is a family who refuses to participate in well-being checks, the staff should notify their Program Area Supervisor immediately and document as appropriate in the Family Well-Being Check event as part of the meeting summary in the actions section.
- Family well-being checks can be combined with home visits and conferences upon the family and classroom staff availability. When this occurs, staff are required to document both requirements as described in each one of the ChildPlus articles for documenting family Well-Being checks and Home Visits/Conferences. It must be noted in the Family Well-Being Check action notes that this was done in combination with another home visit or conference.

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. If staff are unable to record the contact in ChildPlus, they must notify their supervisor promptly.

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.

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After completing the well-being check, summarize the findings in ChildPlus by writing a brief paragraph highlighting any significant successes, ongoing issues, or concerns related to the child and/or family. In the Family Services Module, select "Add Event" and choose "Family Well-Being Checks." Record each well-being checks as an add action, including the summary paragraph in the notes section. For detailed guidance on data entry, please refer to the ChildPlus Training Portal.

Additionally, document updates to specific events in the relevant component modules—for example, if a need was identified or a dental exam was discussed, record these as additional actions under those specific events. For guidance on documenting health requirements within ChildPlus, please consult the ChildPlus Training Portal.