

BIG SANDY AREA HEAD START PROGRAM
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Goal Statement – To create partnerships with Head Start families.

A. Family Partnerships

Objective 1: To ensure that a PFCE Family Needs/Goals Assessment is completed on all families to identify interests, desires, goals, needs and strengths

1. In an effort to begin the process of collaborative partnership building with families concerning their short-term and long-term goals, staff will address the family in relationship with their immediate concerns.
2. Staff will initiate a PFCE Family Needs/Goals Assessment with the parent at the time of enrollment, or as early as possible, taking into consideration, each family's readiness and willingness to participate.
3. Staff will encourage all families to establish an individualized Family Partnership Agreement which describes family goals, responsibilities, timelines, and strategies. The Family Partnership Agreement allows for achieving process with these goals.
4. To avoid duplication or conflict, the Family Partnership Agreement will build upon any pre-existing plans developed between the family and other programs/agencies. Big Sandy Area Head Start program and delegate agencies will coordinate, to the extent possible, with families and other agencies, to support the accomplishment of goals in pre-existing plans.
5. A variety of opportunities will be created by the program for interactions with parents throughout the year.
6. Meetings and interactions with families shall be respectful of each family's diversity, culture and ethnic background.

Objective 2: Big Sandy Area Head Start program and delegate agencies will work cooperatively with all participating parents/guardians to identify and continually access, either directly or through referrals, services and resources which are responsive to each family's interests and goals including:

1. Emergency and crisis assistance in areas such as food, housing, clothing and transportation.
2. Education and other appropriate interventions including opportunities for parents to participate in counseling programs, and/or support groups, or to

receive information on mental health issues which place families at risk, such as substance abuse, child abuse and neglect, and domestic violence.

3. Opportunities for continuing education and employee training and other employment services through formal and informal networks in the community

Objective 3: Big Sandy Area Head Start program and delegate agencies will follow-up with each family to determine whether the kind, quality and timelines of the services received through referrals met the family's expectations and circumstances.

1. Staff will follow-up with the family via telephone contact or home visits, to ensure that they receive the requested service in a timely manner.
2. Follow-up with the agency that the family was referred to will also take place if needed.
3. Staff will solicit from parents/guardians their overall satisfaction concerning services that they received.

Objective 4: To provide parent involvement and education activities that are responsive to the ongoing and expressed needs of the parents/guardians, both as individuals and as members of a group.

1. In addition to involving parents/guardians in program policy making and operations, the grantee and delegate agencies will provide parent involvement and education activities that will include workshops, training, orientations, parent groups and individual counseling that will be responsive to the ongoing and expressed needs of the parents/guardians. Other community agencies will be encouraged to assist in the planning and implementation of these programs.
2. All Head Start settings will be open to parents/guardians during all program hours. Parents/guardians will always be welcomed as visitors and observers. Parents/guardians will be encouraged to spend time observing children in the classroom and to participate in group activities with children. The participation of parents/guardians in any program activity will be voluntary, and will not be required as a condition of their child's enrollment.
3. Big Sandy Area Head Start program and delegate agencies will provide parents/guardians with opportunities to participate in the program as employees or volunteers.

Objective 5: To ensure parent involvement in child development and education by:

1. Providing parents/guardians with opportunities to make suggestions regarding the curriculum and have input into the daily lesson plans.

2. Planning and making available training opportunities to enhance parenting skills, knowledge and understanding of child development and education.
3. Encouraging parents/guardians to share any suggestions and/or concerns that they may have regarding the services their child receives, during parent conferences and home visits in the program.
4. Providing, either directly or through referral to other agencies, opportunities for children and families to participate in family literacy services by:
 - a. Increasing family access to materials, services and activities essential to family literacy development.
 - b. Assisting parents/guardians as adult learners to recognize and address their own literacy goals.

Objective 6: To ensure parent involvement in health, nutrition, and mental health education, Big Sandy Area Head Start program and delegate agencies shall;

1. Provide medical, dental, nutrition and mental health education programs for staff, parents and families.
2. Ensure that, at a minimum, the medical and dental health program:
 - a. Assists parents/guardians in understanding how to enroll and participate in a system of ongoing formal health care
 - b. Encourages parents/guardians to become active partners in their child's medical and dental health care process and to accompany their child to medical and dental examinations and appointment times
 - c. Provides parents/guardians with the opportunity to learn the principals of preventive medical and dental health, emergency first aid, occupational and environmental hazards, and safety practices for use in the classroom and in the home. In addition to information on general topics, information specific to the health needs of individual children will also be made available to the extent possible.
3. Big Sandy Area Head Start and delegate agencies will ensure that the nutrition education program includes, at a minimum:
 - a. Nutrition education in the selection and preparation of foods to meet family needs.
 - b. Parent discussions with program staff about the nutritional status of their child.
4. Ensure that the mental health education program provides, at a minimum;

- a. A variety of group opportunities for parents/guardians and program staff and consultants to identify and discuss issues related to child mental health.
- b. Individual opportunities for parents/guardians to discuss mental health issues related to their child and family with program staff and consultants.
- c. The active involvement of parents/guardians in planning and implementing any mental health interventions for their children.

Objective 7: To ensure that parent involvement in community advocacy, Big Sandy Area Head Start program and delegate agencies will:

1. Support and encourage parents/guardians to influence the character and goals of community services in order to make them more responsive to their interests and needs.
2. Establish procedures to provide families with comprehensive information about community resources.
3. Provide parents/guardians with regular opportunities to work together, and with other community members, on activities which they have helped to develop and in which the families show an interest.

Objective 8: To ensure parent involvement in transition activities.

1. Big Sandy Area Head Start and delegate agencies will assist parents/guardians in becoming their child's advocate as they transition both into the Head Start program from the home or other child care setting, and from Head Start to the Primary Program.
2. Staff will work to prepare parents/guardians to become their child's advocate through transition periods by conducting staff/parent conferences and meetings throughout the year. These activities will enable parents/guardians to understand their child's progress while enrolled in Head Start, and what to expect in next school setting.
3. To promote the continued involvement of Head Start parents/guardians in the education and development of their children upon transition to school, the program will:
 - a. Provide education and training to parents/guardians to prepare them to exercise their rights and responsibilities concerning the education of their children in a school setting.
 - b. Assist parents/guardians to communicate with teachers and other school personnel so that parents/guardians can participate in decisions related to their children's education.

Objective 9: To provide parent involvement in home visits.

1. Big Sandy Area Head Start program and delegate agencies will not require that parents/guardians permit home visits as a condition of the child's participation in Head Start center-based programs. Every effort will be made to explain the advantages of home visits to the parents/guardians.
2. The child's teacher in the center-based program will make no less than two (2) home visits per program year to the home of each enrolled child, unless the parents/guardians expressly forbid the visits. Other staff working with the family will make or join home visits as appropriate.
3. Staff shall schedule home visits at times which are mutually convenient for the parents/guardians, primary caregivers and staff.
4. In cases where parents/guardians whose children are enrolled in the center-based program ask that the home visits be conducted outside the home, or in cases where a home visit to the home presents significant safety hazards for staff, the home visit will take place at the Head Start site or at another safe location which affords privacy.

Goal Statement – To create and utilize partnerships with the community.

A. Community Partnerships

Objective 1: To take an active role in community planning

1. Big Sandy Area Head Start and delegate agencies will take an active role in community planning to encourage communication cooperation and the sharing of information to improve the delivery of community service to children and their families. This will take place in accordance with the agency's confidentiality policy. Documentation will be maintained to reflect the level of effort undertaken to establish community partnerships.
2. Agency staff will serve on community boards and committees such as:
 - i. Interagency Committees
 - ii. Pre-K
 - iii. Child Care
 - iv. First Steps/Early Intervention
3. The program will take affirmative steps to establish ongoing collaborative relationships with community organizations to promote access of children and families to community services which are responsible to their needs to include:

- a. Health care providers, such as clinics, physicians, dentists, and other health professionals
 - b. Mental health providers
 - c. Nutrition service providers
 - d. Individuals and agencies which provide services to children with disabilities and their families
 - e. Family preservation and support services
 - f. Child protection services and any other agency to which child abuse must be reported under state law
 - g. Local elementary schools and other educational and cultural institutions, such as libraries, for both children and families
 - h. Providers of child care services
 - i. Any other organizations or businesses which can provide support and resources to families
4. The grantee and delegates will perform outreach strategies and techniques to encourage volunteers from the community to participate in the program.
 5. To enable the effective participation of children with disabilities and their families, Big Sandy Area Head Start and delegate agencies will make specific efforts to develop interagency agreements with local educational agencies and other agencies within the service area.

Objective 2: To establish and maintain a Health Services Advisory Committee

1. The grantee and delegate agencies shall establish and maintain a Health Services Advisory Committee to address program issues in medical, dental, mental health, nutrition and human services fields. Membership of the committee shall include professionals and volunteers from the community.
2. Big Sandy Area Head Start and delegate agencies shall also establish other service advisory committees as deemed appropriate to address program service issues and to help respond to community needs.

Objective 3: To establish and maintain procedures which support successful transitions for enrolled children and families from previous child care programs into Head Start and from Head Start into elementary school

1. Big Sandy Area Head Start and delegate agencies shall implement procedures to support successful transitions of children and families by:
 - a. Coordinating with the elementary schools and other agencies to ensure that Head Start children's relevant records are transferred to the school or next placement in which the child will enroll or from earlier placements to Head Start.
 - b. Outreach to encourage communication between Head Start staff and their counterparts in the schools and other child care settings, including principals, teachers, social workers, and health staff to facilitate continuity of programming.
 - c. Initiating meetings involving Head Start teachers, parents and primary teachers to discuss the developmental progress and abilities of individual children.
 - d. Initiating joint transition-related training for the Head Start staff and other child development staff.
 - e. Ensuring parental participation in their child's transition to and from Big Sandy Area and delegate Head Start programs.

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