Early Head Start Home-Based Early Childhood Education Plan

The Early Head Start Home-Based Education Program for families of infants, toddlers, and twos reflects the concept that parents are the first and most influential educators of their own children. Early Head Start Home-Based Teacher/Family Advocates place emphasis on enhancing/expanding the role of parents in the social/emotional, cognitive, physical and language development of their child. The overall goal of promoting children’s social competency is a driving force in the Early Head Start home base program. Child development and early education services are designed for the home visitor and the parent to plan together to ensure that each child’s needs are being addressed. Home-based families receive the same comprehensive services as those families enrolled in the center-based option. These services include health, nutrition, dental, mental health, disability, early childhood development, and family/community services.

Home Visits

The Early Head Start Home-Based program will provide one 90-minute home-visit for each family per week. There are many unique advantages to the home-based program. These advantages include:

1. Individualized Instruction where one-on-one attention is provided during home visits.
2. Learning occurs in the natural environment of the home with the parent as the primary teacher.
3. Parent-child interaction is enhanced.
4. Family involvement is enhanced with all members of the family involved. Needs and strengths of families are identified and goals set to meet these needs.

The parents and home visitors will agree on a convenient time for weekly visits. The home visitor and the parent will enter into a written contract which outlines responsibilities of both parties. It is the responsibility of the Home Visitor to:

- Explain the philosophy and scope of the Early Head Start Home-Based program to parents.
- Focus on the parent, therefore reaching the child through the parent.
- Work with the family to enhance self-esteem and move toward self sufficiency.
- Encourage parents to practice good health, proper nutrition, and dental care in their daily routines.
- Improve parenting skills and use everyday experiences as learning activities.
- Increase their knowledge, skills, and understanding in child growth and development.
- Identify parent’s needs, make referrals, follow-up to ensure services are provided.
- Provide learning games and materials for parents to utilize and enhance the home visit.
- Support the parent by pointing out the many ways everyday household materials can be utilized to support learning and development.
- Observe the development of the child and document anecdotes for entry into the Teaching Strategies Gold on-line assessment system.
- Support cultural diversity and home language acquisition through the use of materials, supplies, and interactions.
Parent-Child Time Group Socialization

Early Head Start Home-Based Teacher/Family Advocates includes the opportunity for infants, toddlers, twos, and their parents to engage in activities outside their home. The Parent-Child Time Group Socializations are offered twice per month and involve children and parents in activities that scaffold the goals addressed during home visits. Parents are key to planning and carrying out activities during socialization. An appropriate environment with equipment and materials will be provided for children and adults during socialization:

- Rooms must meet safety, health, comfort, and developmental needs of children.
- Rooms must be well lighted and adequately vented.
- Rooms must be free of dangerous materials.
- Appropriate equipment and supplies must be available for indoor and outdoor activities.
- Equipment must be provided for napping, diapering, and feeding.
- Appropriate provision for disabled children and/or parent will be provided.

Observing infants, toddlers, and twos in groups will allow parents to see and understand that children learn and develop differently. Children will begin to learn to share and develop/enhance their social-emotional skills.

Curriculum

The Partners for a Healthy Baby series will be utilized to address issues of family development and child health and development. The curriculum is organized by the age of the infant/toddler in months. Home Visitors/Family Advocates will choose the topics that need to be presented each week to achieve program goals and assist families to meet their personal goals. Information is provided on topics related to: Family Development, Parents Needs, Caring for Infants/Toddlers, and Child Development. Activities for infant/toddlers will be planned to facilitate child’s sensory, motor, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development.

The Creative Curriculum Learning Games will be a valuable resource for Home Visitor/Family Advocates to support child development. Families will receive support/instruction in providing meaningful play experiences with their infants and toddlers. Each game has step-by-step instructions for play experiences that build children’s skills, knowledge, abilities, and support children’s brain development. Games are arranged to reflect patterns of child development in the four areas:

- Social/Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Cognitive Development
- Language and Literacy Development

Plans for children with a disability will also include goals from the IFSP. Home Visitors will ensure specific “interventions” meet his or her needs.

Assessment

Home Visitors/Family Advocates and parents will observe children during their activities. As both parties watch and listen to infants/toddlers they can document and discuss development:

- Children’s interests
- How they are developing
- Strategies children use to get what they want
- Skills children need to practice
- Children’s temperaments
- Ways each child learns best

Observing how children grow and change during daily routines and activities helps to assess their development. Observing them in new and different situations broadens understanding of the child. As the home visitor and parents exchange observations knowing what the child is currently doing will help plan likely next steps.

Home Visitors/Family Advocates will record and enter observations and utilize the information to plan for children’s development. The Teaching Strategies Gold on-line assessment system is on-going, but three times per year (fall, winter, and spring check-points) teaching staff determine the scores from the observations and enter the data into the computer system for the ten areas of development including thirty-eight objectives. The Teaching Strategies Gold on-line assessment areas of development include:

- Social/Emotional
- Physical
- Language
- Cognitive

Home Visitors/Family Advocates will share data reports with parents on each child’s development in the fall, winter, and spring.

**Conclusion**

Home visiting, group socialization, and services from other support organizations will significantly improve outcomes for young children and their families. The key to the effectiveness of home visiting is the relationship the visitor has with the family, planned curriculum topics, and activities provided.