

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT PROCEDURE

Performance Standards

1304.40 (a) Family goal setting:

Grantee and delegate agencies must engage in a process of collaborative partnership-building with parents to establish mutual trust and to identify family goals, strengths, and necessary services and other supports. This process must be initiated as early after enrollment as possible and it must take into consideration each family's readiness and willingness to participate in the process.

As part of this ongoing partnership, grantee and delegate agencies must offer parents opportunities to develop and implement individualized family partnership agreements that describe family goals, responsibilities, timetables and strategies for achieving these goals as well as progress in achieving them.

1304.40(a)(3) To avoid duplication of effort, or conflict with, any preexisting family plans developed between other programs and the Early Head Start or Head Start family, the Family Partnership Agreement must take into account, and build upon as appropriate, information obtained from the family and other community agencies concerning preexisting family plans. Grantee and delegate agencies must coordinate, to the extent possible, with families and other agencies to support the accomplishment of goals in the preexisting plans.

The Family Partnership Agreement is a process, not merely a form. From the first contact with a family, the Advocate will endeavor to build rapport and create a trusting relationship in order to establish, as early as possible, the desires, ambitions, dreams, and hopes of family members.

Family Advocates will aim to engage all parental figures in the partnership process, remaining sensitive to the differing needs, roles, and interests of each individual.

In most cases a series of measurable goals with specific steps towards completion. will be written with each individual/family, and entered in GenesisEarth as Family Partnership Agreements (FPA's).

- Each goal is recorded as a separate FPA in the GenesisEarth (GE) data management system.
- The FPA will specify the person responsible (**who**) for each step (**what**), and the estimated time of completion (**by when**).
- Goals need to be achievable in two to three months in order for families to feel successful
- Break down bigger goals into small steps in order to develop an attainable outcome.
- Each goal will be recorded on a goal worksheet, signed by the parent/s and by the Family Advocate at the time of setting the goal.
- Progress towards achievement of goals will be reviewed frequently with the family; updates or completion dates will be added as goals progress.

PRE-EXISTING FAMILY PLANS:

- If a Family Agreement or Plan has been made with another agency, the FA will offer to support the family in attaining these goals. The FA will obtain a signed release from the parent, request the pre-existing plan from the other agency and retain it in the paper file.
- The FA will document the receipt of the plan as a casenote in GE.
- The Family Advocate will work in cooperation with the family, and the other agency, to support goals that have already been made.
- The FA's and family's pre-existing family goals, responsibilities, timetables and strategies for achieving these goals as well as progress in achieving them will be tracked as GE FPA's
- Additional Head Start goals will be developed and documented only if the family chooses.

INFORMAL FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT:

- In some situations the Family Partnership Agreement (FPA) will be developed informally as, for example, when the parent and Family Advocate are working on immediate crises, that do not allow for the lengthier process involved in the creation of formal goals.
- Once the family's situation stabilizes, the Family Advocate may schedule a home visit to complete written FPA's.
- Informal FPA's may also be used with a family not willing to complete a formal agreement.
- Document the goals and steps informally agreed on as FPA's in GE.
- For families with limited literacy skills, staff are encouraged to utilize alternative means of recording the Family Partnership process, and individual goals. These could take the form of collages, recorded statements, or photographs of activities, for example. Evidence of the informal Family Partnership must be documented as an FPA in GE and stored in the paper file, if this is appropriate for the medium used.