

Supporting Social-Emotional and Behavioral Needs Procedure

Purpose

This document tells site teams how to access a mental health consultant, and how to create a social and emotional climate where children learn, practice and apply skills that support attachment, self-regulation and initiative.

Procedure

Children enrolled in Early Head Start, Head Start and ECEAP have a high probability of having adverse childhood experiences that may result in mental health concerns or challenging behaviors.

Screening Children

- Listen and ask questions about any concerns a parent may have about their child's development and behavior, review and discuss the information provided on the application and developmental and health history forms.
- Complete the Teacher report on the DECA (Devereux Early Childhood Assessment) and have the parent/guardian complete the Parent rating within 45 days of the child's enrollment.
- Discuss results with the parent and contact your Mental Health, Disabilities or Education Coordinator if you need additional support to analyze the report. Observe children regularly and share assessment information with parents.

Infant, Toddlers and Twos Curriculum (Center Based EHS)

- Set up the classroom and plan daily interactions in accordance with the Creative Curriculum to convey these positive messages: "You belong here. We like you." "This is a place you can trust. You will be safe here." "This is a comfortable place to be." "You can move freely and explore on your own." "We will take care of you."
- Establish trusting relationships to support the child's development of emotional regulation, secure attachment, understanding of their own feelings and rights as well as the feelings and rights of others, and positive approaches to learning.
- Use the guidance about caring and teaching in the Creative Curriculum Volume 1: The Foundation to respond to challenging behaviors that are common for very young children.

Preschool Curriculum

Use the Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Edition 6 (required)

- Set up the classroom in accordance with the curriculum to convey these positive messages: "This is a good place to be." "You belong here." "This is a place you can trust." "There are places where you can be by yourself when you want." "You can do many things on your own here." "This is a safe place to explore and try your ideas."

Use DECA Program Classroom Strategies to support Attachment, Self-Control and Initiative.

- Use the DECA Reflective Checklists to evaluate how your environment supports protective factors. (<http://www.centerforresilientchildren.org/using-reflective-checklists-simply-reflect-improve-quality/>)

Implement the Second Step Curriculum (required).

- Model and teach the skills that help children learn to listen, pay attention, and remember directions.
- Model and teach children how to identify wants and needs and communicate them to others.
- Model and teach children how to identify, express and manage emotions.

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- Model and teach children how to make friends, have empathy/be respectful of others, be cooperative in play, and solve problems.

Individualizing

- Identify any accommodations or adaptations made to the environment or activities, which are needed to keep a child safe and included. Seek assistance from PSESD in providing these.
- Plan for the social-emotional needs of children in all aspects of the curricula.
- Collaborate with families to develop at least one social-emotional school readiness goal for each child.
- Plan curriculum experiences to support the child's progress on the child's Individual School Readiness Goals.
- Request an observation or consultation of the PSESD Mental Health Coordinator when there are concerns about a specific child. The PSESD Mental Health Coordinator will make recommendations to staff and parents. The family completes and signs the *Request for Mental Health Observation/Consultation Form* and it is sent to the Regional Mental Health Coordinator prior to the consultation.
- Request by email or telephone the attendance of the Mental Health Coordinator at a staffing on individual children to support the development of specific strategies, to effectively engage families or to assist with an appropriate referral for additional services.

Positive Child Guidance

Site teams use a positive guidance approach in accordance with the curriculum.

- Build and maintain positive relationships with children.
- Adapt the environment, routine and activities to the needs of individual children.
- Establish consistent, reasonable and predictable expectations.
- Involve children in defining simple, clear rules for the classroom and outside play area when developmentally appropriate.
- Observe, facilitate and supervise children's activities.
- Establish and post a predictable classroom schedule that includes pictures.
- Use effective transition methods such as reminding children with environmental and verbal cues. Use Mighty Minutes and other learning games such as Brain Builders from the Second Step curriculum as developmentally appropriate to manage the length of transitions, guide behavior and make the most of learning time.
- Give directions and instruction on expectations, and offer replacement behaviors to children.
- Be proactive - anticipate problems and develop plans to avoid them.
- Remember - behavior that gets noticed is repeated.
- Temporary touching for the purpose of guiding a child to walk or move to a safe location is acceptable.
- Provide brief physical guidance, instructional prompting, physical support and comforting.

Family engagement

- Communicate with families about any concerns they have regarding a child's social emotional development or behaviors.
- Be sensitive to emotions and culturally competent when talking about possible concerns and referrals to service and respect families' choices.
- Be knowledgeable about family issues that affect the social and emotional development of young children, such as maternal depression, substance abuse or parental incarceration.
- Know basic strategies to support parent-child interactions.
- Request a PSESD Mental Health Coordinator or other mental health professional from a community agency to present to parent groups on topics related to child and adult mental health.

Related Documents

Triage Support Procedure

Triage Support Form

Resources

Second Step Curriculum (see kit in your classroom and use online resources)

Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos

Creative Curriculum for Family Child Care

Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Edition 6