

# Conferencing with Families Procedure – Center-Based Preschool and Early Head Start

## Purpose

This explains the purpose and process of conferencing with families throughout the program year and clarifies the differences between Head Start and ECEAP program requirements.

## Guidance

Conferencing with families promotes respectful relationships with parents and helps to develop a broader understanding of each child in the program. The conferences enhance the family's knowledge and understanding of the developmental progress of their child and how their learning can be supported at home and in the classroom.

Conferences are conducted by staff in the family's home language or with an interpreter during the program year. During conferences, teachers and FCC providers learn about the family's culture, discuss the child's development and progress, share screening and assessment results, obtain parent input for program and curriculum planning, and jointly plan support for the child. Teachers and providers must maintain written documentation of these discussions. Four conferences must be conducted with families during the program year.

- **For Head Start and Early Head Start**, at least two of the conferences should be held in the family home, unless the parent requests different arrangements. When requested, home visits may occur at another safe location that affords privacy, or at the center. This request by the family should be documented on the *Family Partnership Record and Contact Log*. The other two conferences can be conducted at the center.
- **For ECEAP**, home visits are encouraged, but only family conferences held at the center are required.

## Procedure

### 1. Enrollment Conference (at the beginning of the program year):

This first contact is a time for you and the family to get to know each other and to orient the family to the program and your classroom. **Head Start and Early Head Start** teachers are strongly encouraged to conduct this initial conference in the family's home. The *Child Enrollment Information Form* is completed with the family and, if possible, the *Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ3)* and the *Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Social/Emotional (ASQ-SE2)* should also be completed with the family during the enrollment conference. The *ASQ3* and the *ASQ-SE2* can also be left with the family to be returned to the teacher, as soon as possible, and not later than by 45 days of enrollment. The completed conference must be documented in the *Family Partnership Record and Contact Log* or **(for ECEAP)** in ELMS where the number of minutes is documented and notes are written to record any other valuable information discussed with the family.

### 2. Child Assessment and Support Planning Conferences (by November 30, February 28, and May 31):

These conferences can be conducted in either the family's home or at the center in alignment with the guidance for each program written above. During these conferences, the child's home routine, behaviors, and activities are discussed with the family. The child's developmental progress is shared

with the family using the *Development and Learning Report* printed from the *MyTeachingStrategies™* (formerly known as *Teaching Strategies GOLD*) reports page.

**For preschool children**, briefly explain the Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) to guide and inform your discussion. Collaborate with the family to develop at least 3 child school readiness goals and support strategies for the next assessment period.

1. This goal should be developed to build on the child's strengths and interests. This strengths-based goal will support the child's school readiness by giving the child support to further develop their individual talents.
2. This goal should be developed to build on the child's relative area of need. This goal will target an area where the child may need focused opportunity to meet the widely held expectations for their age group prior to entering Kindergarten.
3. This goal should be developed to support the child in meeting their next level of development or learning in one additional area that is part of your site or PSESD's program School Readiness goals. Connect with your Center Director or PSESD Site Support Team for any further clarification around Program School Readiness Goals.

Use the *Individual School Readiness Goals Form* to document the child's three goals and connect them to the appropriate Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) domains (included on the form.) Include the strategies, activities and materials that will be used in the classroom and at home to support the child in achieving each goal.

At the February conference, begin discussing Kindergarten transition for children who will turn 5 before September. In May, continue the Kindergarten transition discussion, assist with transition as needed, and provide summer learning opportunities and information about other services (e.g., Free Lunch Program).

**For infants and toddlers**, briefly explain the Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) to guide and inform your discussion. Use the *Individual Development Support Strategies Form* to document the topics discussed, including strategies developed to support ongoing development and learning over the next assessment period. Discussion and planning with the family for preschool (**Head Start or ECEAP**) transition should begin at least 6 months prior to the child turning 3 years old. Continue transition planning with families as needed during conferences.

**For ALL teachers and providers (preschool and infant/toddler)**, encourage families to share ideas for the classroom curriculum related to their child's interests and emerging skills. Provide information and follow-up about any health re-screens or referrals. Document the completed conference in the *Family Partnership Record and Contact Log* and/or in ELMS, including any other valuable information discussed with the family. **For ECEAP**, family contact minutes must also be documented in ELMS.

### 3. **August Conference (Full-Day/Full Year and Early Head Start sites only – by August 31st):**

The August conference can be both a child assessment and re-enrollment conference depending on whether the child is transitioning out of the program or 're-enrolling' for the new program year. The procedures above for the "Enrollment Conference" and/or the "Child Assessment and Support Planning

## Parent Teacher Conferences and Home Visits Procedure

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Conferences” should be followed as is appropriate. If the child will be going to Kindergarten or preschool in the fall, assist the family with any final support needed.

Document the completed conference in the *Family Partnership Record and Contact Log* and/or in ELMS, including any other valuable information discussed with the family. **For ECEAP**, family contact minutes must be documented in ELMS.

### Related Documents

*Engaging Families in the Screening Process Guidance*

*Ongoing Child Assessment Procedure*

*Engaging Families in Ongoing Child Assessment Guidance*

*Engaging Families in Curriculum Guidance*

*Curriculum Planning Procedure – Preschool*

*Curriculum Planning Procedure – Early Head Start*

### Resources

ASQ3: [www.AgesandStages.com](http://www.AgesandStages.com)

ASQ-SE2: [www.AgesandStages.com](http://www.AgesandStages.com)

*MyTeachingStrategies*™: <https://gold.teachingstrategies.com/login.cfm>

ELMS: <https://apps.del.wa.gov/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fELMS%2fHome.aspx>