

Family Engagement Guidance

Family engagement begins when a family first contacts your program (as early as recruitment) and deepens throughout the time of their involvement. Encourage the involvement of the following populations:

- Fathers or father figures
- Parents or guardians working full time
- Family members who are absent due to deployment, incarceration, or other reason
- Families whose primary or home language is not English
- Other underrepresented families

Show the [Family Engagement Opportunities](#) web below to families so they can see how to get involved in their child’s learning and development, and how to have learning opportunities of their own. Encourage families to find program opportunities that fit their interests, cultural traditions, goals, and time availability.

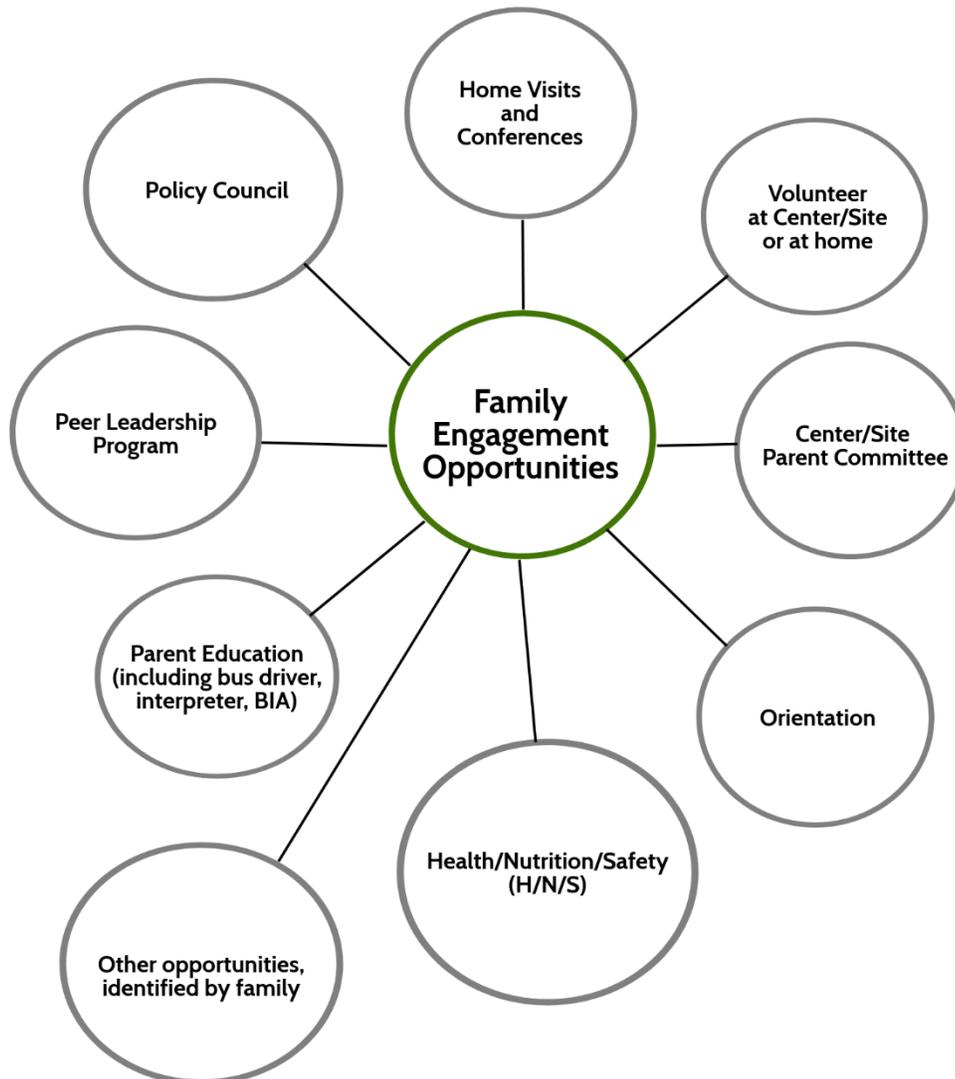


Table of Contents – *this Table of Contents is hyperlinked*

Orientation 3
 Health/Nutrition/Safety Orientation 3
Home Visits 3
 Preparing for Home Visits..... 4
 Home Visit Safety..... 6
Family Events..... 7
Policy Council (PC)..... 7
Parent Center Committee..... 8
 Documentation 8
Parent Education 9
 Peer Leadership Program 9
 Bus Driver, Interpreter, and Bilingual Instructional Assistant (BIA) Training..... 9
Other Opportunities 9

Orientation

Orientation is for families to learn about Early Learning policies and procedures and all about your center/site. All families must have an Orientation before the child starts class, either as part of a group event or one-on-one at the enrollment visit.

An [Orientation PowerPoint](#) presentation to be used at group events is available. It is recommended to invite teachers, past parents, a Policy Council Representative, transportation personnel (if applicable), Peer Educators, and the Center Director/Center Coordinator.

Health/Nutrition/Safety Orientation

Review the *PSESD Early Learning Family Health Handbook* to help families become familiar with the health and nutrition practices that may impact the family and child's participation in the program. Address the following topics using the handbook as a guide:

- When to keep children home from school due to illness
- What to expect during early learning health screenings
- What kind of medical and health documentation is required
- Foods from home

Home Visits

Families can be engaged in their child's learning through home visits. Trust is built through listening and understanding the family's perspective and supporting goals that parents have for their child and family, as their child's first teacher.

Staff must provide a minimum of one visit per quarter, per enrolled family. To count as one of the required home visits, each must be:

- A minimum of 30 minutes
- Face-to-face with the parent or guardian
- In a location agreed upon with the family
- Scheduled based on individual family needs
- Planned with individualized content for each family for each visit

 For enrollment to count as one of the required family support visits, the family engagement portion ([Family Connections](#) or [Family Connections – EHS-HB](#)) must be a minimum of 30 minutes.

Home Visits continued



1. **Documentation in ELMS begins every July 1st of the new program year. While you may enroll families for the new program year before July 1st, minutes you spend on the family engagement portion of enrollment will not be counted as a formal family support visit in ELMS.**
2. **After July 1st, a family's first home visit may take place during the enrollment visit in a location agreed upon with the family, if family engagement is at least 30 minutes.**

EXAMPLE 1: The Doe Family has an enrollment visit on July 2nd at 10:00 am and their first home visit is at 11:00 for a minimum of 30 minutes. Both visits are scheduled to occur at the site.

EXAMPLE 2: The Doe Family completed their enrollment visit on April 27 for the 2018-2019 program year. While at the Enrollment visit, the Doe Family also scheduled their first home visit on July 2nd in their home.

Preparing for Home Visits

When scheduling home visits, consider how families prefer to be contacted and where they prefer to meet, based on responses on the [Emergency Treatment and Consent Form](#). If you have difficulty connecting with a family, document every effort made to schedule/reschedule. Make sure to have an interpreter available if needed.

Review the family file and check with other staff regarding follow up needs. To better meet the needs of families with children in multiple programs, staff should make efforts to combine home visits with other program staff, whenever possible.



For families enrolled in the Department of Children Youth and Families' (DCYF) Home Visiting Services Program (HVSP), such as Nurse Family Partnership or Parents as Teachers, staff must participate in joint visits whenever possible. Both programs must support families to design and achieve shared goals whenever possible, which will allow for integration of goals set with home visitor or ECEAP family support staff with families.

Bring information about program and community updates, events, and opportunities, as well as the required documents listed on the next page.

Preparing for Home Visits continued

What	Goal of Visit	Documents Required (all programs, unless specified)	Staff Resources
<p>Enrollment Visit</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Orient the family to the program, including schedules, routines, and systems that your center/site has in place. Get to know the family using <i>Family Connections</i>. Discuss the parent/guardian’s role as their child’s first and most important teacher. Share with families how they can be involved in their child’s learning and development, and how they can have learning experiences of their own. Encourage families to find the program opportunities that are the best fit for their interests, cultural traditions, goals, and time availability. Discuss school readiness and transition to Kindergarten or EHS transition to Preschool. Learn about family strengths, interests, needs, and goals. Introduce the goal setting process that will happen in the future. If family is currently working on a goal with another program, collaborate with parent on setting the same or similar goal on the Family Strengths and Goal Planning Form Connect families with relevant community resources and referrals as needed. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Family Connections (pages 1-6) EHS-HB ONLY: Family Connections – EHS Home-Based (pages 1-6) Family Contact Log AS NEEDED: Consent for Use of Interpreter IF APPLICABLE: Family Strengths and Goal Planning Form ECEAP ONLY: <i>Mobility Mentoring</i> documents 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Family Engagement Guidance</i> Family Engagement Opportunities web Race and Ethnicity List
<p>Goal Setting Visit (2nd and/or 3rd home visit)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to get to know the family using <i>Family Connections</i>. Continue to discuss the parent/guardian’s role as their child’s first and most important teacher. Share with families how they can be involved in their child’s learning and development, and how they can have learning experiences of their own. Encourage families to find the program opportunities that are the best fit for their interests, cultural traditions, goals, and time availability. Discuss school readiness and transition to Kindergarten or EHS transition to Preschool. Continue to learn about family strengths, interests, needs, and goals. Set/update goals with the family including timeline for follow up. Continue to connect families with relevant community resources and referrals as needed. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Family Connections (pages 1-6) EHS-HB ONLY: Family Connections – EHS Home-Based (pages 1-6) Family Contact Log Family Strengths and Goal Planning Form AS NEEDED: Consent for Use of Interpreter ECEAP ONLY: <i>Mobility Mentoring</i> documents 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Family Engagement Guidance</i> Family Engagement Opportunities web Race and Ethnicity List
<p>Transition Visit (3rd and/or 4th home visit)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect with family on their experience in their Early Learning program. Connect families with relevant community resources and referrals as needed. Identify if/when goal is achieved and possible next steps. Complete items for transition to Kindergarten/Preschool. 	<p>COMING SOON</p> <p>IF APPLICABLE: “Returning Child Information” page of Early Learning Application</p>	<p>COMING SOON</p>

Home Visit Safety



Follow your center/site's safety policies and procedures, as well as the steps listed below.

Make sure someone is aware of your plans

- Always leave complete information with co-workers.
 - family's name and phone number
 - address of the visit
 - time of scheduled visit and anticipated length of the visit
 - expected time of return to site
- Wear easily recognizable work identification (e.g., school district badge).
- Use common sense, trust your judgment and leave immediately if there is danger.
- Make sure your supervisor knows your visit schedule, including the name, address, time of the visit and your expected return time. Always check in with your supervisor when you complete the visit and are heading to your next visit.
- Know the neighborhoods that you visit by being observant and by getting to know important details of the neighborhood from the people you visit. You can always contact the local police station or sheriff's office to ask if you should be aware of any safety concerns.
- Make sure that you are well and that the family members are well when you make your visit, to avoid spreading communicable diseases. Your Health Coach is always available for consultation.
- Carry a cellphone or devise a system for checking in with a co-worker or your center director.

Be aware of your surroundings

- Get clear directions to the home.
- Check with the family about parking, pets, etc.
- Be aware of people in the vicinity, adequate lighting and landscaping that could allow for the element of surprise.
- Bring only what you need for the visit.
- Carry your keys in your hand.
- Walk assertively, confidently and look others in the eye.
- Once inside a home, be aware of where the exits are.

Use common sense and trust your judgment

- If you feel unsafe, leave. Often our "gut instincts" are correct.
- If you believe family members in the home are unsafe, call the police.
- In rare situations, a visit to the home is not safe. Plan with co-workers, your supervisor or PSESD staff before visiting a family in their home when you have a safety concern.

Family Events

Staff must provide a minimum of one family event per quarter.

Gather input from each family

Use [Family Connections](#) to gather information about families' interests and learning preferences. Get more information about families from other forms you have completed with them and in conversations throughout the program year. Use the [Parent Training Topics Tracking Form](#) to determine the level of interest in each topic and plan quarterly events in partnership with parents. Events can include the Orientation and the End-of-Year Celebration. All other topics can be addressed in various ways, such as parent newsletters, one-on-one visits, and brochures.

Support families by helping them plan events that reflect their needs and interests

Parents must be involved in the planning and implementation of each family event and activity, with support from staff. Make sure families are familiar with the [Parent Fund Policy](#) and [Procedure](#). When parents participate in this process, they gain skills that will be useful for employment and in managing their own households.

Provide parent funds for family events and activities

These funds are set aside for families to spend on events that include trainings and activities that interest them. Help parents estimate the cost of activities and aid them in generating options to stay within their budget.

Use interpreters and translated materials

Make sure all families can benefit and participate in family events and activities. Provide interpreters in languages spoken by families in your program and translate written materials for events.

Consider food, child care, and transportation needs

Providing a healthy meal and child care at the event makes it easier for families to attend. Honor families' cultural and ethnic practices and remember food safety practices when serving food. Activities that are geared toward both parents and children will reduce the need for child care. Plan activities in accessible locations for families with transportation difficulties or discuss alternative options with them.

Policy Council (PC)

Parents can learn more about the Early Learning Program and participate in the governance of the program as a Policy Council Representative. Family Support staff must elect at least 2 representatives and complete the [Policy Council Representative Notice and Verification Form](#). Family Support is responsible for assisting parent representatives to carry out their role. This might mean helping them find child care and transportation options, so they can attend the Policy Council meetings. They also support parent representatives in finding effective ways to communicate information from the Policy Council meetings back to their center/site Parent Committee and receive information from parents to take to Policy Council meetings. For more information, visit the [Policy Council page](#) of earlylearningwa.org.

Parent Center Committee

The Parent Center Committee meeting offers parents opportunities to plan events, activities, and trainings that enhance their own adult learning, and support their child's school readiness.

Every parent and guardian of children enrolled in your program are part of the Parent Center Committee. If your center has services at more than one location, your center can determine if the Parent Center Committee and the parent funds will be for the entire center, or if each individual site will have their own. Opportunities for parents to meet must be offered regularly throughout the year.

Parent Center Committee meetings provide parents with leadership opportunities. Parents share in decision making and may decide to elect parents to serve as Chairperson, or Co-Chairpersons, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Parent Center Committee may elect parents in these roles for the entire program year or may rotate roles. The Center Policy Council Representative and/or Parent Center Committee leader are responsible for signing documents related to the use of parent funds for all types of family events.

Centers are expected to ask parents from the previous year to participate in the Parent Center Committee meeting to help plan and implement the first family event. This provides an opportunity to set the stage for future events and activities. "Getting to know you" or "Ice breaker" activities, time to explore interests, and opportunities for parents to engage in various ways are important elements to include in your first meeting.

Documentation

The Parent Center Committee, with support of center staff, must document their ideas, planning and decisions they make at their meetings. They also must document family events, activities and trainings. Documentation may include any of the following:

- Minutes showing evidence that parents have designed events, activities and trainings for themselves
- Minutes which show decisions made (e.g., approval of use of Parent Funds)
- In-kind documentation related to family events, activities and training
- Marketing materials such as newsletters and flyers to announce upcoming meetings, events, activities and trainings
- Agendas to show what meetings, events, activities and trainings have occurred
- Sign in sheets that indicate parent attendance
- Evidence of parent evaluation of family events, activities and trainings

All documentation listed above must be kept at the center or individual site, in the [Family Engagement Notebook](#), or for Family Childcare (FCC), at PSESD in the [Family Engagement Notebook](#).

Parent Education

Peer Leadership Program

Parents who are interested in learning about Health, Literacy, Math, or Money Management are encouraged to register for the Peer Leadership Program at PSESD. Site teams complete the [Parent Referral Form](#) and support the parent in arranging for childcare and transportation to six evenings of curriculum training. After completing the training, parents can, upon request, teach the curriculum to other parents. This program is an excellent opportunity for parents who want to learn facilitation and training skills.

Staff must provide a minimum of one Peer Program Teach Back per site/center. If a site/center has a Peer Parent, staff must schedule a Peer Program Teach Back to support the parent's leadership development. This can meet the minimum requirement of one family event per quarter.

See the [Parent Professional Learning](#) page for more information and resources.

Bus Driver, Interpreter, and Bilingual Instructional Assistant (BIA) Training

See the [Parent Professional Learning](#) page for more information and resources.

Other Opportunities

Families may identify other opportunities for family engagement.