

EARLY HEAD START TIP SHEET

No. 50

Socializations and Field Trips, May 2013

Are field trips appropriate for Early Head Start home-based socializations?

Response:

When determining whether field trips are appropriate for socializations, it is important to first understand the intent of group socializations in the Early Head Start (EHS) home-based option. Group socializations provide a means to support the parent-child relationship. Benefits of this group setting include opportunities for parents to be involved in planning the content of the socializations, learn from each other, share their struggles and successes, and observe how their children react to other children and adults as well as to new experiences. Socialization experiences also help infants and toddlers feel safe and secure with a small number of consistent and familiar people.

Given these goals, it may be appropriate to occasionally hold group socializations in different locations, or to go on field trips. The following questions will help programs to plan these experiences to fit their needs and the needs of the families they support.

Questions to Consider for Planning and Programming:

- How does the field trip link to family goals according to the Family Partnership Agreements? If many families share a similar goal, consider a socialization experience that would meet it. For example, if a common goal is spending more time outdoors, consider a field trip to a park, nature preserve, or community garden.
- How does the field trip fit in with the existing curriculum, goals, and home visit experiences?
- How does the experience link, both generally and specifically, to program goals for socializations? For example, if a program has a goal of helping each family obtain and use a public library card, a group socialization at the local public library might be appropriate.
- Would a field trip increase families' access to community resources and partnerships? Some programs may have agreements with local museums or other cultural venues that allow their families free access. Programs might plan a socializations aimed at helping families learn how to enjoy a local resource.
- Is the site accessible to all families? Some families may have transportation to the regular socialization location but find it difficult to go somewhere else. Are there reasonable transportation options—that conform to program policies and guidelines—for families to attend off-site socializations?
- Can the venue accommodate the specific developmental needs of infants, toddlers, and their families? Young children must have a safe environment for exploration, and they have unique needs regarding their sense of security as well as their eating, sleeping, and diapering routines and schedules.
- How would the field trip or outing contribute to and support the parent-child relationship?
- How does the program effectively plan and prepare for a safe and successful outing? Is the proposed location safe, clean, and well kept?

- Is the location infant, toddler, and family friendly? Will there be enough room for families to bring equipment such as strollers or diaper bags, or other gear? Is the venue prepared to accommodate infants and toddlers who may be active or noisy?
- Is the location accessible for children and family members with disabilities?

Performance Standards, Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations:

- 1304.53(a)(1) Grantee and delegate agencies must provide a physical environment and facilities conducive to learning and reflective of the different stages of development of each child.
- 1304.53(a)(2) Grantee and delegate agencies must provide appropriate space for the conduct of all program activities (see 45 CFR 1308.4 for specific access requirements for children with disabilities).
- 1304.21(b)(2)(i)-(ii) Grantee and delegate agencies must support the social and emotional development of infants and toddlers by promoting an environment that:
 - (i) Encourages the development of self-awareness, autonomy, and self-expression; and
 - (ii) Supports the emerging communication skills of infants and toddlers by providing daily opportunities for each child to interact with others and to express himself or herself freely.
- 1304.21(b)(3)(i)-(ii) Grantee and delegate agencies must promote the physical development of infants and toddlers by:
 - (i) Supporting the development of the physical skills of infants and toddlers including gross motor skills, such as grasping, pulling, pushing, crawling, walking, and climbing; and
 - (ii) Creating opportunities for fine motor development that encourage the control and coordination of small, specialized motions, using the eyes, mouth, hands, and feet.

Resources:

DHHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB. **Curriculum in Head Start.** *Head Start Bulletin* 67 (March 2000).

DHHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB. **Early Head Start.** *Head Start Bulletin* 69 (October 2000).

Early Head Start National Resource Center (EHS NRC). **Early Head Start Program Strategies: Socializations for Infants and Toddlers in the Early Head Start Home-Based Program Option.** DHHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB, 2001.

EHS NRC. **Home Visitor's Handbook for the Head Start Home-Based Program Option.** DHHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB, 2004.

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This Tip Sheet is not a regulatory document. Its intent is to provide a basis for dialogue, clarification, and problem solving among the Office of Head Start, Regional Offices, TA consultants, and grantees. If you need further clarification on Head Start Policies and regulations, please contact your Regional Program Specialist.