

# EARLY HEAD START TIP SHEET

No. 38

## Grandparents & EHS home-based activities

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### Can grandparents be included in EHS home visits or socializations?

#### Response:

The intent of home visits and socializations is to support the child's development and learning through the relationship between parents and child. Grandparents and extended families may be included in these activities. This may be especially beneficial if the grandparents are highly involved in the lives of the child and parents being served.

However, unless the grandparents are legal guardians, they may not take the place of the parents during a home visit. When the grandparents are the child's legal guardian, the home visits and socialization experiences take place with and focus on the relationship between grandparents' and child.

It is important for programs to be aware of their state's regulations regarding grandparent guardianship based on the age of a teen parent. For example, some states require that the grandparent is the baby's guardian if the parent is under the age of 16. In this situation, the program would work with the grandparents as well as the parents of the baby.

#### *Purpose of home-based activities*

Regardless of who attends the home visit or socialization, the ultimate purpose of home-based activities is to help parents and guardians enhance the child's growth and development by supporting the adults' role as the child's first teacher through:

- Improving their 'parenting' skills
- Assisting them in providing learning opportunities within the home environment

When grandparents are included in these activities, many programs also focus on the parenting skills of the grandparent and their relationship with their child (parent of the grandchild).

#### *Special circumstances*

There may be special circumstances or certain situations when programs/home visitors/families may want to consider including grandparents in either home visit(s) or socialization(s), such as when:

- Parents and child live in the grandparents' home
- Grandparents serve as temporary guardians for the child such as providing frequent child care
- Grandparents frequently visit or are highly involved in the family's life such as assisting with the parental role when the parent has a disability or temporary impairment

Program staff should gather as much information about the child and specific circumstances of the family. The content of the home visits may include the grandparents and are to be jointly planned by the home visitor and the parents. The home visits must be conducted with the participation of parents.

### *Enhanced home visiting services*

Through enhanced services, the program provides each family with the home visits and socialization experiences required through the home-based program option and additional services. These additional or enhanced services are designed and planned to meet the individual needs of the families and children.

Some programs provide enhanced services for families whose grandparents provide daily child care since their relationship with the child impacts the child's overall development. For example, the enhanced services may include an additional home visit each month that may take place at the grandparent's home where child care occurs.

“Both the relationship between the child and caregiver and the home environment have a significant impact on cognitive and language development, and ultimately on school readiness. Because a significant number of infants and toddlers ... are in the care of relatives, ... it is important that those caregivers receive support and training to promote the early language, literacy, and learning of the children in their care”

(The Enhanced Home Visiting Pilot Project, 2004, Why is it an area of interest for Early Head Start section ¶ 2).

### **Questions to Consider for Planning and Programming:**

- How do staff, programs, and families decide to involve extended family members with home visits and socializations?
- When extended family members are present, how does the program ensure that the extended family members support the parental role (without taking over the parental role)?
- How are staff and programs planning the content/experiences for home visits/socializations with parents and grandparents? How do they document this?
- How do staff, programs, and families decide if enhanced services are needed? How do they determine the most appropriate course of action?
- How do programs, when providing enhanced services, ensure that the requirements for the home visiting program option are met and maintained?
- What systems support staff in obtaining unique insights and information about the custodial grandparents?
- How do programs and supervisors support and train staff who are working with families with multi-generational caregivers? What resources does the program have for staff and families?

### **Performance Standards, Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations:**

- 1306.33(a)(1) Grantees implementing a home-based program option must provide one home visit per family lasting for a minimum of 1 and ½ hours each.
- 1306.33(b) Home visits must be conducted by trained home visitors with the content of the visit jointly planned by the home visitor and the parents. Home visitors must conduct the home visit with the participation of parents. Home visits may not be conducted by the home visitor with only baby sitters or other temporary caregivers in attendance.
- 1306.33(b)(1) The purpose of the home visit is to help parents improve their parenting skills and to assist them in the use of the home environment. The home visitor must work with parents to help them provide learning opportunities that enhance their child's growth and development.

- 1306.33(c) Group socialization activities must be focused on both the children and parents. They may not be conducted by the home visitor with baby-sitters or other temporary caregivers.
- 1306.33(c)(1) The purpose of these socialization activities for the children\* is to emphasize peer group interaction through age appropriate activities in a Head Start classroom, community facility, home, or on a field trip. The children are to be supervised by the home visitor with parents observing at times and actively participating at other times.

\* The purpose of socialization experiences for infants and toddlers is to support child development by strengthening the parent-child relationship. The content of the group experience reflects this emphasis and incorporates the goals of the program and participating families such as:

- Helping parents to better understand child development
- Encouraging parents to share their parenting challenges and joys with one another
- Providing activities for parents and children to enjoy together
- Offering structured and unstructured learning opportunities for both children and parents
- Modeling successful strategies for engaging children and supporting their development

(Information Memorandum ACYF-IM-HS-00-22, Child Development Services During Socializations ¶ 1).

## Resources:

**Early Head Start Program Strategies: Socializations for Infants and Toddlers in the Home-Based Program Option.** Early Head Start National Resource Center. DHHS/ACF/HSB. 2001. <http://www.ehsnrc.org/pdffiles/EHSProgramStrategies.pdf> (accessed September 21, 2009).

**Enhanced Home Visiting Pilot Project.** The Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center. DHHS/ACF/OHS. 2004. [http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Family%20and%20Community%20Partnerships/Community%20Partnership/Program%20Options/famcom\\_ant\\_00053\\_062005.html](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Family%20and%20Community%20Partnerships/Community%20Partnership/Program%20Options/famcom_ant_00053_062005.html) (accessed September 21, 2009).

**Home-Based Program Option materials.** Early Head Start National Resource Center. DHHS/ACF/HSB. <http://www.ehsnrc.org/Publications/index.htm> (accessed September 21, 2009).

- Home-Based Supervisor's Manual
- Home Visitor's Handbook for the Head Start Home-Based Program Option
- Parent's Guide to the Home-Based Program Option
- Program Administrator's Checklist for the Head Start Home-Based Program Option

**How do you create an effective environment for infant/toddler socializations in an Early Head Start home-based program?** Early Head Start Tip Sheet No. 26. Early Head Start National Resource Center. DHHS/ACF/HSB. 2006. <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Management%20and%20Administration/Planning/Program%20Planning/HowDoYouCreate.htm> (accessed September 21, 2009).

**Information Memorandum ACYF-IM-HS-00-22: Child Development Services During Home Visits and Socializations in the Early Head Start Home-Based Program Option.**

DHHS/ACF/OHS. 2000.

[http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/IMs/2000/resour\\_ime\\_00521a\\_021306.html](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/IMs/2000/resour_ime_00521a_021306.html) (accessed September 21, 2009).

Jerald, Judith; Siegel, Willa C. & Semlak, Sarah M. "Socializations for Infants, Toddlers, and Their Families in the Home-Based Option." **Head Start Bulletin #69**. DHHS/ACF/HSB. 2000. [http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ecdh/eecd/Families-Parent%20Involvement/Home-Based/edudev\\_art\\_00205\\_072505.html](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ecdh/eecd/Families-Parent%20Involvement/Home-Based/edudev_art_00205_072505.html) (accessed September 21, 2009).

**May EHS programs include non-EHS families in socialization and parent activities?** Early Head Start Tip Sheet No. 14. Early Head Start National Resource Center. DHHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB. 2004. <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ecdh/eecd/Families-Parent%20Involvement/Home-Based/MayEHSPrograms.htm> (accessed September 21, 2009).

**Policy Clarification I-034: If a child lives with and is supported solely by the child's grandparents whose income is used to determine Head Start eligibility, under what circumstances can a Head Start program release the child to the grandparents and allow the grandparents to make health decisions for the child?** The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. DHHS/ACF/OHS. June 2007.

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/Policy%20Clarifications%20and%20FAQs> (accessed September 21, 2009).

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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 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.*