

Partnering with Families to Build Economic Security During Emergencies



Partnering with Families to Pursue Education and Training Goals

Families' education and training goals may change during emergencies. For example, some families may have unexpected time available to enroll in online courses to advance their education. Some will need a referral for a community-based program. Head Start and Early Head Start **family services staff and home visitors** can help families access key resources and take steps to achieve their immediate and long-term education, employment, and career goals.

You can partner with families to:

- Identify their immediate education and training goals and revisit their long-term education and training goals
- Plan concrete actions
- Track progress and celebrate successes

Identify Families' Immediate Education and Training Goals and Revisit Their Long-Term Education and Training Goals

- As you check in with families about how they are doing, let them know that Head Start and Early Head Start staff are available to assist families with their immediate and long-term education and training goals.
- Ask families what method of communication works best for them. Then set up a time to talk.
 - You can connect with families remotely by phone, email, video conference, text, or social media. If families prefer printed information, you can send it by regular mail. Or families can pick up materials if your program offers drive-up services.

- Review The Family Partnership Process: Engaging and Goal-Setting with Families on the Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) website. This guide recommends seven steps you can take to help families set financial, employment, and education goals.
- Use the Seven Steps Worksheet Template in The Family Partnership Process guide to ask questions focused on the family’s current situation, strengths, and goals.
- Connect with families individually to assess where they are and what they would like to accomplish. Remember, every family is different.
 - Some families may want to work toward taking the General Educational Development (GED) test. Others will be interested in learning a second language. Some will want to develop a skill related to their long-term education or career goals.

Seven Steps for Setting and Reaching Goals with Families:

- Step 1** Set a Goal
- Step 2** Identify Skills
- Step 3** Assess Strengths
- Step 4** Examine Stressors
- Step 5** Explore Strategies
- Step 6** Determine Support
- Step 7** Track Progress and Celebrate Successes

Plan Concrete Actions

When you know what goals families are interested in, you can research options and provide them with tools.

- **Job training:** Connect families to the Career One Stop website to find job training resources.
- **GED Classes:** Connect families to local libraries, community colleges, or technical colleges for information about GED preparation classes and the exam.
- **Online courses:** Contact local 2-year and 4-year colleges or use the Community College Finder on the American Association of Community Colleges website to explore options for online coursework that could help families advance their education and training goals.
- **Find a school:** Connect families to the online College Navigator tool or the Community College Finder to explore college options. They can search by state, type of school, major, and other criteria.

- **Check a school’s accreditation:** Use the Look Up a School online tool from the U.S. Department of Education to find out if a college or university is accredited. Accreditation is an indication that an institution meets standards of quality. Attending an accredited 2-year or 4-year college is important because employers often require applicants to have attended an accredited school or program.
 - Using the U.S. Department of Education College Scorecard, families can also learn about colleges’ graduation rates, average annual costs, and the salary ranges of their graduates. Families can access the College Scorecard on the U.S. Department of Education website.
- **Costs:** Remind families to think about finances when looking for a school. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has online tools that can help families choose a school that is financially right for them.
- **Internet access:** If families don’t have access to the internet, you can help them connect to Lifeline. Lifeline is a federal program that helps make communications services more affordable for low-income consumers. Lifeline gives subscribers a discount on monthly telephone service, broadband internet service, or voice-broadband bundled service purchased from participating companies.

Track Progress and Celebrate Successes

Follow up with families to see how they are meeting their education and training goals. Celebrate successes!



Staff Tip

You may find that your own education goals shift during an emergency. Follow the steps in this tip sheet to reflect on and take action toward your own immediate and long-term education and training goals.

Check out the other tip sheets in the *Partnering with Families to Build Economic Security During Emergencies* series for staff. Review and share the Family Tip Sheets in this series with families. These tip sheets include valuable information families can use to improve their family economic security during emergencies.

Related Resources

- **Learn More.** All of the resources mentioned in this tip sheet are available on the Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) website. To learn more about how to support parents' and families' goals for economic mobility, explore all of the resources in the Building Foundations for Economic Mobility series available on the ECLKC.
- **Join the Economic Mobility Learning Community.** Engage with your colleagues around the country in the online Economic Mobility learning community hosted on the MyPeers platform. You can network, share, and learn from each other about partnering with families to achieve their financial security.
- **Subscribe.** The Building Foundations for Economic Mobility (BFEM) E-newsletter is produced quarterly by the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE). It is dedicated to staff working with families.

This document was developed with funds from Grant #90HC0014 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, and Office of Child Care, by the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. This resource may be duplicated for noncommercial uses without permission.

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