

# Head Start and Early Head Start Relationship-Based Competencies

## Professional Development Assessment for STAFF Who Work with Families

### OVERVIEW

Looking for ways to support your development around the nine Head Start and Early Head Start Relationship-Based Competencies? We have created a professional development assessment to help staff in Head Start and Early Head Start (HS/EHS) who work with families. You may use this tool to build competency and capacity in preparation for pre-service training and mid-year and year-end check-ins. This assessment is aligned with the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework.



### 1. POSITIVE, GOAL-ORIENTED RELATIONSHIPS

*Engages in mutually respectful goal-oriented partnerships with families to promote parent-child relationships and family well-being.*

Knowledge, Skills, and Actions for Staff	I have solid understanding and skills and continue to grow in this area.	I am making progress in my understanding, skills, and growth in this area.	I need support to learn more and grow in this area.	I would like to focus on this area in my Professional Development Plan.	Notes
<b>Knowledge</b>					
Develops knowledge of effective relationship-building practices.					
Understands that parents/expectant parents and staff each bring equal value to the relationship.					

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<b>Skills</b>					
Helps families feel welcomed, safe, and respected by building trusting relationships over time.					
Shows respect for different families' circumstances and creates opportunities for families to consider their aspirations for their children and for themselves.					
Uses appropriate communication techniques, such as verbal and nonverbal messages and reflective listening.					
Demonstrates the ability to work with families on different kinds of goals (health, nutrition, parent/child interactions, mental health, family literacy, financial literacy, etc.).					

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Demonstrates the ability to jointly develop and follow up on goals that are meaningful for families and individualizes services for parents and expectant mothers and fathers.					
Makes ethical decisions that maintain professional boundaries and family confidentiality.					
<b>Actions</b>					
Makes contact with both mothers and fathers, as applicable, to develop ongoing relationships.					
In partnership with families, develops and supports plans that describe families' strengths, resources, and needed services.					

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### 2. SELF AWARE AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

*Respects and responds appropriately to the culture, language, values, and family structures of each family served.*

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<b>Knowledge</b>					
Identifies and reflects on personal values, experiences, ethics, and biases (e.g., gender, racial, ethnic, cultural, and/or class) in order to become self-aware and more effective in working with different groups of people.					
Understands the importance of taking care of oneself in order to be available and capable to attend to the needs of others.					
<b>Skills</b>					
Demonstrates respectful interest in learning about each family's values, beliefs, faith traditions, cultural influences, family structures, and circumstances.					
Applies this knowledge to relationship-building and ongoing interactions with each family.					

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Reinforces the importance of home language and culture in a child’s development during interactions with parents and expectant families.					
<b>Actions</b>					
Conducts culturally and linguistically responsive outreach and recruitment to parents and expectant families.					
Provides intake and orientation materials to families that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.					

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#### 3. FAMILY WELL-BEING AND FAMILIES AS LEARNERS

*Supports families' safety, health, financial stability, life goals, and aspirations.*

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<b>Knowledge</b>					
Understands the proper steps to ensure family and child safety when safety is threatened.					
Develops knowledge and awareness of the signs of depression, trauma, homelessness, domestic violence, and/or mental illness for parents and expectant families.					
<b>Skills</b>					
Can increase families' awareness and ability to identify protective factors/strengths they have to overcome challenges.					
Can increase families' awareness and ability to address the risks and stressors in their lives.					

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Is able to conduct educational opportunities for parents and expectant families on the importance of healthy relationships and support networks.					
Knows how to identify, in partnership with the family, options and resources to address challenges and work toward aspirations and long-term family stability.					
<b>Actions</b>					
Connects families with opportunities that support safety, financial literacy, health, and family wellness.					
Links parents to training that contributes to self-sufficiency and to reaching goals around their education and/or career training.					

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### 4. PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILIES AS LIFELONG EDUCATORS

*Enhances the parent-child relationship, and supports parents' role as the first and lifelong educators of their children.*

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<b>Knowledge</b>					
Understands that families are vital to children's development and learning.					
Recognizes positive interactions between families and children.					
<b>Skills</b>					
Actively engages families in interactions with their children when children are present.					
Is able to focus on family and child strengths as an entry point into relationships and conversations about children.					
Promotes prenatal attachment with expectant families.					



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Facilitates and/or coordinates evidenced-based parenting education opportunities for parents individually and in groups, individualizing for culture, gender, and age, as appropriate.					
Supports parents (or links parents to supports) to address challenging child behaviors in positive, developmentally appropriate ways and accesses resources as necessary.					
Works well with other program staff to support ongoing interactive literacy activities between parents and their children at home and in the community.					

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Supports families in developing skills and confidence to be effective leaders and advocates for their children.					
<b>Actions</b>					
Talks with families about their vital role in their children’s development and learning.					
Supports expectant families in making connections between their actions and the pre-natal effects.					
Offers learning materials for children and parents that reflect families’ cultures, encourages family members to visit, observe, and volunteer in the program.					
Provides families with appropriate information, training, and connections to future early care and educational settings and kindergarten to help facilitate the transition process for parents and children.					

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Develops strong relationships with community child care, preschools, and public schools in order to enhance home-school partnerships and transitions.					

#### 5. FAMILY CONNECTIONS TO PEERS AND COMMUNITY

*Facilitates networks and group activities that support families' strengths, interests, and needs.*

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<b>Knowledge</b>					
Recognizes the importance of support networks, particularly for isolated families.					
Understands how facilitation skills support group processes and interactions.					

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<b>Skills</b>					
Demonstrates group facilitation knowledge and skills.					
Is able to support families in identifying, developing, and utilizing their informal and formal support networks (e.g., neighborhood groups, faith/spiritual communities, civic organizations).					
Has the ability to identify common interests and needs of parents in order to plan appropriate activities and learning opportunities.					
Is skilled at coordinating training and educational opportunities for parents (e.g., adult education, life skills, parenting courses, family literacy, employment training).					

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<b>Actions</b>					
Educates parents on Policy Council and other available committee or community opportunities that will promote parent leadership and advocacy.					
Includes parents as active participants in groups and training so they can share skills, culture, and talents.					
Supports parents as they engage in volunteering, collaborating with the community, and other ways of contributing to program activities and the larger community.					

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#### 6. FAMILY ACCESS TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES

*Supports families in using community resources that enhance family well-being and children's learning and development.*

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<b>Knowledge</b>					
Has an extensive knowledge of social service and community resources for families (e.g., health, mental health, nutrition, financial literacy, education).					
Understands how to match community and program resources to family interests and needs.					
Knows when and how to connect families with specialized resources and assistance (e.g., mental health, domestic violence, substance abuse treatment, child welfare services) and when to ask for supervisory help to do so.					

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<b>Skills</b>					
Knows how to provide ongoing information and support to families in using program services and community resources to achieve family goals and promote the well-being of their children.					
Demonstrates the ability to support families as leaders in the program and as advocates for needed resources for their families.					
Is able to build partnerships with schools and service providers to link families to needed services and support successful transitions.					
<b>Actions</b>					
Becomes family's liaison to program and community services as appropriate. This could include joint visits with professionals in health, mental health, child development, and child welfare as indicated to address specific issues or family needs.					

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Follows up on the effectiveness of family referrals to community resources.					

#### 7. COORDINATED, INTEGRATED, AND COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

*Acts as a member of a comprehensive services team so that family service activities are coordinated and integrated throughout the program.*

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<b>Knowledge</b>					
Develops a basic knowledge of health, mental health, child development, and disabilities to ensure service coordination amongst HS/EHS staff.					



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<b>Skills</b>					
Is able to work cooperatively with other staff (mental health, teaching, health, disabilities, etc.) to ensure families' individual values and practices are incorporated into program strategies for children and families.					
Can communicate with families and others about the importance of health, mental health, and child development services for children's ongoing learning and development.					
<b>Actions</b>					
Ensures that pertinent knowledge about families is appropriately shared with colleagues and professionals in a way that assures confidentiality and increases service coordination.					

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#### 8. DATA DRIVEN SERVICES AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

*Collects and analyzes information to find new solutions to challenges as part of ongoing monitoring in order to continuously improve services.*

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<b>Knowledge</b>					
Understands how the Head Start Program Performance Standards, the Head Start Act, and Office of Head Start family engagement and family services technical assistance resources relate to daily work.					
Learns to use program data sources to inform work with parents and expectant families.					
<b>Skills</b>					
Knows how to use family well-being data to inform decisions and methods for supporting families.					

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Integrates data collected from parents and expectant families into individualized services, decision-making, and daily practice (e.g., survey, observational, or conversational data that includes family ideas and experiences).					
<b>Actions</b>					
Performs effective recordkeeping and internal and external reporting tasks to track individual family progress and program progress.					
Prepares and distributes evaluations and feedback suggestion forms during workshops, meetings, and other activities for parents and families.					
Uses data results to inform the design of workshops, meetings, and other activities for parents and expectant families.					

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#### 9. FOUNDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

*Actively participates in opportunities for professional development.*

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<b>Knowledge</b>					
Understands what professionalism requires in a human services environment.					
Understands the value of reflective supervision for personal and professional growth.					
<b>Skills</b>					
Demonstrates the ability to be self-reflective and integrate new knowledge into practice.					
Maintains professional boundaries and confidentiality of family and child information.					
Effectively utilizes supervisory feedback, educational opportunities, and technical assistance resources to improve individual skills and knowledge.					

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<b>Actions</b>					
Actively engages in reflective supervision to gain new insights and knowledge about relationships with families.					
Creates and works on individualized professional development plans in collaboration with supervisors.					

### RESOURCE

Head Start and Early Head Start Relationship-Based Competencies for Staff and Supervisors who Work With Families. ACF-IM-HS-12-05. HHS/ACF/OHS. 2012. Visit at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/center/foundations/ohs-rbc.pdf>.



THE NATIONAL CENTER ON  
**Parent, Family, and  
Community Engagement**

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