



FY 2010 Office of Head Start Monitoring Protocol

September 10, 2009

Family & Community Services Protocol



Family and Community Services

This section of the Protocol contains a list of **Compliance Questions** that identify Head Start (HS) program requirements against which each question is designed to monitor compliance. Reviewers assigned to this section must answer all of the Compliance Questions, but only after collecting and analyzing sufficient information to make well-informed decisions. Responses to each Compliance Questions must be substantiated with details from extensive interviews, document reviews, and/or observations.

Targeted Questions following the Compliance Questions will help lead reviewers to the right people, documents, and observations from which to gather information. These questions reflect the minimum evidence gathering requirements to address the Compliance Questions. Responses to Compliance Questions are not limited to the interviews, document reviews, and observations outlined in the Protocol's Targeted Questions, so long as additional sources are necessary to answer the Compliance Question. The onsite review should cover all program options provided by the grantee and delegate as well as childcare partnerships and family child care homes.

For each Compliance Question, reviewers must document and describe detailed evidence collected through the Guides and Checklists. Guides are organized by type of interviewee, type of document to be reviewed, or type of observation to be conducted. For example, when interviewing a parent, all Targeted Questions for parents, regardless of where they reside in the protocol, will be listed on the Parent Interview Guide, organized by key topic area (e.g., Communication with Families). The Guides are the area where reviewers will document all of their Notes, which form the foundation for understanding grantee compliance, and, when appropriate, become the basis for preliminary areas of noncompliance. For all evidence collected, reviewers should provide sufficient context to support the conclusions drawn, including the number of documents reviewed, people interviewed, and observations made. In the Monitoring Software, all Notes collected through the Guides are attached to the standards listed with each Targeted or Compliance Question.

The Family and Community Services section of the Protocol is divided into six subsections:

- Staff Qualifications – FCS
- Building Relationships with Families
- Strengthening Families through the Family Partnership Agreement Process
- Encouraging Parent Participation
- Building and Maintaining Community Partnerships
- Management Systems Analysis



Family and Community Services Question 1A

Has the program hired staff or consultants as content area experts to oversee family and community services who have training and experience related to social services, human services, or family services?

1304.52(d)(5)

Targeted Question for Family and Community Services Question 1A

Interview: FCS Coordinator (Staff Qualifications and Expertise)

- Describe your training or experience related to social services, human services, or family services. If you are not the content area expert, describe the training or experience of the person who provides this expertise for the program.
- Describe how you provide the program with regularly scheduled, ongoing expertise and oversight in the area of family and community services. If you are not the content area expert, does someone support you in this area and how?

Staff Files: FCS Content Area Expert (Staff Qualifications and Expertise)

- List the family and community services content area expert's training, experience, and qualifications.



Family and Community Services Question 1B

Are parent involvement services supported by staff or consultants with training, experience, and skills in helping parents advocate and make decisions for their young children and families?

1304.52(d)(6)

Targeted Question for Family and Community Services Question 1B

Interview: FCS Staff (Staff Qualifications and Expertise)

- Explain your experience in organizing or facilitating parent education, advocacy, or support groups.
- What training, experience, and skills do you have in helping parents advocate and make decisions for their young children and families? What experience do you have in making referrals (e.g., health, mental health, and disabilities) for families?



Family and Community Services Question 2A

Are opportunities for interaction between staff and families made available to parents throughout the year? Are they respectful of each family's cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity?

1304.40(a)(4), 1304.40(a)(5)

Targeted Question for Family and Community Services Question 2A

Interview: FCS Staff (Parent Involvement)

- Are activities planned at varying times during the day and week (e.g., at breakfast, end of the day, weekends) to encourage as many parents as possible to participate?
1304.40(a)(4)
- Are alternative work schedules provided to allow staff to interact with working families during weekend events (e.g., picnics, religious and Tribal ceremonies, or other cultural events), if necessary?
1304.40(a)(4)
- How are the needs of family members with special needs considered when planning meetings and activities?
1304.40(a)(4)
- How are meetings and interactions respectful of families' diversity and cultural and ethnic backgrounds, including families who might be unable to read or speak English? Can you share materials or plans that show how the program implements this requirement?
1304.40(a)(5)

Interview: Parent (Parent Involvement)

- Are activities planned at varying times during the day and week (e.g., at breakfast, end of the day, weekends) to encourage you to participate?
- Are meetings and interactions respectful of your family's cultural and ethnic background?
- Do program staff interact with you during weekend events (e.g., picnics, religious and Tribal ceremonies, or other cultural events)?

Document Review: Newsletters, Calendars, etc.

- Review newsletters, calendars, event flyers, etc. for documentation that events are planned and that opportunities exist for interaction between staff and families throughout the year. Describe examples of the events documented.



Family and Community Services Question 2B

Are classroom staff and home visitors able to communicate with families they serve either directly or through an interpreter? Are they familiar with the families' ethnic backgrounds?

1306.20(f)

Targeted Question for Family and Community Services Question 2B

Interview: FCS Staff and FCS Coordinator (Communication with Families)

- What strategies are used to ensure communication with families in their own language?

Interview: FCS Coordinator (Communication with Families)

- What steps are taken when staff are unable to communicate directly with parents?

Interview: ECD Coordinator (Culture and Diversity)

- How are staff familiarized with the families' ethnic backgrounds?
Asked by: ECD

Document Review: Materials for Families

- Review materials available for both English and non-English speaking families. Into what additional languages have materials been translated? Do these languages reflect languages spoken by the program's families?



Family and Community Services Question 2C

Does the program initiate appropriate support for families whose children have been absent (unexcused) for 4 or more consecutive days?

ERSEA2A, 1305.8(b)

Targeted Question for Family and Community Services Question 2C

Interview: FCS Staff (Communication with Families)

- What is the process for reaching out to families whose child has been absent for 4 or more consecutive days? When absences result from temporary family situations, what kind of family support procedures does the program initiate?
- How do you reach out to parents if families have no phone or are otherwise hard to reach? What do you do if you cannot reach the family?
(Note to reviewer: Listen for staff efforts to reach out to families beyond phone and notes sent home.)

Child Files

- Did staff communicate with the family regarding any absence greater than 4 consecutive days?



Family and Community Services Question 3A

Is a strength-based and family-driven, collaborative partnership-building process in place so all families have the opportunity to participate and, if parents choose, to develop and implement an individualized partnership agreement?

1304.40(a)(1),
1304.40(a)(2), 642(b)(7)

Targeted Question for Family and Community Services Question 3A

Interview: FCS Staff (Parent Involvement)

- Describe the process for developing trusting relationships with families and encouraging them to participate in individualized family partnerships. When does this process begin?
1304.40(a)(1)
- Describe the process for determining the needs and interests that form the basis for jointly developing goals with parents?
1304.40(a)(1)
- How do you approach situations in which families are not ready, or elect not to participate in, the family partnership process?
1304.40(a)(1)
- How do you track families' progress in meeting their goals? How do you know when families have met their goals?
1304.40(a)(2)

Child Files

- Review family contact notes or Family Partnership Agreements, if written. Are timetables and strategies for achieving family goals documented?

Interview: Parent (Support Services for Families)

- Do you find that you have a relationship or partnership with staff that is trusting and helps you to focus on your family's needs?
- When does the program start working with you to create goals that support and strengthen your entire family?
- If you feel comfortable, describe some of the goals that you have made for your family, and tell me where you are in your plan for achieving those goals.



Family and Community Services Question 3B

Does the program provide, either directly or through referral, resources responsive to families' identified needs and interests?

1304.40(b)(1),
1304.40(b)(1)(i),
1304.40(b)(1)(ii),
1304.40(b)(1)(iii)

Targeted Question for Family and Community Services Question 3B

Interview: FCS Coordinator (Support Services for Families)

- How do you determine that the services provided through a partner community organization respond to the families' needs? Has the program sought Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) input on health providers and resources in the community?
- Can you share examples of educational resources and tell me how it was determined that these resources best fit the families you serve?
1304.40(b)(1)(iii)
- Has the community experienced community-wide emergencies or crises that affected many Head Start (HS) families? If so, what kind of help, if any, did the program provide in response, either directly or through referral?

Interview: FCS Staff (Support Services for Families)

- How do you know whether a resource or referral is meeting the families' needs?
1304.40(b)(1)
- How are opportunities to participate in education or appropriate interventions provided to families in the following areas:
 - Counseling programs,
 - Substance abuse programs,
 - Child abuse and neglect education,
 - Domestic violence services,
 - Prevention programs for at-risk families, and
 - Mental health education?
 1304.40(b)(1)(ii)
- Can you share examples of how you have helped families access emergency services or resources, such as food, housing, clothing, or transportation?
1304.40(b)(1)(i)

Interview: Parent (Support Services for Families)

- What kinds of resources or referrals has the program helped you access? Tell me how the resources or referrals you received meet your needs?
FCS3C



Family and Community Services Question 3C

Does the program provide, either directly or through referrals, opportunities for parents and children to participate in family literacy services?

1304.40(e)(4),
1304.40(e)(4)(i),
1304.40(e)(4)(ii)

Targeted Question for Family and Community Services Question 3C

Interview: FCS Coordinator (Family Literacy)

- What is your program's approach to providing family literacy services?
1304.40(e)(4)(i)
- Describe how your program provides services that address the four major activities defining family literacy in Head Start:
 - Parent and child interactive literacy activities;
 - Training for parents as the primary teachers of their children;
 - Parent training that leads to economic self-sufficiency and financial literacy; and
 - Age-appropriate education for children that prepares them for success in school and life.

Interview: FCS Staff (Family Literacy)

- How are parents, as adult learners, helped to identify and address their own literacy goals?
1304.40(e)(4)(ii)

Interview: Parent (Support Services for Families)

- What kinds of resources or referrals has the program helped you access? Tell me how the resources or referrals you received meet your needs?
FCS3B



Family and Community Services Question 4A Are parents encouraged to participate in staff-parent conferences and home visits to discuss their child's development and education?	
	1304.40(i)(1), 1304.40(i)(2), 1304.40(i)(3), 1304.21(a)(2)(iii)

Targeted Question for Family and Community Services Question 4A

Interview: Parent (Parent Involvement)

- How often does the teacher visit you at home?
- Are parent visits held at times convenient for you?

Interview: Teacher, Family Child Care Provider, Home Visitor, and ECD Coordinator (Parent Involvement)

- How do staff encourage parents to participate in staff-parent conferences?
1304.21(a)(2)(iii)
Asked by: ECD
- How do you explain the advantages of home visits to parents?
1304.40(i)(1)
Asked by: ECD

Interview: Family Child Care Provider, Teacher, and ECD Coordinator (Parent Involvement)

- Are teachers required to make no fewer than two home visits per program year?
1304.40(i)(2)
Asked by: ECD



Family and Community Services Question 4B

Are parents invited to become integrally involved in the approach to their children’s development and education?

1304.21(a)(2)(i),
1304.21(a)(2)(ii),
1304.40(d)(2)

Targeted Question for Family and Community Services Question 4B

Interview: Parent (Parent Involvement)

- Have you been asked to make suggestions for classroom activities?
- Have you been given opportunities to observe your child’s skills and talk to program staff about how you think your child is progressing?
1304.21(a)(2)(ii)
- What types of information about your child’s progress is shared with you? How often do you receive these reports?

Interview: Parent (Support Services for Families)

- If you speak another language, how have you been encouraged by the program to create and share stories in your native language?

Interview: Teacher, Family Child Care Provider, ECD Coordinator, Head Start/Early Head Start Director, and Home Visitor (Parent Involvement)

- How are parents involved in the selection and or development of the program’s curriculum?
1304.21(a)(2)(i)
Asked by: ECD and PDM
- How are parents provided with opportunities to increase their child observation skills and to share their assessments with staff?
1304.21(a)(2)(ii)
Asked by: ECD and PDM

Interview: Teacher, Family Child Care Provider, Head Start/Early Head Start Director, and ECD Coordinator (Parent Involvement)

- When are parents allowed to visit the program and observe their children?
1304.21(a)(2)(i)
Asked by: ECD and PDM

Interview: Teacher, Family Child Care Provider, and Home Visitor (Parent Involvement)

- Are developmental assessments shared with parents throughout the program year?
Asked by: ECD
- Are parents included in educational decisions related to their children? Can you describe the decision-making process?
Asked by: ECD



Family and Community Services Question 5A	
Has the program taken affirmative steps to establish ongoing collaborative partnerships with community organizations?	
	1304.41(a)(2)

Targeted Question for Family and Community Services Question 5A

Interview: FCS Coordinator (Community Partnerships)

- Has the program established ongoing collaborative relationships with health and mental health services providers, such as local health departments, community health centers, managed care organizations, medical or dental schools, and professional associations? Can you describe these partnerships and specify the agencies with which partnerships have been formed.

Interview: FCS Staff and FCS Coordinator (Community Partnerships)

- How do the community partnerships the program has established support families' needs (e.g., improve, share, and augment services for children and families)? What documents and materials does the program have, if available, to support demonstration of its community partnership collaborations?

(Note to reviewer: In your notes, indicate the type or types of documentation (e.g., written agreements, informal agreements, correspondence, in-kind, meeting minutes)).



Family and Community Services Question 5B Has the program established and maintained Health Services Advisory Committees (HSAC) that include parents, professionals, and other community volunteers?	
	1304.41(b)

Targeted Question for Family and Community Services Question 5B

Interview: FCS Staff (Parent Involvement)

- How does the HSAC help the program stay abreast of current community health needs and recommend necessary interventions for children and families?

Document Review: HSAC Roster and Meeting Minutes

- Review the HSAC roster and meeting minutes to determine the frequency of meetings, relevancy of topics, and member attendance. If no roster or meeting minutes exist, ask a staff member where this information is located.



Family and Community Services Question 5C

Does the program have procedures to support successful transitions for enrolled children and families that provide coordination with other agencies as well as outreach to encourage communication between Early Head Start, school principals, and others involved in supporting children and families through transitions, including joint transition meetings?

1304.41(c)(1),
1304.41(c)(1)(i),
1304.41(c)(1)(ii),
1304.41(c)(1)(iii),
1304.41(c)(1)(iv),
1304.40(h)(1), 642A(a)(5)

Targeted Question for Family and Community Services Question 5C

Interview: Parent (Transitions)

- Ask parents who have experienced a transition into Head Start recently or parents who are in the process of a transition from Head Start: How did the program assist your child with the transition process?

DIS5B

Applies to: Programs serving preschool-age children

Interview: ECD Coordinator (Transitions)

- How are developmentally appropriate expectations for children's learning and development shared with the school or other programs as the child transitions?
1304.41(c)(1)(iii)
Asked by: ECD
- How do you encourage parents and elementary school teachers to discuss the educational, developmental, and other needs of each child?
1304.41(c)(1)(ii)
Applies to: Programs serving preschool-age children
Asked by: ECD
- How do you help families understand how parent involvement relates to their child's academic success and teach them strategies for maintaining parent involvement as their child moves from Early Head Start to Head Start or elementary school?
Asked by: ECD
- How do you work with parents who speak a language other than English to achieve effective transitions?
Asked by: ECD
- How does the program organize and participate in joint, transition-related training for school and Head Start staff?
1304.41(c)(1)(iv)
Applies to: Programs serving preschool-age children
Asked by: ECD
- What are the procedures for transferring, with parental consent, Head Start program records for each participating child to the school or program where the child will enroll?
1304.41(c)(1)(i)
Asked by: ECD



Family and Community Services Question 6A

This section lists a series of targeted questions not linked to a performance standard at the service area level. These questions are designed to contribute to a comprehensive analysis of the program’s management systems. Accordingly, these questions appear in each protocol section and are completed for each service area to provide insight into how key management systems function with relationship to each service area.

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Targeted Question for Family and Community Services Question 6A

Interview: FCS Coordinator (Ongoing Monitoring and Oversight)

- How do you monitor delivery of the program's family and community services and the program's compliance with all Federal regulations?
- Show me the documents, systems and reports used in the implementation of the ongoing monitoring of family and community services.
- What do you do if you detect problems or weaknesses with the program's family and community services?

Interview: FCS Coordinator (Program Planning)

- Describe how information from the annual self assessment is incorporated into your program planning and implementation.
- Describe how information from the community assessment (and its updates) is incorporated into your program planning and implementation.

Summary Analysis: Overall Service Summary

- Summarize your general impressions of the program’s delivery of family and community services. The summary should describe what the program does well, which areas need improvement, and your overall level of confidence in the program’s provision of family and community services. Your summary should not directly reiterate the strengths and findings you identified through implementation of the protocol but, rather, should reflect your overall analysis and impressions of the program’s effectiveness in providing family and community services.

Summary Analysis: Communication among Staff

- Summarize whether the program has effective two-way communication between FCS staff and staff in other service areas. Your summary should provide examples of why you consider the communication between the program’s staff to be effective or ineffective. Your summary might reflect a potential program strength, a concern, or general compliance.

Summary Analysis: Communication with Parents

- Summarize whether the program has effective two-way communication between FCS staff and parents. Your summary should provide examples of why you consider the communication between the program’s staff and parents to be effective or ineffective. Your summary might reflect a potential program strength, a concern, or general compliance.



Summary Analysis: Ongoing Monitoring

- Summarize the program's process for ongoing monitoring of FCS services. A comprehensive explanation of this system should include a description of each of the following:
 - Monitoring measures, tools or instruments, materials and procedures
 - Staff responsibilities for ongoing monitoring of their respective service areas
 - How the program analyzes and documents progress toward achieving program goals and complying with performance requirements
 - How follow up occurs for findings or problems identified through data collection, and how these findings are corrected and documented.

This summary should help all team members understand the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of FCS services. Your summary might reflect a potential program strength, a concern, or general compliance.

Summary Analysis: Planning

- Review the FCS Services area's written plans so you understand the goals the program intends to achieve and the strategies the program plans to use to accomplish its goals. Summarize the program's progress in implementing its plans and achieving its defined goals. Your summary might reflect a potential program strength, a concern, or general compliance.

Summary Analysis: Record-Keeping

- Summarize whether the program is effective in keeping up to date and accurate FCS records. Your summary should provide examples of why you consider the program's record-keeping system to be effective or ineffective. Your summary might reflect a potential program strength, a concern, or general compliance.

Summary Analysis: Service Specific Strengths

- Summarize program strengths noted in family and community services. Describe any practices that were found to be new or innovative and had a positive impact that helped the grantee overcome challenges and provided greater/improved service quality or surpassed established performance indicators. Some examples of broad categories of program strengths include (but are not limited to):
 - Collaborations with local/community-based services
 - Exemplary fiscal practices to ensure the safeguarding of Federal dollars
 - Highly successful efforts to address and improve school readiness
 - Expansion of the program and increased accessibility
 - Extraordinary accommodations for children/families (e.g., children with disabilities)
 - Innovative program design and management

Do not include strengths that will contradict any PANCs identified on this review.