

# FAMILY ADVOCATE TRAINING GUIDE INDEX

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## **FAMILY ADVOCATE TRAINING GUIDE**

This training guide is not a complete training guide for the Family Advocate position. The majority of the training is found in the Work Plans.

### The Family Advocate Role:

#### With Families

Family Advocates are responsible for the delivery of social and health services to Head Start and Early Head Start families enrolled in the center based program option. The advocates also serve as a liaison between families and the other staff at the center and help to facilitate parental involvement in the Head Start program.

It is important that Family Advocates develop trusting, comfortable relationships with the families enrolled in HS and EHS. Families should feel that they are able to approach the advocate and discuss personal/family issues without staff being judgmental or breaching the family's confidentiality.

#### With Other Staff

The Family Advocates are directly supervised by the Family & Community Services Coordinator. However, Advocates also receive feedback and direction from the other PACT Component Coordinators and the Site Supervisor at their center. Family Advocates must develop good two-way communication with the other center staff, including the Head Start/Early Head Start Teacher, Teacher Aides, and Transportation Staff.

Families may share information with the Advocate that other center employees have a need-to-know. If families are to receive the most benefit possible from Head Start, it is vitally important that the center staff that delivers services to the child and family have a good working relationship and a "team" approach to working with families.

The Site Supervisor is responsible for knowing the daily activities of the Family Advocate.

#### Within The Community

Family Advocates are responsible for developing and maintaining relationships with the social service agencies, health providers, and other organizations within the community. Family Advocates should appear and act professionally when interacting with other agencies. It is important that information provided to agencies from PACT is consistent.

Decisions about collaborative activities, sharing of agency resources, etc. should be made by the appropriate coordinator. Family Advocates should work to develop personal contacts within community organizations in order to facilitate the delivery of social and health services to families.

**Family Advocates are required to attend Inter Agency Meetings in their communities.** See 1302.53(a)(2)(viii) in the workplans for interagency meeting schedules/locations.

### Home Visits

Much of the Family Advocate's time should be spent making home visits with families. The majority of home visits completed should take place in the families' homes. The families' homes are the ideal environment in which to build a friendly, yet professional relationship with parents. There is no minimum or maximum amount of time that should be spent at a home visit. The time allowed should be sufficient to meet the needs of the family and the program. Home visits should be scheduled at the family's convenience, including evenings and weekends if necessary, and be made at times to include both parents/guardians in the home where possible.

### Center Check In/Check Out Board

When Advocates leave the building to attend meetings, visit other agencies, or go to other centers/sites, etc., the times and location should be documented on the check-out board as well as the estimated time of return. Any time off or deviation from the normal 8:00 – 4:30 work schedule must be approved by the Family & Community Services Coordinator in advance.

### Intake Visit

The Intake visit is the first visit the Family Advocate does with the Family. This visit should take at least one hour if not more and include a review of agency policies using the Parent Handbook and completion of the Family Outcomes Assessment.

### Second Home Visit

The second home visit for each family is scheduled by the Family Advocate during late fall. The following must be completed on home visit #2 and documentation must appear on the Family Advocate's Home Visit Report form:

- *Family Outcomes Assessment* (2<sup>nd</sup> assessment)
- Family Goals (if applicable) and document in CPlus
- Follow up on Social Service referrals and document in CPlus
- Distribute written information and document in CPlus
- Follow up on Health needs (will be followed up weekly until complete)
- Follow up on attendance issues
- *Attendance Success Plan* (if attendance is below 85%)
- Follow up on needs if requested by the Center Based Teacher
- Distribute and discuss: toothbrushes and tooth paste
- Discuss Ready Rosie
- Ready, Set, Grow materials, if applicable
- In-kind training/review, if needed

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Home Visits & On-going Home Visits

Family Advocates will do an end of the year home visit in April or May with parents. On this visit, Family Advocates will have parents complete the spring assessment of the *Family Outcomes Assessment* and discuss the *Participant Evaluation of the Program* with them. (See 1302.52 (a)(b)(c)(1-3) in Work Plans). Other home visits will be conducted as time allows or as needed to ensure everything is going well for the family and provide support, to encourage volunteerism, follow-up on health needs, and for staff to hear input from parents about the PACT program and the services we provide.

**Visits should be scheduled for the following reasons:**

- Ongoing follow-up of child's health needs, including bed bugs/head lice issues
- To make or follow up on social service referrals
- To assist family in completing family goals
- To follow up on a classroom attendance issues (See the Work Plans) or transportation issues
- To follow up on missing Inkind
- To review information given from the *Family Outcomes Assessment*
- To begin new goals anytime during the year

Additional Family Contacts

It may not always be necessary to make a home visit in order to complete follow-up. Family contacts may also be made by phone or by parents coming to the center.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Prior to the scheduled conference month, the Teacher will follow the steps below to schedule a conference with parents/guardians, including sending a note home explaining the purpose of this contact. For foster children, DCFS caseworkers will also be contacted. The Teacher attempts a parent contact approximately every three months.

The CB Teacher will plan and schedule the Parent-teacher Conference or Home Visit by:

- 1.) Schedule & make appointments during Family Events
- 2.) "Back Pack" home a note to the parent/guardian to select a date and time of conference.
- 3.) Assign a date and time for the conference and send the information by mail.
- 4.) Involve the Family Advocate and ask Family Advocate to assist family.

All attempts to contact and invite families to parent/teacher conferences are documented on the *Education Contact Report*. The Teacher will use the Child Plus printout to track contacts.

Change of Status

If application information changes after submission, the FA is to complete a *Change of Status Form* for any updates to the application that include:

1. Changes, additions, or removal of family members.
2. Delivery of baby by pregnant woman
3. Change of employment/education for parent(s)
4. Change of custody

The completed form should be emailed to the Family & Community Services Coordinator, who will make the changes in the ChildPlus database.

For address and phone number changes, the Advocate is responsible for updating that information in ChildPlus as soon as they become aware of it.

Release of Children

The names on this form are adults over the age of 18 years. Staff will only release children to the adults documented on this form.

### Emergency Care Information

The *Emergency Care Information* form is completed by Family Advocate on intake. Distribute according to directions on bottom of form.

### Family Advocate Home Visit Report

A *Family Advocate Home Visit Report Form* should be completed prior to making any home visit. The *HVR* should document anything completed on the home visit: forms, handouts, health and social service follow-up, activity reminders, etc. The Home Visit Report documentation should clearly show what all was done during the visit. FAs should also document any significant in-person contacts on the HVR form to show contacts with families.

### Health Progress Sheet & Follow up Progress Sheets

The original *Health Progress Sheet & Follow up Progress Sheets* should be kept in the family file until completed. A copy is sent to Central Office as requested by the Health Coordinator, until completed, at which time the original is sent in. (See 1302.42 (ii) in the Work Plans).

### Attendance Support

See 1302.16 (a)(2)(i-iii) in the Work Plans.

### Referrals

Referrals and follow-up is documented in ChildPlus by the Family Advocate. (See 1302.52 (a)(b)(c)(1-3) in Work Plans.)

### Family Outcomes Assessment and Family Goals

See 1302.52 (a)(b)(c)(1-3) in Work Plans.

### Family Advocate File Maintenance Checklist

Use the *File Maintenance Checklist* to maintain children's files in the field. Staff use the *File Maintenance Checklist*, attached to the front of the child's files, when a child leaves the program in mid-year and for all children at the end of each program year. Staff will follow instructions on the form to shred forms, retain forms in the file, or submit forms to appropriate coordinator.

Children's files that drop mid-year will be hand carried (DCFS file, teacher's file, and past files) by the Family Advocate to Central Office, or sent with a manager. All children's files at the end of each program year will be taken to the Central Office, as designated in the End of Year Checkout Procedures.

### Center Team Meetings

Family Advocates are expected to attend the Center Team Meeting at each of their centers every week, as possible. Team meetings are used to review areas of concern, discuss upcoming family events, transportation issues, etc. The meetings give center staff a chance to give input and receive information as a group in order to enhance communication and help build the center "team". **This is not the time to discuss individual children or families unless there is a "need to know" for every staff member attending the meeting. Family Advocates and Teachers should set aside additional time every week as necessary to discuss those issues.**

### Parent Committees/Family Events

See 1301.4 (a)(b) in Work Plans.

Family Advocates will use *Parent Committee Minutes* to document committee meeting minutes and planning of Family Event activities. HBT's should receive a copy of the flyer via email or in person in advance of the event taking place so HB families can be invited. A *Request for Event Pay* form is used to request funds from the Family Event budget that is designated for each Center. *Volunteer Sign-In Sheets* should be submitted to CO within 1 week of the family event, along with the original *Request for Event Pay* and a copy of the flyer that was used to advertise the event.

### Time in Classroom

Family Advocates should have enough knowledge about the enrolled child to enable them to answer basic questions from the family about classroom activities and interactions. In order to do so, the Family Advocate should spend some time in the classroom interacting with the children. The FA may observe or join in the classroom activities. Family Advocates should only be in the classroom as their schedule allows as direct services to families take priority.

Any problems with a child's developmental progress, classroom management, etc. should be communicated to the family by the teacher. However, the teacher may at times request that behavior issues be addressed by the Family Advocate on home visits.

### Children's DCFS Files

Family Advocates are responsible for completing and copying forms for DCFS files, copying forms for teacher/transporters after intake visit. The DCFS files located at each center are started and reviewed by the Family Advocate, who also completes the *Children's Record for DCFS* by classroom. This form is kept in the Site Supervisor's office with the children's DCFS files. The Site Supervisor will discuss with Family Advocate or Teacher about any missing information.

Throughout the program year, when families change or up-date information on DCFS paperwork, copies will need to be made and placed in DCFS file by the Family Advocate or SS. Children's' DCFS files contain the following paperwork:

- 1.) *Physical Exam Form*
- 2.) *Immunization Record*
- 3.) *TB test results*
- 4.) *Lead screening results*
- 5.) *Vision & Hearing screening*
- 6.) *Copy of child's Health History*
- 7.) *Emergency Care Information*
- 8.) *Copy of child's Application*
- 9.) *DCFS Verification of Receipt*
- 10.) *Permission & Consent from Parents*
- 12.) *Release of Children*
- 13.) *Copy of Certified Birth Certificate*
- 14.) *Infestation Report- Head Lice/Bed Bugs*

### DCFS Individual Checklist

This form is completed by the Family Advocate and is placed on the inside of each child's DCFS folder. The FA reviews the children's DCFS files and completes the *Children's Record for DCFS* grid by classroom and places it in the front of the DCFS file lateral/cabinet. The grid is updated as paperwork is added to the DCFS files. The Site Supervisor will discuss with FA about missing information.

### Permission and Consent

The *Permission and Consent from Parents* form is explained to the parent/guardian during intake, completed, and signed. If a parent states that they do not wish their child or family to be photographed, the Teacher is responsible for making Managers, Supervisors, and classroom staff working with that child aware of this. The teacher will make a copy of "NO" to Permission for Publicity and place the information in the classroom Health & Safety Notebook. If a foster child is enrolled, the Family Advocate will note this on the form.

Parents also indicate on this form that they received a copy of the parent handbook, which includes information/policies regarding video surveillance, data sharing, discipline procedures, pest management plan/uses of pesticides procedures, certified birth certificate procedures, and late pickup procedures. Signing this form also acknowledges they wish to enroll their child in the program.

### Transportation Requests

Anytime a child or family needs transported by PACT Staff, the FA will complete a transportation request and forward it to the Central Office if they cannot transport the family themselves. When the FA provides the transportation, the original form is sent to the Family & Community Services Coordinator after transportation has been provided.

### In-kind Tracking

Families are expected to complete weekly Inkind Record Reports that are sent home by the CB teachers. Family Advocates will need to follow-up with those families who do not return inkind to find out the reasons why the forms are not getting returned and obtain any if possible.

### Positive Behavioral Support Plans

Family Advocates are required to attend Behavioral Conferences. The CB Teacher or Disabilities/Mental Health Services Coordinator will notify the Family Advocate of the conference.

### Health & Safety Check-Ins and Family Support Plans

See 1302.50 (b)(6) in the Work Plans.

### Ready Rosie

Family Advocates are responsible for the oversight of Ready Rosie playlists being scheduled and sent to families on a routine basis. Advocates should also maintain communication with CB teachers if any children need individualized playlists for specific needs. FAs can also utilize the parenting resources with parents as well.