

 <b>Policy #: CHDS-5</b>	<b>Page #: 1 of 2</b>
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**COMPONENT: CHILD HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES**

**SUBJECT: INVOLVING PARENTS**

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:** In collaboration with each child’s parent, the program must complete a current developmental screening to identify any concerns, within the first 45 calendar days of when the child first attends. To ensure that Parents are involved in the screening, follow-up, and treatment process and in making all possible efforts to ensure that each child is enrolled in and receiving appropriate health care services. To ensure that staff consult with parents immediately when child health or developmental problems are suspected or identified. To familiarize parents with the use of and rationale for all health and developmental procedures administered through the program or by contract or agreement, and obtain advance parent or guardian authorization for such procedures. To ensure that the results of diagnostic and treatment procedures and ongoing care are shared with, and understood, by parents. To talk with parents about how to familiarize their children in a developmentally appropriate way and in advance about all the procedures they will receive while enrolled in the program. To assist parents in enrolling and participating in a system of ongoing family health care and encourage parents to be active partners in their children’s health care process. To ensure that written documentation is maintained if a parent or other legally responsible adult refuses to give authorization for health services.

**POLICY AND PROCEDURE:**

Head Start will ensure that medical and dental programs are provided for program staff, parents/guardians, and families and the results of diagnostic treatment procedures and on-going care are shared with and explained to parents/guardians. Parents/guardians will be familiarized with developmentally appropriate ways to prepare their child for procedures and screenings. The Family Advocate will assist parents/guardians in enrolling and participating in a system of ongoing family health care and encourage parents/guardians to be an active partner in their child’s health care process.

The Family Advocate will assist the parent/guardian in understanding how to enroll and participate and to be an active partner in their child’s health care and to advocate for their family’s health needs in various health care systems by including a goal in the Family Partnership Agreement and training them on their rights by:

- Discussing the child’s medical and dental status during enrollment;
- Encouraging and providing information regarding the importance of establishing a medical/dental home for their child and the family in an effort to develop good relationships with providers;

- Providing parents/guardian with Community Resource Manual
- Providing information and assistance on how to apply for medical benefits access to safe transportation and other needed resources;
- Educating parents/guardians on the importance of completing program health requirements and implementing health/dental referrals for any child with outstanding health/dental requirements;
- Promoting preventative health care for all family members; assisting parents/guardians in becoming an effective consumer of health care;
- Educating parents/guardians on what to expect when attending health/dental appointments and encourage them to prepare their child;
- Establishing Family Partnership Agreements with families who agree to participate;
- Encouraging parent/guardian to accompany their child their child to medical/dental appointments and actively participate;
- Encouraging parents/guardians to participate in the Health Services Advisory Committee;
- Offering medical/dental health and safety awareness parent education opportunities through:
  - Parent meetings
  - Resource Racks
  - Bulletin Boards
  - Newsletters;
  - Referral to community partners;
  - Individually through staff/consultants as needed.

The Health Service Manager will assist the Family Advocates and parents/guardians to provide information specific to individual needs of children and families as needed. The Health Service Manager will seek guidance and support from various resources to include but not limited to contracted consultants, Health Services Advisory Committee, community partner professionals, research from reliable sources, etc.

The Health Services Manager will provide information to parents specific to the health needs of individual children, as needed.

At enrollment the Family Advocate will explain and familiarize parents/guardians of screenings administered through the program and explain the importance of health/dental services required and request authorization for their child to be administered the screenings. If a parent/guardian refuses to give authorization for screenings or to participate in health services the Family Advocate must maintain written documentation of refusal on the *Parent Refusal Form*.