

**COMMUNITY ACTION OF SOUTHEAST IOWA
HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START**

SUPPORT MEETING PROCEDURES

Reason for a Support Meeting

A Support Meeting is a meeting that takes place between staff members and parents to discuss areas of concern for a child's development, health, safety, etc. At the meeting, staff and parents work collectively to discuss the areas of concern and to develop an appropriate intervention plan to help the child (and family) become more successful, remain safe, to meet age-appropriate milestones, etc.

A Support Meeting can be requested by a staff member or the child's parents at any time. Follow up Support Meetings are scheduled to take place 2-4 weeks later. The timeframe for the follow up meeting is dependent upon the severity of the concern and the amount of tracking time needed to allow adequate time to implement the new intervention plan and to measure the successful of the strategies used. Meetings can, however, take place before the 2-4 week timeframe is completed if the interventions being used are proving unsuccessful and/or the child's behavior has become a safety concern or escalates further.

With Support Meetings, it is important to remember that the interventions set are not just limited to the classroom. At the meeting, further supports and referrals outside of the Head Start/Early Head Start program are also discussed with the family. Parents are also given the opportunity to work closely with their Family Development Specialist in the home as an additional support to the family.

Support Meetings Prior to Entry in the Program

During the time of application to the program, the Family Development Specialist will assist the family in the completion of the Health History and Nutrition Assessment Forms and will ask any questions needed to achieve clarification as to a child's condition and/or needs.

After the Health History Form is completed, the Nurse will then review the document to make sure there are no other questions or cause for concern. If there are any, the Nurse will discuss the concerns with the Family Development Specialist or the family. The Head Start Health & Nutrition Coordinator and/or Dietitian will review the Nutrition Assessment Form and discuss the document discussing any concerns with the Family Development Specialist.

Any concerns from the Health History Form and Nutrition Assessment will be noted in the child's application file and in ChildPlus.

After a child has been accepted to the program, a Home Visit is completed with the Family Development Specialist and the Lead Teacher before the child can attend school. No child may enter the program without completing a Home Visit with both staff persons. During the Family Development Specialist's Home Visit, the family will update the Health History and Nutrition History Forms to make sure there are no changes that staff members need to be aware of in order to properly accommodate the needs of the child. If there are any changes, the Family Development Specialist will notify the Lead Teacher and Nurse (if necessary, the Health & Nutrition Coordinator).

Before school begins, a Team Meeting will also take place between the Lead Teacher and Family Development Specialist to discuss each child and review any health, nutrition or other concerns.

A Support Meeting is required for any child with concerns, as outlined in the Support Meeting Guidelines (see attached), before a child may attend school. This meeting will take place in order to ensure that the appropriate accommodations are made for the child and that his/her needs will be adequately met within the program.

The Family Services Coordinator, Health & Nutrition Coordinator, Coach and Disabilities Coordinator and Education Coordinators will maintain a list of children who have been identified as needing Support Meetings and will work together to monitor that each child has had a Support Meeting completed before entry into the program.

After Entry in the Program

As the school year progresses, the needs of children may change: new allergies, health conditions or disabilities are diagnosed; children begin taking new medications or medications are discontinued; behavior or safety concerns arise, there are custody changes in the home, etc. When a staff member is made aware of a concern, as outlined on the Support Meeting Guidelines (see attached), a Support Meeting must be held for the child, as soon as possible.

In instances where a child's health or safety is of immediate concern, the child will not be able to return to school until a Support Meeting has taken place and procedures/accommodations/staff training have been put in place to ensure the child's safety while at school. Examples of situations that would put the child's health or safety at risk include, but are not limited to: potential of a severe allergic reaction; addition of, a change in, or discontinuation of a medication that has the potential to impact the child's well-being; a child begins displaying unsafe behavior such as running away from adults, harming himself/herself, harming others; child has a condition that requires immediate adult interaction (has seizures, ceases breathing, heart stops, diabetic coma, etc.).

If a staff member is ever unclear of whether a Support Meeting should be held, they will contact the appropriate Coordinator at Central Office for guidance. As a program, we work to ensure that each child's health and safety needs are being met at school.

Returnee Children

Many of the returning children may not necessarily need a typical Support Meeting. If it is something simple that has not changed for the child (like Behavior Concerns, Asthma, Mental Health Diagnosis or Speech IFSP/IEP) and they will be with the same teacher, an in-person meeting may not need to take place. Instead, the FDS/Nurse/Cook/Teacher **and** the parent can do a phone conference/Zoom meeting to update any new developments. Staff will fill in the Support Meeting notes during the meeting and confirm that everything is in place, such as a medication permission form or IFSP/IEP.

Some things to help you along:

- Look at the Support Meeting Schedule on the shared calendars in Outlook
- Refer to Support Meeting Guidelines
- Fill out the Support Meeting form, even if a phone call or Zoom meeting takes place
- FDS will enter the Support Meeting into ChildPlus and attach the meeting notes accordingly

On-Going Monitoring

It is imperative that all staff members that work with a child are astute observers and listeners and are implementing proactive measures to help each child be successful in school and life. Two big factors here are communication and documentation.

When a child exhibits behaviors that are of concern, Behavior Reports must be completed. Behavior Reports not only document concerns we have but are also used as a communication tool for staff with parents about concerns with their child's behavior and/or development. The overall goal is to promote the academic, behavioral and social well-being of each child and Behavior Reports are a tool for helping us to achieve this. Behavior Reports help us, as staff, to clearly illustrate to a parent (or education agency) the areas a child is struggling in.

Communication is a far-reaching issue and/or need. When there are concerns for a child, the concerns should be discussed between the Lead Teacher (and the Teacher Associates), the Family Development Specialist and the appropriate Component Coordinators. These conversations between staff members are an informal means of ongoing monitoring that must occur. There are also formal methods of ongoing monitoring that should take place, such as the following:

- Weekly Team Meetings occur between Lead Teachers and Family Development Specialists
- Weekly Team Meetings is tracked by the Education Coordinators, Coach & Disability Coordinator, Family Services Coordinator, Health & Nutrition Coordinator and the Director
- Tracking of Behavior Reports is completed by Education Coordinators, the Coach & Disabilities Coordinator
- Tracking of Support Meetings is completed by the Education Coordinators, Coach & Disabilities Coordinator, Family Services Coordinator, Health & Nutrition Coordinator and the Director
- Tracking of the Disability Tracking plans (for disability and non-disability concerns) is completed by the Coach & Disabilities Coordinator

Parent Involvement

Parent participation in the intervention process is crucial. The success of a child's education and development is reliant on the level of involvement of their parent(s) and the teamwork that occurs between the staff and the family. When there are concerns for a child that have not or cannot be alleviated through intervention strategies that have already been implemented, a Support Meeting is necessary. As a team, the staff and family will discuss further supports and or referrals that the child and family needs in order to help the child reach age-appropriate developmental milestones.