

Family Service Advocates and Family Service Workers Early Head Start and Head Start Programs

In our EHS/ Head Start Programs, Family Service Workers schedule a home visit with each parent to build a trusting relationship with the family. During the visit, the Family Service Worker and the parent(s) discuss the family's strengths and needs. When a parent is ready, a family goal is developed with the Family Service Advocate/Worker, which is part of the Family Partnership Agreement. (FPA). Family Service Advocates/Workers must make monthly contact with parents on their caseloads to follow up on goals, needs, attendance, etc.

Family Service Advocates/Workers are available to assist families with the following:

- Crisis intervention
- Referral to appropriate community agencies and resources
- Accessing benefits (i.e., health insurance, SNAP, TANF, etc.)
- Accessing medical and dental resources
- Parenting education

Mental Health

Mental Health is a state of well-being. The everyday demands of life can have an impact on a person's ability to cope. This is true for both children and adults. The program has several ways of helping children and families who may be overwhelmed or experiencing difficult situations such as sadness, domestic violence, children's behavioral problems, substance abuse, family relationships, death of a loved one, separation, job loss, financial crisis, etc.

The program's Behavioral Specialists are trained to work in partnership with parents and teachers to provide interventions and support for children with challenging behaviors. All families will complete a behavioral screening checklist to identify children and families who may need services and support.

The Behavioral Specialists also work with Mental Health Consultants to provide mental health services to children, adults, and families experiencing a crisis. A behavior plan can be developed for children who display some "unique" behaviors, but the parents must participate for the behavior plan to work. Dangerous behaviors (i.e., throwing objects, running out of the classroom, biting, or injuring others) may require more intensive interventions, and the program will assist the parents in determining what setting is appropriate for the child.

Temporary removal will be determined by the Preschool office and will only be considered if a child poses a health/safety risk to themselves and/or others. Corporal punishment, seclusion, withholding of food, denying access to the bathroom, name-calling, or any other form of degrading treatment is strictly forbidden.