

## Strengths and Needs Assessment

### Head Start Performance Standards

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§ 1302.52 (b)

#### Policy

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The **Strengths and Needs Assessment (SNA)** is designed to identify family strengths, areas of potential need and how program staff can support families in pursuing their goals. Cumulative family needs and risk factors can have a detrimental impact on young children's social and emotional development and future school readiness. Identifying family risk and resilience factors can be a first step in linking families to needed services.

The **SNA** is divided into sections related to family engagement outcomes as described in the Head Start Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework and Head Start Program Performance Standards (§1302.52), including family well-being, parent-child relationships, families as lifelong educators, families as learners, family engagement in transitions, family connections to peers and the local community and families as advocates and leaders. Once the **SNA** is completed with the family, staff use the results to guide the goal setting process with the family. The **Family Partnership Agreement (FPA)** form is used for setting family goals with the family. See **Family Partnership Agreement Family Goals and Plans Policy and Procedure** for more information on completing the **FPA**.

We conduct the **SNA** twice per program year to review family strengths, needs and progress on meeting identified needs.

#### Procedure

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- The **SNA** is completed at the first and second Educational Home Visits with families. **The Head Start Timeline Calendar** includes **SNA** due dates. See Home-based and Coffee Creek sections below for timelines and information specific to those program options.
- The Teachers, Home Visitors and Coffee Creek Family Advocates are the primary staff responsible for completing **SNA**'s with families.
- The Teacher/Home Visitor completes the **SNA** with parent(s)/guardian(s). The Family Services Assistants (FSAs) participates in completing the **SNA** with the Teacher/Home Visitor and parent(s)/guardian(s) if attending the home visit with the Teacher/Home Visitor. The FSA may also complete the **SNA** and **FPA** with parent(s)/guardian(s) they are working with more closely through a Family Services Referral. In this situation, the Teacher/Home Visitor and FSA will communicate and agree who will complete the **SNA** with the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- The Teacher/Home Visitor will explain to families why they conduct **SNAs with them**. When completing the Strengths and Needs Assessment with families', staff will complete the form in **conversational style**. For additional support or guidance refer to the **Completing the Strengths and Needs Assessment with Families** document.
- Parents/guardians or caregivers should be encouraged to consider each item and scoring should be mutually agreed upon using the following selection: 1 Safe/Self Sufficient, 2 Attention Needed, 3 Support Needed and 4 Immediate Need.
- Consider and respond to all items; however, they may choose not to respond if any areas feel too personal.
- Consider the selection that best fits the family's current situation.

## Community Action Head Start Washington County, Oregon

- Identify items as areas where immediate support is needed, or concerns are noted.
- Use the comments section for each section to record additional information that will support staff better serve families when they score more than 1 or a column. There are some exceptions for when you will need to provide additional information when the score is 1. For additional information when to apply this refer to the **Completing the Strengths and Needs Assessment with Families** document.
- If the family has 1-2 identified needs that can be easily addressed with resource and referral, the Teacher/Home Visitor will locate the appropriate resource(s) and provide to the parent(s)/guardian(s). See **Definition and Documentation of Family Referrals Policy and Procedure** for information about making referrals. Staff should document any resources /services received in the Family Services Information tab of ChildPlus and create need identified events as appropriate to track progress and outcome. See the **Community Resources Policy and Procedure** for more information about where to locate resources. Contact your Family Services Assistant for assistance as needed.
- If the family has 2-3 specific needs which cannot be easily addressed with resource and referral or the family is in crisis and needs immediate support, the Teacher/Home Visitor will speak with the family about working more closely with a Family Services Assistant (FSA) to support their needs. If the family agrees, the Teacher/Home Visitor makes a referral using the **Family Services Referral** form.
- If the Teacher/Home Visitor has an immediate concern about the family's needs or believe the family is in crisis, they should contact their FSA as soon as possible to have a Family Services Check-In Meeting to discuss how best to support the family needs and if a Family Services Referral might be helpful. Be sure to always discuss this option with the family before making a referral. See the **Family Services Check-In's Policy and Procedure** for more information.
- If the family refuses to complete the **SNA**, the Teacher/Home Visitor makes an effort to understand why and whether their concerns can be addressed. If the family still refuses, document in ChildPlus that the family refused and why.
- Teacher/Home Visitor will use the SNA and FPA spreadsheet tracker to inform the FSA when **SNAs** are complete and uploaded in CP. The FSA will review the **SNAs**, document all Preliminary and Mid-Year SNA results in ChildPlus under the Family Services Module-Family Services Information tab and the Family Outcomes tab. The SNA is available in fillable format if staff prefer to use it. The staff completing the SNA is responsible for uploading the form directly to ChildPlus in the Family Services Attachment tab.
- Teacher/Home Visitor/Family Advocate or FSA will use the **SNA** results to guide the goal setting process.

### Home-based Early Head Start

The Home Visitor must complete the SNA's in a conversational style with the parent(s)/guardian(s) two times per year at home visits. The Home Visitor should attempt to do the first **SNA** with the parent(s)/guardian(s) after they feel they have built a rapport. It must be completed within the 45-day deadline.

### Coffee Creek

Since mothers and children can enroll and begin the Coffee Creek program at any point during the program year, the Family Advocate will complete the initial **SNA** with the mother within 45 days of enrollment. This assessment will be completed based on the mother's current circumstances and needs.

If a mother/child are enrolled in the Coffee Creek program for 6 months or less during the program year, only one **SNA** will be completed. The Family Advocate will work during this time to connect the family to the appropriate resources.

## Community Action Head Start Washington County, Oregon

If a mother/child is enrolled in the Coffee Creek program for more than one program year, a **SNA** assessment will be completed yearly, and the final **SNA** will be completed 6 months prior to mother's parole.

For **SNAs** that are not completed according to the overall program timelines, in ChildPlus under Family Outcomes tab, check box "Not Assessed" and select "Coffee Creek Exception" as the reason and add notes for either the Preliminary or Mid-Year assessment.

If appropriate, the Family Advocate will request the child's caregiver to complete a **SNA** assessment upon enrollment, 6 months follow-up and 6 months prior to mother's parole, if the caregiver is willing. If the caregiver(s) has identified needs, the Family Advocate will support with identifying resources to meet the needs within the county they live. Need identified events will be created to track progress and outcome. The **SNA** completed with caregivers will be uploaded as an attachment in the Family Services module under the attachments tab and noted in the preliminary or mid-year **SNA**.

The Coffee Creek Family Advocates will review the **SNAs**, document all in ChildPlus and place in child files.

### Other Considerations

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For families who **start later in the school year**, complete the preliminary SNA within 45 days of their start date. The Mid-Year **SNA** should be completed before the end of the program year. For children enrolled before Spring Break, complete the Preliminary **SNA** at transition conference and document that date in ChildPlus. For children enrolled after Spring Break, complete the Mid-Year **SNA** within 45 days of their start date.

When a child **enrolls at the end of the program year**, attempt to complete a **SNA** to ensure the family is connected to resources before the program ends. If ChildPlus calculates a **SNA** due date that falls after the end of the program year, record *the Mid-Year SNA* as "Not Assessed" and select "Scheduling Conflict". Add notes in ChildPlus (e.g., child not in program long enough to complete 2<sup>nd</sup> **SNA**, Date falls after program year ends).

If a parent/guardian has **more than one child in either Early Head Start and/or Head Start**, they need to complete only one Preliminary and one Mid-Year **SNA** for the family. The Home Visitor is responsible to complete the Preliminary and the Mid-Year **SNA** with the family. Teacher and Home Visitor will review the results together and collaborate on follow-up for resources, as well as family goals during their monthly siblings check ins. If the family has more than one child in one program model (i.e., HCDC Full Year), the teachers will decide together who will conduct the SNA, review the results together and collaborate on follow-up for resources, as well as family goals. They will use the Sibling Check Ins meetings to have these discussions and will be documented as part of the entry.

*See the Family Services ChildPlus Portal Training for more information on how to document **SNAs**.*

### Ongoing Monitoring

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FSAs will review the ChildPlus Family Outcomes Analysis report (#4220) for each of their sites and will review report status with Teacher/Home Visitor during the FS Check Ins. The FSA will share report status with Program Area Supervisor (PAS) for the site/class and Family Services Supervisor. The PAS will follow up with Teachers/Home visitors to ensure completion if the report indicates incomplete and/or past due SNAs.