

Early Learning Ventures EHS Service Plan
1302 Subpart E:
Family and Community Engagement Program Services

Table of Contents

Family Engagement.....	1
Parent Activities to Promote Child Learning and Development	4
Family Partnership Services.....	7
Community Partnerships and Coordination with Early Childhood and Education Programs	13

1302.50 Family Engagement

Performance Standard

Purpose – A program must integrate parent and family engagement strategies into all systems and program services to support family well-being and promote children’s learning and development. Programs are encouraged to develop innovative two-generation approaches that address prevalent needs of families across their program that may leverage community partnerships or other funding sources.

Policy and Procedures:

The policies and procedures outlined throughout this Family and Community Engagement Service Plan demonstrate ELV’s provision of quality services to promote and support children’s learning and development. Family Engagement is interwoven into all Early Head Start Content Areas and promotes:

- Family Well-Being;
- Positive Parent-Child Relationships;
- Families as Life-Long Educators;
- Families as Learners;
- Family Engagement in Transitions;
- Family Connections to Peers and Community
- Families as Advocates and Leaders

Family engagement is an integral part the Early Head Start program. Child Care Partnership Specialists (CCPS) actively collaborate with the Directors of each Early Head Start –Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) site to ensure an understanding of and commitment to family engagement. CCPSs and Directors work collaboratively develop opportunities to promote family engagement and skills in the seven outcomes listed above.

CCPSs partner with each site’s Parent Committee and the leadership at each EHS-CCP site to develop activities that create active engagement. Furthermore, Policy Council collaborates with program staff and partners to guide the design of program wide activities of interest to a variety of families.

Examples of family engagement include, but are not limited to, opportunities in which families can:

- Gain confidence to address family specific needs and/or interests related to: safety, housing stability, health and mental health, employment and job skills development, safety, and/or budget and finances. (Family Well-Being)
- Learn new ways to understand and respond to their child’s behavior. (Positive Parent-Child Relationships)

- Learn the importance of the home language for dual language learners and the value for children’s development and long-term academic success. (Families as Life-Long Educators)
- Enroll in courses or training programs that lead toward GED, certifications, and/or other degrees. (Families as Learners)
- Learn about their rights under federal and state laws, such as their rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. (Families Engagement in Transitions)
- Connect with other parents/families to exchange knowledge and resources via family events, parental support groups, and peer to peer connections for groups such as teen parents, grandparents and fathers. (Family Connections to Peers and Community)
- Build upon their strengths as leaders and advocates and participate in program-supported activities such as advocacy and leadership trainings, Parent Committees, and Policy Council. (Families as Advocates and Leaders)

Early Learning Ventures and Partnership sites will encourage and support the development of innovative programs with a two-generational approach; such programs will help families achieve economic stability, upward mobility, as well as support healthy child development. A goal of the two-generational approach is to assist parents in building self-sufficiency skills to move out of poverty, therefore serving as an example to their children. Two-generational approaches include, but are not limited to:

- Developing linkages between high quality early childhood development and workforce development services;
- Ensuring that families have access to economic and social supports to support upward mobility while also assuring healthy child development;
- Making programmatic efforts to help parents gain the skills, knowledge, and resources to support their child’s development; and
- Helping families build social capital (i.e. linkages, networking) that can support both resilience and upward mobility.
- Assisting families to establish a savings account with a particular goal in mind, typically to purchase a home or car, create a business, or provide tuition.
- Moving parents from unemployment to employment, school, or entrepreneurship, based on their individual goals and interests.
- Building relationships with colleges and certification programs which allow parents an avenue to obtain credentials for available, higher wage jobs, specific to the region.
- Recognize parents as their children’s primary teachers and nurturers and implement intentional strategies to engage parents in their children’s learning and development and support parent-child relationships, including specific strategies for father engagement;
- Develop relationships with parents and structure services to encourage trust and respectful, ongoing two-way communication between staff and parents to create welcoming program environments that incorporate the unique cultural, ethnic, and

- linguistic backgrounds of families in the program and community;
- Collaborate with families in a family partnership process that identifies needs, interests, strengths, goals, and services and resources that support family well-being, including family safety, health, and economic stability;

Policy and Procedures:

As part of ELV's approach to family engagement, ELV and EHS-CCP sites will maintain a comprehensive family engagement approach which supports the bulleted items above; further detail is outlined throughout the subsequent pages of this Family and Community Engagement section of ELV's Service Plan.

- Provide parents with opportunities to participate in the program as employees or volunteers;
- Conduct family engagement services in the family's preferred language, or through an interpreter, to the extent possible, and ensure families have the opportunity to share personal information in an environment in which they feel safe; and,
- Implement procedures for teachers, home visitors, and family support staff to share information with each other, as appropriate and consistent with the requirements in part 1303 subpart C, of this chapter; FERPA; or IDEA, to ensure coordinated family engagement strategies with children and families in the classroom, home, and community.

Policy and Procedures:

Parents are strongly encouraged to volunteer at EHS-CCP sites whenever possible. All EHS settings must be open to parents during all operational hours. Parents shall be welcomed, encouraged to observe their child, and allowed to participate with their child in the classroom. Regular volunteers must meet all licensing requirements. The objectives of volunteerism are to provide experiences that support and enhance the parent's role as the principal influence in their child's education and development, allow parents to contribute to the program, and to engage in a variety of volunteer opportunities.

Parents are also informed about any relevant job opportunities as they arise within ELV's affiliate network.

Meetings and interactions with families are respectful of each family's diversity and cultural and ethnic background. Services are provided in the home language when possible, via bilingual staff or an interpreter. ELV utilizes Certified Languages International to provide interpretation for a variety of languages. This service can be utilized during regularly scheduled meetings with families (Home Visits, Parent Teacher Conferences, etc) as well as in the moment translations.

ELV and its Partners show sensitivity to family privacy by meeting in a confidential setting. Parents have the right to choose how much personal information they share.

Family and child information will be discussed with other staff, only to the extent that sharing of such information is necessary to support the family. Privacy will be maintained per the requirements and procedures outlined in 1303, subpart C

1302.51 Parent Activities to Promote Child Learning And Development

Performance Standard

Parent Activities - A program must promote shared responsibility with parents for children's early learning and development, and implement family engagement strategies that are designed to foster parental confidence and skills in promoting children's learning and development. These strategies must include:

- Offering activities that support parent-child relationships and child development including language, dual language, literacy, and bi-literacy development as appropriate;
- Providing parents with information about the importance of their child's regular attendance, and partner with them, as necessary, to promote consistent attendance; and,
- For dual language learners, information and resources for parents about the benefits of bilingualism and biliteracy.

Policy and Procedures:

It is the goal of ELV to work in partnership with parents to support each child's learning and development. Family engagement strategies to foster parents' skills that promote children's learning and development include:

- Emphasizing the importance of the home language for children and their families.
- Developing children's goals in conjunction with families;
- Discussing children's progress and observations at EHS and at home;
- Giving parents ideas of activities and experiences that they can provide at home to extend learning; and
- Providing opportunities for parent education regarding children's behaviors and development.

Attendance

Early Learning Ventures will focus on overall program attendance and on identifying and intervening with individual families whose children have low attendance. It is the goal of ELV to identify the source of chronic absenteeism and to collaborate with families, as necessary, to promote consistent attendance. Many factors can contribute to

absences including transportation, inflexible jobs, housing, health care problems, substance abuse, domestic issues, and community violence. ELV CCPs track absences and the reasons for absences in Alliance CORE. Directors/Owners will inform CCPS about any families who are experiencing chronic absenteeism or are at risk of experiencing chronic absenteeism. CCPS communicate with parents to identify barriers to attendance and access resources within the larger community.

Families will be informed about the impact of chronic absenteeism which means a child missing 15% or more (as few as three days per month) of the school year for any reason, including both excused and unexcused absences. Infants/toddlers ages birth-three may experience more illness and a higher rate of absenteeism than preschool children. However, it is still the goal of ELV and its Partners to educate parents on the importance of attendance and encourage parents to regularly bring children to the child care to receive consistent Early Head Start services. For further information about our Attendance Policy please refer to the ERSEA Service Plan.

The following information will guide the education of parents and/or discussions between FSSs, caregivers and families:

- Chronic absenteeism in early childhood has been found to be a predictor of chronic absenteeism and decreased child outcomes as a child continues through school.
- A missed day of school is a missed opportunity for learning, and impacts a child's success in school. An excused absence is still a missed learning opportunity and should be treated with equal seriousness when monitoring absenteeism.
- Children who regularly attend school are likely to do better and stay in school longer.
- Research shows that three factors have the power to heighten school attendance: engaging learning experiences; stable, skilled teachers; and parent engagement.
- Much like the cognitive and noncognitive skills that children begin to develop at an early age, foundations for good attendance are formed at an early age.
- Chronic absenteeism disproportionately affects minorities, children with disabilities, and children from low income families.
- There are three categories of causes of absences: 1) a barrier, such as transportation issues or illness 2) an aversion, such as disinterest or fear of attending 3) a myth, such as a parent thinking a child is too young for attendance to matter
- There is a strong correlation between education and health; therefore, chronic attendance can impact educational outcomes and, in turn, health outcomes.
- Program eligibility affects attendance; homeless children often miss the most school.
- The negative impacts of early absenteeism can be minimized by later improved attendance. In other words, poor absence in early grades is important and impactful, but its effects are reversible.

Dual Language Learners

Early Learning Ventures is committed to working with parents of dual language learners to support the language development of their children in both the home language and

English. A variety of resources and information regarding the benefits of bilingualism and biliteracy will be shared with parents in a culturally sensitive way, including the importance of maintaining the child's home language:

- The language in which parents are most comfortable will facilitate richer conversation and the opportunity to share aspects of the family's culture, instill family values and strengthen family relationships.
- Continued use of the home language allows a child to establish a strong cultural identity and sustain strong ties with family members.
- Parents speaking in their home language are more apt to model grammatically correct phrasing and sentence structure.
- Children who know two or more languages often have higher levels of cognitive achievement than monolingual children.
- The use of the home language does not interfere with English language development.
- Children who are bilingual have increased social and economic opportunities in adulthood.

Parent Activities – A program must, at a minimum, offer opportunities for parents to participate in a research-based parenting curriculum that builds on parents' knowledge and offers parents the opportunity to practice parenting skills to promote children's learning and development. A program that chooses to make significant adaptations to the parenting curriculum to better meet the needs of one or more specific populations must work with an expert or experts to develop such adaptations.

Policy and Procedures:

Early Learning Ventures has adopted and is implementing Conscious Discipline's parent curriculum. Each county CCPS team will have the responsibility of leading a Conscious Discipline cohort of families and teachers through a series of trainings on an annual basis and offer additional supports to families as needed.

1302.51 Family Partnership Services

Performance Standard

Family Partnership Needs - A program must implement a family partnership process that includes a family partnership agreement to support family well-being, including family safety, health, and economic stability, to support child learning and development, to provide, if applicable, services and supports for children with disabilities, and to foster parental confidence and skills that promote the early learning and development of their children. The process must be initiated as early in the program year as possible and continue for as long as the family participates in the program, based on parent interest and need.

Policy and Procedures:

ELV employs Child Care Partnership Specialists to implement the strategies outlined in the Framework, using the relationship-based practices articulated by the National Center on Parent Family and Community Engagement (NCPFCE). Through the Family Partnership Agreement process, parents play a pivotal role in identifying and prioritizing the PFCE goals and objectives. All data collected from families throughout the year is analyzed to support the development of PFCE priorities. Parents are given the opportunity to participate in focus groups in each county to further refine the development of the PFCE priorities.

Furthermore, families identify their family's individual needs and interests through a parent interest survey and ELV's Strengths and Needs Assessment adapted from the the Colorado Family Support Assessment 2.0. The Family Partnership Agreement process is detailed on subsequent pages of this Family and Community Engagement section of ELV's Service Plan.

Identification of Family Strengths and Needs – A program must implement intake and family assessment procedures to identify family strengths and needs related to the family engagement outcomes as described in the Head Start Parent Family and Community Engagement Framework, 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.

Policy and Procedures:

Family Support Specialists have been trained to use ELV's Strengths and Needs Assessment adapted from the Colorado Family Support Assessment 2.0, a reliable assessment tool that measures family progress toward self-reliance across 14 domains:

- Income
- Employment
- Housing
- Transportation
- Food Security
- Child Care
- Child Education
- Adult Education
- Cash Savings
- Debt Management
- Health Coverage
- Physical Health

- Mental Health
- Substance Abuse

The CCPS engages the family over the course of the collaborative partnership between CCPS and the family to gain a better understanding of the family's strengths and needs. This conversation will be guided by the FPA Question Form, and documented in Alliance CORE. Results of the assessment will be used to identify any immediate needs of the family and may be utilized for goal setting when families feel they are able to move forward with the goal setting process. Furthermore, the Strengths and Needs Assessment can be utilized as a continuous improvement tool to gauge the growth of the family and identify where the family needs more support in their progress toward self-reliance.

Individualized Family Partnership Services - A program must offer individualized family partnership services that:

- Collaborate with families to identify interests, needs, and aspirations related to the family engagement outcomes (as described in the Head Start Parent Family and Community Engagement Framework);
- Help families achieve identified individualized family engagement outcomes;
- Establish and implement a family partnership agreement process that is jointly developed and shared with parents in which staff and families review individual progress, revise goals, evaluate and track whether identified needs and goals are met, and adjust strategies on an ongoing basis, as necessary, and;
- Assign staff and resources based on the urgency and intensity of identified family needs and goals.

Policy and Procedures:

CCPSs will collaborate with families to identify interests, needs, and aspirations related to the family engagement outcomes. After the CCPS has completed the Strength and Needs Assessment with the family, the CCPS will provide resources and family supports based on the urgency and intensity of identified needs. As appropriate, the CCPS will move forward with developing goals with the family. [The Family Partnership Agreement Process: Engaging and Goal Setting with Families](#) reference guide on ECLKC helps describe best practices in the Family Partnership Agreement process in more detail.

1. Rapport building occurs upon enrollment with the family, this is the most important step of the Family Partnership Agreement setting process. The Family Partnership Agreement is designed to be a process that can be completed with the family during a conversation or a series of conversations. The Family Partnership Agreement may not be given to parents to complete on their own.

2. Within 60 days of a child's enrollment, the CCPS will set up a meeting to complete the Strengths and Needs Assessment. The meeting location is individualized to meet each family's needs.
3. CCPSs collaborate with families to identify and work on a minimum of one goal during the program year. Goals might include goals that families set for their children (my child will learn to use 5 new words to get their needs met) as well as goals families set for themselves (We will move into a new home by the end of the program year). If a family is not ready to set a goal for themselves, discuss the possibility of setting a school readiness goal. If a family is still not ready to establish a goal, the CCPS will continue the rapport building process and re-visit the goal setting process with the parents. Document the "refusal" in Alliance CORE.
4. When a family is ready to develop a Family Partnership Agreement, parents are given the opportunity to organize their goal, action steps and timetable on the FPA Goal Setting Worksheet. CCPSs will guide families through the process of goal development. Results of the Strengths and Needs Assessment, as well as the Parent Family Community Engagement Outcomes, may be referred to and utilized for goal setting. Goals should be based on parents' strengths, needs, interests, and aspirations. Parents should not be pressured into setting a goal. Additionally, no more than two goals should be set with a parent at any given time to support sustainable family development
5. The CCPS will provide resources and/or support families in accessing necessary community resources for completion of action steps and goal attainment.
6. Once a goal is set, the family keeps a copy of the original Family Partnership Agreement to refer to and a copy is uploaded to Alliance CORE. Child Care Partnership Specialists will also ensure that the proper documentation is entered into Alliance CORE to monitor and track progress.
7. CCPSs will revisit the goal regularly with the family. After a period of 3 months, the CCPS and the family will review progress, adjust strategies, and/or develop further action steps necessary for goal achievement. In some cases, the parent may decide to revise the goal.
8. CCPSs will celebrate both large and small successes that families make toward their goals.

Existing Plans and Community Resources - In implementing this section, a program must take into consideration any existing plans for the family made with other

community agencies and availability of other community resources to address family needs, strengths, and goals, in order to avoid duplication of effort.

Policy and Procedures:

If a family discloses that they have a pre-existing family plan with another social-service agency, the parent may sign consent to release information between Early Learning Ventures and the other agency or agencies involved in the plan, to avoid duplication of services or conflicts of interest. This will then serve as their Family Partnership Agreement and FSS will support the goal as necessary. This will be documented in Alliance CORE.

1302.53 Community Partnerships and Coordination with Early Childhood and Education Programs

Performance Standard:

Community Partnerships - A program must establish ongoing collaborative relationships and partnerships with community organizations such as establishing joint agreements, procedures, or contracts and arranging for onsite delivery of services as appropriate, to facilitate access to community services that are responsive to children's and families' needs and family partnership goals, and community needs and resources, as determined by the community assessment.

A program must establish necessary collaborative relationships and partnerships, with community organizations that may include:

- Health care providers, including child and adult mental health professionals, Medicaid managed care networks, dentists, other health professionals, nutritional service providers, providers of prenatal and postnatal support, and substance abuse treatment providers;
- Individuals and agencies that provide services to children with disabilities and their families, elementary schools, state preschool providers, and providers of child care services;
- Family preservation and support services and child protective services and any other agency to which child abuse must be reported under state or tribal law;
- Educational and cultural institutions, such as libraries and museums, for both children and families;
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, nutrition assistance agencies, workforce development and training programs, adult or family literacy, adult education, and post-secondary education institutions, and agencies or financial institutions that provide asset-building education, products, and services to enhance family financial stability and savings;
- Housing assistance agencies and providers of support for children and families experiencing homelessness, including the local educational agency liaison designated under section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 *et seq.*);
- Domestic violence prevention and support providers; and,
- Other organizations or businesses that may provide support and resources to families.

Policy and Procedures:

ELV has collaborated with numerous agencies to meet the needs and enhance skills of families and children. The Child Care Partnership Specialists work in conjunction with the ELV EHS management team to establish a portfolio of community services by developing contractual agreements and MOUs with local service agencies (e.g., county social services, county health department, local Child Find and early intervention services, health clinics, WIC, family resource centers, professional development).

CCPSs will leverage community resources to support families. Priorities for such services will include: addressing homelessness, establishing a medical and dental home, obtaining health insurance, enrolling in CCCAP, and accessing early intervention services as needed. Additionally, ELV will partner with child care staff to ensure completion of all developmental screenings and coordinate the mental health and disability referral process and service delivery.

Examples of areas of needs include: nutrition, assistance for children with disabilities, parent education, financial planning, vocational support, emergency/crisis assistance, domestic violence, and an overall awareness of available community resources. ELV has established collaborative formal and informal relationships and partnerships with a variety community organizations.

Performance Standard:

Coordination with Other Programs and Systems - A program must take an active role in promoting coordinated systems of comprehensive early childhood services to low-income children and families in their community through communication, cooperation, and the sharing of information among agencies and their community partners, while protecting the privacy of child records in accordance with subpart C of part 1303 of this chapter and applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws.

Policy and Procedures:

It is the goal of ELV to work with other community agencies and early childhood programs to provide comprehensive services to children and families. ELV and its Partners will ensure the Protection for the Privacy of Child Records as outlined in sub- part C of section 1303 (Financial and Administrative Requirements) of the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

If a program serves a child who is referred to, or found eligible for services under, IDEA, then ELV must comply with the applicable confidentiality provisions in Part C of IDEA to protect the records of those children.

Refer to 1303, Sub-part C of this service plan for complete policies and procedures regarding the Protection for the Privacy of Child Records.

Memorandum of Understanding - To support coordination between Head Start and publicly funded preschool programs, a program must enter into a memorandum of understanding with the appropriate local entity responsible for managing publicly funded preschool programs in the service area of the program, as described in section 642(e)(5) of the Act.

Policy and Procedures:

Early Learning Ventures will pursue a MOU with the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP), in addition to a MOU with the local Head Start program to coordinate, as appropriate, transitions of children from Early Head Start. Per 642 (e)(5), the MOUs will include plans to coordinate, as appropriate, activities regarding:

- educational activities, curricular objectives, and instruction;
- mutual dissemination of information regarding program enrollment;
- selection priorities for eligible children to be served by programs;
- service areas;
- opportunities for joint staff training on topics such as academic content standards, instructional methods, curricula, and social and emotional development;

- program technical assistance;
- provision of additional services to meet the needs of working parents, as applicable; and
- communications and parent outreach for smooth transitions.

Quality Rating and Improvement Systems - A program must participate in its state or local Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) if:

- Its state or local QRIS accepts Head Start monitoring data to document quality indicators included in the state's tiered system;
- Participation would not impact a program's ability to comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards; and,
- The program has not provided the Office of Head Start with a compelling reason not to comply with requirement.

Policy and Procedures:

Early Learning Ventures participates in Colorado's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), referred to as *Colorado Shines*. Quality is assessed in five areas:

1. Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development
2. Family Partnerships
3. Leadership, Management, and Administration
4. Learning Environment
5. Child Health Promotion

While Office of Head Start (OHS) Grantee and Delegate Programs holding a child care license and an OHS issued grant automatically receive a Colorado Shines level 4 rating, child care partners do not currently qualify for the QRIS crosswalk into level 4.

Data Systems - A program should integrate and share relevant data with state education data systems, to the extent practicable, if the program can receive similar support and benefits as other participating early childhood programs.

Policy and Procedures:

The state of Colorado does not currently have an education data system that is inclusive of all licensed child care programs. However, ELV does have a data sharing agreement with the Colorado Department of Education for child assessment data. In addition, the Colorado Department of Human Services operates the platform for the Colorado Shines Quality Improvement Rating System; all licensed child care programs are required to participate in the comprehensive system that assists parents with finding quality care for their children.