

Brevard C.A.R.E.S., Inc. Policy and Procedure Manual



Series: Operating Procedures COA: CSE 1,2, 3, 6, 9 CM 3, ,4
Procedure Name: Head Start Service Delivery
Procedure Number: OP BC 1030
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Effective Date: 08/15/2012
Applicable to: Brevard C.A.R.E.S. staff

SUBJECT: Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Head Start Service Delivery

PURPOSE: This operating procedure outlines Brevard C.A.R.E.S. procedure for serving eligible families in the contracted Head Start program in the Brevard Public School System. This procedure clarifies the protocols and steps taken by the Brevard C.A.R.E.S staff to ensure prompt quality access for families to the services offered by Brevard C.A.R.E.S. The proper application of this procedure ensures that Brevard C.A.R.E.S. meets its commitment to ensure continuity of care for families using the strength based wraparound principles of care.

REFERENCES: Office of Head Start National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement, Integrating Strategies for Program Progress

PROCEDURE:

Access to Services:

Families who have been screened and determined to meet federal eligibility requirements by the Head Start grantee, Brevard Public Schools, (including children aged 3 to 4) have access to Head Start services through Brevard C.A.R.E.S..

Head Start adheres to a Gold Standard in Early Childhood Education Programs and provides services to the most vulnerable of the population. Head Start provides education, health and social services to eligible families with the goal of ensuring the children enrolled are ready to start school. Education includes pre-school education to nationally set standards that include screenings, health check-ups and dental check-ups. Brevard C.A.R.E.S. provides the social services component for family strengthening and family stabilization to occur and to assist families in accessing community resources. Eligibility for Head Start services is largely income-based (100% of the federal poverty level), and other eligibility criteria includes that a maximum of 10% of the program's enrollment be from over-income families or families experiencing emergency situations and a provision to offer an option to serve children from 100 to 130% of the federal poverty guidelines has been added. All programs are required to provide full services to children with disabilities (10% of their total enrollment). Head Start is also required to serve the homeless children defined as a child "who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." This includes not only the typical homeless child in a shelter or other outreach program, or those living in motels or cars but also the children who are living in a "sharing housing arrangement due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason." These homeless children are sought out and determined eligible by Head Start eligibility specialists. Head Start is provided by Brevard Public Schools. Brevard Public Schools also provides services to the siblings of those the school has identified as homeless and

older siblings of the preschool children Head Start has identified.

Screening and Intake:

Brevard Public Schools ensures that each family referred to Head Start meets eligibility requirements to be served through the Head Start program and compiles family demographic information (minimally family name, phone number, address, child's name and assigned Head Start school.) This screening practice ensures equitable treatment and supports timely initiation of community linkages and supports. The Head Start Care Coordinator receives this information, creates an intake in the centralized database and assigns to self. The identified staff member schedules the initial contact with the family no later than 3 days of receiving the referral and completion of the Strength and Cultural Discovery within 5 days. There are multiple supports available for each child served in Head Start that includes a pre-determined "team" consisting of; Head Start Classroom Teacher, Head Start Family Engagement Social Worker, Family Literacy Specialist, Home Visiting Nurses, Instructional Assistants that function as Family Advocates and Children's Mental Health Services Provider. All families minimally receive information and referral services, the identification and development of family goals and regular follow up to revisit family's changing needs. Families that initially present with more acute needs (beyond information and referral) receive more intensive case management including Family Team Conferencing. This level of need determination is made at the initial family meeting once the assessment is completed. This continuum is designed to flexibly meet family's needs as families experience either increased risk levels or as risk to the family decreases and stabilization occurs. Brevard C.A.R.E.S. utilizes the following protocol to ensure that families that are experiencing immediate crisis are triaged for intensive service delivery: referring Brevard Public Schools personnel alerts Head Start Care Coordinator of immediate crisis situation that has been presented for subsequent family contact, engagement and crisis stabilization. In these instances, the family is contacted within the same day whenever possible but no later than 24 hours from referral. All Head Start families have access to a 24/7 on call service and mobile crisis response team. The agency's written procedures regarding immediate intervention and crisis stabilization are outlined in OP BC 1018 (that includes crisis and safety planning) as well as connecting the family to more intensive services and emergency response as appropriate. Progress notes including case chronological information is entered into the required state database system (PROMIS) and FSFN. This includes updates to the family needs and goals as appropriate to identified intervention.

In instances where families do not meet Head Start eligibility criteria, families can elect to be served voluntarily through Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Wraparound Program after review for eligibility by the Community Services Manager or are referred and connected to appropriate community resources.

Service and Philosophy:

Brevard C.A.R.E.S. adheres to service philosophy that is a basis for how the program meets the needs of service recipients and guides the development and implementation of the program based on goals and the best available evidence of service effectiveness. The Brevard C.A.R.E.S. philosophy centers around the National Principles of Wraparound, the use of Family Team Conferencing (FTC) and the Care Coordination of resources and supports that is both informal and formal. Brevard C.A.R.E.S. service philosophy:

- 1) Ensures that successful engagement of families occurs early in the process, with the identification of the family's vision, strengths and potential barriers to success;
- 2) Clarifies with the family the reasons for Brevard C.A.R.E.S. involvement;
- 3) Focuses on the safety and permanency needs of the child;
- 4) Ensures the family drives the process by identifying needs;

- 5) Ensures the family has access, voice, and ownership of their plan;
- 6) Clarifies expectations for behavioral change with all persons involved;
- 7) Acknowledges the family's strengths and commitment to their child;
- 8) Documents the families' accomplishments;
- 9) Forms community based, culturally sensitive support that provides ongoing support to the family;
- 10) Identifies community resources to assist the family and;
- 11) Empowers children and families.

For families served through Head Start, the Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Care Coordinator conducts the Strength and Cultural Discovery which lays the foundation for family engagement and inclusion. The Strength Discovery is the tool used to learn about the family's history, needs, traditions, culture, resources and norms. The Strengths Discovery sets the tone for family goal planning and Family Team Conferencing, if indicated, by identifying informal supports and natural resources available to the family. The Care Coordinator then enters the activity information into required databases (PROMIS and the state automated child welfare information system). The Brevard C.A.R.E.S. staff member completes the Strengths and Cultural Discovery Release of Information form (which may include a list of individuals the family would like invite to the Family Team Conference) and the acknowledgement and receipt of the Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Handbook. The Protective Factors Survey is also completed at the initial family meeting. The Protective Factors Survey was developed by the FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community Based Child Abuse Prevention through funding provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. At subsequent family visits, the Care Coordinator revisits family goals through the Family Goal Planning Worksheet. The Family Goal Planning Worksheet outlines Family Needs, Goals, and Strategies for Achieving Goals, Challenges or Barriers, Plan of Action, Services and Supports, Person Responsible, Timeframe and Outcome. This plan is revisited on ongoing basis at family visits, interactions and contacts at which time the family's progress towards goals is reviewed and case chronological information reflects family progress. Family visits make take place at the assigned Brevard County Head Start school site, the family's home, within a community setting or Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Family Resource Center.

Service Scope and Outcomes:

Brevard C.A.R.E.S. is primarily responsible for the family outcomes identified in the Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework in the following areas: Family Well Being- Parent and families are safe, healthy and have increased financial stability: Positive Parent Child Relationship- Beginning with transitions to parenthood, parents and families develop warm relationships that nurture their child's learning and development; Families as Learners- Parents and families advance their own interests through education, training and/or other experiences that support their parenting, career and life goals: Family Connections to Peers and Community- Parents and families form connections with peers and mentors in formal or informal social networks that are supportive and/or educational and that enhance social well-being and community life: and Families as Advocates and Leaders- Parents and families participate in leadership development, decision making, program policy development, and community and state organizing activities to improve children's development and learning experiences.

Information and Referral Services:

The Care Coordinator identifies family strengths and reframes deficits throughout the process as well as ensuring all the care coordination of all necessary supports, community linkages and referrals. The Care Coordinator establishes responsibilities, timetables and strategies for achieving family goals in partnership with the identified family. Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Head Start staff interact with parents during service delivery and work collaboratively with Brevard Public

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Schools Head Start staff, parents and other team members to access referrals, community resources, and services to ensure that individuals are promptly referred and connected to appropriate resources. If a family is experiencing an immediate crisis, Brevard C.A.R.E.S. provides emergency crisis assistance with food, housing, clothing and crisis stabilization services through the Mobile Response Team. Prompt follow up with the family is completed to determine if kind, quality and timeliness of services are delivered with the highest standard of quality and professionalism. Any other intervention such as counseling for substance abuse, mental health evaluations or domestic violence intervention is provided through service authorizations within the Brevard C.A.R.E.S. network of subcontracted providers. Family Team Conferences are conducted when indicated for families served in Head Start. Brevard C.A.R.E.S. has access through the centralized 211 database to up to date information on community resources that includes program name, location, contact information, contact person, service offered, linguistic capabilities, fee structure (if applicable) and eligibility requirements.

Brevard C.A.R.E.S. staff works in partnership with Brevard Public Schools staff on additional opportunities that are identified for continuing education, employment, vocational skills or literacy training. Care Coordinators provide regular and frequent follow up with families throughout the duration of the family's involvement with the Head Start program until graduation. Families are consistently provided with information about community resources as family circumstances and needs change. All Head Start families engage in transition planning to develop an aftercare plan prior to program completion that outlines the family's plan to continue to achieve family sustainability. Brevard C.A.R.E.S. aggregates monthly performance data that includes number of referrals, families, children and siblings served, family contacts, assessments completed, service linkages, home visits, family meetings, community linkages and prevention services authorized.

Parent Committee and Policy Council Meetings: The Parent Committee forum is required by the Federal government for all Head Start Programs. All parents are automatically members of the Parent Committee. Parents are elected by peers to serve on the agency Policy Council from the Parent Committee(s). All parents from Head Start are encouraged to participate in the Parent Committee; based on the research premise that children do better in school when their parents are involved. Parents personally benefit from involvement by gaining leadership experience and the opportunity to advise staff in the development and implementation of local program policies, activities, and services. Parents in the Head Start program may also plan, conduct, and participate in informal as well as formal program evaluation and quality improvement activities that even include recruiting and screening Head Start employees. Parent Committees are scheduled at various locations throughout Brevard County. Brevard Public Schools facilitates the Parent Committee and Policy Council meetings.

Information and Referral Service Personnel: The Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Head Start Care Coordinator is oriented and trained prior to making contact with families primarily by the Community Services Manager. The Community Services Manager ensures compliance with agency operating procedures and federal mandates. This position also ensures the maximization of resources and use of community services including informal and natural supports. The Community Services Manager is required to have the following technical and functional competencies: resource management, capacity building, providing leadership in developing partnerships as well as staff leadership and aggregating monthly Head Start data. This position is required to have a minimum of two years of experience providing direct services to at risk families. This is necessary to have a solid understanding of the needs of service recipients. Training includes reviewing community resources in the specific area of the county assigned, county-wide resources and funding agencies including the faith-based community and service providers. The Virtual Resource Guide and 211 database is reviewed. New community-based resources or

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underutilized resources are presented during monthly staff meeting in order to familiarize new staff with agency support services and to build new relationships with community based agencies. Additional training includes the process of identifying crisis or potential crisis situations and formulating a response for immediate intervention and stabilization. Techniques for identifying new in-kind community resources are shared. Staff participates in didactic exercises involving engaging families and building rapport using a strength-based approach that includes a program overview, review of handbook, and required agency forms and releases.

Training on Brevard C.A.R.E.S. staff requirements for reporting critical incidents is completed as outlined in OP BC 1014 and of mandated reporting requirements of child abuse, neglect and exploitation to the Florida Abuse hotline. Regardless of the status of an event in client risk prevention, allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation are always reported immediately to the Florida Abuse Hotline.

BY DIRECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR



KATHRYN PARKER

Executive Director

Brevard C.A.R.E.S., Inc

APPROVAL DATE: 04/23/2021