

**HEAD START POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
CHILD HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES**

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SUBJECT: Involving parents

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE: Parents will be encouraged to be involved in their children's health.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE:

Parents will be notified as soon as a health or developmental problem is suspected or identified. The family partnership assistant will work closely with the family to see that further evaluation and treatment, if needed, is obtained for the child. The FPA's will encourage parents to be active partners in their child's health care process.

Parental involvement is a key factor in ensuring that all children receive appropriate health care services. Parents will be informed during the initial enrollment process of the purpose of the exams and screenings. The purpose for early screening is to identify, as soon as possible, children with potential health or developmental problems. Before screenings are done on a child, the parents must sign permission for those screenings.

The *Parent Handbook* contains helpful hints to prepare a child for health screenings. Teachers also will help prepare late-enrolled children for screenings through explanation, role play and dramatic play.

When the FPA does the Family Partnership Agreement with the parent, family health and mental health needs are assessed and identified by the parent. The FPA makes referrals to appropriate agencies to help the parent meet the needs. The parent may choose to make a health or mental health goal to work towards.

Educating the parent in the importance of preventive health services is vital. The *Parent Handbook* contains an article on *EPSDT/Well Child and Preventive Health Care*. The FPAs provide the parents with written materials on preventive health topics such as folic acid needs for women of childbearing age, decreasing the risk of SIDS, and the benefits of breastfeeding. A short video, *TennCare for Children*, is available for FPAs to show at a parent meeting. This video explains the

TennCare system including how to file a grievance, which could help a parent become a more effective consumer of health care.

Parents are always encouraged to accompany their children to all health and developmental appointments. That means that appointments, scheduled by Head Start staff for a child, are made at a time convenient to the parent around his/her work schedule, if possible.

Parents are encouraged to participate on the Health Advisory Committee, also. Through participating in the committee, the parent will get the opportunity to affect decisions regarding the health services of the children, and to become a better advocate for his/her own children's and family's health needs. .