

## **Family Support Visit Policy Snohomish County ECEAP**

The most important factor in building strong relationships with families is to send a clear and consistent message that our program cares about whole families, not just children. Supportive relationships with each family stem from a common interest in the well-being of the child. These relationships are nurtured by staff's genuine interest and concern for all family members, and are strengthened by their responsiveness and ability to offer parents help when they need it. We know that strong families build strong learners. During our brief connection with families we want to be as much of a positive influence as possible.

Contractors provide a minimum of three hours of family support contact per year with each child's family. Family Support visits start as early in the service year as possible. During family support visits, staff work in partnership with individual families to:

- Assess family strengths and needs
- Set family goals
- Assist families in accessing community resources
- Follow up on progress toward goals
- Coordinate transitions between ECEAP and home, childcare and kindergarten
- Explore education topics of interest to their family

In an effort to provide quality services to families, Family Support staff complete three face-to-face family support visits per year with each family.

- Visits typically last 40-60 minutes.
- Staff may choose to schedule three 60 minute visits, or to schedule three shorter visits (which meet the objectives listed above) and connect with families through several additional follow-ups or impromptu meetings throughout the year to complete a minimum of three hours of individual contact.
- Phone contact may only be counted as part of the required three hours when a parent is unable to meet face-to-face, or for brief follow-up to completed visits.
- Visits are prearranged to accommodate family schedules.
- A minimum of one visit per year occurs in the home, unless the family requests an alternate location, or the Program Manager deems there to be a safety issue. All visits occur in the location most convenient to the parent.
- If visits are conducted outside the home, contractors provide a meeting space for family support services where confidentiality can be ensured and conversations between parents and staff cannot be overheard.
- Interpreters are scheduled in advance for meetings with families whose home language is not English.
- The time spent filling out initial enrollment paperwork (DEL Enrollment form, emergency contact, parent permission, etc) is not counted in the three hours of family support contact. On occasion, family needs may emerge that require support beyond the completing of the forms at the enrollment appointment. This time is counted toward the minimum three hours of family support.
- Staff maintain written documentation of the content of these visits as well as the hours of contact.

While providing family support services, staff implement the following family support principles:

- Focus on parent and family strengths
- Build relationships based on mutual respect and equality
- Acknowledge parents as resources to themselves and others
- Respect family beliefs, culture, language, and child rearing practices

*Please refer the Program Standards page 26, standard F-1 through F-4.*