

10.0 Education and Early Childhood Development

10.1 Child Development and Classroom Education Approach

10.2 Social and Emotional Development

10.3 English Language Acquisition

10.4 Curriculum Development

10.5 Individualization and Transition

10.6 Child Guidance and Behavior Management

10.7 Family Role, Family-Teacher Conferences and Home Visit Philosophy

10.8 Attendance, Transportation and Child Release

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

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|---|--|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Procedure Title: | Child Development and Classroom Education Approach | | |
| Procedure Number: | 10.1 | Effective Date: | August 18, 2016 |
| Policy Title Reference: | Child Development and Classroom Education Approach | | |
| Subprocedures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Classroom Approach b. Classroom Celebrations c. Screen Time | | |
| Regulation References: | | | |
| Forms: | | | |
| SCFS Executive Director Approval Date: | August 18, 2016 | EHS Director Approval Date: | August 18, 2016 |
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POLICY

Interactions between children and adults provide opportunities for children to build trust and trusting relationships, to develop an understanding of self and others, and to encourage respect for the feelings and rights of others. All interactions between children and adults will be respectful and supportive of each child's gender, culture, language, ethnicity and family composition

SCFS will seek to optimally nurture each child's cognitive, language, physical and social-emotional development through the establishment of environments and schedule of activities that include opportunities for experimentation, inquiry, observation, play, exploration, self-expression and pro-social interactions with both peers and adults.

DEFINITIONS

SCFS: South Carolina First Steps

PROCEDURES

a. CLASSROOM APPROACH

SCFS EHS CCP staff will do the following:

- Will greet each child to acknowledge their presence.
- Will demonstrate respect and caring for children in all interactions.
- Will offer reinforcement for children's efforts.
- Will actively listen to children and observe non-verbal communication.
- Will physically place themselves at the child's eye level while interacting.
- Will encourage children to talk about their feelings.
- Will use language and materials free from ethnic and gender bias.
- Will stimulate critical thinking skills and cognitive concepts by using open-ended questions.
- Will use questioning, modeling and other appropriate communication strategies.
- Will make every effort to include persons at the site who speak the primary language of each child and are knowledgeable about their heritage.
- Will provide opportunities for each child to explore a variety of sensory and motor experiences.

Procedure 10.1 - Child Development and Classroom Education Approach

Page 1 of 4

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

- Will practice primary caregiving.
- Will use *The Creative Curriculum* for planning meaningful, developmentally appropriate, and individualized lesson plans.
- Will provide a print-rich environment and encourage children's emerging interest in writing (e.g. scribbling, drawing, copying, writing and inventing their own spelling).
- Will use wall photos to share information using pictures and words.
- Staff will be intentional in planning activities and will extend childrens' thinking and learning by:
 - adding new materials
 - asking open-ended questions
 - offering ideas or suggestions
 - joining in their play
 - supporting children in problem solving
- Will read from a variety of literature sources daily.
- Will share stories with children about experiences and expand on their learning.
- Will dictate drawings, and experiences of the children. (e.g. "tell me about your picture")
- Will use flannel board, puppets, songs, finger plays, books and poems.
- Will provide opportunities for children to learn new vocabulary.
- Will plan activities for labeling, classifying, sorting objects by shape, color, size.
- Will observe and discuss natural events such as seeds growing, life cycle of pets and other animals.
- Will provide a variety of hands on science and exploration activities allowing children to discover, create, and learn about problem solving and cause and effect.

b. CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS

SC FIRST STEPS EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM believes that individual family traditions strengthen the family and the community. Early Head Start values the diversity of traditions and beliefs practiced by enrolled families. Children will be encouraged to talk about family celebrations to teachers and other children. This is a way to share the children's culture and traditions with their classmates.

Because there is such diversity in tradition and beliefs already being celebrated in the home, Early Head Start has chosen to celebrate seasonal and cultural events, rather than the more traditional religious-based holidays. Parents can be involved in planning these celebrations and will be provided with guidelines for planning.

Any foods involved in classroom celebrations will be provided by the child care center and will be in keeping with program guidelines limiting salt, sugar and fat.

To ensure that the classroom is an inclusive and safe environment for all children, any exchange of gifts, cards or invitations must happen outside of the classroom or center environment.

Procedures:

Parent's involvement in curriculum and classroom activities provides parents with an opportunity to contribute to what their child learns in the classroom (or what activities are used to provide learning opportunities) and to help parent learn what is developmentally appropriate

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

for very young children to be doing in the Early Head Start classroom. This is a valuable contribution to the program.

The teaching staff is responsible for ensuring the appropriateness of all activities and to help parents modify their suggestions, taking into consideration developmentally appropriate practices, safety, health, nutrition, social-emotional appropriateness and program policy.

Special projects may be done as one of many choices for children during free choice and may be delivered as a "thank you" or special gift to some organization or to a family member. As a literacy activity, cards can be made and letters sent throughout the year for any reason - seasons, good for you, get well, we miss you, thank you. The focus is not on a religious or non-religious holiday, but on creative expression, doing something for others, etc. The activity should be designed to enhance fine motor skills, cooperation, sharing of ideas and materials, problem solving, etc.

Parent's desire to celebrate holidays is often a reflection of their desire for their children to have parties and celebrations.

Find "common ground" issues to celebrate – changing seasons, children's achievements both individually and collectively, baby animals in spring, children's growth, the natural loss of teeth, reading books, developmental milestones... help parents come up with creative things to celebrate.

- Explain the program's approach for handling celebrations to parents at the beginning of the year. Early Head Start will provide materials for classroom activities; parents can contribute their time and energy.
- Explain to parents how children's birthdays will be celebrated – perhaps a "Special Person Day" for each child. Activities like posters, crowns, etc. will be included in the classroom curriculum – parents will be asked not to bring sugary treats or balloons, but would be very welcome to participate in classroom activities.
- Determine if you have any families who do not celebrate any events...find out what the boundaries are about that belief/practice to determine if celebrating common events would be a problem. Look for ways to make it work.

Explain to parents the difference between "dramatic play" and "costumes".

- Children will have opportunities to dress up throughout the year in the dramatic play area. Themes and props will change regularly, and parents are welcome to make suggestions and contribute ideas.
- Costumes, on the other hand, are not universally accepted, may be scary for some children, can leave some children feeling "left out" or competitive, and tend to promote inappropriate social interactions.
- Find events and opportunities for children to dress up throughout the year. Some examples are "blue day", "backwards day", or a "pajama party".

Explain Early Head Start's philosophy and regulations with regard to food served and used in the classroom.

- Early Head Start requirements limit the use of salt, sugar and fat in foods served to children. This program has decided to also serve healthier foods to adults.
- Regulations also prohibit serving foods that have been prepared and brought from home.

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

c. SCREEN TIME

SCFS will limit screen time during all activities, including classroom time, home visits and at child care for Early Head Start meetings and events. We prohibit the use of passive and non-interactive technology for any children.

The American Academy of Pediatrics discourages media use by children younger than age 2 and recommends limiting older children's screen time to no more than one or two hours a day. Too much screen time has been linked to obesity, irregular sleep, behavioral problems, impaired academic performance, violence and less time for play and learning. Most children spend about 3 hours a day at home watching TV. When you add in other screen time activities, it is closer to 5-7 hours a day.

Procedure

Screen time includes all electronic media such as television, video/DVD, electronic games, computers, tablets, smart phones, digital cameras, or any other screened electronic devices. It does not include audio only media used for music or stories such as MP3 players, radios, CDs, records, or tapes.

Classrooms and Home Visits:

In all classrooms and on home visits the teacher will support limited screen time:

- Screen content must be appropriate for the ages of children, nonviolent, and culturally sensitive
- At least one alternative activity is available for children while electronic media is used
- Program's use of screen viewing encourages active child involvement
- Electronic media is not on during non-viewing time and not allowed during meals or snack time
- When electronic media is used, it is used intentionally to promote learning
- Lesson plans clearly show connection between intentionally planned screen time activities and the curriculum topic as well as individual goals for children
- Adults do not use electronic media for personal use during class time
- Staff may use electronic media for purposes of documentation for TSGold, urgent communication with school staff or parents and other reasonable intentions
- Staff encourages families to limit screen time to fewer than 2 hours/day and model appropriate use of technology with families. Staff use technology with families that strengthens the staff-family relationship.

Procedure 10.1 - Child Development and Classroom Education Approach

Page 4 of 4

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

| | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Procedure Title: | Social and Emotional Development | | |
| Procedure Number: | 10.2 | Effective Date: | August 18, 2016 |
| Policy Title Reference: | Social and Emotional Development | | |
| Subprocedures | | | |
| Regulation References: | | | |
| Forms: | | | |
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POLICY

Classroom staff will support the social and emotional development of children through the design of the physical environment and a schedule of activities that builds trust; fosters independence; encourages self-control and respect for the feelings and rights of others; and supports each child’s home language, culture, and home composition.

DEFINITIONS

N/A

PROCEDURES

SCFS EHS staff will provide training and technical assistance on best practices for social and emotional development for children, *Creative Curriculum*, *Conscious Discipline*, and ASQ: SE.

Classroom teacher teams will set clear, consistent limits and have realistic developmentally appropriate expectations based on the accepted principals of child development and based on the individual needs of the child.

Staff will implement curricula and practices through lesson plans that include *Conscious Discipline* strategies, concepts, and environmental set-up that links social emotional learning and classroom management to achieve center wide success. Activities teach self-regulation and social skills.

The EHS teachers will complete the *Ages and Stages: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE)* with families to identify strengths and growth areas through ongoing assessment of social emotional development.

Build trust: Classroom teachers will build trust by establishing primary caregiving practices in the EHS classroom. Primary caregiving is established when the EHS teacher assigns herself to four of the children in the classroom. Temperament, arrival and departure times, and family connections will be the criteria for establishing primary care groups. PLEASE NOTE PRIMARY CAREGIVING IS NOT EXCLUSIVE CARE. Continuity of Care is practiced to allow children and teachers time to establish trust and attachment. Whenever possible, children remain with the same teacher for the duration of their time in the EHS program.

Foster independence: The classroom teacher will establish consistent, classroom routines that facilitate predictability for the child and promote independence. Examples: Family style meals are implemented where children serve themselves while seated at the table with the teacher. In diapering, children will

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

actively participate during the diaper process-holding their diaper, lifting their legs, attempting to pull up their own clothes. The teacher will assist children in brushing their teeth daily, explaining steps and supervising to make sure it is completed successfully.

Encourage self-control: Classroom teachers will provide clear and consistent expectations for children. Using Conscious Discipline strategies, teacher will use daily class experiences as learning tools to model self-control.

Encourage respect: Classroom teachers will model respect in how they speak with children, interact with children, and encourage children to use language and actions that are respectful and inclusive of people and their environment.

Be culturally sensitive: Classroom teachers will promote cultural sensitivity by inviting and including families in the classroom. They will include photographs of families and will use a variety of materials that reflect the cultures of the children represented in the classroom to promote and teach acceptance and sensitivity.

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

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|---|------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Procedure Title: | English Language Acquisition | | |
| Procedure Number: | 10.3 | Effective Date: | August 18, 2016 |
| Policy Title Reference: | English Language Acquisition | | |
| Subprocedures | | | |
| Regulation References: | | | |
| Forms: | | | |
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POLICY

SCFS EHS program supports the home language and culture of every child and family. In addition, SCFS EHS actively promotes English language acquisition for those children for whom English is not their first language, while at the same time providing books, materials, and activities that positively reflect the child’s home language and culture.

DEFINITIONS

SCFS: South Carolina First Steps
 EHS: Early Head Start

PROCEDURES

Home language support is the foundation for developing English language skills. While working with families and children who are dual language learners, classroom teacher teams will engage families in planning of activities and approaches for the child. Teachers will incorporate culturally relevant books, songs, games, and toys to help the child adjust to the learning environment. Families will be encouraged to actively participate in classroom activities to foster and promote their cultural practices.

Classroom teachers will design classroom activities to provide exposure to English language usage in an effort to increase comprehension of the English language and to provide opportunities for children to practice vocabulary in a safe and supportive setting. The activities will be individually based on the child’s development.

Classroom teachers will provide labels for materials and items in the classroom using both English and the home languages of the children enrolled in the classroom as a tool for promoting comprehension and English language acquisition.

Classroom teachers will provide opportunities for group involvement in repetitive word games, rhymes, and songs in both English and the child’s home language.

SCFS EHS staff will provide ongoing training and technical assistance to support SCFS EHS teachers in cultural sensitivity towards English language acquisition.

Procedure 10.3 – English Language Acquisition

Page 1 of 1

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

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|---|------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Procedure Title: | Curriculum Development | | |
| Procedure Number: | 10.4 | Effective Date: | August 18, 2016 |
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| Subprocedures | | | |
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| Forms: | | | |
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POLICY

SCFS EHS will follow a curriculum that is consistent with the Early Head Start Program Performance Standards and is based on sound child development principles about how children grow and learn.

SCFS EHS shall utilize the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos® as the basis for written educational plans. Teachers will use supplemental curriculum resources such as Conscious Discipline® to enhance learning experiences. Supplemental curriculum resources and materials will be made available for staff use in planning and developing specific activities and goals for children.

DEFINITIONS

Curriculum is defined in the Performance Standards as a written plan that includes:

- 1) The goals for children’s development and learning;
- 2) The experiences through which they will achieve these goals;
- 3) What staff and parents do to help children achieve these goals; and
- 4) The materials needed to support the implementation of the curriculum.

Written plans consist of:

- 1) Specific goals and objectives;
- 2) Developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor activities for acquiring basic cognitive, social emotional, and physical skills; and
- 3) A system for documenting children’s progress in all areas of development.

PROCEDURE

Teaching staff will receive training to ensure full implementation of the *Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos®* and Conscious Discipline® .

Curriculum planning is an ongoing creative process in which specific activities are adapted and developed as program staff interacts with individual children and families. The curriculum is responsive to the emergent interests and needs of children, families and the community and is used as a framework to develop activities as program staff:

- 1) Learn about the developmental levels of each child;
- 2) Identify each child’s individual learning style;
- 3) Identify individual needs and interests; and
- 4) Attempt to understand each child’s and family’s culture and value system.

Procedure 10.4 – Curriculum Development

Page 1 of 2

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

Teachers will intentionally plan a balance of child initiated and adult directed activities daily including individual and small group activities. Daily activities are designed to be:

- 1) Comprehensive and reflective of each child's developmental level;
- 2) Reflective of the community and cultures represented in the group;
- 3) Clear in recognizing and promoting the role of the parents;
- 4) Child focused;
- 5) Built on each child's individual skills and knowledge; and
- 6) Diligent in promoting every child's self-awareness and positive self-concept.

Teachers will post weekly lesson plans in prominent spaces for families to access. This will provide an opportunity to gain families' input regarding their children's learning.

On a daily basis, teachers will intentionally plan and implement activities to support children in all areas of development:

Cognitive Development: Teachers will provide intentional learning opportunities to support cognitive development through developmentally appropriate materials (manipulatives, books etc.) and activities (building, reading etc.). Teachers will capitalize on children's natural curiosity to plan themes and lessons. Teachers will provide opportunities for hand-on learning throughout the day and build in opportunities for sensory exploration of materials.

Social-Emotional Development: CCP staff will facilitate trust building and emotional security for every child in their care by following primary caregiver and continuity of care models. Having a primary caregiver during the infant-toddler years will strengthen attachments.

Physical Development: Teachers will plan for routines and activities to support both gross and fine motor development. CCP staff will provide sufficient time, indoor and outdoor space, equipment, materials and adult guidance for active play.

Communication Development. Teachers will support the emerging communication skills of infants and toddlers by providing daily opportunities to interact with others and to express themselves freely. Teachers will plan for respectful, nurturing, meaningful language rich routines and experiences throughout the day.

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

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|---|---|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Procedure Title: | Individualization and Transition | | |
| Procedure Number: | 10.5 | Effective Date: | August 18, 2016 |
| Policy Title Reference: | Individualization and Transition | | |
| Subprocedures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Individualization b. Transition | | |
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POLICY

EHS services will be individualized to meet each child’s unique strengths and patterns of development. Individualization will take place based on classroom observations, ongoing developmental assessment, and/or consultation with the family.

SCFS will work in collaboration with families and preschool providers to ensure a smooth transition from EHS to the child’s next preschool placement.

DEFINITIONS

EHS: Early Head Start

PROCEDURE

a. INDIVIDUALIZATION

SCFS EHS CCP sites use mixed age classrooms. Teachers organize the curriculum to support the individualized needs of each child based on their age, developmental level, interests, learning styles and familial/cultural values.

Gathering Information: Teachers will gather information about each child’s interests, developmental level, language, cultural background, learning style and temperament in order to individualize instruction.

Materials and Environment: Information gathered about individual children will be used to create learning environments appropriate for each child that promotes individual growth. Choice of materials in the classroom will reflect individual differences amongst children.

Instruction: Individualized teaching may occur during one-on-one sessions with a child, or in small groups. Individualized instruction will be embedded throughout the day during child initiated and adult directed activities.

Modifications: Teacher will modify classroom instruction based on the individual needs of each child. Modifications may include providing environmental support, modifying materials, modifying activity, providing peer support, and/or providing adult support.

Goals/Progress: EHS teachers write goals and objectives for each child using information gathered through observations, developmental screening and parent report. If a child has an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), the IFSP goals and objectives will be integrated into the child’s classroom goals. Each weekly lesson

Procedure 10.5 – Individualization and Transition

Page 1 of 2

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

plan will include several child goals to be targeted during the week. Teachers will use observations, child work samples, photos and reports to monitor progress on identified goals. Information from *GOLD™* by Teaching Strategies® will be used to develop goals and objectives and to assess progress in all developmental domains.

b. TRANSITION

Transition from Early Head Start to Head Start /PreSchool Overview

SC FIRST STEPS EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM, in an effort to build continuity and consistency into the educational approach for young children in our communities, endeavors to maintain open lines of communication with Early Childhood Special Education, Head Start, and School District personnel. To ease the transition of children through the Early Head Start program and into Head Start or other early childhood preschool programs, activities are planned to address the specific needs of individual children and families. Appropriate records are transferred from Early Head Start to the new school or school district in accordance with (see *Student Education Record Policy*).

Procedure

Children and families are introduced to the new educational environment and personnel with the support of familiar Early Head Start staff, and individual assistance is provided on request to parents as they enroll their child in the new early childhood program.

1. Teaching teams will plan transition activities during the year. Activities may include: scheduling a parent group and inviting Head Start/Early Childhood program teachers to talk about their programs; helping parents make a list of questions to ask their child's preschool teacher; encouraging parents to visit the new school; or helping families set up visits for themselves as a home visit activity. Completion of activities and other relevant information will be documented.
2. On the second home visit of the program year, the teacher will verify with the family of children approaching 30 months of age which preschool each child will be attending. Transition issues will be discussed with parents during the second parent conference. The Transition Form may be completed with the parent to share child and family information with the new school.
3. For children on an *Individual Family Service Plan* (IFSP), an Early Head Start Family Advocate will arrange to attend all multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings, *Individual Education Plan* (IEP) meetings, and other transition related meetings for children with disabilities.
4. Transition meetings, or more informal meetings, can be set up with the teacher and parent if it is believed that the transition into another setting may be difficult for a particular child or family.
5. Parents may receive copies of requested child records prior to registration in another program. Education records will be forwarded to the new program with parental permission.

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

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|---|--|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Procedure Title: | Child Guidance and Behavior Management | | |
| Procedure Number: | 10.6 | Effective Date: | August 18, 2016 |
| Policy Title Reference: | Child Guidance and Behavior Management | | |
| Subprocedures | | | |
| Regulation References: | | | |
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POLICY

Child guidance and classroom behavior management will promote positive social skills, foster mutual respect, strengthen self-esteem, and support a safe, nurturing environment.

DEFINITIONS

N/A

PROCEDURE

Child Guidance and Behavior Management Overview

Young children will exhibit challenging behaviors as they learn to act appropriately in different social settings. SC FIRST STEPS EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM will employ a system of child guidance and behavior management that is clear and consistent, and that promotes the development of positive social skills, encourages mutual respect, strengthens self-esteem, and supports a safe and secure environment for all children and adults.

Federal Head Start Performance Standards prohibit the use of corporal punishment or isolation as a child management tool. The withholding of food, basic needs, or participation in special events; name-calling, threats, ridicule, or any form of demeaning, harsh or frightening treatment is strictly forbidden. SC FIRST STEPS EARLYHEAD START recommends immediate termination of employment for any child care center staff who resort to corporal punishment.

PROCEDURE:

Positive Behavioral Strategies

Positive behavioral strategies are proactive, and serve to teach children skills to manage their own behavior. Individual and cultural factors will be considered when planning for and providing guidance. The following guidelines will be followed in classrooms:

1. Teachers will set up a safe and appropriate classroom environment that supports pro-social behavior.
2. All adults will interact with children in a positive, friendly, and socially supportive manner, modeling pro-social behavior with each other and with the children.
3. Children will be provided with alternative choices and will be directed away from inappropriate behavior without engaging in power struggles between child and adult.

Procedure 10.6 – Child Guidance and Behavior Management

Page 1 of 2

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

4. Schedules and routines will promote predictability and security for children; adequate time and preparation will be allowed for children to transition from one activity to another.
5. Children will be taught positive social skills through direct teaching, modeling, and using practice with competent peers.
6. Expectations for appropriate behavior will be clearly and consistently stated and appropriate behavior will be recognized through praise and encouragement.

Implementing Additional Behavioral Strategies

Occasionally, a child may exhibit behavior that has the potential to injure him/herself, or others. In this case additional strategies may be called for, including, but not limited to:

Use of Natural Consequences Help children understand that mistakes are opportunities to learn, and natural consequences help children reflect on choices and motivate them to make changes in their behavior. Teachers will help students understand the connection between that behavior, which will help children learn how to be responsible for their choices.

Use of Safe Place. The teachers will set boundaries and teach skills around self-regulation and will create a safe place in the classroom that is out of the way but not isolated. If a child is exhibiting behaviors that are calling for help (unsafe, strong, upset, violent, etc.) then the teacher will provide the structure to help the child voluntarily enter the safe place. Children will be encouraged to use the safe place to calm themselves. The child will have the opportunity to identify feelings and make choices to regain control. The teacher will then help to solve the problem with a plan for how to re-enter play or classroom activity.

Problem Solving Teachers will help children reflect on their actions and then to make choices that bring successful outcomes by using problem solving strategies.

Response to Unsafe Behavior. Potentially dangerous behaviors may occur quickly and with little warning. Each center will develop an action plan for handling unanticipated behavioral outbursts that pose a threat to children or adults. This plan will enable staff to take immediate action to ensure the safety of the child and others in the environment. For the safety of the child and staff, crisis intervention will involve gently yet firmly removing the child from the situation, holding the child only long enough to get him/her to a safe place to quiet down.

The plan will include the following steps, to be used as appropriate, depending on the situation: 1) identify a safe, quiet place in the classroom where the child can be alone (safe place) 2) develop a procedure of quickly removing the child from the classroom so the child can be alone with an adult; 3) identify a quiet place outside of the classroom where the child can be alone and still under the supervision of an adult; and 4) determine a system for quietly communicating to other staff members the need to intervene, without disrupting the rest of the classroom.

Should such a situation occur, The EHS Education Coordinator and the child's parent will be contacted to discuss the incident. If need for further support is indicated, the parent, coordinators, and mental health consultant will be involved in the decision to develop a Child/Family Support plan. Consistent communication with the child's parent and the appropriate program coordinator must be maintained throughout implementation of a Child/Family Support plan. Ongoing documentation and reports of the child's progress will be maintained in the child's file and shared with the parent and appropriate program coordinators.

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

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|---|--|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Procedure Title: | Family Role, Family-Teacher Conferences, and Home Visit Philosophy | | |
| Procedure Number: | 10.7 | Effective Date: | August 18, 2016 |
| Policy Title Reference: | Family Role, Family-Teacher Conferences and Home Visit Philosophy | | |
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POLICY

Parents will be actively involved in helping to develop the program’s curriculum, provided with opportunities to help plan learning experiences, and in regular home visits and teacher conferences.

SCFS believes that a partnership between families and staff best supports children in their development. Family-teacher conferences and home visits will be planned to provide a natural link between the child’s family, home, and school.

DEFINITIONS

N/A

PROCEDURE

SCFS believes that a partnership between parents and staff best supports children in their Early Head Start experience. Regular collaboration between the program and families is an expectation, to include day-to-day communication and collaboration, family-teacher conference and home visits, each of which creates a natural link between the two most powerful influences in a child’s life, home and school. These also support the development and achievement of personal and family goals.

Teaching teams will schedule regular planning time together and will go on every home visit and conduct every parent-teacher conference together, except under extraordinary circumstances. This requirement is intended to ensure that the teaching teams regularly and consistently communicate essential information and together form a working, supportive relationship with the family. In the classroom with a Teacher and Family Advocate when home visits are not done together, the teacher and FA will meet regularly to share information.

Based on the Community Assessment and parent preference, SCFS will operate a Center-Based program option that provides Early Head Start services primarily in the classroom setting, five days a week with a minimum of 240 days of school, two Home Visits and two Parent Teacher Conferences.

Prior to acceptance, an Early Head Start staff member will schedule a visit with the family in their home or in the Early Head Start center or will spend time with a parent on the phone. This is an opportunity to explain the purpose and philosophy of the Early Head Start program, answer any questions parents may have, and complete the initial paperwork to help determine eligibility for the program.

Home Visits must be completed in the home unless the family situation or safety of the staff is an issue, or if parents expressly forbid home visits. In such cases, staff will continue to work on building a trusting relationship, which over time may provide opportunities for meeting families in their homes. In exceptional circumstances, visits may be conducted outside the home; however, every effort will be made to conduct the visit in the home.

Procedure 10.7 - Family Role, Family-Teacher Conferences and Home Visit Philosophy

Page 1 of 2

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

Parent Teacher Conferences provide an opportunity for staff and parents to discuss each child's growth and development, and plan an individualized education program to meet the child's needs.

Procedure 10.7 - Family Role, Family-Teacher Conferences and Home Visit Philosophy
Page 2 of 2

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

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|---|--|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Procedure Title: | Attendance, Transportation, and Child Release | | |
| Procedure Number: | 10.8 | Effective Date: | August 18, 2016 |
| Policy Title Reference: | Attendance, Transportation, and Child Release | | |
| Subprocedures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Attendance b. Transportation c. Child Release d. Class Closure | | |
| Regulation References: | | | |
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POLICY

Children are best able to benefit from their EHS experience if they attend school on a regular basis. EHS staff will regularly discuss the importance of attendance with parents and encourage their cooperation in bringing their children to school on a regular basis. If children are absent without a parent contact for 10 consecutive days, that enrollment slot may be opened up for another eligible applicant. SCFS will make every effort to maintain a monthly average daily attendance rate of 85%.

South Carolina First Steps does not provide transportation to Early Head Start students.

South Carolina First Steps Early Head Start staff will release children only to the custodial parent(s)/guardian(s) or those individuals listed on the *Child Release and Emergency Contact Form*.

DEFINITIONS

N/A

PROCEDURE

a. Attendance

EHS center staff will take regular attendance and communicate regarding absences with the Family Advocate daily.

b. Transportation

SCFS does not provide daily transportation for children to and from the Early Head Start classroom, and neither funding, nor appropriate buses are available for field trips.

In cases where self-transport is an extreme financial hardship on a family, SCFS will attempt to find a source of financial subsidy with the family to facilitate regular attendance of the child.

Procedure 10.8 – Attendance, Transportation, and Child Release

Page 1 of 3

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

c. Child Release

South Carolina First Steps Early Head Start staff is authorized to release children only to the custodial parent or those individuals listed on the *Child Release and Emergency Contact Form*. If a staff member is unfamiliar with the individual attempting to pick up a child, they must ask that person to present photo identification. If in doubt, staff will always check the *Child Release and Emergency Contact Form*.

Although Early Head Start staff is expected to do everything in their capability to protect the children in our care, it is neither reasonable, nor expected that anyone put themselves in physical danger trying to prevent an unauthorized person from forcibly taking a child. Staff will be aware of potential conflicts and conduct the classroom in such a way as to limit opportunities for unauthorized access to a child. If an individual is violent, it is in the best interest of the child and the program to let the child go and immediately call the police, giving them as much information as is available.

Procedure

If, in the opinion of a staff member, a parent's functioning appears to be impaired due to drugs or alcohol, and the parent is attempting to pick up and transport a child:

1. The staff member will try to dissuade the parent from driving and suggest that they find alternative transportation.
2. If the parent insists on driving with the child, the staff member will note the condition and behavior of the parent, the automobile's make, and color and license number and will call the police.
3. The incident will be documented and a copy of the report sent to the Family Advocate.

If a child is not picked up after class, the procedure will be as follows:

1. A staff member will remain at the center with the child.
2. The staff member will attempt to locate the parent, or one of the emergency contact people listed in the child's file.
3. If, after one hour, the child has not been picked up and/or the parent has not been located, DSS will be contacted directly or through the police department.
4. The staff member will continue to attempt to contact the parent and let them know that the child is in the care of DSS.
5. The incident will be documented and a copy of the report sent to the Family Advocate.

d. **CLASS CLOSURE**

SCFS will make every effort to keep to the annual calendar as provided to parents at the beginning of the school year. Early Head Start programs are required to provide a specified number of class days each year. All classrooms are scheduled for 240 class days, 2 home visits, one enrollment appointment that can take place either in the center or in the family home, and two parent-teacher conferences. If classes must be cancelled beyond the scheduled days, make-up class days may be scheduled.

Procedure

Each center will establish a system for canceling class; responsibility will be assigned to the Center Director for making the decision to cancel class, notification of all parents and notification of the Education Coordinator and the EHS Director.

Procedure 10.8 – Attendance, Transportation, and Child Release

Page 2 of 3

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS PROCEDURE

Class may be closed for the following reasons:

Weather. Class may be cancelled due to adverse weather conditions, or unsafe road conditions. Follow the closures for your local school district.

Facility Issues. Class may be cancelled due to temporary lack of basic services such as heat or water in the center.

Scheduled Staff Training. Training is generally scheduled for days when class is not in session. Staff may attend training on a regular class day if approved by the Education Coordinator. Finding a substitute is preferable to canceling class. Parents will be notified of any change in schedule at the earliest opportunity.

Personnel Issues. Early Head Start requires that at least two teachers be present in the classroom when class is in session. (See the Teacher Job Description for teacher qualifications.) If, due to circumstances beyond our control, teachers or substitutes are not available, class must be canceled.