

Tri-County Community Council, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start

Section: Mental Health Services PS 1304.24 (a)(1)(i)

Subject: Administration of Ages & Stages Parent Questionnaire

Policy:

Staff's communication with parents will draw upon the parent's knowledge of their child's development.

Procedure:

1. The Ages & Stages parent survey will explore any concerns the parents may have concerning child's social/emotional development.
2. Staff will build a rapport with the parents to help parents become comfortable discussing mental health issues.
3. When meeting with parents, staff needs to focus discussion on a variety of topics:
 - Developmental and cognitive phases.
 - Child's special interests
 - Child's special needs and strengths
 - Any changes in the child's behavior, mood, or physical appearance.
 - Any information on health condition that may influence behavior.
4. Information from assessments and staff/parent discussion will be used to individualize services for the child.

Tri-County Community Council, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start

Section: **Mental Health Services** PS 1304.24 (a)(1)(ii)

Subject: Administration of Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

Policy:

The DECA will be administered only if atypical behavior becomes unmanageable in the classroom or home and decision is made by Multi- Disciplinary Team to distribute DECA to teacher and parents.

Procedure:

1. The DECA form may be distributed to parents and teacher after behavior observation/referral process has been completed.
2. The DECA will be scored and charted in a timely manner to ensure they are available for parent/teacher conference or home visit.
3. Parents will be assured that the DECA is an assessment with a margin of error that assists in the class curriculum and individualization.
4. The DECA scores are not used to rate child differences but to examine what strategies need to be implemented to strengthen child's skills.
5. The DECA will not be used as a tool to address child's behavior with the parents.
6. The DECA should never be explained using words such as: Normal, Abnormal, Below Average, Poor, or Bad.
7. Parent permission slip will be filed under Parent Permission in Educational File.
8. The scored DECA and information will go into the Education file under the Assessments section.

Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Head Start/Early Head Start

Section: Child Mental Health P.S. 1304.24 (a) (1) (iii)

Subject: Behavior Management Principles

Policy:

Tri-County Head Start/Early Head Start policy on behavior management and discipline is based on the following principles:

1. Children are capable of learning self-management and socialization skills.
2. Children, families, and staff members are treated with unconditional respect in all situations. Staff and volunteers model calm and courteous behavior.
3. Teaching staff are most aware of temperaments of children in their class and are able to solve many behavior problems on their own or with the help of their education specialist.
4. Early identification of children who need additional help developing behavior management skills is essential. All staff will support the child, parents/caregivers, and teaching team in accomplishing this goal.
5. All staff members are responsible to keep information about children and families confidential.

Procedure:

Who Disciplines, When and Where:

Children will be carefully supervised by adults in any Head Start/Early Head Start setting. The Teacher and Teacher Assistant are the primary disciplinarians in the classroom. All adults in the classrooms understand and model the same positive approach to behavior management as the teaching staff. Parents and other volunteers are oriented to the rules and limits in the classroom and can remind the children of these rules but will seek help from the teachers if unacceptable behavior continues. Adults remain calm and respectful at all times and the child will never be made an example of or purposely embarrassed.

Helping children develop empathy, anger management, problem solving and impulse control skills are important goals for Tri-County Head Start/Early Head Start.

1. The classroom schedule and curriculum are organized to allow children time and opportunities to practice acceptable behavior.
2. Teachers view a child's inappropriate behavior as an opportunity to model, teach, and help the child practice appropriate socialization skills.
3. Adults in the classroom consistently model appropriate behavior. Adults who are unable to model appropriate behavior are asked to leave.
4. Teachers anticipate and eliminate potential problems by organizing the environment in a developmentally appropriate manner. Children have easy access to toys and supplies and quiet and active spaces are provided.
5. Clean up is easily managed and there are no runways or hiding spots.
6. Adults consistently give children reinforcement for positive behavior.
7. If possible, adults redirect or distract children displaying unwanted behavior to another area or to other children to play with.
8. Teachers clearly define classroom expectations and rules and maintain these throughout the year. Rules and expectations are positively framed and age appropriate.
9. Teachers recognize that children need to be taught every rule and procedure in a variety of ways, such as demonstration, class discussion, role-play, and positive reinforcement.
10. Teachers plan for each child as an individual who learns in their own style and at their own pace.

11. Children are encouraged to make choices, solve problems, and use appropriate words to resolve conflict.
12. If a child's behavior is harmful to themselves, to others, or to property, the child is removed from the situation until they are able to calm themselves.
13. Time out is not to be used except in extreme situations-tantrums, out of control children, or aggressive/dangerous behavior. When the time-out is over, the child may leave the time-out place. Do not discuss the bad behavior, but look for ways to reward and reinforce good behavior.
14. Child restraint occurs only when required for the child's safety, the safety of others or as a last resort to stop destruction of property. The child is restrained in a manner that will not cause injury to the child and will not allow the child to cause injury to the adult.

Unacceptable Discipline

Any form of corporal punishment (i.e. spanking, slapping, etc) is unacceptable discipline, as are demeaning or negative remarks. These forms of discipline will not take place in any Head Start or Early Head Start facility or at any sponsored activity.

Behavior Management

Teaching staff will view behavior issues which cannot be handled by the teaching team alone, not as a failure in their classroom management but as an opportunity to help the child and family receive more professional resources and support. In order to give each child the timeliest assistance, ongoing behavior that requires action will be handled according to the system described below.

Children with IEP's will be staffed periodically to be sure their individual needs are being met and that all is being done to ensure they are reaching their full potential in every learning domain. If these children are determined to have behavior issues which hinder their progress, they will be staffed with the same approach as other children in the program.

Child Staffing System

1. Complete the incident report form. Describe the incident and state what you believe caused the incident (environmental, risk factors, physical well-being, etc.). Write on the incident report from whether immediate support from the staffing team is necessary.
2. Teachers will review everything known about the child, family, and environment. They may talk with people in child's life-parents, caregivers, bus driver, siblings, grandparents, past teachers, etc.
3. During a staffing meeting (may include Education staff, Health staff, Family Service staff, and Director) it is the team's responsibility to give their best suggestions, and then it is the teachers' responsibility to sort out and implement the suggestions/ideas which they feel will work best for this child.
4. Teachers will implement the program and will determine if the intervention is working with a child or if the child needs further staffing. (Parents will be included in staffing at this point)
 - a. Reasons for further staffing might include misidentified risk factors, protective factors not minimizing risk factors or protective factors cannot be maintained, situation changes for the child and/or family.
 - b. Reasons for curtailing staffing of a child - goals are met and child is progressing, or risk factors are removed and child is progressing.

Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Head Start/Early Head Start

Section: Child Mental Health P.S. 1304.24 (a) (1) (iii)

Subject: Behavior Management Support/Discipline

Policy:

All children will be provided the support for positive behavior that is conducive to the development of social competence in the individual and an atmosphere that provides safety to all children and staff and an environment in the classroom in which opportunities for learning are optimized.

This policy provides guidance for all Head Start/Early Head Start Staff, volunteers, and Contractors in the requirement for support of positive behavior and definition of acceptable discipline methods.

Procedure:

- Staff will directly teach classroom rules, expectations and behavioral requirements to children.
 - They will discuss adult expectations in an age appropriate manner and on a daily schedule to ensure that children are aware of what is expected of them.
 - Staff will ensure all children have been taught acceptable means of satisfying adult requirements for their behavior.
 - Rule making and teaching will be positive and rational explained to children.
- As early in the school year as possible, and on a regular basis, staff will document challenging behavior by children and responses by adults.
 - Child Incident Reports will be used for this purpose
 - As soon as patterns of challenging behaviors emerge, staff will seek the advice and assistance of their immediate supervisor.
- Staff and supervisors will develop plans for assisting children in finding acceptable ways of meeting their needs.
- Plans will include a determination of the need for referral to appropriate professionals for assessment.
- The Disabilities Coordinator will be notified before any referral is made.
- Staff will develop curricular plans that will address the behaviors without humiliating or punishing the target child.
- Plans will identify the role of each staff member, volunteer, and contractor in the implementation of plans so that an orchestrated and coordinated approach to providing positive support to appropriate behaviors can be achieved.
- Staff will discuss and plan for inappropriate behaviors presented by identified children in advance.
 - ✓ For children whose behaviors present minor problems, informal plans may be made that staff will implement on a regular and consistent basis to assist the child to conform to expectations of appropriate behavior.
 - ✓ For children who present more aggressive and disruptive behaviors that center on concerted efforts by staff to identify and reinforce appropriate behaviors for the child, when they occur

- Children who develop a pattern of challenging behaviors will be staffed in a weekly staff meeting to identify:
 - ✚ The antecedent or triggers for challenging behaviors
 - ✚ How behaviors are expressed and
 - ✚ The consequences of the behaviors that are reinforcing the undesirable behaviors.
- Staff, Volunteer, and Consultants will support the behaviors of identified children in a manner that will assist the child in identifying and developing the skills necessary to function appropriately in his/her present HS/EHS environment, at home and prepare the child for their future experiences in school.
- Environmental, curricular, and classroom routine will be evaluated for factors that may trigger or reinforce inappropriate behaviors of the child.
- Children who do not respond to classroom planning and program individualization will be referred to the Mental Health Coordinator who will meet with the Education and Health Coordinator. Appropriate staff members will observe the classroom and child prior to convening a team meeting to address the challenging behaviors.

Guidance:

All Tri-County Head Start and Early Head Start staff will adhere to the philosophy of positive behavior support.

- Build Positive Relationships with Children, Families and Colleagues
 - Be consistent with children and notice when they are following expectations
 - Communicate with children at eye level
 - Verbally interact with children during routines and activities
 - Participate in children's play when appropriate
 - Show respect and consideration to all
 - Examine own attitudes toward challenging behavior
- Establish Classroom Preventive Practices
 - Arrange traffic patterns in classroom so there are no wide open spaces
 - Clearly define boundaries in learning centers
 - Establish and enforce clear rules, limits and consequences for behavior
 - Provide a variety of materials in all learning centers
 - Consider children's interests when deciding what to put in learning centers
 - Make changes and additions to learning centers on a regular basis
 - Provide a well balanced schedule of large and small group activities
 - Implement schedule consistently
 - Teach children about the schedule and explain changes when necessary
 - Ensure that transitions are smooth, by providing warnings, expectations and that wait time is held to minimum.
- Utilize Social Emotional Teaching Strategies
 - Interact with children to develop their self-esteem
 - Demonstrate active listening with children
 - Show empathy and acceptance of children's feelings
 - Show sensitivity to individual children's needs
 - Encourage autonomy
 - Capitalize on the presence of typically developing peers
 - Use prompting and reinforcement of interactions effectively
 - Provide instruction to aid in the development of social skills
 - Promote identification and labeling of emotions in self and others
 - Explore the nature of feelings and the appropriate ways they can be expressed

- Model appropriate expressions and labeling of own emotions and self regulation throughout the course of the day
- Create a planned approach for problem solving processes within the classroom
- Promote children's individualized emotional regulation that will enhance positive social interactions within the classroom.
- Use Intensive Individualized Interventions when necessary
 - Team with family to develop support plans
 - Use a functional assessment
 - Develop and implement a behavior support plan
 - Teach replacement skills
 - Monitor Progress

Common Rules:

1. Staff should observe situations that are known to trigger inappropriate behavior and try to diffuse these situations before they occur.
2. Request to children will be stated in a positive way. Example: "I like how you are using your walking feet."
3. Quality time-a child may need extra attention, take the child for a walk, read a book. Allow the child to help staff or volunteer with a special project.
4. Praise and encouragement of good behavior shall be used instead of focusing on the unacceptable behavior.
5. Expectations for a child's behavior shall be appropriate for the developmental level of that child.
6. Redirection is the first method to be utilized when an eruption is beginning.
7. Only constructive, age-appropriate methods of discipline shall be used to help children develop self-control and assume responsibility for their own actions.
8. Children shall not be shamed, ridiculed or spoken to harshly, abusively or with profanity. No discipline technique that is humiliating, threatening or frightening to children shall be used.
9. Children shall not be permitted to intimidate or harm others, themselves, or destroy property. If a child becomes out of control and combative, try to lead them from the area. If he/she does not want to go then distance the group from the child.

Documentation of the events of the classroom is to be done following each incident. Documentation should include staff interactions, peer interactions, intervention/strategies taken during the inappropriate behavior and after the behavior. Ongoing records can be helpful to center staff, parents and program specialists in assessing behavior and developing a plan to modify behavior. All documentation will be fact based – no opinions.

Communication of concerns should be ongoing. Take time to brainstorm about actions that might be taken to solve the discipline problem. Focus on positives and take steps to involve the parent in the proposed solution.

After careful evaluation of the environment, developmentally appropriate activities, schedule, supplies, supervision, staff interaction, peer interaction and a child continues to exhibit inappropriate behavior, contact the Mental Health Coordinator or the Education Coordinator.

Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Head Start/Early Head Start

Section: Mental Health PS 1304.24 (a)(1)(iii) 1304.52(h)(1)

Subject: Child Discipline-Time Out

Policy:

The administration of discipline will be conducted in a professional, safe, and respectful manner.

Procedure:

1. Time out is the only acceptable discipline method that is used.
2. Time out will be one (1) minute per age. (3 years = 3 minutes).
3. Time out will be conducted in an area where the child is near peers and visible to staff.
4. Child will not be placed directly in a corner
5. Child will face the classroom to allow the child to observe class activity.
6. Staff will not discipline in a manner that is frightening, humiliating, or associated with food, rest, or toileting.
7. Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is prohibited by staff.
8. Flicking or thumping a child will be considered a form of physical discipline.
9. Staff and parents will share positive approaches to discipline.
10. Staff will identify parents who use other approaches to discipline and discuss with them appropriate responses to behavior.
11. Offenses of child discipline measures constitutes a written warning and possible termination of employment.
12. One written discipline warning of child safety or inappropriate discipline may constitute immediate termination of employment with Tri-County Head Start.
13. Severity of offense may constitute immediate dismissal from Tri-County Head Start.

Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Head Start/Early Head Start

Section: Mental Health P.S. 1304.24 (a)(1)(iii)

Subject: Mental Health Assessment and Concerns/Emergency Concerns

Policy:

Program will solicit parental information, observation and concerns about their child's mental health. Support will be given for parental participation in any needed interventions. Services of a mental health professional will be secured to ensure timely and effective identification of a family or staff concern about a child's mental health.

Teaching staff will view behavior issues which cannot be handled by the teaching team alone, not as failure in their classroom management but as an opportunity to help the child and family receive more professional resources and support.

Procedure:

Mental Health Concerns:

1. Parents are requested to complete Ages & Stages at enrollment. The Ages & Stages screening will be used for identification of children with social/emotional needs that may affect their behavior. Teaching staff and Family Service Workers will review all records in each child's file before the first home visit so they will be aware of the special needs of all children and the concerns of the parents.
2. In order to give each child the most timely assistance, behavior that requires action will be handled through the Mental Health Coordinator in conjunction with the Education Coordinator with the third written notice of child's behavior submitted.
3. In urgent cases where the child's behavior is of particular concern or that child or other children are in danger (refer also to the flow chart):
 - a. Teaching teams may begin the teacher DECA immediately.
 - b. The Mental Health Coordinator will meet with the teaching team to observe the child and create/revise an Action Plan as soon as possible. The Mental Health Coordinator may also complete a DECA for the child.
 - c. The parent, teacher and Mental Health Coordinator along with the incident report(s), Action Plan, DECA, and observation reports will be brought to the staffing committee.
 - d. Professional or Specialist observation may be requested immediately.
 - e. Support will be given to the family for any professional or specialist recommended referral or transition, agreed to by the staffing committee.
 - f. The Mental Health Coordinator and Family Service Worker will support families in making the transition to mental health services.
4. If families desire to be connected with mental health services the Mental Health Coordinator will aid the family to complete the referral process.

Emergency Mental Health Concerns:

1. Children or Families in need of immediate psychiatric assistance will be provided a phone and private area to speak with a Mental Health Hotline.
2. Families who need immediate psychiatric assistance and who can be transported to the Mental Health facility will be provided assistance with transportation to the nearest facility.
3. If family member is of danger to themselves or others – call 911 for immediate assistance.

Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Head Start/Early Head Start

Section: Mental Health PS 1304.24. (a)(2)(a)(3)

Subject: Mental Health On-Site Services

Policy:

Mental Health Services must be secured with regular on-site visits by Mental Health Professional.

Procedure:

1. Service contracts will be updated annually for Mental Health Services through COPE and Life Management.
2. Visits by the Mental Health provider will be monitored through sign-in sheets and monthly reports by Mental Health Professional.
3. Staff will monitor providers' on-site visits and notify the Mental Health Coordinator if the visits are not occurring on a regularly scheduled basis.
4. A signed referral is needed before any individual observations of child are made.
5. Information from Mental Health Professional will be shared with parent upon request.

Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Head Start/Early Head Start

Section: Mental Health P.S. 1304.24 (a)(1)(i)

Subject: Mental Health Procedures

Policy:

Program will collaborate with staff, parents, and mental health providers to provide efficient, non-judgmental services to the families.

Procedure:

The Mental Health Provider List is updated annually. The Mental Health Coordinator or other staff member will complete the update. Contact the mental health professional on the previous year's list. Verify address, phone number, office hours, and payment services they accept. Also include the type of service the provider provides (i.e. family therapy, child therapy, play therapy, substance abuse therapy, psychological testing, etc.) Add any new mental health providers to the list.

Collaboration with a child/family's mental health provider – If a child sees a mental health provider, then the Teacher or Family Service Worker should discuss with the parent/guardian the advantages of working with the mental health provider. Explain to the family that the purpose of the collaboration and the reason to contact the mental health provider is to obtain guidance in helping the child function successfully in the Head Start/Early Head Start program. If the parent/guardian approves the collaboration, then have the family sign a release form. Ensure the family is not having any difficulty obtaining mental health services (i.e. transportation, child care, funding). If difficulties are being experienced, then consult the Family Service Coordinator to assist with eliminating the barriers.

Screening Process

Within the first 45 calendar days of a child entering Head Start or Early Head Start, center staff will complete Health Screens including dental, hearing, and vision (90 days), the Battelle Assessment, and parents will complete the Ages & Stages Assessment.

- Objectives:
 - Identify mental health/behavior/developmental concerns through the screening process.
 - Consulting the family about any concerns.
 - Referring child as needed
- Screening tools- the following are ways to screen a child for mental health/behavior/developmental concerns. Use all the following tools to determine if a child needs to be referred for further assessment or observation by a Coordinator.
 - ✓ Observations – All staff have the responsibility to report observations.
 - All observations should be non-judgmental and descriptive of the event. Describe the behavior and try not to define it.
 - Correct example – Today, Dillon would join a group of children that were playing. He would grab a toy or object from a child and walk away. A teacher would help Dillon give the toy back to the child. He would give the toy back but would stomp his feet as he walked away. He had at least three incidents like this throughout the day.
Incorrect Example – Dillon is having problems with sharing and playing with other children today. He would throw temper tantrums when he did not get his way and had to give back a toy he had taken from another child.

- Remember! Parents can review their Child's File and you should report the facts, not opinions. (Who, Where, When, Why, How).
 - ✓ Child Physical Form – The child's physical has information concerning a child's behavior as reported by a physical health professional. Review this form to see if any concerns are noted.
 - ✓ Family contacts during first home visit or other contacts with the parents/guardians – Teaching staff and Family Service Workers will talk about any concerns they have about their child's mental health/behavior/development. Use any initial observations of the child's behavior/development and assessments to guide the discussion. Talk with the family about their concerns and ask for their guidance. Find out what ways they have dealt with their concerns (i.e. have they consulted a professional? What techniques have they used with their child?) The most important thing to do with families at this point is to get them to understand the importance of their assistance. Explaining and or reinforcing to them that they are an important part of the team. Consult with them as often as needed to obtain a complete picture of the child and their needs.
 - ✓ MENTAL HEALTH OBSERVATION- Once the Teaching Staff, Mental Health Coordinator, Center Coordinator determines that a child needs a Mental Health Observation, the parents/guardians need to be consulted and agree to professional observation. Follow these steps:
 - ✓ Meet with the parent/guardians providing information about why the concern exists. Share observations with parents/guardians. Any information shared with the parent/guardian should be documented in the child file.
 - ✓ Explain to the parents what the professional Mental Health Observation consists of. The parents may wish to skip this step and have the child referred to the LEA or a mental health professional of their choice.
 - ✓ If the parents/guardians agree to the Mental Health Observation, then have them sign the permission form. Inform the parents/guardians that you will inform them of when the Mental Health Observation will occur and invite them to attend the staffing after the observation or to speak with the Mental Health Professional. Regardless, the results of the Mental Health Observation will be shared with them.
 - ✓ If the parents/guardians refuse the observation, have them sign a Refusal of Permission for Services form.
 - ✓ If child/family begins seeing the mental health professional outside of the center, request a release of information between the center and mental health agency so Head Start/Early Head Start staff can assist the child at the center.
- Objectives
 - Assist families in obtaining mental health services as needs arise.
 - If staff become aware of a family's need for mental health services including counseling, substance abuse intervention, domestic violence services, etc. If situations such as these become known, then referrals to community professionals and service providers should be making following procedures for the Family Partnership component. If the family does not want a referral or the situation does not warrant a referral, then printed or other types of information can be provided to the families. The Mental Health Coordinator is available as needed, upon request from the Teacher/Center Coordinator/Family Service Worker/Family members.

Confidentiality and Sensitivity to Mental Health

The Confidentiality Policy must be followed by all staff. Mental Health can be a very sensitive issue with families. Be supportive and understanding to families' fears and uncertainties. Reassure families that by obtaining mental health services that they are not faulty, but need assistance just as they would with any other issue in their life(i.e. seeking medical treatment due to a physical illness).

Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Head Start/Early Head Start

Section: Mental Health PS 1304.24. (a)(1)(ii)

Subject: Mental Health Referrals for Children

Policy:

Children who attend Head Start/Early Head Start will be provided Mental Health referrals as needed.

Procedure:

1. Children who attend Head Start/Early Head Start may be referred to a mental health service provider if a need is identified by teaching staff, family, assessment tool, disabilities specialist, or Mental Health Coordinator.
2. Referral will first be discussed with parent/guardian and signed permissions will be obtained.
3. Full documentation of discussion with family, family giving permission, and a copy of the referral will be kept in family file.
4. The referral will be submitted to the Mental Health Coordinator for submission to the service agency to ensure consistency of information.
5. Family information will not be disclosed to service agency without the direct and written consent of custodial family.
6. All referrals will remain confidential.
7. If child is not seen at the center in a timely manner the Mental Health Coordinator will be notified.
8. The service agency will be contacted by the Mental Health Coordinator if the service agency does not respond in a timely manner.

Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Head Start/Early Head Start

Section: Mental Health PS 1304.24. (a)(1)(iv) 1304.24 (a) (3) (iv)

Subject: Mental Health Referrals for Families

Policy:

Families of Head Start/Early Head Start children will be provided the opportunity to request mental health referrals to assist in strengthening their home environments.

Procedures:

1. Families may be referred for Mental Health services upon their request for services. Family will not be referred without a personal request.
2. The family will not be pressured into receiving mental health services.
3. Full documentation of family giving permission for referral will be in the family file with a copy of the signed referral.
4. Follow-up should be done to ensure that family's request for services is met in a timely manner. This follow-up will be done with the family member and the service agency if family has not been contacted.
5. Family information will not be disclosed to service agency without the direct and written consent of family member.
6. All referrals will be confidential.
7. A copy of referral will be submitted to the Mental Health Coordinator.
8. Any request by the family for Mental Health information or service agency information without a referral request should be made through the Mental Health Coordinator to ensure consistency of information.

Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Head Start/Early Head Start

Section: Mental Health PS 1304.24. (a)(3)(iv)

Subject: Mental Health Resources

Policy:

Any and all Mental Health resources will be utilized as needed.

Procedure:

1. Staff will solicit assistance from Mental Health Professional to access all existing resources as needed.
2. Staff will work with Mental Health Professional to locate provider for child and family in need of services.
3. Staff will assist Mental Health Professional in accessing needed services and allow Mental Health Professional to act as a liaison between agencies.
4. Staff will work with Mental Health Professional to secure appropriate services through referrals as needed.

Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Head Start/Early Head Start

Section: Mental Health PS 1304.24. (a)(1)(v-vi) 1304.40 (b)(1)(ii)

Subject: Providing information and support to parents

Policy:

Helping parents understand Mental Health Issues and providing support for parent's participation in needed services.

Procedure:

1. Opportunities will be provided to allow parents to learn about and participate in mental wellness activities.
2. Parents will have access to Mental Health Professional through parent activities.
3. Parents will be provided assistance in accessing Mental Health resources.
4. Parents will be provided assistance in obtaining services by:
 - Staff attending orientation meeting with parent
 - Staff will assist parent in completing paperwork
 - Staff will assist parent in locating child care if needed
 - Staff will assist parent in locating funding if needed
 - Staff will speak with family members about mental health intervention for the family.

Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Head Start/Early Head Start

Section: **Mental Health** PS (a) (3) (i) – (a) (3) (ii) - (a) (3) (iii)

Subject: **Response to Behavioral and Mental Health Concerns**

Policy:

Program practices will be responsive to behavioral and mental health concerns.

Procedure:

1. Mental Health Professional will provide observations and suggestions for staff and parents that will help the child foster healthy mental wellness.
2. Mental Health Professional will assist through direct contact and reports to staff to suggest techniques to try in the classroom.
3. Mental Health Professional will make needed recommendations to resources in area.
4. Child's mental wellness will be supported through group and individual staff and parent education on mental health issues.
5. Assistance will be provided to child with atypical behavior.

Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Head Start/Early Head Start

Section: Mental Health P.S. 1304.24

Subject: Sexual Predator Policy

Policy:

To keep children enrolled in the Tri-County Head Start & Early Head Start Programs safe.

Procedure:

It is the policy of Tri-County Head Start/Early Head Start to follow Law Enforcement guidance regarding persons placed on the sexual predator list. The following steps will be taken:

Recognizing that Local Law Enforcement officials usually notify the public regarding sexual predators in the community:

1. Center Coordinators will contact their local Law Enforcement Agency at the beginning of each school year, to ask if there is anyone in the community or vicinity of the Center that has a history of sexual abuse of young children. They will ask Law Enforcement to inform the center, throughout the year, if there is someone in the near vicinity of the Center that is a potential threat to young children.
2. Head Start/Early Head Start staff will take necessary precautions to protect the children, following Law Enforcement advice.
3. Head Start/Early Head Start children will **never** be left alone with anyone other than Head Start/Early Head Start staff unless the person is a contracted, credentialed service provider (therapist).
4. Only designated Head Start/Early Head Start staff will go online, for Head Start/Early Head Start purposes, to seek the names of sexual predators who might be in the area.
5. Each incident of a sexual predator in the community will be treated on an individual basis.
6. If a parent comes to HS/EHS staff regarding their concern about a specific individual, the Center Coordinator will contact Law Enforcement to see if that person is considered a danger for young children and take appropriate actions, as recommended by Law Enforcement.

If the person of concern is a HS/EHS parent or significant other, the above guidelines will be followed. If that person (parent or significant other) is considered dangerous to young children, the following steps will be taken:

1. That person will not be allowed to volunteer in the classroom.
2. If that person arrives at the center to pick up their child, staff will take the child to the door to meet the person. He or She will not be allowed in the classroom.
3. That person will be allowed to attend Family Activities with their child, but will be monitored at all times by staff, and will not be allowed to be alone with any child other than their own.

Every effort will be made to keep HS/EHS children safe. At the same time every effort will be made to allow HS/EHS parents and significant others to be involved with their child at Head Start and Early Head Start, unless there is court order stating that they should have no contact with young children.

At all times, the safety of the children will be of the utmost importance, and appropriate steps will be taken to assure their safety.