

Mental Health Protocol and Referral Process

1302.45 Child Mental Health and Social and Emotional Well-Being

In an effort to promote mental wellness for children and families in Head Start the protocol is as follows:

Center Base:

- **Center Teachers will work with their Area Manager and staff and Mental Health Coordinator to discuss concerns that they have with the child's behavior in the classroom.**
- **Center Teacher will contact the parent to let them know that they will be documenting the child's behavior on a behavior log for 2 weeks. Documentation can be from classroom observation, home visit, and parent reports.**
- **Center Teacher will talk to the Mental Health Coordinator and send a completed copy of the behavior log to their Area Manager and the original copy to the Mental Health Coordinator.**
- **The Head Start Mental Health Referral and Record of Follow-up Service form will be completed by the Teacher and signed by the parent/guardian.**
- **The original Referral form will be sent to the Central Office to Attn: Mental Health Coordinator and a copy to their Area Manager.**
- **When all documentation is complete, the Mental Health Coordinator will make the mental health referral to the appropriate Mental Health Agency.**
- **Emergency referrals will be made by the Mental Health Coordinator upon discussion with the Teacher and Parent/Guardian. Emergency referrals will only be made when the child's immediate safety and well-being are at risk at home or at school.**
- **The Mental Health Coordinator will keep the Teacher and Area Manager informed on services received.**

Home Base and Combination:

- **Home Base and Combination Teachers will work with their Area Manager and Mental Health Coordinator to discuss concerns that they have with child's behavior.**
- **Home Base and Combination Teachers will discuss the concerns with the Child's Parent/Guardian to let them know that they will be documenting the child's behavior on a behavior log for three weeks. The documentation can come from home visits, PALS, and parent reports.**
- **Home Base and Combination Teachers will talk to and or meet with the Mental Health Coordinator and send a completed copy of the behavior log to the Area Manager and the original copy to the Mental Health Coordinator at the Central Office.**
- **The Head Start Mental Health Referral and Record of Follow-up Service form will be completed by the teacher and signed by the Parent/Guardian.**
- **The original referral form is sent to the Central Office, Attn: Mental Health Coordinator and a copy is sent to the Area Manager.**
- **When all documentation is complete, the Mental Health Coordinator will make the referral to the appropriate Mental Health Agency.**
- **The Mental Health Coordinator will keep Teachers and Area Managers informed of services received.**
- **Emergency referrals will be made by the Mental Health Coordinator upon discussion with the Teacher and Parent/Guardian. Emergency referrals will only be made in situations where the child's safety and well-being are a factor at home or at school.**

Referrals from SCCD, Inc. need to be made to one of the following:

- **The School district in which the child belongs – The Mental Health Coordinator will make a referral to the appropriate school district if an observation is needed. A referral will also be made to the school district if the child has no insurance that will cover the cost of the services.**

OR

- **The Mental Health Agency in the child's location** – The Mental Health Coordinator will make a referral to the appropriate Mental Health Agency if the child has insurance that will cover the cost of services.

Self-Referrals

When families determine that services are necessary due to child behaviors and family situations, they can be assisted by staff to get necessary Mental Health Center information and phone numbers. These referrals do not require the above documentation by staff as families are making their own referrals. In these situations, please let the Mental Health Coordinator know that the family is seeking services. It is important to track ALL children receiving Mental Health services.