

HEALTHY FAMILIES NEW YORK

PCANY Training and Staff Development PROTOCOL FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE VISITS

For the purpose of FAW, FSW, and Supervision quality assurance, a trainer or consultant to PCANY will visit HFNY program sites regularly. The importance of practice observations is to maintain focus on home visitor, assessor, and supervisor competencies, and the relationships among those roles and with families in the Parallel Process. Sites can expect the FSW QA visit to involve two days at the program site with one day of practice observations and one day of Site Support (see Site Support Plan, below). The FAW QA visit involves one day of practice observations. Although the frequency of visits may vary from year-to-year, depending on other contractual obligations of the Training and Staff Development Team, both FSW and FAW QA visits occur approximately every 24 months.

PCANY QA for newly trained FAWs

In some cases, a newly trained FAW will have a PCANY QA site visit within 3-4 months of training, and will have one to two positive assessments reviewed by their site's FAW QA Specialist. To attend to the professional development of newly trained FAWs, if a QA visit to their site is not anticipated within 3-4 months of FAW Core, the QA Specialist assigned to their site will contact the program to request and review two positive assessments from dedicated FAWs, and one positive assessment from those conducting assessments but also working in other capacities in their program. In addition, the FAW QA specialist will initiate a conversation with the FAW supervisor, using a set series of questions about the supervisor's observations of the new FAW's competence and confidence conducting and documenting assessments, and the supervisor's approach to ongoing quality assurance and support of the FAW's professional development. Based on the conversation with the supervisor, the FAW QA specialist and the supervisor may develop a professional development and quality assurance plan for the new FAW using the FAW Core Training TOL workbook, or other tools and strategies.

Larger programs or multi-site programs may receive more time, at the discretion of the Central Administration (a collaboration of NYS OCFS Program Contract Managers, Center for Human Services Research, Data Collection and Evaluation, and Prevent Child Abuse New York).

Arranging and Scheduling Visits

At the beginning of each contract year, the Director of Training will assign Trainers and Consultants to be responsible for specific sites. Efforts are made to provide continuity from year-to-year. The trainers assigned will contact sites early in the contract year to let them know who their visitor will be, the month the visit is to occur, and to review the QA

protocol and answer any questions the Program Manager might have about the assignment or the process.

The Director of Training will inform OCFS Program Contract Managers (PCM) about the assignment of QA staff to the various sites and about the approximate schedule for conducting the visits. OCFS Program Contract Managers and the Director of Training will consult together if needed as preparation or follow-up to any Quality Assurance visits.

QA visitors assigned to a given site will work with the Program Manager to set a specific date for the visit. The QA visitor will also arrange a conversation with the PCM and the PM to identify the topic(s) to be addressed during the Site Support portion of the visit. (See Site Support Plan, below). The QA visitor will inform their direct supervisor and the Program Associate of the date(s) for the visit. The Program Associate will send a letter confirming the visit to the Program Manager with a copy to the OCFS PCM. This letter outlines the purpose of the visit and explains the procedure. In addition, the forms that will be used to organize observations made during the visit will be mailed to the Program Manager to assist the program to focus on the desired objectives ahead of time and increase preparedness for the visit. The Program Manager is responsible for explaining the Quality Assurance visit to the staff ahead of time and sharing the observation forms with them.

Once the visit date is confirmed, the QA visitor will request the most recent quarterly MIS reports from CHSR as well as any other reports that may be useful for the specific topics requested for the Site Support portion of the visit.

Site Support Component of FSW QA

The site support visit is part of a two-day FSW QA visit that includes an observation of a Home Visit and an observation of FSW Supervision. A second day is tailored to each program's needs, as identified in advance by the Program Manager, the Program Contract Manager, CHSR-staff, and other members of Training and Staff Development Team. A second day could consist of any of the following activities:

- In-service Training for all staff or Supervisors and Manager only
- Observations and feedback on the following:
 - A second home visit
 - A second FSW Supervision
 - Group Supervision or Case Conferences
 - Team Meetings
- A Nature of Nurturing (focus on relationships) Follow-up Day
- Individual consultation with Program Manager on specified topics, including but not limited to the following:
 - Program management
 - Supervision
 - Home visitor and supervisor documentation review/discussion

- Personnel/staffing issues
- Outreach
- Assistance with utilizing and integrating MIS reports
- Developing an effective internal QA system
- Preparation for credentialing
- Individual consultation with Supervisors and Manager around a topic or issue identified by the Program Manager.

Content of site support visits is based upon individual sites' needs and requests, information learned about the site through the quality assurance system, OCFS PCM site visits, and response to training events. Following the initial information sharing and planning discussion, the QA visitor will draft a plan for the visit and send it to all parties for review. The plan that is developed may require assistance from someone other than a QA visitor, and in that case, Central Administration partners will attempt to come up with a plan to meet this need.

After the visit is conducted, programs have a formal opportunity to provide feedback on the usefulness and helpfulness of both the process and the report. A brief written evaluation will be mailed from the program to the Director of Training and Staff Development. Complete documentation and written review will be submitted to OCFS as well as the program. It includes identified strengths and recommendations, and is sent to Program Managers within 60 days of visit. This documentation includes the Observation of Home Visit and Observation of FSW Supervision as well as the following:

- The process and individuals that were part of the planning phase,
- The goals for the Site Support Visit,
- The individuals and activities that comprised the Site Support Visit,
- A follow-up plan, if required, and
- The Program Manager's evaluation of the process.

After Program Managers have an opportunity to review the report, the QA visitor will call again to answer questions and provide any additional follow-up.

Preparing for the Visit

In addition to educating staff ahead of time about the visit and its purpose, the Program Manager is responsible for arranging home visit observations, observations of supervision, and observations of assessments.

For home visits, this includes informing the workers who have been selected, preparing the families ahead of time, and arranging back-up observations in the event of cancellation or no-show by the families. The recommendation is that at least one back-up visit be arranged as one home visit observation must be completed during the site visit.

For assessment observations, the Program Manager is responsible for informing the worker who will be observed and for letting them know how to introduce the observer to the family.

Prior to the visit and after the staff who will be observed have been selected, the QA visitor will offer the worker to be observed the opportunity to reflect on their work, either with a written questionnaire or a phone call. Questions asked by the visitor will include:

- What is going well?
- What are your strengths?
- Is there anything you would like to do better?
- For Supervisors: What do you see in the numbers from your last quarterly report that might connect to this observation?

This information will help the visitor to tailor her feedback and observations to each individual.

Selecting Families to be visited, staff to be observed, etc.

During the planning phase, prior to the visit, the Program Manager will provide the QA visitor with a complete list of staff who have completed core and wraparound training, their date of hire, and their job titles. Direct service staff (FAW's and FSW's) that have previously been observed in a PCANY QA visit will not normally be selected for observation a second time. From the remaining pool of direct service staff, the QA visitor will randomly select which FAW or FSW will be observed and notify the manager at least 3 weeks prior to the date of the visit. The manager and the worker and/or supervisor will then arrange the home visit observations and observations of assessments.

Observations of Supervision

At least one supervision will be observed during a QA visit. The ideal arrangement is for the QA visitor to observe supervision of the same staff member observed during the assessment or home visit.

Conducting the Visit

For both FAW and FSW visits, the Observer will begin the day by having a brief, private discussion with the Program Manager to review any questions or concerns the Program Manager may have, get an overview of the community being served, and to review the Program Manager's thoughts concerning the relationship between recent quarterly data reports and the observations and feedback of the present visit.

The FSW QA visitor will observe a home visit and FSW supervision, and a verbal debrief of the home visit and supervision session. It is most beneficial if debriefing of the home visit observations takes place with the FSW, Supervisor and PM present, and for

supervision debriefing if the Supervisor and the Supervisor's direct supervisor are present.

QA visitors should have time to prepare for face-to-face feedback. Visitors are strongly discouraged from providing detailed feedback to workers unless the person's supervisor is present. An exception to this would be some brief behaviorally specific positive reinforcement.

The FAW QA visitor's responsibilities are to observe one assessment and review the scoring of the same assessment at the end of the day, and to observe one FAW supervision.

Because of the demanding schedule for the QA visitor, it is strongly recommended that the program explore lunch options at the site in advance with the QA visitor as well as provide a space for them to work and meet privately with staff.

Follow-up

QA visitors may also arrange follow-up verbal feedback by phone with managers and staff observed within 10 days of the visit. During the follow-up calls, the QA visitor will ask each staff member to revisit the responses to the questions asked in the preparatory phase.

Documentation of the visits must be completed within 60 days. Documentation includes completion of all observation forms, internal review at Training and Staff Development, and completion of a letter summarizing the visit to be sent to the Program Manager and to the OCFS Contract Manager, accompanied by the observation forms. All letters will be reviewed and approved by the Director of Training and Staff Development or her designee.

The letter and all accompanying documentation must be based on observations, not inferences or interpretations. All documentation must focus on strengths as well as suggested areas for further skill development.

After the Program Manager has reviewed the written documentation from the visit, the QA Follow-up Form should be filled out and returned to the Director of Training and to the Program's OCFS Program Contract Manager. The follow-up form is the formal means through which HFNY collects information and feedback on the QA process. The follow-up form is also the place where the Program Manager is asked to identify what will be done within the program to address the feedback from the visit.

OCFS PCMs will review and discuss recent QA visits and feedback received with Program Managers during the annual site visits.