

**VOLUNTARY NATURE OF SERVICES** (EFFECTIVE 10/31/2024)

**HFA Best Practice Standard 3-1.A**

**POLICY: HFNY services are voluntary. All families are made aware of the voluntary nature of their participation in the program.**

HFNY Policy Guidelines

* Parents are to be informed, verbally and in writing, of the voluntary nature of participating in HFNY services as early as possible and no later than when families consent to participate in services, including the FROG/assessment visit.
* Engagement visits, phone calls or other activities are used as the first opportunity for families to make an informed and voluntary choice about participation in services offered by the program.
* During engagement visits and activities, the assigned worker[[1]](#footnote-1) explains what Healthy Families is, what services are available, and the voluntary nature of services.
* The assigned worker will review the H*FNY Service Agreement Family Rights and Confidentiality Form* and MIS Information Consent Form with families in line with GA-3A (i.e., enroll families) **before completing the FROG.** Completed forms will be uploaded in the MIS under Case Documents.
  + Refer to One Step Enrollment Process
* Sites are required to utilize the *HFNY Service Agreement Family Rights and Confidentiality Form.* Sites are permitted to include additional criteria to the form but not remove any required areas (refer to GA-3A for policy on Family Rights and Confidentiality).
* Each family choosing to participate in HFNY services signs and receives a copy of the HFNY Service Agreement Family Rights and Confidentiality Form.
* In the event that any entity (child welfare or the court system, for example) attempts to mandate services for a family, staff ensure that both the agency and the family know that services will be offered voluntarily and that the family is free at any time to decide whether or not to participate.

**The site will adhere to all NYS policy guidelines specified above. In addition, please insert site-specific procedures that:**

1. Statement of commitment to services that are voluntary.
2. Describe the process for informing families of the voluntary nature of services and their right to refuse services and where this is documented within the MIS for both those who enroll and those who decline services.

**BUILDING TRUST AND ENGAGING FAMILIES** (EFFECTIVE 10/31/2024)

**HFA Best Practice Standard 3-2.A**

**POLICY: HFNY staff use positive methods to build family trust and engage/enroll new families.**

**Please note:** This standard applies to families who have not yet enrolled or received a first home visit (i.e., visit subsequent to the site offering services), and is not to be confused with creative outreach expectations which occur after the family has received a first home visit (Standard 3-3).

HFNY Policy Guidelines

* Staff will use a variety of outreach and engagement activities including engagement visits, texting, phone messages, sending friendly notes, invitations to parent groups, providing program information and leaving small token gifts like hand sanitizer, etc. to engage families.
* HFNY Staff are trained to plan for intentional use of reflective strategies and active listening skills to build a trusting relationship with families and encourage children’s healthy brain development.
* When a family is reluctant to participate in home visiting or does not appear to be available, the assigned worker discusses the family in detail with their supervisor to problem-solve the engagement difficulties and develop strategies to build trust and engage the family.
* All activities to engage the family are documented in participant case notes, these will be used to populate the Engagement Log in MIS.
* There is no requirement for the amount of time staff will spend trying to initially engage families; it is recommended the pre-enrollment outreach (outreach services provided prior to the first home visit) concludes within 30-45 days of the first attempted contact with the family subsequent to their verbal acceptance. For early prenatal referrals or when sites are working to build caseloads, pre-enrollment outreach may extend longer.

**The site will adhere to all NYS policy guidelines specified above. In addition, please insert site-specific procedures that:**

1. Description of how staff will begin building their relationship with the family prior to enrollment. Including customizing activities based on the family’s needs and interests, indicating an understanding of those needs and an ability and willingness to help.
2. Description of how supervisors support staff and have ongoing discussions with staff about positive and persistent outreach and engagement methods.

**TIP:** When programs choose to utilize separate FRS and FSS roles, it will be important to use pre-enrollment interactions between the FRS and family to begin discussions around FSS assignment. The visit where the FROG occurs will be considered the first home visit and programs will be held accountable for home visit rate expectations from that point, assigning the FSS or beginning conversations about FSS assignment prior to the FROG visit will help programs ensure they meet home visit rate expectations.

**Creative Outreach** (EFFECTIVE 10/31/2024)

**HFA Best Practice Standard 3-3.A**

**POLICY: Families who have received at least one home visit (post-enrollment) are offered Creative Outreach in accordance with the HFA Level Change Forms for a minimum of three months before discontinuing services (or for a cumulative three-month period over six consecutive months). Families remain at the case weight of the level they were on prior to moving to CO.**

HFNY Policy Guidelines

* Level CO (Creative Outreach) corresponds to the family’s circumstances and not those of the home visitor or the program. For example, families may not be placed on Level CO when a home visitor is on leave of absence or vacation, or when the program is having trouble filling a vacancy. It is the program’s responsibility to visit the family according to the family’s current home visit level.
* A family that has received at least one home visit is placed on Level CO when:

1. The family cannot be located.e.g, phone, house issue
2. Attempts to schedule or reschedule a home visit are unsuccessful (e.g.,the family cannot be contacted, the family has not accepted any meeting time being offered by the home visitor.
3. The family has missed three consecutive scheduled home visits while on Level 1-Prenatal, Level 1, Level 2 or Level 1SS. The program will place the family on CO as of the date of the first missed home visit.
4. A family on Level 3 or 4 has missed onescheduled visit and there has been no communication. This does *not* include a family who calls prior to the missed visit to reschedule.

* Home visitors consult with their supervisor in determining Level CO. The review is documented in the case notes and supervision documentation.  When Level CO status is assigned, discussions about the outreach efforts occur regularly in supervision.
* Creative Outreach activities are carried out consistently and at a frequency equal to or higher than that associated with their previous level.
* Creative Outreach includes positive engagement activities such as, phone calls, text messages, drop-by home visits, use of door hangers, friendly letters, and materials that may be of special interest to the family (e.g., ASQs, job announcements, social activities, etc.).
* Home Visitors should maintain a record of all Creative Outreach activities in the case notes.
* A family is taken off Level CO when they have received ***two consecutive* *home******visits*.** The date of the second home visit is the date of level change, and this is documented on the Level Form found in the Basic Information tab for each case.
* Decisions about visit frequency after families are taken off Level CO (the same or higher than prior to time on CO) will be made based on discussions between the supervisor, home visitor and family (not necessarily at the same time).
* A family will remain on Level CO for a minimum 92 day period, either consecutively or cumulatively over a six-month period, before being discharged from services.
* Families who are assigned a permanent worker from Level TR or returned to the service area from Level TO, **but who are unable to be engaged on an active service level**, should be placed on Level CO. In these situations, the cumulative time on TR or TO plus CO will be for a minimum of 92 days. This decision should be documented in case notes and supervision notes.
* HFA has specified the following allowable reasons for when a family on CO may be discharged from services prior to the 92 day period. Including:

1. The family has refused services
2. The family has moved from the service area
3. Neither parent has custody of the child
4. The pregnancy ended in miscarriage or termination
5. The target child or primary caregiver is deceased
6. There are significant safety concerns that place the home visitor’s health and well-being in jeopardy
7. The family has transferred to another program
8. Permanent staff assignment has been re-established from TR or TO and family has been placed on CO ( if the time on TR/TO/CO equals 92 days).

* Level CO can extend beyond 92 days if it is likely that the family will be re-engaged. Supervisors and home visitors discuss this circumstance and document this discussion.   HFNY Performance Indicators set the maximum percentage of families on Level CO at 10% or lower.
* If 92 days of outreach at Level CO conclude without success, a letter may be sent to the family indicating that services will be closed and inviting them to contact the program if their circumstances have changed.

**The site will adhere to all NYS policy guidelines specified above. In addition, please insert site-specific procedures that:**

1. Describe when families will be placed on post-enrollment Creative Outreach (CO).
2. Identify how shared decision making between the supervisor and home visitor as to when level CO is assigned will occur, how the decision will be documented and require regular reviews about outreach efforts, including monitoring the documentation of all outreach efforts.
3. Specify case weight from previous level will be maintained during time on Creative Outreach.
4. Describe the activities encouraging reengagement to be carried out, consistently and at a frequency equal to or higher than that associated with their previous level.
5. Specify that the home visitor will document all Creative Outreach activities in the case notes.
6. Specify that CO efforts will be continued for a **minimum** of 92 days or for a cumulative 92 day period over six consecutive months.
7. Describes that level CO will conclude prior to the 92 day period (consecutive or cumulative) only when the family has re-engaged in services, has moved from the service area, has declined services or other allowable reasons specified in HFA Best Practice Standards (p. 61).
8. Specify that when families are unable to be actively engaged, after coming off of Levels TR or TO the process for assigning them to Level CO will reflect the following:
   1. Family is first transferred to their appropriate service level.
   2. Home visitors attempt to contact the family and establish a regular visit schedule, but are unable to do so.
   3. Supervisor and home visitor determine placement on Level CO is appropriate, and document this in case notes and supervision notes.

**Reference Table**

**Best Practice Standard 3**

*This reference table contains a list of reports in the MIS that can be used to help programs monitor fidelity as well as helpful links and documents related to each policy.*

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| **Policy** | **MIS Reports & Forms** | **Appendix & Links** |
| **3-1.A**  **Voluntary nature of services** | * None | * **HFNY Service Agreement Family Rights and Confidentiality Form** (need MIS login) Go to Help and Docs, click Paper Forms then search confidentiality. Forms are available in Arabic, Haitian Creole, Spanish, Chinese, and English * [*The One Step Enrollment Process*](https://www.healthyfamiliesnewyork.org/Staff/Documents/One-Step%20Guidelines%208-10-2023.pdf) |
| **3-2.A**  **Pre-enrollment outreach** | * Engagement Log | * N/A |
| **3-3.A**  **Post-enrollment creative outreach** | * Accreditation/ 3-3.B Use of Create Outreach * Accreditation/ 3-4.A and B Retention Rate Analysis * Analysis/ Program Synopsis * Lists/ Supervisor case list | * **HFNY Service Agreement Family Rights and Confidentiality Form** (need MIS login) Go to Help and Docs, and click Paper Forms then search confidentiality. Forms are available in Arabic, Haitian Creole, Spanish, Chinese, and English * Annual Service review guidelines * MIS Report Analysis Level CO/TO/TR Tracking Report |

1. Please note: For programs using a two-worker model, these discussions will occur between the FRS and families. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)