

Winter
2017



HEALTHY FAMILIES NEW YORK

the Link

Accreditation 2017-2018

**Susan Atwell, Office of Children and Family Services
Unit Manager**

Healthy Families America (HFA) peer reviewers will visit Central Administration (CA) in November 2017 and meet with various members of the CA team. This is the first phase of the multi-site accreditation process. As part of the site visit, HFA will conduct interviews of program managers, some of them by phone. We expect to learn which sites they will visit. Typically, they select a few sites (including, for example, a new site and a site that has been operating for many years and/or a site that struggled in the last accreditation). They often try to include urban, rural and suburban sites. HFA will also want to see how CA supports new managers and new programs so they may select sites with this in mind. Once HFA decides which sites they will visit, they will begin to score the evidence provided in the programs' self-assessment tool. During this time they may request more information to show evidence of the practice they are evaluating. The ratings are based on a 3-2-1 scale similar to the new tools OCFS uses in site visits. We are allowed 25 '1's among 150 standards ('1' ratings cannot be in safety or sentinel standards). The sites that are not visited will not be scored. Policy changes are no longer allowed during the site visit and must be finalized prior to the site visit.

Please remember, this is a strength-based process and HFA will allow programs to provide additional information to demonstrate their practice. CA will provide as much technical assistance and support as it can during the process, and will try to meet your needs wherever possible.

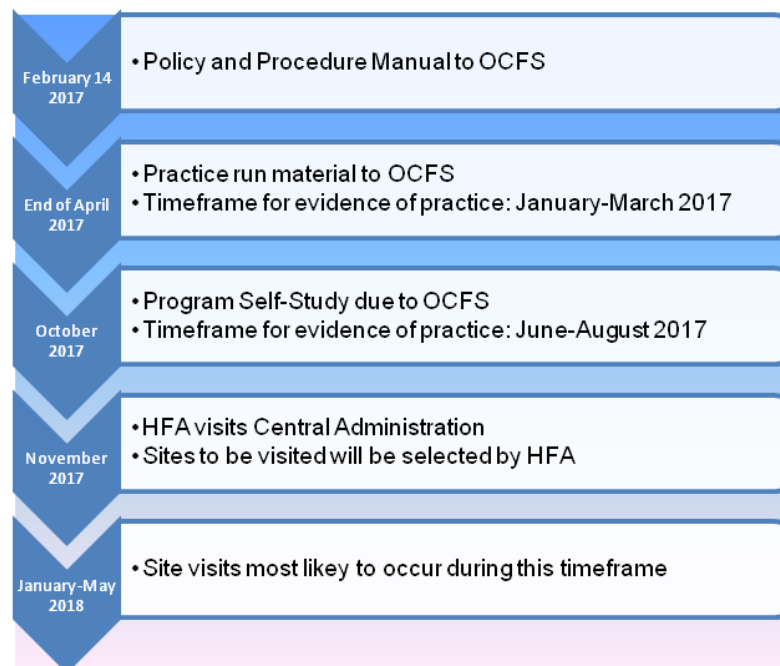
Some examples:

- Connecting you with a program manager who has gone through accreditation before
- Talking through a particular standard that is causing your program trouble with your program contract manager at OCFS
- Having your PCANY QA specialist look over some of your supervisors' notes to give feedback on their documentation
- Learning more about the MIS from CHSR and how you can better prove adherence to a standard

We'll spend time together talking about this at our regional meetings.



Accreditation Timeline



Office of Children
and Family Services



Prevent Child Abuse
New York

Accreditation Prep—from those who've been there

Carol Peeling, Healthy Families Broome, Program Manager

Although the accreditation process was arduous, it provided my team with the opportunity to unite as we prepared for accreditation and fine-tuned our work. Upon completion of the process, we made sure to celebrate our many successes and acknowledge that the program operated with HFA model fidelity to provide the best services to our families and communities.



Here we have CAMBA's Healthy Families Program engaging in Outreach (BPS 3-2.B)!

Amelioration of Accreditation Anxiety

Peggy Sheehan, Healthy Schenectady Families Director

Relaxation strategies used in childbirth work well during the accreditation process. Develop a mantra such as “a score of a two is okay...a two is okay...” **Here are some tips:**

- Get started now!
- Completing the program self-study is one of the best ways to learn the program model inside and out. Engage all staff in the process!
- If one standard is overwhelming, move on to one that is easier for you. Doing so will build confidence.
- The charts at the end of each standard will guide your work.
- Don't make this a one person journey. Let your team help!

Roxanne Monroe, Healthy Families Brookdale, Program Manager

While I haven't experienced a Site Visit, the peer reviewers selected me for a brief interview during their CA visit. They asked me about the support provided by CA for wrap-around trainings and what procedures we had in place to meet the criteria. I was also asked whether or not I had the ability to contribute to the agenda for Regional/Statewide Meetings. In preparing the Policies and Procedures, it was very helpful to be able to work in tandem with other Program Managers/Directors in our region and around the state. We even gathered information from other states to address areas where we felt we lacked knowledge and/or experience. Preparing for Accreditation is not something that you can handle in isolation or without the support of other HFNY Managers, and our Central Administration. Quoting the song from High School Musical, “**We are all in this together!**”

Lisa Galatio, Healthy Families Steuben, Director

As someone who has gone through this process a couple of times, my advice is to break the self-study into pieces and dedicate some time to it each week/month. It's a very daunting process so if you have a plan spread out over time, it will help you feel less stressed about it. Think about what parts the whole team can help with and do a little at each team meeting. This will help your staff get familiar with the terminology and standards as well so they will feel better prepared if you are chosen for a site visit.



Kristin Weller, Healthy Families Albany County former Supervisor, and HFA Peer Reviewer

Accreditation is a process for learning what you do well as a program and what areas need further strengthening. Accreditation isn't punitive, all programs could be better at something. Peers are program managers, supervisors, FSWs and FAWs who have taken the Peer Review training through HFA. They understand the stress that comes with accreditation and are strength based in their approach with programs. They operate with the understanding that they will not cause any surprises! No “gotcha” moments.

Everything you need to know is written in the Best Practice Standards (BPS)! Use them!

Preparing for accreditation takes a significant amount of work and it can feel stressful. Stressing yourself and your program staff out in the process is missing the point about what accreditation is all about. Address each of the standards one at a time. Remember, you and your staff are the experts on your program.

Some have found it works well to start with standards 10 and 11 (training) as these standards have lots of dates. They can be confusing since there was a change in 2014 regarding which roles need what training. Get these out of the way so you're not running about at the last minute tracking down dates.

Esther Piper, Healthy Families Clinton, Program Manager and HFA Peer Reviewer



If you are selected for a visit during accreditation, a team will be selected for your visit that includes a team coordinator and a peer reviewer (PR). Peers are volunteers with the Healthy Families America (HFA) accreditation process and have attended intense training. They are also experienced in conducting site visits and have demonstrated to HFA that they have superior engagement and interviewing skills. Allow the team coordinator to guide you through the process and feel free to ask as many questions as needed. PRs are objective reviewers who have the goal to make you comfortable and discover your best practices. Your PR team is looking for positive things to bring back to the national office so don't be afraid to sing your own praises and be proud of what you do well.

You should expect your team coordinator to schedule at least 2 conference calls prior to the visit. The coordinator will send you two questionnaires regarding your self-study (portions BPS 1-6 and 7- GA). The questions will be very specific to the standards where they need more information. There is not enough time for PR teams to rate the entire self-study on the visit so these questions will be for items that can be rated pre-site visit. Many of these are related policy and procedures and analysis.

Also note that while PR teams are able to rate your self-study, they cannot give technical assistance. If a question you ask involves the need for technical assistance, your team coordinator will let you know that and refer you to your regional HFA director for support. A rating of '2' is good and shows that you met that standard. Still, don't be surprised if you get a recommendation on a standard where you were rated '2.' This is one of the ways that going through accreditation helps your program to improve!

During the site visit you may hear the PR team using the following terms: Interview Paradigms and Recent Practice.

Interview Paradigms: For standards with interviews included in the site visit, it means that the practice is more important than the documentation. If interview discussions clearly indicate the practice is occurring and PRs see enough in your documentation to prove there is continuity of this practice, you may be given a '2' with a recommendation to strengthen documentation.

Recent Practice: For those standards where recent practice is taken into account, the PR team can use interview discussions that support that practice. However, documentation will need to be provided demonstrating the new practice has occurred consistently over at least the 3-month period prior to the site visit for all the charts reviewed.

This next topic is a big one!

Analysis and Plans: Analysis has to cover all the required components to meet a standard:

- Programmatic, social, and demographic factors and reasons
- Informal and formal mechanisms of information collection
- Comparison (i.e., Standard 1, Accept vs. Decline and Standard 3, Retained vs. Closed)

Your team coordinator will give you opportunities to meet these standards, as long as corrections are submitted by the Friday before the site visit date. I strongly encourage you to work on your analysis reports far in advance of the visit. Keep in mind interviews and recent practice will need to line up with your analysis narratives or you risk scoring a '1' rating for the entire standard.

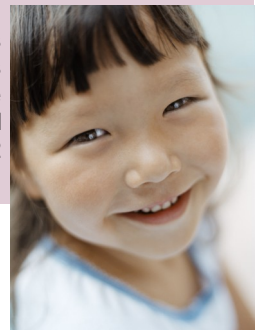
Some of the things that you will be asked to do before the site visit are:

- 1) complete a contact form;
- 2) set the agenda for the site visit (a format will be provided);
- 3) send feedback or answers to the two questionnaires; and
- 4) provide a list of active participants sorted by home visitor and the level of service.

Some of the things you can do to support your PR team: You can make recommendations for good hotels and restaurants as close as possible to your site. If possible, you may want to have water on hand, comfortable chairs, and plenty of space to spread out for reviews. An inviting space can help move the process along, especially on the file review day (Sunday). Having local menus available for food delivery during lunchtime can also help to keep things moving through each day.

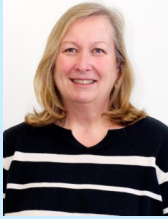
Remember that our Central Administration team may have the answers you need. I recommend reaching out to your PCANY QA specialist, your contract manager, and our MIS/research team if you start wondering if you are going in the right direction on something.

HFA wants ALL sites to receive accreditation. Please know that it is our goal to discover your great practices and also to find areas in need of improvement. Unless you know that your site needs to make serious changes to demonstrate best practices, this is the time to be proud of the things your site has accomplished and the successes you have with families. By conducting a self-study you will not have surprises. You will know ahead of time what needs to be worked on. Maybe your only surprise will be that what you thought would be rated at 2 is in fact a 3! If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to me! Best wishes.



Farewell from Wendy Bender:

My Friends, I am trying to find words to allow me to say good-bye to all of you and each of you. For this is what it has been for me for the last 19 years; the amazing connection to all of you and each of you. As a social worker, I have worked with young children and families for more than 30 years and always felt proud of the ability to provide help and support. Yet, until I became part of Healthy Families New York, I had not realized the ability to be part of preventing the myriad of problems that families face. This model offers hope! I am going to continue in this work, with a focus on infant mental health. I will continue to provide training and reflective supervision and I am certain that our paths will cross again. I truly believe that when we can positively influence a child's early social/emotional development, we have the possibility of changing the world. So, as I say my good-bye, I know that all of you and each of you will continue what you do – change the world!



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The Link is published twice a year as a joint venture of Prevent Child Abuse New York and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

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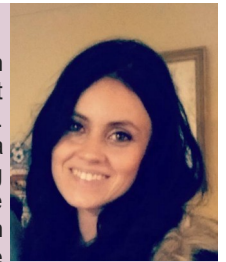
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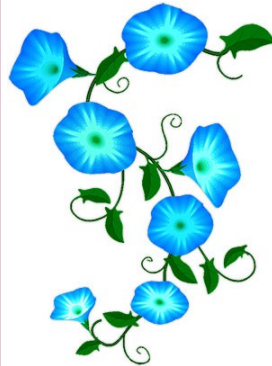
Sheila J. Poole

Welcome: Isabel daSilva, Prevent Child Abuse NY

My journey in human services began by earning my B.A. in Psychology from Mount Saint Mary College. I knew that I fit best where there was the most need - working with children and families. I worked for several years at Youth Advocate Programs then as a Preventive Case Worker. One of the best ways I found for assisting parents to make positive changes was by helping them see the wonderful things they were capable of offering their family. When an opportunity came for me to be the Healthy Families Supervisor in the Orange County program, I jumped at it. The mission and the vision of the program spoke volumes to me. I am proud of the work that the program achieved while I was a part of, and of the work that it continues to do.



Prior to accepting my position at PCANY, I was a Preventive Supervisor at Northwestern Human Services. I worked to promote opportunities for families to stay together and also be reunited. Throughout my career, I have continuously worked with Orange County's Mobile Mental Health Crisis response team where I've been able to learn from trained clinicians and provide a much-needed service for the county. With over 15 years experience working with families of varied cultures, I consider myself a life learner. Finally, I am the mother of a wonderful eight-year old boy, Michael. He teaches me everyday how to persevere and aim for the stars. I am honored to be apart of PCANY, and am so excited about the beautiful work ahead.



Mindful Accreditation Preparation James Porter, Prevent Child Abuse NY

Accreditation can be stressful. Just the thought of a potential site visit from Healthy Families America may raise your heart rate. In the run-up to HFA's visit, we might try to manage our anxiety by 1) avoiding preparations for as long as we can, 2) running with our anxiety and over-preparing, or 3) both. The Healthy Families model encourages us to approach challenges and difficulties with an attitude of openness and curiosity, and to support parents in relating to their children in this way. The practice of mindfulness is a great adjunct to this approach that can teach us to respond to stressful situations *reflectively* rather than *reactively*, reversing the effects of stress and anxiety. Maybe a bit of "mindful accreditation preparation" or what I will call "MAP," would support us all in the months to come! When faced with stressful circumstances, our minds tend to ruminate on the past or race into the future in an attempt "figure out" or "fix" the situation. Mindfulness practices counter this stress reaction by inviting us to be in the here and now. Moment by moment, we pay attention to our thoughts, feelings, sensations and the surrounding environment without judgment, setting aside the idea that there is a "right" or "wrong" way to think, feel or be. Here is one simple mindfulness practice that you can explore on your own or together during team meetings to counter-act workplace stress in general, and accreditation stress in particular.

Sitting meditation. Sit in an upright position that's relaxed yet alert. Bring your attention to your breath, noticing the sensations as you inhale and exhale. Allow your breathing to find its own rhythm and depth. When your mind drifts away, gently bring your attention back to your breath without judgment. Continue this practice for five minutes.

After the exercise, consider the following questions:

- What do you notice about the state of your mind, emotions and body?
- How has this practice impacted your outlook on your work, life or relationships?
- How might you integrate the Experience of mindfulness into your work with families?

