

# Mental Health Observation and Assessment

## Policy:

Umatilla-Morrow Head Start, Inc. provides for early identification of social-emotional development and interactions that may interfere with a child's development toward the overall goal of resilience, emotional well-being and social competence.

## Procedure:

1. When a Child & Family Advocate, teacher, or other staff has concerns about an individual child's social-emotional interactions or behavior, the following procedure will be used to address these concerns.
2. The concern will be discussed with the child's parent to obtain their input about the issue. Staff will inform the parent that they are planning to make an internal referral to the Administrative Team for assistance in developing a plan to maximize the child's social and emotional development.
3. The staff will use the Internal Referral Policy to make the referral to the Administrative Team.
4. The Administrative Team will develop a plan of action to address the issue, which may involve referring the situation to the Mental Health Services Director to arrange an individual mental health assessment.
5. For concerns referred to the UMCHS mental health professional for assessment and consultation, the Child & Family Advocate, teacher, or other staff will inform the parent(s) of the recommendation.

Inform the parents that the mental health assessment can include observations in the classroom, observations at home, and behavioral assessments.

The parent **must** sign the "Parental Permission for Mental Health Consultant Services" form prior to the Individual Mental Health Observation/Assessment occurring

Complete the "Referral for Mental Health Assessment" form with the parent.

6. Prior to individual child observation the Mental Health Professional will review the Child/Family file and discuss the concerns with the CFA, Teacher and/or Family Advocate.
7. After the assessment/observation of the individual child is complete, the Mental Health Services Professional will meet with the staff and parent(s) to discuss the outcomes and develop a plan of action. If the mental health provider has a formal referral form that will be completed with the parent.
8. If the plan involves referral to an outside agency or the Community Mental Health Center, the Child & Family Advocate or other staff will request that the parent(s) sign an "Authorization for Release of Information" form.

9. The Authorization for Release of Information form must be completed with the parent(s) present and must include what specific information UMCHS is requesting. Staff will explain to the parent(s) the reasons for requesting the specific information and how it will be used in assisting the child. The name and address of the specific agency or individual from which the information is being requested must be completed before the parent(s) are ask to sign and date the form.

