

SVHS Family Service Worker Resource- Conversations with Parents -Covid-19

Information is subject change as we receive new guidance from the Office of Head Start, TN Child Care Licensing, and the Center for Disease Control.

Scenario #1: Talking to Parents about Virtual Learning

Sharon Sunshine is the Family Service Worker (FSW) at the Happytimes Head Start. Sharon is getting many calls from parents wanting to enroll their child. Sharon has several income-eligible children on her waitlist. How should Sharon respond to calls?



First Sharon needs to do her math...

What Sharon Knows:

Sharon knows that she can only enroll 22 children in the Center-based model (CBM). Sharon knows she has 18 returning children and can only enroll 4 new children in CBM.

- 10 children in Class A
- 12 children in Class B
- = 22 children at be served at the center
- 18 children returning
- = 4 new children to be enrolled at the center

Because Class A will have 10 children in CBM, Class A will (if possible) serve 7 children in the Virtual Service Model (VSM). Because Class B will have 12 children in CBM, Class B will (if possible) serve 5 children in VSM. Sharon's center can serve 12 VSM children.

- Class A = 7 VSM children
- + Class B= 5 VSM children
- = 12 VSM children

Phone call scenario #1

Parent: I am calling because I want to sign my child up for Head Start. Do you have any openings?

Sharon: We are taking applications at this time and I would be happy to set up a time to take your application. Due to Covid-19 our class-sizes have been reduced to only 10 or 12 or children in a classroom. We are excited to offer families new, virtual services. If your child

qualifies for our program and we do not have space available at our center, they may enroll in our virtual classroom. Would you like to hear more about our new virtual classroom?

Parents: Yes. If my child participates in the virtual classroom, will my child be placed on a waitlist? I want my child to attend the center. If someone drops out of the center, could my child get in?

Sharon: Yes. All children in the virtual classroom, will be placed on a waitlist. We will contact you if an opening becomes available.

Parent: So, how does the virtual work?

Sharon: Our virtual classroom has some very good resources and support systems for parents. Parents are a child's first teacher. We want to support you in preparing your child for kindergarten. We also want to help your family during these trying times by offering health and social services. I have a list of benefits of the virtual classroom. Can I share these with you?

Parent: Please!

Sharon: (It is not necessary for staff to read this to parents word for word. In fact, I would not recommend it as people tune out.)

1. Of course, I already shared that your child will be placed on the waiting list to attend in person at the center should an opening become available. If your child is not going to Kindergarten next year, they are eligible to return to our program next year. We hope this pandemic will be over and your child can attend in person next year.
2. Your child will be assigned to a teacher that works at our center. The teacher will be able to help you become familiar with the virtual classroom. She will be checking in with you about once a week to find out how your child is progressing. Some teachers will also be sending you lessons, activities, resources, and videos via a great app called Class Dojo. We can help you download the app on your phone or electronic device.
3. We have a great learning platform called Cognitive Toybox. Children can log in to the program to play learning games and view great learning videos. Cognitive Toybox does not require the internet! So, if you don't have internet access, you have no worries!
4. If you do not have an electronic device, you may borrow one from us. We just need you to sign a device agreement and we want you to bring your device to our center 2x per month. When you bring your device to our center, we can update the software. If you don't have internet access, we can upload data and print up a great report outlining your child's progress in the virtual classroom. ---Parents have asked if they have to login to the virtual classroom at a certain time. The answer is, no. Children work at their own pace when time is available.
5. You will receive learning materials for at home use including art supplies; a math kit; and literacy materials. Your teacher will be providing you with a lesson plan and activities you can do at home with your child. The activities come from our curriculum, called the

Creative Curriculum. Your child will be doing some of the same activities that the children at the center are doing. We are very excited to be able to provide materials to our virtual classroom students.

6. You and your child are invited to visit our center generally around 2x per month for Socialization. Children need time to be around other children of their own age. We invite you to bring your child for a 2 hours visit to play and interact with other children in the classroom and on the playground. Only a small group of 5-7 children will participate at a time. We require all adults entering our center to wear a mask and have their temperature taken. All children will have a health check and be encouraged to wear a mask. Due to holidays and school closure we may only be able to do this 1x per month in some instances.
7. Most weeks we will provide 5 breakfasts, 5 lunches, and 5 snacks for your child. We call this service Grab and Go Meals. I will let you know the dates and times for pick up. There may be some weeks we are unable to provide this service due to center closings. At most of our centers, Grab and Go meal pickup will be on Monday. Grab and Go in Dunlap will be on Wednesdays.
8. Your child will receive a health screening (vision and hearing), a developmental screening, speech screening, and social emotional screening. We want to make sure your child is developing as they should be. We will reach out to you about making an appointment for these services.
9. We would like to schedule a time for a home visit. The home visit is not an inspection of your home. In fact, we really just want to come out and meet you and your child and a short meeting in the front yard is fine! If you are not comfortable with a home visit, just let me know and maybe we can arrange a time for a Zoom meeting or a quick visit to our center.
10. I will be here to help you with family support services. We plan to invite you to some really great parent zoom meetings on a variety of topics. I am here to help you anytime. Just give me a call or send me an email.

Sharon: What do you think? Are you interested in our fantastic new virtual classroom?

Parent: Wow! It sounds great but will my child be dropped if I am unable to participate in all these great activities?

Sharon: No. I know it sounds like a lot. We understand how busy you may be and we want to encourage you to participate as much as possible. We do ask that your child participate in the screening process. We also want your child to stay up to date with physical exams and immunization.

Parent: Great! When can I do an application!

Definitions

Center-based Model (CBM)- Children that attend class in person at the center. These children attend 4 days/week for 6 hours/day.

Virtual Service Model (VSM)- Children enrolled in the virtual classroom. Children do not attend regular classes and are served remotely. Generally, children will visit the center 2x per month for two hours for Socialization.

Grab and Go Meal- Meals sent home to children in VSM consisting of 5 breakfasts, 5 lunches, and 5 snacks. These meals will generally be sent home on Mondays except in Dunlap where pick up day will be on Wednesday. Meals sent home in CBM on Fridays consisting of 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, and 1 snack. This meal is provided to cover the Mondays when we are closed.

Scenario #2: Talking to parents that need childcare

Sharon is getting phone calls from parents needing childcare. A few of her returning parents need more days/hours of service than we can provide at this time. How should Sharon handle these calls?



Phone call scenario #2

Parent: I am calling because I would like to enroll my child in Head Start. I work and need childcare.

Sharon: I would love to help you. Can you tell me a little about your work schedule?

Parent: I need childcare Monday-Friday until 4:00 pm.

Sharon: Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 we are only open 4 days a week for 6 hours each day. At our center children attend Tuesday-Friday from 8-2, 8:30-2:30, or 9-3. Do you think you can find someone to help you with childcare when your child is not enrolled at Head Start?

Parent: I really do not have anyone.

Sharon: Maybe I can help you find childcare. The State of Tennessee has a website that lists childcare centers in our area. Can I text or email you the link or I can pull up the site and read off the list with phone numbers? [Find Childcare in Tennessee](#)

Parent: I have called around to a few places and they are full. Could you send me the link?

Sharon: Do you need help paying for childcare? Do you know about the State's child care assistance program? The program is income-based but you can make quite a bit and still qualify. I can pull up the website, if you have a minute, to see if you might qualify. Currently, essential workers can get support regardless of their income. You can even apply online.

[Tennessee Childcare Assistance Program](#)

Parent: That would be great! Can you send me the link? Who counts as an essential worker?

Sharon: Hold on. I have a list. [Governor's Order- List at End of Document](#)

Parent: Thank you some much for your help.

Sharon: We all hope things will be better soon. Next year we hope to be back on our regular schedule. Please call back next school year!

Scenario #3: Talking to Parents about Nebulizers

Sharon is taking an application and the parent indicates that her child has a nebulizer. This is Sharon's response:

Sharon: Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, we are unable to administer medication with a nebulizer at this time. You can call your pediatrician about providing your child with a special chamber that fits onto a inhaler instead of using the nebulizer. Please let me know if your peditraian is able to provide a prescription for one. If not, we can enroll your child in our virtual learning classroom.



Scenario #4: Talking to Parents about Transportation

Sharon is getting calls about transportation. Sharon knows she only has room for 5 children on the minibus. This is Sharon's response:

Sharon: Due to Covid-19, we will be forced to limit the number of children on our minibus to about half our usual number. Only children without transportation will be considered for bus services this school year. We know our kids really love to ride the little, yellow bus! If we are unable to provide necessary transportation for your child, we are happy to enroll your child in our virtual learning classroom.



Scenario #5 Talking to Parents about Shared Custody

Sharon is taking an application for a mother wanting to enroll a child with a shared custody situation. The mother only has the child every other week. Sharon asks if both parents are willing to bring the child regularly. The mother is unsure but thinks the father may be willing to bring the child to class. Father is an out of town truck driver and the child stays with the paternal grandmother a lot. This is Sharon's response:

Sharon: We would like to be able to serve your child in Head Start but we must enroll children that can attend everyday the center is open if possible. The virtual option may be a better fit for your family. Can I tell you more about our virtual program?