Eff. January 3, 2013

New River Community Action, Inc.

Home Visiting Guidelines

1.) Before leaving for a home visit, staff should sign out on Head Start center or CHIP office home visit log stating start time of visit, location of visit, and expected return time. If going on home visit before coming to the office, staff should sign out before leaving the prior day or call in before visit to notify supervisor or other staff in supervisor’s absence of plans. If visit is at the end of the day, staff should call back to notify supervisor that visit is over, and staff is going home. If visit goes beyond expected end time, staff should call back to center to notify Site Administrator/staff or CHIP Supervisor.

2.) When safety is a concern, home visits should be made in “pairs”. The Head Start Performance Standards make a few exceptions regarding acceptable home visit locations: a home visit may be conducted at the home of a secondary care giver such as grandparent, childcare provider, relative that provides extended care, etc.

Upon arrival to home, staff should make a safety assessment of home environment and remain aware of any potential safety/dangerous concerns or issues; staff should take note of quickest exit/escape route.

If a safety/dangerous situation initializes or escalates during a home visit, staff should immediately get to a safe location. Although staff should use verbal de-escalating techniques when appropriate, the physical safety of staff person takes priority.

If uncomfortable with a home environment due to safety reasons, staff should notify their supervisor to develop an alternative visiting plan for that specific family.

If an aggressive animal is present, staff should call a member of the family to secure the animal, otherwise do not enter the premises.

3.) Staff should attempt to schedule all home visits before visiting the family, using the “drop in” method as a last resort. If home visit has been pre-scheduled, staff should be on time. Staff should notify families if going to be late for the scheduled visit. Staff should make all attempts to keep scheduled date/time, and not reschedule home visit unless it is absolutely necessary.

4.) When possible, home visitors are encouraged to take and leave program materials with the family.

5.) Home visitors are cautioned against taking their handbags or other belongings into the home; additionally, they are encouraged to not have substantial amounts of cash.

6.) Staff should communicate with all family members with respect during the visit. CHIP staff should attempt to engage all members present.

7.) Staff person should always remember that she/he is a guest in the home. Staff should always inform the family when planning to bring another person (intern, supervisor, etc.) to the visit.