CHEERS: A Guide for Use During Visits by Phone and Video

The promotion of nurturing parent-child relationships remains a primary goal of Healthy Families America (HFA). Per the HFA Best Practice Standards 6-3.A, 6-3.B, and 6-3.C, sites assess, address, and promote positive parent-child interaction, attachment, and bonding and the development of nurturing parent-child relationships. This document provides support on how to meet these standards while visiting with families by phone and video when in-person visits are not possible.

CHEERS During Visits by Phone and Video

CHEERS is a way to promote nurturing parent-child relationships when visits must be conducted by phone and video rather than in person with families. The intent of completing CHEERS is to identify and document the ways that the parent is aware of and interacting with their child as well as to identify specific CHEERS domains the FSS wants to promote and address with the parent to strengthen the parent-child relationship.

CHEERS completed by phone and video visits are not always based specifically upon a behavioral observation. Instead, they may include observations made when conducting visits by video and facts from conversations with parents by phone and/or video.

How to Use to Assess

During a virtual visit, the Family Support Specialist (FSS) will check in on each CHEERS domain by asking open-ended questions throughout the conversation with the parent. If conducting the visit by video, the FSS may also use his/her observations as evidence for each domain.

The following helpful prompts for each CHEERS domain are provided as conversation starters to learn about and assess parent-child interactions. Please note, this is not an all-inclusive list and not every question has to be used or asked during each visit. FSSs are encouraged to let the conversation flow and utilize these and other Problem Talk questions as needed to gather information about the CHEERS domains.

Cues	• How does your child tell you "I like this" or " I want more"? • How does your child tell you "I don't like this," "I need a break," or "I am upset"? • When did this happen recently? What did you think and do when this happened?
Holding	• How does your child like to be held? • How do you like to hold your child? • What does your child enjoy doing with you right now?
Expression	• How do you and your child communicate? • How would you describe a recent conversation you've had with your child? • How does your child respond when you talk, sing, play, or read with him/her? • What does your child enjoy most? How did you discover this?
Empathy	• When have you noticed your child feeling happy, content, and/or comfortable recently? • What about a time your child has felt sad, frustrated, scared, and/or uncomfortable recently? • How do you know he/she was feeling this way? How do you help him/her with this feeling? • What have been some of your feelings recently? How does this impact your child's feelings?
Rhythm and Reciprocity	• What has been your daily schedule or routine with your child lately? • How did you decide on this schedule or routine? • What have you had to change or adjust with the schedule for your child lately? • How does your child let you know if your activities together are moving too fast or too slow? • If your child set the schedule for the rest of the day, what would he/she want?
Smiles	• What makes your child smile? • What makes you smile? • What makes you both smile together? • How do you have fun together? • How does your child know you enjoy being with him/her? • How do you know your child enjoys being with you?

How to Use to Address

CHEERS allows FSSs to use teachable moments and support parents in developing healthier ways to interact with their children by building on parental competences and promoting nurturing parent-child relationships in a thoughtful way. HFA Reflective Strategies, activities, and curriculum are ways to address CHEERS challenges and concerning parent-child interactions.

While multiple HFA Reflective Strategies may be used to address CHEERS domains; here is a summary of when the strategies are most commonly used:

Strategic Accentuate the Positive	When you want to increase a behavior that will facilitate attachment/positive parent-child interaction
Feel: Name & Tame	Whenever a parent states a strong feeling or exhibits feelings through the body (energy shifts, facial or body language, etc.)
Explore & Wonder	For missed cues and to build parent empathy
Problem Talk	When a parent hands you a problem or when you see a problem the parent does not see
Normalizing	When a parent has a strong belief that is not healthy or safe for the child

How to Use to Promote

The HFA reflective strategy Accentuate the Positive (ATP) is used to promote any and all CHEERS domains with nurturing parent-child interactions and/or parenting behaviors. FSSs are encouraged to incorporate at least one ATP every visit.

How to Document

FSSs are encouraged to document all the CHEERS domains when possible. At a minimum, two domains per visit are documented for virtual visits, whether prenatal or postnatal. Frequency for each domain is not required when documenting CHEERS for a visit conducted remotely. The FSS will use facts when documenting CHEERS such as: a description of what the parent says; parent and/or child quotes; and what the FSS sees and/or hears during the visit.

Documentation of CHEERS includes one example of a parent-child interaction for each CHEERS domain from the conversation and/or observation (if completing a visit by video). The example documented for each domain includes an interaction and a descriptive quality to identify if the domain is to be addressed or promoted. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, interaction is defined as "mutual or reciprocal action or influence" (Merriam-Webster.com, 2020). Therefore, an example documented for each CHEERS domain will include a specific action or influence between the parent and child and a quality to describe the interaction. In other words, each domain will have one documented example of a parent-child interaction that includes:

Parent or Child Behavior + Child or Parent Response + Quality

How to Plan Future Visits

Once CHEERS is documented, the FSS will:

o   Identify the CHEERS domains to address and/or promote at the next visit
o   Create a plan for the next visit with the family by selecting the HFA Reflective Strategies activities, and/or curriculum to address and/or promote the identified CHEERS domains
o   Review the selected plan in supervision
o   Implement the plan and continue to assess, address, and promote positive parent-child interactions on subsequent visits with the family.

CHEERS by Phone or Video Example Documentation

Parent-Child Interaction = Parent or Child Behavior + Child or Parent Response + Quality

Cues	During the phone visit, FSS heard **infant cry** in the background, the **Mom spoke quickly to older child and said "go make a bottle for your brother" and continued to talk with FSS**.
Holding	**Mom stated "she always wants me to hold her but I have to get things done".** When FSS asked Mom how she knows baby always wants Mom to hold her, Mom said **"she always fusses when I put her in the crib or swing"**.
Expression	FSS observed infant sleeping on a blanket on the floor and older child looking at a tablet/ipad and could hear some music and voices from the device, when the device noise stopped, **child brought device to Mom, sat it on her lap and grunted. After a couple minutes and a few grunts from the child, the Mom touched the device and handed it back to the child who began watching it again. The Mom talked with the FSS during this time,** no **talking between the Mom and children was observed or heard**.
Empathy	**Mom expressed frustration with not being able to work and feeling worried about when she will be able to work again,** when FSS asked how this may impact her child, Mom said, **"I'm sure she feels stressed too"**.
Rhythm and Reciprocity	**Mom shared that her entire schedule has changed by not being able to work** and **all she does right now is sleep, eat, and change diapers. She said her oldest child (age 4) has been "bouncing off the walls"**.
Smiles	Mom said her **baby smiles when "she is about ready to poop". Mom said she has been enjoying her library app that offers free movies. FSS did not observe or hear smiles or joy from Mom or baby during the visit**.

CHEERS domains addressed during this visit:
- Holding: PT to learn more about holding
- Holding: ATP used with Mom for holding baby when she is upset

Plan for subsequent visits:
- Expression: SATP Mom when she makes eye contact and speaks positively with child
- Empathy: FN&T for Mom's frustration about not being able to work and impact on child
- Rhythm: PT to support Mom with schedule and routine
- Smiles: ATP Mom for taking care of herself and enjoying the library app
- Smiles: Find Curriculum for activities to promote joy and smiles

CHEERS by Phone or Video Example Documentation

Parent-Child Interaction = **Parent or Child Behavior** + **Child or Parent Response** + **Quality**

Cues	Dad shared how he was eating a banana last night and the **child reached for it** so **he gave the child some** and **in a joyful voice Dad** said, "it was messy but she ate it all".
Holding	During video visit, FSS observed **toddler running in circles around rug on the floor in the same room as Dad**, **Dad said "you're going to get dizzy!"** **and laughed. Toddler laughed and kept running around rug**.
Expression	**Dad said his daughter loves his singing** because when he sings **she gets very quiet and stares at him**.
Empathy	Dad shared how his **child had been drawing on the wall** and when **he yelled "stop"** the **child froze for a second then ran away**. **Dad said he picked up the crayons and put them away so she can't get to them for awhile**.
Rhythm and Reciprocity	During the visit, **Dad got out a puzzle and asked the child "do you want to do the puzzle with me?"** The **child picked up a piece shaped like a cow and said "moo"**, the Dad **laughed** and said, "yes, that's a cow".
Smiles	Dad said his **child smiles when she gets to "run around"**. FSS heard and observed **smiles and joy from both parent and child** especially when **they were talking and playing together**.

CHEERS Domains addressed during this visit:
- o Cues: ATP Dad for understanding child's interests with banana
- o Expression: ATP Dad for singing to child
- o Reciprocity: ATP Dad for following child's lead with puzzle and animal noise

Plan for subsequent visits:
- o Empathy: E&W Dad's understanding of child's reaction re: drawing on the wall
- o Empathy: NORM Dad's understanding of what his child wants to do at this age
- o Smiles: ATP Dad for joy with child
- o Empathy/Smiles: Curriculum for tips and activities based on child's age that include art, music, and physical play with parent