

Formula for Program Success: HFA's 12 Critical Elements

HFA's 12 Critical Elements describe the essential components of the HFA model. These Critical Elements are unique to HFA and serve as the structure for HFA model fidelity.

Critical Element 1 – Initiate services early: to ensure the site has a well-thought-out mechanism for the early identification and engagement of families who could benefit from services.

Critical Element 2 – Standardized assessment tool-FROG Scale: to ensure the site has an objective process for learning about each family's strengths and concerns at the start of services.

Critical Element 3 – Offer services voluntarily: to ensure the site has an equitable process for reaching out to and engaging families initially as well as throughout the time families choose to remain enrolled.

Critical Element 4 – Offer services intensely: to ensure sites offer services intensely at the onset of services to support relationship building between the FSS and the parent(s), and attachment and bonding between parents and child, through repeated positive experiences. This reflects the parallel process. HFA services are offered for a minimum of three years and up to five years, subsequent to the birth of the focus child or date of enrollment, whichever is later.

Critical Element 5 – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: ensures each site is intentional in its efforts to promote equity in all facets of operations with families, staff, and community. Doing so compels an honest look at existing flaws, individually and systemically, exposing and resolving blind spots previously unrecognized.

Critical Element 6 – Promote parent-child interactions, childhood growth and development: is to reduce risk factors and build protective factors, ensuring site staff provide services that are family-centered and growth oriented; supporting parents in nurturing their children; setting meaningful goals; and enhancing health, development, and family functioning.

Critical Element 7 – Health care and community resources: is to ensure site staff link families to providers for preventative health care and timely receipt of immunizations, and appropriately refer families to additional community services based on each family's unique needs.

Critical Element 8 – Limited caseload sizes: to ensure site staff have limited caseloads to allow them the necessary time with families to build trusting, nurturing relationships.



Critical Element 9 – Service provider selection: to ensure staff are selected because they possess characteristics necessary to build trusting, nurturing relationships and work with families with different cultural values and beliefs than their own.

Critical Element 10 – Model specific training: to ensure staff receive training specific to their role.

Critical Element 11 – Training to fulfill job functions: is to ensure staff receive training support and have the skill set necessary to fulfill their job functions and achieve improved outcomes with families.

Critical Element 12 – Ongoing reflective supervision: The field of infant mental health has identified reflective supervision as a best practice approach and recognizes and embraces the supervisory relationship as being central to the work with families.

GA - Governance and administration: to ensure the site has feedback and oversight mechanisms to ensure high quality services to families. These practices include effective advisory group operation, evaluation/review of site quality, handling of family grievances, utilization of informed consent, protection for families related to research conducted, and appropriate reporting of child abuse and neglect.