

# PARENT COMMITTEE

## Program Design and Management

### § 1304.50 Program Governance.

**1304.50(a)** Policy Council, Policy Committee, and Parent Committee structure.

(1) Grantee and delegate agencies must establish and maintain a formal structure of shared governance through which parents can participate in policy making or in other decisions about the program. This structure must consist of the following groups, as required:

(i) Policy Council. This Council must be established at the grantee level.

(ii) Policy Committee. This Committee must be established at the delegate agency level when the program is administered in whole or in part by such agencies (see 45 CFR 1301.2 for a definition of a delegate agency).

(iii) Parent Committee. For center-based programs, this Committee must be established at the center level. For other program options, an equivalent Committee must be established at the local program level. When programs operate more than one option from the same site, the Parent Committee membership is combined unless parents choose to have a separate Committee for each option.

**1304.50(e)** Parent Committee. The Parent Committee must carry out at least the following minimum responsibilities:

(1) Advise staff in developing and implementing local program policies, activities, and services;

(2) Plan, conduct, and participate in informal as well as formal programs and activities for parents and staff; and

(3) Within the guidelines established by the governing body, Policy Council, or Policy Committee, participate in the recruitment and screening of Early Head Start and Head Start employees

Parent Committee members will select a parent member to represent them on the Policy Council. This parent will provide input from the Parent Committee to the Policy Council and then report back to the

Parent Committee regarding action that was taken and decisions that were made.

Parent Committee members may also select an "alternative" parent representative to the Policy Council. The alternative will serve the same function and have the same voting privileges as the regular parent representative if that parent is unable to attend a meeting.

# **POLICY COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES**

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#### **Must Approve or Disapprove**

**1304.50(d)** The Policy Council or Policy Committee.

(1) Policy Councils and Policy Committees must work in partnership with key management staff and the governing body to develop, review, and approve or disapprove the following policies and procedures:

(i) All funding applications and amendments to funding applications for Early Head Start and Head Start, including administrative services, prior to the submission of such applications to the grantee (in the case of Policy Committees) or to HHS (in the case of Policy Councils);

(ii) Procedures describing how the governing body and the appropriate policy group will implement shared decision-making;

(iii) Procedures for program planning in accordance with this part and the requirements of 45 CFR 1305.3;

(iv) The program's philosophy and long- and short-range program goals and objectives (see 45 CFR 1304.51(a) and 45 CFR 1305.3 for additional requirements regarding program planning);

(v) The selection of delegate agencies and their service areas (this regulation is binding on Policy Councils exclusively) (see 45 CFR 1301.33 and 45 CFR 1305.3(a) for additional requirements about delegate agency and service area selection, respectively);

(vi) The composition of the Policy Council or the Policy Committee and the procedures by which policy group members are chosen;

(vii) Criteria for defining recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities, in accordance with the requirements of 45 CFR part 1305;

(viii) The annual self-assessment of the grantee or delegate agency's progress in carrying out the programmatic and fiscal intent of its grant application, including planning or other actions that may result from the review of the annual audit and findings from the Federal monitoring review (see 45 CFR 1304.51(i)(1) for additional requirements about the annual self-assessment);

(ix) Program personnel policies and subsequent changes to those policies, in accordance with 45 CFR 1301.31, including standards of conduct for program staff, consultants, and volunteers;

(x) Decisions to hire or terminate the Early Head Start or Head Start director of the grantee or delegate agency; and

(xi) Decisions to hire or terminate any person who works primarily for the Early Head Start or Head Start program of the grantee or delegate agency.

**1304.50(g) Governing body responsibilities.**

(1) Grantee and delegate agencies must have written policies that define the roles and responsibilities of the governing body members and that inform them of the management procedures and functions necessary to implement a high quality program.

**1304.50(h) Internal dispute resolution.** Each grantee and delegate agency and Policy Council or Policy Committee jointly must establish written procedures for resolving internal disputes, including impasse procedures, between the governing body and policy group.

## **Operating Responsibilities**

**1304.50(d)(2)(v)** Establish and maintain procedures for working with the grantee or delegate agency to resolve community complaints about the program.

# POLICY COUNCIL FUNCTIONS

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**1304.50(d)(2)** In addition, Policy Councils and Policy Committees must perform the following functions directly:

(i) Serve as a link to the Parent Committees, grantee and delegate agency governing bodies, public and private organizations, and the communities they serve;

(ii) Assist Parent Committees in communicating with parents enrolled in all program options to ensure that they understand their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities in Early Head Start and Head Start and to encourage their participation in the program;

(iii) Assist Parent Committees in planning, coordinating, and organizing program activities for parents with the assistance of staff, and ensuring that funds set aside from program budgets are used to support parent activities;

(iv) Assist in recruiting volunteer services from parents, community residents, and community organizations, and assist in the mobilization of community resources to meet identified needs; and

(v) Establish and maintain procedures for working with the grantee or delegate agency to resolve community complaints about the program.

# **DEFINITIONS OF POLICY COUNCIL ACTIVITIES**

## **A. General Responsibility**

The individual or group with legal and fiscal responsibility that guides and oversees the carrying out of the functions described through the individual or group given operating responsibility.

## **B. Operating Responsibility**

The individual or group that is directly responsible for carrying out or performing the functions consistent with the general guidance and oversight from the group holding general responsible.

## **C. Must Approve or Disapprove**

The group that must be involved in the decision making process prior to the point of seeking approval. If it does not approve, a proposal cannot be adopted, or the proposed action taken, until agreement is reached between the disagreeing groups.

## **D. Determined Locally**

Management staff functions as determined by the local governing body and in accordance with all Head Start regulations.

# POLICY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

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#### Policy Council Composition:

**1304.50(b)(1)**- Each grantee and delegate agency governing body operating an Early Head Start or Head Start program *must* (except where such authority is ceded to the Policy Council or Parent Committee ) propose, within the framework of these regulations: (1) The total size of their respective policy groups (based on the number of centers, classrooms or other program option units, and the number of children served by Early Head Start or Head Start program); (2) The procedures for the election of parent members; and (3) The procedure for the selection of community representatives. These proposals must be approved by the Policy Council or Parent Committee.

**1304.50(b)(2)**- *Must* be comprised of two types of representatives: parents of currently enrolled children and community representatives. At least 51% of the members of these policy groups must be the parents of currently enrolled children.

**1304.50(b)(3)** Community representatives *must* be drawn from the local community: businesses; public or private community, civic, and professional organizations; and others who are familiar with resources and services for low-income children and families. Community representatives may include the parents of formerly enrolled children.

**1304.50(b)(4)** All parent members of the Policy Council or Parent Committee *must* stand for election or reelection annually. All community representatives also must be elected annually.

**1304.50(b)(7)** Parents of children currently enrolled in all program options *must* be proportionately represented on established policy groups.

## **Terms of Membership:**

**1304.50(b)(5)** Policy Councils and Parent Committees must limit the number of one year terms any individual may serve on either body to a combined total of three terms.

## **Staff Membership:**

**1304.50(b)(6)** No grantee or delegate agency staff (or members of their immediate family) may serve on the Policy Councils or Parent Committees except parents who occasionally substitute for regular Early Head Start or Head Start staff. In the case of Tribal grantees, this exclusion applies only to Tribal staff who work in areas directly related to or which directly impact upon any Early Head Start or Head Start administration, fiscal or programmatic issues.