

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY EHSD COMMUNITY SERVICES BUREAU
HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START BYLAWS

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I. Name

The name of this council is the Contra Costa County Head Start and Early Head Start Policy Council, hereinafter referred to as the Policy Council.

II. Purpose

The purpose of the Policy Council is to serve as a governing body using a shared decision making process with the County Board of Supervisors in all matters relating to the planning and coordination of the Head Start and Early Head Start programs operated by the Community Services Bureau. The Policy Council serves as the link among public and private organizations, the Grantee and Delegate Agencies, the communities served, and the parents of enrolled children.

The Policy Council will comply with the existing Head Start Performance Standards requirements and the 2007 Head Start legislation. Any changes in the Head Start Performance Standards that will affect Policy Council bylaws will be brought to the Policy Council for explanation and approval.

III. Executive Committee

The Executive officers will be elected annually at the Policy Council Orientation/general meeting in September. The role of the Executive officers is to plan general meetings, review previous month minutes, set the agenda, and help staff in the overall planning. Executive officers shall attend all Policy Council and Executive Committee meetings. No more than two absences total from both Policy Council and Executive Committee meeting for the full term will be allowed. Arriving 15 or minutes late to an Executive Committee meeting will be considered an unexcused absence.

A. Chairperson

The Chairperson shall preside at all Policy Council meetings. He or she has the authority to call special meetings, maintain order, and appoint chairperson ad-hoc committees. The Chairperson shall enforce the observance of order and decorum among the members, recognize members, staff and visitors who wish to speak and make official written communication.

B. Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson shall assist the Chairperson and assume all the obligations and authority if the Chairperson is absent. The Vice Chair will be responsible for reviewing the desired outcomes during the Policy Council meetings.

C. Secretary

The Secretary shall declare whether a quorum exists at the beginning of each meeting. The Secretary shall monitor attendance. He or she shall read any correspondence at Policy Council meetings. He or she shall check for any corrections or clarification on previous month's minutes, and seek approval of minutes. The Secretary shall also help prepare minutes of the meeting and ensure that the meeting is recorded.

D. Parliamentarian

The Parliamentarian assists the Chairperson in maintaining order during meetings. He or she states and reviews the principles of conduct and expected behaviors during meetings. He or she acts a timekeeper

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of the agenda items and notifies the Chairperson when time is an issue. He or she is the Chairperson of the Bylaws subcommittee.

E. Election of Officers

The officers shall be elected annually at the September general meeting. Nominations for the officers shall be made by the general membership. Current Head Start and Early Head Start parents and past parents may be nominated as candidates. All votes are cast by closed ballot. No more than four past parents may serve on the Executive Committee at any given time.

F. Removal from Office

Executive officers may be removed from office by a two-thirds (2/3) vote at any regular meeting for reasons of misconduct or excessive absenteeism.

G. Officer Vacancies

The chairperson of the Policy Council fills the vacancy by appointment and the Policy Council ratifies or elects a new nominee to fill the vacancy. If the Chairperson's position is vacated, the Vice-Chair assumes all the obligations and authority of the Chair.

IV. Policy Council Membership

The Policy Council is comprised of parents of currently enrolled children and community agency representatives. At least 51 percent of the members must be the parents of currently enrolled Head Start or Early Head Start children (see 45 CFR 1306.3(h) for the definition of Head Start parent). No grantee, delegate or child care partner agency staff members or their immediate family (spouse, co-parent) may serve on the Policy Council.

A. Composition

Policy Council composition is reviewed annually to ensure that it meets the general membership guidelines of Head Start Performance Standards and that the compositions of representatives are proportionately selected according to program option (Head Start, Early Head Start, Full Day, Part Day, and Home Base).

1. Currently Enrolled Parents

Currently enrolled parent representatives are elected by center parent committees and must have one or more children currently enrolled in the Head Start or Early Head Start programs.

2. Past Parent Representatives

Former Head Start and Early Head Start parents may request to participate on the Policy Council, provided they have not exceeded the term limit. See the Policy Council handbook for application procedure.

3. Community Agency Representatives

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The Policy Council determines which community agencies it would like to invite to participate. Agencies are drawn from the local community and are familiar with resources and services for low-income children and families.

B. Term of Membership

Term of membership is for one year, September-August. Members are elected each year for a maximum of three years. This limit applies to primary and alternate representatives who are listed on the Policy Council roster as a center representative at any time during the term. Currently Enrolled Parent Policy Council Members are expected to serve the full term, even if their program option closes for the summer.

C. Alternates

When an elected Policy Council member is unable to attend a meeting, he or she must secure an alternate to attend the meeting on his or her behalf. The alternate will participate fully including voting on action items. Each center shall maintain a list of alternates.

D. Absences

Policy Council members are required to attend all meetings. If a member will be absent, he or she shall secure an alternate. The member shall give twenty-four hour notice to the alternate and program staff.

If a currently enrolled parent has two unexcused absences (failed to notify CSB staff or an Executive Officer of the absence) the center will be notified and the parent committee may choose to terminate the parent's membership. The center must notify the Secretary of any changes in representation and in cases of excessive absenteeism, provide a response about the course of action the parent committee would like to take.

If a past parent or community representative has two unexcused absences the Policy Council may choose to terminate his or her membership.

E. Resignation

If a member resigns from the Policy Council or is no longer eligible to serve due to enrollment status, the member must submit his or her resignation in writing to staff. If the member is an Executive Officer or Chair of a committee, the vacancy shall be filled as outlined in section III.G of the Policy Council Bylaws.

F. Termination

A Policy Council membership may be terminated by a two-thirds (2/3) vote at any regular meeting for reasons of misconduct or excessive absenteeism. If the termination is in regards to excessive absenteeism, this vote will take place only after a notice has been sent to the center and the center has provided a response as to the course of action. The member will be notified in writing of his or her termination from the Policy Council.

G. Vacancy

A vacancy at a center will be filled by an alternate until a new representative can be elected by the center parent committee. If a vacancy occurs by a community agency representative, the agency must appoint a replacement as soon as possible. Filling past parent member vacancies are outlined in Section IV.A of the Policy Council Bylaws.

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V. Subcommittees

The Policy Council has four standing subcommittees: Fiscal Committee, Self-Assessment Committee, Personnel/Interview Panel Committee, and Ongoing Monitoring/Program Services Committee. The Policy Council has two Ad-Hoc subcommittees: By-laws Committee, and Policies and Procedures Committee. Executive Officers must sit on at least one subcommittee.

Each subcommittee must maintain at least four members at all times. The Policy Council Chair appoints subcommittee leads and the Policy Council must ratify all appointments. Subcommittees must keep minutes, and reports must be presented to the Policy Council.

VI. Conferences

Policy Council representatives may be selected to attend conferences. Upon return from a conference, attendees must present a conference report to the Executive Officers and the Policy Council. Attendees will be given a per diem allotment for meals, ground transportation and child care expenses. All receipts must be submitted to staff no more than seven (7) days after return from travel. Conference attendance guidelines are outlined in the Policy Council Handbook.

VII. Standards of Conduct

All Policy Council members must sign and adhere to the Contra Costa County Code of Conduct, Community Service's Bureau Standards of Conduct, and abide by policies and procedures for reporting to Child Protective Services and State Community Care Licensing.

Any Policy Council Member in violation of any standards of conduct may be temporarily dismissed from his or her duties while the misconduct is under investigation. Staff and the Policy Council Executive Committee will hold a closed-session meeting and review the nature of the misconduct and make recommendations to the Policy Council to resume or remove membership.

VIII. Meetings

Meeting notices shall comply with the Brown Act, the County's Better Government Ordinance, and all applicable local and state meetings laws.

A. Regular Meetings

The Policy Council will hold a minimum of nine (9) meetings per year. Notice of meetings is provided 96 hours in advance of meetings and will be scheduled to encourage parent participation. All meetings of the Policy Council and its committees will be held in accordance with the Brown Act and the Contra Costa County Better Government Ordinance.

B. Special Meetings

A special meeting may be called at any time by the Chairperson. A twenty-four hour notice must be given to Policy Council members unless written notice has been waived.

C. Emergency Meetings

The Executive Officers may conduct business in emergency matters or if a majority of the Policy Council members cannot meet. A quorum (51% of the Executive Committee) is required to make a decision on

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behalf of the Policy Council. All decisions made during an Emergency Meeting must be ratified at the next regularly scheduled Policy Council meeting.

D. Quorum

A quorum is 25% of the full Policy Council membership. At least 51% of the total number of authorized Policy Council members of which a majority in attendance must be Currently Enrolled Parents.

E. Voting

Only a Policy Council member or his or her alternate is permitted to vote on any Policy Council action. The Chairperson votes only in the case of a tie.

F. Agenda

The agenda shall comply with the Ralph M. Brown Act and the County Better Government Ordinance and all applicable laws.

IX. Reimbursement

Policy Council members will be reimbursed for child care and mileage for approved Policy Council activities according to the standard approved rates. Current standard rates and procedures for requesting reimbursement are outlined in the Policy Council Handbook.

X. Amendments

Proposed amendments of these bylaws may be initiated by action of the Policy Council. Proposed amendments must be presented to members at least one general meeting prior to action.