

Policy Council

Mission of City of Albuquerque Early Head Start:

Our mission is to help build school-ready children and self-sufficient families. School-ready children are strong in all areas of their lives; cognitive, physical, social and emotional. And strong, stable families with support systems are essential to their growth.

Policy Council Overview:

Policy Council is made up of Early Head Start parents and community representatives, and may include parents of children previously enrolled in the program who are familiar with resources and services for Early Head Start families. One representative, from the City of Albuquerque City Council, is assigned to act as a liaison between the City Council and Policy Council. Parents of currently enrolled children elect representatives annually. At least 51% of the members must be parents of currently enrolled children. Policy Council is responsible for assisting in the direction of the program, in compliance with Head Start Performance Standards, and the Head Start Act (as amended December 12, 2007).

As a member of the Policy Council, you represent your Early Head Start Center or Home Based program option, or the community. At meetings, you have the opportunity to make suggestions and offer ideas for program design and operation and long and short term planning goals and objectives, taking into account the annual program self-assessment and community needs assessment.

Policy Council generally meets at 5:30 PM on the **third Wednesday** of each month. All parents are welcome to attend, but elected representatives are the only persons with voting privileges. The officers are elected at the first meeting, and serve a one year term. Parents can serve on Policy Council for no more than five (5) years.

(a) Meetings are held at the Trumbull Family Resource Center, which is located at 419 Pennsylvania Ave SE.

(b) Staff volunteers provide childcare on site.

Policy Council Representative “Job” Description

Purpose: To participate in the process of making decisions about the nature and operation of the program.

Qualifications:

1. Must be a parent of a currently enrolled child in Early Head Start and be elected by the parents.
2. Or, a former parent or representative of the community who has interest in helping families, can contribute to the program, and has been approved by Policy Council.

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Tasks:

1. Participate in Policy Council Orientation (meet & greet) and Trainings.
2. Attend Policy Council meetings the 3rd Wednesday of each month, from 5:30-7:00 PM.
3. Arrive on time for scheduled meetings, and review agendas, minutes, action items, and relevant information.
4. Participate in appropriate decision making processes, as described in the Head Start Performance Standards and the Head Start Act.
5. Encourage parent participation in the program.
6. Assist in center and home based meetings to promote parent participation and to ensure that parents become familiar with agency policies.

Areas of Responsibility:

1. Review, approve, make recommendations, and submit decisions to the City of Albuquerque City Council (governing body).
2. Follow procedures for working with the Early Head Start Director to resolve complaints about the program.

Other Responsibilities:

1. Share the work and mission of Early Head Start, as invited and approved by the Policy Council.
2. Have the opportunity to initiate suggestions and ideas for program improvements within the regular structure of Policy Council Meetings (Agenda Items).
3. Recruit volunteer services from parents, community residents, and community organizations, and identify community resources to meet identified needs.
4. Respect the confidential nature of the work of Policy Council and information shared, as part of their responsibilities, to ensure the protection of privacy and confidentiality for Policy Council members, children, and families, and staff
5. Confine decision to policy issues, understanding that programmatic and fiscal decisions fall under the specific responsibilities of the program and the governing body.

Responsibilities: [adapted from Sec. 642(c)(2)(D) of the Head Start Act]

The Policy Council shall approve and submit to the governing body decisions about each of the following activities:

- (i) Activities to support the active involvement of parents in supporting the program operations, including policies to ensure that the Early Head Start agency is responsive to community and parent needs.
- (ii) Program recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities.
- (iii) Applications for funding and amendments to applications for funding for the program.
- (iv) Budget planning for program expenditures, including policies for parent participation and activities.
- (v) By-Laws for the operation of the Policy Council (see attached document).

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- (vi) Program personnel policies and decisions regarding the employment of program staff, including standards of conduct for program staff, contractors, and volunteers and criteria for the employment and dismissal of program staff (City of Albuquerque Personnel Rules and Regulations).
- (vii) Procedures for how members of the Early Head Start Policy Council will be elected.
- (viii) Recommendations on the selection of delegate agencies and the service areas for such agencies (N/A)

I will remember:

** I am an important member of the group.*

**My ideas are important, and so are the ideas of the other members.*

**I need to listen to all points of view before making a decision.*

**My time and abilities are important to the group.*

**Members may disagree with one another, which is okay.*

**I am learning about Policy Council along with the other members.*

**I am representing my Early Head Start center, home based program, or the community.*

Agency Responsibilities: [adapted from Sec. 642(d)(2-3) of the Head Start Act]

Training and technical assistance shall be provided to the members of the Policy Council to ensure that the members understand the information the members receive and can effectively help oversee and participate in the programs of the Head Start/Early Head Start agency.

The agency shall ensure the sharing of accurate and regular information for use by the policy council about program planning, policies, and agency operations, including:

- (I) Monthly financial reports
- (II) Monthly program information summaries
- (iii) Program enrollment reports, including attendance reports for children whose care is partially subsidized by another public agency
- (iv) Monthly reports of meals and snacks provided through programs of the US Department of Agriculture, Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- (v) The financial audit
- (vi) The annual self-assessment, including any findings related to such assessment
- (vii) The community wide strategic planning and needs assessment of the Head Start/Early Head Start agency, including any applicable updates
- (viii) Communication and guidance from the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services; and
- (ix) Program Information Reports (PIR)

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Yearly Plan

Attachment: Program Governance Planning Calendar
Approved by Policy Council:

Section 5
Pages 1 - 4

City of Albuquerque Early Head Start By – Laws

Attachment: Early Head Start By-Laws
Approved by Policy Council: January 16, 2019

Section 6
Pages 1 - 11

APPENDIX A **Policy Council Code of Conduct**

The City of Albuquerque Early Head Start recognizes that persons involved in governance activities (Policy Council) are leaders, role models, and representatives of the organization. All members will be expected to conduct themselves such that their personal and professional conduct does not have a negative effect on services or reflect badly on the City of Albuquerque's Early Head Start's public image, reputation, or credibility.

Code of Conduct

Early Head Start Policy Council members:

1. Will respect and promote the unique identity of each child, family, employee, Policy Council and Governing Board member and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability.
2. Must uphold the agency's confidentiality guidelines stated as follows:
 - a) No information regarding children and families of children enrolled with the City of Albuquerque Early Head Start is to be discussed outside of the work setting or Policy Council meetings.
 - b) Information is to be discussed during Policy Council meetings only as related to program operation/business or decision making.
 - c) No information learned at Policy Council meetings or while conducting Policy Council business may be discussed or used in any way outside of Policy Council activities.
3. Will support and participate in a **TEAMWORK** approach to decision making.
4. Will behave and interact respectfully while participating on Policy Council or representing the organization within the community.
5. Will respond to grievances or complaints by parents or public by:
 - a) Referring parties to the appropriate person or procedure.
 - b) Reporting the instance to the program director.
6. Must have an interest and concern for children and their families.
7. May not accept gifts and or gratuities as stated in the City of Albuquerque Personnel Handbook.

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8. Are prohibited from using their position on the Policy Council for purposes that are, or give the appearance of being, motivated by a desire for private gain for themselves or others, such as those with family, business or other ties.
9. May not make public statements under the auspices of any agency title without Governing Board (City Council) approval.
10. May not offer services, establish agreements, or enter into contracts.
11. Will follow general operating procedures of the City of Albuquerque Early Head Start.
12. Will respect and uphold the legal authority of the governing board (City Council) to establish, review, or revise the standards of conduct for individuals participating on the Policy Council.

APPENDIX B **Parliamentary Procedure / Robert's Rule of Order**

1. To get recognition say, "Madam/Mister Chairperson," and the chairperson will call your name.
2. To make a motion say, "I move that we _____."
3. To second a motion say, "I second the motion." If no one seconds the motion, then the motion dies on the floor.
4. The chairperson must then restate the motion.
5. The chairperson then asks for discussion of the motion.
6. The chairperson must take the action on the motion before any other business can be discussed or acted upon.

There are 6 kinds of actions that can be taken:

1. **Vote on the motion** - a majority is needed to pass a motion
2. **Amend the motion** - to change it in some way
3. **Table the motion** - stop action on the motion for the time being
4. **Withdraw the motion** - done by the person who made the motion
5. **Postpone the motion** - discuss at a later time
6. **Put the motion into action** - motion has passed with a majority vote

The chairperson may decide to use the other procedures with which they are more comfortable. The chairperson must present their procedure to council and have it approved before they can replace **Roberts Rule of Order**.

APPENDIX C Policy Council- Rights of Membership

A member has the following rights:

- To make motions
- To second another's motion
- To amend a pending motion
- To enter into discussion (debate) when discussion is permitted
- To make inquires, ask questions, and request parliamentary information
- To nominate or be nominated
- To hold office
- To serve on committees
- To have meetings conducted properly and in an orderly manner
- To raise a Point of Order when it is believed the rules are being violated
- To appeal, in writing, a ruling made by the Chair when the ruling appears to be incorrect
- To vote:
 - a) Cannot be forced to vote
 - b) Should abstain on questions of direct personal or financial interest not in common with the members
 - c) Can change your vote before results are stated or with permission of the assembly after results have been announced
 - d) Can request a rising vote when results are in doubt by calling "Division"
 - *To raise a **Point of Order** when it is believed the rules are being violated.
 - *To appeal in writing, a ruling made by the Chair when the ruling appears to be incorrect.

APPENDIX D

Grievance Procedure: Parent and/or Community Complaints

The grievance procedure is a problem-solving mechanism in which every attempt is made to resolve issues at the lowest level of authority, with the least possible amount of program disturbance. A grievance is a written complaint alleging that Early Head Start regulations and / or Program Policies and Procedures:

1. were not followed; or
2. were administered in a discriminatory (unequal) fashion; or
3. were administered in an arbitrary and capricious (unfair) fashion

Situations may arise that are not covered by any existing policy and/ or procedure but seem to merit action; these situations would be addressed in most cases by the development of new policies and procedures that apply to that type of situation in the future.

1. Before a grievance can be filed by a parent or community member, direct discussion must take place between the person(s) whom the complaint involves. They must make more than one (1) attempt to resolve any problem or conflict. All parties involved should note the date and time of the informal discussions.
2. Failing resolution at that level, informal consultation with the originator and with the supervisor of the staff person to whom the complaint is directed must take place more than once to resolve such complaint. The meeting may include the Early Head Start (EHS) director and /or members of the management team, as appropriate.
3. Failing resolution at the informal level, the complaint must be prepared in writing and another meeting must take place between the originator and the staff person. The EHS director will facilitate this process and inform governing bodies and the ACF Regional Office of the filed grievance.
4. Failing resolution at that level within (5) working days, the complaint may be presented in writing to the EHS director, who has (10) working days to review the matter and to make a recommendation.
5. Failing resolution at the level, or if no action is taken within (5) working days, the complaint may be presented to the Division Manager who has (5) working days to hold at least one meeting and to make a recommendation.
6. Failing resolution at the Division Manager level, the grievance may proceed to the Family and Community Services manager.

GLOSSARY

By-Laws - rules governing the internal management of a group.

Community Representatives - persons from the community who serve on the Policy Council, who know about services available in the community.

Conflict of Interest - any situation in which an individual is in a position to exploit a professional or official capacity in some way for their personal benefit. A conflict of interest arises when anyone has two duties which conflict,

- Self-dealing, in which public and private interests collide
- Family interests, in which a spouse, child, or other close relative is employed (or applies for employment) or where goods or services are purchased from such a relative or a firm controlled by a relative. For this reason, many employment applications ask if anyone is related to a current employee; if this is the case, the relative could then excuse themselves from any hiring decisions.
- Gifts from friends who also do business with the person receiving the gifts.

Delegate - a public, private nonprofit, or for profit organization or agency to which a grantee has delegated all or part of the responsibility of the grantee for operating a Head Start/Early Head start program

Family - for the purposes of the regulations in this part, all persons:

1. Living in the same household who are
 - a. Supported by the income of the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child enrolling or participating in the program; or
 - b. Related to the child by blood, marriage, or adoption; or
2. Related to the child enrolling or participating in the program as parents or siblings, by blood, marriage, or adoption.

Fiscal - of or relating to financial matters

Gifts and /or gratuities - something given voluntarily or beyond obligation

Governing Body - The City of Albuquerque City Council is the group that is legally responsible for overseeing operations of the program and setting the program's financial priorities.

Grievance - a wrong or hardship suffered, which is the grounds of a complaint.

Head Start Act - On December 12, 2007, President Bush signed into law 110-134 "Improving Head Start School Readiness Act of 2007" reauthorizing the Head Start program. (Link to the Act:

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc>)

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Majority Vote - a decision that makes one of two alternatives the “winner”, based on which has more than half the votes.

Parent Committee - a group of parents from the Early Head Start Centers /and or the Home Base program option.

Policy Council - a group, made up of community representatives and parents of children enrolled in the program, which works in partnership with key management staff of the program.

Program Information Report (PIR) - report that collects comprehensive data on the services, staff, children and families served by Head Start and Early Head Start programs nationwide. All programs are required to submit a PIR for each year in which they provide services to children and families. The PIR is the primary source of programmatic data for the head Start community, their partners, Congress and the general public. Staffing, enrollment, and service trend information is collected through the PIR and compiled each year to use at federal, regional, and local levels.

Performance Standards - document that outlines the rules and regulations that every Head Start and Early head Start program must follow.

Proxy Vote - a vote cast on behalf of an absent person.

Resolution - the act or process of making a determination; alleviating or eliminating sources of conflict

Rising Vote - a vote in which the voters on each side rise in turn to be counted

Quorum - the minimum number of members necessary to conduct the business of the group.

Selection Criteria - used to determine the children/families with the highest need or risk factors. Selection criteria are based on the community needs assessment. Children are selected for enrollment using this criteria.

Self-Assessment - a review of the operations of the program that must be conducted annually. This includes:

1. Reviewing the program’s goals and objectives to see what kind of progress is being made,
2. Looking at the program’s financial records and reviewing program procedures and policies
3. Deciding if the program is meeting its responsibilities, and
4. Deciding if the program has corrected any problems that were reported in the annual audit or Federal monitoring review.

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Work Plans - How Head Start Performance Standards are implemented throughout the program year in each component area. The plan is a road map for staff, parents, and interested community members linking Performance Standards to agency policies and procedures.