

The Children's Learning Center

Policy Council By-Laws

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization shall be The Children's Learning Center (TCLC) Policy Council. *Also known as Policy Council (PC).*

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purpose of the Policy Council will be to improve services to the Oregon Pre-Kindergarten (OPK) children and their families through communication, coordination, and support. The PC establishes a network through which parents, staff, and community members can voice their concerns and needs. The PC is to serve as a go-between among public and private organizations in the community. The PC will provide in-put to the Board of Directors concerning the program, as well as assist in the planning and development of the program in an effort to create better program operation and communication between the staff and families.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERS

Section A. Control

The control of the business and affairs of Policy Council shall be managed and controlled by its members.

Section B. Eligibility

- Members shall consist of any parent presently using the center and/or interested members of the community such as:
 - Parent Representatives
 - Community Representatives
 - Parent Community Representatives
- At least Fifty-one percent (51%) of the Policy Council will be a parent and/or guardians of child currently enrolled in the Head Start program.
- Ideally there should be a PC representative from each Head Start classroom.

Section C. Selection

- The election process for Parent Representatives starts with parents nominating themselves at the first parent meeting.
- Non Head Start parents from a classroom may become community representatives from the classes if a Head Start parent does not choose to represent the class; however they must submit a written request and be approved by the Policy Council before they can be elected.
- If there are a multiple number of parents from a specific class that would like to become a PC member, ballots will be distributed to all parents for voting to elect representatives if there are already representatives from each classroom.
- However if there is a specific class that does not have a parent rep, parents from a class that had multiple nominees may be elected. The only qualification is that there must be 51% of the representatives from the Head Start program. Community representatives and/or former Head Start parents in the communities served by Head Start must submit a written request and be approved by the Policy Council before they can be seated.

Section D. Nepotism

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07/01/2008

1

PC App _____ Date _____
Board App _____ Date _____

No one can serve on the PC while they or any member of their immediate family is employed by The Children's Learning Center due to potential conflict of interest and confidentiality problems.

Section E. Term

1. The members shall serve for a period of one year, or until the next annual election date.
2. Members should be limited to a combined total of three, one-year terms.

Section F. Termination of Membership

1. Any officer or member will be considered inactive if they have been absent from three (3) regularly scheduled meetings. If a member is not active they lose voting privileges until they attend the next meeting. (Inactive members do not count towards the 51% that must be in attendance for voting to occur.)
2. Any officer or member of the Policy Council will be voted on for termination by a majority vote of Policy Council members present, if he/she is absent from three (3) regularly scheduled meetings without a legitimate reason or has missed four (4) meetings in one year without a legitimate reason.
3. Cause for removal shall include, but not be restricted to:
 - a. Multiple absences from Policy Council meetings without just cause
 - b. Failure to uphold the standards of Head Start
 - c. Inappropriate behaviors while representing Policy Council
 - d. Gross misconduct
 - e. Acting on the behalf of Policy Council without prior authority
 - f. Blatant disrespect of Head Start philosophies
 - g. Neglect of duty
 - h. The release of privileged or confidential information
 - i. Inability to cooperate with the fellow members
4. Written notification of membership termination will be mailed or hand delivered.

Section G. Resignation

A member should give an elected officer or TCLC management staff a written statement of resignation. If a member verbally informs the appropriate party chair that he/she is resigning, the Chairperson will then report it to the Policy Council of their intent to resign.

Section H. Vacancy

1. When a Parent Representative position is vacated, the affected class will elect a new representative.
2. If there is not an interested parent in the class, which was vacated the center will open the election process up to the other classes. If there is a specific class that does not have a parent rep, parents from a class that had multiple nominees may be elected as long as 51% of the PC is from the Head Start program.
3. In emergency situations, in which not taking action would put the program in jeopardy, the Chairperson must appoint a temporary replacement to a vacant position for the current meeting only.

Section I. Voting Rights

1. All regularly elected Head Start parents and community representatives will serve in a voting capacity. Each regular representative will have a maximum of one vote with the exception of the Chairperson who shall cast the deciding vote only in the case of tie. During the transition period when the outgoing and incoming Policy Council members are meeting together, old and new voting members will vote on each agenda item, including election of officers.
2. In cases of a failure to obtain quorum, call-in votes are allowed. In cases where the Representative are unable to attend the monthly meeting but wishes to cast a vote, the Representative can call or e-mail the Executive Director or Family Service Coordinator with their vote. The exception is for an

executive session. A quorum for the conducting of business will consist of 51% of members. This quorum will apply to all regular Policy Council meetings and any special Policy Council meetings.

3. Policy Council meetings are open to the public and attendees are subject to Head Start policies on confidentiality. All members are asked to sign confidentiality forms once appointed to the Policy Council. Non Policy Council members may be asked to leave when confidential matters are being discussed at the Council's discretion.

Section j. Training

Parents in Head Start are informed of the structure of Policy Council and are invited to attend Policy Council meetings and training. Policy Council representatives have the opportunity to be trained in shared decision-making, Robert's Rules of Order, roles and responsibilities, etc.

Section k. Duties

1. The duties of all members of this Policy Council and officers include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Study and follow By-Laws.
 - b. Attend PC meetings regularly.
 - c. Arrive on time for all Policy Council and committee meetings.
 - d. Actively participate in meetings by reading the Agenda and being aware of the matters at hand.
 - e. Read and keeps copies of Policy Council and Committee minutes.
 - f. Stay aware of the Council's purpose, plans, and progress. Make and plan monthly reports back to Parent meetings, as well as report information and concerns from the Parent meetings to Policy Council.
 - g. Consider all sides of a matter before voting.
 - h. Be acquainted with Roberts Rules of Order and Parliamentary Procedures.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS

Section A. Offices

The Policy Council shall elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary-Treasurer. Other officers may be elected as are deemed necessary. Community representatives may hold any of the elected offices, as well as alternates. Officer should be represented on standing committees. Common duties of all officers include the following:

1. Attend all Policy Council meetings.
2. Study and follow By-Laws.
3. Be acquainted with Robert's Rules of Order and Parliamentary procedures.

Section B. Election and Term of Office

1. Officers will be elected by a majority vote of Policy Council members at the October Policy Council Meeting. They shall hold office from the day of their election until the next annual meeting, or until the successor to that office has been elected.
2. Any officer can run for office the following year, provided they have not already served their three years on Policy Council.
3. If an officer resigns or is removed from his/her office, an election will be held at the Policy Council meeting after the official resignation announcement or removal process is voted upon.

Section C. Description of Offices

Chairperson

Calls and presides over meetings of the Policy Council. With prior approval from the Policy Council, the Chairperson may act as a spokesperson for the Council in events concerning the program that

arise outside of regular or emergency and/or special meetings. The Chairperson's duties include the following:

- a. Shall preside at all Policy Council meetings.
- b. Refrain from entering into debates during the Policy Council meetings.
- c. Shall extend every courtesy possible.
- d. Shall call special meetings, when necessary.
- e. Open and closes all Policy Council meetings.
- f. Explain each motion before it is voted upon.
- g. May vote only to break a tie.
- h. Shall be available to Policy Council members for questions pertaining to the program.
- i. Shall form and participate on committees as needed.
- j. Shall be the Policy Council representative to the Board of Directors.
- k. Shall be a member of Policy Council at least one year, if possible.

Vice-Chairperson

Will assume the duties of the Chairperson in their absence. The Vice-Chairperson's duties include the following:

- a. Shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson or whenever the Chairperson temporarily vacates the chair.
- b. Shall be available to Policy Council members for questions pertaining to the program.
- c. Shall form and participate on committees as needed.
- d. The Vice-Chairperson shall perform other duties as prescribed by the membership.

Secretary/Treasurer

Is responsible for maintaining official records for the Policy Council. The Treasurer maintains and reports on Policy Council financial activities. The Secretary/Treasurer duties include the following:

- a. Shall keep a record of members' attendance.
- b. Keep a record of all Policy Council minutes.
- c. Shall notify Family Service Coordinator of absent representatives by means of written/verbal warning following second absence.
- d. Shall be responsible to the Policy Council and staff for the accounting and monthly reporting of the Policy Council budget and state funds.

ARTICLE V: PARENT REPRESENTATIVE OHS ASSOCIATION

Section A. State Representatives

For each of the State Head Start Meetings one member of Policy Council should attend and if the PC feels it is deemed necessary may elect one representative for the year.

Section B. Duties and Responsibilities

The duties of the representative are to attend each State meeting, to make reports of progress and other information about state activities to TCLC Policy Council, and carry recommendations to the State meeting.

Section C. Cash Outlay

The cash outlay for any conference or training relating to Head Start, which is approved by the Policy Council, will be handled as follows for designated representatives; transportation, lodging and per diem will be determined by the program. The representatives shall receive an allotment for child care at the rate set by Policy Council.

ARTICLE VI: COMMITTEES

Section A. Parent Committee

Policy Council representative responsibilities for the monthly Parent Committee meeting includes, but not limited to:

- a. Attend monthly Parent Committee meetings.
- b. Works with the Family Service Coordinator on the agenda for monthly meetings.
- c. Work with the Family Service Coordinator to sends agenda and minutes and file them.
- d. Developing trainings and special events. Although training and special events may not occur monthly, these events will be scheduled for consistency and continuity.
- e. Assure that all parents at the center receive a copy of the agenda and minutes.
- f. Follow the set agenda.
- g. Makes regular financial reports to the committees.
- h. Actively encourages center parents to participate in parent involvement activities.
- i. Takes the minutes of meetings and keeps a permanent record of what has taken place.

Section B. Committees

- 1. The Chairperson shall establish standing committees, which will be formed as early as possible in the school year, typically in November.
- 2. Other committees shall be established when the membership and Director may deem appropriate. See suggested list of potential committees and their descriptions.
- 3. The committee will consist of at least 2 to 4 members.
- 4. The meeting will be approximately two (2) hours per meeting at a date and time set by the committee.
- 5. Head Start parents of currently enrolled children, staff, and other community representatives will represent the members.
- 6. The committees will provide recommendations and suggestions to the PC that will be used by them to make informed decisions for the program.
- 7. Standing committees include:
 - a. Personnel Committee – Members shall handle all personnel matters. The committee will meet when deemed necessary by the TCLC Policy Council Chairperson.
 - b. Program Self-Assessment Committee – Members shall ensure compliance with all OPK performance standards. They will assess the quality of Head Start services to program participants and discuss the findings of the self-assessment based upon their observation, parent and staff surveys and make recommendations for improvement.
 - c. ERSEA Committee – Members will review the eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance criteria annually and submit revisions to the Policy Council for approval.
 - d. Safety Committee. The purpose of this committee is to evaluate, assess, and provide recommendations to address issues regarding the safety and welfare of the children and staff at the center.
 - e. Curriculum Committee – Members will evaluate and recommend curriculum and literacy programs for TCLC when they meet with the Education Coordinator at least once per year for the development and revision of the curriculum for the program.
 - f. Events Committee—Members will be in charge of planning various events throughout the year including the Winter Festival and Graduation. They will also help organize food baskets for families along with “Dollar Per Child” donations. Other events may also be planned as deemed necessary by the year.

ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS

Section A. Regular Meetings

Regular Policy Council meetings will be held on monthly basis with the exception of July. The current Policy Council will determine the dates and location of its meetings. All meetings will be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order

A Policy Council Meeting may be held as normal if a quorum is present within fifteen minutes after scheduled meeting time. If no quorum is present after fifteen minutes, the meeting shall proceed as an informal discussion. However, no official session can occur without a quorum. A quorum for conducting business will consist of no less than 3 members. This quorum will apply to all regular Policy Council meetings and any special Policy Council meetings.

Section B. Special Meetings

The PC Chairperson and/or Executive Director may call special meetings of the Policy Council. The Chairperson and/or Executive Director shall call all Special meetings at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of that meeting. If possible 72 hours notice will be given. Any member of the Policy Council may request that the Chairperson call a Special meeting.

Section C. Notices

1. Written notices shall be mailed to each member of the Policy Council at least five (5) days prior to the date of each regular meeting, with a copy of the Agenda for the meeting and the Minutes from the previous Policy Council Meeting.
2. The Chairperson and/or the Family Service Coordinator shall be responsible for notification of all Policy Council members in the event of a special meeting. Notice of a special meeting may be called with forty-eight (48) hours notice (72 hours if possible) with the reason for calling the special meeting.

ARTICLE VIII: PROVISION OF INFORMATION

Section A. Policy Council Information

A system for the regular provision of information to members of Policy Council is provided. Appropriate staff will distribute information and materials to parents in a timely manner. The Director and Family Service Coordinator take primary responsibility as support staff on Policy Council. Distributions may include written handouts, minutes of meetings, official correspondence, and oral presentations at meetings or training sessions.

Minutes of the meeting are mailed to all Policy Council members at least five working days prior to the Policy Council meeting. All items to be approved must be included in this packet to allow for informed decision-making. The packet includes:

- a. Minutes of previous meeting.
- b. Agenda for upcoming meeting.
- c. Any items to be approved.
- d. Financial statement.

Information provided to Policy Council members may include, but not limited to:

- a. Timetables for planning, development, submission of proposals.
- b. Policies and procedures, guidelines, and communications from ACYF and/or OPK.
- c. Financial reports and statement of funds expended.
- d. Work plans; grant applications, and personnel policies.

Section B. Shared Policy Council Information

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07/01/2008

6

PC App _____ Date _____
 Board App _____ Date _____

Agendas and minutes are to be posted at center in the entryway and/or parent area. The minutes will also be included in the center newsletter that is given to every family.

ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS OF THE BY-LAWS

Section A. Amendments

- a. Send a copy of the proposed amendment to each Policy Council member at least one week before the up coming meeting for members may review the proposed amended By-Laws. The proposed amendment shall be presented in writing to the Policy Council members in session at a regular meeting. The proposed amendment will then be placed on the agenda for vote at the next regular meeting.
- b. In certain cases, there may be a suspension of rules allowing the Policy Council to over-ride the By-Laws at a single meeting.
- c. Motion to suspend rules will be effective only for the meeting in which the motion was made.
- d. The Policy Council may debate an amendment before it's adoption. Amendments must be approved by a majority vote of the members present at the Policy Council meeting.

These By-Laws must be reviewed at least every two (2) years and be re-written to include new amendments yearly.

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07/01/2008