



Clackamas ESD  
Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten Program

# Policy Council Manual



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## Head Start Overview

### Administration for Children and Families Administration on Children, Youth and Families

Head Start is a national program which provides comprehensive developmental services for America's low-income, pre-school children ages three to five and social services for their families. Specific services for children focus on education, socio-emotional development, physical and mental health, and nutrition.

Head Start began in 1965 in the Office of Economic Opportunity as an innovative way in which to serve children of low-income families and is now administered by the Administration for Children and Families. In FY 1995, \$3.5 billion was available for Head Start. Almost 751,000 children were enrolled in over 37,000 Head Start classrooms. About 13 percent of the enrollees were children with disabilities. Over \$3.5 billion is available for Head Start services in FY 1996.

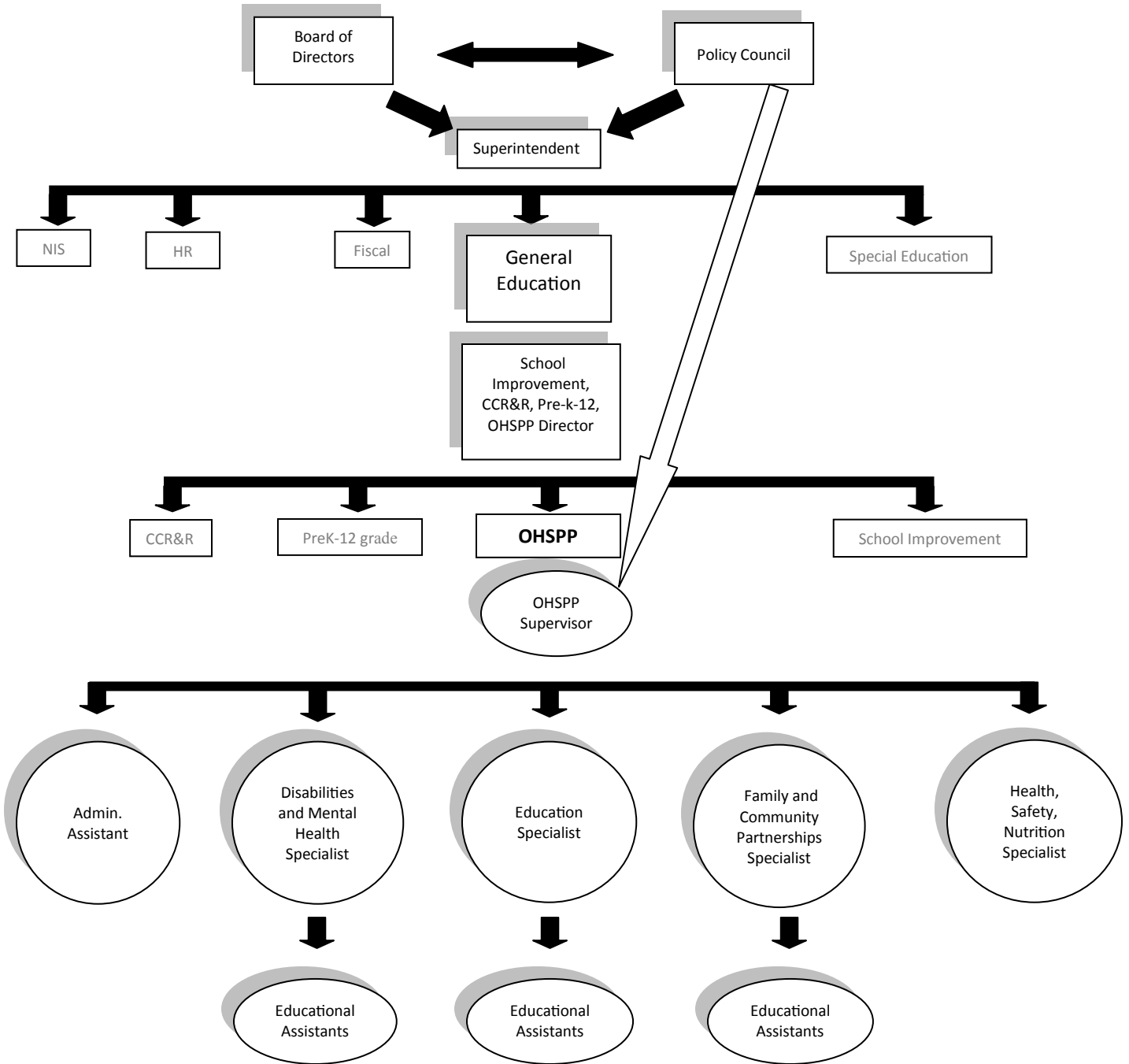
The cornerstone of the program is parent and community involvement -- which has made it one of the most successful pre-school programs in the country. Approximately 1,400 community-based non-profit organizations and school systems develop unique and innovative programs to meet specific needs.

## Major Components of Head Start

Head Start provides diverse services to meet the goals of the following four components:

- **Education** - Head Start's educational program is designed to meet the needs of each child, the community served, and its ethnic and cultural characteristics. Every child receives a variety of learning experiences to foster intellectual, social, and emotional growth.
- **Health** - Head Start emphasizes the importance of the early identification of health problems. Every child is involved in a comprehensive health program, which includes immunizations, medical, dental, and mental health, and nutritional services.
- **Parent Involvement** - An essential part of Head Start is the involvement of parents in parent education, program planning, and operating activities. Many parents serve as members of policy councils and committees and have a voice in administrative and managerial decisions. Participation in classes and workshops on child development and staff visits to the home allow parents to learn about the needs of their children and about educational activities that can take place at home.
- **Social Services** - Specific services are geared to each family after its needs are determined. They include: community outreach; referrals; family need assessments; recruitment and enrollment of children; and emergency assistance and/or crisis intervention.

## Clackamas Education Service District



## OHSPV Vision, Mission, Principles and Values

### Vision

Building bridges to success, one child, one family, one community at a time.

### Mission Statement

To develop a foundation of knowledge, skills and life-long learning by nurturing relationships with children, families, and communities.

**Principle: A fundamental truth on which actions are based. The following are principles of the OHSPV program as developed by the team:**

- Parents are the primary teachers of their child
- Holistically healthy families nurture healthy children
- Children need to feel loved, safe and secure
- Healthy children do better in school and life
- It takes a village to raise a child
- Parents are partners in decision making regarding their child and within the OHSPV program

**Value: A thing or quality having intrinsic worth. The following are values of the OHSPV program as developed by the team:**

- Parents will be involved in developing and guiding an individualized plan for their child through the home visits and at preschool. Involved means being present, actively engaged in decision making, and reflective about their child's needs and strengths.
- We respect the family's value system without giving up our own or judging the family.
- We trust that parents have the ability and desire to parent their child to the best of their ability. We believe that parents are doing the best they can do.
- We believe parents are lifelong learners. Once parents know better they can do better.
- We believe that health is a lifelong issue. Health would include mental, physical and social health.
- We believe that change is an active process and impacts the whole family system. We believe the change process, although positive, involves many ups and downs that require patience, support and time.
- We believe it takes a community of support to keep a child safe (physically), secure (emotionally) and loved (needs met).
- We believe children deserve medical, dental and mental health services at a young age.
- We believe child and family advocates are important, primary people in the community supporting families and children.
- We believe parents can be supported and nurtured to become active decision makers.
- We believe in supporting families in the process of gaining new information and incorporating into their own lifestyles/values.

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## Parent Involvement in Head Start

### Area Parent Meetings

In every area *all* parents are members of a parent group. This is a parent/staff get-together once every other month, often combined with a social event or a parent education topic. The parent groups provide you the opportunity to be involved in planning *your* child=s program, decision-making, and other activities of your choice. In OHSP your preschool co-ops will have their own parent groups, in which each parent must be a member. OHSP will have parent meetings at sites around the county that are for all OHSP parents. These will be held every other month beginning in October.

### Policy Council

Parents participate in policy making and the operation of the *whole* OHSP program by being members of the Policy Council.

The Parent Policy Council elects two parent representatives from each area. These representatives will take ideas with them from all parents, and, in turn, keep those parents informed of decisions made at the Policy Council meetings. Policy Council members help plan and develop program goals; decide ways of enrolling OHSP families, and approve various policies, hiring and firing decisions, and the budget. They also evaluate the program each year.

The Policy Council receives support from the program by receiving training from OHSP staff so they are able to understand the program and changes within it. Childcare is provided at Policy Council and area meetings.

### An Invitation

Whether or not you are a representative, all parents have an open invitation to attend Policy Council meetings. You will be mailed an invitation to each meeting. Talk with your home visitor about attending. Policy Council alternates are encouraged to attend all trainings and meetings to assist them in taking the place of the representative when the need arises.

### Parent Program Activities

You will have several chances during the year to attend or even help plan educational, fundraising, or just social events with OHSP parents. This is also an important kind of parent involvement.

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## Policy Council Job Descriptions

### Policy Council Chairperson

- Chair (or co-chair) Policy Council Meetings
- Receive mailings and updates from the State
- Represent Clackamas ESD OHSP program at state meetings (optional)
- Assist with development of Policy Council Meeting Agenda
- Talk with parents of newly identified children as needed
- Represent program
- Participate in New Parent Orientation (if time permits)

#### ***Expected Annual Time Commitment***

- ◇ 20 hours for Policy Council Meetings
- ◇ 5 hours in meeting planning (can be by telephone)
- ◇ 15 hours review of printed material from the state
- ◇ Optional: state activities, regional activities, participation in program activities - up to 8 days per year

### Policy Council Vice Chairperson

- Chair Policy Council meetings, if Chairperson is absent
- Represent Clackamas ESD OHSP Program at state meetings (optional)
- Talk with parents of newly identified children as needed
- Represent program
- Participate in New Parent Orientation (if time permits)
- Serve as Chair person in the next program year

#### ***Expected Annual Time Commitment***

- ◇ 20 hours for Policy Council Meetings
- ◇ Optional: State activities, Regional activities, participation in program activities - up to 8 days per year

## Policy Council Secretary

- Take notes during Policy Council meetings (program secretary will type)
- Represent Clackamas ESD OHSP Program at state meetings (optional)
- Talk with parents of newly identified children as needed
- Represent program
- Participate in New Parent Orientation (if time permits)
- Assist with budget presentation at Policy Council; Program Coordinator will assist.

### ***Expected Annual Time Commitment:***

- ◇ 20 hours for Policy Council meetings
- ◇ Optional: state activities, regional activities, participation in program activities - up to 8 days per year

## Parent Area Representative

- Take area concerns and opinions to the Policy Council
- Reporting back to represented area parents
- Take an active, positive part in committee work and discussions
- Help represented area parents understand and accept Policy Council decisions and recommendations.

## All Parents

- Work through your representatives
- Help representatives, when possible
- Trust your representatives to work for you
- Be a representative whenever you can

**Child care and travel costs related to Policy Council activities will be reimbursed for all Policy Council elected officials.**



## Appendix A

### Code of Conduct

#### **OHSP 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 in OHSP 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 is necessary and related to program operations/business or decision making;
  - c. No information learned at Policy Council meetings or while conducting
3. Policy Council business may be discussed or used in any way outside of Policy Council activities.
4. Will support and participate in a TEAMWORK approach to decision making.
5. Will behave and interact respectfully while participating on Policy Council or representing the organization within the community.
6. 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.
7. Must have an interest and concern for children and their families.
8. May not accept gifts and/or gratuities as stated in Code: GBC of the CESD Policies and Procedures.
9. 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.
10. May not make public statements under the auspices of any agency title without Governing Board approval.
11. May not offer services, establish agreements, or enter into contracts.
12. Will respect and uphold the legal authority of the Governing Board to establish, review, or revise the standards of conduct for individuals participating on the Policy Council.

## Appendix B

### How a Motion is Made

- **Recognition.** Raise your hand to get the Chairperson's permission to speak: "Mr. (or Madam) Chairperson..."
- **Make the motion.** Offer your recommendation to the rest of the group: "I move we have a spring picnic..."
- **It must be seconded.** To support your idea, another member should say: "I second the motion..."
- **Clearly state the motion.** The Chairperson puts the motion in words that everyone can understand and then states the motion: "It has been moved and seconded that we have a spring picnic..."
- **Discussion.** The Chairperson invites members to discuss the motion: "Is there any discussion?"
- **Restate the motion.** The discussion ends when the Chairperson prepares the members for voting by restating the motion: "The motion before us is to have a spring picnic."
- **Motion.** The Chairperson calls for the vote. The vote can be done by voice, written ballot, or show of hands. If the vote is by voice, the Chairperson says: "All those in favor of a spring picnic, signify by saying, 'aye'; those opposed, say 'nay'; those abstaining?"
- **State the results.** The Chairperson announces whether or not the motion has carried or failed. "The motion carried."

## 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 orderly.
- To vote:
  - ◇ Cannot be forced to vote.
  - ◇ Should abstain on questions of direct personal or financial interest not in common with other members.
  - ◇ Can vote for you.
  - ◇ Can change your vote before results are stated or with permission of the assembly after results have been announced.
  - ◇ 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

# Concern and Feedback Procedures

It is the desire of the OHSP program to encourage communication between parents, community members and OHSP staff.

It is important that questions, concerns, ideas and problems be dealt with in a positive manner.

Parents and community members should feel comfortable expressing their concerns directly to the individual staff member involved. Every attempt should be made to handle the situation directly. If, after communications have been attempted, the situation is still unresolved, the concern should be put in writing.

Written concerns should include a description of the problem, date of occurrence, names of people involved, and possible solutions. The Policy Council Representative is the parent's link to overall program operation. Parents should consult their Policy Council Representative for advice and assistance.

The written concern will be given to the Director within ten (10) working days, and a meeting will be scheduled to discuss the situation. The Director may invite all or part of the following to review the situation: Policy Council Chairperson, Parent/Community member, Policy Council Representative, individual staff person addressed in the concern, Regional Manager, Consultants, Board of Directors Chairperson, or other members of the Board of Directors.

A written response will be prepared by the Director outlining action taken and given to Parent/Community member within ten (10) working days of the meeting.

If Parent/Community member is not satisfied with the written response from the Director, the Parent/Community member may request a joint meeting of the Policy Council and Board of Directors Executive Committees for final resolution of the concern/problem through a written request to the Policy Council Chairperson.