

**OCDEL EARLY HEAD START**

**POLICY COUNCIL**

**BYLAWS**

**2019-2020**

# OCDEL Early Head Start Policy Council

The OCDEL Early Head Start Grantee is the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Office of Child Development & Early Learning, OCDEL. OCDEL in turn subcontracts the Early Head Start program management to the PA Key and direct services are contracted to community based providers. These community based providers operate in the Early Head Start service area defined by the Financial Assistance Award letter. The counties in which services are provided are: Berks, Chester, Montgomery, Bucks, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lawrence, Venango, and Huntingdon. This document serves as the Policy Council by-law for the body responsible for ensuring compliance across OCDEL and its sub-contracted partners.

**PURPOSE of Policy** - The OCDEL Early Head Start Policy Council is an independent group with Operational Responsibility for the Early Head Start grants, 03HP0014 (Early Head Start Child Care Partnership) and 03CH3474 (Early Head Start Home Visiting). Members shall work in conjunction with the OCDEL Early Head Start Governing Board and Staff to review policy, monitor program activities and provide guidance for the implementation of Early Head Start in accordance with the Head Start Act, Head Start Performance Standards and other regulations.

## MEMBERSHIP

### Section I - Definition of Members

A Policy Council Member is one of 2 types, the first being a currently enrolled pregnant woman, or the parent of an enrolled OCDEL Early Head Start Child. The second type is an interested individual from the community at large. The OCDEL Early Head Start Policy Council has opportunity for membership of 21 members. Parents members must make up 51% or greater of the Policy Council Membership. Each partner agency will have:

EHS Home based : 1 seated parent members from CAC

2 seated parent members from LLIU

EHS-CCP: 1 seated parent member from each HUB

Membership on the Policy Council is voluntary. A member is an individual who has been apprised of the roles and responsibilities of the Policy Council and willingly accepts those responsibilities. Members are prohibited from being program staff with direct grant implementation responsibilities or who have a conflict of interest according to guidance in the Head Start Act 2007.

### Section II - Selection of Members

Members of the Policy Council are selected by parents from their HUB. To serve as a parent representative or alternate, a parent must be enrolled as a pregnant woman or have a child currently enrolled in the OCDEL Early Head Start Program. Interested parents complete an application and elections are held in Sept. or October of the program year. The parents with the most votes will be the seated members from that partner agency.

Community members are selected by recommendation of the Governing Board, the Policy Council members or HUB/HB partners. Community Representation should include no more than one community member from each HUB/HB partner service area and one community representative from the Harrisburg area who will represent the PA Key.

### Section III: Terms of Office

Parent members on Policy Council are elected annually. Parents can only be seated members of the PC for a maximum of 5 one year terms. The PC term operates from November through October with the elections occurring in October annually. As part of the process, new Policy Council members will receive an orientation prior to the end of December to better understand their roles and responsibilities. New Policy Council members seated after the orientation will be provided with the orientation within one month of their election to Policy Council.

Community members when selected for Policy Council are seated for a 5 year term. At the end of that time period, they are not permitted to return to Policy Council as a member.

#### Section IV - Resignation of Members

When circumstances arise that a member believes he or she can no longer serve on the Policy Council, that individual may voluntarily resign her or his membership by submitting a letter to the Chairperson of the Policy Council. This letter should include a date by which that the member will no longer participate on the PC.

#### Section V - Termination of Membership

Each Policy Council Member will sign a conduct statement. If a member violates the terms of the Conduct Statement, continued membership on the Policy Council will be discussed among the remaining members. If it is determined that the violation is egregious, then the Policy Council will vote on the continued inclusion of the offending member. If the Policy Council is in consensus that the member's responsibilities should be terminated, the member will be notified in writing, and a replacement will be identified.

All members are expected to participate in regularly scheduled meetings. If a member is absent from 3 consecutive meetings they will be asked to relinquish their membership.

#### Section VI - Transfer of Membership

In the event of a member leaving midyear, the partner agency will be responsible for finding a new parent to assume the vacant seated membership position. As membership is transferred from one member to the next, the new member will receive a Policy Council orientation. An individual conversation will occur with the Chairperson or the Chairperson's designee to ensure that the new member is aware of responsibilities and of the current work of the Policy Council prior to participating in his or her first meeting.

In the event that a community member position is vacant, there is only a potential transfer of membership if a replacement from the community member's agency is willing to fill the remaining term. If there is not an interested replacement, recommendations will be sought from a joint sub-committee of Governing Board and Policy Council with the EHS director's involvement.

#### Section VIII – Vacancy

It will be the goal of the Policy Council to fill all parent vacancies within 30 days of their occurrence. In the event of a vacancy, regular business of the Policy Council will continue as long as a quorum of members is available to vote on issues.

#### Section IX - Voting Rights

Each seated member shall have one vote. Members can abstain from a vote at their discretion.

### **ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS**

#### Section I Officers - Definition

The **OCDEL** Early Head Start Policy Council will have 3 officers; Chairperson, Vice Chair Person and a Secretary. The duties of each are outlined below.

#### Section II - Election and Term of Office

In the initial year of Policy Council, the Chairperson will be appointed by the Governing Board. In subsequent years all officers to the Policy Council will be selected by the members. In the event multiple people are vying for the same position, each shall have the opportunity to describe her or his qualifications to the membership and a majority vote will determine the successful candidate for the position. If elections occur mid year due to unforeseen circumstances, officers will not be re-elected the following fall. This will result in a term lasting longer than one program year but will be limited to no more than 18 months.

### Section III - Removal from Office

In the event that an elected officer neglects his or her duties to the board, members can make the motion to discuss removal of the person from her or his position. This process would follow parliamentary procedure, and the Policy Council membership must elect a new officer to fill the position.

### Section IV - Officer Vacancy

In the event that an officer vacancy occurs, the remaining members will elect a new officer through discussion at the next regular or special meeting.

### Section V - Duties of the Chairperson

The Chairperson will facilitate regular and special meetings. It is the Chairperson's discretion to call special meetings as need arises for the effective implementation of the program. The Chairperson will serve as the point of contact for the OCDEL and PA Key administrators. Additionally, the Chairperson will be the designated contact for the Governing Board and staff.

The Chairperson or the Chairperson's designee will develop the Policy Council Meeting agenda and implement parliamentary procedures to facilitate the meeting.

### Section VI - Duties of the Vice Chairperson

In the event of an absence of the Chairperson, or a vacancy in that position, the Vice Chair will fulfill the role of the Chairperson.

### Section VII – Duties of Secretary

To document the discussions of the Policy Council in the form of minutes and work with the program director to ensure that minutes are distributed.

## **ARTICLE V – QUORUM**

### Section I - Quorum

A quorum for all regular and special meetings has been determined to be 40% of the current number of EHS HB members, and 30% of the current number of EHSCCP members, of the Policy Council, of which the majority are parent members. In the event absentee ballots are considered to meet quorum, there must be (at minimum) 2 representatives present on the call in order to conduct the meeting. In general, votes will be a consensus, majority vote, however, if a vote must be taken during a conference call, a roll call vote will be taken. In the event that vacancies occur on the Policy Council for Parent members or Community Members, Policy Council will continue to complete business as long as a quorum is achieved. In the event a member knows in advance they are unable to participate in a meeting, they may vote to approve, table the discussion until such time the full board can meet, or vote to disapprove in absentia. This absentee voting will be conveyed in writing via email to the appropriate staff facilitator, who in term will read the member's response at the time of meeting. The vote will not be shared with other members in advance to the general vote. At the conclusion of the vote, the written communication will become part of the meeting minutes.

## **ARTICLE VI - COMMITTEES**

### Section I - Special Committees

Special committees shall be enacted at the discretion of the Chairperson. Terms of office, membership, duties and scope of a special committee is the discretion of the Chairperson.

### Section II - Quorum/Special Committees

A quorum for special committees shall be 50% of the membership of that committee. The work of the special committees and votes by membership shall be reported to the Policy Council as recommendations for Policy Council consideration or vote.

## **ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS**

### **Section I - Regular Meetings**

Regular meetings are scheduled annually for a minimum of 6 meetings. At least one meeting will be held during the following months: October, December, February, April, June and August. The schedule of meetings is shared with members, program administration and partner staff. Policy Council has the discretion to determine if a meeting is held at a single location, concurrent regional locations linked by conference line or by conference call. Meetings are held at a time of day determined by majority rules vote of members.

### **Section II - Special Meetings**

The need for special meetings is determined by the Chairperson in collaboration with grantee administrative staff. Special meetings can be convened with members in person, or depending on the need to expedite the meeting, a conference call.

### **Section III - Location and Scheduling of Meetings**

Regularly scheduled meetings will occur at locations determined by Policy Council appropriate for the type of meeting convened by the Chairperson. For members that are not able to attend in person, a conference call number will be distributed the prior to the meeting.

### **Section IV - Notice of Meeting**

Regular meeting times will be determined by the Policy Council annually. Dates will be posted separately with the minutes of Policy Council meetings. Each meeting format and time will be determined by Policy Council and published as part of the meeting minutes which should be posted at each partner location for public viewing.

Special meetings will be called and the meeting place and time determined by the Chairperson. Notification for a special meeting will be sent via email with a response expected to determine if a quorum of members is available for the meeting.

### **Section V – Verification of Receipt of Policy Council Materials**

To document receipt of Policy Council materials, members will complete the Cover Sheet by checking off the items received and signing and dating at the bottom of the Cover Sheet, if they received a hard copy of the materials. Members should submit the Cover Sheet to their Home Visitor or to program staff at or before the Policy Council meeting. If the materials are sent to a member by email, the EHS staff person will include the read-receipt option. A member who receives the materials via e-mail will submit the read-receipt or acknowledgement email to the sender within four days of receipt of materials.

### **Section VI - Decisions of the Policy Council**

Decisions of the Policy Council are made with consideration of input from the Governing Board, OCDEL, PA Key, Partner Administrators and Parents. The Policy Council has approve/deny authority regarding the PA Early Head Start Program decisions are implemented into policy. In the event that the Governing Board and Policy Council do not agree in areas of shared governance, the steps identified in the approved Impasse Policy will be followed.

### **Section VII - Conduct of the Meeting**

Meetings will be conducted in following parliamentary procedures.

### **Section VIII – Reimbursement of Parent Expenses**

Policy Council will review and vote annually on the policy to reimburse the Parent Policy Council and Alternate members for child care and transportation costs associated with participating on Policy Council. The minutes of that meeting will

serve as documentation of the discussion and approval of the policy. The previous approved policy will remain in effect each year until the Policy Council reviews and updates the policy.

#### ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

The Policy Council by-laws can be amended as needed by its membership. By-law amendment must be an agenda item, distributed to all members prior to a scheduled meeting of members. The staff facilitator will collect documentation of delivery receipt of the email distribution to all members. Proposed changes will be completed in track-changes in order for members to clearly see the edits to the document. During the next scheduled meeting, members will have opportunity to discuss the amendments. In order to facilitate timely approval, if members are in agreement with the changes and a quorum is present, members can motion to approve posting of revised by-laws, and after a 30 day period members can vote to finalize the changes.

#### ARTICLE IX – IMPASSE PROCEDURE

##### Section I - Introduction

To ensure that the Early Head Start Policy Council (Council) is included on significant issues as referenced in the Head Start Performance Standards and Head Start Act, the following procedure for internal dispute resolution has been established.

##### Section II- Purpose

To resolve internal disputes between the Council and the Governing Board or Early Head Start (EHS) Director without disrupting services to EHS children and families.

##### Section III- Definition of Dispute

Should a dispute occur, the Council Chairperson shall be authorized by the council to send written notice within (5) working days, following the final action by the Board or Director. This written notice shall be submitted to the EHS Director.

The EHS Director shall meet with the Council Chairperson within (5) working days after receiving the written notice. If a resolution plan is developed, the written plan shall be submitted to the Board within (5) working days after being agreed to by the EHS Director and the Council Chairperson. The Board will review and approve or disapprove the resolution plan at it's next meeting the approved plan of action.

If the EHS Director and the Council Chairperson cannot develop a resolution plan, or if the Board disapproves of the resolution plan, then impasse occurs. If impasse occurs, a writted notice of impasse must be submitted to the Council and Board within (5) working days.

##### Section IIII- Impasse Committee's Composition and Powers

Within (5) working days following the receipt of written notice of impasse, the EHS Director or designee shall call for an Impasse Committee meeting. The Impasse Committee shall then convene as soon as it is feasible.

The Impasse committee shall be made up of four (4) persons as follows:

- Two(2) members of the Board, chosen by the Board;
- Two (2) members of the Council, chosen by the Council

In addition, the EHS Director or their respective designees shall serve as a resource person to the committee. The (4) Impasse Committee members shall all agree to the final written resolution plan prior to submitting it to the Board and Council.

The Impasse Committee shall have five (5) working days from the date of it's first meeting to develop a written resolution plan and submit it to the Board and Council. The Board and the Council will approve or disapprove of the plan at their next meeting and notify the other entity. If the Impasse Committee fails to agree on a resolution plan, it shall promptly notify the Board and Council.

Section V – Non- Binding Arbitration Committee’s Composition and Powers

In the event that the Board and/or the Council reject the resolution plan of the Impasse Committee, or the Impasse Committee cannot agree on a resolution plan, a Non-binding Arbitration Committee shall be established.

Within five (5) working days following the Board and/or the Council disapproval of the resolution plan or five (5) working days after the Impasse Committee notifies the Board and Council of it’s failure to agree to a resolution plan, the Executive Director or designee shall call for a meet as soon as is feasible.

The Non- binding Arbitration Committee shall be made up of three (3) disinterested persons who have agreed to serve as arbitrators. Disinterested persons shall not include a parent or family member of children currently enrolled in the EHS program, EHS staff or a member of their family, PA Key staff or a member of their family, EHS partner staff or a member of their family, or a Board member or a member of their family. The Non-binding Arbitration Committee is composed of the following.

- One (1) representative selected by the Board
- One (1) representative selected by Policy Council Officers
- One (1) representative from the Grantee Executive Staff

The Non-binding Arbitration Committee shall have five (5) working days from the date of it’s first meeting to develop a written resolution plan and submit it to the Board and Council. The Board and the Council then have fifteen (15) working days to approve or disapprove of the plan.

**Approved by Policy Council:** \_\_\_\_\_