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**COMPONENT: PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

**SUBJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF POLICY COUNCIL**

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:** To establish and maintain a formal structure of shared governance through which parents can participate in policy making or in other decisions about the program. Parents will serve on policy council and in parent committee.

**OPERATING PROCEDURE:**

Parent committee and policy council will be established as early in the program year as possible. Policy council will not be dissolved until the successor council is elected and seated. Parent representatives that attend policy council meetings (finance, grievance, personnel or executive committee included) can be reimbursed for mileage. (reference parent travel in financial Manual)

The composition of the policy council will be one parent representative per center/complex. The following distribution of community representatives are as follows: Dickson County (2), Humphreys County (2), Houston County (1), and Stewart County (1). This will maintain a 51% Parent, 49% community representative ratio. Community representatives will be drawn from local community businesses, civic and professional organization and others, familiar with the resources and services available to low-income families. Parent representatives will approve the selected community representatives.

Parent members of the policy council must be elected at the beginning of each year. Community representatives are selected and voted upon by the parent members annually. Parents and community representatives are limited to a number of one year terms they can serve. Each may serve a combined total of three terms.

No staff person or member of their immediate family may serve on the policy council except parents who occasionally substitute for regular Head Start staff.

Parent committee and policy council will receive training in the process of the parent committee meetings, policy council function, budget, local policies and procedures and parliamentary procedure.

Policy council must work in partnership with key management staff and the governing body to develop, review and approve or disapprove the following: 1) funding applications and amendments to funding applications, 2) procedures describing how the policy council will implement shared decision-making, 3) long- and short-range program goals and objectives, 4) selection of service area, 5) composition of policy council and procedures by which members are chosen, 6) criteria for changes to those policies; and 8) decisions to hire or terminate the Head Start Director and any person who works primarily for the Head Start program. The policy council will also serve as a link between the policy council, the community and parents. They will share information about the program, volunteer opportunities and enrollment opportunities.

From the policy council members, special committees will be established for personnel, grievance and finance issues.

Policy Council members will receive a policy council book which includes: job descriptions, policies and procedures, operating plans, budget, monthly financial statement, policy council membership composition, Head Start yearly calendar, regional office correspondence, attendance reports, by-laws, etc. Members are supplied each month with updated information to be incorporated into the policy council book.

Parent committee will assist in carrying out program policies and procedures and activities. They will help plan activities at the center level and serve as a link between Head Start and the community. Members will contribute input into the curriculum, field trips and other classroom activities.