

# Early Head Start Program

a division of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe



## Policy Council Bylaws

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**ARTICLE I**  
NAME OF ORGANIZATION

The name of the organization shall be the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe Early Head Start Policy Council (Policy Council).

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**ARTICLE II**  
THE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE POLICY COUNCIL

The purpose and objective of the Policy Council is to provide a platform for parents/legal guardians and the community to participate in a process of shared planning and decision-making concerning the program design and implementation of the Early Head Start Program (Program), as outlined in [Head Start Program Performance Standards 1301](#) and section [642 of the Head Start Act](#). The Policy Council members shall:

- Section 1** Serves as a link between the Program's Parent Committees, the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe Board (Governing Board), and public and private organizations of the communities served. Policy Council parent members shall bring information and recommendations from their respective groups, organizations, child care centers (center), and/or regions for dissemination. Issues and concerns that are within the scope, purpose, function, and responsibility of the Policy Council must follow proper protocol established at the center level before being presented to the Policy Council.
  - Section 2** Ensure children and families have an opportunity to benefit from a comprehensive, interdisciplinary broad range of services offered by the Program.
  - Section 3** Assist Program Parent Committees in communicating program options with all enrolled parents to ensure that they understand their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities in the Program and to encourage participation.
  - Section 4** Assist Program Parent Committees in planning, coordinating, and organizing program activities for parents with the assistance of staff and ensure that allocated funds are used accordingly to support parent activities.
  - Section 5** Assist in recruiting volunteer services from parents, community residents, and community organizations.
  - Section 6** Assist in the mobilization of community resources to meet identified center and program needs.
  - Section 7** Establish and maintain procedures for resolving community complaints about the Program.
  - Section 8** Support the program by participating in committees and meetings that support the Program's decision-making and planning process.
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**ARTICLE III**  
STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION OF MEMBERSHIP

- Section 1** The structure of the Early Head Start Policy Council shall ensure members are elected by the parents of currently enrolled children. The majority of the members shall be parents/legal guardians of children currently enrolled in the program, in accordance with [Head Start Performance Standard 1301.3\(b\)](#) and [Head Start Act 642\(c\)\(2\)\(C\)](#).
- Section 2** The Policy Council shall consist of the following:
  - Parent Representation  
One voting representative shall be elected by and from each center's Parent Committee.
  - Community Representation  
At least two (2) Community Representatives shall serve as voting members on the Policy Council. The candidates shall represent or provide service to Miami-Dade County. One of the two representatives can be a former parent and/or representative. All Community Representatives must be elected by the Policy Council.

### Board Representation

One voting representative shall be appointed by the Board Chair to represent the Board and serve as a voting member.

**Section 3** Any officer from the parent committee can serve as an alternate for a policy council representative so long as they are not related to any staff working in the Program (see Section 4 for the definition of relative). Alternate representatives shall be non-voting representatives and shall only vote in the absence of the voting representative.

**Section 4** In accordance with [Head Start Performance Standard1301.3\(b\)\(2\)](#), no staff member or members of his/her immediate family shall serve on the Policy Council. Immediate family is defined as any of the following relationships:

- wife
- husband
- son
- daughter
- brother
- mother
- father
- sister
- grandmother
- relatives by marriage of comparable

All Policy Council members will be given an affidavit to sign, attesting to the fact that they have no family members employed with Head Start Program.

**Section 5** Parent members elected to the Policy Council shall serve a one (1) year term beginning in September and ending upon the election of the new Policy Council. Members may be re-elected, but not to exceed five (5) years. Any part of a year served is considered a full term even if the term of office is less than six (6) months.

**Section 6** The Community Representatives shall serve one (1) year term beginning in November and ending upon the election of the new Policy Council. The members elected will not exceed five (5) years. Any part of a year served is considered a full term even if the term of office is less than six (6) months.

### **Section 7** Executive Committee

The Executive Committee will be comprised of the following officers:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer

A minimum of two (2) parents will serve on the Executive Committee

**Section 8** The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe's legal counsel will serve as support to the Parliamentarian on the Policy Council and shall not be a council member.

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## **ARTICLE IV**

### **ELECTIONS, TERM OF OFFICE, AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

**Section 1** Election of officers shall be held yearly at the Policy Council meeting in October. Officers shall consist of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, a Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Parliamentarian. Only the elected voting representatives are eligible to serve as Policy Council Officers.

**Section 2** Officers shall serve a one (1) year term of office subject to re-election of two (2) additional terms. Any part of a year served is considered a full term.

**Section 3** A parent serving as an alternate who does not actually cast a vote during a program year will not be considered as having served a term and will be allowed to serve up to three terms as a Policy Council member, if and upon being elected.

**Section 4** The duties of the officers shall be those, which usually apply to the positions identified in "Roberts Rules of Order" and those of the Executive Committee of the Policy Council.

**Section 5** All Policy Council officers by virtue of their position serve as members of the Executive Committee. The officers are expected to attend monthly Policy Council and Executive Committee meetings and serve on the Standing Committees (Planning and Budget, and Screening Committees).

**Duties of Officers:**

**Chairperson:** The Chairperson shall preside at all Policy Council meetings. S/he shall by virtue of their office, serve as ex-officio member of all standing committees. S/he shall assist in the recommendation or selection of all subcommittee chairpersons, temporary or permanent, except for the Executive Committee. S/he shall appoint members of the Policy Council to serve on other committees and boards as needed.

**Vice-Chairperson:** The Vice-Chairperson shall preside at the Policy Council meeting in the absence of or the inability of the Chairperson to exercise the duties of his/her office. The Vice-Chair shall succeed to the position of the Chair if a vacancy occurs, becoming the Chair of the Policy Council with all rights, privileges, and powers except to change or modify rules made by the Chair. S/he shall perform other duties as are incidental to his/her office or as instructed by the Chair.

**Secretary:** The Secretary shall be responsible for taking the roll call at all of the meetings. The Secretary shall perform such duties as are incidental to his/her office or as instructed by the Chair.

**Assistant Secretary:** The Assistant Secretary shall assist the Secretary as needed with taking the roll call at the meetings. The Asst. Secretary shall perform such duties as are incidental to his/her office or as instructed by the Secretary.

**Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall give the program's fiscal and financial reports at the Policy Council monthly meetings. S/he shall serve as the Chair for the Planning and Budget Committee and shall perform such duties as are incidental to his/her office or as instructed by the Chair.

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**ARTICLE V**  
**QUORUM**

**Section 1** There must be a quorum present to conduct official business. One-third (1/3) of the seated Policy Council members shall constitute a quorum. If a quorum is not present or expected within twenty minutes of the meeting's start time, the members who are present will decide by a majority of votes whether to continue with the meeting or reschedule the meeting.

**Section 2** The chairperson will be counted towards the quorum.

**Section 3** A 51% of members shall constitute a quorum for the all Ad-hoc, or Sub-committees of the Policy Council.

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**ARTICLE VI**  
**VOTING PROCEDURES**

**Section 1** One-third (1/3) of the seated Policy Council members in attendance, at a duly constituted regular or special Policy Council meeting, shall represent the official action of the Policy Council.

**Section 2** Each member of the Policy Council shall have one (1) vote. There shall be no proxy. The Chair shall only have voting privileges in the event of a tie vote. A record of all Policy Council members entitled to vote shall be maintained by the Policy Council Secretary and made available at any meeting upon request by the members. Alternates will vote only during the absence of their elected voting representative as prescribed in Article III. A list of all alternate members shall be maintained by the Program's office.

**Section 3** Fifty-one percent (51%) of the votes cast shall determine if a motion passes or fails unless otherwise stated.

**Section 4** If an attempt to obtain quorum has been unsuccessful, electronic voting will be allowed as an acceptable form of voting. Electronic voting would be permissible for time-sensitive action items

related to Early Head Start grant application or having a budgetary impact. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the seated Policy Council members must vote in order for an action item to pass or fail.

- Section 5** Election of Officers shall be held in October or as early as possible in the new program year following the organization of the Parent Committees. The election of new officers will occur immediately after the outgoing officers officially vacate their office.
- Section 6** Elections of officers will take place at the first organization meeting of the Policy Council. Only the voting Representatives shall participate in the election of officers. All officers shall be elected by roll call. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be declared the winner.
- Section 7** A voting member can abstain from casting a vote if s/he is ambivalent about the action item, mildly disapproves of the action item without rising to the level of active disapproval or has a conflict of interest with the action item. If the abstention is a result of a conflict of interest, the member shall state his or her conflict for the record.

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## ARTICLE VII VACANCIES AND REMOVAL OF MEMBERS

- Section 1** All vacancies shall be filled through election or temporary appointment within thirty (30) calendar days of the date the Policy Council officially declares a seat “vacant”.
- Section 2** Vacancies of the Policy Council shall be filled by election or temporary appointment with a representative from the specific center wherein the vacancy occurs. Any representative filling a vacancy does so only for the remainder of the term of the Committee member being replaced.
- Section 3** No Policy Council representative shall serve in a temporary capacity for a period of more than two (2) months.
- Section 4** All Policy Council members shall be expected to attend meetings of the Policy Council on a regular basis. Any Policy Council member missing three (3) consecutive regular meetings during the program year shall be automatically removed from the Policy Council unless the absences are excused by the Chairperson and/or Secretary upon notification from the member or key management staff. The Secretary or key management staff shall notify the member, school, or organization of this action in writing within fifteen (15) days.
- Section 5** The member being removed from the Policy Council due to nonattendance shall have the right to appeal (in writing) the decision to the Policy Council within ten (10) days following notification of dismissal. A majority vote of members present at the next Committee meeting is required for reinstatement, provided the membership in attendance constitutes a quorum.
- Section 6** Any violation of the Policy Council Member’s Code of Conduct shall be brought to the attention of the Committee in writing. Members of the Committee shall listen to all points of view prior to deciding whether or not to remove the Member from the Committee. A final decision by the committee will follow voting procedures as specified in Article VI, section 3.
- Section 7** Any member of the Policy Council may resign from their position at any time by providing the Policy Council with a written notice indicating the member’s intention to resign and the effective date.

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## ARTICLE VIII MEETINGS

- Section 1** Regular meetings of the Council shall be held on the third Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom on the following months February, April, June, September, and November. In lieu of the October meeting, the Policy Council will receive a Head Start orientation. In lieu of the January meeting, the members will participate in an ethics training.
- Section 2** The members shall be notified by mail at least five (5) calendar days prior to the regular meeting.
- Section 3** The Chairperson, other officers, and key management staff may call a special meeting upon written request.

- Section 4** All members shall be notified of any Special meetings at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance. This notice shall state the purpose of the meeting, person(s) calling the meeting and should include information related to the agenda items.
- Section 5** The meetings of the Policy Council shall be conducted in general conformity with “Roberts Rules of Order” except as may otherwise be provided by these by-laws, or as the Committee may prescribe.
- Section 6** All Policy Council meetings shall be open to the public. Any citizen may participate in any meeting of the Policy Council as an observer or may petition the Policy Council to be placed on the agenda by completing and submitting the *Agenda Item Request Form* at least 7 calendar days prior to the meeting date.

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## ARTICLE IX TRAVEL

- Section 1** To be considered for travel, a voting representative must be actively participating in the Policy Council. Travel will be on a voluntary basis.
- Section 2** All Policy Council members traveling must submit a written summary of the conference within five (5) days of their return, which will be distributed at the next regularly scheduled Policy Council meeting.
- Section 3** The traveling members must submit within five (5) days of their return, receipts for overnight lodging, boarding pass, registration, luggage cost, transportation, etc.

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## ARTICLE X MEETING AND TRAVEL ALLOWANCES

- Section 1** Reimbursements: In accordance with [Head Start Program Performance Standards 1301.3\(e\)](#), reimbursement payment is made to cover the cost of certain expenses incurred as a result of attending meetings, trainings and activities in the performance of other official duties and responsibilities in connection with the Program shall be made eligible to Early Head Start parents who are members of the Policy Council in the following manner:
1. Even if no quorum is achieved, a meeting is considered to have taken place when proper notification was made inviting the participants to attend.
  2. Policy Council Representatives, Executive Committee, and Subcommittee members with family income that falls below Health and Human Services poverty guidelines will be eligible to request reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred for their participation in Council meetings and activities. Reasonable expenses incurred shall be considered for paid transportation, for the purchase of gasoline, etc.
  3. Reimbursement may be made for transportation to and from official appointments by the least expensive, convenient means of transportation. Mileage allowance shall be computed in accordance with the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe Travel Policy. This allowance is limited to only the voting and nonvoting representatives (alternates) serving on the Policy Council and Parent Committee members selected to serve on Sub-Committees of the Policy Council. To ensure parents are eligible to receive reimbursement family status and income eligibility will be verified for all Policy Council representatives requesting reimbursement.
  4. Travel expenses for out-of-town meetings, conferences, and trainings shall comply with the Early Learning Coalition Miami-Dade/Monroe Travel Procedures.
  5. Other expenses such as calls made on a private telephone will not be allowed as reimbursement expenses.
  6. Childcare expenses, when not provided by the program, will be paid at the rate of minimum wage for the number of hours plus half-hour to and half-hour from the meeting.

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## ARTICLE XI COMMITTEES

**Section 1** The following standing committees shall exist:

Executive Committee: The Executive Committee shall be comprised of the Policy Council officers. The Executive Committee will be authorized to transact Policy Council business between meetings of the full Policy Council. In cases of emergencies, items approved will be subject to ratification at the regularly scheduled meeting.

**Subsection 1** In the event the Policy Council is unable to convene, the Executive Committee shall transact the business of the Policy Council, to be ratified at the next regular or special Policy Council meeting.

**Subsection 2** The Executive Committee shall assist the Policy Council in the formation of planning and shall serve to make recommendations to the Policy Council. The Executive Committee shall assist the Policy Council Chairperson in making recommendations for the election of the Sub-Committee Chair. The standing and/or subcommittees shall meet monthly or as frequently deemed necessary by the Chairperson, its members, and key management staff. The Executive Committee shall be assisted by the Program's Management team and other key staff.

Finance Committee: The Finance Committee's responsibilities include reviewing financial reports, approving and/or disapproving budgets, providing program recommendations, and working with staff on the grant application process. The Finance Committee will assist in determining where services are needed, including location for program operation as stipulated by the Community Needs Assessment.

Enrollment and Attendance Committee: The Enrollment and Attendance Committee's responsibilities include reviewing the monthly enrollment and attendance reports, providing recommendations on the annual Recruitment and Selection Plan, reviewing and approving over-income applications, and providing recommendations of where services are needed, including location for program operation as stipulated by the Community Needs Assessment.

Personnel Committee: The Personnel Committee's responsibilities include the review of applications and/or resumes of all recommended applicants for any position within the Early Head Start Program. Members of the Personnel Committee are encouraged to participate in the interview process.

The committee will also be responsible for making recommendations regarding personnel decisions, such as hiring, promotion, and termination of staff. Terminations will include a list of employees to be terminated and a statement regarding reasons for termination of employment. Approved recommendations will be given in writing to the Executive Committee of the Policy Council. If approved, the Executive Committee will take the recommendation before the Policy Council for approval. If not approved by the Executive Committee, the recommendation will go back to Early Head Start Vice President for resolution.

Resolution Alternatives:

1. Begin process again, and select alternate candidates from interviews.
2. Interview additional candidates and begin process again.
3. Request to re-advertise.

Nutrition Committee: The Nutrition Committee's responsibilities include the reviewing monthly nutrition reports, providing input on the menu on an annual basis, and provide recommendations on initiatives that will promote healthy eating and lifestyle among children, families and staff.

Program and School Readiness Goals Committee: The Program and School Readiness Goals Committee will participate in the development of the 5-year Program and School Readiness Goals



Committee, review the progress of the goals on an annual basis, and provide feedback on the annual self-assessment plan and improvement plan.

Ad Hoc Committees: The Chairperson of the Policy Council shall create an Ad Hoc Committees as deemed necessary to promote the objectives of the Policy Council. Ad Hoc Committee, such as Evaluation Committee or Community Complaint Committee, may be established to set up lines of communication between parents and the community and to assist in the Program's objectives. Such Committees shall be terminated upon completion of their assigned tasks. The Chairperson shall be an ex-officio member of all Committees except for the Nominating Committee, if such a Committee is established, at any point in time.

Each alternate representative shall be given the opportunity to serve on at least one standing committee or subcommittee of the Policy Council.

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## ARTICLE XII COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION AND TRAINING

Opportunities will be provided for Policy Council members to participate in leadership skill trainings. The purpose of such action is to provide opportunities for skill development, participation in community-related activities, and support the decision-making process for the Policy Council.

- Section 1** An annual orientation on the Head Start Performance will be offered to Policy Council members. The training will occur in October.
- Section 2** An annual training on the applicable federal regulations and program policies and procedures related to eligibility determination. The training will occur in October.
- Section 3** An annual training on ethics and Sunshine Statutes, as defined in Florida Statutes, §§ 112.313, 112.3135, and 112.3143, will be offered to the Policy Council. The training will occur in January.

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## ARTICLE XIII AMENDMENTS

- Section 1** The Policy Council shall be guided by these by-laws for the conduct of its business and for carrying out the purpose of the Council.
- Section 2** These by-laws may be adopted and amended at any meeting of the Policy Council by a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of the members present, provided a quorum exists.
- Section 3** Notice of all proposed amendments shall be emailed to each Policy Council member at least five (5) days prior to the meeting where such amendments are to be considered for adoption.

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## ARTICLE XIV INTERNAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The Policy Council will adhere to the Internal Dispute Procedures outlined in the Program's Policies and Procedures for resolving internal disputes, including impasse procedures between the governing body and policy group. The Policy Council will adhere to the Program's Internal Dispute and Impasse Procedures between the governing board and the policy group.

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## ARTICLE XV RULES OF ORDER

The rules contained in "Robert's Rules of Order" shall govern the Policy Council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are consistent with the Policy Council By-laws.

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## ARTICLE XVI APPLICABILITY

Nothing in these By-laws may be constructed or applied in a manner to contravene applicable local, state, or federal funding source policies or laws.

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## ARTICLE XVII APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Policy Council must at a minimum approve or disapprove items specified in [Head Start Act Sec.642\(c\)\(2\)\(D\)](#).

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## ARTICLE XVIII CONSENT AGENDA

- Section 1** Routine, procedural, informational, and self-explanatory non-controversial items that require no discussion or debate may be grouped on the agenda under the title of Consent Agenda.
- Section 2** A Policy Council member may make a single motion to approve all of the items listed under the Consent Agenda after allowing members the opportunity to request that a specific item be moved to the full agenda for individual attention.
- Section 3** Documentation for consent items must be provided to the Policy Council prior to meetings so that members feel confident that their vote reflects attention to their duty of care.
- Section 4** Prior to voting, Policy Council members are encouraged to ask questions related to Consent Agenda items.
- Section 5** If, prior to voting, it is determined that an item on the Consent Agenda portion of the agenda actually requires an individual action, decision, or discussion that item should be removed from the Consent Agenda portion of the agenda and added to the full agenda.
- Section 6** Any Policy Council member can request that an item be moved to the full agenda.
- Section 7** A vote on the single motion applies to all the items on the Consent Agenda portion of the agenda.

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## ARTICLE XIX CONDUCT

The activities of the Policy Council shall be governed by the Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees, as defined in Florida Statutes, §§ 112.313, 112.3135, and 112.3143.

Policy Council members must conduct duties in a fair and ethical manner according to the code of conduct set below:

- Section 1** Decision Making
- May not accept gifts and/or gratuities that will influence the fair execution of duties and decisions.
  - Will support and participate in a teamwork approach to decision-making.
  - Will listen to all points of view before deciding, respect the comments made by all members, and represent the interests of the Early Head Start children.
- Section 2** Conduct
- 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.
  - Will conduct themselves in a respectful manner when addressing other Policy Council members, the Governing Board and staff of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe, childcare partner staff, families participating in the program, and when representing the Policy Council at other community organizations.

- 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, LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer), or disability.

**Section 3** Confidentiality/Sensitive items

- Must uphold confidentiality standards. Members will refrain from discussing individual and/or personal information regarding any child or family.
- Will respond to grievances or complaints by parents or the public by referring parties to the appropriate program staff.