

Parent Committee & Policy Council

Policy/Approach:

Southern Oregon Head Start (SOHS) is committed to fostering meaningful partnerships with families and elevating parent voice across all areas of the program. Each center will offer regular opportunities for families to connect with one another, engage in shared planning and feedback, and contribute to the overall culture and success of the center community. These gatherings are designed to build relationships, strengthen social connections, and create space for families to share their perspectives, needs, and ideas.

Head Start Performance Standards:

1301.3 Policy Council & Policy Committee

1301.4 Parent Committees

Definition & Structure:

Parent Committee is made up of parents and caregivers who choose to sign up or “opt in” at the start of the year, typically during Center Orientation, Family Day, or through conversations with staff.

Families who join the Parent Committee agree to:

- Receive a short monthly Parent Input Survey.
- Receive invitations to monthly check-in meetings with their Family Advocate, Policy Council Representative, and Site manager (attendance is **optional**).
- Support center events and activities when available (e.g., Family Days, classroom celebrations).

Note: Parents may remain on the Parent Committee even if they don’t attend meetings, as long as they are engaged via survey or center activities.

Policy Council Representative:

Each center will have a parent serving as their Policy Council Representative. If a parent is interested in serving as a Policy Council Representative for their center, they must connect with their Family Advocate for details on how they may be elected by their center peers. Most representatives will be elected at the first Parent Committee

meeting. However, if a vacancy occurs later in the year, the Family Advocate will coordinate an election process that allows center parents to vote for interested candidates.

Policy Council Representatives are expected to:

- Meet monthly with the Family Advocate and/or Site Manager and any Parent Committee members in attendance.
- Share highlights and updates from the most recent Policy Council meeting.
- Collect and represent parent feedback or concerns to be shared with the Policy Council or Family Services leadership.
- Serve as a communication bridge between families and agency leadership.

Procedure:

Family Advocate Responsibilities:

- Promote Parent Committee and Policy Council involvement at Orientation, family contacts (Home Visits, Conferences, etc.), or whenever relevant
- Maintain a Parent Committee contact list that includes names, contact info, and preferred meeting availability.
- Host the **first Parent Committee meeting at the start of the year** to:
 - Introduce center involvement opportunities.
 - Coordinate Policy Council elections.
 - Assign optional support roles for the upcoming Family Day (e.g., greeter, activity support, icebreaker lead).

Ongoing (Monthly) FA Responsibilities:

- Distribute the Family Services-provided **Parent Input Survey** to all Parent Committee members via email, Playground, or preferred communication.
- Post the survey for **all parents** via QR code or link near sign-in, bulletin boards, or parent areas.
- Conduct a Parent Committee meeting during the 4th week of each month. However, if a Family Day occurs during that month, the Family Day parent meeting may serve in place of the regular Parent Committee meeting—there is no need to hold both.

- Site managers are encouraged to participate in the parent committee meeting whenever possible.
- Parent Committee members should be invited, though their **attendance is optional**.
- Use a sign-in sheet or download virtual attendance for SHINE data entry. (*See documentation*)
- Recruit a Policy Council Representative if the seat is vacant (through posted flyers, newsletters, outreach, or invitations at committee meetings or Family Days).

Monthly Meeting Content:

Each **Parent Committee Meeting** (led or facilitated by the FA) will:

- Review and discuss parent survey responses.
- Identify emerging needs, trends, or parent concerns.
- Highlight any relevant family engagement updates or successes.
- Include **Policy Council Representative highlights** from the most recent meeting.
- Offer time to collaborate on planning upcoming events (e.g., Family Day, center or agency campaigns).
- Determine any feedback or questions to take back to Family Services leadership or Policy Council.

Ongoing Partnership:

Family Advocates will maintain ongoing communication with their center's Policy Council Representative to ensure two-way communication between the program and families. The FA is responsible for helping the PC Representative understand their role, stay informed about center updates, and prepare for monthly meetings.

Documentation:

- Have parents sign in on the 'Parent Meeting/Training Attendance Roster'
 - Mark 'Parent Committee Meeting', the date and the length of time of your meeting

- AA's will data enter attendance in the Family Tab under Family Engagement.
 - The engagement type is 'Parent Committee Meeting'.
 - In the description you will include the parents' name and the activity they participated in.
 - If more than one of the child's parents/guardians is on the Parent Committee, please do an individual entry for each parent when they participate.

Newsletters

Monthly family newsletters are an important communication tool used to keep all families informed, engaged, and connected to the program. Whether or not a family has opted into the Parent Committee, newsletters ensure they receive valuable updates and information, including—but not limited to—special events, classroom closures, parenting education, and highlights from Policy Council. These newsletters help promote transparency, build trust, and support a strong home-school connection for every family.

- Each family advocate is to create a monthly newsletter containing information specific to their center and community. Centers with multiple advocates may share or alternate the newsletter responsibility, or each Family Advocate may choose to do their own for their specific classrooms.
- An optional template will be available to FAs to utilize if needed
- Newsletters must be uploaded to center folders in the One Drive for approval by the deadline
- Newsletters must contain the following components:
 - Professional Appearance
 - Center News & Updates
 - Policy Council Updates
 - Teacher Talk/Site Manager Updates
 - Family Advocate News/ Resources
 - Non-Discrimination Statement
 - Parent Education Content (provided by Family Services)

Detailed guidance can be found on the Family Services Resources and Training Page:

[Family Services Resources & Training - Home](#)