Childcare Policy and Procedure

POLICY/APPROACH:

Parent involvement is an important part of Head Start/Early Head Start. Our programs encourage parents’ attendance at center parent committee meetings, Policy Council meetings, parenting classes and other such special events. We provide childcare at some events to help parents access these opportunities. The Head Start and Early Head Start program Directors determine when childcare will be made available. Childcare provided by the agency follows the state childcare regulations and supports a safe, quality experience for children.

Policy Council Approval 8/19/2014
Board Approval 8/21/2014

PROCEDURES:

Group Size and Staffing Requirements

Size of Care-giving Rooms:

The space(s) available for childcare is the first consideration.

Each room to be used for childcare must be evaluated in terms of the maximum number of children who may be cared for. Childcare regulations require a minimum of 35 square feet per child of usable space (space always available to children – does not include large permanent equipment, teachers’ desks). Figure out the maximum number of children by calculating: The number of usable square feet of space divided by 35 square feet. When there is more than one care-giving room available, separate younger and older age groups.

The room must also be evaluated for age-appropriate materials and equipment. Is it age-appropriate and safe for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and/or older children? Are there diaper changing areas and/or child bathrooms close by?

Group Size and Ratio of Staff to Children:

Childcare will adhere to the following state regulations for the number of children in any care-giving group, the age of the children, and the number of staff needed to care for them. After determining the maximum number of children the care-giving space can accommodate, the number of staff needed can be calculated by dividing the number of children by the ratio specified in the state regulations. The ratio of staff to children should be in accordance with the state childcare regulations.
accommodate, the following table will show the number of staff needed. The number of staff is based upon the age of the youngest child in the care-giving group.

Caregivers must include at least one employed SOCFC staff person. Other caregivers may include substitutes who are on the Criminal History Registry and have participated in training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Child</th>
<th>Minimum Number of Caregivers to Children</th>
<th>Maximum Number Children in a Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 weeks through 23 months</td>
<td>1 to 4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 months through 35 months</td>
<td>1 to 5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 months to Kindergarten</td>
<td>1 to 10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending Kindergarten and older</td>
<td>1 to 15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I. Communicating With Parents

Parents need to call and schedule their child(ren) for childcare in advance of the parent involvement event. Parents need to know that the numbers of children who can be cared for are limited and childcare will be provided on a first come first serve basis, as scheduled. Our agency needs to ensure that we provide children with quality childcare that meets state regulations and is within our program budgets.

Childcare is provided to enrolled Head Start/Early Head Start children and their siblings. It is not intended to provide childcare for Head Start/Early Head Start parents who are childcare providers for children of non-Head Start/Early Head Start families. If this poses a barrier for some parents to attend parent involvement events, staff can help problem-solve the issue with the parent to arrange for substitute care.

Parents, assisted by staff, must change the diapers of their own children during childcare according to the posted diapering procedures. Diapering areas must be cleaned by staff according to procedures after the childcare shift ends.

Babies in arms (non-mobile infants) must stay with parents.

II. Off-Site Child Care

Childcare should be provided at the Head Start/Early Head Start center whenever possible, as there is a close proximity to parents. However, circumstances sometimes arise that make it necessary to provide childcare off site. When these occur, center staff needs to contact their Site Manager to discuss the issues and determine the best option for providing childcare.

When childcare is provided off-site, the Site Manager prior to use must evaluate the location. In addition to all the guidelines above, the following guidelines also apply:

- A minimum of two staff is required, regardless of the number of children.
• Staff must have knowledge of the phone system, and ensure they have a means of contacting parents. If there is no phone system, a cell phone must be checked out for use during this time.
• Staff must know the evacuation/emergency system for the building.
• Staff must know where bathrooms are located.
• Staff must arrange for food and drinks for children.