

EARLY HEAD START TIP SHEET

No. 24

EHS Program Governance Structure, January 2005

What is the Head Start governance structure when the agency is:

- a. A grantee for EHS and a grantee for preschool Head Start?**
- b. An EHS grantee and a delegate agency for preschool Head Start?**
- c. A delegate for EHS and a delegate agency for a preschool Head Start?**

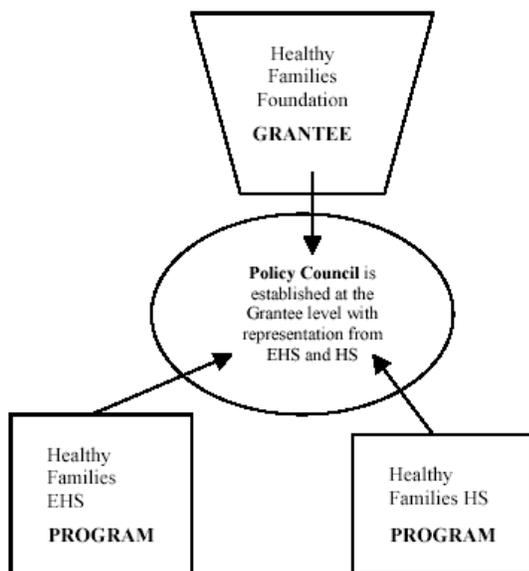
Response:

An agency has only **ONE governing body and ONE Head Start policy group**. The Head Start policy group is called a Policy Council at the Grantee level and a Policy Committee at the delegate level. The Policy Council and Policy Committee structure varies depending on whether the Early Head Start (EHS) program is a grantee or a delegate agency, and whether the agency has both preschool Head Start and EHS grants.

An agency that is the grantee for either an Early Head Start or a preschool Head Start program will have a Policy Council and an agency governing body. The grantee agency is the agency that receives the federal funding to operate a Head Start or EHS program. An agency that serves as a delegate of an EHS or preschool Head Start grantee is responsible for establishing a Policy Committee to work with the agency governing body. When an agency has **both** preschool Head Start and EHS funding, the agency has only one Head Start policy group.

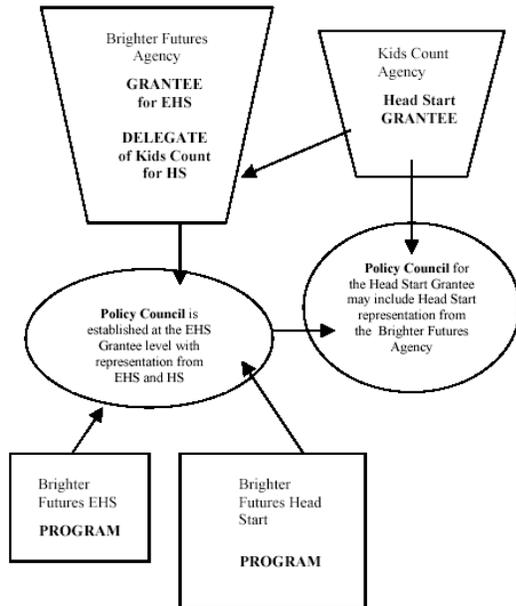
Three examples follow:

- a. An agency that is a grantee for both an EHS and a preschool Head Start program will have **one** Policy Council at the grantee level. Both EHS and preschool Head Start should have adequate representation on the Policy Council, which is determined at the local level. Both EHS and preschool Head Start should be fully represented, even if one program is larger than the other. Each program should also have Parent Committees at the local program level.



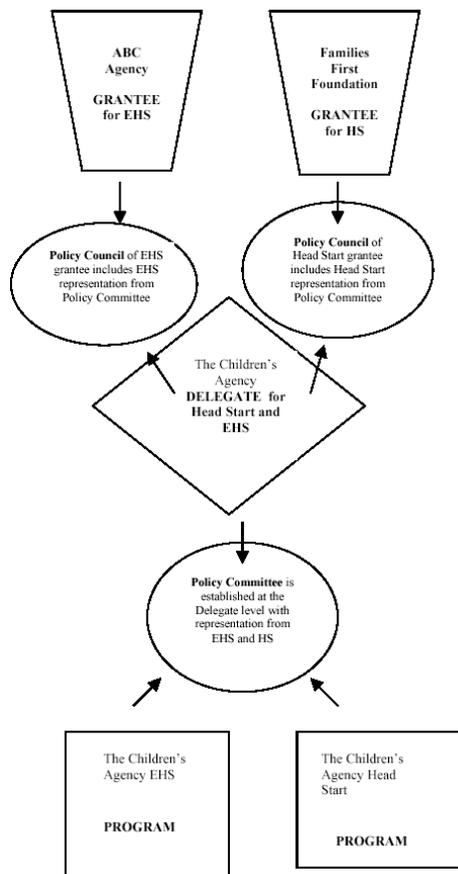
Example: The Healthy Families Foundation is a grantee for the Healthy Families EHS program and a grantee for the Healthy Families Head Start. The Healthy Families Foundation creates a Policy Council that shares decision-making with the governing body and equally represents the needs of the EHS and the preschool Head Start.

b. An agency that serves as a delegate to operate a preschool Head Start and a grantee to operate an EHS will have a Policy Council at the grantee level that represents both the Head Start (delegate) and EHS (grantee) programs. In this case, the delegate preschool Head Start program does not have a Policy Committee.



Example: The Brighter Futures Agency is the grantee for the Brighter Futures EHS and is also a delegate of the Kids Count Agency for Head Start. The Brighter Futures Agency creates a Policy Council with representation from the Brighter Futures EHS and the Brighter Futures Head Start. The Head Start program, although a delegate, will not have a Policy Committee because it will have adequate representation on the Policy Council created by the Brighter Futures Agency, which is the one Head Start policy group for the agency. In addition, the Brighter Futures Agency may send Head Start representation from their Policy Council to the Policy Council of the Kids Count agency, of which they are a preschool Head Start delegate.

c. If the agency is a delegate of a preschool Head Start grantee and a delegate of an EHS grantee, each grantee agency will have a Policy Council. The delegate agency will have one Policy Committee, which is the policy group at the delegate agency level, for EHS and preschool Head Start.



Example: The Children's Agency is both a delegate of the Families First Foundation to operate Head Start and a delegate of the ABC Agency for an EHS program. The Children's Agency will create a Policy Committee to function as the Head Start policy group for the agency, with adequate representation from both the Head Start and EHS programs. The Policy Committee will also provide appropriate representation to participate in Policy Councils of each grantee agency.

Questions to Consider for Planning and Programming:

- Do the Policy Council (at the grantee level) and the Policy Committee (at the delegate level) have the representation proportionate to the Early Head Start and preschool Head Start so that both programs have adequate representation?
- How do the Head Start Policy Council or Policy Committee relate to the Agency governing body?
- Do you discuss the opportunity for participating in policy groups and Parent Committees when you enroll families into the program?
- Do outgoing members of policy groups play an active role in recruiting and training new members?
- Do you have a procedure for replacing policy group members when they leave the program?
- For newly funded programs, have you formed an interim policy group with representation from eligible families that is involved in start-up planning and the hiring of staff?
- Does the agency governing body and policy group have the distinct membership and functions? Is there representation from the governing body participating in the policy group and like wise representation from the policy group on the governing body? Are they voting members or communication liaisons?

Performance Standards, Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations:

- 1304.50(a)(1)-(5) Policy Council, Policy Committee, and Parent Committee Structure.
(1)(i)-(iii) Grantee and delegate agencies must establish and maintain a formal structure of shared governance through which parents can participate in policy making or in other decisions about the program. This structure must consist of the following groups, as required:
 - (i) Policy Council. This Council must be established at the grantee level.
 - (ii) Policy Committee. This Committee must be established at the delegate agency level when the program is administered in whole or in part by such agencies (see 45 CFR 1301.2 for a definition of a delegate agency).
 - (iii) Parent Committee. For center-based programs, this Committee must be established at the center level. For other program options, an equivalent Committee must be established at the local program level. When programs operate more than one option from the same site, the Parent Committee membership is combined unless parents choose to have a separate Committee for each option.
- (2) Parent Committees must be comprised exclusively of the parents of children currently enrolled at the center level for center-based programs or at the equivalent level for other program options (see 45 CFR 1306.3(h) for a definition of a Head Start parent).
- (3) All Policy Councils, Policy Committees, and Parent Committees must be established as early in the program year as possible. Grantee Policy Councils and delegate Policy Committees may not be dissolved until successor Councils or Committees are elected and seated.
- (4) When a grantee has delegated the entire Head Start program to one delegate agency, it is not necessary to have a Policy Committee in addition to a grantee agency Policy Council.
- (5) The governing body (the group with legal and fiscal responsibility for administering the Early Head Start or Head Start program) and the Policy Council or Policy Committee must not have identical memberships and functions.
- 1304.50(b)(1)-(7) Policy group composition and formation.
 - (1) Each grantee and delegate agency governing body operating an Early Head Start or Head Start program must (except where such authority is ceded to the Policy Council or Policy Committee) propose, within the framework of these regulations, the total size of their

respective policy groups (based on the number of centers, classrooms, or other program option units, and the number of children served by their Early Head Start or Head Start program), the procedures for the election of parent members, and the procedure for the selection of community representatives. These proposals must be approved by the Policy Council or Policy Committee.

- (2) Policy Councils and Policy Committees must be comprised of two types of representatives: parents of currently enrolled children and community representatives. At least 51 percent of the members of these policy groups must be the parents of currently enrolled children (see 45 CFR 1306.3(h) for a definition of a Head Start parent).
- (3) Community representatives must be drawn from the local community: businesses; public or private community, civic, and professional organizations; and others who are familiar with resources and services for low-income children and families, including, for example, the parents of formerly enrolled children.
- (4) All parent members of Policy Councils or Policy Committees must stand for election or re-election annually. All community representatives also must be selected annually.
- (5) Policy Councils and Policy Committees must limit the number of one-year terms any individual may serve on either body to a combined total of three terms.
- (6) No grantee or delegate agency staff (or members of their immediate families) may serve on Policy Councils or Policy Committees except parents who occasionally substitute for regular Early Head Start or Head Start staff. In the case of Tribal grantees, this exclusion applies only to Tribal staff who work in areas directly related to or which directly impact upon any Early Head Start or Head Start administrative, fiscal or programmatic issues.
- (7) Parents of children currently enrolled in all program options must be proportionately represented on established policy groups.

Resources:

“Q&A on Program Governance.” *Head Start Bulletin*, 65: Family Involvement. DHHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB. (March 1999): 4–5.

45 CFR 1304.50 and Appendix A: Governance and Management Responsibilities. Program Performance Standards for the Operation of Head Start Programs by Grantee and Delegate Agencies. DHHS/ACF/OHS. 2006.

Linking Our Voices Facilitators Manual: A Training Program for Head Start Policy Councils [video]. DHHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB.1997.

Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community: Fostering Program Governance. DHHS/ACF/OHS. 2007.

- **Fostering Program Governance: Overview.**

National Satellite Broadcast and Webcast: Head Start Program Governance. DHHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB. September 17, 2004.

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This Tip Sheet is not a regulatory document. Its intent is to provide a basis for dialogue, clarification, and problem solving among Office of Head Start, Regional Offices, TA consultants, and grantees. If you need further clarification on Head Start Policies and regulations, please contact your Regional Program Specialist.