

14g. Parent Center Committee Guidelines

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The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary/Historian should be elected by the entire parent group at the **First** Parent Center Committee Meeting of the year.

No staff member or relative of a staff member may be elected as a Parent Center Committee and/or Policy Council member. When a Parent Center Committee and/or Policy Council member accepts a temporary or permanent position with the program they shall resign from their position prior to beginning employment.

All staff, parents and community are welcome to attend Parent Center Committee and Policy Council.

Chairperson is responsible for the following:

- Leads the meeting
- Appoints a timekeeper to help keep the meeting on time
- Makes sure everyone gets a chance to speak
- Calls the meeting to order and formally closes the meeting when the time is up
- Reviews any item that is going to need a vote prior to calling for a vote
- Meets with other Officers, Class Representative(s), and Family Advocate prior to the Parent Center Committee meeting to set up the agenda
- Does **not** vote unless there is a tie. Only then may he/she vote to break a tie
- Gets in touch with all Committee Chairs (if there are any) to get the Agenda organized, as each Committee Chair will make a brief report each month.

Facilitation involves:

- Preparing the Agenda
- Starting the meeting on time
- Keeping the group on topic and on time
- Being aware of the group dynamic/mood/needs
- Helping everyone participate democratically
 - Making sure there is agreement about the decision-making method
 - Calling on people
- Encouraging quiet people to talk
- Discouraging domination by a few people
- Checking for clarity of communication - "I think I hear you saying..."
- Summarizing progress of the meeting from time to time
- Moving the group to the point of decision

- Getting clarity about responsibilities: Task check

Note: The **whole group** should learn to accept responsibility for the conduct of the meeting and for helping the facilitator. This means individual self-discipline. It also means people should be willing to point out when the group is digressing or to make process suggestions. In addition, be aware that deep involvement in the issue at hand, especially if it is controversial, is incompatible with good, fair facilitation. The facilitator can ask someone else to facilitate temporarily when too personally involved in the issue being discussed.

Vice-Chairperson is responsible for the following:

- Should understand the job of the Chairperson
- If Chairperson is ill and/or cannot attend a meeting, then the Vice-Chairperson leads the meeting # If Chairperson resigns, Vice-Chairperson takes over as Chairperson, and a new Vice- Chairperson is elected
- Assists with the development of the agenda
- Assists Chairperson as needed
- Attends monthly Parent Center Committee meeting

Note: The Vice-Chairperson position is a good starting place for someone new at it; helps prepare Agenda. Can be timekeeper, can be observer (watching how people are responding/participating, pointing out need to hear from some who haven't spoken), and may become facilitator for next meeting.

Secretary is responsible for the following:

- Notes who attends the meetings and gives the Family Advocate a list of all attendees
- Writes down what happens at each meeting (in brief) and keeps a copy of these minutes in the Center Notebook so that any parent can take a look at the Minutes Book
- Shall write up the minutes or type them within 5 days of the monthly meeting and post them on the Classroom Parent Board
- Shall have copies of any documents or forms used for Head Start / EHS / ECEAP parent activities

Timekeeper is responsible for the following:

- Makes sure the Chairperson is running the meeting in a timely fashion and ends on time
- There can be a different person being the timekeeper at each meeting.

Committees

- Sub-Committees may be developed as needed. A Chairperson of each sub-committee should make a report at the Parent Center Committee meeting.

Key Ingredients for a Good Meeting

- Advance preparation is very helpful
- Important to have a blackboard or flip chart where all can see

- Key questions agenda planners face:
 - What are the goals of the particular meeting?
 - Where do we need to be at its conclusion - what decisions must be made at this meeting?