



Parent Committee

WHAT IS IT?

Parents can work together to decide what kind of education and learning experiences they want their children to have in Head Start. The Parent Committee consists of ALL parents of those children enrolled in Early Head Start or Head Start.

One of the purposes of parent involvement is to assist in the development of the program. For this to happen, parents and staff must meet regularly. Meetings are held at a time and place that is convenient to the greatest number of parents. Parent Committee meetings are friendly and informal, often refreshments are served and child care is usually available. This helps people come up with good ideas for the program. Electing a group of officers is optional; however, a treasurer should be identified if activity funds are to be collected.

In most programs, Parent Committees elect parent representatives to the Policy Council. This provides support to the Parent Committee in two ways. First, the parents tell the representative their ideas on matters coming before the Policy Council. Second, parents may ask their representative(s) to report on meetings of the Policy Council.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

The Head Start guidelines list four functions of a Parent Committee. More may be negotiated if all parties agree. The guidelines state that the Parent Committee:

- a) **Assists teacher, director and all other persons responsible for the development and operation of every component including curriculum in the program.** Parents and staff should work together in deciding both the general goals and also the day to day activities for the children. Parents contribute knowledge of their own children and their needs, while staff provides their education, training and experience working within the program. The final decisions should be made by parents and staff working together.
- b) **Works closely with classroom teachers and all other component staff to carry out the daily activities program.** It should be made clear that this is not a requirement that parents help in the center for their children to be enrolled. However, staff and parents should work together so that parents may participate in the daily activities to the greatest extent possible.
- c) **Plans, conducts and participates in informal as well as formal programs, activities and all fundraising events for center parents and staff.** The Parent Committee may want to work together on community activities or problems such as health, housing, youth involvement, etc. There may be other programs and activities which the Parent Committee may want to sponsor for them and the staff.
- d) **Participates in recruiting and screening of center employees within guidelines established by the Grantee and the Delegate Agency.** To do this, parents will need to study the hiring guidelines and procedures.