

Minutes
Douglas-Cherokee Head Start/Early Head Start
Policy Council
December 5, 2024

Members Present

Casey Brown	Jaimaine McNamara
Scharanda Brock	Tina Patterson
Sheri Arden	Molly Scaff
Jamie Jackson	Danielle Smikle
Tamra Williamson	Carla Testerman
Jessicia Walker	Krista Warner
Patrick Tackett	Melissa Logan

Members Not Present

Stacey Inman	Cheyenne Wright
Amber Capps	Candiacie Winstead
Jessicia Burnett	Garnet Sutherland
Kelly Ritenour	

Employees Present

Melody Cantrell	Amber Brobeck
Kristie Woolard	Ginny Ritchea
Haley Moore	Curt Amos
Emily Kelley	Janice Taylor

Guests Present

Kim Paxton

Douglas-Cherokee Head Start/Early Head Start held a Policy Council Meeting on December 5, 2024, at Shoney's, located at 120 Sharon Dr. Dandridge, TN 37725.

Jessicia Walker, Policy Council Vice Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM and announced that we had a quorum.

Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement Manager, presented Mindful Moments and spoke about the importance of loving others and loving ourselves.

Emily Kelley, Assistant Director, provided the Literacy Reading with the book, *The Cool Bean* by Jory John and Pete Oswald.

Kim Paxton, DCEA Community Services Director, presented the DCEA Program Spotlight. She shared information about the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP),

Neighborhood Services, and the new Families First SOAR program. Handouts were provided to all members. For more information email Kim at kpaxton@douglascherokee.org.

Kristie announced that there are no new Policy Council members.

Jessica asked for the approval of the November 7, 2024, Policy Council meeting minutes. The minutes are available to all Policy Council members on the website. Molly Scaff, Monroe County, made the motion for approval and Jamie Jackson, Cocke County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Casey Brown, Secretary, announced that the Personnel Committee met, ratified, and approved all hiring decisions. Jessica asked for a second. Jamie Jackson, Cocke County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Krista Warner, Treasurer, announced that the Finance Committee met and approved all budget and finance reports. Jessica asked for a second. Scharanda Brock, Blount County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Tamra Williamson, Community Representative from Cocke County, presented the Community Spotlight. Tamra provided handouts about the Community Health Access and Navigation in Tennessee (CHANT), Children's Special Services, and Care Coordination programs provided by the Tennessee Health Department. For more information email Tamra at Tamra.Williamson@tn.gov.

Amber Brobeck, Curriculum and Assessment Manager, presented the Head Start Outcomes report for Fall 2024 and the School Readiness Goals.

- Literacy and Math continue to have the highest percentages of children falling below expectations.

Amber gave a brief update and overview of the Early Head Start program.

- There are 9 classrooms in Hamblen County.
- There are 3 infant rooms and 6 toddler rooms.

Curt Amos, Program Director, presented the Director's Report.

- Our Grant Specialist told the program that we may have money to spend (approx. 677K) that was left over from previous funding periods. We are asking for approval to use the money if there is money.
- Melody spoke about the Laura J. Kress Angel Tree Grant.
 - We were awarded \$8,000 to purchase Christmas wish list items for Head Start/ Early Head Start children in Cocke, Hamblen, Grainger, and Union Counties.
 - We were able to allocate \$34 per child and sponsored 235 children with this money, because some of the classrooms in the counties had private sponsors.
- Due to the Fire Marshal violations at the New Providence Head Start site, we will relocate this classroom to the new Marville 5 Head Start classroom by January.
- The old Wearwood Head Start modular was appraised and the quote to move the modular is more than the modular is worth. We have reached out to the Head Start Regional Office

for guidance. We are asking for approval to donate the modular to the Wearwood Elementary School if the Head Start Regional Office gives us approval.

- Program plans for the 25-26 year include permanently closing the Underwood Center, Ray's Place preschool classroom, and North Hamblen 1 and 2. Other plans include converting EHS West 8 toddler room into an infant room and opening an infant room in the Ray's Place preschool room. We are asking for approval to make these changes for the 25-26 program year.

Jessica asked for approval of the Director's Report and all approval requests. Scharanda Brock, Blount County, made the motion for approval and Jaimaine McNamara, Jefferson County seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Curt followed up with the old business regarding the proposed Policy Council By-Laws changes.

- The proposed changes were presented to the Policy Council at the November meeting.
- Proposed changes included reducing the number of parent representatives to one per county, except for Hamblen. Hamblen would have two parent representatives; one to represent Head Start and one to represent Early Head Start.
- Another proposed change is to omit the Personal and Finance Committees and present the information to the entire Policy Council group.

Jessica asked for approval to make the proposed Policy Council By-Laws changes. Jaimaine McNamara, Jefferson County, made the motion for approval and Jamie Jackson, Cocke County seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Kristie presented county reports on Cocke, Hamblen, and Grainger Counties. Kristie also presented the MVP awards for the classrooms with the most volunteer hours for October.

- Blount Maryville 4
- Cocke Northwest
- Grainger Rutledge
- Hamblen Learning Center 2/Early Head Start 1
- Jefferson Cherokee
- Monroe Mount Vernon 1
- Sevier Harrisburg
- Union Cross Creek

Jessica asked for approval to adjourn the meeting. Scharanda Brock, Blount County, made the motion for approval and Krista Warner, Sevier County seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:33 PM.

Casey Brown, Secretary

**Douglas-Cherokee Head Start
Policy Council Officers and Committee Members
2024-2025**

Policy Council Officers

Chairperson: Candiace Winstead
Vice Chair: Jessica Walker
Secretary: Casey Brown
Treasurer: Krista Warner

Personnel Committee

Blount County	Casey Brown
Cocke County	Jamie Jackson
Grainger County	Candiace Winstead
Hamblen County (FDY)	Amber Capps
Jefferson County	Jaimaine McNamara
Monroe County	Molly Scaff
Sevier County	Danielle Smikle
Union County	Cheyenne Wright

Finance Committee

Blount County	Scharanda Brock
Cocke County	Stacey Inman
Hamblen County	Patrick Tackett
Hamblen County	Jessica Walker
Sevier County	Krista Warner

Douglas-Cherokee Head Start/Early Head Start

Policy Council Members

2024-2025

Blount County

Casey Brown – Personnel
Scharanda Brock – Finance
Sheri Arden – Community Rep (5)

Cocke County

Jamie Jackson – Personnel
Stacey Inman – Finance
Tamra Williamson – Community Rep (2)

Grainger County

Candice Winstead – Personnel
– Community Rep

Hamblen County

Amber Capps (FDY) – Personnel
Patrick Tackett - Finance
Jessica Walker – Finance
Carla Testerman – Community Rep (2)

Jefferson County

Jaimaine McNamara – Personnel
Tina Patterson – Community Rep (2)

Monroe County

Molly Scaff – Personnel
Jessica Burnett – Community Rep (2)

Sevier County

Danielle Smikle – Personnel
Krista Warner – Finance
Kelly Ritenour – Community Rep

Union County

Cheyenne Wright – Personnel
Melissa Logan – Community Rep

Douglas Cherokee Head Start/Early Head Start Year 2025-2026 Selection Criteria

Date Given to Policy Council for Input _____
Date Approved by Policy Council _____
Policy Council Chairperson _____
Executive Director _____
DCEA Board Chairperson _____

The Douglas Cherokee Head Start/Early Head Start Program has an active recruitment process designed to seek out and enroll disadvantaged preschool children who are in need of comprehensive services. No child will be denied enrollment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, or disability.

The selection criteria will take into account a careful analysis of the family situation as a whole. Children will be served according to the availability of appropriate slots; the demographic make up of the community as addressed in the Community Assessments; family income; parent status; the needs of the children and families; children with disabilities; and the appropriate age of children.

Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council will have input in the development of the priority criteria and give final approval for its use in the selection of children when more children are recruited than slots are available.

The eligibility priority will be determined using the following categories and points (pts):

1. Parent Status:

- foster parent - 90 pts
- kinship care - 90 pts
- homeless - 90 pts
- teen parent - 80 pts
- guardian other than natural parents - 80 pts
- one parent - 75 pts
- two parents - 60 pts

2. Disability:

- confirmed - 90 pts
- suspected - 30 pts
- low developmental score -20 pts (screened by health dept. or school system)
- non-disabled - 00 pts

3. Eligibility Categories:

- Homeless Eligibility – 110 pts
- Foster Care Eligibility - 110 pts
- Kinship care – 110 pts
- TANF Eligibility – 100 pts
- SSI Eligibility – 100 pts
- SNAP – 100 pts

- 75% to 100% below – 90 pts
- 50% to 74% below – 80 pts
- 25% to 49% below – 75 pts
- 0% to 24% below – 70 pts
- Over-income (101-130%) - 25 pts
- Over-income (131% and Above) – 00 pts

4. Social Service Needs:

- combination of two factors - 90 pts
- protective services - 80 pts
- high social service need - 70 pts
- high risk - 50 pts
- referral from other agency/professional - 40 pts
- family crisis - 30 pts
- health problem - 20 pts

5. Age - Early Head Start:

- Returnee 250 pts
- 1st Trimester - 80 pts
- 2nd Trimester - 70 pts
- 3rd Trimester - 60 pts
- Child is 6 weeks to 11 months - 50 pts
- Child is 12 months to 23 months - 40 pts
- Child is 24 months to 29 months - 30 pts
- Child is 30 months to 36 months - 20 pts

6. High Priority:

- Combination of 2 or more below scoring items – 80 pts
- Homeless - 40 pts
- Foster Care - 40 pts
- Kinship Care – 40 pts
- Applying for Pregnant Mommy slot – 40 pts
- Current Incarceration of parent/legal guardian – 40pts
- None – 00

7. Extended Duration Classrooms:

- Single Parent working or attending school – 30 pts
- Two Parents – both working or attending school – 20 pts

8. State of Emergency:

- Explanation of Cause – 40 pts

Head Start Age Eligibility

Performance Standards Section 1302.12(b)(2) states: "For Head Start, a child must be at least three years old, or turn three years old by the date used to determine eligibility for public school in the community in which the Head Start Program is located". Therefore, children who are three years of age upon entry into the program, or will be three by the school cut-off date, may be enrolled in Head Start.

Kindergarten is mandatory in the State of Tennessee and a child must have kindergarten experience in a school approved by the Department of Education to qualify for entrance to the first grade. Children who are of kindergarten age by the school cut-off date are not eligible to remain in Head Start. Douglas Cherokee Head Start will serve children from three years to compulsory school age although efforts will focus primarily on four-year-old children.

Early Head Start

Douglas Cherokee Early Head Start provides family-centered services for low-income families with very young children designed to promote the development of the children, and to enable their parents to fulfill their roles as parents and to move toward self-sufficiency.

Early Head Start accepts applications for possible enrollment of prenatal women and children from birth through 36 months of age. When feasible, the following ages and slots will be maintained in order to (1) facilitate individual child transitions into, through, and out of the program (PS 1302.7(c); (2) to meet Tennessee Department of Child Care Licensure Rules and Regulations regarding multi-age group size and adult: child ratio for child care centers serving pre-school children (1240-4-3-.07); and (3) to meet Head Start Performance Standards regarding the use of age as part of the selection criteria (PS 1302.14(a)).

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Number of Slots</u>
Prenatal – 23 months	32
24 months – 36 months	40

Eligible Children

Performance Standards Section 1302.12(c)(2) states: "a program may enroll a child who would benefit from services, provide that these participants only make up to 10 percent of a program's enrollment".

Administration for Children and Families recognizes that an increasing number of Head Start families are returning to work and there are, in some communities, fewer families with incomes below the poverty line. The Head Start Act of 2007 (Section 645(a)) provides several ways in which families can be deemed eligible for HS/EHS:

- Families that have annual incomes that fall within the Federal Poverty Guidelines
- Families that are determined homeless according to the McKinney Vento Act definition
- Children that are in a foster care or a kinship placement
- Families that are receiving on-going TANF benefits which is Families First benefits through The Department of Human Services
- Families that are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Ten Percent (10%) Over

Ten percent (10%) of the children Douglas Cherokee Head Start/Early Head Start serves may be from families with incomes above the poverty line. The ten percent (10%) over-income allowance may be used to enroll over-income children who could benefit from the HS/EHS services such as:

1. Disabled and high risk children
2. Single parent/working parent
3. Children of HS/EHS staff, who because of their employment with Head Start are now income ineligible
4. Children of families who are just above the poverty guidelines (e.g. grandparents, aunts and other relatives raising the child, parents who are working in need of full day care).
5. Reenrolling over income children. The program will use discretion in these situations.

Thirty-five Percent (35%) Poverty Line to 130% (WE DO NOT USE THIS)

Following the new guidelines set forth in the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, additional children may be served under Head Start guidelines and be considered income eligible. The program must serve all the homeless families and all the income eligible children less than 100% of the poverty guidelines that they are aware of in the service area. If the children that meet the aforementioned guidelines are shown to be exhausted through our continuous recruitment efforts, our program may then serve up to 35% of enrollment with the population that falls within the 100% to 130% range of the poverty guidelines. This is in addition to the 10% we are able to serve that exceed the income guidelines. All funded slots will be filled from the application list according to the current federal regulation guidelines with no more than 35% from 101% to 130% of poverty level, no less than 10% children with disabilities and no greater than 10% children from over-income families.

Selecting Children with Disabilities

Since Head Start was established in 1965, and Early Head Start in 1995, it has become a national leader in providing services to young children with disabilities and their families. Developmentally appropriate programming and inclusionary classrooms makes HS/EHS an attractive placement for preschool children with disabilities.

In recognition of the value and worth of all children, HS/EHS requires inclusion of children with disabilities.

The Head Start Act of 2007 requires that no less than 10% of the total number of children enrolled are children with a certified disability.

Children with disabilities must have a professional diagnosis of any of the following:

- Visual Impairment or Blind
- Hearing Impaired or Deaf
- Health Impairment (impacting normal development)
- Autism
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Speech/Language Impairment
- Learning Disability
- Developmental Impairment

Children with disabilities are defined as those children who are eligible for services under state regulations governing Part B & C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

(IDEA). IDEA is a Federal law that is implemented at the State and local levels to provide screening, assessment and, for eligible children, early intervention services based on Individualized Family Service Plans

(IFSP) for infants and toddlers and Individualized Education Plans (IEP) for pre-school age children. Children with disabilities requiring special education or related services (as determined by a multidisciplinary team), the local Education Agency (LEA) must be assured of a free and appropriate public education beginning with that child's third birthday. Since the LEA is obligated to assure special education for children with disabilities upon their third birthday, their eligibility for public education begins on that date.

If an eligible child with disabilities is three years of age, and is therefore eligible for special education and related services under IDEA, the Head Start Program may enroll that child if his/her third birthday does not occur by the cutoff date which the school system uses to determine eligibility for its regular public school program.

Therefore, these children should be considered age-eligible for Head Start as of their third birthday. To enroll children in this situation, the Head Start Program will acquire the evaluation team's findings which indicate that this child has a disability for which special education/related services are needed before enrolling. The recruitment of children with disabilities will be a part of the entire recruitment enrollment process.

Once HS/EHS has reached the 10% of its enrollment of children with disabilities, children who have a disability and non-disabled children will compete equally for the available enrollment opportunities according to priority points without counting the points for a disability.

Families Income Verified

Families income shall be verified and a signed statement by an employee of Douglas Cherokee HS/EHS, identifying which document was examined and stating that the child is eligible to participate in the program, shall be maintained to indicate that verification has been made. Once a child is determined eligible for, and enrolled in, HS/EHS, that child remains eligible for the remainder of that program year and for the subsequent program year.

Returning Children

Families with a child returning to the program for a second year, enrollment information will be reviewed and revised, as necessary. Income of returning families will not be re-verified the second year. When a child transitions from Early Head Start to Head Start, the income of the family must be re-verified.

Whenever possible, we will ensure a child who has been enrolled in Early Head Start will receive Head Start services until enrolled in school.

If a child is enrolled as income ineligible but due to age could return for another year, that child will receive returning points in the age category and an enrollment slot will be available (as part of the 10% over income) to ensure continued school readiness for the child and family.