

Minutes
Douglas-Cherokee Head Start/Early Head Start
Policy Council
September 4, 2025

Members Present

Casey Brown	Ashley Johnson
Anna Uptain	Kayla Murrell
Jennifer Jones	Melissa Logan
Tamra Williamson	Jennifer Wright
Misti Eubanks	Tina Patterson
Tina Layman	

Members Not Present

Tammy Spears	Gloria Flores
Carla Castaneda	Clara Testerman

Employees Present

Melody Cantrell	Curt Amos
Kristie Woolard	Ginny Ritchea
Emily Kelley	

Guests Present

Haley Moore

Douglas-Cherokee Head Start/Early Head Start held a Policy Council Meeting on September 4, 2025, at Shoney's, located at 120 Sharon Dr. Dandridge, TN 37725.

Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement/Health and Nutrition Manager, called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM and announced that we had a quorum.

Kristie introduced Mindful Moments and discussed being in the moment and being present.

Emily Kelley, Assistant Director, provided the Literacy reading with the book, *Bad Apple* by Edward Hemingway.

Haley Moore, Assistant Fiscal Officer, presented the DCEA Program Spotlight. She shared information about the agency, the programs, and current employment perks.

Kristie provided Parliamentary Procedure training for all members and staff present.

Kristie explained the Policy Council election process to elect the community representatives and parents from each county. Kristie asked for the approval of all current Policy Council Members and Community Representatives elected. Jennifer Jones, Cocke County, made the motion for approval and Casey Brown, Blount County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Kristie explained the role of the Policy Council officers. She called for an election of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer for Policy Council. Jennifer Jones, Cocke County, volunteered to be the Chairperson. Jennifer Wright, Jefferson County, volunteered to be the Vice Chairperson. Casey Brown, Blount County, volunteered to be the Secretary. Misti Eubanks, Grainger County, was nominated for Treasurer. Kristie called for a vote to approve the new Policy Council officers. Ashley Johnson, Monroe County, made the motion for approval and Tina Patterson, Jefferson County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Curt Amos, Program Director, initiated introductions of the program staff in attendance at the meeting. A directory of all program staff was provided to members. Curt asked for a motion to approve program staff to attend Policy Council meetings. Ashley Johnson, Monroe County, made the motion for approval and Jennifer Jones, Cocke County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Kristie asked for approval of the Policy Council minutes from April 2025. Misti Eubanks, Grainger County, made the motion for approval and Tamara Williamson, Cocke County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Member Orientation: Policies and procedures were reviewed with Policy Council

- Review Agency's Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest: Kristie Woolard
- Parent/Community Grievance Procedures: Kristie Woolard
- Policies for Reimbursement and Participation in Policy Council Activities: Kristie Woolard
 - Mileage
- Vendor list, Budget Overview and Reporting: Melody Cantrell, Finance Manager
 - A packet of information was given out to members and was uploaded to website.
- Parent Activity Fund Orientation/Disbursements: Melody Cantrell
 - The parents get to decide on an activity during the Parent Committee Meetings.
 - Each classroom is allotted \$10.00 per child.
- Personnel Overview and Reporting: Ginny Ritchea, HR Manager
 - Ginny discussed personnel policies and decisions regarding employment of staff.
 - An explanation of the Leave Without Pay disciplinary process was provided.
 - Ginny reviewed the Standards of Conduct for staff, contractors, and volunteers.
 - The criteria for the employment and dismissal of staff was discussed.
- Governance Training: Curt Amos
 - Curt explained the Head Start laws and regulations, plans, goals, and reports.
 - Parent involvement in supporting program operations was discussed.
 - An overview of the program's complaint procedures was reviewed.

Kristie explained that the Policy Council has a digital notebook that is used to provide information located on the program website, dceaheadstart.org. Kristie asked for a motion to approve the Policy Council notebook. Ashley Johnson, Monroe County, made the motion for approval and Melissa Logan, Union County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Kristie reviewed the Policy Council Bylaws. The Bylaws were updated and approved last program year. There are no changes to the Bylaws. Kristie asked for a motion to approve the Policy Council Bylaws. Tina Patterson, Jefferson County, made the motion for approval and Misti Eubanks, Grainger County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

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

- The report was uploaded to the website for Policy Council to review before the meeting.
- Change of Scope Update
 - We received feedback from OHS on August 29.
 - The Change of Scope has been sent to Washington, D.C. for final approval.
 - We are waiting for approval.
- Area of non-compliance OHS
 - A brief overview of the incident was provided to the Council.
 - A final program meeting to discuss the evidence of correction will take place in September.
- Our program will have an emphasized focus on improving child attendance this year.
 - We have made improving child attendance a program goal.
- Anonymous complaint received though DHHS, Inspector General, Commissioner, OHS
 - OHS advised us not to take any action at this time.
- Action Items for approval
 - Approve Policy Council Representation on the DCEA Board
 - Approve Annual Public Report
 - Overview of report provided by Emily Kelley.
 - Each member received a copy of the report, and the report was uploaded to the website for Policy Council to review prior to the meeting.
 - Approve Program Information Report
 - Report summary was discussed and uploaded to website for Policy Council to view prior to meeting.
 - Approval to apply for Laura J. Kress Angel Tree Grant
 - The grant was discussed by Melody Cantrell and Emily Kelley.
 - This grant is only for Cocke, Grainger, Hamblen, and Union Counties in our service area.
 - We can apply for up to \$10,000 to purchase Christmas gifts that the children in our program have "wished for".

Kristie asked for a motion to approve the Director's Report and all action items. Ashley Johnson, Monroe County, made the motion for approval and Tina Patterson, Jefferson County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Kristie asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Melissa Logan, Union County, made the motion and Tina Patterson, Jefferson County, seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 12:37 PM.

Casey Brown, Secretary

Douglas-Cherokee Head Start/Early Head Start

Policy Council Members

2025-2026

Blount County

Casey Brown

Anna Uptain – Community Rep

Cocke County

Jennifer Jones

Tamra Williamson – Community Rep (3)

Grainger County

Misti Eubanks

Tina Layman – Community Rep

Hamblen County

Gloria Flores (FDFY)

Carla Castaneda

Carla Testerman – Community Rep (3)

Jefferson County

Jennifer Wright

Tina Patterson – Community Rep (3)

Monroe County

Ashley Johnson

– Community Rep

Sevier County

Tammy Spears

– Community Rep

Union County

Kayla Murrell – Personnel

Melissa Logan – Community Rep (2)

**Douglas-Cherokee Head Start
Policy Council Officers and Committee Members
2025-2026**

Policy Council Officers

Chairperson: Jennifer Jones
Vice Chair: Jennifer Wright
Secretary: Casey Brown
Treasurer: Misti Eubanks

ACTIVE PARENTING First Five Years™

PARENT'S GUIDE

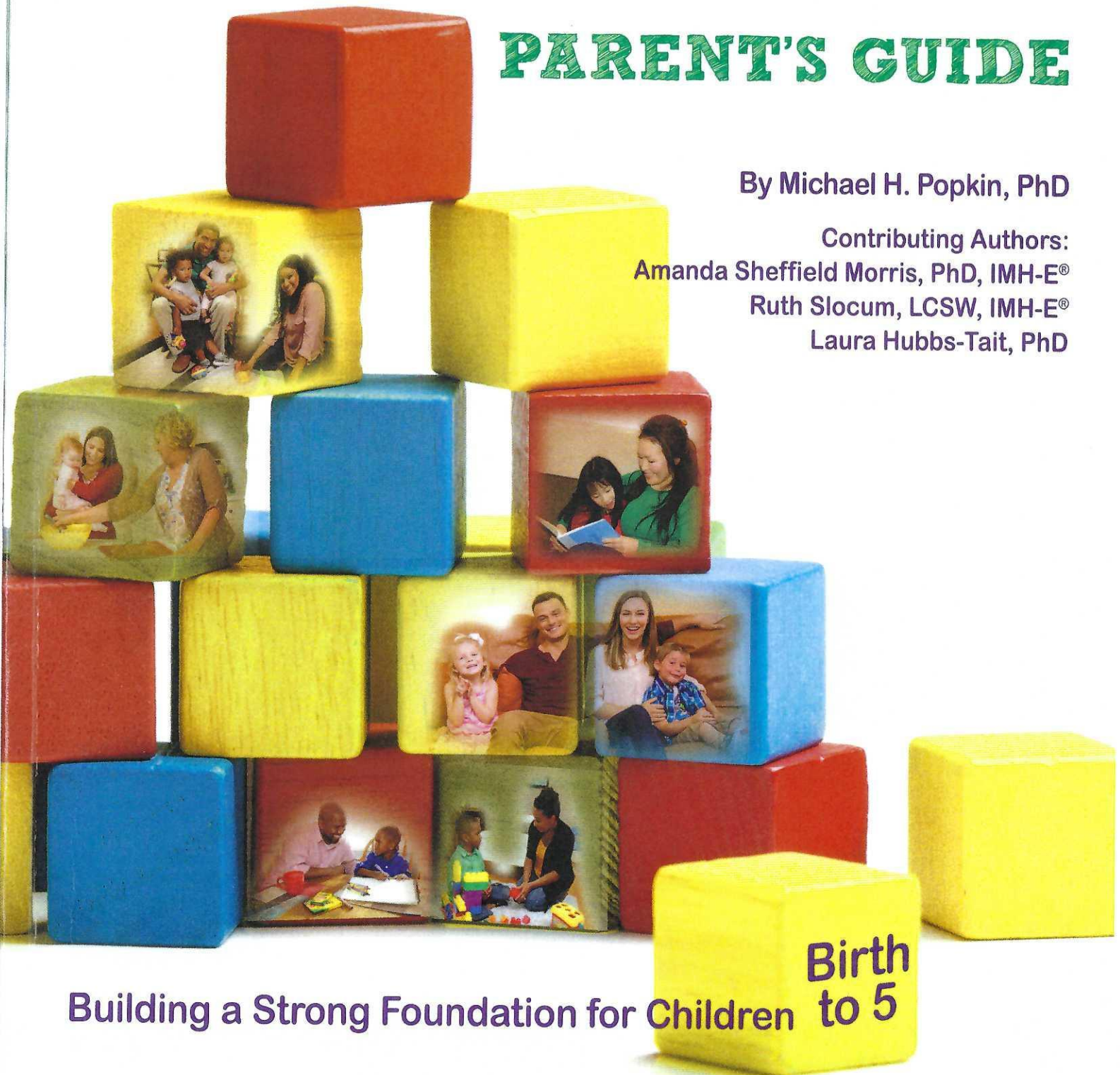
By Michael H. Popkin, PhD

Contributing Authors:

Amanda Sheffield Morris, PhD, IMH-E®

Ruth Slocum, LCSW, IMH-E®

Laura Hubbs-Tait, PhD



Building a Strong Foundation for Children

Birth
to 5

Help for Every Step of the Way from Birth to Age 5

Your child's first years are so important! This book will help you make the most of them. Written by one of the nation's foremost parenting experts, Dr. Michael H. Popkin, in collaboration with university child development specialists, *Active Parenting: First Five Years* will help you nurture your child with a "just right" combination of freedom and nonviolent discipline.

You'll learn about:

- what a baby's cry means.
- your child's growing brain.
- preventing tantrums and other problems.
- building a loving bond.
- caring for your child at different ages and stages.
- using mindfulness to keep your cool.
- 6 ways to prepare your child for school success.

...and so much more! This guide teaches practical parenting skills that really work. Since 1983, Active Parenting has helped over four million parents raise responsible, courageous children who thrive.

MICHAEL H. POPKIN, PhD, founder and president of Active Parenting Publishers, is the pioneer of video-based parenting education and author of over twenty books and video programs. He lives in Atlanta with his wife, Melody, with whom he actively parented their two (now grown) children, Megan and Ben.

AMANDA SHEFFIELD MORRIS, PhD, IMH-E® is a professor of developmental science and the George Kaiser Family Foundation Endowed Chair in Child Development at Oklahoma State University.

RUTH SLOCUM, LCSW, IMH-E® is a family therapist specializing in infant and early childhood mental health. She is the Mental Health Manager for the Tulsa Children's Project at Oklahoma State University and oversees the Mental Health Consultation for Tulsa Educare.

LAURA HUBBS-TAIT, PhD, is a Regents Professor at Oklahoma State University in the Department of Human Development and Family Science, where she has taught since 1992. She is a Parenting Specialist for Oklahoma Cooperative Extension.



This book can be used with the *Active Parenting: First Five Years* video and discussion program.

Check our web site for many helpful books and videos, advice from Dr. Popkin, and a list of *Active Parenting: First Five Years* groups in your area. Just go to www.ActiveParenting.com/FFY.

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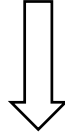
ISBN: 978-1-59723-343-9



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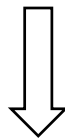
The Head Start Act

Head Start began as a summer program in 1965 as an effort to break the cycle of poverty by meeting the social, health, nutritional, and psychological needs of low-income children ages 3-5 and their families. Early Head Start was first funded in 1995 for pregnant women, infants, and toddlers up to age three (last reauthorized in 2007)



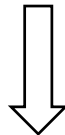
Performance Standards

The federal regulations are the minimum requirements for the entire range of Head Start and Early Head Start services. They serve as the foundation for Head Start's mission to deliver comprehensive, high-quality services in supporting school readiness of children and families (updated in 2016).



Written Plans

This is how our program plans to meet and/or exceed requirements of the HS Act and the HSPPS. Written plans are developed by Head Start staff, in consultation with parents, community partners, and other resources. They follow the basic format of the performance standards and are reviewed and updated as-needed (at least annually).



Self-Assessment

Every HS/EHS program must conduct an annual self-assessment that uses program data from child assessments, professional development, parent & family engagement, and other community data to evaluate the program's progress towards meeting goals and objectives. It should measure the effectiveness of program systems in promoting school readiness and family engagement. Our process begins with reviewing the previous year's self-assessment and incorporates on-going data from internal and external monitoring with input from community partners, the Policy Council, and the Board.

Data

A rectangular box with the word "Data" inside. Two horizontal arrows point outwards from the box, one towards the "Written Plans" section and one towards the "Self-Assessment" section, indicating a feedback loop.



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and Fiscal Operations**

Head Start A to Z *Program Governance*



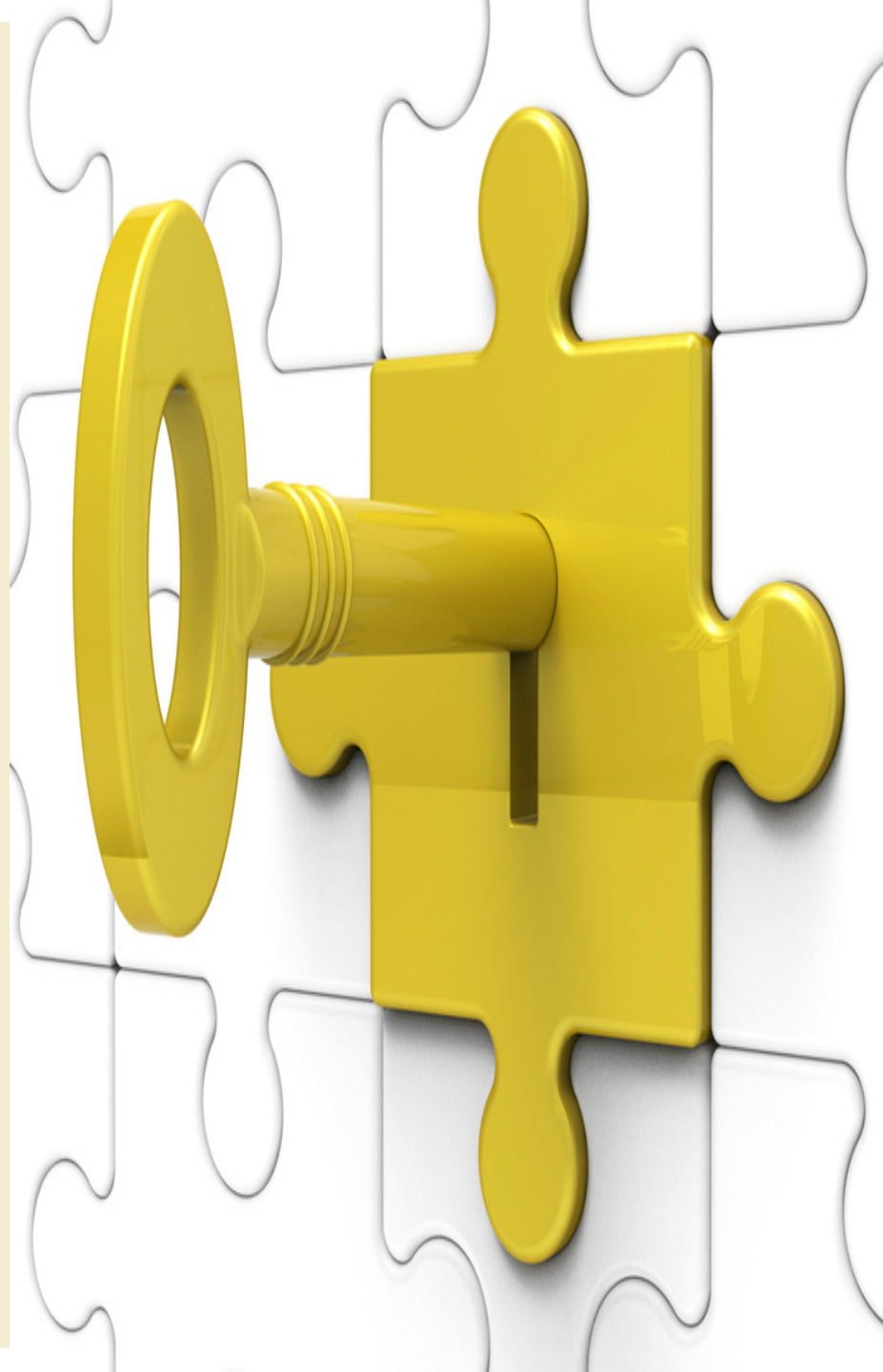
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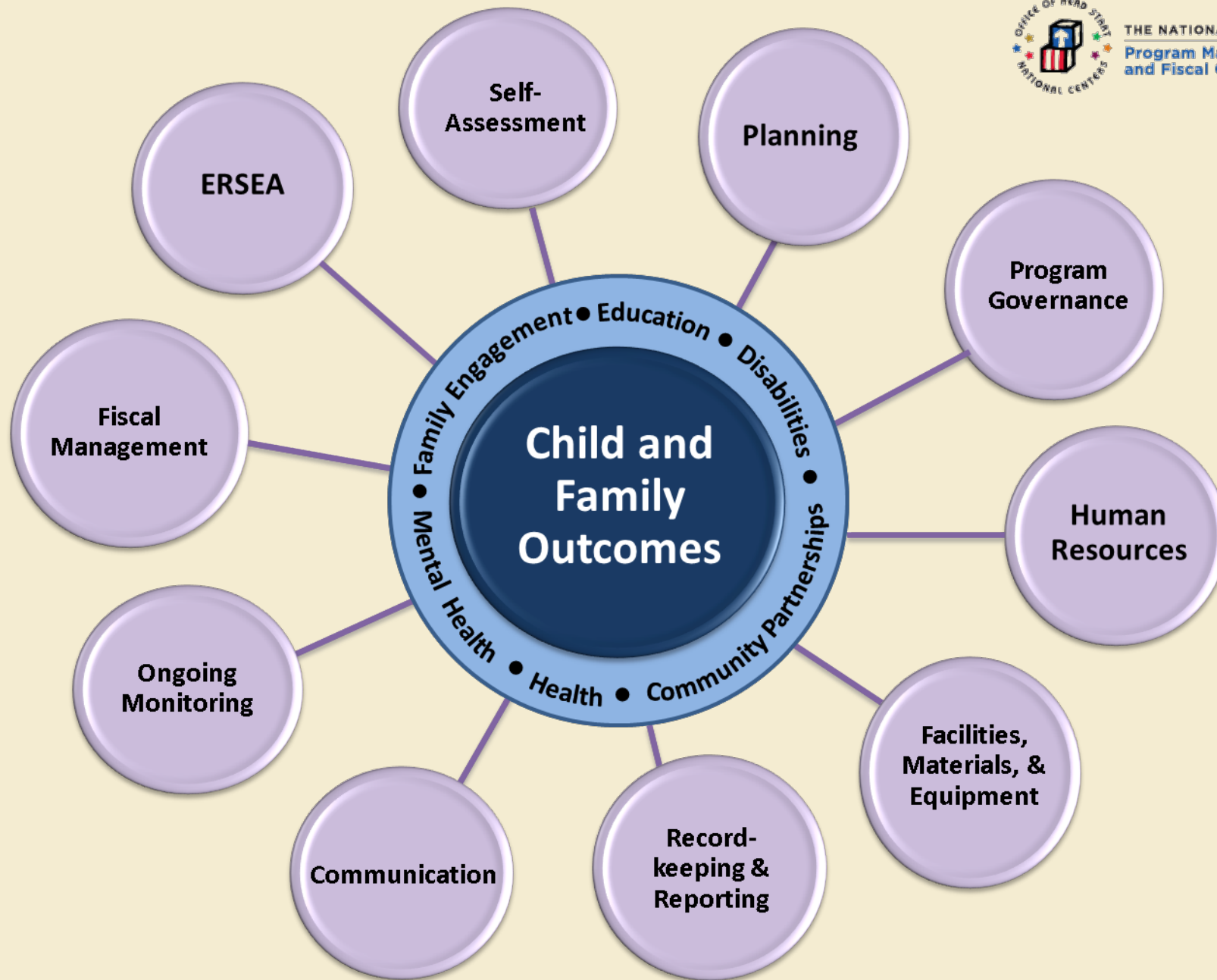
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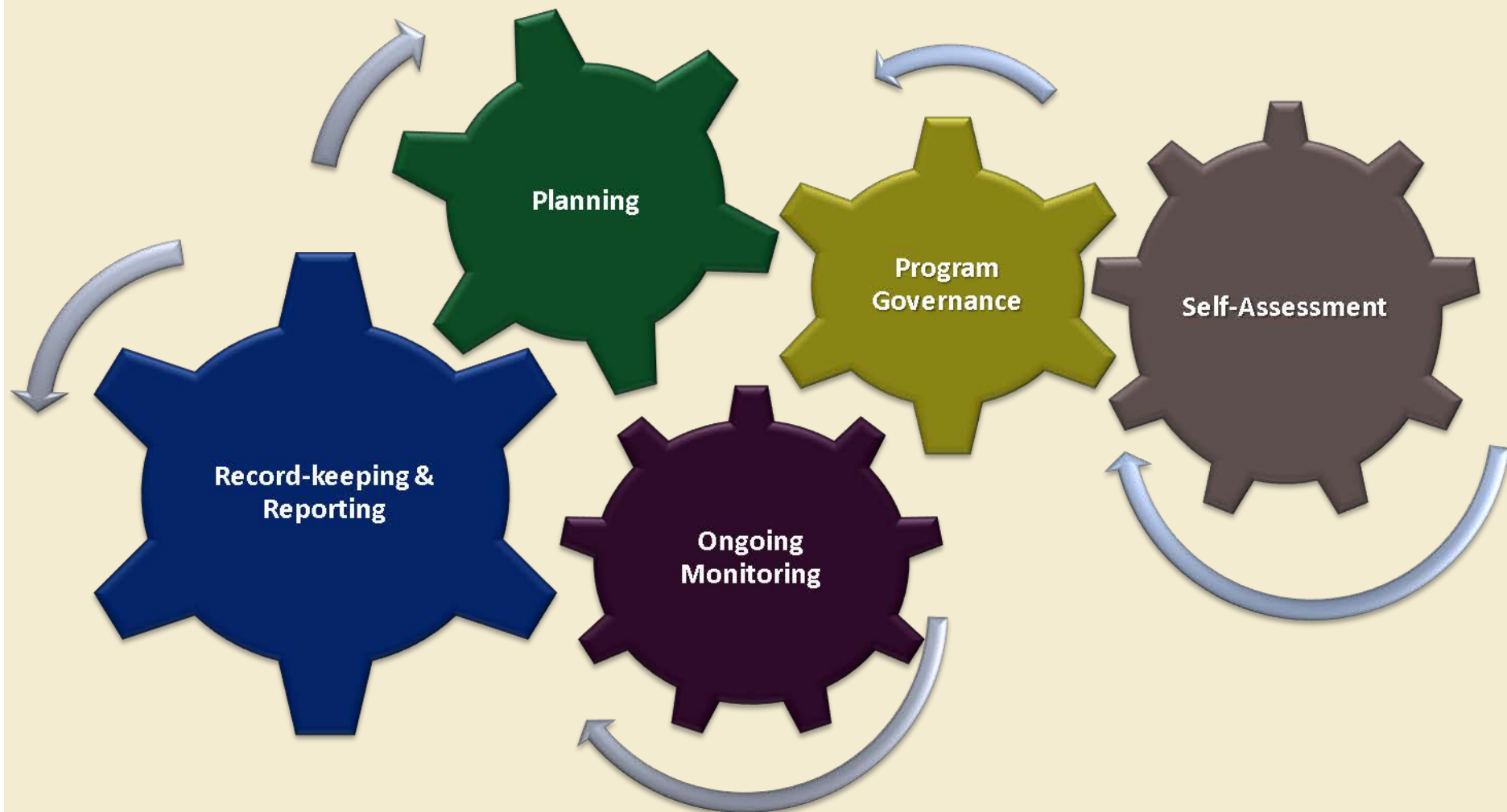
Key Message

Relationship building
is at the heart of
effective leadership.





Systems Are Linked



Head Start/Early Head Start Program Governance

- The Head Start Act of 2007 describes the **composition and roles and responsibilities** of Head Start/Early Head Start agency governing bodies and Policy Councils with regard to **program design, planning, monitoring, and oversight**.
- The Act, in conjunction with the Head Start Program Performance Standards, describes performance expectations regarding program governance.
- This is Head Start ***governance***.

Head Start Governance and Management Composition



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Governing Body/Tribal Council

The governing body shall be composed as follows:

- Not less than 1 member shall have a background and expertise in fiscal management or accounting.
 - Not less than 1 member shall have a background and expertise in early childhood education and development.
 - Not less than 1 member shall be a licensed attorney familiar with issues that come before the governing body.
- Additional members shall—
- reflect the community to be served and include parents of children who are currently, or were formerly, enrolled in Head Start programs;
 - are selected for their expertise in education, business administration, or community affairs.

Policy Council

The policy council shall be elected by the parents of children who are currently enrolled in the Head Start program of the Head Start agency.

The policy council shall be composed of—

- parents of children who are currently enrolled in the Head Start program of the Head Start agency (including any delegate agency), who shall constitute a majority of the members of the policy council; and
 - members at large of the community served by the Head Start agency (including any delegate agency), who may include parents of children who were formerly enrolled in the Head Start program of the agency.
- In addition, parents of children currently enrolled in all program options must be proportionately represented on established policy groups.

Management Staff

May include:

- Executive director
- Chief financial officer
- Head Start director
- Key HS management staff

Head Start Governance and Management Responsibilities



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Governing Body/Tribal Council

Assumes Legal and Fiscal Responsibility for Head Start and the Safeguarding of Federal Funds

Adopt practices to ensure active, independent and informed governance:

- Governing body bylaws
- Procedures for accessing and collecting information
- Written standards of conduct, including conflicts of interest and complaints
- Procedures for selecting Policy Council members
- Advisory committees

*Reports that are generated and used by management, then shared with and used by Policy Council and governing body:

- HHS secretary communication
- Financial statements
- Program information summaries
- Enrollment
- USDA
- Financial audit
- Self-Assessment
- Community assessment
- PIR

Policy Council Assumes Responsibility for Head Start Program Direction

Take Action:

- Hire/terminate Head Start Director and other lead staff
- Establish impasse procedures

Provide Legal Oversight:

- Ensure compliance with federal laws and state, tribal, and local laws

Management Staff Assumes Operating Responsibility for Head Start Day-to-Day Functions

April 22, 2014

Head Start Governance and Management Responsibilities

Governing Body/Tribal Council Assumes Legal and Fiscal Responsibility for Head Start and the Safeguarding of Federal Funds



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Adopt practices to ensure active, independent and informed governance:

- Governing body bylaws
- Procedures for accessing and collecting information
- Written standards of conduct, including conflicts of interest and complaints
- Procedures for selecting Policy Council members
- Advisory committees

Select:

- Delegate agencies and the service areas for such agencies

Establish:

- Procedures and criteria for recruitment, selection, and enrollment

Review:

- All funding applications and amendments
- Results and follow-up activities from federal monitoring

Review and Approve:

- Major policies and procedures, including Self-Assessment, financial audit, and personnel policies
- Progress on implementing the HS grant, including corrective actions
- Major expenditures
- Operating budget
- Selection of auditor
- Actions to correct audit findings

Receive and Use:

- Annual, monthly, and periodic reports*

*Reports that are generated and used by management, then shared with and used by Policy Council and governing body:

- HHS secretary communication
- Financial statements
- Program information summaries
- Enrollment
- USDA
- Financial audit
- Self-Assessment
- Community assessment
- PIR

Policy Council Assumes Responsibility for Head Start Program Direction

Approve and submit to the governing body decisions regarding:

- Activities for parent involvement/engagement
- Program recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities
- Funding applications/amendments
- Budget planning, including reimbursement and participation in Policy Council activities
- Policy Council bylaws
- Head Start program personnel policies and decisions, including criteria for employment and dismissal of program staff
- Policy Council election procedures
- Recommendations on delegates/service areas

Receive and Use:

- Annual, monthly, and periodic reports*

Take Action:

- Hire/terminate Head Start Director and other lead staff
- Establish impasse procedures

Provide Leadership and Strategic Direction:

- Focus on Self-Assessment
- Develop, plan, and evaluate the Head Start program

Provide Legal Oversight:

- Ensure compliance with federal laws and state, tribal, and local laws

Management Staff Assumes Operating Responsibility for Head Start Day-to-Day Functions

Take action:

- Implement policies
- Develop procedures
- Provide T/TA to governing body and Policy Council
- Supervise staff
- Monitor compliance
- Generate and use annual, monthly, and periodic reports*
- Share reports with Policy Council and governing body*

April 22, 2014

Governing Body Reminders

Because governing bodies need to demonstrate their ability to oversee the Head Start program, they much embrace their:

- *Legal* responsibility for ensuring that grant activities respond to regulations, terms and conditions of the grant
- *Fiscal* responsibility for ensuring that funds are used prudently and according to regulations
- Responsibility to be engaged and knowledgeable about the program's five-year goals, progress towards achieving those goals, and outcomes for children, families and the community

Policy Council Reminders

- The Policy Council is a unique aspect of Head Start program governance; it supports active parent engagement in the design of the Head Start program.
- The governance structure and processes ensure that the Policy Council is involved in decision-making in a meaningful way.
- Policy Council members provide leadership and help shape the future of the Head Start program