

**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

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)

Katie Hearn

Carla Testerman – Community Rep (3)

Jefferson County

Jennifer Wright

Tina Patterson – Community Rep (3)

Monroe County

Emily Johnson

– Community Rep

Sevier County

Tammy Spears

Kelly Ritenour – Community Rep (2)

Union County

Kayla Murrell – Personnel

Melissa Logan – Community Rep (2)

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

Members Present

Casey Brown	Jennifer Wright
Anna Uptain	Tina Patterson
Tamra Williamson	Emily Johnson
Carla Testerman	

Members Not Present

Jennifer Jones	Tammy Spears
Misti Eubanks	Kelly Ritenour
Tina Layman	Kayla Murrell
Katie Hearn	Melissa Logan
Gloria Flores	

Employees Present

Amber Brobeck	Melody Cantrell
Kristie Woolard	Ginny Ritchea
Emily Kelley	Curt Amos

Guests Present

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

Emily Johnson, Monroe Parent, called the meeting to order at 10:12 AM and announced that we did not have a quorum. Emily was voted to lead the Policy Council meeting in the absence of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement/ERSEA/Family Community Partnership Manager, presented Mindful Moments. Kristie spoke about loving kindness and encouraged others to be kind to one another. Everyone received an inspirational card.

Emily Kelley, Assistant Director, provided the Literacy Reading with the book, *The Luckiest Snowball* by Elliot Kreloff.

Tonya Purkey, Afterschool Program Director, presented the DCEA Program Spotlight. The Afterschool Program is funded for most public schools in Grainger and Hamblen County. The program runs from 3:00pm-6:00pm. Children who receive afterschool care will be provided

tutoring, enrichment activities, a snack, and physical activities. For more information contact Tonya at 423-581-5420.

Kristie announced that there are no new Policy Council members.

Emily Johnson asked for approval of the Policy Council minutes from November 2025. Tina Patterson, Jefferson County, made the motion for approval and Casey Brown, Blount County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Ginny Ritchea, HR Manager, provided the personnel report. The report was uploaded to the website. Ginny briefly discussed the current vacancies and staff qualifications. Emily Johnson asked for a motion to approve the personnel report and approve all hiring decisions. Tamra Williamson, Cocke County, made the motion for approval and Casey Brown, Blount County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Melody Cantrell, Finance Manager, discussed the budget overview. The report was uploaded to the website and copies were made available at the meeting. Emily Johnson asked for a motion to approve the budget report. Casey Brown, Blount County, made the motion for approval and Jennifer Wright, Jefferson County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Tina Patterson, Dental Hygienist, Section of Oral Health Services for State of Tennessee Department of Health, presented Community Spotlight. Tina shared information about the local school systems' dental program that is free to all students who qualify. For more information email Tina at Tina.Patterson@tn.gov.

Training/Reports

- Grant Application Preparation and PC Input: Curt Amos, Program Director
 - The new Grant application process has been simplified, except for the finance section.
 - Over the next Policy Council meetings, we will discuss what goes into the Grant.
- Budget Planning: Melody Cantrell, Finance Manager
 - Each manager will review their budget worksheet and request the amount of funds they will need for the next program year.
 - T&TA budget planning will take place soon.
- Community Assessment: Emily Kelley, Assistant Director
 - The Agency completed a community assessment in January 2024.
 - We will update the community assessment based on new data.
 - The community assessment will be included in the Grant.
- School Readiness: Amber Brobeck, Curriculum and Assessment Manager
 - The first TSG checkpoint was completed this Fall.
 - The Creative Curriculum is aligned with the Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards.
- Outcomes Report: Amber Brobeck, Curriculum and Assessment Manager
 - The majority of Early Head Start children are meeting or exceeding expectations.
 - The four-year-old group of children have more falling below expectations in reading and math than last year.
- Coaching and Professional Development for Teaching Staff: Amber Brobeck, Curriculum and Assessment Manager
 - Mentor Coaches work with staff to set goals based on the needs of the classroom staff and training is provided in-person and virtual.

- We currently have only one Mentor Coach. We will have a new Mentor Coach starting soon.
- Our program partners with Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) to help provide additional classroom support.
- We provide preservice training for staff and base the training on the needs of the classroom staff.

Old Business

- None

New Business

- Curt Amos, Program Director, presented the Director's Report
 - On November 27th we received an email that our Change in Scope was approved.
 - A call with the Program Specialist confirmed the Change in Scope approval.
 - The Tennessee Child Care Rules and Regulations were revised and made effective on November 20th.
 - All staff are required to read the Licensure Rules Summary before Christmas break.
 - Attendance is down and we are still encouraging Fun Fridays.
 - Attendance letters will be going out to participants with low attendance.
 - We do not anticipate making any program changes next year.
 - Our Program Specialist asked us to plan ways to prevent future incidents regarding a child supervision incident that occurred at one of our centers.
 - We had a minor licensing violation because we failed to report an incident that occurred at a center. This incident did not involve any staff.
 - The Laura J. Kress Angel Tree Grant Funds are currently being spent on the children in Cocke, Grainger, Hamblen, and Union counties. The gifts will be given out on December 18, 2025.

Emily Johnson asked for a motion to approve the Director's Report. Jennifer Wright, Jefferson County, made the motion for approval and Casey Brown, Blount County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Kristie provided County Reports from October and November for all counties.

Kristie presented the MVP awards for the classrooms with the most volunteer hours.

- Blount Maryville 1
- Cocke Newport 2
- Grainger Bean Station
- Hamblen Learning Center 2/Early Head Start 9
- Jefferson Shady Grove
- Monroe Madisonville
- Sevier Oak Cluster
- Union Cross Creek

Emily Johnson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Casey Brown, Blount County, made the motion and Jennifer Wright, Jefferson County, seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 12:37 PM.

Casey Brown, Secretary