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**Subject: Education Policies and Procedures**

**Source: Performance Standards 1304.21**

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The objectives of the Education services of the North Texas Parent and Child Development, Inc Early Head Start program are to:

- ◆ Determine the children's developmental, sensory, and behavioral status.
- ◆ Create an environment, which invites children to observe, be active, make choices, experiment, and explore at their own individual pace.
- ◆ Involve parents in the educational activities of the program enhancing their role as the principal influence on the child's education and development.
- ◆ Assist parents' knowledge, understanding, skills, and experience in child growth and development by providing training and technical assistance.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for periodic assessments of children utilizing subjective/objective data from parents and staff to identify new and/or recurring concerns/problems.
- ◆ Create an environment that offers nurturing group care experiences that supports the healthy development of very young children.
- ◆ Provide children with opportunities to interact with their physical and social environment so they continuously broaden their frame of reference.

A climate for learning involves much more than the physical environment. It includes all that fosters and facilitates learning (i.e. physical setting, spatial structure, equipment and materials, nurturing teachers, and most importantly, an atmosphere in which the child is made to feel that he/she is important, belongs, and can succeed.)

**1. CHILD DEVELOPMENT APPROACH FOR ALL EARLY HEAD START CHILDREN**

In order to help children in Early Head Start develop the necessary skills they need to be successful in the present and later on in life, we must provide a well-rounded curriculum, which is:

- *Developmentally and linguistically appropriate*
- *Inclusive of children with disabilities*
- *Nurturing and provides an environment which promotes acceptance and respect*
- *A balanced daily program: child-directed, adult-directed, individual & small group activities*
- *Supportive of independence*
- *Open to parents and encourages their involvement in every aspect of the children's development*
- *Supportive of each child's social/emotional development*
- *Supportive of each child's cognitive & language skills*
- *Supportive of each child's physical growth & development*

- a. **INDIVIDUALIZING** - Teaching staff are required to write weekly individual skill building lesson plans on each infant/toddler. These plans will be written and reviewed by the Center Coordinator by Tuesday, two weeks prior to the week planned; then they will be reviewed by the Education Manager and returned to the teacher. Individual skill building plans should be written

based on *The Creative Curriculum For Infants, Toddlers and Twos* Developmental Continuum's Goals and Objectives, Child Observations, Ages and Stages, Parent Input, Denver Screening results, or the child's IFSP where applicable. **Individual curriculum activities should be planned for each child weekly to increase their skill level and be inclusive of children with special needs.** These activities should be planned based on each child's individual needs and be documented in the designated area of the lesson plan with skills, objectives, methods, and materials noted. Individual plans should include but be not limited to the following:

- \* **Providing a nurturing environment, which promotes trust and emotional security so that each child can explore the environment according to his/her developmental level.**
  - \* **Provide opportunities for each child to explore a variety of sensory and motor experiences with support and stimulation from teachers and family members.**
  - \* **Provide encouragement to promote development of self-awareness, autonomy, and self-expression.**
  - \* **Support their emerging communication skills by providing daily opportunities for children to interact with others and to express themselves freely.**
  - \* **Support the development of the physical skills including gross motor such as grasping, pulling, pushing, crawling, walking, and climbing.**
  - \* **Creating opportunities for fine motor development and encourage the control and coordination of small specialized motions, using the eyes, mouth, hands, and feet.**
- b. **GROUP** -Teaching staff is required to write weekly lesson plans. Plans are to be written and reviewed by the Center Coordinator by Tuesday, two weeks prior to the week planned; then the Education Manager will sign off on them and return them to the teacher. Lesson planning is to be based on (but are not limited to) the monthly *High Reach Curriculum* concepts and should be inclusive of the children's interests and abilities. This should be completed on a **weekly** basis. Overall weekly lesson plans should include but not limited to:
- \* **Providing support for each child's individual pattern of development and learning.**
  - \* **Provide opportunities for the development of cognitive skills by encouraging each child to organize their experiences, to understand concepts, and to develop age appropriate literacy, numerically, reasoning, problem solving and decision-making skills which form a foundation for school readiness and later school success.**
  - \* **Planned activities, which integrates all educational aspects of dental health, health, mental health, nutrition, and safety into the program.** (at least one activity a week in each area and a cooking experience at least once a month.)
  - \* **An environment, which promotes social relationships and develops emotional security.**

- \* **Create an environment, which enhances a child's understanding of self as an individual and as a member of a group.**
- \* **Provide each child with opportunities for success in developing feelings of competence, self-esteem, and positive attitudes towards learning.**
- \* **Provide individual and small group experiences both indoors & outdoors on a daily basis.**
- \* **Utilize a variety of strategies to promote & support children's learning and developmental progress based on observations and on-going assessments of each child.**

- c. **External Resources to Support the Curriculum** The Program, Education, and Disabilities Manager will work closely with the Management Team to locate and secure programs, services, agencies, materials, and curricula to provide instruction to Early Head Start children when available or as needed.

## 2. SCREENINGS

Developmental screenings shall be completed within the first 45 days of enrollment in the program. Parental consent for screening shall be obtained at the time of enrollment and is on file at the child's center of attendance. Change of status form should be sent to the Management Team, as needed.

## 3. ON-GOING ASSESSMENTS

Observation notes are to be completed on a weekly basis. One *Creative Curriculum Child Observation* will be completed for each child on Teaching Strategies; it is recommended that at least **one entry** is made in two of the developmental/content every week that the child is in attendance. The observations will be filed in the child's binder on the last school day of the month. Checkpoints will be completed quarterly, at the time of the home visit or the parent conference, for each child.

## 4. CONFIDENTIALITY and FILES

**Confidentiality** of all classroom records will be maintained at all times. File cabinets will be kept locked. **Education files should contain: Section Table of Contents, Observations, Ages and Stages Parent Questionnaires, Observations of Concern, Individualizing Goals and Objectives, Home Visit Sheet 1 and 2, Parent/Teacher Conference Report 1 and 2, Progress and Planning Reports, Teachable Moments, Related Referrals, Parent/Home Visitor Agreement (Home-based), Home Visit Reports (Home-based), Absentee Forms (Home-based), and Lesson Plans (Home-Based).**

## 5. HOME VISITS AND PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Home Visits are defined as **pre-scheduled** contacts with parents that run approximately **thirty-minutes** per visit. **Traditional home visits should take place in the child's home.** Every effort must be made to explain the advantages of traditional home visits to the parents.

In the event that parents forbid a traditional home visit, staff is required to obtain a signed statement from the parent and then schedule a non-traditional home visit. This **pre-scheduled** meeting can be held at **EHS centers** or other **designated safe locations** that are agreed upon and afford **privacy** for discussion.

Classroom staff will make a minimum of **two (2) home visits (completed in the home or off-site location) and two (2) parent/teacher conferences with each family each year**. Home visits and parent conferences will be used to share information about the child's progress, share activities to do with the child at home, screening results, share child's developmental progress, and to get parents' input into the educational program. **Home visits and parent/teacher conferences schedules will be planned with the Center Coordinator using the designated timelines:**

	<u>Center-based by</u>	<u>Home-based by</u>
<b>Home Visit #1/Progress &amp; Planning Report</b>	<b>October 31</b>	<b>October 31</b>
<b>Parent/Teacher Conference #1/Progress &amp; Planning Report</b>	<b>December 15</b>	<b>December 15</b>
<b>Home Visit #2/Progress &amp; Planning Report</b>	<b>March 31</b>	<b>March 31</b>
<b>Parent/Teacher Conference #2/Progress &amp; Planning Report</b>	<b>June 30</b>	<b>June 30</b>

#### 6. CLASSROOM POSTINGS

The following information must be posted, or be readily available, in each Early Head Start classroom:

##### Items to be posted -

- Fire and tornado procedures, evacuation floor plan, and reports of dates that emergency drills took place.
- Daily schedule
- Menus
- Red Cross Posters/ Choking Posters
- Weekly Lesson Plans

##### Items to be readily available –

- Lesson plan books
- Sign-In and Sign-Out Sheets
- Emergency numbers
- First Aid Kit
- Flashlight

#### 7. PARENT CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION

Parents are always welcome in the Early Head Start classrooms, either as volunteers or observers.

#### 8. CLASSROOM MAINTENANCE

Teaching teams must check daily to see that classrooms are clean and free of hazards. **All classroom equipment is to be washed and disinfected on a weekly basis. Freshly laundered sheets and blankets shall be provided and changed at least once per week or more frequently if wet or soiled. Cribs shall be cleaned daily and sanitized with a bleach solution. Cots shall be cleaned once a week with a bleach solution, or more frequently if wet or soiled.**

## 9. CLASSROOM DAILY SCHEDULE

**Center Schedule** – The centers are open daily Monday through Friday. Teaching teams use nap/rest periods for planning and home visits. Every effort will be made to schedule a volunteer/floater/substitute so these teaching teams can participate in scheduled meetings and trainings. The Center Coordinator will make these arrangements on an as needed basis.

Following is a sample schedule. The schedule for each classroom is based on the needs of the children and parents. Schedules are posted in each classroom.

Times	Daily Schedule
Opening – 9:00	Arrival, Games, Restroom, Breakfast
9:00 – 10:00	Small Group/Individualization/Interest Centers
10:00 – 10:30	Structured Outdoor Play
10:30 – 11:00	Restroom, Prepare for Lunch
11:00 – 11:45	Lunch, Restroom
11:45 – 12:00	Prepare for Naptime
12:00 – 2:00	Naptime, Teacher’s Break, Lesson Planning
2:00 – 2:30	Restroom, Snack
2:30 – Closing	Large Group Activities, Structured Outdoor Play, Interest Centers, Games, Prepare to go Home

*\*Children who do not sleep may be permitted to get up and shall be helped to have a quiet time with equipment or activities that will not disturb the napping children.*

## 10. Classroom Caregiver/Child Ratio

- All North Texas Parent and Child Development Inc., Early Head Start, centers will follow the Federal Performance Standards in regards to the caregiver/child ratio.
- **There are to be two (2) staff members present with the children at all times.**

## 11. GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR STAFF WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN GROUPS

- Staff are to be directly involved with the classroom activities at all times, either facilitating, participating, or observing.
- All hazardous and poisonous materials are to be stored in locked cabinets away from the children.
- **Never**, under any circumstances, will adults of the Early Head Start program **scream, hit, or in any other way physically or verbally abuse or misuse** any child in their care.
- Staff is to always greet children and parents upon their arrival.
- **TODDLERS** - Teaching staff will eat with the children for ALL meals and snacks. The food is to be served family style. Child-sized serving utensils will be provided. Children will clean up their individual area upon completion of the meal/snack.
- **INFANTS** - Staff shall establish flexible feeding schedules to coordinate with parents’ schedules and to allow for nursing infants. Feeding times & consumption shall be documented in writing and available for review by parents. Infants shall be held during bottle-feeding. When infants are able to hold their own non-glass bottle they may do so. Bottle propping and carrying of bottles by young children shall not be permitted.
- Staff will **not** initiate the saying of grace before meals, based on federal guidelines.

- **All classrooms and learning centers are to be labeled.** Labels will be printed with the first letter of the word capitalized (e.g., Blocks). Shelves will be labeled with pictures of the items on the shelf.
- Staff will read and have a basic understanding of all health & safety procedures covered in the **Health Services** section.

## 12. HOME-BASED PROGRAM

### Home Visits

Home Visitors work with parents and children in their homes on a regular basis, visiting each family once a week. The home visits focus on parent-child developmental activities, teaching and modeling activities for parents to do with their children, as well as attending to all the other Early Head Start component requirements. The visits are one and one-half (1½) hours in duration and planning for parent-child focused activities should:

- **Encourage positive interaction between parents & children**
- **Provide learning experiences for all involved**
- **Generalize and expand skills of both the parent and child**
- **Present component information geared to the child**
- **Reinforce parents as primary educators of their children**
- **Home visitors will be implementing the Parents As Teachers Curriculum or Partners for a Healthy Baby Curriculum, when applicable**

### Group Socialization

A group socialization experience is arranged for all children twice a month for a minimum of two (2) hours each. The group socialization experiences are held in an Early Head Start facility. Group experiences are for both children and parents. The experiences include socialization activities that will encourage children to interact with each other, explore experiment, solve problems, create, and exhibit self-control. Activities represent all areas of child development and include child-initiated and adult-initiated experiences, indoor, and outdoor play. **Home visitors should bring a class list, including birth dates, an emergency card, and consent for services and medical card, where applicable.**

Parents will accompany their child to the group socialization and participate in a monthly parent meeting. Parents should determine the content and type of meetings and they should be responsible for planning and conducting the meeting. Parent meetings should include a balance of socialization, participation, support, and information dissemination. Within each parent meeting it is important to have activities that vary from listening to doing and sharing. Parents are also encouraged to spend part of the time in the classroom interacting with their child and with other children in helping them to enhance their skills during the group socialization.

Following is a sample schedule. The schedule for Group Socialization is based on the needs of the children and parents. A schedule is posted in the Group Socialization Room.

<b><u>Group Socialization - Activity Schedule</u></b>	
9:30 a.m.	Arrival, Greeting
9:45 a.m.	Circle Time with Parents and Children
10:00 a.m.	Learning Center Activities (parents may break away for training opportunities).

10:30 a.m.	Snack/Restroom/Brush Teeth
11:00 a.m.	Outdoor Play (weather permitting)
11:30 a.m.	Departure

**Field Trips**

In Early Head Start field trips are to be planned for the children to help them learn and experience different things in their community. Field Trips should be carefully planned and developmentally appropriate for young children. (See **FIELD TRIP PROCEDURES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**)

***Form(s):***

Lesson Plan Forms  
Change of Status  
Consent for Services  
Observation Notes  
Home Visit/ Parent Conference Report  
Family Conference Form  
Daily Activity Records  
Emergency Cards

***Books***

Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers