



Early Childhood Program Policies & Procedures

2019-2020

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- *No policies*

Part 1301- Program Governance

Title: Amending Head Start Policy

Policy Council Approval: 12/13/18

Board Approval: 3/28/19

Rationale: There are occasions when a parent, staff member, policy council, or board member feels that there is a need for a change of policy or procedure within the program. In order to ensure standardized practice, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Suggested change will be put into writing by policy council members, Board of Directors, parents or staff and presented to the Early Childhood Director.
2. The Early Childhood Director will review suggested changes with staff, as necessary.
3. After review, the Early Childhood Director will place the suggested change on the next Policy Council meeting agenda for discussion.
4. Policies will be sent ahead of time to Policy Council members for review.
 - At the Policy Council meeting the Council will consider and discuss the requested change.
 - The Policy Council may vote and approve the policy at the same meeting it was presented.
 - If further discussion is necessary the Policy Council may choose to discuss at a second meeting.
5. Once approved by the full Policy Council, summaries of policy amendments will be sent to the WCAP Board of Directors.
6. Once approved by both Policy Council and Board of Directors, the Policy Council will officially be considered policy and communicated to staff via email or hard copy and included in future reprints of the Policy and Procedures book. Policies that need immediate release will be sent as high priority items to all staff.

Title: Board of Directors/Policy Council Information Sharing Policy

Policy Council Approval: 12/23/18

Board Approval: 3/28/19

Rationale: Each Head Start agency shall ensure the sharing of accurate and regular information for use by the governing body and the policy council, about program planning, policies, and Head Start operations.

Guidance: The program will share the following documents with both the WCAP Board of Directors and Head Start Policy Council:

- A. Monthly:
 - Financial statements including credit card expenditures
 - Program information summaries
 - i. Program enrollment and attendance reports for all program options
 - ii. Reports of meals and snacks provided through the Child Care & Adult Food Program
 - Communication and guidance from HHS (when available)
 - Requests for action resulting from meeting agenda items
- B. Annually:
 - Financial Audit
 - Annual Self-Assessment, including any findings, goals and long-term objectives

- Communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment (Community Assessment)
- Program Information Report (PIR)
- Annual Program Budgets for both Early Head Start and Head Start

Title: Family Group Roles and Expectations

Policy Council Approval: 12/13/18

Board Approval: 3/28/19

Guidance: Each center will have a Family Group. All enrolled families are considered members of the Family Group. These groups have a valuable role in the governing of the WCAP Head Start program. The goals of these groups are to develop and implement local program policies, and activities to ensure they meet the needs of local families, communicate with the policy council, and participate in the recruitment of Head Start and Early Head Start employees. The staff role in these groups is to help with the logistics such as arranging childcare, food, and speakers, and to provide information to help families make decisions. Because these committees are crucial to our program, we are providing the following information to help the functioning of the Family Group.

Structure & Meetings

Each Family Group should elect a chairperson to run their meetings through a democratic process. The Family Service Staff assigned to each Family Group will provide a sample agenda of regular activities which will help to keep the Family Group on track during the year. Family Group chairpersons should refer to the calendar every month.

Minutes

Each Family Group will keep minutes of their meetings. These minutes will be kept at the center and also sent in copy to the Family Service Coordinator. These minutes serve as the communication between the local parent committees, program staff, and policy council. Minutes should always track any expenditures of parent funds.

Input into the Curriculum and Classroom Activities

- Parent and family input is critical to the development of the classroom experience. They provide insight about what their children know and can do at home, what they are interested in, and what is important for their child to know. Families also provide critical information about their family culture, which helps to shape individualized curriculum. All members present are welcome to provide suggestions for operation of the classroom via the *Family and Program Communication Form*. These should be reviewed each meeting.
- Families who are enrolled in a home-based option are asked to provide input on an ongoing basis during home visits by taking an active role in planning subsequent visits. These families also provide input into planning for the bi-monthly socializations.

Family/Parent Education

- A guest speaker may be scheduled for each meeting on a topic that is of interest to the group.
 - Family Group members identify topics they are interested in. The staff assigned to that site will assist in making arrangements for speakers and are asked to have a stand-by plan in the event a trainer is unable to keep the scheduled commitment. The stand-by plan should be discussed and determined by the family service staff assigned to that site and the Family Group committee at one of the first monthly meetings.

Community Engagement

- Each Family Group helps to plan an annual community support event of the groups choosing.

Self-Assessment

- An annual program-wide self-assessment is conducted to monitor the effectiveness and progress in meeting program goals. Family Group members are encouraged to participate in this process.

Policy Council

Please see Policy Council By-Laws

- Members of Policy Council are elected by members of each Family Group annually.
 - At the Family Group meeting early in each year families are told about the opportunity of joining Policy Council. Elections for Policy Council occur at a subsequent parent group meeting.
 - Members are elected in accordance with the Policy Council By-Laws
 - *See Policy Council By Laws Article III Section 1.*
- Policy Council voting representatives from Family Groups are responsible for attending monthly Policy Council meetings.
- At monthly Family Group meetings, the Family Group Representative is responsible for sharing the Policy Council updates and providing feedback to and from Policy Council meetings.

Funds

- Funds for parent/family activities come from federal grant money and may only be used for their intended purpose, to support parent activities. For example:
 1. Becoming involved in the development of the program's curriculum and approach to child development and education
 2. Bringing parents together to share common interests
 3. Working with the Policy Council to support program development and implementation
 4. Planning programs and activities for families and staff.
- Funds or materials purchased with these Funds cannot be given directly to individuals or to charities.
- The staff who is responsible for the facilitation of each Family Group will request in advance, monies needed to fulfill any or all of the activities stated above based on each Family Group's annual budget.
- Funds expended will be noted in the Family Group minutes.

Financial Burden

In all program activities, including those of the Family Group, no activity can be planned that requires any family to incur costs in order for their child to participate. Those who participate in Policy Council may be eligible for reimbursements for reasonable expenses incurred as a member of the council.

Fundraising is also considered a potential financial burden and is disallowed. For more information see the *Fundraising Policy*.

Involvement in hiring of staff

Members of the Family Group may be selected to participate in the recruitment and screening of Head Start and Early Head Start employees. Individuals may be invited to participate in interviews. Coordination of interviews will occur with the help of the Family Service Coordinator, Human Resources Manager, and Early Childhood Director.

Title: Internal Dispute Resolution

Policy Council Approval: 12/13/18

Board Approval: 3/28/19

1. The Head Start Policy Council and the Board of Directors of WCAP have a responsibility for governance of the Head Start Program. It is necessary that both bodies work collaboratively to best meet the needs of the client population of Head Start. To meet this goal it shall be the practice of the WCAP Board of Directors and the Head Start Policy Council to name annually a member or members of each group to serve as representatives who will participate in the governing actions of the other. Minutes of both groups will be shared with both constituencies.
2. In the event that potential or existing conflict occurs during the process of governance, a written notice and description of the conflict shall be sent within five (5) business days to the Executive Director, Early Childhood Director, Chairs of the respective boards, and ACF/Head Start Program Specialist. The WCAP Board Chairperson shall be responsible for writing the notice.
3. When such notice is necessary the Board Chairperson and the Policy Council Chairperson will mutually convene a joint meeting of their Boards within ten (10) business days. The purpose of this meeting will be to resolve conflict with mutually agreeable terms. If the ten-day time period for convening a joint meeting cannot be accomplished by either the Board Chairperson or the Policy Council Chairperson, the Vice Chairpersons may convene the meeting in their absence. More than one meeting may be convened if necessary.
4. If the conflict cannot be resolved within 15 business days the Board Chairperson will submit the dispute to the offices of a professional mediator. This mediator will be agreed upon by both the Board and the Policy Council. WCAP Executive Director, Head Start Director, Policy Council Chairperson and the Board Chairperson are expected to attend any meetings requested by the mediator.
5. If the conflict relates to the grantee's annual grant and/or grant submission the mediation process must be completed and an agreement made twenty (20) days prior to the Program Year Beginning unless the WCAP Board Chairperson has written permission from the Regional Office to submit a late annual refunding application.
6. Final result of the mediation process will be shared in writing with both WCAP's Board and Policy Council members. Results of mediation will also be forwarded to the ACF Office.

Head Start Policy Council

Board of Directors

Chairperson

Chairperson

Title: Policy Council By-Laws

Policy Council Approval: 12/13/18

Board Approval: 3/28/19

Article I- PURPOSE

The purpose of the Head Start & Early Head Start Policy Council is to give members the opportunity to make decisions that effect children's growth and development, to develop sustaining programs that assist parents in carrying out their parental and community responsibilities (such as health, housing, education and/or welfare), and to provide knowledge and understanding of the Head Start philosophy with direct voice in implementing guidelines. This group assumes the responsibilities of the Policy Council as outlined in the Head Start Program Performance Standards 1301 and Section 642 of the Head Start Act.

Note: When WCAP refers to "parents" we also stretch this definition to refer to any primary caregivers in the family structure who are doing "parenting". As a program we work to support families, no matter how they are made up. We work to refer to the "family" rather than the "parent" in an effort to be as inclusive as possible. In this document we use the language from the Office of Head Start around parent, but include the expanded definition as described above.

Article II- RESPONSIBILITY

Policy Council works in partnership with key management staff to be informed of, develop, review, approve (as appropriate), and submit to the Board of Directors decisions (as appropriate) on the following:

1. Activities to support the active involvement of parents in supporting program operations, including policies to ensure that the agency is responsive to community and parent need.
2. Program recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities
3. All funding applications and amendments including administrative services, prior to submission to OHS.
4. Budget planning and program expenditures
5. By-laws for the operation of Policy Council.
6. Program personnel policies and decisions regarding the employment of program staff
7. The composition of Policy Council and the procedures by which the Council is chosen.
8. The annual self-assessment of the grantee
9. The annual independent audit
10. The Community Needs Assessment
11. Communication and guidance from OHS
12. Monthly reports to include:
 - a. Financial statements
 - i. Including credit card statements
 - b. Program information summaries
 - c. Reports of meals and snacks provided through the CACFP program
13. School Readiness Goals & Monitoring Results

The Policy Council will also:

1. Serve as a link to the Family Groups, grantee governing body (Board of Directors), and other public and private organizations as necessary.
2. Assist Family Groups in communicating with families enrolled in all program options to ensure that they understand their rights and responsibilities and encourage program participation.
3. Assist Family Groups in organizing program activities for families with the assistance of staff. Ensure funds set aside from budgets are used to support family activities.
4. Assist in recruiting volunteer services and mobilization of community resources.
5. Establish and maintain procedures for resolving community complaints.
6. The program staff and Policy Council, jointly, establish written procedures for resolving internal disputes, including impasse procedures, between the governing body and the Policy Council.

7. Participate in annual Policy Council training.
 - a. This training shall include training on program performance standards and other trainings to ensure that the Council is informed and can effectively oversee and participate in the programs Head Start agency. Training and support will be provided for to all elected Policy Council members annually by the Family Services Coordinator, Early Childhood Director, WCAP Executive Director, WCAP Finance Director, and the Board.

Article III- MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS

Section 1: Composition

- a. All members of Policy Council shall be elected by the parents of children who are currently enrolled in WCAP's Head Start & Early Head Start program and are members of Family Groups or Community Members elected by the Policy Council.

Family Groups will elect representatives to the Policy Council at each local Family Group.

All parent members of Policy Council must stand for election or re-election annually. All community representatives also must be selected annually.

Policy Councils will limit the number of one-year terms an individual may service in any capacity to a combined total of five terms.

Parents of children currently enrolled in all program options must be proportionately represented on established policy groups.

Policy Council is comprised of two types of Representatives: Parents of currently enrolled children and Community Representatives

- b. At least 51% of the members must be parents/guardians of currently enrolled Head Start children.
 - a. The number of parent slots on the Policy Council will consist of slots equal to the number of classrooms currently operated plus two slots from the EHS home-visiting program.
 - b. Each member must be voted in by the local center's Family Group.
 - c. A local Family Group may consist of multiple classrooms; the Family Group may vote in one representative per each classroom that they represent as long as the family is enrolled in classroom represented by that Family Group.
 - d. An alternate for each filled position may be named.
- c. Up to 49% of the members may be selected to fill a Community Member Slot from the public or private agencies within Waldo County and/or major community, civic or professional organizations, which have a concern for children of low-income families and can contribute to the program. Community Members have the same duties as a Parent Member.
 - a. Community Representatives must be drawn from the local community: businesses, public or private community, civic and professional organizations, and others who are familiar with resources and services for low-income children and families. Community Representatives may include parents of current or formerly enrolled children.
 - i. A minimum of three community slots will be reserved for parents not enrolled in Head Start, but who have child(ren) in WCAP/public school preschool collaborations.
 1. These slots may still serve as liaisons between the Policy Council and their local Family Group.

- b. There is no set number of Community Representatives that may serve on the Policy Council, as long as composition rules under Article III Section 1 (b)(c) and (c) are followed.
- c. The maximum number of Community Members that may be elected to the Policy Council at any time is eight.
- d. Regular members are responsible for contacting an alternate member if they are unable to attend the meeting to represent their group.
- e. Members of Policy Council shall not have a conflict of interest with the Head Start program pursuant to sections 642(c)(2)(C) and of the Head Start Act. No member shall receive compensation for serving on the Policy Council or for providing services to the Head Start agency. Parents who occasionally substitute for regular Early Head Start or Head Start staff may still serve on the Policy Council.

Section 2: Membership Fees

There are no membership fees.

Section 3: Voting

Each member shall be entitled to one vote on each matter considered. The Council elects to follow Robert's Rules for voting and meeting proceedings.

Section 4: Alternate Members

The Council may include alternate members. The alternates are encouraged to attend all meetings but may only make motions or vote in the absence of a regular member.

Section 5: Vacancies

Vacancies shall be filled as they become available.

- a. A vacancy of a parent member will be filled by a democratic election at the sending classroom.
- b. In the case of Community Representative vacancy, another representative will be chosen from the community at the next regular monthly meeting of the Policy Council or whenever a potential member is suggested.

Article IV- OFFICERS

Section 1: Policy Council Officers

The officers of the Policy Council shall be a Chairperson, a Vice- Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer. At least half of the offices will be filled by present Parent Representatives.

Section 2: Election of Officers

The officers of the Policy Council shall be elected after the membership is established from the Family Group (usually November meeting).

Section 3: Vacancies

Vacancies in officer positions shall be filled at the next regular meeting of the Policy Council by a majority of the members present after resignation is accepted. If a vacancy cannot be filled, the Chairperson may continue to operate the Council with that vacancy.

Article V- DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1: Chairperson

- a. To chair all meetings.
- b. To prepare an agenda with the assistance of the Policy Council Officers when available, the Family Service Coordinator and the Early Childhood Director.
- c. To occupy a seat on the Waldo Community Action Partners (WCAP) Board of Directors.
- d. The Chairperson is an ex-officio member of all committees
- e. In the absence of the elected Treasurer, the Chairperson will serve as Treasurer

Section 2: Vice-Chairperson

- a. To chair all meetings at which the chairperson is not in attendance.
- b. To assume the Chairperson's duties in his/her absence.
- c. In the absence of the elected Secretary, the Vice-Chair will serve as Secretary

Section 2a: At a single meeting, in the absence of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson, an acting Chairperson may be elected from the floor.

Section 3: Secretary

- a. To keep accurate records of all Policy Council meetings (format and support provided by the Family Services Coordinator)
- b. To provide a copy of each meeting's minutes to the Family Services Coordinator following the meeting.
- c. Meeting sign-in & out and attendance will be tracked by the Secretary and will be submitted to the Family Service Coordinator immediately following each meeting

Section 4: Treasurer

- a. The Treasurer works collaboratively with the Head Start Bookkeeper in support of preparing and maintaining Policy Council financial reports
- b. To prepare a written report which is presented orally at each meeting and is housed in the Policy Council ledger for record keeping.
- c. If necessary, work with WCAP staff in order to pay bills upon vote of Policy Council.

Training and support will be provided for to all elected officers annually by the Family Services Coordinator.

Article VI- COMMITTEES

Based on the size and frequency of meetings, the Policy Council has not, at this time, established a need for standing committees. Ad hoc committees will be formed as needed to complete a specific purpose and will be dissolved at the completion of that task. Ad hoc committees may be formed by a majority vote of the Policy Council. The Chairperson will serve as an ex-officio member of all Committees.

As ad hoc committees are formed, ad hoc chairpersons will be elected to ensure efficient running of meetings.

Potential ad hoc committees may include: personnel committee, policy committee, budget committee. For example, during review of the annual non-competing continuation grant, an ad hoc budget committee will be formed to look at the budget in more detail than the larger Policy Council.

Article VII- MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

Section 1: Regular Meetings

There shall be regular meetings that occur at least every six weeks in coordination with WCAP's Board of Directors meetings. The date, time and place of the meeting shall be determined annually by the Council and shall be subject to change due to unusual circumstances. A regular meeting may be cancelled for any number of reasons and not rescheduled not more than twice a year.

The WCAP Early Childhood Program will send out written notices of all meetings.

Section 2: Special Meetings

The Chairperson is authorized to call a special meeting, and in case the Chairperson is unavailable then the Vice-Chairperson may call the special meetings. Special meetings may also be held at the request of a two-thirds majority of the full membership of the Policy Council. Such request would be communicated to the Chairperson. Notices of meetings, consisting of a written communication to be delivered to the members at least five days in advance of such meetings, shall clearly state the date, time, place and the agenda of such meeting.

Section 3: Quorum

A quorum is the minimum number of members of the council that must be present at any of its meetings to make proceedings of that meeting valid. This number is calculated by dividing the total of the elected voting members of the council in half and adding one. If the council membership is 16, quorum would be 9.

- a. At the beginning of every meeting the Chairperson will establish the quorum and the Secretary will record this in the minutes.
- b. A quorum for a special meeting or a regular meeting of the membership shall be one more than half of the total voting members.
- c. A quorum will not include vacant seats. (Vacant seats: resignations, drops, any seat not filled by community representatives or past parents).

Section 4: Attendance

- a. Any member of the Policy Council who is absent for three consecutive meetings of that body without prior notification given will be deemed to have resigned his/her position. Attendance is tracked by the Secretary.

Article VIII- BOOK/RECORD KEEPING

Section 1: Minutes

Minutes of the meetings of the Policy Council shall include all formal votes of the meetings and the names of those making motions. The minutes shall include a list of those in attendance. Minutes will be kept by the Policy Council Secretary or designated staff person. Minutes will be reviewed for accuracy by at least one other in attendance of the meeting. Completed minutes will be presented to the Policy Council for approval at the meeting following the meeting in which they were taken. The approved minutes shall at all times be open to inspection of any person.

Article IX-PROCEDURE

Section 1: Accountability

WCAP will be responsible for accounting for all funds allocated to the Policy Council or Family Groups for parent activities. WCAP shall assist the Policy Council in establishing an appropriate accounting system for the administration by parents groups of the parent activity funds.

Section 2: Utilization of Funding Procedure

Utilization of the parent activity fund shall be determined by the Policy Council and Family Groups. This plan for use of parent activity funds shall be consistent with any existing Head Start philosophy and relevant to the goals of the Early Childhood Program. WCAP staff shall be responsible for the disbursement of funds to be used by Policy Council and Family Groups following all WCAP fiscal procedures.

Those who participate in Policy Council are eligible for reimbursements for reasonable expenses incurred as a member of the council. See Family Service Coordinator for more information.

If the Policy Council or Family Groups wish to make changes to the utilization of funds, they may do so through the process outlined in the *Policy for Amending Head Start Policies*.

Article X - BY-LAWS

These By-Laws may be altered, amended or repealed and new By-Laws may be adopted by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the active members of the Policy Council, provided that at least seven (7) calendar days written notice of the proposed changes is given before the meeting at which it may be put to vote.

I, _____, Head Start Policy Council Chairperson, certify that these By-Laws were approved by the Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start Policy Council at the meeting on _____.

Part 1302- Program Operations

Subpart A- ERSEA

Title: Attendance Policy & Procedure

PC Approved: 2/27/19

BOD Approved: 3/28/19

Rationale: Enrollment opportunities are defined as vacancies that exist at the beginning of the enrollment year or during the program year that must be filled to achieve and maintain funded enrollment. In circumstances where chronic absenteeism persists, and it is not feasible to include the client in the same or a different program option, the client's slot must be considered vacant.

Policy:

Center Based options:

WCAP Early Childhood Program will maintain records of all dates and times of attendance as well as absences; the reason for absences will be noted using approved attendance codes (refer to "Attendance/Absence Guidance" listed below). Attendance averages are verified by the Family Service Coordinator within the first week of each month for the prior month; using the programs data base reporting feature (Childplus). When the monthly average daily attendance rate in a center-based program falls below 85%, the reasons for absenteeism must be analyzed by the Family Service Coordinator, including a study of the pattern of absences for each child, the reasons for absences as well as the number of absences that occur on consecutive days. Attendance percentage reports are available in Childplus and are discussed at each site's staff meeting to support good attendance using a team approach.

On any day that a child is absent and staff is unaware of the reason, outreach to the family shall occur within one (1) hour of the child not arriving at school. To ensure child safety, staff will prioritize their outreach to families of children who are absent by contacting those whose child is transported to the program by public or school transportation first. Staff will then reach out to families who self-transport in order to inquire the reason for the absence. Staff explain the importance of good attendance and notification of absences in multiple ways: at application, home visits, individual contacts and in newsletters and other notices that go out to families on a regular basis.

When a child is absent due to illness or well-documented absences for other reasons, no special action is required.

When a child's absence results from other factors, including temporary family challenges or obstacles that affect a child's regular attendance, teachers will work with Family Advocates to discuss and plan appropriate family outreach. This outreach should include a home visit or other direct contact with the child's parents. Contacts with the family must emphasize the benefits of regular attendance; while at the same time remaining sensitive to any special family circumstances influencing attendance patterns. All contacts with the child's family as well as special family support service activities provided by program staff must be documented in the client record. If needed, an ERSEA Status Change Plan may be developed with the family to support a temporary modified attendance plan; submitted to the Family Services Coordinator for consideration and approval from the Program Director.

- **Modified Attendance Plans can be utilized for any number of reasons. Modified attendance plans are not considered suspensions or expulsions. Modified attendance plans are used to support individual children based on their needs.**
 - **For example: a young child may not be ready to have a long day.**

- For example: a child going through a series of unwanted behaviors may need additional support and will be more successful with a shorter day.
- All Modified Attendance Plans are approved by the Early Childhood Program Director and documented on the *ERSEA Status Change Request Form*.

In circumstances where chronic absenteeism persists, a “Program Attendance Letter” shall be sent by the Family Service Coordinator to the family to determine the family’s interest in having their child remain enrolled. When a parent does not respond in accordance with the timeline noted in the letter, the child’s slot will be considered an enrollment vacancy.

Gradual Entry

Gradual entry may be utilized to support group transitions for children. If a site chooses to gradually enter half of the children one day, and the remaining children the next day, the program can only count one day of service provided to all of its enrolled children. Some children may require a longer gradual entry at which time an ERSEA Status Change/Plan will be completed which is outlined under attendance modification and be approved by the Family Services Coordinator and Program Director.

Daily attendance is taken for all clients by the teacher. See the Childplus tutorial for step by step data entry instructions. Reasons for non-attendance are recorded on the day of the absence.

Attendance/Absence Guidance:

1. Teachers are responsible for entering daily attendance records on the attendance sheet. In some cases, daily attendance is entered upon arrival and departure by the teacher electronically right into the ChildPlus data system. Where this is not happening, Family Advocates are responsible for entering daily attendance records from an attendance sheet prepared by the teacher(s) into the ChildPlus database. The Family Advocate will support the teaching teams with follow up related to any absences. Attendance is also monitored by the Family Services Coordinator monthly using attendance reports available in the ChildPlus database.

The following codes are used to track attendance daily:

- **P** – Present: arrived and attended a scheduled day of the program
- **T** – Tardy: client arrived one hour after programing began
- **LE** – Left Early: client left for the day before snack or one hour before the program ends
- **T/LE** – Tardy & Left Early
- **E** – Excused Absence: child did not attend due to health, weather, transportation issues, religious or cultural reasons, other (family concerns)
- **N** – Not Scheduled to Attend: to be used for consecutive absences with the same reason from the original excused absence as long as staff has received prior notice the child will be absent
- **U** – Unexcused: to only be used after consulting the Family Services Coordinator

All attendance codes other than P – (Present) must be followed by a reason.

The following are the required criteria as a possible explanation of absence:

- **H** – health related absence
- **W** – weather related absence
- **T** – transportation related absence
- **R** – religious or cultural related absence
- **O** – other – explain
- **U** – unknown - to only be used after consulting the Family Services Coordinator

The ERSEA Status Change/Plan form must be completed by the Teacher or Family Advocate in partnership with the family **five days prior to any planned absences due to vacations or other reasons for being absent for*

more than four program days and are subject to approval by the Family Service Coordinator and/or Program Director.

2. When a client is absent and the staff is **not** notified, an attempt to contact the family will be made within an hour of the program start time and the reason for the absence will be documented and assessed. If the family cannot be reached by phone, and all emergency contacts have been exhausted staff responsible for recording and reporting attendance will attempt to make face-to-face contact with the family.

If contact is made, staff responsible for recording and reporting attendance will:

- Consider family engagement, how has the family been engaged in the importance their child's attendance and their participation in the program?
- Emphasize the necessity of regular attendance; review the family agreement signed by the family and staff at the initial education home visit. Use resources located at attendanceworks.org for parents and staff
- The staff member responsible for the child/family attendance will schedule a program services review with the staff members involved. This meeting will be conducted to generate ideas **for supporting and serving the family.**
- Discuss any special family circumstances influencing attendance
- Formulate a plan to improve attendance and discuss action steps needed, follow up on action steps weekly
- Consider another option, such as a transfer to another program; follow the transfer plan, complete the ERSEA Status Change/Plan form, work with the required staff until a matching opening occurs
- Document all real time contact and/or attempts to contact thoroughly
- The staff member responsible for the child/family attendance will follow-up with the family daily/weekly as needed once the child is in attendance to support and engage the family in their child's improved attendance and their on-going participation in the program
- Complete the ERSEA Status Change/Plan form requiring the parent's signature and proceed with filling the vacancy - **if the family chooses to withdraw from the program**
- In the event a client is absent for four or more consecutive days due to a health-related issue, contact the Health Coordinator to determine if a doctor's note is necessary in order for the child to return to school. If the child has not returned within three consecutive school days there-after, the staff member responsible for attendance will notify the Health Coordinator and follow step #2; proceed as indicated

If contact cannot be made, staff responsible for recording and reporting attendance will notify the Family Services/ERSEA Coordinator and the following steps will be followed:

- Send a **registered** letter which includes a "respond by" date giving the family five (5) days to contact Early Childhood Program to discuss their client's attendance
- If the family responds, staff responsible for recording and reporting attendance will work with the family to find solutions to the attendance problem. See #2 "If contact is made..."
- If the letter was delivered and there is no response within 5 business days, **the client will be dropped from the program** and the slot will be filled. If the letter is returned as "Undeliverable", **the client will be dropped from the program** and the slot will be filled.

3. In cases where a client is present at school less than 85% consistently during a month, the staff members assigned to the family will contact the family and follow step #2. In the event of prolonged, serious documented illness or extenuating family circumstances, an individual determination regarding the client's enrollment in the program may be made with input from the client's Teacher(s) and/or other staff involved

with the family at the center, the Family Services Coordinator and the Early Childhood Program Director. Every effort will be made to assist the client and family to be successful in the program.

4. Once a client is removed from the program, and a ERSEA Status Change/Plan form is received or completed by the Family Services Coordinator the following steps will be taken to fill the vacancy within **thirty days**:
 - **The Family Services Coordinator will contact the next family on the waitlist matching the dropped slot to inquire if the family wishes to be enrolled.**
 - **Next the Family Services Coordinator will prepare and circulate the client applied/enrolled status routing slip, selection criteria sheet and acceptance letter to all coordinators/managers: Once approved by the program coordinators, the acceptance letter will be mailed to the family accepted and the record will be made available to the program option receiving the new family to begin the enrollment process.**
 - **The Family Services Coordinator will accept the child in Childplus.**
 - Once the Teacher receives the client's information, reviews it for compliance, she/he will schedule with the family a visit to the classroom, set up the initial home visit and establish a start date with the parent. The client's Teacher or staff responsible for recording and reporting attendance will notify the Family Service Coordinator by email prior to the date of the first class day. The Family Services Coordinator will enroll the child in Childplus.

Home-Based Option

Rationale: In order to ensure that families participation in the Early Childhood Program Home Based Services receive the full benefit of what the program offers, the following home visiting attendance procedures have been established.

Guidance: The Home Based Early Childhood Program *will provide a minimum of 46 home visits per year, per family.* The purpose of the home visit is to help parents improve their parenting skills and to assist them in the use of the home as the child's primary learning environment. The home visitor must work with parents to help them provide learning opportunities that enhance their child's growth and development.

Home visits must be conducted by trained home visitors with the content of the visit jointly planned by the home visitor and the parents. Home visitors must conduct the home visit with the participation of parents. Home visits may not be conducted by the home visitor with only babysitters or other temporary caregivers in attendance.

Reasons for cancellations are requested by the Home Visitor from the family and recorded. At the family's convenience, home visits are scheduled for a consistent time and day of the week. A courtesy call is made by the Home Visitor a day or two before each Home Visit to remind the parent of the scheduled appointment.

If a parent requests that the time and/or day of the home visit be changed, the Home Visitor will make a reasonable effort to accommodate the parent during that week. A family may choose to cancel a scheduled home visit. These cancellations *are* defined below. Home Visitors will provide families with a monthly calendar of socialization activities and develop a home visiting schedule. If the family requests less than 4 home visits a month *the home visitor will complete the ERSEA Status Change/Plan form and follow the guidance as written. At this time, approval will be needed by the Family Services Coordinator who will review with the Program Director for approval and guidance.* Once approved, a new calendar established with the family for the period of time needed to best meet the family's needs. A family who has two or more enrolled children may request separate home visits for each individual child or one home visit a week that will last no more than three (3) hours per visit. A home visit is conducted at a minimum of 1.5 hours but not more than 3 hours and may be adjusted based on family needs.

Home Visits Canceled by the Home Visitor:

Home Visits canceled for any reason by the Home Visitor or WCAP Program will be rescheduled. Every effort will be made to schedule and complete all makeup visits within a month of the canceled visit and will be documented.

Home Visits Canceled by the Family:

In the event a family notifies the Home Visitor of the need for a cancellation; *examples may be: illness or family emergency etc.*, this shall be recorded. All efforts must be made to make-up a home-visit cancelled by the family at a mutually agreed upon time. If a family is unable to participate in a make-up home visit once it has been scheduled, the make-up visit will not be rescheduled unless the family requests it again. All efforts to schedule make-up visits will be documented.

Cancellation Documentation:

A Home Visit Cancellation form will be completed by the Home Visitor in the event of any Home Visit cancellation. The Home Visitor will then make every effort to have the Cancellation form signed by the family at the next home visit; documentation will be made and the original signed form will be logged in the family/child record.. All attempts to contact the family will be logged in the family/child record.

Missed, Cancelled or Rescheduled Home Visits:

In order to ensure all families have equal opportunity to be enrolled and participate in the Early Childhood Program the following home visit attendance procedures are established.

1. All missed, cancelled or rescheduled home visits will be documented on the Early Childhood Program Home Visit Cancellation form *once signed by the family*, data will be entered into the family/child record. *Also see cancellations sections for further guidance.*
2. The first home visit missed (family was not home or no contact) the Home Visitor will leave a message saying "Sorry we missed you, I will call to reschedule."
3. The second consecutive home visit missed, (family was not home or no contact) the Home Visitor will leave a message for the family to contact the Home Visitor to schedule the next visit. If the family did not return the call, the Home Visitor will initiate an unannounced face-to-face contact with the family that same week.
4. If a family misses three (3) consecutive un-excused home visits or the family demonstrates an inconsistent pattern in home visit availability, the Home Visitor and the family will discuss the importance of consistency in home visit participation. A new calendar of *scheduled home visits* which best meets the family's needs and aligns with the Home Visitors schedule will be created. If the family cannot be reached by phone the Home Visitor will attempt contact with the family by driving to the home making a second unannounced face-to-face visit. *1302.22 (see also guidance section for the process)* At this time, the Home Visitor will inform the Family Service Coordinator for support.
 - The Home Visitor will schedule a *Program Services Review* plan with the Family Service Coordinator. This meeting will be conducted to generate ideas **for supporting and serving the family**. The *new calendar of scheduled home visits* generated earlier with the family will also be reviewed for possible adjustment considerations during this meeting. Ideas will be discussed to support the family and resources and referrals given as needed and appropriate.
 - Efforts to assist families to problem solve will be made in support of getting them back on schedule. All contacts and meetings will be documented in the contact notes, or as otherwise indicated.
5. If a family misses four (4) or more consecutive visits the Family Service Coordinator will contact the family first by phone then by mail in the fourth week of absence (registered letter) to initiate contact to discuss the family's interest in remaining in the program.

6. If the Family Service Coordinator makes contact by letter, (registered letter) the letter will inform the family that if the program does not hear from them within five (5) days, we will assume they are no longer interested in the Home-based program and will fill their family's slot with a child from the waiting list.
7. If the registered letter is returned as "Undeliverable", the family will be dropped from the program *that day* and the slot will be filled *within 30 calendar days*

Support:

The intention of the contact with the family from the Family Service Coordinator is to support the family to reach a decision about their participation in the Home Based option. The family may choose to "take a break" if the program is not working for them at the time and the Family Service Coordinator will place the family on the waitlist and when a future opening occurs the family will be contacted at that time to inquire about their interest in returning to the program. All efforts are made by the Family Service Coordinator to make outside referrals for the family if the Home Based option is not a good fit for them, although no guarantees for placement are given.

Socialization Attendance:

1. A minimum of two group socialization activities per month will be made available for each child (a minimum of 22 group socialization activities will be offered each year).
2. If a scheduled socialization activity is cancelled by the program or Home Visitor, the event must be rescheduled.
3. Group socialization activities must be focused on both the children and parents. They may not be conducted by the home visitor with babysitters or other temporary caregivers.
4. The purpose of these socialization activities for the children is to emphasize peer group interaction through age appropriate activities in an Early Childhood Program classroom, community facility, home, or on a field trip. The children are to be supervised by the home visitor with parents observing at all times and actively participating at other times.
5. These activities must be designed so that parents are expected to accompany their children to the group socialization activities at least twice each month to observe, to participate as volunteers or to engage in activities designed specifically for the parents.

Title: Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, & Enrollment Policy

PC Approved: 2/27/19

BOD Approved: 3/28/19

Definitions:

Age Eligibility:

- For Early Head Start, a child must be an infant or toddler **younger than three years of age to enroll in the program**. Children will transition to Head Start or another appropriate setting as soon as possible after age three. For each child, a transition plan/timeline begins when the child is 30 months, it is reviewed and up-dated on or before the child is 36 months of age, the child transitions before the child is 42 months of age. Any exceptions to transition after 42 months must be reviewed and approved by the Program Director and be based on individual needs of the child.
- Pregnant women may be any age.
- For Head Start, a child must be **at least three years of age**; or turn three years old by the fifteenth of October of the enrolling year, but not older than the compulsory school age. Children may remain in Head Start until they reach Kindergarten age. Children who are Kindergarten-aged but are deemed

to need an additional year of Head Start/Pre-K may be enrolled following the procedures described below for five-year-olds.

Foster Care Eligibility:

Twenty-four-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the state agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child-care institutions, kinship care, and pre-adoptive homes. A child is in foster care in accordance with this definition regardless of whether the foster care facility is licensed and payments are made by the state or local agency for the care of the child, whether adoption subsidy payments are being made prior to the finalization of an adoption, or whether there is federal matching of any payments that are made.

Homeless Eligibility: *The term "homeless children and youths"--*

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and

(B) includes—

*(i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;**

(ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C));

(iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

*(iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii). *Per Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, "awaiting foster care placement" was removed from the definition of homeless on December 10, 2016; the only exception to his removal is that "covered states" have until December 10, 2017 to remove "awaiting foster care placement" from their definition of homeless.*

Income Eligibility:

- a. Income eligible (IE); the family's income is equal to or below 100% of the poverty guidelines and/or the family receives Public Assistance (TANF) and/or Social Security Insurance (SSI).
- b. 101-130% Families with income between 101 and 130% of Federal Poverty Guidelines (OI) (up to 35% of Early Head Start and Head Start enrollment; only if every effort has been made to recruit and enroll income eligible children first). Recruitment and outreach is conducted on an on-going regular basis to ensure the program has made every effort to serve income and categorically eligible families first. The waitlist is reviewed weekly to also enroll the most eligible children/pregnant women first. *See also recruitment plan*
- c. Over income Children from families with income above 130% of Federal Poverty Guidelines but below 200% (OI) (up to 10% of Early Head Start and Head Start enrollment)
- d. Pre-K eligibility: children from any income who do not fall into one of the above three categories and live within the appropriate local school district. Children that are pre-k eligible are served in accordance with the local school district MOU with non-Head Start funds.

Pre-K eligibility:

- a. Any child residing within the school district who is four-years-old or that the district deems eligible for their pre-k services.

Policy:

Eligibility

An application for services must be completed to initiate the process for enrollment consideration. Family Services Staff members who have been trained to support the eligibility determination process will provide assistance as needed for application completion, including home visiting outreach. Each child's eligibility is determined based on the information provided on the *Selection Criteria*.

An interview will be conducted with each prospective family to review application materials and discuss family circumstances to accurately assess risk factors. The interview should be used as an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the program and each prospective family. Interviewers will be prepared to respond to referral needs and remain sensitive to warning signs of domestic violence and/or challenges related to mental health. In situations where a face-to-face application cannot be completed, a phone interview may take place with prior approval and guidance from the Family Services Coordinator. Documentation must include the reason for a phone interview, the guidance given to the enrollment staff member and the outcome. All complete application data is entered in to the ChildPlus data base (see the Childplus tutorials for step by step instructions).

Verifying Eligibility:

1. Age Eligibility: Enrollment Staff members will request to see the child's legal birth certificate as proof of age, although it is not required in order to apply if all other eligibility requirements are met. Staff may ask for documents (other than the legal birth certificate), which indicate child's date of birth. Enrollment staff must verify age eligibility utilizing the *Selection Criteria* Sheet. The program will not require families to submit documents verifying the child's age if in doing so, creates a barrier for the family to enroll the child. Every effort will be made to support the family to obtain the child's legal birth certificate before the child ages out of head start.
 - a. Children who are five by 10/15 of the enrolling year (Kindergarten age) may not be enrolled without following the outlined process:
 - i. Both the family and the sending public school must make a recommendation for enrollment based on an appropriate factor (to include but not limited to developmental ability, special services available, current assessments, etc.). This recommendation must be documented and include data related to the recommended reason.
 1. If the child/family does not have a previous relationship with the public school, the specific case may be brought for discussion with the school by the Early Childhood Director.
 - ii. Enrollment decisions of children who are five by 10/15 of the enrolling year must be approved by the Early Childhood Director.
 1. In partnership classrooms the Early Childhood Director or designee may consult with the District Superintendent, Special Education Director or designee to ensure enrollment is appropriate and in the best interest of the child's education. The Early Childhood Director will ensure compliance with any school district policies.
 - iii. A case conference may be requested when necessary for successful transition into the classroom.
 - iv. The above does not apply to children who are eligible for services through CDS under Chapter 676.
2. Income Eligibility: Verification of income eligibility will be determined using the most up-to-date *Federal Register, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Poverty Guidelines*, which aligns with the current

enrolling program year. Children are selected in a priority order, in alignment with the HSSPS (see definitions section for additional explanations):

- b. Income eligible (IE)
 - c. 101 and 130% (OI)
 - i. up to 35% of Early Head Start and Head Start enrollment; only if every effort has been made to recruit and enroll income eligible children first
 - d. Over income (OI)
 - ii. up to 10% of Early Head Start and Head Start enrollment
 - e. Pre-K eligibility:
2. Homeless Eligibility: Homeless families/children are considered to be eligible for services. At application, families are not required to verify income, submit immunization records, other health records, child's birth certificate or other documents. Although it is not required in order to be enrolled, the program will make every effort to support the family in gathering the aforementioned documentation in support of the family's on-going needs and eligibility for other services with-in the community. *To determine if a family or child is homeless, WCAP will use section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.*
 3. Foster Care Eligibility: children in foster care are determined to be eligible for services. To verify whether a child is in foster care, program staff must accept either a court order other legal or government-issued document, a written statement from a government child welfare official that demonstrates the child is in foster care, or proof of a foster care payment.
 4. Pre-K Eligibility: children who live in the towns served by the district collaborations are eligible for pre-k services based on what is outlined in the current MOU with that district. Documentation for determining pre-k eligibility varies by district.

Verifying Income: In order for a family to apply for Head Start or Early Head Start, trained Enrollment Staff members will request income verification for the 12 months preceding the month in which the application is submitted or verification which reflects a relevant time period during the calendar year preceding the calendar year in which the application is submitted, which ever more accurately reflects the needs of the family at the time of application. Families will be asked to submit proof of income during the application process. Staff will use the definition of income as indicated in the Performance Standards and the *Federal Register, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services*. If the family reports they are self-employed with no income documentation or have no income staff will:

1. Request a signed declaration of no income from the family
2. Document all efforts made to verify family income explaining how the income was calculated
3. In the event staff must contact a third party to obtain written information necessary to prove income or no income, staff will ensure permissions to exchange information has been signed stating the family gives consent for the information to be shared with the program

Staff must indicate what documentation was used as verification utilizing the *Selection Criteria*.

A redetermination of eligibility is required:

- Prior to an Early Head Start transition to Head Start
- Prior to a 3rd program year in Head Start only

A copy of all documentation used to determine a child's eligibility will be collected and routed to the WCAP Early Childhood Program Office Clerk for status verification and forwarded on to the Family Services Coordinator for final authorization.

Selection

Children are selected for enrollment in Head Start using a standardized criteria points system aligned with Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, and the Head Start Performance Standards. Families/children are given points on the *Section Criteria* based on their current needs, homeless or foster child status, income eligibility, age eligibility and other considerations. When an opening occurs, the next child/family will be selected based on location desired and/or available, highest points scored on the *Section Criteria*.

The *Selection Criteria* is approved by Policy Council annually. The *Selection Criteria* may be updated each year based on the most recent Community Needs Assessment and other considerations.

Head Start and Early Head Start eligible children will be selected for the program based on the points that they score on the *Selection Criteria*. For public pre-k slots, children will be prioritized as written into the current MOU with the school district.

In cases where child-care licensing ratios must be maintained based on already enrolled children and the next child to be selected does not have an age that would comply with that ratio the program may move to the next child on the list.

WCAP will not deny enrollment based on a disability or chronic health condition or its severity.

When a child is selected for enrollment approval of that enrollment will circulate to the Content Area Managers/Coordinators. Each Coordinator/Manager reviews and approves the selection for enrollment, indicates any additional recommendations, requests further information if needed and returns the *Client Enrollment Status Routing slip* to the Family Services Coordinator for final approval.

Once all parties have reviewed and approved the child/family for enrollment, the acceptance letter is mailed to the family. The Office Clerk will then call the family to inform them they have been accepted and informs them their acceptance letter is being mailed and will explain next steps.

Enrollment and eligibility data will be reported monthly to the Policy Council and the Board of Director's.

Waitlist:

A waitlist is maintained throughout the year to support timely enrollment of vacant slots as turnovers and transitions occur. Complete applications, not accepted for enrollment will be kept on the waiting list for the program year in which applied. Children will be selected from the waitlist following the selection process detailed above. This process will be follow up monthly until the family is selected to be served by the program, ages out, and/or becomes ineligible for services based on the programs selection process for eligibility or has chosen to be removed from the waitlist.

Ongoing resource information related to educational and developmental need will be offered to all families on the waitlist in order to support best placement based on information given to the program at the initial interview and application meeting.

Should a child not be selected from the program waitlist during the program year and/or the family wishes the child to be considered for enrollment in the succeeding program year, the original application and income verification must be updated after six (6) months from the initial income verification.

Enrollment Committee:

WCAP Early Childhood Program Enrollment Committee consists of the content area Coordinators and Managers with support from the Program Director as needed. When an opening occurs the Family Services Coordinator authorizes the *Selection Criteria*.

Enrollment

Once a child has been selected to participate in the program, they are considered "*accepted*." Staff will work with families to obtain any additional required information and documentation to support the enrollment process.

"*Enrolled child*" means a child has received a direct service (for example: has been accepted and has attended class, received at least one home visit or has received a direct support from a staff person).

Occasionally children have special needs which prevents them from successfully participating in the classroom for a period of time upon enrollment (ex: broken leg). An *ERSEA Status Change Request* should be completed and approved by the Family Services Coordinator and authorized by the Program Director for these situations with supplemental home visits offered and encouraged.

When a transfer from one WCAP site or option to another WCAP site or option is necessary, children are given priority status for locations for which they meet the selection criteria and will be enrolled before children on the waiting list.

Records:

Enrollment/eligibility records will be housed in the client record and/or in the Childplus database and will remain intact until the child/pregnant woman is no longer eligible for the program.

Once a child/family transitions out of the program, the client records are broken down from the binder which they are housed in while enrolled. The order of the documents will remain in the order listed on the client file index located in the front of the file. The file is then placed in a large manila envelope and labeled with the client's name, program last attended, year leaving the program and last eligibility determination. The records are all transported to the main office and logged in the programs "archive records" spreadsheet. The records are then stored in alphabetical order program wide and kept in a secure, locked storage area.

See *Data Management Protocol* for information on record retention.

Title: Recruitment Plan

PC Approved: 2/27/19

BOD Approved: 3/28/19

Overview

Recruitment for WCAP Early Childhood Program is a systematic process, which utilizes the Community Assessment to target recruitment areas. Intentional recruitment strategies are implemented to identify children most in need of Head Start services. Intentional recruitment activities are implemented to support enrollment of children experiencing homelessness, in DHHS custody, and children with diagnosed disabilities. Expanded recruitment strategies are implemented for options that serve mixed socio-economic groups. The program will engage in a cycle of continuous recruitment and monitoring within the service area to:

- Determine if eligible children have access to program sites/options;
- Ensure that options are able to maintain funded full-enrollment;
- Review recruitment areas, center locations and options using the latest Community Assessment information; and
- Identify community partnership opportunities.

Responsibilities

Family Services Staff members and other designated staff will recruit throughout the program year. Intensive recruitment for fall enrollment is scheduled to begin in March of each year. Recruitment activities will be tailored to meet the needs of the community, ranging from participation in public events to home visit outreach. Although the Family Services Coordinator is primarily responsible for recruitment at local levels, every staff member is responsible for the public relations of the program and should recruit eligible children for services. The Program Director with support from the program Managers and Coordinators are responsible for assuring public school partnership connections.

Recruitment Activities:

Recruitment activities will be carried out in a manner that ensures:

- Input from the community and parents (local and governance)
- Year round recruitment efforts are coordinated, individualized and implemented
- Families and parenting teens with eligible children are informed of enrollment opportunities
- Other service providers that serve Head Start eligible children are informed of enrollment opportunities

Recruitment Materials & Methods:

Recruitment materials and methods may consist of the following *but are not limited to*:

- Media
- Newsletters
- Brochures
- Intake Screening sheets (*staff members responsibility*)
- Direct mail
- Screenings
- Transition meetings
- Referrals from collaborative partners
- Community Referrals
- Websites
- Local Activities targeting families of young children and expecting families
- Open Houses, Art Shows, etc.
- Word of mouth
- Bulletin Boards
- HEAP Referrals
- Intra-agency connections

Recruitment of Children with Disabilities

Recruitment activities have been established to ensure that a minimum of 10% of Early/Head Start enrollment opportunities are accessed by children with disabilities. Efforts to raise awareness of Head Start's intent to serve children with disabilities include:

- Indicating "services for children with disabilities" on recruitment materials.
- Providing CDS referral information at preschool screenings.
- Providing Head Start materials about eligibility requirements, options and services to CDS staff and partner agencies serving children with disabilities.
- Obtaining parent/guardian consent to obtain medical information from medical/health providers at the time of application or when staff members become aware of a suspected disability.

Recruitment of Children Experiencing Homelessness

Recruitment activities to promote intentional outreach to children and families experiencing homelessness include:

- Regular connections with public school partners to identify younger siblings of school aged children experiencing homelessness.
- Regular connections with area homeless shelters through the Family Services Coordinator and other partners
- Sharing eligibility criteria with partner programs and agencies, specifically referencing homelessness.

Recruitment of Children in DHHS Custody

Monthly the Family Service Coordinator will make connections with the local DHHS Office to inform them of any open slots.

Title: Suspensions and Expulsion Policy

PC Approved: 2/27/19

BOD Approved: 3/28/19

Suspensions:

In accordance with HSPPS 1302.17:

- WCAP limits suspensions and expulsions of children participating in Head Start and Early Head Start programs.
- Temporary suspensions may only be used as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications.
 - The Head Start Director is the only one who may approve a temporary suspension.
 - AND if a temporary suspension is necessary, WCAP will engage with a mental health consultant, collaborate with the families, and utilize appropriate community resources – such as behavior coaches, psychologists, other appropriate specialists, or other resources – as needed, to determine no other reasonable option is appropriate.
- When a temporary suspension is deemed necessary WCAP will:
 - Help the child return to full participation in all program activities as quickly as possible while ensuring child safety by:
 - Continue to engage with the families and a mental health consultant, and continuing to utilize appropriate community resources;
 - Develop a written plan to document the action and supports needed;
 - Provide services that include home visits; and,
 - Determine whether a referral to a local agency responsible for implementing IDEA is appropriate.
 - A case review will be completed on this child.

Expulsions:

WCAP will not expel or un-enroll a child from Head Start because of the child's behavior.

- When a child exhibits persistent and serious challenging behaviors, WCAP will explore all possible steps and document all steps taken to address such problems, and facilitate the child's safe participation in the program. Such steps must include, at a minimum, engaging a mental health consultant, considering the appropriateness of providing appropriate services and supports under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to ensure that the child who satisfies the definition of disability in 29 U.S.C. §705(9)(b) of the Rehabilitation Act is not excluded from the program on the basis of disability, and consulting with the families and the child's teacher, and:
 - One such possible step is a modified attendance plan (See Below).
- If the child has an individualized family service plan (IFSP) or individualized education program (IEP), WCAP will consult with the agency responsible for the IFSP or IEP to ensure the child receives the needed support services; or,
- If the child does not have an IFSP or IEP, WCAP will collaborate, with parental consent, with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA to determine the child's eligibility for services.
- If, after WCAP has explored all possible steps and documented all steps taken as described in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, a program, in consultation with the families, the child's teacher, the agency responsible for implementing IDEA (if applicable), and the mental health consultant, determines that the child's continued enrollment presents a continued serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children and determines the WCAP program is not the most appropriate placement for the child, WCAP will work with such entities to directly facilitate the transition of the child to a more appropriate placement.

Modified Attendance Plans:

- There may be cases where WCAP works with the teachers and the families to determine a modified attendance plan is necessary. Modified attendance plans are not considered suspensions or expulsions. Modified attendance plans may be used for any number of reasons, including behaviors.
- Modified attendance plans are used to support individual children based on their needs.
 - For example: a young child may not be ready to have a long day.
 - For example: a child going through a series of unwanted behaviors may need additional support and will be more successful with a shorter day.
- All Modified Attendance Plans are approved by the Early Childhood Director and documented on the *ERSEA Status Change Request*.

Title: Training on Eligibility Policy

PC Approved: 2/27/19

BOD Approved: 3/28/19

Policy:

It is the policy of WCAP Early Childhood Program to assure that all necessary staff members, policy council members and the board of directors are properly trained on, and aware of eligibility requirements for the WCAP programs.

Procedure:

1. The Board of Directors and Policy Council will be trained on eligibility for WCAP Early Childhood Program including the methods to collect, complete, and assure accuracy of eligibility information from families and third party sources and any agency policy's pertaining to this collection. This training will occur at the joint policy council/board meeting; which must occur within 180 days when a new policy council or board member is seated; if a seat is vacated on either of the governing boards during the program year the new member must receive training on this topic within 180 days of joining the representative governing body.
2. Managers, Family Services Staff members and Directors hired as part of the child and family services team who work with WCAP Early Childhood Program & Early Childhood Program will be trained within 90 days of hire, and yearly thereafter.
3. The ERSEA Coordinator/Family Services Coordinator along with support from members of the management/leadership team will make eligibility determinations for the program. As such, they need to be trained on methods to collect, complete and assure accuracy of eligibility information from families and third party sources, new management staff/coordinators will be trained within 30 days of hire and will review the training information yearly thereafter.
4. Family Services Staff members who support data collection for eligibility determinations will be trained on how to collect eligibility information, how to treat families with dignity and respect, how to deal with and support possible issues of domestic violence stigma, and privacy that may come out during the application process, and on the agency policy for violating eligibility determination regulations. Training will occur annually during pre-service training and within 90 days of hire for any related vacated positions.
5. Management staff and Family Service Staff will be retrained on eligibility policies at a minimum of every two years.

Title: Violating Eligibility Determination Policy

PC Approved: 2/27/19

BOD Approved: 3/28/19

Policy:

WCAP Early Childhood Program accurately and appropriately evaluates the eligibility of each child and family who enrolls in the Head Start programs. It is our intention to safeguard our program against any fraud. Any staff member who intentionally violates federal and/or program eligibility determination regulation which results in the enrolling of pregnant women or children found not eligible for the program will be subject to agency's disciplinary action process. If upon review, it is discovered that fraud was willfully committed the staff member may be immediately dismissed.

Procedure:

1. If a member of the community suspects that a violation of federal and/or program eligibility determination has occurred they should follow the agency complaint procedure to communicate and resolve the issue.
2. If a staff member suspects that a violation of federal and/or program eligibility determination has occurred they should immediately report to their supervisor and/or the Program Director. An investigation will occur following the agency investigation process and report the result of any investigations conducted to the Policy Council and Board of Directors whether fraud was discovered or not.
3. Any family who is found to be ineligible through the complaint process or agency investigation process, will be given a week to transition to another service in cases where an error was made; and 72 hours to transition out of the program in the case where fraud was discovered.

Subpart B- Program Structure

Title: Classroom Assignments of Teaching Staff

Policy Council Approval: 10/10/18

Board Approval: 10/25/18

Rationale: To ensure that all classrooms are staffed with a qualified staff. To ensure that staffing patterns reflect equitable distribution of people with the highest credentials and experience. To ensure that consideration is given to providing a balance of instructional and social-emotional supports. To ensure healthy environments by promoting positive interpersonal and communication skills. To consider the importance of continuity of care for children.

Considerations for classroom assignments include the following:

1. Structure:

All classrooms will be staffed with at least two staff persons, one of which must meet the credentials for a Lead Teacher.

- Job Description credentials align with the requirements of the Head Start Standards and Head Start Act and are read annually and updated as necessary.
- The Lead Teacher supervises the other staff in the classroom as outlined in the *Center Supervisory Procedure*.

Whenever possible the classrooms will be staffed with a third person or classroom aide. In some cases, this aide may be shared between classrooms of the same building.

Specific staffing determinations are made yearly by the Early Childhood Director and appropriate Content Area Coordinator/Manager(s). These specifics, as well as program options, are outlined in the *Program Information Chart* housed in the main office.

2. Program Option:

The particular program option may dictate the staffing requirements needed. These details are primarily covered under Section 3 (Credentials) and Section 4 (Experience).

3. Credentials:

All Pre-K Lead Teachers in public school collaborative classrooms will meet state Pre-K teaching certification requirements as outlined in Chapter 124 including a DOE issued 081 state teaching certification (conditional, professional, or otherwise).

Head Start classrooms will follow federal guidance for staff qualifications which requires 50% of all Head Start teachers will have, at minimum, Bachelor's Degree in early childhood education or a Baccalaureate or advanced degree in any subject, and coursework equivalent to a major (24 ECE credits) relating to early childhood education with experience teaching preschool-age children. Whenever possible, teaching teams will have at least one teacher with a Bachelor's Degree in the Lead Teacher position.

Assistant Teachers will have at a minimum a (CDA) credential and/or an Associate or Baccalaureate degree (in any area), with 24 ECE credits when feasible.

Classroom Aides without other education will be encouraged to complete a Child Development Associate (CDA).

Any staff who have credentials different from the position they are serving in will be approved by the Early Childhood Director.

All staff who do not meet the preferred qualifications for the job for which they are performing will be encouraged to obtain additional education and credentialing as outlined in the *Professional Development Policy*.

4. Experience & Training:

Experience teaching in an early childhood setting, as well as experience working with the age group (infants, toddlers, pre-k) for which the staff is assigned, will be considered in classroom assignments. Whenever possible a more experienced teacher will be paired with a less experienced teacher to provide opportunities for professional growth through observation and modeling.

Staff should also have completed training on the Maine Early Learning and Development Standards or Maine Infant Toddler Guidelines (whichever is appropriate for the age group with which they work). Every effort to have Lead Teachers at each site with these trainings will be made.

5. Instructional & social-emotional supports:

In making classroom assignments consideration will be given to individual staff members who have participated in professional development opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills in particular areas of instructional supports (ex: literacy; special needs) or social-emotional supports (ex: relational

teaching skills; positive behavioral response). The goal is to provide all children with access to staff with a variety of skills who can meet the wide-range of needs present in a classroom as well as individualize responses to optimize healthy development.

All staff will be exposed to these professional development opportunities as they become available.

6. Creating healthy environments by promoting positive interpersonal and communication skills:

A healthy environment for children is dependent upon the communication skills and styles of the adults. Attention will be paid to assessing each staff member's skills and efforts in supporting positive interactions between adults and children and between adults in a classroom using the CLASS observation tool. Classroom assignments will reflect efforts to create teaching teams that can provide optimal positive environments for learning.

5. Continuity of Care - maximizing opportunities for the development of healthy relationships between children and teaching staff:

Changes to classroom staffing assignments will take into consideration the importance of continuity of care for healthy emotional development of children.

6. Staff Performance:

Historical performance of a staff member may be taken into consideration when assigning teaching staff to classrooms. This may include: attendance, evaluations, complaints, etc.

7. Staff Request:

Whenever possible management staff will take into consideration staff preference in assigning classroom assignments. This is, unfortunately, not guaranteed and is trumped by the conditions listed above.

Process:

1. In April, supervisors will review the file of each teacher including Performance Evaluations, progress on goals, progress on Professional Development Plans, any concerns or complaints filed, and any awards or recognition received.
2. At the May supervisory meeting, supervisors will review the above with each teacher and discuss the implications for their current position. Supervisors will also review with each teacher the current classroom team and solicit input on how the team is working in regard to providing a quality educational experience for children. This discussion will be guided by the criteria in the Guidance section of this policy. At this time part-year staff will be asked to complete a Letter of Intent to return to their current position. At this time teachers may request a change in status or placement.
 - a. The annual file review and supervisory meeting may result in a recommendation for retaining current status, a promotion to a higher status, or a recommendation for an improvement plan which may include a change in status. This may also include a change of location due to the review or due to changes in program options or locations. Teacher requests will be considered but cannot be guaranteed. Any change in placement or status will be made to meet the criteria in the Guidance section of this policy.
3. When a position becomes available the opening will be posted in-house and any qualified staff person may apply by submitting a letter of intent to the Human Resources Manager. The decision will be guided by the criteria in the Guidance section of this policy.

4. Final decisions on teacher placements will be made by the Early Childhood Director, with recommendations by Content Area Coordinators/Managers as early in the summer months as possible.
5. Teachers will be notified in writing in a call-back letter mailed as early as possible in August of each year. Whenever possible the supervisor will give a phone call to staff prior to call-back letters.

Subpart C- Education and Child Development Program Services

Title: Active Play and Screen Time Policy

Policy Council Approval: 7/10/19

Board Approval: 7/25/19

Rationale: Gross motor development is important to overall health and is gained through regular play and movement, both indoors and outdoors. Other children, in a rich learning environment, electronic media can get in the way of exploring, playing, self-regulation and interacting with others.

Guidance:

1. Classrooms will provide daily opportunities for children to engage in moderate to vigorous activities indoors and outdoors, weather permitting.
 - a. There should be a minimum of 30 minutes of outdoor active playtime with a goal of 60 minutes of combined indoor and outdoor active playtime per day.
2. Physical activity must never be used as reward or punishment.
3. Physical activity should be encouraged as part of self-regulation strategies to promote optimal learning and overall well-being.
4. There will be no televisions in classrooms.
5. Any computer screen time for 3-5-year-old classrooms should be limited to no more than 15 minutes and educational in nature
6. There will be zero screen time in any infant and toddler classroom.

Title: Active Supervision and Accountability of Children Procedure

Policy Council Approval: 7/10/19

Board Approval: 7/25/19

Rationale:

These strategies allow for infants, toddlers, and preschool children to safely explore their environments while being closely supervised by staff. All staff and volunteers are responsible for the active supervision, safety, and accountability of all children within the WCAP Early Childhood Program classrooms at all times. This procedure should be used as a guide to examine your classroom set up and practices.

Guidance:

- 1.) Set up the environment to supervise children and be accessible at all times.

- a. Staff will consider the arrangement of the classroom so that play spaces remain clutter free, and children are easily seen and heard at all times.
 - b. Visuals will be used in the classroom, including a daily schedule for predictable routines, stop signs on classrooms doors, and other visual rules and directions.
- 2.) Proper zoning to allow staff to see and hear children at all times.
- a. Staff will position themselves in the environment to keep children safe, and prevent potential harm. This means having clear pathways to children for quick reactions when necessary.
 - b. Staff will be mindful of children who may need additional support, and position themselves accordingly.
 - c. Staff will communicate with each other about shifts in zoning as needed, such as a staff member needing to leave the room.
 - d. Staff will work together to have a supervision plan, and a method of communication to call for support if needed such as dialing extensions, calling cell phones, or shouting for assistance.
- 3.) Scan the environment, and frequently count children.
- a. Be aware of where children are at and what they are doing. Communicate with other staff and volunteers as needed for accountability.
 - b. Always know the number of children in your classroom at any given time.
 - c. Classroom doors will be monitored, with awareness of who is coming and going. Children should never leave a classroom without the knowledge of a teacher or without being signed out. Systems should be put in place in the classroom to know which children are out of the classroom.
 - i. Special attention should be paid for children who may receive services or therapies that require them to exit the classroom with a service provider.
 - ii. If there is any reason to believe a child has exited the classroom unsupervised, it should be investigated immediately and reported to a supervisor.
 - d. Count the number of children frequently so all are accounted for. This is especially important during transitions to and from the classroom:
 - i. Child arrival and pick up will be recorded on attendance by WCAP staff or by parent. This is also true when classrooms are attending field trips.
 - ii. When going out of the classroom or returning to the classroom for any reason, staff will count the number of children in line and perform a roll call to verify child presence before leaving a location and upon arriving at the destination.
 - iii. One staff member will do a sweep of the environment to make sure that all children are accounted for. Another staff member will remain with children. If a child leaves the line for whatever reason, one staff person will stay with the rest of the children, while a second staff person assists the child to return. Head counts/roll calls of children and sweeps of the environment should be completed again once the child has rejoined the group.
 - iv. Children must be holding on to a loop ring, or the hand of an adult during any transition.
 - v. Staff will be positioned at the front of the line, and the end of the line for accountability and supervision.
- 4.) Listen for specific sounds or lack of sounds that could indicate potential concern.
- a. Staff will be aware of when children are showing signs of distress or needing assistance, and respond immediately to assist the child.
 - b. Please see *Safe Place and Positive Techniques of Guidance Policy* for addressing potentially disruptive, dangerous, or very dangerous behaviors.
- 5.) Anticipate children's behaviors to provide the necessary support.

- a. Build the school family in order to get to know child's individual interest, skills, and patterns of behavior.
 - b. Be aware of children who may take risks, wander, or get upset. Remain close to these children, and others, that may need assistance throughout the day or during various activities.
- 6.) Engage and redirect children when they are unable to solve problems independently.
- a. Match the level of support based on individual needs and development.

Title: Animal Visits in the Classroom Policy

Policy Council Approval: 7/10/19

Board Approval: 7/25/19

Rationale: The primary responsibility of the Early Childhood Program is to provide a safe, secure, and healthy environment in which all children can learn, play and grow. In order for animals to play a positive role in the life of the young child, it is necessary for staff to take reasonable precautions and show consideration for children who may have allergies and other health concerns.

Guidance:

- The classroom teachers will schedule animal visits and complete an Animal Request Form to be submitted to the site supervisor ten (10) calendar days before the animal visits. The site supervisor has the authority to grant or deny requests based on individual cases. When a request is granted, families will be notified of animal visits in writing.
- In addition to the Animal Request form, a Field Trip/Special Guest form will also be completed when children experience the animals at school as part of a special event.
- The following must be followed:
 - Children and adults must wash their hands before and after direct contact with any animal following the Hand Washing Policy.
 - All visiting animals will either be on a secured leash or in a cage when introduced to the children. A safe and secure location will be provided for children who may experience animals outside of the classroom (i.e. playground or adjacent area).
 - Any animal waste should be disposed of utilizing universal precaution guidance by the visiting animal owner.
 - Teaching staff will supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals. Any handling of animals will be done in a kind manner appropriate for the type of animal.
 - Program staff will make sure that any child who is allergic to an animal is not exposed to that animal. Any classroom pets requested must follow the same request and approval process and all health and sanitation guidelines.
- The following should be considered:
 - When animals are experienced in a multi-purpose building/or outdoor area all affected parties will be notified and permission obtained, at least one week prior to the planned event.
 - Proof of liability insurance may be required from owners of animals when brought in from an outside location, such as a local farm.
 - Parking for large animal trailers must be considered when planning visits.
 - Additional adult volunteers should be encouraged to ensure the safety of all children.
 - Small group learning experiences with animals provide better opportunities for learning and safety for children and animals.

- When appropriate, pets or visiting animals will have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animals are fully immunized and that the animal is suitable for contact with children.

Title: Child Assessment Procedure

Policy Council Approval: 6/12/19

Board Approval: 7/25/19

Staff will utilize the selected ongoing assessment tool in assessing, promoting, and supporting a child's educational progress.

For each child:

- The Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) Assessment will be utilized through the online platform.
- Staff will work to ensure current reliability.
- Individual Child Plans will be created for each child monthly using the TSG weekly planning form. Plans will be used to individualize instruction and monitor progress.
- Staff will complete assessments of individual children utilizing authentic interactions to create observations.
- Staff shall collect observations ongoing.
 - Observations will be entered in increments weekly.
 - All children will have evidence of observations entered monthly.
- Checkpoint Guidelines:
 - For every checkpoint staff will enter a minimum of two or three observations for each TSG objective. Each objective will be linked to a dimension.
 - For instance:
 - Objective 20. Uses concepts and operations has six sub-dimensions (20a, 20b, 20c, 20d, 20e, 20f). You are required to have 2-3 observations linked to any of the six dimensions.
 - So to meet the criteria observations could look like this:
 - 20a: 1
 - 20b: 1
 - 20c: 0
 - 20d: 1
 - 20e: 0
 - 20f: 0
 - Note: Best practice is each sub-dimension would have an observation linked to it. Best practice would look like this:
 - 20a: 1
 - 20b: 1
 - 20c: 1
 - 20d: 1
 - 20e: 1
 - 20f: 1
 - When 2-3 observations are entered per dimension staff will finalize the TSG checkpoint.
 - Checkpoints will be completed on time. If staff are struggling to maintain the checkpoint timeline they should notify their supervisor at least two weeks prior to the checkpoint is due.

- Data from observations shall be used in lesson planning and individualization.
 - There must be records of TSG individualization for each child at least twice per month.
- At the end of each assessment checkpoint staff will generate *TSG Development and Learning Reports* to be used as discussion points when meeting with families for Family Conferences and goal setting. Additional TSG reports may be used to support these conversations. Copies of reports will be given to the family.
- The *TSG Family Conference Form* will be utilized in the Family Conference a minimum of twice a year. Staff will record family input directly onto this form and staff and parents will sign the report. A copy of the *TSG Family Conference Form* will be given to the family.
- For children enrolled in school-year programs there will be three checkpoint assessment periods. For children enrolled in full-year programs there will be four checkpoint assessment periods.

For the classroom:

- *TSG Classroom Profile Reports* may be used for individualization and small group planning at any point during each checkpoint and after the finalization of each checkpoint.
- Each child will have individual goals targeted no less than 2X monthly.

For the program:

- Content area managers will set the assessment periods at the beginning of each program year.
 - Changes to the assessment period may be approved with permission from the Early Childhood Director. All efforts will be made to maintain consistent data timeframes across the program.
- Content area managers will provide training and technical assistance as needed to ensure staff are able to complete child assessment observations.
- Content area managers will provide TSG Documentation Status and TSG Assessment Status information to classroom teams regularly and as needed, to inform instructional decisions and to monitor progress.
- At the end of each checkpoint and every program year and Content area managers will save all child assessment data.
- The Early Childhood Director will share aggregate data with collaborative partners at key points.
- Content area managers & Early Childhood Director will work together provide aggregate data to the Policy Council, Board of Directors and self-assessment team at key points throughout the year.

Writing Quality Observations:

Objective Observations:

- When writing an anecdote/observation, follow the following guidance:
 - Observe the situation
 - Identify the situation is valuable for purposes of recording an observation (i.e. it is developmentally significant/related to a child's specific goals, the Maine Early Learning & Development Standards/Maine Infant Toddler Guidelines, or Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework).
 - Write down an objective observation of the situation.
 - Enter the observation into TSG and set a preliminary level.
- Well-written anecdotes include:
 - Brief description that builds a visual image
 - Summarize any context necessary for understanding the situation
 - Uses descriptive words or direct quotes
 - Is done factually and non-judgmentally without interpretation
 - Uses examples of child's work product (photos, videos)

Title: Child Referral Procedure

Policy Council Approval: 6/27/19

Board Approval: 7/25/19

Rationale: The purpose of the child referral procedure is to guide Teachers, Family Service Staff and Early Head Start Home Visitors when a referral is indicated for any child within the program. The procedure details the responsibilities and steps to be taken by the Head Start staff.

Referrals should be made as soon as possible to ensure that children receive prompt services; are successful learners, and are ready for school.

Referrals for Behaviors/Mental Health and Special Needs:

1. Through the enrollment and application process, families are made aware of Child Development Services (CDS) and are asked if they have any developmental or behavioral concerns for their child at that time. Families are encouraged to contact CDS and/or their primary care physician prior to being accepted into any Head Start program for a screening, especially if they have concerns. All families are given a CDS brochure that explains their services.
2. During the initial home visit, Teachers, Family Service Staff and/or EHS Home Visitors remind families of the services provided by both Child Development Services and the Mental Health Consultant. The referral procedure is reviewed and staff answer any questions the family may have.
3. For newly enrolled children who have not been previously screened, a developmental screening will occur within forty-five (45) calendar days of enrollment. WCAP Early Childhood Programs staff and/or CDS complete the screenings and may make recommendations for referrals at the time of screening, in partnership with parents. See *Screening Procedure* for more information.
4. Behavioral or developmental concerns are documented in writing by staff through child observations, behavior incident documentation, and as indicated by screening results. It is best practice for staff to contact the family in person or by telephone to express these concerns and discuss any concerns the family may have. EHS Home Visitors will discuss concerns during a scheduled weekly home visit. Staff will take a strength based approach always discussing areas of strength prior to areas of concern. Parents should be asked if they note other areas of strengths not discussed. Staff should emphasize that a referral is made to gather more information about the child. Information that can result from a referral can be used to individualize a child's program.
 - a. Concerns should then be addressed seeking feedback from parents.
 - b. Staff should be objective, respectful to the family, and should not suggest any diagnosis.
 - c. Parents should be assured that both Child Development Services and the Mental Health Consultant are trained to work with children and make any subsequent screening or evaluation process fun for the child.
5. Staff follow the *Response to Difficult or Unsafe Behavior Procedure* and may make referrals using the referral procedure.
6. All pertinent information should be attached to the Referral Form. This may include child observations, social-emotional and developmental assessments, and parent comments. The completed Referral Form is then sent to the Special Services Manager or Mental Health & Prevention Manager.
7. Once received, the form will be forwarded to the appropriate person/ agency within 72 hours or upon completion of the referral packet.
 - a. The Director will be notified in the event the form is not forwarded within the 72 hours.

Referrals for Health and Nutrition:

1. Through the screening process, the Health and/or Nutrition Coordinator will make referrals to the appropriate Consultant and/or Health Care Provider. Refer to the *Screening Procedure*.
2. The Referral Form may or may not be used in the process of making a health or nutrition referral. A parent signature is not required when making a Health or Nutrition referral, however the parent/family is always informed of the referral. Referrals are processed in a timely manner and tracked in ChildPlus by Health and/or Nutrition Coordinator. Referrals for special services through Child Development Services or Medical Model services require a parent's signature/informed consent. Referrals for special services are tracked in ChildPlus by the Special Services Manager.

All Referrals:

- In all circumstances, the parent is an active participant in the referral process. Should parents not be interested in a referral, this is their right. It is important to share with parents that any referral that leads to some extra support for their child can have a profound impact upon a child's development and readiness for school. Staff continue to monitor the child's progress and to work with the family around their concerns for delaying a referral. Staff should contact the appropriate Content Coordinator when a family does not wish to seek a referral. This should be documented in the Child File and in ChildPlus in the appropriate content area with the reason(s) for the parent refusal noted.
- Once concerns are communicated with the family, and the family agrees to a referral, Teachers, Family Service Staff and/or EHS Home Visitors will complete the WCAP Early Childhood Programs Referral Form and have it signed by the parent/guardian.

Title: Classroom Design and Materials Guidance

Policy Council Approval: 6/27/19

Board Approval: 7/25/19

Rationale: Classrooms should be lively, inviting, safe, and developmentally appropriate for the children enrolled within them. Classroom layout and the choice of the materials within them should follow the guidance provided below.

Classrooms must:

- Provide a physical environment conducive to learning and reflective of the different stages of development of each child.
 - Always ensure at least 35 square feet of usable space per child.
 - Be changed throughout the year to meet the needs of enrolled children.
 - Utilize recommendations from Content Area Managers/Coordinators as well as Mental Health Consultants in considering classroom layout.
- Be inclusive of any children with disabilities enrolled in the classroom.
 - Utilizing recommendations made in consultation with the Special Services Manager.
- Be inclusive of children who are dual language learners
 - Audio opportunities, books, labels in home language
- Be organized into functional areas that can be recognized by the children and that allow for individual activities and social interaction.

- Functional “interest” or “learning” areas must include but are not limited to:
 - Block area
 - Sensory table
 - Library
 - Math/science
 - Dramatic play
 - Art
 - Writing center
 - Table toys/manipulatives
- Include a “Safe Space” in accordance with the *Safe Space and Positive Child Guidance Policy* and Conscious Discipline training.
 - Classroom organization is done in accordance with the predominant classroom curricula:
 - Head Start & Pre-K: Opening the World of Learning (OWL)
 - Early Head Start: Creative Curriculum
 - Early Head Start Home-Based: Partners for a Healthy Baby and Creative Curriculum
- Classrooms shall provide sufficient equipment, toys, materials, consumables, and furniture to meet the needs and facilitate the participation of children and adults enrolled in the classroom.
- Classroom materials are purchased and chosen by ensuring alignment with:
 - Needs and development of currently enrolled children
 - Materials, equipment, toys, and furniture for children with diagnosed disabilities are provided in consultation with the Special Services Manager
 - Predominant Classroom Curricula
 - Environmental assessments of the classroom
 - May include but not limited to: Environmental Checklists, Daily Condition Logs, Playground Inspections, Center Based Safe Environments Checklist, Center Checks
 - Head Start Standards 1304.53 (b) (1) which state, equipment, toys, materials, consumables, and furniture must be:
 - Supportive of the specific educational objectives of the local program;
 - Supportive of the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the children;
 - Age-appropriate, safe, and supportive of the abilities and developmental level of each child served, with adaptations, if necessary, for children with disabilities;
 - Accessible, attractive, and inviting to children;
 - Designed to provide a variety of learning experiences and to encourage each child to experiment and explore;
 - Safe, durable, and kept in good condition; and
 - Stored in a safe and orderly fashion when not in use.
- In addition classroom equipment, toys, materials, consumables, and furniture must be:
 - Must be made of non-toxic materials
 - Must be sanitized regularly
 - Staff follow guidance provided to them by the Health Coordinator regarding sanitization as well as the *Cleaning Policy*.

Title: Cultural and Linguistic Approach

Policy Council Approval: 6/27/19

Board Approval: 7/25/19

Waldo Community Action Partners Early Childhood Program will support linguistically and culturally diverse children and families by acknowledging and actively responding to the value and importance of each child's home language and culture whenever possible in the family's primary or preferred language. School readiness and success for children who are dual language learners (DLLs) is tied directly to mastery of their home language (Zelasko and Antunez, 2000) *Benefits of Being Bilingual*-Planned Language Approach (PLA).

Strategies for cultural inclusion in the classroom, home visit or center that should be considered and utilized:

- Learn about and integrate child and family's culture and language(s) into curriculum development.
- Educate all families on the cognitive and social advantages of a child knowing more than one language.
- Provide families with strategies to support, maintain and preserve home language learning.
- Provide parents and caregivers information that is written in their native language when needed, or requested.
- Promote opportunities in the classroom and in educational materials and the home environment to celebrate and honor family language, culture and traditions.
- Encourage home language and literacy development to educate families about how these activities contribute to children's ability to acquire English language proficiency.
- Provide children with varied ways to demonstrate what they know and can do.

Interpretation Services

- WCAP will seek to access and utilize interpreter and translator services as needed to assure clear communication with families as is possible.
- Services will be provided at no cost to the family upon approval by the Early Childhood Director.
- When a family who speaks a language other than English enrolls the following steps should be followed:
 - Take the family's information on the intake form to the extent possible.
 - Notify the Family Service Coordinator with the name of the client and the preferred language.
 - Staff shall seek to engage interpretation services in the family's home language for the completion of the application. Agreements to purchase interpretation services will be approved by the Family Service Coordinator or Early Childhood Director.
- Any questions around ability to provide interpretation services should be sent to the Family Services Coordinator.

Screening and Assessment

- WCAP will seek to provide screenings and assessments in the child's dominant language as interpretation services and qualified screeners and assessors are available.
- Complete Home Language Survey for 3-5 year olds to determine language proficiency in home language and English language acquisition.
 - WCAP will work with community partners in order to secure professionals able to assist in these services.
 - This will be provided at no cost to the family.
 - A staff person who has identified a child who may need interpretation services for an assessment shall notify the Family Service coordinator to arrange for services.

Family Partnership

- Wherever possible families will be communicated with in their home or preferred language.

- A staff person who has identified a family who may need interpretation services for a Family Partnership Agreement shall notify the Family Service coordinator to arrange for services.

Community Partnerships:

- WCAP will partner with local organizations and public schools to pool resources related to teaching English language learners, interpreting, and other cultural inclusion activities.

Staff Professional Development:

- As appropriate, WCAP will provide professional development opportunities in the areas of culture, language and diversity.

Title: Education Home Visit Approach Policy

Policy Council Approval: 6/27/19

Board Approval: 7/25/19

Rationale:

The intent of doing home visits is for the teachers and home visitors to meet with each family to build positive relationships, to engage the family in their child's School Readiness progress, and to plan for transitions.

Cancellations: See *Attendance Policy and Procedure* (1302 Subpart A)

Guidance: For **new** or **transitioning** children, the initial home visit is completed **prior** to the child's first day of attendance. **Returning** children from the same program option must have an initial home visit within 30 days of the child's first day of attendance.

- Visits will be done IN PERSON, not over the telephone. Visits are scheduled by telephone or in person with each family. If a situation occurs which precludes visiting the family in their home, every effort will be made to ensure that a meeting still takes place. This may be at a mutually agreed upon location, (library, restaurant, etc.), or at the center, as long as confidentiality can be upheld at all times.
- Teachers or Home Visitors have an Initial Home Visit packet which includes all the paperwork and information that is to be covered. All required enrollment paperwork not completed at the Initial Home Visit, Screening Day or Open House, MUST be completed on the child's first day of enrollment.

Center-based Option:

- At the second Home Visit the discussion includes a review of information from the Initial Home Visit, and the fall Family Conference in combination with analysis of developmental progress utilizing winter assessment data. This should focus on child progress from the time of enrollment; individual child goals will be updated with the family's input. The Transition Process started at the first Family Conference in the fall.
- The duration of all home visits must be a minimum of 90 minutes.
- When possible, best practice is for both teachers and Family Advocate to participate together in all home visits, so that family members have the opportunity to meet and establish a positive relationship with each of them.

Home-based Option:

- The Home Visitor will provide a minimum of 46 home visits per year per family.

- See Head Start Attendance Policy and Procedure for more information.
- Home Visits take place on a weekly basis @ 90 minutes each with the exception of prenatal. All home visits focus on promoting high-quality early learning experiences in the home and growth toward goals described in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework- ages birth to five, using such goals and the curriculum to plan home visit activities.
- Prenatal home visits will be scheduled based on the needs of the pregnant mother.
 - Staff members must make monthly contact.
 - These visits must address needs for appropriate supports for emotional well-being, nurturing and responsive caregiving, and father engagement during pregnancy and early childhood.
 - Visits provide enrolled pregnant women, fathers, and partners or other relevant family members the prenatal and postpartum information, education and services that address, as appropriate, fetal development, the importance of nutrition, the risks of alcohol, drugs, and smoking, labor and delivery, postpartum recovery, parental depression, infant care and safe sleep practices, and the benefits of breastfeeding.
- Post-partum visits are required within a two-week time frame from delivery by a health staff member. (See 1302 Subpart H)

Title: Family Engagement in Curriculum Planning

Policy Council Approval: 6/27/19

Board Approval: 7/25/19

Rationale: All planning in the WCAP Early Childhood program is based on the concept of developmentally appropriate and researched-based practice. However, because we also believe parents and families are the primary educators of their children, we provide opportunities for them to have input into curriculum planning.

Guidance:

- *Family Groups:* A Classroom Teacher will attend the Family Group meeting when possible and present curriculum concepts and ideas to the group for discussion monthly. Participants are asked to contribute ideas or activities to support school readiness goals. All teachers will generate a *Family & Program Communication Form* for their classroom to be presented at the Family Group meeting. The Family Group members will then record written suggestions with signatures on the provided form. The Family Advocate will scan and attach the form in the family group section of Childplus and will also post in the corresponding classroom next to the curriculum lesson plan. All suggestions will be considered for inclusion on the weekly lesson plan. When possible, members will be given information as to how their suggestions were utilized.
- *Home Visits:* The home visit is a time when the classroom teacher comes to the home to discuss the child and share information regarding the child's developmental progress and any areas of concern, which may potentially impact curriculum planning.
- *Weekly Lesson Plans:* Weekly Lesson Plans are posted in the classroom for families to view. Developmentally appropriate family suggestions are incorporated into the weekly plan when possible.
- *Family Conferences:* In the fall and spring, the classroom teachers invite families to attend a family conference. At this time, the teacher provides the family with a progress report using the *Teaching Strategies Conference Form* and the *Teaching Strategies Development & Learning Report* explicitly documenting their

child's areas of strength, and expected next steps in their development & learning. The conference includes a discussion of the curriculum in the classroom and how it.

- *Early Head Start Home Visiting option:* Each family enrolled in the Early Head Start Home Visiting option receives a visit from a Home Visitor once a week. During this visit the parent indicates needs and interests and works with the Home Visitor to develop the individualized curriculum plan for the succeeding week. The home visitor and family discuss learning experiences which are provided in the home between each visit, address concerns, and inform strategies to promote family engagement toward school readiness goals.

Title: Incident Reporting Policy and Procedure

Policy Council Approval: 7/10/19

Board Approval: 7/25/19

Rationale: The primary responsibility of the WCAP Early Childhood Program is to provide a safe, secure, and healthy environment in which children can learn, play and grow. The WCAP Early Childhood Program will design and implement program practices responsive to the identified health, safety, behavioral, and mental health concerns of children.

Guidance: Complete the following documentation steps involved in reporting any behavioral, injuries, and safety incidents.

For all child injuries, accidents, or medical emergencies:

- a. Complete *Child Incident/Injury Report* for the child involved.
 - i. Notify the child's parent/guardian the same day by phone or in person following the *Confidentiality Policy*.
 - b. Immediately notify the parent or legal guardian of an illness, serious injury or accident involving their child.
 - c. A signature on the Child Incident Report will be requested when parents are present. If parents are not present, staff will indicate on the report that a copy was sent home and how.
 - i. If on NCR paper: the white copy of the Child Incident/Injury Report will be given to the parent, the pink copy will be placed in the corresponding child file, and the yellow copy will be given to the Health Coordinator by inter office mail once a week, or by fax the same day in the case of emergencies or significant injuries.
 - ii. If no NCR copies are available, staff will follow the notification procedure above and make a copy of the Child Incident/Injury Report to be sent home. Staff will fax a copy to the Health Coordinator once a week or the same day in case of emergencies or significant injuries.
 - d. A copy will be uploaded in the child file.
- b. If additional documentation is needed, please document in the child file.
- c. The Health Coordinator will review and track all incidents. This will also be reviewed by designated site supervisor, and patterns are shared at monthly staff meetings.

For staff injuries:

1. Complete the *Employees First Report of Injury Form* and fax to Health Coordinator on the same day of the injury (within 24 hours of the injury).
2. Report injury immediately to HR.
3. The Health Coordinator will review the report and send to Human Resources. The Health Coordinator will inform the Early Childhood Program Director as appropriate.

For community volunteer/client injuries:

1. Complete the Community Volunteer Client Accident Form.
2. Fax the report immediately to the Health Coordinator.
3. The Health Coordinator will review the report and send to the Fiscal Department.

For behavior related incidents:

1. Always complete the *Behavior Incident Report* when a child engages in the following kinds of behaviors:
 - *Aggression to another child or adult that results in physical pain or harm to that person (includes kicking, hitting, biting, scratching)*
 - *Running out of classroom, off the playground, or away from group without responding to the calls of the adult*
 - *Intentionally injuring self in a manner that might cause serious harm to self (e.g., severe head banging, biting self)*
2. Also complete when a child continues to engage in problem behavior despite efforts to redirect to use alternative skills. On these occasions, complete the form for children who are persistent in problem behavior and their problem behavior appears to be unresponsive to the child guidance procedures used in the classroom. The form will not be completed if the behavior has not occurred before or if the behavior may be developmentally-expected (e.g., 2-year old who tussles over a toy). These behaviors might be:
 - *Tantrums*
 - *Inappropriate language*
 - *Hitting*
 - *Breaking or destroying items*
 - *Disruptive behavior*

Completing the Behavior Incident Report:

1. Complete the *Behavior Incident Report* as soon as possible after the behavior incident so that staff can remember all of the relevant details.
2. Fill in the top boxes including classroom name, what activity was happening when the behavior occurred, date and time of the behavior, and the name of the child engaged in the behavior.
3. Complete one form for each behavior incident that matches the criteria described above. An incident might be a single event (e.g., hit) or have a longer duration (e.g., tantrum). When young children engage in challenging behavior, they often engage in multiple behaviors (e.g., hit, kick, and verbal aggression). A behavior incident might include multiple behaviors although staff will be selecting the behavior that is most intrusive to note on the form. If the behavior incident ends and the child has another one later in the activity or day; complete an incident form for each separate incident.
4. Fax completed forms to the main office weekly. Fax more often if the behavior is very dangerous or significant.
5. Complete any necessary Child Incident/Injury reports for any victims of behaviors following the guidance above.

To ensure the safety and wellbeing off all children, staff, and volunteers, the following will be adhered to:

1. All WCAP Early Childhood Program Policies and Procedures. Applicable procedures to cross-reference include: *Active Supervision and Accountability of Children Policy*, and *Safe Place and Positive Techniques of Guidance Policy*.

2. Any potential violation of a child's right to freedom from abuse and neglect must be immediately discussed with the site supervisor, and then reported to the Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services and Child Protective Intake Services (1-800-452-1999) in accordance with the Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities.
3. Any guidance provided by the Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services and Child Protective Intake Services will be followed immediately with regular and ongoing monitoring by site staff members and management team.

Title: Positive Behavior Guidance Policy

Policy Council Approval: 7/10/19

Board Approval: 7/25/19

Rationale: The primary responsibility of the Early Childhood Programs is to provide a safe, secure, and healthy environment in which children can learn, play and grow. Attention to healthy social-emotional development is an integral part of the program including learning to recognize, understand and express feelings, foster strong positive relationships with peers as well as with adults, develop self-control, and build resiliency. Staff and parents will identify and discuss appropriate responses to their child's behavior. While behaviors may be viewed as typical for an age group, they are not necessarily behaviors that are useful strategies for the rest of life. All responses to unsafe or inappropriate behaviors will be grounded in the understanding that children's behavior conveys a message; unsafe or inappropriate behaviors are almost always signaling distress or unmet needs. Staff will make every effort to understand the causes of such behavior and find solutions that support the healthy social-emotional development of each child. Responses to behavior will be individualized based on the needs, situation and characteristics of each child using the least restrictive interventions.

Challenging Behaviors: Challenging behaviors are any repetitive and persistent behavior that interferes with learning or engaging in social interactions with adults or peers. Challenging behaviors are divided into three levels of severity:

1. **Disruptive Behaviors:** interfere with learning and functioning but are not directly harmful. Example behaviors include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Yelling
 - b. Uncooperativeness
 - c. Swearing
 - d. Disrobing
 - e. Asking repetitive questions
2. **Dangerous Behaviors:** are potentially harmful. Example behaviors include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Slapping
 - b. Light head banging
 - c. Scratching
 - d. Biting
 - e. Running Away (indoors)
3. **Very Dangerous Behaviors** have a high likelihood of causing serious harm. Example behaviors include but are not limited to:
 - a. Choking
 - b. Closed-fist hitting
 - c. Suicide attempts
 - d. Forceful head banging/head butting

- e. Running Away (outdoors near traffic)

Prevention:

1. All staff are required to use Conscious Discipline knowledge and techniques consistently to establish a positive classroom community that is respectful, where children as well as adults feel safe and confident in their ability to successfully interact with others and learn together.
2. Staff will also reference the Pyramid Model for teaching practices and activities to support nurturing and responsive relationships, high quality classroom environments, and targeted social emotional supports. Staff will also reference the *Environmental Checklist* and *Active Supervision and Accountability of Children Policy* for additional guidance on practices to prevent challenging behaviors in classrooms.
3. Food and physical activity shall never be used as a reward or punishment.
4. Positive Guidance Plan
 - a. All children enrolled in WCAP Early Childhood Program will have a *Positive Guidance Plan* with activities and strategies routed in Conscious Discipline principles strategies and guidance using the *Positive Guidance Plan* form.
 - b. The *Positive Guidance Plan* form will be filled out by the teacher or the Family Advocate at the time of the first Home Visit or first day in programming.
 - c. The form will be uploaded into the ChildPlus database.

Responses to challenging behaviors:

1. Incident Reporting
 - a. *Behavior Incident Reports* will be filled out as appropriate for children engaging in challenging behaviors
 - b. *Child Incident/Injury Reports* will be filled out as appropriate for any child injured as a result of a challenging behavior
 - i. See *Incident Reporting Policy* for further guidance.
2. Communication with families around challenging behaviors is expected to be ongoing and documented appropriately through communication logs.
3. Staff will fill out a *Mental Health Request* as applicable for consultation and support from the Mental Health Consultant. All requests will be submitted to the Mental Health & Prevention Manager.
4. Individualized Behavior Support Plan
 - a. An *Individualized Behavior Support Plan* will be created for children with repetitive and continuous disruptive, dangerous, or very dangerous behaviors using the *Individualized Behavior Support Plan* form.
 - b. Staff will meet for a Case Conference, and if necessary, a Family Team Meeting with their site supervisor or corresponding coordinator to identify specific behaviors with patterns and frequency, what needs the child is trying to communicate, triggers, and desired replacement behaviors and strategies to reinforce them. At any time, if possible, staff should work to get the input of families and service providers. Any contact with the family or service providers should be documented accordingly.
 - c. Plans should be posted with Medical/Allergies list. The cover sheet will be updated as needed by the corresponding coordinator when entered electronically. Plans must be read by any substitute teachers in the classroom before working with children. Lead Teachers and/or Assistant Teachers are responsible for ensuring all substitute teachers understand the plans and their role within it.
 - d. A copy of the *Individualized Behavior Support Plan* will be uploaded into the ChildPlus database. The Mental Health & Prevention Manager will track the plans.

- e. *Individualized Behavior Support Plans* should be updated when challenging behaviors change, or when preventative measures and actions steps appear to be ineffective. Staff should review the plans every four to six weeks at minimum to assure effectiveness.

5. Seclusions

- a. Seclusions are defined by Maine DOE Chapter 33 as the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or clearly defined area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion is not timeout.
- b. Because children may never be left alone, (See: *Active Supervision and Accountability of Children Policy*), seclusions may never be used on a child participating in a WCAP program.

6. Physical Restraints

- a. Physical restraints are defined by Maine DOE Chapter 33 as an intervention that restricts a student's freedom of movement or normal access to his or her body, and includes physically moving a student who has not moved voluntarily. Physical restraints do not include:
 - i. Physical escort;
 - ii. Physical prompt;
 - iii. Physical contact when the purpose of the intervention is to comfort a student and the student voluntarily accepts the contact;
 - iv. Momentarily deflecting the movement of a student when the student's movement would be destructive, harmful or dangerous to the student or to others;
 - v. The use of seat belts, safety belts or similar passenger restraints, when used as intended, during the transportation of a child in a motor vehicle; or
 - vi. The use of a medically prescribed harness when used as intended; or
 - vii. A brief period of physical contact necessary to break up a fight.
- b. Restraints will only be done by trained staff or in the case of an emergency using the least restrictive methods.
 - i. Any restraints performed should be indicated on an incident report and shared immediately with the site supervisor.
 - ii. Restraints may be reportable to collaborative partners such as Public Schools, Maine DOE, or CDS. Staff members will work with site supervisors on reporting.

Title: Screening Procedure

Policy Council Approval: 6/27/19

Board Approval: 7/25/19

Rationale: The purpose of the screening procedure is to provide a brief check to identify strengths and/or concerns regarding a child's developmental, sensory, motor, language, social, cognitive, perceptual, and emotional skills. Developmental, hearing, and vision screenings are completed by various staff and/or collaborative partners, including but not limited to physicians, the Local Education Agency (LEA) - Child Development Services, and WIC. WCAP staff members complete screenings to ensure timelines are met. Parents and families are informed of the types and purposes of the screening prior to as well as the results of the screening. The procedure details the responsibilities and steps to be taken by the staff.

Procedure: Staff members follow the timeline for completion to meet mandates as well as the periodicity of the tool used. Staff members are trained in using the tool prior to using it to screen children.

Screenings may be completed in the spring, or summer before program services begin in the fall.

The following screening tools may be used by Early Childhood Program staff members and/or Collaborative Partners but are not the only approved screening tools. Therefore, other tools and/or equipment may be used to meet the mandate and determine a need for further evaluation.

Developmental & Behavioral Screenings

Screening Tool	Age of Child and/or Program	Timeframe for Completion	Screening Completed by Who
ASQ-3	Birth to 3.6 years old	Within 45 calendar days of entering the program	EHS Staff Members
M-CHAT (Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers Part 1 to assess risk for autism spectrum disorders)	Toddlers age 24 months up to 30 months old	Upon entering the program age applicable	EHS Staff Members
Speed DIAL 4 (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning) OR Brigance	3 – 5 years old	Within 45 calendar days of entering the program	Education Team or designated staff
DECA (Devereux Early Childhood Assessment) OR Brigance	Birth – 5 years old	Within 45 calendar days of entering the program; a 2 nd DECA is completed in the spring time	Teachers and Home Visitors

Health Screenings

Timeframe for completion: If not completed by the health care provider, age appropriate health care screenings will be completed within the 45 calendar day or recommended EPSDT schedule.

Screening & Tool	Age of Child	Screening Completed by Who
Hearing: Pilot Audiometer, OAE	Birth – 5 years old	Health Coordinator or designated staff
Vision: Sure Sight Screener, Spot Screener	Birth – 5 years old	Health Coordinator or designated staff
Lead & Anemia Screen or Laboratory Results	Birth – 5 years old	Health Coordinator or designated staff
Height & Weight: Scales, Stadiometer	Birth – 5 years old	Health Coordinator, Nutrition Coordinator, or designated staff

Results and Follow-up: Following the screening, results are shared with the parents and family of the child as soon as possible. A written summary of the screening results are placed in the Child File and sent home to the family. Parents

are encouraged to contact the Special Services Manager or their child's teacher to discuss any concerns they may have with the screening results. A screening may indicate a need to rescreen at a later date or it may indicate need for further evaluation. Parents and families are active participants when further evaluation is recommended.

Early Childhood Programs staff members follow the *Referral Procedure* when a screening indicates further follow-up or evaluation is needed. It is important to share with parents that any referral that leads to some extra support for their child can have a profound impact upon a child's development and readiness for school. Staff members continue to monitor the child's progress and to work with the family around their concerns for delaying a referral. Staff members should contact the Special Services Manager when a family does not wish to seek a referral.

Screening results will not be used to provide rewards or sanctions for individual children or staff. Screenings will not be used to exclude children from enrollment or participation.

Individualization

Screenings may be individualized based on the needs of the child or the family. For example, when a child does not speak English, attempts will be made to screen in the child's home language. See *Cultural and Linguistic Policy*.

Title: Special Events: Field Trips, Guests, Holidays, and Year End Event Policy

Policy Council Approval: 6/25/19

Board Approval: 7/27/19

Classroom teachers may include and plan local field trips, guests, and special events as enrichment activities for the curriculum. All special events, including field trips, guests, holidays, and end of year events should also align with program and school readiness goals.

1. **Special Guests:** Special guests will be invited to sites as appropriate and are especially important to curriculum enrichment where limited or no transportation is available for off-site field trips.

Special Guests Procedure:

Invited Special Guests should be approved by the classroom's site supervisor prior to planning and arrival via the *Special Guest/Field Trip Request* form.

2. **Field Trips:** During the program year, teachers may plan field trips that align and enrich curriculum goals. Field trips must be related to curriculum planning and relevant to individual child goals, as well as advance program School Readiness goals. Suggestions from parents for field trips will be considered in the planning process. Field trips expose children to local culture and provide opportunities for hands-on experiences in the environment in which they live, work, and play.

Field Trip Procedure: Once approved by the Site Supervisor, staff should use the following procedure:

- All requests for field trips must be submitted to the Site Supervisor at least two weeks prior to the desired date of the field trip using the *Field Trip Request Form*. Forms may be sent via e-mail or fax to expedite the process. The Site Supervisor (or designee) will evaluate the request, and if appropriate, approve the field trip.
- All parents will be notified at minimum one week prior to the planned trip.
- Parents/guardians must sign individual permission forms for every off-site trip. Children without signed permission slips will not be permitted to attend the off-site trip and will remain at the site. If a child is not

able to attend the classroom should consider whether the trip should continue if some children are unable to attend. Children who remain at the site must be offered an alternative activity that follows curriculum and classroom expectations. Staff will make all reasonable efforts to obtain permission slips for all children. Children will not be excluded from attending field trips for reasons other than an unsigned permission slip.

- Classroom staff will obtain additional adults as necessary to maintain safe ratios. Walking field trips will require at least a 1 to 3 adult/child ratio, and if transportation is being provided, ratios should be at least 1 to 5 adult/child.
- Teachers and Site Supervisors should evaluate classroom behavior needs before planning and approving field trips. Children who may need additional support will be assigned to his or her parent or to a classroom teacher.
- Field trip destinations will not be more than one half hour from the center.
- Financial support for approved field trips is the responsibility of the program and governed by available budget and must be approved by the Supervisor or Director.
- In the event a scheduled field trip/special event is cancelled due to a reason such as transportation, weather, illness, etc., approved trips may be rescheduled.

When parents attend field trips as a volunteer:

- Parents who actively participate in a field trip may be counted in the adult/child ratio.
- When parents volunteer on field trips, the classroom volunteer daily sign in and out sheet will be signed before departing the building.
- Approved parent volunteers may submit a mileage reimbursement form for the mileage accrued while volunteering no later than two weeks after the field trip occurred. Mileage reimbursement sheets should be submitted to the site's Family Advocate and forwarded on to the main WCAP office.

What is considered countable In-Kind time for a field trip:

- A person/parent volunteer with a completed and approved volunteer packet on file is assisting.
- A person/parent who is asked to assist with tasks necessary for the field trip to be a success such as: helping set up food, or other hands-on activities.
- All parents may attend field trips as long as teachers have record their attendance, but no more than four will be counted as In-Kind volunteers for the event.
- For approved volunteers, a Volunteer In-Kind Time Sheet will be submitted to the family advocate no later than Friday of the same week of the trip. Volunteer time sheets and a copy of the classroom volunteer sign-in sheet for the day will be used as back up.

3. Holidays guidance:

- Classrooms and teachers will follow familiar and predictable classroom routines during holiday times and focus on natural occurrences and changes in their environment rather than events associated with the calendar.
- Holiday parties and gift or card giving will not be part of classroom activities but should be reserved for families to experience outside of the classroom setting, where family traditions can be established and honored authentically.
- Teachers will be sensitive to and teach the children that there are groups of people who do not observe Halloween, Christmas, and other similar holidays, and should point out how each family may celebrate in their own way.
- Children who arrive to school in costume, should not be forced to remove a costume, however this should never be encouraged by WCAP staff.

4. End of the Year Event guidance:

- An end of year event plan will be developed by teachers and parent group using the *Event Planning Form* at least one month prior to the end of school.
- Each Family Group, in coordination with staff, will decide on a closing event that is developmentally appropriate and meaningful to children.
- The Event Planning Form will be submitted to the Family Services Coordinator who will meet with the Leadership Team to review the plan for approval. A copy of the plan will be retained and filed with the Family Service Coordinator.
- Events will take place at the site during regular operating hours. Public school settings may require additional logistics for consideration and should be described on the *Event Planning Form*.
- Presentation of child portfolios to children and their families is expected.
- **Volunteer Recognition:** The End of Year Event will also include volunteer recognition with the presentation of certificates for volunteer service.
- **Purchases:** All purchases will be part of the event planning approval process.

Subpart D- Health Program Services

Title: Administration of Medication to Children in the Classroom

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Caring for Our Children Basics 3.6.3

Rules for the Licensing of Childcare Facilities 17.6

Rationale: WCAP Early Childhood Program must maintain written procedures regarding the administration, handling and storage of medication for every child. Children requiring medication during the day will receive it only on written order from a physician. The Program will not administer any non-prescription medications to a child, without a written order from a physician.

Medication will only be dispensed when the following criteria are met:

1. A current prescription, doctor's note or a physician signed OTC, IHP, Allergy or Asthma Plan has been received.

For Prescription Medications:

- a. A completed Authorization to Administer Medication Form is completed and approved by the Health Coordinator.
- b. The medication is in the original container appropriately labeled with the child's name, date, name of medication, physician's name, dosage, frequency, pharmacy's name and date medication was sold, and a completed, signed *Authorization To Administer Medication Form*.

For Over the Counter (OTC) Medications:

- a. A completed OTC form is completed and approved by the Health Coordinator.
 - b. The medication is in the original container and appropriately labeled with the child's name.
2. Any required or requested training has been completed.

3. Controlled Substance, nonregulated and other high-risk medications will be reviewed on a case by case basis and may only be housed and administered by a parent or guardian.

WCAP personnel dispensing prescription medication shall maintain a daily log that includes the child's name, date dispensed, and the initials of the adult responsible for administering or monitoring the dose. (*Authorization to Administer Medication Form*) All routine medication will be secured in a locked box or medication bag.

Title: Assessment of Nutritional Needs & Accommodating Special Diets Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.42(b)(4); 1302.44(a)(1)

Rationale: All children enrolled in Head Start programs will have a nutritional assessment completed to identify family eating patterns, cultural preferences, and to identify those at nutritional risk. Community assessment through the Health Advisory Committee will identify major nutrition issues in the community. Medically based diets or other dietary requirements are accommodated and ensure that a child's health will not be jeopardized and that individual needs are met. CFOC 4.2.0.2, 4.2.0.8, 4.2.0.10, 4.2.0.12

Guidance:

1. During enrollment, staff will complete a Child Nutrition Intake Assessment and work with families to identify any special dietary needs for a child while at Head Start.
2. Heights and weights will be completed on each child twice per year. If the Body Mass Index (BMI) for children 3 and older is at or above the 95th percentile or at or below the 5th percentile, a referral to the Nutrition Consultant will be recommended to the parent/guardian.
3. For a child **with** a disability, any special meal or dietary accommodation must be documented by a Dietary Restriction and Substitution Statement signed by an authorized professional as specified by USDA CACFP. Any dietary modifications that are required for children with disabilities will be made as soon as appropriate documentation has been submitted.
4. For a child **without** a disability, dietary requests that are not medically necessary will be accommodated if USDA CACFP meal patterns can still be met, the requested item(s) do not exceed more than 10% of usual cost, and the requested item is readily available where supplies are usually purchased. The Nutrition Coordinator must approve all substitutions.
5. Requests for fluid milk substitutes require only a parent signature when the alternate milk selected is approved by USDA CACFP as a product that meets nutrient standards for non-dairy beverages. The written request must identify the special dietary need that restricts the diet of the child.
6. WCAP staff will refer children with nutrition related disabilities or food allergies/special diets to the Nutrition Coordinator for review. Children with conditions such as celiac disease, phenylketonuria, diabetes, severe food allergy (anaphylaxis) or any other medically necessary modification will also be referred to the Health Coordinator for review. The Nutrition Consultant and/or Disabilities Coordinator will be utilized as necessary and appropriate. An individualized Nutrition and Feeding Care Plan will be developed.

7. Any special diets, food allergies or intolerances will be clearly posted for Head Start staff.
8. The Nutrition Coordinator will coordinate with other specialists and staff members to ensure individualization of meals and snacks.
9. Community nutritional issues are included on the agenda and discussed at the Health Advisory Committee meeting.

Title: Breastfeeding Promotion and Support Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standards: 1302.44(a)(2)(viii)

Rationale: Human milk, as an exclusive food, is best suited to meet the entire nutritional needs of an infant from birth until six months of age. In addition to nutrition, breastfeeding supports optimal health and development. Human milk is also the best source of milk for infants for at least the first twelve months of age and, thereafter, for as long as mutually desired by mother and child. Breastfeeding protects infants from many acute and chronic diseases and has advantages for the mother, as well. Early Head Start Centers will encourage, provide arrangements for, and support breastfeeding. CFOC 3.1.4.1, 4.3.1.1

Guidance:

Program staff will:

1. Talk with families, both prenatal and postnatal, about breastfeeding, offering accurate information to help families make informed choices, and support families in the feeding decisions that make the most sense for them.
2. Provide referrals to local WIC Programs, Lactation Counselors, Peer Breastfeeding Support Programs, and other resources as necessary for breastfeeding support.
3. Provide a program environment that welcomes breastfeeding, including welcoming breastfed infants to attend parent group, policy council and other meetings with mom/family
4. Provide a designated space for mothers who want to breastfeed their infants in private.
5. Ensure that refrigerator and freezer space is made available for labeled, pumped human milk as needed.

The Nutrition Coordinator will train the staff on the benefits of breastfeeding and techniques for handling and storage of human milk.

Title: Building Safety Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Guidance: Facilities must be maintained to a condition that is safe. Proper attention must be paid to issues of safety to assure that staff and children are working and learning in a secure environment. Maine Child Care Licensing Facilities

requires that the premises must be maintained in a condition ensuring health and safety. In accordance with the above stated requirements, the following protocols regarding building safety are to be followed for all Head Start Centers:

Visitors:

1. Facilities are locked at all times.
 - In the event that a Collaborative Partner chooses not to lock their building, an alternative plan for safety of the center will be worked out with the Early Childhood Director or appropriate staff.
 - If deemed appropriate classrooms may remain locked.
 - i. Classrooms that do not remain locked may be issued lock down magnets. Lock-down magnets allow the door to stay in the locked position while still allowing ready entry into the classroom. In the case of a lock-down drill or immediate threat, lockdown magnets should be removed and the building safety procedures shall be followed.
 - During emergencies, classroom should remain locked.
2. Parents and volunteers visiting a WCAP Center to volunteer must sign-in using the WCAP *Daily Sign-In Sheet*.
3. All other adult visitors to a Head Start building are required to sign-in and out using the *Daily Sign-In Sheet*.
 - The *Daily Sign-In Sheet* is required to be kept at each site near the entrance door.
 - In buildings not owned by WCAP, (such as public school collaborations) the building sign-in sheet may be substituted for the WCAP *Daily Sign-In Sheet*.
 - Adult visitors include but are not limited to: therapists, special classroom visitors, vendors, service people, and community members who are visiting for a purpose other than volunteering.
 - Visitors should be approved ahead of time by Teachers. If an unannounced visitor shows up it must be cleared with the Site Supervisor or other Program Manager.
4. Guns or other weapons are not allowed inside any building in which a Head Start or Early Head Start Classroom or Socialization occurs.

Keys:

1. Only persons employed by the Waldo Community Action Partners Early Childhood Program shall be issued a key(s) to the building where each is employed. With the exceptions of the Site Manager and Facilities Coordinator, keys will be issued for one entrance only unless other arrangements are made with the Program Director or the Main Office.
 - i. In some cases, and with express permission from the Early Childhood Director or Executive Director, temporary keys may be issued.
2. Keys will be signed in and out by the Office Clerk.
3. Security for each key will be the responsibility of the person to whom it was issued.
4. Keys are not to be duplicated by anyone other than the Early Childhood Director or the Office Clerk (with permission from the Early Childhood Director).
5. Keys are only to be used for work purposes during approved work hours. Staff with questions on use of keys during non-typical work hours should discuss with their supervisor. Additionally, classroom space and offices are only to be used for work purposes during work hours.
6. Keys are not be loaned to anyone and should only remain in the custody of the person to whom they were assigned. If extra keys are needed, contact the Program Director or the Main Office.

7. At the time of summer shut down, (or other extended leave longer than three weeks), the Office Clerk will be responsible for collecting and accounting for all keys. Keys will be turned in to be locked up by the Office Clerk. Please see also *Equipment Policy*.
8. In the event of termination, leave longer than three weeks, or resignation, all keys will be returned as stated in the *Equipment Policy*.

Title: Cleaning Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.47

To comply with day care licensing and Head Start Performance Standards, the following cleaning policies must be followed:

ALL WORK AREAS

It is the responsibility of each staff person to maintain his/her work area in a sanitary and orderly fashion.

Please refer to Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards schedule K – Routine Schedule for Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting for specific guidance.

CLASSROOMS

Classrooms are to be cleaned daily. This is to include, but is not limited to:

- Arts and craft area supplies will be maintained in a neat, clean, and orderly manner.
- Bathroom sinks and toilets will be washed with a disinfectant or bleach solution mixed according to product specifications.
- Toothbrush holders are to be cleaned as needed, and cleaned in the dishwasher or sanitized monthly.
- Trash will be deposited in the outside dumpster.
- Trash cans and lids will be wiped down with a bleach or sanitizing solution as necessary.
- Water tables shall be empty and wiped clean with bleach or sanitizing solution after each use.
- Floors will be swept and washed.
- Bleach solution or other approved BBP disinfectant must be used immediately if spills of body fluids have occurred according to WCAP's BBP Exposure Control Plan.
- Rugs are to be vacuumed.
- All chairs and tables are to be wiped down daily.
- Plastic manipulative toys shall be washed as necessary.
- Mouthed toys shall be washed and sanitized daily.
- Closets and/or storage areas shall be organized and maintained in a neat, clean, orderly manner.
- Cleaning supplies shall be labeled and kept locked and inaccessible to children at all times.
- Rugs shall be shampooed at least once during the school year- more frequently if necessary. Additional cleaning will occur immediately if body fluids or other hazardous spills occur.

OTHER SPACES

All trash must be placed in outside dumpster daily.

KITCHENS

State and Federal Sanitation laws are to be followed. Self-inspection reports should be completed quarterly. See *Food Handling and Sanitation Policy*.

PLAYGROUNDS

All playgrounds must be checked daily before student use and any trash/debris removed. Monthly Inspection forms are submitted to the Operations Manager thru Child Plus data entry.

Title: Diapering and Toileting Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.47

Rules for Licensing of Child Care Facilities: 10-148 CMR Chapter 32 sections 22.5, 22.6

Diapering:

- Wet or soiled diapers and other clothing must be changed promptly.
- Wet or soiled disposable diapers must be placed in a lined, lidded container, separate from other trash or garbage and separate from play or food preparation areas.
- Children in diapers or other soiled or wet clothing shall be changed on a washable vinyl table or mat that is cleaned and sanitized after each use or has a disposable single use covering.
- The changing table or mat shall be located in a designated area. The kitchen/food preparation area may not be used as the designated area.
- Staff shall wash their hands and the child's with soap and warm running water after every diaper change.
- Child Care Facilities using cloth diapers must comply with diapering guidelines available from the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services. Cloth diapers may be used only when the child has a medical reason that does not permit the use of disposable diapers (such as allergic reactions). The child's health care provider must document the medical reason. The documentation must be placed in the Child Care Facility's file.
- All containers of soiled cloth or disposable diapers must be removed daily from the childcare areas.
- Diapering tables or mats will be disinfected after each use per product use instructions.

Toileting:

- The facility must inform parents as to its toilet training practice as it applies to their child.
- Toileting practices must be developed by the family and staff, and must be based on the individual needs of the child.
- Potty-chair receptacles or seats must be emptied, rinsed, and disinfected after each use.

Non-latex gloves are used during all diapering or toileting procedures.

WCAP Early Childhood Program will provide diapering supplies and toilet training equipment for all enrolled children during the program hours.

Children with a signed permission form may have Program supplied preventive diaper rash cream applied as needed. Any other creams, ointments or medications will follow the Medication Administration Policy.

Diaper Changing Procedure must be posted in areas where diapers are changed.

Diaper Changing Procedure: (CFOC Basics)

Step 1: Before bringing the child to the diaper changing area, perform hand hygiene and bring supplies to the diaper changing area.

Step 2: Carry/bring the child to the changing table/surface, keeping soiled clothing away from you and any surfaces you cannot easily clean and sanitize after the change. **Always keep a hand on the child.**

Step 3: Clean the child's diaper area.

Step 4: Remove the soiled diaper and clothing without contaminating any surface not already in contact with stool or urine.

Step 5: Put on a clean diaper and dress the child.

Step 6: Wash the child's hands and return the child to a supervised area.

Step 7: Clean and disinfect the diaper-changing surface. Dispose of the disposable paper liner if used on the diaper changing surface in a plastic-lined, hands free, covered can. If clothing was soiled, securely tie the plastic bag used to store the clothing and send home.

Step 8: Perform hand hygiene and record the diaper change, diaper contents, and/or any problems.

Caregivers/teachers should never leave a child unattended on a table or countertop. A safety strap or harness should not be used on the diaper changing table/surface.

Title: Drop-off and Pick-up Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Rationale: Staff have a responsibility to ensure that all children are safely arriving to and leaving from classrooms. Staff and parents are very busy and must work together to ensure pick-up and drop-off goes smoothly and as scheduled. The following guidance is provided to staff and parents in an attempt to keep the process working smoothly.

Guidance:

1. Children are only to be released to a parent, legal guardian, or other adults designated in writing on the WCAP Early Childhood Program *Emergency Card* by the parent or legal guardian.
 - a. Staff must maintain accurate Emergency Contact Information completed by the parent and guardian for each child in the program containing a list of adults who may be authorized to pick up the child on the *Emergency Card*.
2. Families are requested to bring children to the centers or classrooms no more than ten (10) minutes before the class is scheduled to start. Staff are not available to assume responsibility for children before this time. Center and classroom doors may not open before this time unless a parent has an appointment with a staff member.
3. Families are requested to pick children up at the designated end of the program day. This will allow all children to leave at the same time as a group. Children may only be released to parents, guardians, or other adult as indicated on the WCAP Early Childhood Program *Emergency Card*. Guardians must inform WCAP in writing if any other adult, not listed on the *Emergency Card*, is to pick up a child.
 - a. In the event a family member is unavoidably delayed, a phone call must be made to the center alerting the staff of the delay. If such a delay is going to be more than ten (10) minutes, the family member must make an arrangement for someone else to pick up the child as soon as possible.

- b. If no one comes to pick up a child at the end of the program day, and no contact with the guardian has been made, staff will use the emergency phone list to make arrangements for the child after fifteen (15) minutes and a phone call to the parents.
 - c. If the parent or emergency contact(s) cannot be reached, the child will be kept at the center and supervised by any available staff.
 - d. After thirty (30) minutes of no contact from the parent staff should call the site supervisor (or in their absence the Early Childhood Director or any Content Area Coordinator/Manager) to inform them and follow any guidance provided.
 - e. If the child is not picked up by one (1) hour after the classroom closes with no contact from the parent, the staff should again contact the site supervisor (or in their absence the Early Childhood Director or any Content Area Coordinator/Manager) to inform them. After this the police may be contacted to come and take custody of the child.
4. There may be some cases in which legal guardians will be requested to pick up their child before the end of the program day. Health related issues will follow the *Exclusion and Admittance Policy*.
- a. Site supervisors or the Health Coordinator must be notified in such instances.

Chronic Late pick-ups

Late pick-ups are considered “chronic” when a child has been picked up more than ten (10) minutes late over three (3) days within a two- week period.

Chronic late pick-ups will be addressed by the teacher immediately after the third late pick up in a two- week period. This will be again addressed by the designated Family Advocate to identify any barriers to families arriving on time. Further, a Family Team Meeting may be scheduled to create a plan for on-time pick-ups.

Late pick-ups and early drop-offs on public transportation

- Content Area Coordinator/Managers will work with local transportation agencies to ensure they know the start and end times of our programs to avoid early drop-offs or late pick-ups.
- In the event these do occur, staff will record the times of the early drop-offs or late pick-ups each time.
 - After two early drop-offs or late pick-ups they will notify their supervisor.
 - The supervisor will work with the Early Childhood Director or the Transportation agency to find a resolution to the timing issue.
- Transportation agencies have their own policies and procedures for ensuring safe pick-up and drop-off of children and agree to ensure the child’s safety between the classroom and their homes, including release of child only to appropriate adults.
 - The Early childhood Director requests that any public transportation agency communicate any instances of an inappropriate release of a child enrolled in The WCAP Early Childhood Program immediately.

Title: Emergency Evacuation Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.47

Rationale: Waldo Community Action Partners Early Childhood Program is committed to providing a safe, secure environment in all of their classrooms and other facilities. It is imperative to maintain accurate child attendance and volunteer records so that in an emergency, an accurate head count would confirm the presence or absence of any

individual. It is also imperative to notify families and others as soon as possible to reduce unnecessary concern and worry.

Guidance:

1. Medical emergencies will be dealt with according to First Aid or Individual Health Plan guidance. Emergency Procedures and Health Plans will be posted in classrooms.
2. Child-to-provider ratios must be maintained. Additional support may be requested.
3. The site will be evacuated when the fire alarm rings or when requested by a staff, volunteer, public safety official, or school official; or if there is an indication of danger including: fire, flood, hurricane, blizzard, violence or threat in the community, power failure, bio-hazard, etc. An emergency phone list will be readily available and the designated person listed on the emergency plan posted in each classroom in each center will be designated to secure the list prior to evacuation. The emergency phone list will be attached to the evacuation plan and will be updated as necessary.
4. The following exits and procedures are to be used when the Center is evacuated:
 - a. Exit the building following the fire drill protocol posted in each classroom.
 - i. The protocol should list an alternate exit. YIKES plans are available in every classroom for additional information.
 - b. Teachers will conduct a head count.
 - c. If a decision is made to evacuate the center or site, staff and children will evacuate using a safety rope or evacuation crib to the designated location.
 - d. Children will remain in the location until they can be safely discharged.
5. In collaborative classrooms where the building has different evacuation policies or procedures, or in situations where these procedures are not deemed safe, the staff will use their best judgement to protect children.

All Sites:

1. Upon arriving at the assigned destination, a designated center staff person will contact the appropriate public safety personnel, listed in each evacuation protocol, and the Early Childhood Director.
2. The Director will contact the President & CEO and if necessary, assist the Center Staff in contacting parents.
3. Staff will remain at the evacuation site with children until all have been returned to their families or the contact person designated on the *Emergency Cards*. In no circumstances will parents of children be allowed to return to the building until an appropriate inspection has taken place. The inspection may be made by the site manager, or public safety official as necessary.

All Centers will conduct and maintain documentation of Fire System checks. Fire drills will be conducted at Head Start Program sites on a monthly basis as required by Maine Child Care Licensing.

Title: Facilities Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Guidance: It is the intention of the WCAP Early Childhood Program to provide facilities that meet both federal and state requirements through consistent safety inspections.

1. Head Start Standards, the Head Start Act, and Maine Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities will be consulted as the guiding documents for all facilities related improvements, repairs, and relocations.
2. All facilities will meet licensing requirements in accordance with 1302.21(d) and 1302.23(d)
3. All centers will be monitored following the table listed below:

Document	By who	How often	Submitted to the main office or entered into ChildPlus when...
Fire Drill -Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist	Center Staff or Facilities Coordinator	Monthly	Monthly
YIKES Plan & Emergency Plan	Center Staff	Annually, prior to child attendance	Upon completion, and/or when updated
Center Based Safe Environments Checklist	Health Coordinator or Center Staff	Quarterly while in session	Quarterly
Monthly Inspection Checklist	Center Staff or Facilities Coordinator	Monthly	Monthly
Start-Up Checklist	Classroom Staff	Once, before children begin school	Before children begin school

4. Facilities will be kept clean and free from pests.
5. All cleaning materials, detergents, aerosol cans, pesticides, medications, poisons, chemicals used in lawn care treatments, and other toxic materials are kept in product-labeled containers, entirely separated from food, and out of children's reach.
Please see 1302.47 Cleaning Policy for additional information on Cleaning.
 - Safety Data Sheets (formally known as MSDS) will be kept on hand for substances used in the center.
6. All buildings will be free from pollutants, hazards and toxins that are accessible to children and could endanger children's safety such as: cigarette smoke and other air pollutants, lead, soil and water contaminants, etc.
7. All facilities will be arranged to prevent child injury and keep children free from hazards such as choking, strangulation, electrical, water, entrapment, and all other safety hazards. The following criteria will be followed:
 - All electrical equipment and appliances must be properly grounded and all electrical cords must be in good repair as well as secured out of the reach of children.

- All electrical outlets must be covered with child-resistant safety devices or have installed childproof receptacles.
 - Windows and glass doors are constructed, adapted, or adjusted to prevent injury to children. Windows that can be opened are equipped with devices that do not block natural light, and are screened when open, so that children cannot pass through the windows or become stuck in any way.
 - Swimming pools or other areas of standing water are not allowed.
 - Age appropriate materials and foods are used to reduce choking risk.
 - Daily outdoor and indoor safety inspections shall be conducted by staff.
8. All buildings and spaces will be well lit- including emergency lighting.
- Testing of emergency lighting shall be recorded on the *Fire Drill - Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist* and documented in ChildPlus. Any required maintenance should be reported immediately to the Operations Manager or Facilities Coordinator.
 - Light fixtures must contain shielded or shatterproof bulbs.
 - In buildings that do not have integrated emergency lighting systems, each first aid kit must include a flashlight to be used in the case of a power outage.
 - For more information see the *Fire Drill and Emergency Lighting Policy*.
9. All buildings and spaces will be equipped with safety supplies that are readily accessible to staff including at minimum, fully equipped and up to date first aid kits and appropriate fire safety supplies
- First aid kits will be restocked annually and on an as-needed basis. First aid contents will be inspected monthly or after use. Supply requests and inspections sheets will be submitted to the Health Coordinator.
 - Approved, working fire extinguishers must be readily available.
 - All sites are inspected by the Fire Marshal annually or bi-annually. This inspection includes fire extinguishers.
 - Any fire extinguishers past their annual service date should be reported immediately to the Operations Manager.
 - Smoke detectors must be placed throughout the facility following local regulations and code. Records of testing of smoke detectors are kept on the *Fire Drill -Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist*.
 - Carbon Monoxide detectors will be used in areas where children sleep and be tested monthly and documented on the *Fire Drill- Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist*.
 - Fire drills must be practiced and documented monthly. All exits must be unobstructed and easily operable. Documentation of fire drills must be recorded on the *Fire Drill - Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist* and be visibly posted. Fire drills will also be documented in ChildPlus.
 - At the end of the program year, *Fire Drill - Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklists* are copied and turned into the Operations Manager. A copy of the previous year's log should remain onsite posted behind the current *Fire Drill Log*.
10. All buildings and spaces will be free from firearms and other weapons.
11. Toilets, diapering, and hand washing facilities must be clean and in good repair and be designed to be separated from areas used for preparing food, cooking, eating, and children's activities. These facilities should be maintained as follows:
- Toilets and sinks should be accessible for the age of children in the classroom. Step stools or low platforms should be used where toilets and sinks are too high for a child to safely reach.
 - Each toilet room door is easily opened by the children from either side.
 - Toileting areas are never used for the temporary placement or serving of food.
 - Changing areas have impervious, nonabsorbent, clean surfaces.
 - Storage areas are close to or within the diapering area for clean diapers, wipes, gloves and other supplies.

- Sink(s) for hand washing that are adjacent to the diapering area.
 - Soiled diapers should be stored in containers separate from other waste.
 - The *Diapering and Toileting (1302.47 (6))* and the *Cleaning Policy (1302.47(6))* should be followed at all times.
12. Indoor and outdoor play equipment, cribs, cots, feeding chairs, strollers, and other equipment used in the care of enrolled children must:
 - Meet standards set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CSPC) or the American Society for Testing and Materials International (ASTM).
 - Be clean and safe for children's use and be appropriately disinfected or sanitized.
 - The Cleaning Policy (1302.47) should be followed in all aspects of cleaning and sanitization.
 - An in-depth cleaning of carpets and rugs will be arranged by the Facilities Coordinator at least once yearly in sites owned by WCAP. In shared sites, staff will work with collaborative partners to ensure an in-depth cleaning is done at least once per year.
 - Be accessible only to children for whom they are age appropriate.
 - Be designed to ensure appropriate supervision of children at all times
 - Allow for the separation of infants and toddlers from preschoolers during play in center-based programs.
 - See *Playground Policy*
 13. All water sources must meet all federal and state standards. If the water is supplied by a well, regular, annual testing must be conducted. Water that is unsafe for consumption must be treated and re-tested by a trained professional. Bottled water will be used until the water test is satisfactory. A notice will be posted at the center in question if an unsatisfactory test is noted.
 14. All sewage and liquid waste will be disposed of through a locally approved sewer system.
 15. Garbage and trash are stored in a safe and sanitary manner:
 - Garbage/trash must be placed in a lined, tightly covered container that does not leak.
 - Garbage should be removed from rooms used by children, staff, families, or volunteers on a daily basis and disposed of as outlined in the contract with local waste removal company.
 - All waste materials should be kept away from children's indoor and outdoor activity areas as well as from areas used for the storage or preparation of food
 16. Adequate provisions are made for children with disabilities to ensure their safety, comfort, and participation:
 - Provisions or modifications regarding a child's disability should be put in place in partnership with the Special Services Manager and in accordance with the *1308 Plans and Policies*.
 17. All sleeping arrangements for infants must use firm mattresses, mats, or cots and avoid soft bedding materials such as comforters, pillows, fluffy blankets, and stuffed toys. Classrooms must follow current safe sleep practices released by the CDC.

All sites are smoke and tobacco free.

Title: Fire Drill /Emergency Lighting

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Rationale:

1. In accordance with The Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities, monthly fire and emergency lighting drills will be conducted in each center. The Facility Coordinator, or other designee, will conduct the drills in the WCAP owned centers. Lead Teachers will perform this duty in other classroom settings.
2. Posted fire evacuation floor plans will be located in each classroom/office near the door.
3. Written documentation of monthly drills will be posted on the Fire Drill, Evacuation and Monthly Systems Check List Form.
4. All Staff and children will be evacuated from the building within a 3 minute time frame.
5. Children are introduced to the fire drill /evacuation plan prior to actual drill to alleviate fear. This will help children to understand the importance of safety practices.
6. Alternative exit routes should be practiced after routine is established, and children are familiar with the process.

Fire drills must be practiced and documented monthly. All exits must be unobstructed and easily operable.

Documentation of fire drills must be recorded on the *Fire Drill - Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist* and be visibly posted.

At the end of the program year, *Fire Drill - Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklists* are copied and turned in to the Operations Manager. A copy of the previous year's log should remain onsite posted behind the current *Fire Drill Log*. Approved, working fire extinguishers are readily available.

- All sites are inspected by the local fire marshal annually or bi-annually. This inspection includes fire extinguishers.
- Any fire extinguishers past their annual service date should be reported immediately to the Facilities Coordinator or Operations Manager.

Smoke detectors and emergency lighting must be placed throughout the facility following local regulations and code. Records of testing of smoke detectors and emergency lighting are kept on the *Fire Drill -Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist*.

Carbon Monoxide detectors will be used in areas where children sleep, and be tested monthly and documented on the *Fire Drill- Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist*.

Title: Food as Punishment or Reward Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.31(e)(2); 1302.90(c)(1)(ii)(D)

Rationale: Children who are forced to eat or, for whom adults use food to modify behavior, come to view eating as a tug-of-war and are more likely to develop lasting food dislikes and unhealthy eating behaviors. Offering food as a reward or punishment places undue importance on food and may have negative effects on the child by promoting "clean the plate" responses that may lead to obesity or poor eating behavior. Encouraging, but never forcing a child to try foods

allows for the child to feel empowered in their food choices and avoids any underlying potential for power struggles related to food. CFOC 4.5.0.11

Guidance: Food will not be used as punishment or reward

1. All components of the meal should be offered at the same time, allowing children to select and enjoy all of the foods on the menu.
2. When introducing new foods, parents and staff should note that “pestering” the child to eat is not an effective strategy. “Pestering” refers to continual mention of eating and/or trying new foods beyond the point that a child has expressed a lack of interest.
3. Children will not be forced to take all foods or to finish food on their plate.
4. If a child chooses not to eat a food, staff and parents are encouraged to offer such food again at some future time.
5. “Clean-plate clubs”, “stars” and other gimmicks are not appropriate ways to encourage children to eat. Bribery and punishment should never be used in connection with food.
6. Positive conversation at the table between children and adults helps encourage a pleasant environment while also fostering children’s language development. This also offers the opportunity for adults to model good food choices and to connect good food choices to the concept of overall good health.

Title: Food Choking Hazards Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.44(a); 1302.44(a)(2)(iv)

Rationale: High-risk foods are those often implicated in choking incidents. Almost 90% of fatal choking occurs in children younger than four years of age. The compressibility or density of a food item is what allows the food to conform to and completely block the airway. Hot dogs are the foods most commonly associated with fatal choking in children. Many children die from choking each year. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Heart Association (AHA) believe that parents and other caregivers can often prevent choking. CFOC 4.5.0.10

Guidance: To reduce the risk of choking, menus should reflect the developmental abilities of the age of children served. The AAP and AHA recommend not serving children under 4 years of age any round, firm food unless it is chopped completely. Round, firm foods are common choking dangers.

The following foods can be choking hazards and therefore will be avoided:

- Nuts
- Chunks of meat or cheese
- Whole grapes *
- Raisins
- Popcorn
- Chunks of peanut butter
- Raw carrots *

- Hot dogs *

Food for infants should be cut into pieces one-quarter inch or smaller, food for toddlers should be cut into pieces one-half inch or smaller to prevent choking.

In addition, children must be closely supervised during mealtimes to ensure they are sitting while they have food in their mouths.

*These items may be served if appropriately cut, chopped or sliced so they are no longer in a round firm state. Carrots can be cooked to soften for toddlers.

Title: Food for Meetings, Training and Socialization Events Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.44(a)(2)(vii)

Rationale: Head Start is mandated to role model good nutrition for children and families. Meetings, training events and Early Head Start socializations provide opportunities to educate families and staff and help develop a positive attitude toward good nutrition. The incidence of heart disease, diabetes and hypertension continues to rise with the escalating obesity rates, making WCAP's role critical in helping address this national epidemic. CFOC 4.7.0.2

Guidance: Food and beverages for all WCAP sponsored functions will demonstrate good nutrition practices and will follow these guidelines:

1. We will provide lower fat meats or meat alternates, whole grains and fresh fruits and vegetables.
2. Acceptable beverages are water, skim or 1% milk, 100% juice, coffee & tea.
3. Dessert type items provided at adult attended meetings and trainings will offer some nutritional value (lower in fat and sugar and include whole grains when possible) and may include items such as fruit crisps or cobblers, molasses or oatmeal cookies, frozen low fat or fat free yogurt or ice cream, and puddings made with skim or 1% milk.
4. Meals and snacks served at Early Head Start socializations will follow USDA CACFP guidelines and emphasize fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, whole milk for children ages 1-2, and skim or 1% milk for children 2 years of age and older. Dessert type items will not be offered in CACFP reimbursable meals.

Title: Food Handling and Sanitation Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.47(b)(6)(ii)

Rationale: The program will comply with all applicable Federal, State and local food safety and sanitation laws, including those related to storage, preparation, service and health of food handlers. CFOC 4.9.0.1-13

Guidance:

Food Preparation and Handling

- Food will be prepared with a minimum of handling, with suitable utensils, and on surfaces that have been cleaned, rinsed and sanitized prior to use to prevent cross-contamination.
- Unless produce is labeled “ready to eat”, “washed”, or “triple washed”, it should be washed under running water before cutting and serving.
- Tops of canned items will be washed before opening.
- Potentially hazardous foods must be thawed under refrigeration at a temperature 41° F or lower , by submerging under running water at 70° F or lower, in a microwave only when food is cooked immediately afterwards, or as a part of conventional cooking.
- Potentially hazardous foods must be kept at an internal temperature below 41° F or above 135° F during the holding period.
- The temperature of all potentially hazardous foods will be recorded on the daily Production Record.
- Food that is prepared off site will be transported in insulated containers that keep hot and cold foods at safe temperatures. Food temperatures will be taken and recorded before service.
- During transportation, food and food utensils will be transported in covered containers or completely wrapped to prevent contamination.

Storage and Monitoring

- All non-food items will be stored separately from food items.
- Chemical and cleaning solutions will be stored separately from paper/disposable meal service items.
- All chemical and cleaning supplies will be clearly labeled and will have a MSDS available.
- All food not stored in the product container or package in which it was originally obtained, is stored in a sealed container that is labeled and dated.
- Thermometers will be present in each refrigerator, cooler and freezer and monitored and recorded daily to ensure that refrigeration temperatures are between 32°-41° F and freezer temperatures are at 0° F or colder. This will include classroom refrigerators.
- Store rooms, storage areas, freezers and refrigerators should be organized with inventory recording in mind and in an orderly manner.
- Food and non-food supplies will be used on a first in/first out basis.
- A physical inventory of food and non-food items will be recorded on a monthly basis.

Sanitizing and Cleaning

- Food thermometers must be sanitized with alcohol wipes before and after each use.
- Food preparation surfaces will be washed, rinsed and sanitized before and after use.
- All equipment, utensils, and tableware will be washed, rinsed and sanitized according to required procedures after use.
- Wiping cloths shall be cleaned and rinsed in a sanitizing solution. Disposable wiping cloths will not be re-used and will be discarded daily.
- The food-safe sanitizer should be utilized in kitchen areas and on lunch tables.
- Daily, weekly, and monthly cleaning schedules are completed and recorded daily.
- Garbage needs to be removed frequently and no trash may be left in the kitchen at the end of the working day. Garbage cans must be cleaned at least once a week or as often as needed.

The Nutrition Coordinator will conduct internal inspections quarterly to assure compliance with Federal, State and local standards.

Evidence of compliance with all applicable Federal, State and local food safety and sanitation laws will be available.

Title: Food Service Employee Illness Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.47(b)(6)(ii)

Rationale: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates approximately 20 per cent of foodborne illness outbreaks are caused from ill food service employees working with food. For this reason all food establishments should have an employee illness policy for food service personnel. CFOC 4.9.0.2

Guidance:

To prevent foodborne illness outbreaks, employees with any of the following symptoms or conditions shall report such to their supervisor and abstain from any food handling, preparation or serving:

- vomiting
- diarrhea
- fever
- jaundice
- sore throat with fever
- lesions containing pus on hands, wrists or other exposed portions of the body

All staff should be free from illness for 24 hours prior to returning to work.

Title: Hand Washing Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.47(a); 1302.47(b)(6)(i)

Rationale: Hand hygiene is the most important way to reduce the spread of infection. Many studies have shown that improperly cleansed hands are the primary carriers of infections. Deficiencies in hand hygiene have contributed to many outbreaks of diarrhea among children and caregivers/teachers in child care centers. Proper hand washing is the best prevention against food borne illnesses and other diseases. Unwashed or poorly washed hands can transfer harmful bacteria from your hands to those you are feeding. CFOC 3.2.2.1, 3.2.2.2, 3.2.2.3

Guidance:

Children and staff members should wash their hands using the following method:

- a. Check to be sure a clean, disposable paper (or single-use cloth) towel is available;
- b. Turn on warm water, between 60°F and 120°F, to a comfortable temperature;
- c. Moisten hands with water and apply soap to hands;
- d. Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears, hands are out of the water stream, and continue for at least twenty seconds (sing Happy Birthday silently twice). Rub areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, jewelry, and back of hands.
- e. Rinse hands under running water, between 60°F and 120°F, until they are free of soap and dirt. Leave the water running while drying hands;
- f. Dry hands with the clean, disposable paper or single use cloth towel;

- g. If taps do not shut off automatically, turn taps off with a disposable paper or single use cloth towel;
- h. Throw the disposable paper towel into a lined trash container; or place single-use cloth towels in the laundry hamper; or hang individually labeled cloth towels to dry.

When running water is unavailable or impractical, the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer is an alternative to traditional handwashing with soap and water by children over twenty-four months of age and adults on hands that are not visibly soiled. A single pump of an alcohol-based sanitizer should be dispensed. Hands should be rubbed together, distributing sanitizer to all hand and finger surfaces and hands should be permitted to air dry.

Hands should be washed:

- Upon arrival for the day
- After breaks, or when moving from one child care group to another
- Before and after food preparation, handling, serving (including setting tables), eating, or feeding a child
- Before and after diapering
- Before and after administering medications
- Before and after water play
- After handling/removing trash
- After smoking, eating or drinking
- After coughing, sneezing, using a tissue, or any other potential exposure to blood or body fluids
- After using the toilet or helping a child use a toilet
- After touching or handling any animal
- After sand or outdoor play

Situations or times that children and staff should perform hand hygiene should be posted in all food preparation, hand hygiene, diapering, and toileting areas.

Caregivers/teachers should provide assistance with handwashing at a sink for infants who can be safely cradled in one arm and for children who can stand but not wash their hands independently. A child who can stand should either use a child-height sink or stand on a safety step at a height at which the child's hands can hang freely under the running water. After assisting the child with handwashing, the staff member should wash his or her own hands.

Title: Handling and Storage of Breast Milk and Formula Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.44(a)(2)(viii); 1302.47(b)(6)(ii)

Rationale: Proper storage and handling of breast milk and infant formula is necessary to prevent spoilage, to minimize bacterial growth, and to ensure that each infant receives his or her own mother's milk or the correct brand of formula.
CFOC 4.3.1.3, 4.3.1.5, 4.3.1.9

Guidance:

1. Home visitors and other staff work with parents to find safe methods for storage and handling of breast milk and infant formula in both home and program environments, and for transporting breast milk as needed.
2. Staff and parents work together to ensure that all containers of breast milk and formula are dated, clearly labeled with the child's name, and used only for the intended child.

3. All bottles of breast milk and formula are refrigerated (in the main compartment of the refrigerator, not on the door) at 39°F or lower until immediately before feeding, and any contents remaining after a feeding, are discarded within two (2) hours.
4. Unused fresh breast milk will be discarded after 72 hours, if refrigerated, or after six (6) months if frozen. Formula should be mixed before each use and stored according to manufacturer's directions.
5. Once frozen breast milk is thawed, it is used within 24 hours. Previously frozen breast milk, once thawed, is never to be refrozen.
6. Frozen breast milk is thawed in running, warm water, or in the refrigerator.
7. To avoid spoilage, avoid warming bottles of formula or breast milk at room temperature. If breast milk or formula is to be warmed, bottles may be placed in warm pans of water at no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit for no more than five minutes. After warming, the bottle is shaken well and the temperature tested on the back of the preparer's hand before feeding.
8. Bottles of breast milk or formula are never to be warmed in a microwave. Microwaves heat unevenly and may cause severe burning.

All bottles, nipples, rings, valves and caps will be separated, rinsed, washed/sanitized in the dishwasher, and allowed to air dry after each use.

Title: Handling Ready-to-Eat-Foods Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.47(b)(6)(ii)

Rationale: Despite proper hand washing all contamination may not be removed from hands, therefore bare hands contact with ready-to-eat food will be avoided as prescribed by the FDA Food Code (2013) and Maine Food Code (2013).
CFOC 4.9.0.3

Guidance:

The following items will be considered ready-to-eat foods and may not be handled with bare hands:

- Prepared fresh fruits and vegetables served raw
- Salads and salad ingredients
- Cooked meats, cold meats and sandwiches
- Bread, toast, rolls and baked goods
- Ice
- Any food that will not be thoroughly cooked or reheated after it is prepared

Acceptable alternatives to bare hands would be:

- deli paper

- spatula
- tongs
- single-use gloves
- fork or spoon
- scoops
- napkin

Title: Head Lice Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.47

Rationale: To remain in alignment with school policy, students who are discovered to have pediculosis (head lice) should not be immediately excluded from school but allowed to stay for the remainder of the day.

Head Checks are to be performed only when classroom staff suspects a child has head lice.

Procedure:

- a) Check the child.
- b) In the event that live lice are found, staff will do everything in their power to ensure that the child and parent receive sufficient emotional support to prevent the child feeling embarrassment or shame.
- c) Notify parent/guardian and the Health Coordinator if live lice are present.
- d) If the child attends another program or childcare after WCAP Early Childhood Programming, contact that program and make them aware of the situation.
- e) Contact the Health Coordinator for approval to send Health Alerts. Upon approval, send health alerts home with all students at the center, and to anyone who has been in the center during the preceding week.
- f) The child may return after treatment has begun.

In instances when infestation is extreme, the Health Coordinator may extend the exclusion period. While frequent head checks should not be a standard practice, they are advisable in the instances of extreme infestation.

Classroom procedures:

In the event of lice infestation classroom dress up clothes, pillows, and stuffed animals will be laundered or placed in sealed plastic bags for at least 10 days. Rugs and upholstered furniture will be vacuumed and the vacuum bag will be disposed of after use.

Title: Health Exclusion and Admittance Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

References:

- Caring for Our Children 3.6.1
- *Managing Infectious Diseases in Childcare and Schools*

Rationale: The policy for the management of ill children is developed in consultation with the program physician to address technical issues of contagion and other health risk. The policy focuses on the needs and behavior of the ill child. Infectious diseases are a major concern of parents and staff.

Staff will contact parents or guardians of all children who are not feeling well or having a difficult day as part of regular ongoing communications.

When it is suspected that a child needs to be excluded from the center due to a health-related condition the following steps shall be followed:

1. The Health Coordinator or Site Supervisor (or, in the event that neither can be reached, the Program Director) will be contacted.
2. Upon approval, the family will be contacted to arrange for the child to be taken home. If the family cannot be contacted then the person(s) named on the emergency list will be contacted. Until such person arrives the child will receive care in their usual center setting in a manner that creates the least amount of risk to them, other children and/or staff.
3. Health Alerts will be issued to all classroom participants and partner program staff only after Health Coordinator, and or School Nurse approval.

Criteria for children's exclusion due to health reasons exist when the child has any of the following conditions:

- a. **Any unexplained fever in an infant younger than 4 months, and or any fever in a child younger than 2 months must get medical attention immediately.**
- b. Signs and symptoms of possible severe illness: Unusual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs until medical evaluation allows inclusion.
- c. Uncontrolled diarrhea not related to a medical condition, or medication.
- d. Uncontrolled vomiting, or a vomiting illness not related to a medical condition, medication, crying, coughing or choking.
- e. Rash with fever or behavior change.
- f. Any condition listed in *The Managing Infectious Diseases in Childcare and Schools* requiring an exclusion during or after treatment. (To be determined by Health or Coordinating Staff)

Note: Unspecified respiratory illness: A child without fever who has symptoms of mild or moderate severity associated with the common cold, sore throat, croup, bronchitis, pneumonia, or otitis media (ear infection) shall not be denied admission or sent home from the WCAP Early Childhood Program nor shall a child be separated from other children in the facility.

Guidance: WCAP Early Childhood Program shall not deny admission to or send home a child because of illness or disease unless one or more of the following conditions exists:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in the center activities.
2. The illness results in a greater care need than the center staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children

Return to Classroom:

- All staff and children should be free from symptoms and medication (Tylenol, etc.) prior to returning to the classroom.
- Any child placed on new medication may not return to the classroom until after 24 hours of use, even if the child has had the medication before.
- If a child has been absent for four or more consecutive days for a health-related illness, the Health Coordinator must be contacted for determination of admittance.
- Children requiring an Individual Health Plan (IHP) may not attend until all aspects of the plan are complete, and any modifications or aids are in place.
- Any child with a cast or injury needing any health or environment modification or limitation must have a health plan in place before attending or returning.

Additional Guidance:

- CDC or State issued guidance will be adhered to regardless of WCAP policy.

In the event of a vaccine preventable disease outbreak, unimmunized or under immunized children will be excluded per CDC protocol.

Title: Infant Feeding Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standards: 1302.31(e)(2); 1302.44(a)(2)(iv); 1302.44(a)(2)(v)

Rationale: Infants and toddlers require appropriate nutritional needs for their development, nourishment, and school readiness. Caregivers and families should work together to develop infant feeding plans for each infant. Feeding schedules, formula vs. breast milk, types and amounts of food provided, introduction of new foods, meal patterns, food intolerances and preferences, voiding patterns, and developmental changes should be shared between parents and caregivers regularly. CFOC 4.2.0.6, 4.3.1.2, 4.3.1.8, 9.2.3.12

Guidance:

1. Infants are held while being fed and are not laid down to sleep with a bottle or propped up.
2. Infants are fed “on demand” or “on cue” to the extent possible, as indicated by age, in appropriate amounts and at appropriate intervals as required by USDA CACFP guidelines.
3. Information is shared between parents and staff regularly on the following:
 - feeding schedules
 - amounts and types of foods serving
 - breast milk or formula and/or baby food used
 - meals patterns
 - new foods introduced by parents
 - food intolerances and preferences

- voiding patterns
 - observations related to developmental changes in feeding and nutrition
4. A variety of food is served which broadens each child's food experience. Food is served in developmentally appropriate forms. A tracking sheet within the child's file will be utilized to track which foods a child has been introduced to and any intolerances or preferences.
 5. Breast milk and formula are handled and stored properly. See *Handling and Storage of Breast Milk and Formula Policy*.
 6. On hot days, infants receiving human milk in a bottle are given additional human milk, and those receiving formula mixed with water are given additional formula mixed with water.

Further information can be found in the *Feeding Infants Resource Guide* located in each Early Head Start classroom.

Title: Mealtime Management Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.31(e)(2)

Rationale: "Family style" meal service promotes and supports social, emotional, and gross and fine motor skill development. Caregivers/teachers sitting and eating with children is an opportunity to engage children in social interactions with each other and for positive role-modeling by the adult caregiver/teacher. Conversation at the table adds to the pleasant mealtime environment and provides opportunities for informal modeling of appropriate eating behaviors, communication about eating, and imparting nutrition learning experiences. The presence of an adult or adults, who eat with the children, helps prevent behaviors that increase the possibility of fighting, feeding each other, stuffing food into the mouth and potential choking, and other negative behaviors. Family style meals encourage children to serve themselves which develops their eye-hand coordination. In addition to being nourished by food, infants and young children are encouraged to establish warm human relationships by their eating experiences. When children lack the developmental skills for self-feeding, they will be unable to serve food to themselves. An adult seated at the table can assist and be supportive with self-feeding so the child can eat an adequate amount of food to promote growth and prevent hunger. Head Start promotes child wellness by providing nutrition services that supplement and complement those of the home and community. CFOC 4.3.2.3, 4.5.0.1, 4.5.0.4, 4.5.0.7, 4.5.0.8, 4.7.0.1

Guidance:

1. Meals are served "family style" in a pleasant, well-lit and ventilated area that promotes socialization. Tables, chairs, and eating utensils are size and age appropriate.
2. Children will participate (with assistance as needed) in meal related activities such as setting tables, pouring, clearing tables, and cleaning up which will provide opportunities for decision making, responsibility, sharing, communication and fine motor eye-hand coordination.
3. Food is served in child-size portions as recommended by USDA CACFP meal patterns and menu planning requirements.
4. WCAP staff promote interaction and language use among children and between children and adults. Staff will encourage interesting and pleasant table conversation across a variety of topics, not only those related to food and nutrition.

5. When feasible, food is placed in serving dishes according to family style. As developmentally appropriate, children serve themselves. Adults may offer support to allow children success. As able to, each child will make his or her own food choices based on individual appetites and preferences. Children who need limited portion sizes should be taught and monitored.
6. Early Childhood Program staff will join the children at meal times, share the same menu and are expected to eat the same serving size as the children. Early Childhood Program staff, contracted personnel, volunteers and parents will model appropriate mealtime behavior and manners, as well as a positive attitude towards all foods served.
7. Adults who want to participate in mealtime management must be actively involved in classroom activities for that day. Early Childhood Program staff and contracted personnel who are considering participating in a classroom mealtime must meet one of the following criteria in order to participate:
 - As needed to maintain adult to child ratio
 - When acting in the capacity of a classroom staff member
 - At the request of a site manager/lead teacher
 - As authorized by the staff members supervisor

Early Childhood Program staff will notify nutrition program personnel of additional meals necessary above the normal quantity prior to the meal service to ensure adequate food amounts are prepared.

8. Siblings accompanying participating adults may eat with the children.
9. Therapists working with children at mealtime as a part of the child's service plan may also eat at the table.
10. All parents chaperoning on field trips in center locations will be provided with lunch and at school sites as funds are available.
11. Collaborative classrooms will move to the school cafeteria for lunch the last two weeks of the school year. Classrooms will have a transition plan and will discuss/practice this change with students prior to the shift to the cafeteria. In anticipation for preparing the students for kindergarten, children will follow normal school practices in the cafeteria, including using trays, getting in line to be served, having the option of flavored milk, and using straws, etc.
 - a. If a classroom transitions to the cafeteria before this time, as agreed upon by the school district and WCAP Early Childhood Program, CACFP regulations, Head Start Standards & Best Practices, and WCAP policies will continue to be followed. Appropriate size tables and chairs will be provided.

Title: Medical and Dental Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.40, 1302.41

Rationale: When families enroll children they have certain responsibilities to the Program which includes supplying birth certificates and medical records as required by state and federal regulation. They also agree to support program standards by complying with time requirements for insurance, immunizations, physical and dental exams. WCAP

Early Childhood Program will assist with the provision of services for those who are unable to meet these standards. Program entitlements are subject to various stipulations. One element is available funding. Medical and dental coverage is provided only after the participant has exhausted existing resources available to them. These resources include: commercial health insurance; MaineCare; and personal financial support.

Guidance: WCAP Early Childhood Program will support parents in meeting program requirements by assisting with or directly facilitating the arrangements for medical and dental appointments, transportation, child care or other needed assistance so appointments can be met; and by paying for medical and dental appointments, and any prescribed medications, aids or equipment for medical and oral health conditions when no other resources are available. It is our intention to provide these services as a secondary means for medical and dental attention. This service should not be viewed as a replacement for existing health/dental programs. Rather, our range of support is to provide basic health and dental care.

Therefore, medical and dental support:

- is provided to the extent of financial availability (Federal Head Start and Early Head Start Grants),
- is provided to enrolled children who, at the time of service, and have obtained the necessary pre-screenings,
- is provided only after other existing resources have been exhausted
- is pre-authorized by the Health Coordinator or Early Childhood Director, through the use of an authorized purchase order (P.O.) which includes the date of a confirmed appointment with the health care provider. The P.O. that is issued for a confirmed appointment will become void 30 days from the date,
- is for medically necessary care (excludes cosmetic treatments),
- special medical/dental circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- The maximum funding level of financial assistance will be made available from the WCAP ECP at the current MaineCare rates.

If with all of this assistance and support, a family does not meet the program standards, it will be the responsibility of the Health Coordinator to bring the child to the attention of the Early Childhood Director for guidance as to the continued enrollment of the child(ren) in question.

The parent has the right to refuse immunization if they state in writing that it is contrary to their religious or philosophical beliefs, or the child's physician submits documentation that such immunization is medically contraindicated. In the event that a child is not immunized for either reason, that child may be excluded from the center/ program in the event of an outbreak of disease per CDC protocol.

WCAP will maintain written documentation of any refusal of health services.

Title: Nutrition Services Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.42(b)(4); 1302.44(a)(1); 1302.44(a)(2)(i)(ii)(iii)(vii)(ix); 1302.44(b); 1302.46(b)(1)(ii)

Rationale: Early food and eating experiences form the foundation of attitudes about food, eating behavior, and consequently, food habits. One of the basic responsibilities of Head Start is to provide nourishing food daily that is clean, safe, and developmentally appropriate for children. Food is essential in any early care and education setting to keep infants and children free from hunger. Food provides energy and nutrients needed by infants and children during the critical period of their growth and development. Feeding nutritious food everyday must be accompanied by offering appropriate daily physical activity and play time for the healthy physical, social, and emotional development of infants and young children. Early care and education settings have the opportunity to guide and support children's sound eating habits and food learning experiences. CFOC 4.2.0.1, 4.2.0.3-7, 4.2.0.9, 4.7.0.1-2

Guidance:

The nutrition education component of a child's experience in the WCAP Early Childhood Program focuses on both the variety and types of foods modeled in the classroom as well as the emotional and physical environment in which the food is served. Important nutrition related objectives include the following:

1. Provide food which will help meet the child's daily nutritional needs in a pleasant environment, recognizing individual differences and cultural patterns.
2. Serve a variety of food which broadens each child's food experience.
3. Provide an environment which will support and promote physical, intellectual, social, and emotional growth and development.
4. Provide learning and decision-making experiences through participation in mealtime activities (i.e. setting the table, serving food, sampling unfamiliar food, pouring milk/water, cleaning up, etc.).
5. Provide opportunities for staff, children and parents to learn and gain an understanding of the relationship between good nutritional habits and increased health and well-being. Demonstrate to interrelationship of nutrition to other activities of the program and child development goals.
6. Involve staff, parents and community partners, as appropriate, in helping to meet each child's nutritional needs. The nutrition experience will compliment and supplement that of the home and community.
7. Identify community nutrition issues through the Health Advisory Committee.

The WCAP Early Childhood Program will design and implement a nutrition program that meets the nutritional needs and feeding requirements of each child, including those with special dietary needs and children with disabilities.

1. WCAP Centers will utilize funds from the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program as the primary source of reimbursement for meals and snacks. Costs not covered through USDA programs will be funded through Head Start and Early Head Start federal contracts.

2. Each child receives meals and snacks that provide one half to two thirds of the child's daily nutritional needs. Children in care 6 or more hours per day will receive 2 meals and 1 snack per day. Children in care less than 6 hours per day will receive 2 meals per day.
3. Each child receives food appropriate to his/her nutritional needs, developmental readiness and feeding skills. Quantities and types of foods served conform to USDA CACFP recommended serving sizes and minimum meal pattern and nutrient standards.
4. A variety of healthy foods, high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar and salt will be served.
5. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that children aged one to six years drink no more than four to six ounces of fruit juice a day. This amount is the total quantity for the whole day, including both time at early care and education and at home. Therefore, juice will not be served. Children will receive whole fruit which is more nutritious than fruit juice and provides dietary fiber.
6. Potable water is available throughout the day and during meal times.
7. Meal and snack periods will be appropriately scheduled and adjusted, where necessary, to ensure that individual needs are met.
8. Menus will be posted and provided to all parents.
9. Staff will promote effective dental hygiene among children in conjunction with meals.
10. The home based program will provide appropriate snacks and meals that meet CACFP guidelines to each child during group socialization activities.
11. Nutrition services will be supported by a registered dietitian.

Title: Oral Health Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

All enrolled children with teeth are required to brush their teeth at least once daily using fluoridated toothpaste.

Brushing is to be role modeled and supervised by at least one staff member. Do not have children eat or drink for at least 30 minutes after brushing if possible.

Toothbrushes are to be individually labeled and stored without touching each other to avoid cross contamination.

Each brush is to be rinsed with tap water and stored upright to air dry after use.

Contaminated brushes should be discarded and replaced.

Storage racks should be sanitized monthly.

Toothbrushes shall be replaced every 3-4 months, according to the Toothbrush Changing Schedule, or in the event of contamination or excessive wear, or communicable disease.

Staff will wear gloves if contact with the child's oral fluids is anticipated.

Best Practice for: 2 — 5 year olds:

Staff will intentionally lead and model brushing at least once daily following the Classroom Circle Brushing guidance.

Apply a small dab of fluoridated toothpaste to the inside rim of a small disposable cup.

Allow the child to transfer the paste to their toothbrush.

Brush for approximately 2 minutes covering all three surfaces of the teeth. Assist if necessary.

When the 2 minutes are up, have the children spit any extra toothpaste into their cups, wipe their mouths, and throw the cups and paper towels or napkins away.

Brushes are to be rinsed with tap water, stored upright, and allowed to air dry.

1-2 year olds: Staff assist with brushing children's teeth as described above.

Infants under age 1 or until tooth eruption: After washing hands, use gauze or a soft cloth to gently wipe the infant's gums at least once daily.

Title: Outside Food Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.44(a)(i); 1302.47(b)(6)(ii)

Rationale: Foodborne illness and poisoning from food is a common occurrence when food has not been properly refrigerated and covered. Although many such illnesses are limited to vomiting and diarrhea, sometimes they are life-threatening. Restricting food sent to the facility to be consumed by the individual child reduces the risk of food poisoning from unknown procedures used in home preparation, storage, and transport. Other children should not be exposed to unknown risk. Inadvertent sharing of food is a common occurrence in early care and education. The facility has an obligation to ensure that any food offered to children at the facility or shared with other children is wholesome and safe as well as complying with the food and nutrition guidelines for meals and snacks that the early care and education program should observe. The primary objective of the nutrition component of the Head Start program is to meet the nutritional needs of children by serving a variety of healthy foods using current USDA guidelines as a basis for determining the kinds and amounts of the food components eaten each day. Compliance with food safety and sanitation measures protects the health and safety of everyone. CFOC 4.6.0.1, 4.6.0.2

Guidance:

During the enrollment process, staff will explain to parents that Head Start does not allow families to bring in food to the classroom. Only foods that the Head Start sites purchase or that are provided by a licensed food vendor are allowed in classrooms or at any Head Start event, including socializations, field trips or parent meetings.

Reasons for this policy and steps staff will take include:

- **Ensuring children are kept safe**
 - In order to foster the health and safety of families and meet required food safety and sanitation law, all food served during classroom and parent gathering time to adults and/or children will be prepared in Head Start or public school kitchens. WCAP believes that this is vital to the health and safety of children because outside food could have potential risk to children (or adults) with food allergies or be contaminated with E. Coli or other agents that can make people sick.
- **Promoting healthy eating habits**
 - Food served at Head Start must meet nutrition standards put forth by the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The facility has a responsibility to follow feeding practices that promote optimum nutrition supporting growth and development in infants, toddlers, and children. Every child will receive a variety of foods to meet one half to two thirds of their daily nutritional needs. Because nutritional needs are met during mealtimes, parents are not allowed bring in outside foods.
- **Ensuring children and families are treated equally**
 - Because Head Start regulations state that cannot require that participants provide anything to a site, we do not allow any offsite food to be provided for any child. This allows every child in the classrooms to eat from the same menu and be exposed to the same number of opportunities. This minimizes families feeling pressured to bring in certain items while ensuring that every child receives a healthy, nutritious meal.

In exceptional cases, with documented approval from the Nutrition Coordinator and/or the Nutrition Consultant, parents of a child with special dietary needs may choose to bring in food for their child only after it has been determined that WCAP cannot accommodate individual needs under CACFP guidelines.

For safety purposes, staff are not to bring any outside food or drinks (hot or cold*) into the classrooms. *Water in an enclosed bottle or other non-glass container is okay - if kept out of reach of children. Personal snacks and drinks may be consumed before and after school when no children are present, or in a designated teachers' area in the building.

Title: Playground Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

References: 1302.47,10-148 CMR Chapter 32 18.5 Licensing requirements

Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities, effective August 27, 2008,

Guidance: It is the intention of Waldo Community Action Partners Early Childhood Program to provide outside play areas. It is further the intent of the Program to provide outside play areas that are a safe and supportive part of the child's day. Both Federal Regulations and the Maine Rules for Licensing of Child Care Facilities require specified standards for the health and safety of children at all times. WCAP programs incorporate outdoor play into 5-2-1-0 practices in an effort to help reduce childhood obesity. Selection, layout, installation, and maintenance of outside play areas must minimize the possibility of injury to children. Families will have input into all decisions made regarding major changes to outside play areas.

1. All centers will have an outside playground space that allows for a minimum of 75 square feet per enrolled child. Outside play areas will provide safe, attractive equipment and space enough for children to enjoy open-ended play, and to experiment and explore.

2. Outside play areas shall be laid out in such a manner that all children can be visually observed and supervised by staff at all times. Outside play areas will be arranged to prevent any child from leaving the premises or getting into unsafe or unsupervised areas.
3. Provisions will be made for children with disabilities to participate in active play in a safe manner.
4. Outside play areas will be inspected daily by staff for hazards. Ground around all outside play areas where equipment is installed will have ground cover of grass, mulch, sand, or bark to meet safety specifications.
5. Outside play areas and equipment will be inspected monthly by staff using the *Monthly Safety Monitoring* documentation located in ChildPlus.
 - Any playground deficiencies will be brought to the Operation Manager or Facilities Coordinator's attention.
6. Outside play area sand boxes will be covered at all times when not in use by children.
7. Outside play areas will provide both sun and shaded areas.
8. Equipment for outside play areas will be fabricated of materials that are safe, sturdy and designed and installed to meet manufacturer's specifications. No chemically treated lumber will be used.
9. All equipment installed will be professionally installed using safety specifications recommended by the U. S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, Handbook for Public Playground Safety.
10. All Head Start and Pre-K classes located in public schools will complete a Playground Supervision Plan detailing safe use of available playground equipment and play areas.
11. Center family groups, teaching staff and content area managers/coordinators and families will be involved in the process of purchasing or replacing new outdoor equipment.
12. Children will go outside for at least thirty (30) minutes each day. All students are expected to participate in outdoor play unless one or more of the following conditions exist:
 - Temperatures below 20 degrees Fahrenheit factoring in the wind chill
 - Heavy rain
 - Unsafe environmental hazards
 - Child Care Weather Watch chart is to be used for temperature guidance.
13. The outdoor spaces used by multiple age groups (EHS and HS or HS and Kindergarten+) must allow for the separation of age groups during play. Plastic cones used to create a visual barrier is an allowable separation technique. The Child Care Licensing required adult to child ratios of the age group of children must be maintained at all times.
 - Reference: Maine Child Care Licensing 28.2.1

Title: Safe Sleep Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standards: 1302.47(b)(5)(ii), 10-48 CMR Chapter 32 22.8
Current CFOC and CDC guidance will be followed.

Rationale: To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), and the spread of contagious disease:

Guidance: All staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and others who care for infants in the early care and education setting should follow safe sleep practices as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Cribs must be in compliance with current U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and ASTM International safety standards.

- A crib must be provided for each child up to 18 months of age.
 - No crib shall be used for more than one child at a time.
 - There must be at least one designated evacuation crib.
 - All sites are smoke and tobacco free.
 - All sites support breastfeeding.
 - Awake infants will have supervised "Tummy Time".
1. Infants will always be put to sleep on their backs.
 2. Infants will be placed on a firm mattress, with a fitted crib sheet that meets the CPSC standards.
 3. No toys, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, positioning devices or extra bedding will be in the crib or draped over the side of the crib.
 4. Sleeping areas will be ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult. Infants will not be dressed in more than one extra layer than an adult.
 5. If additional warmth is needed, a one piece blanket sleeper or sleep sack may be used.
 6. The infants head will remain uncovered for sleep. Bibs and hoods will be removed.
 7. Sleeping infants will be observed by sight and sound.
 8. Infants will not be allowed to sleep on a couch, chair cushion, bed, pillow, car seat, swing, or bouncy chair. If an infant falls asleep anyplace other than a crib, the infant will be moved to a crib right away.
 9. An infant who arrives asleep in a car seat will be moved to a crib.
 10. Infants will not share cribs, and cribs will be spaced 3 feet apart.
 11. Infants may be offered a pacifier for sleep, if provided by the parent.
 12. Pacifiers will not be attached by a string to the infant's clothing and will not be reinserted if they fall out after the infant is asleep.
 13. When able to roll back and forth from back to front, the infant will be put to sleep on his back and allowed to assume a preferred sleep position.
 14. In the case of a medical condition requiring a sleep position other than on the back, the parent must provide a signed document from the infant's physician.
 15. By age 18 month, or when standing, the crib rail reaches the child's nipple line, the child will be transitioned to a cot for safety.

All cribs and cots will be cleaned and disinfected regularly according to the cleaning schedule, and sheets must be changed and washed before being used by another child.

Title: Sufficient Time for Meals Policy

PC Approved: 3/13/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302.31(e)(2); 1302.44(a)(2)(i); 1302.44(a)(2)(ii); 1302.44(a)(2)(iv); 1302.44(a)(2)(vi)

Rationale: Relaxing meal times provide children with opportunities to learn. Feeding should occur in a relaxed and pleasant environment that fosters healthy digestion and positive social behavior. Young children, under the age of six, need to be offered food every two to three hours. Appetite and interest in food varies from one meal or snack to the next. To ensure that the child's daily nutritional needs are met, small feedings of nourishing food should be scheduled over the course of a day. CFOC 4.2.0.5, 4.3.2.1, 4.3.3.1

Guidance: The following meal and snack patterns should occur:

1. Children in care for six or less hours per day will be offered two meals (breakfast and lunch). Children in care for more than six hours per day should be offered at least one meal and two snacks or two meals and one snack. Nourishment offered will provide one half to two thirds of the child's daily nutritional needs.
2. A nourishing breakfast will be offered to all children upon arrival at the program who have not received breakfast.
3. A nutritious snack should be offered to all children midmorning (if they are not offered a breakfast on-site that is provided within three hours of lunch) and/or in the middle of the afternoon.
4. Children should be offered food at intervals at least two hours apart and not more than three hours apart unless the child is asleep. Some very young infants may need to be fed at shorter intervals than every two hours to meet their nutritional needs, especially breastfed infants being fed expressed human milk. Lunch service may need to be served to toddlers earlier than the preschool-aged children due to their need for an earlier nap schedule. Children must be awake prior to being offered a meal/snack.
5. Children should be allowed sufficient time to eat their food and not be rushed during the meal or snack service. Children who become restless before the meal is over can be directed to an alternate activity such as reading a book.
6. Infants and toddlers served in Early Head Start center-based programs will be fed "on demand" or "on cue" to the extent possible, as indicated by age, in appropriate amounts and at appropriate intervals as required by USDA and CACFP guidelines.

Subpart E- Family and Community Engagement Program Services

Title: Child Care and Child Care Reimbursement Policy

Policy Council Approved: 4/10/19

Board of Directors Approved: 5/23/19

There are two options for childcare:

1. **On-site child care**, which will be provided at or in close proximity to the event. The Early Childhood Program prefers that families make all efforts to use on-site childcare, as it is the most economical means of providing childcare. All efforts will be made to accommodate families, but it is not guaranteed.
2. **Home child care**, where families find their own provider to take care of their child/children in their home. Home childcare is used by families when the on-site childcare does not meet their child's needs such as:
 - Infants under 10 months
 - Children who are ill
 - Children with special needs who cannot be reasonable accommodated on site
 - Other individual needs as they occur

ON-SITE CHILD CARE:

- Childcare shall only be provided by qualified adults who have gone through the WCAP Early Childhood Program background check process and training.
- WCAP's Early Childhood Program requires a minimum of two child care providers for on-site child care for each event following the child care staff-child ratios prescribed by the office of Maine Child Care Licensing (*10-148 CMR Chapter 32, section 28.1*).
 1. Families must RSVP at a minimum of 2 business days prior to the event to utilize the child care services in order to ensure appropriate staffing
- WCAP Early Childhood Program recognizes the importance of consistency in child care givers so children and their families can develop trusting relationships
 1. As often as possible a consistent on-site primary child care provider will be assigned to each regularly scheduled event
 2. Each primary caregiver will work collaboratively with Family Services Coordinator prior to and immediately after each event in the planning of and evaluation of each event in the area of child care services
- No staff person will accrue more than their regular working hours within one week of time without prior permission from their supervisor and then the Early Childhood Program Director.
- On-site child care providers will be reimbursed at their regular hourly rate.
- Checks written by the fiscal department generally 2 weeks to process. Payment will be given only to the provider, unless the provider requests otherwise in writing to the WCAP fiscal Office. Checks will be mailed to the provider unless the provider has made other arrangements with the Fiscal Office.

HOME CHILD CARE:

- Reimbursement for Home child care will **not** be approved for the following:
 - Spouses
 - Families, stepparents, foster parents or older siblings
 - Adult partners of family members residing in the same house
- The rate paid per hour for Home child care will be minimum wage regardless of the number of children present.

- The maximum daily total of time to be paid for Home Child Care will be for no more than 10 hours of child care within a 24 hour period of time
- The home child care providers, or the family hiring the provider, must fill out the In-home Child Care Reimbursement Form in order for the provider to get paid. The form must include the provider's name, mailing address, signature, and other information requested on the form.
- The Child Care Reimbursement Form must be submitted to the Family Services Coordinator for processing through the Early Childhood Program Fiscal Bookkeeper. Checks written by fiscal generally 2 weeks to process. Payment will be given only to the provider, unless the provider requests otherwise in writing to the WCAP fiscal Office. Checks will be mailed to the provider unless the provider has made other arrangements with the Fiscal Office.

Title: Community Partnerships

Policy Council Approved: 4/10/19

Board of Directors Approved: 5/23/19

Rationale: WCAP Early Childhood Program honors and builds upon the unique strengths and abilities of the communities it serves and demonstrates the capacity to adapt to meet emerging needs. We work to expand services by partnering with schools, family childcare, and community-based childcare to increase availability of comprehensive services to children and their families. Our core belief is that no one program will be able to meet all of a child's and family's needs; it is our intent to become embedded in an integrated community system of service providers and strength-building organizations that support the creation and continuation of services, as well as the growth of effective citizens.

Community Collaborations, Partnerships & Systems: We recognize that families must be served within the context of the communities in which they live and work. There are many other agencies and groups, which do, or can, support parents we serve.

The Early Childhood Program takes an active role in promoting coordination of work between community partners at all levels. At the state level the Early Childhood Program Director coordinates with State Departments as well as other Head Start agencies to promote a unified approach to creating quality and comprehensive early childhood system in the state of Maine. This is done through ongoing communication, participation in the State Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), sharing of data with state groups as is possible and required in contracts (while maintaining all protection for child data as described in the *Confidentiality Policy, Data Management Protocol, and Client File Access Procedure*) and other ongoing efforts.

The program works with individual families to ensure coordination between service providers. Additionally, the Early Childhood Director and the other Content Area Managers/Coordinators work with local social services and education agencies to avoid duplication of services and ensure delivery of services for those most at risk.

WCAP strives to maintain strong relationships with, mental health providers, Child Development Services, public school districts, nutritional service providers, educational and cultural institutions, state agencies, housing agencies, domestic violence prevention groups, health care providers, and providers of prenatal and postnatal support to name a few.

WCAP Early Childhood Program has established collaborative efforts within the community as well as with-in the WCAP Agency to assist participating families in receiving necessary services. Information on both informal and formal partnerships is tracked by the Early Childhood department and reported through the WCAP Community Services department. In many cases formal Memorandum Of Understandings (MOUs) are established with partners through the Early Childhood Program Director. Formal contracts and MOUs are kept in the WCAP Finance Department. Staff are encouraged to join local community groups such as coalitions, boards, workgroups, etc. The work done in meeting and committee forums is an effort to improve/influence the delivery of services. Documentation of work is

kept by each Content Area Managers/Coordinators member as to the work completed in their component area as it relates to community partnerships.

The broader Community Action Partnership organization maintains a list of community partnerships available for reporting. The Early Childhood Director assists in the maintenance of this list and maintenance of the relationships. The Early Childhood Department will work with the rest of WCAP to maintain these relationships.

Advisory Committee: WCAP establishes and maintains an advisory committee which includes our parents, professionals, and other volunteers from the community. This committee targets Health Services as well as other components of service delivery as they arise.

Committee membership is facilitated through the Early Childhood Program; the Health Coordinator chairs all meetings. Meeting agendas are distributed ahead of time. Minutes are kept and distributed following each meeting.

Community & Program Transition Services: WCAP staff works with many community partners who participate in the delivery of services needed by children and families to provide helpful support and guidance to the child and family in their transition into, with-in, or out of the program to other service systems.

See *Transition/Transfer Process* for more information.

Title: Family Engagement Policy

Policy Council Approved: 4/10/19

Board of Directors Approved: 5/23/19

Note: When we talk about “parents” we also stretch this definition to refer to any primary caregivers in the family structure who are doing “parenting”. As a program we work to support families, no matter how they are made up. We work to refer to the “family” rather than the “parent” in an effort to be as inclusive as possible. This, of course, is a work in progress.

Rationale: WCAP Early Childhood Program strives to provide family engagement opportunities and education activities that are responsive to the ongoing and expressed needs of the families both as individuals and as members of a group. Our program, and the Head Start program nationally, believes that families are the primary educators of their children. We maintain an “open door” policy, inviting families to visit sites whenever they wish to observe, participate in activities, interact with their children and meet with staff. A variety of opportunities are available for families and caregivers to partner with the Program. The program strives for environments and interactions that promote involvement in the Program.

1. Family Engagement in Transition Activities:

- Individualized transition planning occurs for each child as they move in, out and between programs. The transitions of children moving from Early Head Start to Head Start and from Head Start to kindergarten are thoughtfully planned for all in partnership with the family. Recognizing that these transitions may be a major change that comes with a high level of emotional response, staff work closely with families to consider what the experience will be like for the whole family.
 - See *Transition/Transfer Process* for more information

2. Family Engagement in Home Visits:

- Both Education and Family Service staff offer home visits as a means of supporting connections between the families, including fathers and/or father figures, child and staff; they allow the staff to learn about

the child in the context of his family and home environment and allow the family to interact with the staff outside of the school environment.

- Family Service Home Visits are offered as early in the program year as possible and continue for as long as the family participates in the program, based on family interests and needs.
- Home Visits are arranged to support the scheduling needs of both the family and staff. If the family does not wish to have staff visit in their home, or if there is any concern for safety, an alternative meeting place is selected.
- At the home visit, staff encourage families to discuss changes they have noticed in their child's development. Family observations are connected to the programs curriculum, best practices in education and child development which supports the family growth in their parenting role.
- Home Visits are also an opportunity to connect about family goal setting, health outcomes, child outcomes, and activities to promote school readiness.
- See *Home Visit Approach Policy* for more information.

3. *Family Group Meetings:*

- Family groups are formed at each center. At times, center groups that are geographically close together may be combined.
- Families are also welcome to attend any Family Group meeting.
- In the fall of each program year, each group will elect officers and policy council representative to serve on behalf of their group.
- See *Center Family Group Roles and Expectations Policy* for more information.

4. *School Family Committees:*

- Families who are enrolled in a program located in a public school are encouraged to become involved with that schools PTG, PTA, PIE, etc. in support of the Early Childhood Program School Readiness goals and statement.
- In some cases, School Family Committees also encourage training within their meeting structure as well.

5. WCAP sponsored opportunities for Family Training:

- Each program year, the Early Childhood Program will sponsor local large group training or educational events.
 - The Family Service Staff members work in collaboration with Home Visitors and Family Advocates to plan and implement these trainings
- Included in these opportunities annually, families will be offered opportunities to participate in parenting intervention trainings utilizing a research-based curriculum which offers families guidance and information to practice parenting skills to promote children's learning and development.
 - All parents and families are invited to attend.

6. *Outside opportunities for Family Training Events:*

- Each year a budgeted amount of money may be set-aside for family members who wish to attend trainings or conferences. Preferences will be given to primary caregivers.
- The Family Service Coordinator will distribute information on regional, national, state and local conferences. Anyone wishing to represent Waldo Community Action Partners Early Childhood Program at the conference must contact the Family Service Coordinator in order to be considered to attend. The Early Childhood Program Director may make specific recommendations of Policy Council families to attend trainings.
 - Every effort will be made to send family members who wish to participate in trainings.

- All family members participating in our program are welcome to request in writing their desire to be considered to attend such events; if multiple individuals apply to attend decisions will be made by the Family Service Coordinator and Early Childhood Director.
- All decisions will be made based on current funding.
- Individuals attending trainings or conferences on behalf of WCAP with advanced approval will have their trainings paid for in full.
 - All WCAP policies will be followed by registrants.
 - Mileage will be reimbursed at current staff reimbursement rates using budgeted travel funds.
 - Meals will be paid in accordance with WCAP per diem rates.
 - Child care will be covered as written in the *Child Care Reimbursement Policy*.
 - If individuals hear about a local or state training which could support the programs access to a community-building environment and they would like to attend, they should speak directly to their family service staff assigned to that site or the Family Services Coordinator. The Family Service Coordinator, in partnership with the Early Childhood Program Director and/or the Finance Department, will consider attendance based on budgets and time available

7. *Volunteering and In-Kind:*

- Families are invited to volunteer within the classroom.
- Opportunities for volunteering also exist outside the classroom including, but not limited to, participating in staff interviews, assisting with recruitment efforts, completing site observations, Health/Safety checklists and program self-assessment, and joining Policy Council and family groups and committees.
- Staff will provide any interested individual with list of volunteer opportunities and volunteer job descriptions.
- A volunteer packet must be completed for any regular volunteer before they can begin their volunteer work. The volunteer packet can be obtained from any classroom teacher or family service staff assigned to that site. A volunteer orientation will be scheduled and provided by the family service staff assigned to that site once the volunteer packet is completed and before the volunteer starts service. For additional information on volunteering see *Volunteer Policy*.
- A non-Federal match is required from all Early Childhood Program programs as a contribution to the total cost of the program. In-Kind hours are converted into a monetary value and counted as part of our non-federal match.
 - In-kind rates are determined annually by the Early Childhood Director and the Fiscal Department.

8. *Advisory Committee:*

- Families will be invited to participate in the Early Childhood Program Advisory Committee as they are interested. For more information see *Community Partnerships Policy*.

9. *Other activities:*

- From time to time additional activities may be open for family participation. Information will be shared with all appropriate individuals through Family Service staff and bulletins home to families. These opportunities may include but are not limited to:
 - WCAP Agency celebrations
 - Participation in Head Start Federal Monitoring Visits
 - Field Trips

10. *Families Engaged in Community Advocacy:*

- Throughout each year, families are provided information and opportunities to participate in community advocacy. At the local level, staff provides families with information regarding meetings at schools and within municipalities which they can attend and share their input. Program-wide, information regarding national and statewide initiatives is shared with families in order for them to make informed decisions and advocate if they choose. Through networking connections, our program provides information to families regarding changes in social service programs families may be enrolled in and proposals for changes in legislation and regulations that could impact families and how they can become involved with issues. Further support is provided to families by coordinating opportunities for them to visit the State House, learn about governmental processes, and meet with local representatives. Additionally, participation in program governance through Policy Council provides an avenue for learning about advocacy within the broader community.

11. Newsletters and information sharing with families:

- Newsletters and information are created and sent out to all enrolled families
 - Newsletters are reviewed and approved by the Content Area Coordinators/Managers prior to being sent to families.
- Newsletters contain information about curriculum and suggested family engagement activities which aligns with school readiness goals
- Additionally, newsletters inform families of engagement and education activities as well as community events which supports family engagement program-wide

Title: Family Partnerships Policy

Policy Council Approved: 4/10/19

Board of Directors Approved: 5/23/19

Rationale: *The WCAP Early Childhood Program believes that each family has unique strengths, dreams, desires and needs, and exists within the context of the community. It is through a partnership process that staff and families share and celebrate the strengths of each family and embrace diversity and a variety of cultural backgrounds. WCAP builds stronger families and communities by focusing on family-child relationships and enhancing communities supports such as wellness, enhanced parenting skills, financial stability, and life-long learning.*

Family Partnering Goals: (aligns with the Parent, Family & Community Engagement Framework)

- Partner with families and community-based service providers to assure family access to and participation in services that will support family well-being, safety, health, economic stability and enhance parenting skills.
- Develop meaningful relationships with families in order to support child and family outcomes, engaging families in individualized goal-setting aligned with the Family Engagement Framework.
- Support families to observe, guide, and promote the learning of their children at home, school and in the community.
- All members of an enrolled child's family may be considered in the Family Partnership process, including both mother and father figures, biological and non-biological.
- Foster opportunities for families to make and maintain supportive and appropriate social connections and expand their social support structures.
- Foster opportunities for parents to individually, and with the program, participate in personal and community advocacy, impacting service design, program governance and policy development.
- Offer to meet with families a minimum of two times a year for center-based options and weekly for home based options to discuss school readiness and family engagement goals with the family.

- Questions related to the unique family structure, including cultural background and language preferences are asked in order for the program to work with the family in the most supportive and respectful manner possible. If needed, translators are provided and/or arranged. For more information see [Cultural and Linguistic Policy](#).
- Review individual progress, revise goals, evaluate and track identified needs and goals met, adjust strategies as necessary and prioritize services to families based on the intensity of identified family needs and goals.
- Intentionally engage families in the transition planning process for their children, including Early Head Start to Head Start and Head Start to the public schools.
- Infuse culturally responsive family services throughout curriculum and program design in an integrated manner.

Service Delivery Responsibility: In the center-based model, each family works with a Family Advocate who has access to support from the Family Services Coordinator when additional information or resources are needed. In the Home Based/Home Visiting model, Home Visitors are cross-trained to deliver services in both education and family services and also have access to support from the Family Services Coordinator when additional Family Engagement information or resources are needed.

Individual Family Partnership Agreement Process:

- Using *WCAP Early Childhood Program's Individual Family Partnership Agreement*, Family Service Staff will offer to meet with each of their assigned families as early in the program year as possible to:
 1. Introduce the IFPA process and timeline to the family
 2. Complete a Family Strengths and Needs Assessment or update a prior assessment as needed
 3. Establish the Family Partnership Agreement with the family and explain how it is linked to the Parent, Family & Community Engagement Framework and outcomes
 - a. Document family driven goals and develop action steps in collaboration with the family to reach each goal (*a minimum of two active goals will be encouraged throughout the process*)
 - b. Problem solve to enable the family to identify and remove barriers to reaching goals
 - c. Make appropriate referrals, give resources and provide active support and follow-up as needed
 - d. Support family's understanding of their child's learning and development to provide, if applicable, services and supports for children with disabilities which fosters parental confidence and skills
 - e. Discuss opportunities available through Early Childhood Program to help the family achieve their goals and overcome barriers
 - f. Retain a copy and give the family the original IFPA forms informing them of how to continue the work started/established/up-dated
 - g. Follow-up within 30 program days to support progress and or needs; document as indicated in the packet, send updated information to the family to retain with their original copy
 - h. Continue to follow-up and document as indicated every 30 days thereafter or more often as needed
 - i. Always encourage the family to work on their goals at a pace that is individualized to the family and their abilities
 - j. Continue to encourage family's growth reaching goals, progress made and independence gained
 - k. Celebrate all progress made with the family
 - l. The IFPA and all progress, or lack of, will be entered in the Early Childhood Program data base

- m. The Family Services Coordinator will review each IFPA with individual Family Service Staff to support on-going goal achievement for families and provide professional development for staff
 - 4. If the family is already working with another agency and has established goals or pre-existing plans, goals/plans will be the same as those previously identified. With signed consent from the family, efforts will be made to exchange information regarding pre-existing plans to support the work currently being done on the pre-existing goals.
 - 5. If a family refuses to participate in the IFPA development and all efforts have been made to support the family to recognize the benefits of the process, a service refusal form may be used to document the family's choice.
- All family Partnership data is entered and tracked using the programs database

Parent, Family and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework

We operate on the premise that **parents and families are their children's first and most important educators**. Further, we recognize that **family engagement is everyone's work**. As such, PFCE professional development opportunities are made available to staff.

Guidance: In order to achieve our goal of partnering with parents/families, our program utilizes the Head Start Parent Family and Community Engagement Framework to support all Family Partnership work:

- 1) The Head Start PFCE Framework identifies the following outcomes as a focal point of our work: *Available at:* <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family>

Title: Fundraising Policy

Policy Council Approved: 4/10/19

Board of Directors Approved: 5/23/19

Guidance:

- WCAP Early Childhood Programs, Head Start, Early Head Start, and Pre-K does not allow staff or family group fundraising. This includes schoolwide or school sponsored fundraising in any Head Start/Public School collaborations.
- Any discussions or additional requests for fundraising activities must include a conversation with the WCAP Policy Council, Early Childhood Director, and WCAP Executive Director or WCAP Finance Director.

Definition:

Fundraising is an activity designed to elicit donations (both dollars and donations of items purchased for a specific purpose) for a one-time, specific cause or project. This excludes professional grant writing.

Rationale:

The department has elected this policy for a number of reasons:

- No federal Head Start or Early Head Start funds can be utilized to support fundraising efforts as indicated in OMB 2 CFR 225 Appendix B and 2 CFR 230, Appendix B. It is also not allowed of state funding. This means, no staff may be fundraising or participating in fundraising activities while working for WCAP. This includes classroom participation in school-wide or school sponsored fundraisers. It is best practice to also avoid using grant funding for fundraising. There are minimal unrestricted funds with which to fundraise.

- The ability for family groups to focus on relationship building, the needs of children, the needs of centers and their communities is seen as paramount. The requirement of fundraising distracts and changes the focus away from these critical focal points.
- It should be noted that one of the most important ways to support the WCAP Early Childhood programs is through in-kind support. In-kind, volunteer support is a critical requirement in raising the non-federal share required of our federal grants. Families wishing to support the program should seek opportunities to volunteer for the program either in their child's classroom, or the WCAP Administrative offices.
- Having children participate in fundraising is not developmentally appropriate for the age groups we serve.
- Often fundraisers unintentionally make individuals feel that they must support the program. This means that families should not be asked to fundraise dollars or items purchased for a specific purpose of fundraising (i.e. donating items to a basket to be raffled).

Title: Providing Resources, Referrals, Community Services, and Follow-up

Policy Council Approved: 4/10/19

Board of Directors Approved: 5/23/19

Rationale:

WCAP Early Childhood Program believes that through the support services made available to every family, opportunities are created for families to enhance the quality of their lives as engaged families in their child's growth and development. WCAP staff are committed to partner with each family; identifying their strengths and needs, accessing community resources, services and/or referrals which supports the individual family's interests and goals. It is the wish of WCAP Early Childhood Program that every family has avenues of support to rely on in a crisis/emergency situation.

Key Responsibility:

The Family Services Staff (Family Service Coordinator, Family Advocates and Home Visitors) are responsible for Family Partnering Systems.

Resources:

One critical aspect of family education is the sharing of information and materials regarding accessing community services and resources. WCAP staff obtain information about local resources in the community, along with state and federal resources. Resources available to families are kept up-to-date in the WCAP Resource Bank.

Family Service staff attend monthly resource connections meetings/trainings where current resources are discussed and shared. Additionally, staff refer to the "2-1-1, Get Connected, Get Answers" system, other local resource guides as well as to access information from appropriate on-line sources.

Staff are able to support families with referrals to community services. Referrals and services offered to families are based on individual family need. Staff support families with developing, organizing, maintaining, and utilizing their own support systems should an emergency or crisis arise.

WCAP Early Childhood Program will provide each family with information and support accessing assistance based on individual family needs. In addition to giving each family resource and referral connection information, staff will inform families of their own availability in the case of a family crisis or emergency.

Each enrolled family receives a resource packet at their first Home Visit which contains the WCAP Directory of Services and more. Staff will follow-up with-in two weeks of when resource/referral information was requested and

given to ensure assistance was found or make additional referrals as necessary. If a family does not have a Family Service Home Visit, these same resources will be provided by the Family Advocate as soon as possible.

Services for Pregnant Women:

Once enrolled, pregnant women participate in on-going home visiting services and are given assistance as needed accessing resources and/or being referred to comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care. The home visitor encourages fathers and relevant family members to participate in the services provided to the pregnant woman

In the event an enrolled pregnant woman does not have access to health care the program will facilitate access to appropriate health care and/or health insurance coverage within 30 days of enrollment.

In partnership with the pregnant woman, early and on-going risk assessments are completed. This includes identifying needs for crisis supports, any health care related services, mental health services (including substance abuse prevention and treatment as appropriate), nutritional services, dental care emergency shelter or transitional housing and social services using the Prenatal Health History form which is completed at the first Prenatal Home Visit. Prenatal education is offered to all enrolled expectant families through utilizing the Partners for a Healthy Baby curriculum.

All enrolled mothers who give birth will receive a follow-up home visit within two weeks of the delivery of the infant which will be reviewed by the Health Coordinator.

Subpart F- Additional Services for Children with Disabilities

Title: Procedure for Ensuring Services for Children Diagnosed with Disabilities

Policy Council Approval: 3/13/19

Board Approval: 4/25/19

Rationale: WCAP Early Childhood Program seeks to ensure enrolled children with disabilities and their families receive all applicable program services in the least restrictive environment possible and that they fully participate in program activities.

Procedure:

Collaborations:

WCAP will collaborate with local Child Developmental Services (CDS) Sites. CDS is the local agency responsible for implementing services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Maine Unified Special Education Regulation (MUSER). WCAP will maintain a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each of the CDS sites it works with. This MOU will be updated annually.

In some cases the responsible party for carrying out MUSER or IDEA may be a local public school collaborator. WCAP will maintain an MOU with each local public school site it works with detailing responsibilities of special education services within the partnership.

Determining Eligibility:

WCAP works with local CDS sites to determine eligibility of a child. WCAP follows the Screening Procedure and Referral Procedure to send on pertinent information related to the specific child to their local CDS site.

It is the responsibility of the local CDS site to determine eligibility utilizing IDEA and MUSER. WCAP defers eligibility determinations to CDS. At times where eligibility is disputed by the parent, WCAP works with the parent to provide any needed information through this process.

While the local CDS responsible for implementing the IDEA determines a child's eligibility, WCAP will provide individualized services and supports, to the maximum extent possible, to meet the child's needs. This may include, but is not limited to: observations and input by the appropriate Content Area Manager/Supervisor and if applicable, the WCAP Mental Health Consultant, individualization or Individual Child Plans (utilizing Teaching Strategies Gold), Individualized Behavior Support Plans, interim services, or use of data from completed assessments and screenings. WCAP may also work with other local providers while protecting the identity of the individual child, to utilize techniques or ideas. (For example: an Occupational Therapist working with another child in a classroom may lead or give ideas for a small group that may meet the needs of a particular child).

Also in this process, the WCAP Special Services Manager may recommend the child utilize "the Medical Model" to receive services. The Medical Model allows a child to receive services through the child's health insurance. The Medical Model may be used in the interim, while waiting for an eligibility determination.

Children who do qualify for special education services:

When a child does qualify for services from CDS, WCAP will work with CDS to meet the needs of this child as outlined in their IEP or IFSP in the program settings.

Children who do not qualify for special education services:

When a child does not meet eligibility criteria under IDEA or MUSER as determined by CDS, WCAP will:

- *At Minimum:* Continue to individualize the program for the child utilizing Teaching Strategies Gold
- *If requested:* Work with families to understand the eligibility determination and if requested provide additional information
- *If requested:* Work with families to continue or start services utilizing the Medical Model
- *If requested:* Work with families to see if the child qualifies under 504 Plans
- *If requested:* Work with families and the Special Services Manager to determine if other resources can be provided by the WCAP Head Start and Early Head Start Program.
 - If financial resources from the WCAP Early Childhood Program are requested to be committed toward the program of a particular child, this must be made through following the WCAP Policy for Identifying Payer of Last Resort and made by the Special Services Manager AND the Early Childhood Director.
- *If appropriate:* If appropriate for the child's disability, a 504 plan may be developed. 504 Plans are developed for children who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. The Medical Model may be used to provide support services through a 504 Plan which is developed by the child's education team.

Throughout the Process:

- WCAP will obtain signed releases to communicate with CDS.
- Parents are provided information about the potential for referral for special education services at the time of enrollment through the enrollment and application process, as well as through the *Family Informed Consent* document.
- Teachers, Family Advocates, and other appropriate WCAP staff are available through the screening and referral process to talk with families regarding the process.
- The Special Services Manager will attend IEP and IFSP meetings as available, as requested or as appropriate.
- The WCAP program will support parents by:

- Collaborating with families to ensure their needs are being met, including support to help parents become advocates for services that meet their children's needs as well as information and skills to help parents understand their child's disability and how to best support the child's development
- Assisting families to access services and resources, including securing adaptive equipment and devices, and supports available through a child's health insurance or other entities
- Creating linkages to family support programs
- Helping parents establish eligibility for additional support programs, as needed and practicable.
- Helping families:
 - Understand the referral, evaluation, and service timelines required under IDEA;
 - Actively participate in the eligibility process and IFSP or IEP development process with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA, including informing parents of their right to invite the program to participate in all meetings;
 - Understand the purposes and results of evaluations and services provided under an IFSP or IEP; and,
 - Ensure their children's needs are accurately identified in, and addressed through, the IFSP or IEP.

Title: 504 Procedure

Policy Council Approval: 3/13/19

Board Approval: 4/25/19

Background:

Section 504 is part of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which was enacted by Congress to combat discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Section 504 states: *"No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance..."*

Section 504 and the ADA provide specific protections for "qualified individuals with a disability." There are three categories that may qualify someone as an "individual with a disability." These are:

1. A person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life functions;
2. A person who has a record of such an impairment; or
3. A person who is regarded as having such impairment

For more information on these three qualifying categories please see the Federal Rehabilitation Act.

Eligibility determinations are made on a case by cases basis.

Procedure:

1. Any parent, legal guardian, or WCAP staff member may initiate a referral of a student who is believed to be a child with a disability under Section 504.
 - a. Prior to or in conjunction with a referral under Section 504, if appropriate, children should be referred through the *Child Referral Procedure* to the appropriate Child Development Services agency or local LEA.
2. A referral for Section 504 must be completed by the referring adult using the *Referral Form*. Appropriate, associated information should be attached to the referral form (Teacher Summary Form, completed

evaluations, etc.). All 504 referrals should be forwarded immediately to the Special Services Manager in accordance with the *Child Referral Procedure*.

3. When considering a student's eligibility under Section 504, the Team will complete a *504 Eligibility Form*.
4. The Special Services Manager (or other designated person) will convene a team meeting to consider the information gathered with the person making the request. The Team will document their decision on the *504 Eligibility Determination Form* and provide the *Notice of Parent/Student Rights* to the parent/guardian.
 - a. The Team may determine that a child needs additional evaluation(s) to determine appropriate response.
 - b. The Team may also decide to refer the child to the appropriate Child Development Services or local LEA for special education services, if not already completed.
 - c. All decisions regarding a student's 504 eligibility and the provision of related aids and services will be made by the 504 Team and will be based on information from a variety of sources, with information from all sources being carefully considered and documented on the *504 Eligibility Determination Form*.
5. Members of the 504 Team must include the Special Services Manager (or approved designee) and any appropriate Early Childhood Programs staff who are knowledgeable about the child and the evaluation data. The student's parent or legal guardian should be invited to participate in the 504 Team meeting. Every attempt will be made to schedule at a time that is convenient to the child's parents or guardians. WCAP or the parent/guardian may invite other individuals with knowledge about the child to the 504 meeting.
6. A written notice will be given to the parent/guardian prior to the meeting, notifying them of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting. Whenever possible the notice should be provided at least one week before the meeting.
7. The Special Services Manager (or designee) will chair the meeting and assign a member of the 504 Team to take minutes.
 - a. Minutes should be taken on the *Family Team Meeting Form*. Minutes may be typed or hand written.
 - b. A copy of the minutes shall be sent to the parent/guardian and placed in the child file within a reasonable time after the meeting (no more than seven days).
8. The Team must ensure that decisions about student eligibility or about significant changes in the student's program are based on evaluation of the child. If this evaluation is going to include specific testing of the child, WCAP must obtain written consent from the parent/guardian prior to conducting that testing. If the parent refuses to provide consent for an initial evaluation to determine a student's 504 eligibility, WCAP may, but is not required to, initiate a 504 hearing challenging the parent's request.
9. Team decisions will be made by consensus. It is not appropriate to make eligibility decisions based on majority "vote."
10. Parents/guardians will be notified ahead of time using the *Notice of Parent/Student Rights*. Parents/guardians must also be notified that they have the right to an impartial hearing if they disagree with the decisions.
 - i. If a parent/guardian disagrees with a decision regarding the Section 504 process, the family may follow the *WCAP Concern/Complaint Procedure* to submit a formal, written complaint. The parent/guardian may also request a hearing. The family is also entitled to raise concerns using the *WCAP Concern/Complaint Form*.

- ii. The designated hearing officer is the WCAP Human Resources Manager.
11. A child may not receive services without the written consent of the child's parent or guardian on the *Parental Consent for Initial Section 504 Placement Form*.
 12. If the Team determines an eligible student requires accommodations and/or related aids or services, a *Student 504 Accommodation Plan* will be written.
 - a. If these decisions mean the use of funds, the Early Childhood Director must be notified.
 - b. In public pre-k or other collaborations, the Special Services Manager and representative from the collaborative district or agency will agree upon how funds are to be expended. WCAP believes in strong collaborations, however, also recognizes that Child Developmental Services and local Public School Districts are positioned as the LEAs in the state of Maine, and should take primary responsibility for covering the costs of Special Education and Section 504 related services.
 - c. According to WCAP's fiscal procedures, the Special Services Manager is able to commit up to \$500 without Early Childhood Director Consent.
 - d. The Early Childhood Director must approve any expenditure above \$500 prior to the commitment of funds in the 504 Team meeting. Such decisions in this case should be considered pending until the Early Childhood Director has approved.
 13. If the Team determines that an eligible student does not now require any accommodations and/or related aids or services, a *504 Accommodation Plan* should be written specifying that no aids or services are needed at this time.
 14. The *504 Accommodation Plan* will detail the accommodations to be provided for the child by the program. This plan may developed at the same meeting as the eligibility determination meeting if possible. All 504 Team members may submit suggestions as to accommodations to be made for the child. The Special Services Manager (or designee) will make final plans for accommodations and document in the *504 Accommodations Plan*.
 - a. Accommodations that are reasonable to the program will be considered. Accommodations that are not reasonable for the WCAP program in consideration of ADA, costs, and staffing structures may not be appropriate.
 - b. See #12 regarding accommodations with associated costs.
 15. A final draft of the *504 Accommodation Plan* will be completed.
 16. The *504 Accommodation Plan* will be made available to all staff who have responsibilities under the Plan, to the parent/guardian, and to the Special Services Manager. A copy of the *504 Accommodation Plan* will also be placed in the child file under Special Services within seven days of final development.
 17. The 504 Plan should be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if requested. The 504 Team should meet at least annually to review even those 504 Plans that indicate no services or aids are currently needed.
 18. All 504 Plan students should be reevaluated periodically, but no less than every three years, to determine their continued eligibility and, if eligible, their continued need for accommodations, related aids, or services.
 19. At any point in the 504 process a school staff or the parent/guardian may initiate a referral to consider the student's eligibility for special education.

Student discipline will be handled according to all WCAP Policies and Procedures unless expressly described as differently in the student's 504 Plan, IEP, or IFSP.

Subpart G- Transition Services

Title: Child & Family Transition/Transfer Policy

Policy Council Approved: 5/8/19

Board of Directors Approved: 5/23/19

Rationale: In order to ensure that all staff are aware of children moving in and out of our program the following protocols will be followed.

All enrollment changes are tracked in the program's database. The Family Services Coordinator is ultimately responsible for the tracking of enrollment.

If a staff person is told of a change and the family member will not, does not, or cannot go to the Family Advocate or Home Visitor with the change, it is the responsibility of that staff person to inform the Family Advocate or Home Visitor so that the appropriate changes can be made. Staff that need support with the following Status Change process should reach out to the Family Services Coordinator for support.

Withdrawal/Transfer/Request for support with Attendance Issues:

When the family notifies the center staff or Home Visitor of their child's withdrawal, transfer request or attendance issue.

1. The *ERSEA Status Change Request*, is completed by a staff member upon notification of the change request. This occurs with the family when feasible. The completed form and any other required supportive documentation specified on the form will be sent to the Family Services Coordinator within 24 hours of the request.
2. Depending on the length of request, the Family Service Coordinator may give guidance about removal of paperwork or personal items.
 - a. If paperwork removal is necessary: paperwork regarding the child will be placed in a manila envelope along with the original *ERSEA Status Change Request*, child's name written on the outside of the envelope and will be sent to the main office addressed to the Office Clerk.
 - b. If this is a transfer to another center or program option within our own program the envelope is sent via the in-house mail to the appropriate staff person with a tagged email to the Family Services Coordinator to support tracking.
 - c. The Family Services Coordinator will make the appropriate changes of status on the child's placement in the programs databases.
 - d. The Family Service Coordinator tracks the approved ERSEA status change requests and enters updates in the programs database along with attachments as deemed necessary.
3. In the event that there is an attendance related request, the Program Director must approve and sign the *ERSEA Status-Change Request* form.
 - a. The child may not begin the modified attendance plan until approval has been granted.

Please note: If an attendance modification request or ERSEA Status Change Request is utilized related to a child's behavior, social-emotional, mental-health, or disability related reasons, please refer to the *Suspension & Expulsion Policy*. Modified attendance plans are not considered suspensions or expulsions.

Enrollment Status: New child during the school year

1. Application is taken utilizing the programs database by staff and processed for verifications.
 - a. A new status is given at time of application which will indicate the stage of the waitlist, acceptance and enrollment process. (See Childplus tutorials relate to the application process in the H-drive)
2. Once received the Office Clerk will review for accuracy and place the child on the waitlist. If accepted, the receiving staff will review the file in Childplus, and then contact the family to set up an initial home visit. The staff will coordinate a start date for the child with the family.
3. Staff will prepare the classrooms and child files for the incoming child within the first week of the enrollment of the child. For example:
 - a. The Client's record filed and stored in locked child-file cabinet.
 - b. Classroom (cubby, rug, emergency list, attendance sheet, etc.)
 - c. On daily, sign in & out log
4. A notice of child's first day of attendance will be sent via email by Family Service Staff to the Family Service Coordinator so that an enrollment status may be given for the child to be counted in the electronic attendance.
 - a. The Family Service Staff must also notify all Teachers, Classroom Aides, Home Visitors, and Cooks that will work with the newly enrolled child to ensure all are informed.

Other Change of Status: (address, phone number, name change, Medicaid change, etc.)

1. Family Advocates, Home Visitors, Office Clerk, Operations Manager and/or the Family Services Coordinator may complete a Status Change electronically in the database
2. Other staff who need to know will refer to the client's electronic record for updates.

Title: Client Status Change Policy & Process

Policy Council Approved: 5/8/19

Board of Directors Approved: 5/23/19

Definitions:

- Transition: child moves from one program option from another or transitions into or out of the WCAP Early Childhood Program
- Transfer: child moves from one program location or classroom to another or from one program option to another.

Purpose: **Transitions** are recognized as important milestones for a child and family and are part of a process that requires planning, support, and implementation. **Transfers** are requested by the family from one program option or location to another. Date of transfer requests must be 45 days after date of enrollment unless request is of urgent nature such as moving, getting a new job, going back to school, etc. Parent, Family and Community Engagement supports this process from beginning to end. Throughout our program's relationship with a family, staff members support transitions & transfers in a manner which is uniquely planned to meet each person's background and needs.

The Transition Plan & Timeline is developed in the following order:

Head Start/Pre-K program option:

The transition plan/timeline documentation begins at the second annual education home visit, is reviewed and up-dated at the Family Services second home visit, then completed at the second annual *Family Conference*

Early Head Start & Home Visiting program option:

The transition plan/timeline documentation begins when the child is 30 months, it is reviewed and up-dated on or before the child is 36 months of age, then completed before the child is 42 months of age. Any exceptions to transition after 42 months must be reviewed and approved by the Program Director and be based on individual needs of the child.

All other transition types:

The transition plan/timeline documentation begins as soon as possible once the transition announcement is made; i.e. moving out of the area, changing programs-not HS related, etc.

Process:

Staff will complete the Transition/Transfer Plan & Timeline form and will follow the transition/transfer guidance:

- **Transition** Plan & Timeline Documentation Requirements:
 - From program to program
 - Transition out of program
- **Transfer** Plan & Timeline Documentation Requirements:
 - From one classroom within a program to another
 - From one program option within a program to another

When a transfer request is made, the family services staff member will complete an *ERSEA Status Change Request* form and fax this to the Family Services Coordinator who will follow the enrollment guidelines for placement.

TYPES OF TRANSITIONS:

1. Transition into Program:

Transitioning into WCAP EHS/HS begins at the time a family inquires about our programs. Staff members support children and families transitioning into the program by:

- Recruitment and selection process which occurs in various ways (posters, mailings, radio ads, phone calls) is individualized to meet the family's needs. During this time, a conversation about different program options occurs, discussing what each has to offer children and families, and the importance of family engagement.
- Completed application process
- Classroom/program visits (when possible)
- Initial Home Visits
- Staff members will meet for a *Child & Family Case Conference Plan/Review*
- Inform children that a new child will be attending and implement curriculum to support group transition (ex. assign a peer mentor, create welcome sign, etc.)
- Implement a classroom welcome routine (introductions/review of classroom expectations, name tags, welcome song, etc.)

2. Transition Within Program:

Transitions within the program include Early Head Start Home Based or Center Based to Head Start. This can be one of the most challenging transitions for families and children. The family, as well as the child, experiences a loss in ending a relationship with current staff members and peers who they may continue to see on occasion. Staff members support children and families transitioning within the program:

- Meet with the family to complete or update paperwork and discuss similarities & differences in the receiving school/program (ex: routines, schedules, class environments)
- Both sending & receiving staff members meet for a *Child & Family Case Conference Plan/Review* before the child begins the new program they will be transitioning in to
- Family and child visit the new classroom together (when possible) as a typical day experience
- Child records will be transferred to receiving school/program as authorized
- Initial Home Visit

- Which includes discussion around the child's progress in the program and strategies for parents to continue their engagement in their child's education and development

3. Transition out of Program:

Smooth transitions are vital in order to reap the benefits of an early childhood program. Staff members support children and families transitioning out of the program:

- Provide specific information about the school/program the child will be attending
 - If a program has not yet been identified, the staff will assist the family in identifying a program that meet their needs.
- Encourage parents to schedule a visit to the new receiving school/program
- Staff members attend CDS scheduled IEP/IFSP transition meetings as applicable
- Support families with registration requirements for the receiving school/program
- Provide families with closing activities such as: sharing child portfolios, books to read related to transitions, goodbye routine, etc....
- Child records will be transferred to receiving school/program as authorized
- Kindergarten specific transitions:
 - Teachers will provide activities within the curriculum that promote successful transition to new placements and foster confidence in each individual child.
 - Group opportunities are also available for children and families transitioning to kindergarten. As children visit their new school/classrooms, parents are also invited to participate in that experience.
 - There are also times in which the kindergarten teachers attend parent/family group meetings and answer questions parents may have about what comes next.

TRANSFERS:

The transfer plan/timeline documentation begins as soon as possible once the request has been made by the family.

Transfer within Program Type:

1. Transfers are defined as a request to move from one program option to another, within the same program type. Examples of this may include Belfast Early Head Start to Searsport Early Head Start or Early Head Start Home Based option to Early Head Start Center Based option. Staff members support children and families transferring within the program:
 - Meet with the family to complete or update paperwork and discuss similarities & differences in the receiving school/program (ex: routines, schedules, class environments)
 - Both sending & receiving staff members meet for a *Child & Family Case Conference Plan/Review* before the child begins the new program they will be transferring in to
 - Staff members attend CDS scheduled IEP/IFSP transition/transfer meetings as applicable
 - Provide families and child with closing activities such as: books to read related to changes, establish a goodbye routine, etc....
 - Family and child visit the new classroom together (when possible)
 - Child records will be transferred to receiving school/program as authorized

A note for Children with IEPs, IFSPs, and 504 Plans:

- Support is provided to parents of children with an IFSP/IEP or 504 Plan to assure that they understand services and systems related to the child's disability, and to support them in understanding their rights and responsibilities as children transition between programs.
- The Special Services Manager will support the teachers, home-visitors, or family advocates working with children with disabilities through collaboration and coordination with the appropriate CDS sites and case manager.

- The Special Services Manager attempts to make contact with every CDS Case Manager for each individual child to offer to coordinate attendance of an appropriate WCAP staff member at the IFSP or IEP transition meeting.

The Special Services Manager tracks and documents (in the child file) all paperwork related to the child's transition.

Subpart H- Services to Enrolled Pregnant Women

- No policies; details are included throughout policy and procedure manual

Subpart I- Human Resources Management

Title: Background Check Protocol

PC Approved: 2/27/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302 Subpart I (1302.90)

In accordance with Head Start Program Performance Standards and Maine Child Care Licensing, all staff will be background checked prior to beginning work at WCAP.

Definitions:

- Criminal History Record Check (CRHC): This process from the Maine DOE completes a State and Federal background check based upon fingerprints. This is completed through an official fingerprint process and submitting an application to Maine DOE: <http://www.maine.gov/doe/cert/fingerprinting/approval-instructions.html>
 - Exclusionary criteria for CRHC include those listed in Title 5, Section 5301 (2) (A) through (D) and Title 20-A, section 13020(3) <http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/5/title5sec5301.html> & <http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/20-a/title20-Asec6103.html>

Protocol:

For all staff in the HS/EHS and Family Services department at WCAP the following background check procedures apply before the staff member begins work:

- Interview
- Reference verification
- National Sex Offender Registry Check
- DMV Check /Annual motor vehicle check
- Maine Department Office of Child and Family Services Background Check regarding allegations of abuse or neglect of a child a.k.a. "Authorization Release of Confidential Substantiated Maine Child Abuse and Neglect Records Information"
- Office of Inspector General Exclusions Database
- Either:
 - Fingerprinting

- If an individual is having a CRHC completed for the first time, a CRHC will suffice in place of a state background check to comply with Maine Child Care Licensing Standards.
- State Bureau of Identification (SBI) Background Check criminal history report
 - If an individual comes to WCAP with proof of a CRHC in hand, it is accepted, however a SBI will still be run.

Additionally, for staff working HS/Public Pre-K partnership classrooms the following background check procedures apply:

- CRHC will be obtained if not already completed.
 - If an individual comes to WCAP with proof of a CRHC in hand, it is accepted, however a SBI Background Check will still be run.

For any background check that comes back with findings, WCAP will review the information found and assess the relevancy of any issue uncovered by the complete background check. All current state and federal contracts will be considered in addition to HSPPS and Child Care Licensing Standards in making this assessment.

WCAP will ensure that any newly hired employee, consultant, or contractor does not have unsupervised access to children until the complete background check process is complete.

Background checks will be completed every five years.

Title: Career Development Financial Assistance

PC Approved: 2/27/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Rationale: Financial resources are made available to eligible employees in an effort to ensure that children, families, and the community benefit from the services of well-trained, qualified staff. Resources are offered to staff in order of priority, to support their access to:

- Meeting the credentialing requirements outlined in the employee's job description.
- Job required credentials, certifications, and/or endorsements
- Job required college coursework
- Non-required or preferred college coursework to improve professional skills related to their job

Costs:

- Tuition costs are defined as the cost per credit hour plus related materials/fees
- Credential, certification, or endorsement costs are defined as the application fee plus other associated fees (testing, fingerprinting, etc. if applicable)
- Costs paid by the program will be reviewed and approved by the Early Childhood Director and WCAP Human Resource Manager per individual request.

If approval of the financial assistance request by the Early Childhood Director occurs, WCAP will pay for college course work, in order of priority, for any staff member that is:

- Matriculated in a degree program in Early Childhood Education
- Taking a job-required college course or is in need of a job-required credential, certification, or endorsement
- Taking a job-related course to improve professional skills

Any funds remaining at the end of the program year will be split equally between staff who had any out of pocket expenses for professional development which may include a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or renewal

Due to federal requirements for education qualifications, teaching staff who do not meet the minimum qualifications of the job for which they are fulfilling will be given first priority for available monies. Second preference will be given to teaching staff who do not meet the preferred qualifications for the job which they are fulfilling. Substitute teachers are also eligible for financial assistance from WCAP.

Requests will be granted based on the availability of funds and the number of applications. The Early Childhood Director reserves the right to make the final decisions regarding funding for courses, certifications, and endorsements with recommendations from the Supervisor. Decisions will be made within the budgetary limits while assuring equity for all applications.

Process for Application:

- Staff is informed and encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to continue their education through college courses or other training opportunities.
- Staff may apply by completing the *Career Development Application Form* and submitting it to their Supervisor.
 - This form must be accompanied with the following items to be considered complete and to be considered for payment:
 - Proof of enrollment in chosen course
 - Clear request for payment of course; OR
 - If reimbursement is being requested the form must also be accompanied by proof of payment
- When possible, the Career Development Application should be received by the Early Childhood Director at least six (6) weeks prior to the start of the course.
 - Payments from WCAP (whether to an institution or to an individual for reimbursement) may take up to two weeks to process.
 - WCAP will be responsible for no late fees for *Career Development Application Forms* submitted less than six weeks prior to the start of the course.
- Employees must submit adequate documentation to substantiate that the course is from an accredited college or university.
- Employees must submit adequate documentation of payment for the course (i.e. receipt).

Conditions for College Tuition Payment and Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be current Head Start employee
 - Employees must have completed at least nine months of employment with Waldo Community Action Partners. Employees who have not worked for nine-months must have explicit approval from the Early Childhood Director for college tuition reimbursement.
- All course work needs to be scheduled outside of classroom time unless approved by Early Childhood Director.
- Employees must not be receiving a full scholarship and/or grant to pay for college courses.
- Employees who may be eligible for scholarships, grants and/or other financial assistance sources such as Maine Roads to Quality, are required to:
 - Apply for the financial support
 - Provide written proof of application decision
 - Provide written proof of the amount of the financial award
- Employee must achieve a passing grade and must submit an official grade and credit report or transcript to the Human Resource office. Otherwise, a repayment plan will be made.
- Payments will be made directly to the school for the course and books when possible.
- Reimbursement for a completed course is allowable within the same program year if funds are available.

- Employees completing requirements for a degree in Early Childhood Education are expected to commit to employment with WCAP Head Start after attaining their degree for three years.
 - If staff receive course support from WCAP and do not work for WCAP for the three years following course completion, WCAP may choose to request the reimbursement of those funds.

Conditions for Credential, Certification, Endorsement Reimbursement:

- Must be current Head Start employee
- All course work needs to be scheduled outside of classroom time unless approved by the Human Resource Manager and Early Childhood Director
- Payment will be based on job requirements
- If credential, certification, or endorsement is not a job requirement then payment will be based on the recommendation of the Early Childhood Director
- Payment will be submitted using a Career Development Application Form or a Request for Reimbursement Form and must accompany a receipt of payment.

Title: Early Childhood Program Code of Conduct

PC Approved: 2/27/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Performance Standard: 1302 Subpart I: Human Resources Management

As an employee, consultant, contractor, or volunteer of Waldo Community Action Partners Early Childhood Program, I will abide by the following standards of conduct:

- 1. I will view every child and family as an individual and support them to succeed.**
- 2. I will respect the unique identity of each child and family.**
 - a. I will refrain from stereotyping any child or family based on any reason.
 - b. I will not discriminate against any client.
 - c. I will make the Head Start or Early Head Start environment a welcoming place for all children and their families.
 - d. I will support each child's unique background. See *Cultural & Linguistic Policy*.
- 3. I will protect the safety and well-being of all children in my care.**
 - a. I will be aware of emergency procedures for my location.
 - b. I will not leave a child alone or unattended: *Active Supervision Policy*. Further, I will never leave a child alone with a non-regular staff member (such as a substitute).
 - c. I will be familiar with the signs of child abuse and neglect and will report any suspected abuse per the *Child Abuse Policy*.
 - d. I will never release a child to an adult not authorized by the child's guardian per *Pick-up and Drop-off Policy*.
- 4. I will use positive guidance when working with children and adults.**
 - a. I will give children and their families opportunities to ask questions, make decisions, and solve their own problems, and grow.
 - b. I will view all behavior as communication. I will work to understand what the individual is trying to communicate and seek to see the positive intent. I will respond to challenging behavior using my

training and my executive brain state. See *Safe Place and Positive Guidance Policy* and *Challenging Behavior Reporting and Guidance Policy*.

- c. I will refrain from any of the following as it could endanger the individual: corporal punishment, isolation, restraint, use of food as reward or punishment, use of physical activity as reward or punishment, extended ignoring, emotional abuse, physical abuse, shame, humiliation, toilet training that punishes or demeans a child, using a crib for timeout or disciplinary reasons or any discipline that denies a child's basic needs.
 - d. I will not use any form of verbal abuse including profane, sarcastic language, threats, or derogatory remarks about a child or a child's family.
5. **I will protect the confidentiality of each individual with whom I work.**
- a. I will review and abide by the program's *Confidentiality Policy*, *Data Management Protocol*, and *Client File Access Procedure*.
6. **I will comply with all applicable laws, standards, policies, and procedures.**
- a. I will review and understand the following information:
 - 1. Maine Rules for Licensing of Child Care Facilities
 - 2. WCAP Personnel Policies
 - 3. All Head Start/Early Head Start Plans and Policies
7. **I will maintain professional boundaries with agency enrolled children and families at all times.**
- a. I will keep my personal life separate from client lives.
8. **I will maintain respectful and cordial relationships with my co-workers.**
- a. I will work with my co-workers or my supervisor if necessary to solve any inter-personal problems at work.
9. **I understand that this document shall be placed in my personnel or volunteer file.**
- a. I understand that violations of these standards may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

I certify that I have received a copy, read or had explained to me, and that I understand the Head Start/Early Head Start Code of Conduct. I am willing to carry out these responsibilities and understand the consequences of violating these policies.

Signed: _____
Name Date

Printed Name

Witness Date

Title: Home Visiting Conflict of Interest Policy

PC Approved: 2/27/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Rationale: Home Visiting requires the establishment and maintenance of a professional relationship with clients. This can be difficult to achieve if personal relationships are already established between a Home Visitor and potential client. All reasonable effort will be made to avoid pairing a Home Visitor with a friend or family member as an Early Head Start client.

Guidance:

1. Whenever possible, intake applications will be completed by a Home Visitor who does not have a personal or familial relationship with the applicant.
2. Assignment of families to Early Head Start Home Visitors when possible will be done by the Head Start Content Area Managers with input when appropriate from the Head Start Director and, the Mental Health Consultants, if appropriate. When possible decisions will be based on geographic considerations, special needs of the child, family risk factors, and other factors. Efforts will be made to create balanced caseloads for each Home Visitor. Considerations will include: numbers of families served and the extent of individual family needs.
3. Primary consideration will be given to avoid pairing a Home Visitor and a family with whom there is a personal or familial relationship. When this is not possible, the Head Start team will make the decision on a case-by-case basis. At no time will a Home Visitor be placed with a family in which the familial relationship is one of: mother, father, son, daughter, brother and/or sister.

Title: Home Visiting Safety Policy

PC Approved: 2/27/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Rationale: There are inherent risks in home visiting. In most instances a Teacher, Family Advocate or Home Visitor conducts home visits alone. It is the intention of this policy to have in place certain procedures that help to ensure the safety of any staff member conducting home visits.

Guidance:

1. Any staff member who will be conducting regular home visits will be issued a cell phone which must be carried with them and turned on.
 - a. In the event a home visit is to take place in an area with no cell phone signal, an alternative plan for accessing rescue personnel must be in place. Our alternative plan includes phone check-in before and after each visit with their supervisor or a peer.
2. Any staff member conducting a home visit for any purpose must provide the following information to their supervisor or their working team before arriving at the client's home:
 - a. Time & length of visit
 - b. Name of client
 - c. Address and phone number of client
 - d. Staff member's cell phone number

3. If the staff member is not returning to the office at the end of a workday that staff person is to call, text, or email and check in with his/her supervisor or designated peer. If it is after regular work hours, the staff person and supervisor must make arrangements for how that check-in takes place.
4. Each staff member must have on file with the agency an Emergency Information card which includes phone numbers of people to be contacted in the case of an emergency and any relevant medical information.
5. All staff members who will be conducting home visits will receive training on basic safety practices. Training objectives and outcomes to include:
 - Importance of maintaining a safe environment for working in homes and their community.
 - Potentially unsafe environments
 - Strategies to ensure personal safety as well as safety of co-workers and family being served.

Title: Professional Development Policy

PC Approved: 2/27/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

WCAP Statement on Professional Development:

Ongoing, quality, timely professional development is extremely important for all of our Head Start and Early Head Start staff. Professional development, as defined by the National Association for Educating Young Children, is “a continuum of learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work with and on behalf of young children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work.”

All staff, from our classroom aides to our Director, are required and encouraged to attend professional development opportunities that interest them and are related to their jobs. These opportunities allow staff to stay current on new information and research, refresh their basic information on a topic, and an opportunity to network with others doing the same work with you.

1. Staff must meet the job requirements for the positions in which they are employed:

Job descriptions contain the most up-to-date requirements for all Head Start positions.

Upon review of AA/AS degrees in ECE Waldo CAP has deemed 24 credit hours to be the equivalency of “coursework equivalent to a major in early childhood education.”

Because Waldo CAP strives to deliver high quality services to children and their families teachers who meet the minimum qualifications may be asked and encouraged to work toward the preferred qualifications.

If an employee is employed by WCAP and does not meet the requirements for current their position, as listed in the job description, they will be asked to participate in applying for a waiver to Region 1 for approval. This individual will also be asked to complete education and/or training that lead to the requirements of their position being met. As funds allow, WCAP will support financially the completion of these requirements. See *WCAP Career Development Financial Assistance Policy*.

If a staff refuses these steps, they may be dismissed from their position. If an employee does not complete their degree or coursework as outlined in their professional development plan they may be dismissed from their position.

A reasonable amount of time for this coursework to be completed will be given to staff based on the degree or coursework they are pursuing.

WCAP will offer a pay raise to all staff upon proof of completion of related degrees. Pay raises for completion of full 081 credentials will also be offered with proof of credentialing.

2. Staff must participate in professional development opportunities that are relevant to their positions and advance their craft.

Staff must complete a minimum of 15 clock hours of professional development per year in accordance with the requirements set forth in section 648(a)(5) of the Act.

Training will at minimum include:

- Staff completing a minimum of 15 clock hours of professional development per year. For teaching staff, such professional development must meet the requirements described in section 648A(a)(5) of the Act.
- Training for all staff on methods to handle suspected or known child abuse and neglect cases
- Training for all direct-service staff on best practices for implementing family engagement strategies in a systemic way in accordance with WCAP policies: *Family Engagement Policy*, *Family Partnership Policy*
- Training for all direct-service staff, including staff that work on family services, health, and disabilities, that builds their knowledge, experience, and competencies to improve child and family outcomes
- Training for all direct-service staff on alignment with the Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework and Parent, Family, and Community Framework.
 - With a focus on:
 - Partnering with families
 - Supporting children with disabilities and their families
 - Providing effective and nurturing adult-child interactions
 - Supporting dual language learners as appropriate
 - Addressing challenging behaviors
 - Preparing children and families for transitions
 - Use of data to individualize learning experiences to improve outcomes for all children.

3. Annually, prior to the start of the year, WCAP will offer Pre-Service Training.

Each year the Early Childhood Director and/or the Content Area Managers will supply a pre-service and on-going in-service training opportunities for all program staff.

- This training should be targeted to each individual's job duties with a focus on the delivery of a quality program and continuous quality improvement, as described above.
- This training will include the yearly mandatory trainings as well as training encompassing the philosophy and goals of the Early Childhood Program.

Planning for pre-service and in-service professional development opportunities is informed through the active utilization of data sources, such as: Program goals, Self-Assessment, Professional Development Plans, child outcomes data, CLASS score results, ITERS and ECERS score results, Site Visit observations with noted follow-up, Mental Health Consultant recommendations, parent feedback and orientation of new staff members. Time to conduct home-visits, review and set up files, and prepare classrooms will be built into pre-service training.

4. WCAP will offer in-service training throughout the year, as appropriate.

In-service training to staff will be provided throughout the year. In-service trainings will be scheduled ahead of time and outlined on the program calendar whenever possible, but may be scheduled after the program calendar has been published to be responsive to staff needs. In-service training will focus on current program changes and initiatives or changes in standards or laws, or emergent needs based on data.

5. Newly hired staff will be oriented to their positions.

Head Start Orientation of new staff members or those transitioning into a new program option is provided by the immediate supervisor and other content area coordinators. Orientation of new staff will utilize the *Passport*

6. Staff hired as substitute teacher shall be offered annual training.

Substitute Teacher training is provided no less than once annually, and more as determined by submitted applications of interested participants.

Substitutes must complete all substitute paperwork prior to start of paid work.

- All classroom substitutes must complete substitute training which will include:
 - Introduction to the principles of early childhood education and child development.
 - Curriculum
 - WCAP Policies
 - Head Start policies and procedures that relate to the classroom with particular focus on health, safety and nutrition.
 - Candidates may conduct an observation of classroom activities.
 - In addition, all Substitute Teacher candidates will be encouraged to complete a classroom visit and to be observed by a classroom Teacher while they interact and actively participate in classroom activities. Substitutes that are parents of children may not participate in this component of the training because of familiarity with classroom routines
 - Follow-up session to review questions, concerns and observations from program will occur as necessary.
 - Substitutes are always encouraged to reach out to their trainer with additional questions.
- All cook substitutes will complete an on-the-job training approved by the center cook and Nutrition Coordinator which will include:
 - Kitchen and food program requirements
 - Safe handling of food
 - WCAP Policies
- Substitutes may be asked to take an annual refresher course or additional training as necessary for the individual.
- After successful completion of all parts of the substitute training, the candidate's name will be presented to Policy Council for approval of hire.
- Training records will be kept and submitted to Human Resources.

7. Volunteer Training

Volunteers receive an over-all orientation once approved by the Human Resource Department. Once the volunteer has completed all required paperwork a targeted training is provided by the staff who will supervise their activity related to the work they have chosen to do. *Volunteers are not considered staff but should receive appropriate orientation to the duties they are asked to perform.*

For more information, see *Volunteer Policy* and *Volunteer Manual*

8. WCAP will offer Practice-based coaching opportunities to staff.

Opportunities will be based on staff-need and align with practice-based coaching training.

9. All staff shall receive an annual evaluation.

Each staff will receive an annual evaluation completed by his/her supervisor. See *Supervisory Procedure* for additional information.

- Evaluations shall include two goals, one of which must be targeted to the staff person's professional development.

10. WCAP will complete training and technical assistance plans annually.

Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) plans will be written in accordance with the *Program Management and Quality Improvement Process (1302 Subpart J)*. TTA Plans will focus on the needs of the program and trends in professional development across the employees.

Title: Substitute Pay Policy

PC Approved: 2/27/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Guidance: When a substitute is hired for any period of time training and just compensation must be provided. Training of substitute is covered under the Professional Development Policy.

1. Compensation:

- Substitute Classroom & Family Service Staff will be compensated as follows:
 - a. Substitutes holding no early childhood education (ECE) credential = current entry level for a Classroom Aide.
 - b. Substitutes holding a CDA = current entry level for a Classroom Aide + \$0.75 per hour
 - c. Substitute holding an AA in ECE or a BA/BS in a related field = current entry level for a Classroom Aide + \$1.50 per hour
 - d. Substitute holding a BA/BS or higher degree in ECE or Elementary Education = current entry level for a Classroom Aide + \$2.25 per hour
 - Substitute Cooks will be compensated at the current entry-level pay for a Cook.
2. Substitutes will complete all duties assigned, as is practical, keeping in mind the safety and welfare of children at all times.
 3. Regular volunteers, past and current Head Start parents will be given first consideration for any paid substitute position available providing the WCAP-HS requirements to become a substitute have been met.
 4. In the event a substitute is also a volunteer, paid time must be approved by a Site Supervisor in place of a regular staff position. All other time will be considered in-kind donation and recorded on a volunteer sign-in. Paid-time will be recorded on an agency time sheet.
 5. Substitutes are eligible to request funds for degree attainment as written in the *Career Development Financial Assistance Policy*.

Title: Volunteer Policy

PC Approved: 2/27/19

BOD Approved: 4/25/19

Definition: A volunteer is an unpaid person who is trained to assist in implementing ongoing program activities on a regular basis under the supervision of a staff person.

Rationale: Volunteers are a key component of the WCAP Head Start and Early Head Start program. Volunteers support regular staff in ensuring the program is carried out in the most quality manner possible. Volunteers are an important aspect of the collection of the Federal In-Kind requirement for the Head Start and Early Head Start program.

Recruitment and Selection:

- At the time of application, families are informed about all opportunities to participate in the program as volunteers.
- Staff regularly recruits volunteers; via newsletters, at the Home Visit meetings, parent-teacher conferences and at sites on a face-to-face basis and from other community resources.
 - Staff members stress to families the need for volunteer participation in the classrooms and at the centers and sites as a way to provide the best possible program supports for family growth, engagement and learning.
- Individuals who wish to volunteer must complete volunteer packets by connecting with a Family Advocate or Content Area Manager.
- Each volunteer must complete volunteer Packets.
 - Volunteer packets are completed with the assistance of program staff.
 - Volunteer packets include the following. In some cases, particular components of the volunteer packet may be waived based on the age of the individual volunteer. Any removal of any component of the volunteer packet must be cleared with the Early Childhood Director and WCAP Human Resources Manager.
 - Regular Volunteer Agreement/Emergency Information
 - Read *Rules for Licensing of Child Care Facilities*
 - Confidentiality Agreement
 - Head Start Code of Conduct
 - WCAP Professional Conduct Commitment
 - Two Letters of Reference
 - TB Risk Assessment or TB Test
 - Question of conviction of a crime
 - Background check (SBI) Release form
 - Sex Offender Registry Check
 - DHHS Release form
 - DMV background check
 - Proof of immunizations
 - Proof of volunteer Orientation & Training
 - Parental Consent (age 18 and younger)
 - Completed volunteer packets are housed in Human Resources.
 - Components of the volunteer packet need to be completed and updated according to the periodicity of the requirement.
 - No volunteer will act in the role they are requesting until approval has been given by Human Resources and the volunteer training has been completed (see Orientation section)

Orientation:

- Orientation for volunteer positions are held during open house before the start of the school year whenever possible. Additional orientations are provided as needed by the Staff.
- All Head Start volunteers will be required to attend a meeting/training session conducted by the most appropriate Head Start or Early Head Start staff person related to the volunteer's job selection. The training will offer an overview of the program, its policies and procedures, program/site logistics, housekeeping and the volunteering requirements. This training will also support the volunteer's understanding of the required abilities and knowledge and essential duties of the desired volunteer position(s). A second session may be offered should the need arise; more support is needed or required once authorized by HR to start, or on an individual basis.

Record Keeping

- Volunteers are asked to sign in and out of centers for their safety and the safety of children and staff.
- Volunteers are asked to track their time to be counted as in-kind services toward the program.

Staff Supervision of Volunteers

- Volunteers will work with specific centers, classrooms, or work locations. The staff in the specific classroom or work location is responsible for the supervision of the volunteer. This means that the staff person must:
 - Ensure that the volunteer has completed the volunteer packet and is approved to volunteer.
 - Ensure that a volunteer is never left alone with a child
 - Ensure all aspects of the Head Start Program and Maine Child Care Licensing Rules are upheld at all times.
 - Maintain responsibility for the overall supervision of the classroom or assigned project
 - Delegate projects and duties appropriately
 - Ensure no volunteer arrives unannounced
- If a staff person does not ensure the above conditions are met appropriate performance counseling actions will be taken which may include written or verbal performance counseling or termination, depending on the severity of the infraction.

For additional information please consult the ***Volunteer Manual***.

Subpart J- Program Management and Quality Improvement

Title: Concern/Complaint Procedure

PC Approved: 12/13/18

BOD Approved: 3/28/19

Guidance:

For client complaints please see *WCAP Client and Community Complaint Procedure* in the WCAP Employee Handbook.

For staff complaints please see *Grievance Procedure* in the WCAP Employee Handbook.

Title: Equipment Policy

PC Approved: 12/13/18

BOD Approved: 3/28/19

Guidance:

In an effort to preserve the limited resources of the WCAP Early Childhood Department, equipment will be signed out and returned as set forth in this policy.

Issue of Equipment:

- At the time of employment or the start of a program year, each staff person will be issued equipment and tools necessary for the completion of their job duties.
- This equipment will be signed out with the assistance of the Operations Manager or the Site Manager.
- Records of equipment sign out are kept in the main office and maintained by the Office Clerk and Operations Manager.
- Equipment to be signed out may include, but is not limited to: computers, keys, cameras, phones, chargers, tablets.
- See *Building Security Policy* for additional information on key sign out.

Use of Equipment:

- All equipment is to be treated respectfully and only utilized for agency-sanctioned activities following agency-sanctioned procedures, during approved work hours. This includes, but is not limited to following:
 - *WCAP Agency Electronic Media Policy* located in the *WCAP Employee Handbook*
 - *WCAP Social Media Policy* located in the *WCAP Employee Handbook*
 - *Confidentiality Policy*
 - *Data Management Protocol*
 - *Client File Access Procedure*
- The Early Childhood Director reserves the right to investigate reported or suspected misuse of WCAP equipment.
- All equipment will undergo regular preventative maintenance to ensure ongoing use.

Return of Equipment:

- Upon termination, resignation, or a layoff greater than three (3) weeks, all equipment and materials must be turned in to the staff's supervisor or designated appointee.
- Other instances at the discretion of the Early Childhood Director or CEO may require staff to turn in pieces of equipment.
- Because equipment, such as computers and tablets, have the potential to hold confidential client information, and keys remaining issued to non-employees may be considered a threat to security, all equipment must be turned in on or before the employee's final workday with their final timecard.

Title: Petty Cash Procedure

PC Approved: 12/13/18

BOD Approved: 3/28/19

Process:

1. All classrooms have a dollar amount allocated for the program year. This comes out of the regular classroom budget lines (GL 500444 or 500385). The designated staff member will receive two increments of that disbursement per year per classroom.

- a. The first increment will be given in September.
2. As needed staff will spend petty cash to purchase consumable supplies. Once a purchase is made the staff will submit the receipt of purchase within one (1) working day to the staff. This process will continue until each staff's initial sum of petty cash (\$50.00) is used.
3. The staff will use a *Petty Cash Account Sheet* for each staff to log the date of purchase, item, item type and amount. The Petty Cash Account Sheet must be filled out at the time the purchase receipt is returned to the staff. Staff will be responsible for reimbursing any petty cash not accounted for by a receipt.
4. The staff will submit all supporting receipts *and Petty Cash Account Sheets* for the first round of petty cash by the end of December to the Office Clerk. Once the Fiscal Department has reconciled all petty cash accounting logs the second round will be distributed to the staff. *If the first round receipts is not received by April the staff member that did not submit receipts in time will forfeit the second round.*
5. At the end of the program year (*By June*) the staff will return any unspent cash with the account sheet and receipts for their center to the Early Childhood Director who will turn it to the Fiscal Department.
6. The agency tax-exempt number should be used when applicable to avoid paying tax from petty cash funds. These tax-exempt forms are available upon request from the Office Clerk.

In the event that a staff member leaves WCAP during the school year that staff members petty cash and receipts are due before that staff members last day of employment or the additional staff person in the classroom will sign off and take responsibility for the remaining petty cash.

Title: Payer of Last Resort Policy

PC Approved: 12/13/18

BOD Approved: 3/28/19

Rationale: Federal requirements are that Head Start funds may be used to provide medical and dental care for enrolled children only when all other possible sources of payment have been exhausted.

Policy: When it becomes apparent that Waldo Community Action Partners Early Childhood Program is being requested to pay for necessary medical or dental care or services related to disabilities for an enrolled child, the Health Coordinator in collaboration with the Head Start Staff assigned to the family will determine that no other source of funding is available to pay for the needed care. This determination will be based on a survey of the child's record to identify insurances in place, contacting the family to determine ability to pay, a search for available service through a clinic or other free health care source.

When the Health Coordinator with the Early Childhood Director approval, writes a purchase order as payer of last resort, the documenting label (see sample below) will be completed and attached to the yellow copy of the purchase order and initialed by the Health Coordinator.

Documentation of Payer of Last Resort

The following sources have been checked before this purchase was written:

_____ Medicaid _____ Private Insurance

_____ Clinic _____ Parents ability to pay

Signed

Date

Title: Program Management and Quality Improvement Process

PC Approved: 12/13/18

BOD Approved: 3/28/19

Rationale: Waldo Community Action Partners (WCAP) is committed to ensuring the annual funding application process is a part of ongoing program planning and involves members of the WCAP Board of Directors and Policy Council. Members will be involved in the decision-making early on and at strategic points during the application process.

Process:

Step 1: Data-driven Ongoing Monitoring

WCAP undergoes annual monitoring activities infused into the Content Area Coordinators/Managers TGIT meetings as well as in the work product of each Content Area Coordinator/Manager.

The program takes an approach to ongoing monitoring centered around the program's data and grant goals, most recent self-assessment, Community Needs Assessment, and current Office of Head Start priorities. These data points are considered by the Leadership Team and other small groups (School Readiness Committee, Consultants, Health Advisory Committee, BOD, PC, etc.).

Monitoring activities will include but are not limited to:

- Child-level assessment data reviewed in aggregate
 - Broken into sub-groups including:
 - Dual language learners
 - Children with disabilities
 - Children by age
 - Aggregated at least three times per year
- Identifying program risks
- How data informs teaching practices, curriculum, and professional development
- What data tells us about current goals (Program Goals, School Readiness Goals, etc.)

Step 2: Community Needs Assessment

In order to design a program that meets the needs of the Waldo County community, WCAP will conduct a community assessment at least once over the five-year grant period.

The Community Needs Assessment will describe community strengths and needs and contain, at a minimum:

- The number of eligible infants, toddlers, preschool age children, and expectant mothers, including their geographic location, race, ethnicity, and languages they speak, including:
 - Children experiencing homelessness in collaboration with, to the extent possible, McKinney-Vento Local Education Agency Liaisons (42 U.S.C. 11432 (6)(A));
 - Children in foster care; and
 - Children with disabilities, including types of disabilities and relevant services and resources provided to these children by community agencies;
- The education, health, nutrition and social service needs of eligible children and their families, including prevalent social or economic factors that impact their well-being;
- Typical work, school, and training schedules of parents with eligible children;
- Other child development, child care centers, and family child care programs that serve eligible children, including home visiting, publicly funded state and local preschools, and the approximate number of eligible children served;
- Resources that are available in the community to address the needs of eligible children and their families; and,
- Strengths of the community.
- Consideration of the availability of publically funded pre-k programs
- Consideration of how children from diverse economic backgrounds would and could be supported by other funding sources.

At a minimum, the assessment will be reviewed annually and updated to reflect any significant changes in the community.

Step 3: Annual Self-Assessment

An annual self-assessment of the Head Start program is typically conducted January through March and includes members of the WCAP Board of Directors and Policy Council and all Coordinators or Managers. A Summary Report of self-assessment findings is compiled and includes long-range goals and short-term program and may include financial objectives for the next program year. Data from the most recent Community Needs Assessment, PIR, Parent Survey, progress towards School Readiness goals and child outcomes reports are also used to develop these goals and objectives. The report is presented to Policy Council and the WCAP Board of Directors for discussion, review, and approval.

Incorporated within the self-assessment shall be an evaluation of program goals, School Readiness goals, and any other goals established by the program.

Self-assessments shall include, at minimum:

- Aggregated child assessment data
- Professional development data
- Parent and family engagement data
- Evaluation of program's progress toward goals
- The WCAP systems contributions to school readiness of children
- Recommended changes (if any) to program options

Findings of the annual self-assessment shall be passed to the responsible OHS official through the annual grant application process.

Step 3: Budget Planning

Once goals and objectives have been approved, an ad hoc Budget Committee consisting of members of Policy Council, Board of Directors, and staff meets to develop the budget for the next program year. The Early Childhood Director is responsible for leading the budget discussion with assistance from the WCAP Fiscal Department. The following documents/data are reviewed:

1. Goals with financial requirements (Training and Technical Assistance plan)
2. Funding notices from State and Federal Government
3. Current year expenditure report
4. Estimated increases in base line costs such as health insurance, fuel, gasoline, etc.
5. Input is also solicited from Head Start Service Coordinators specific to their content area.

Using the above, the Budget Committee then discusses possible changes in program options to respond to meet budgetary need. A budget is then created based upon the recommendations of the budget committee.

The recommended budget for the next program year is a line item by line item discussion of what resources will be needed to operate the program based upon program goals, available resources, historical needs and recommended changes. Minutes of the Budget Committee meeting will be taken.

Once completed, the draft budget is then presented to both the full Policy Council and WCAP Board of Directors for discussion and approval.

Training on the interrelated nature of budgets and program planning is provided to all Policy Council members, Coordinators, and Managers annually. Board of Directors receives similar training during the annual, joint meeting of the Board of Directors and Policy Council. Policy Council members also receive training on how to interpret the monthly budget report distributed and discussed at each Policy Council meeting throughout the year as necessary and requested.

Step 4: Reporting

Each year the program will prepare reports to the indicated officials when:

- The Regional Office:
 - Any reports regarding agency staff or volunteer compliance with federal, state, tribal, or local laws addressing child abuse and neglect or laws governing sex offenders;
 - Incidents that require classrooms or centers to be closed for any reason;
 - Legal proceedings by any party that are directly related to program operations; and,
 - All conditions required to be reported under §1304.12, including disqualification from the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and license revocation.
 - Upon receiving a deficiency, a quality improvement plan shall be submitted.
- The Public:
 - Community Needs Assessment (annually)
 - Annual report (annually)
- Board of Directors and Policy Council:

- Monthly reports indicating detailed information regarding program operations to keep the governing bodies informed.

Step 5: Non-competing Continuation Grant Writing and Submission

Non-competing Continuation Grant writing is undertaken primarily by the Early Childhood Director, or designated staff person. The Director must consider all of the components listed within this policy in writing the annual grant application, including the most recent grant writing guidelines released by the Office of Head Start.

Throughout the grant writing process, the Early Childhood Director should consult the Program and Fiscal Specialists located at the Regional Office to keep them informed of changes within the grant.

Major changes such as reduction, conversion, or other changes in enrollment, must be cleared with the Policy Council and Board of Directors and discussed with the Regional Office well in advance of the June 1 submission deadline.

Once Policy Council and the WCAP Board of Directors have approved the Self-Assessment including goals and objectives for the next program year, the budget, and approves the Annual Grant application, the non-competing continuation grant may be submitted. Every five-years the project period ends and a new grant with new project-period must be completed.

WCAP follows a due date of June 1. All grant materials must be submitted to OHS prior to this deadline.

Title: Reporting Abuse and Neglect

PC Approved: 12/13/18

BOD Approved: 3/28/19

A. STATEMENT OF POLICY

Abuse, neglect and exploitation of children and incapacitated or dependent adults are serious issues for the client population of Waldo Community Action Partners (WCAP). WCAP recognizes that employees may develop a suspicion that a **child or an incapacitated or dependent adult client** of WCAP has been, may currently be, or is likely to be abused, neglected or exploited.

State of Maine law requires immediate, mandatory reporting of information about abuse or neglect to the State, specifically to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or to the District Attorneys' (DA's) office of the county in which the conduct is suspected to have occurred. Failure to comply with this policy will be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination.

Additionally, all WCAP staff who work directly with children will be required to complete a mandated reporter training annually which will include identification of child abuse and neglect signs. Upon hire and annually, staff will also complete a training on how to identify and prevent shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma.

B. REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

1. Filing a report of suspected abuse or neglect

Staff who suspect a child or incapacitated or dependent adult is in immediate danger must call local law enforcement immediately, 911.

Staff who know or have a suspicion of abuse or neglect must make an oral report to DHHS **within 24 hours**. DHHS – Child Protection can be reached at 1-800-452-1999. DHHS – Adult Protection can be reached at 1-800-624-8404.

- Staff should discuss this report with their supervisor if possible and appropriate prior to making the report. If the supervisor was not notified prior to the report the supervisor must be notified following making the report.
- Should a staff feel uncomfortable or need assistance, supervisors are always available to walk a staff member through the process of completing the report upon requested.
- If a staff person is unsure if an incident is reportable they may reach out to their supervisor (or if not available another member of the Head Start Leadership Team or Human Resources) for guidance.

Staff who know or have cause to suspect abuse or neglect by a person **not responsible** for the child or adult must report this information orally and in writing to the appropriate DA's Office. In the event that staff are unable to reach the DA's office, a call should be made to local law enforcement.

- a. Waldo County D.A.
137 Church Street
Belfast, ME 04915
207-338-2512
- b. Waldo County Sheriff's Office
207-338-6786 or **911**

2. Communication with WCAP

In addition to filing reports with State authorities, staff must immediately inform the Human Resources Manager of any report filed under this policy. WCAP's *Documentation of Report to Child/Adult Protective Services* form must be sent to the Human Resource Manager **within 24 hours**. To maintain confidentiality, the written report should be sealed in an envelope, labeled "Confidential". These forms must be kept in the Human Resources Department in a locked file, and no copies will be kept at any other location or reviewed by other WCAP staff without the CEO's approval.

C. DHHS or Other State Agency Investigation or Prosecution of a Case

It is the policy of WCAP to cooperate with DHHS or other State agency's investigation or prosecution of a case.

WCAP staff who are contacted regarding any report, investigation or prosecution must notify the Human Resources Manager and Early Childhood Director. No records or documents will be provided, disclosed or produced, until the Human Resources Manager and/or Early Childhood Director confirms that disclosure of information is appropriate; records will not be withheld, this check only serves to ensure that we are following all program policies and checking the credentials of the DHHS or State worker. All correspondence, subpoenas or authorization to disclose information must be provided to the Human Resources Manager within 24 hours.

The Human Resource Manager must notify the CEO of any report made by staff and any follow-up communication. The primary contact for staff is the Human Resource Manager. The Early Childhood Director or CEO must be contacted if the Human Resources Manager is unavailable.

Title: School Cancellation Procedure

PC Approved: 12/13/18

BOD Approved: 3/28/19

When a major weather event occurs or another event causing the closure of a classroom, the following practice will be followed by all classrooms.

1. **Guidance:** All Head Start & Early Head Start centers will be closed on any day that all the public school systems in the area close. Likewise, all classrooms will follow the delayed start or early release of the district in which it is located.
 - When RSU# 20 closes the following sites close:
 1. Searsport Early Head Start
 2. RSU 20 Pre-K
 - When RSU# 22 closes the following sites close:
 1. Leroy Smith Pre-K
 - When RSU# 3 closes the following sites close:
 1. Unity Pre-K
 2. Morse Pre-K
 3. Monroe Pre-K
 4. Walker Pre-K
 - When RSU #71 closes the following sites close:
 1. Belfast Head Start
 2. Belfast Early Head Start
 - Parents will be notified to watch for school district closings at the time of enrollment, initial home visit, through the Parent Handbook, and prior to the winter season.
 - **Note:** The Early Childhood Director reserves the right to retain an open classroom in a variety of cases if deemed best for the program.
 1. For example, the RSU 71 school building may not have power, but the Belfast Head Start building does—this is a case when the Early Childhood classroom may choose to remain open.
2. No classrooms may be closed without approval from the Early Childhood Director. Weather-related closures in accordance with the local school district are always to be considered approved. The Site Supervisor will assume the responsibility in the absence of the Early Childhood Director.
3. In the event that staff travels to the center before the decision is made to cancel, whether or not students are brought in, time sheets must reflect actual time spent at the center.
4. If the CEO of WCAP closes the entire agency for any reason, teaching staff will remain at each center only until all children have been picked up by parents. Staff will then leave and be paid for all hours worked.
 - On rare occasions the WCAP agency may be closed and the Early Childhood Director may not close a classroom. On these occasions refer to the WCAP Employee Handbook for details regarding compensation.
5. When a classroom or center closes for a snow day or other reason, the day may be required to be made up to equal the total number of necessary Head Start days.

- Some make-up days are included in the program calendar each year.
 - If necessary make-up days will be scheduled on Friday.
 1. Make-up days will be set by the Site Supervisor at least one day in advance of the make-up day.
 2. A Friday make-up day may mean a five-day school week.
 3. A Friday make-up day may mean that a scheduled consultation, training, or meeting is cancelled. Any cancelled meetings will be rescheduled as appropriate.
 4. Direct-service staff will adjust their time to allow for classroom coverage of the make-up days and will go to their supervisor with any issues.
6. **Procedures** to follow on a closed day:
1. Classroom staff and Family Advocates will call parents to inform them of the closed classroom.
 - If this closing is the same as the district closing and advertised through media, parents may not need to be called.
 - The site supervisor or designated person will notify the kitchen, main office and bus garage.
7. Center Site Supervisors or Lead Teachers are responsible for establishing call trees for use in emergencies. A copy of the call tree must be sent to the Operations Manager.
- Lead Teachers must include volunteers and others who are only in the center on certain days in the call tree.
 - Upon a closure, any staff may start the center call tree.
 - Site Supervisors, or Lead Teachers may make media calls regarding cancellation of their centers.

Title: Supervisory Procedure

PC Approved: 12/13/18

BOD Approved: 3/28/19

Please consult the WCAP Organizational Chart for specific information regarding organizational structure. Supervisors will be assigned at the beginning of each program year.

Full descriptions of each position are contained within Job Descriptions. The purpose of this document is to outline supervisory requirements generally.

Site Supervisor: Each site and classroom are assigned a Content Area Coordinator/Managers who will provide supervision to the site, center, and classrooms. This individual may also serve as a liaison to the program or collaborative partner. This individual provides an important monitoring role that encompasses all content areas in addition to their own assigned content area. This individual will be responsible for the supervision of positions as assigned and dictated in the *Program Information Chart*.

The exception to the supervision listed in the *Program Information Chart* are the Cooks and Family Advocates. The Nutrition Coordinator will provide direct supervision of all content area related job duties of Cooks as listed in job description. The Family Service Coordinator will provide direct supervision of all content area related job duties of Family Advocates and Home Visitors as listed in job descriptions.

Monitoring:

Content Area Coordinators/Managers and Head Start Consultants, as appropriate, will visit and monitor classrooms and home-visits. These visits may be general observations or focus topic areas such as CLASS, ECERS, ITES, meal observations, health and safety etc.

It is suggested that Content Area Coordinator/Managers use the *Site Visit* format to record site visit observations. Feedback from these observations should be written within one week of the site visit. Within the same one-week timeframe the visiting coordinator should at minimum touch base to schedule a time when a debrief shall occur.

Written documentation of Site Visits will be saved on the Head Start Drive.

Monthly Staff Meetings

Sites will hold monthly staff meetings in which all staff that work at the site and the site supervisor get together for discussion. The agenda for these meetings is to be guided by “hot topics” and follow the monthly *Staff Meeting Notes* format available in the forms binder. Minutes should be taken on this form as well. Completed staff meeting minutes will be uploaded under the appropriate site and date in Childplus under the Staff Meeting Module under the Management tab.

Best Practices for Supervision

Supervisory staff should support open, honest communication in every interaction with the staff they supervise. Supervisory staff should refer to the *Code of Conduct* for additional information around these types of behaviors and professional activities. All staff are expected to follow the *Code of Conduct* in all supervisory interactions.

At the beginning of each year or new supervisory relationship, the supervisor should support the completion of the *Supervision Best Practices Agreement* for discussion with each employee. This provides a guided communication to establish expectations for communication, logistics, and other areas to ensure every supervisee has an opportunity to have his/her voice heard and to provide a constructive place for feedback. A completed *Supervision Best Practices Agreements* should be offered to every supervisee and the original should be kept with the Supervisor’s files.

Monthly Supervision Meetings

Each staff member should receive a monthly supervision meeting with his/her supervisor. This supervision meeting should follow a structured format and must result in written documentation within one week of the meeting. The required format for minutes is the *Supervision Agenda and Record* provided in the Forms Binder. The written documentation is to be kept by the supervisor in a supervisory file in a locked location.

Monthly meetings should provide opportunities for both the supervisor and the supervisee to put forth agenda topics. Staff who provide supervision of other staff will be provided with training opportunities related to supervising.

Evaluations

- **Passport**
 - Upon hire each staff person shall receive a paper “passport” to track their required trainings.
 - The passport has different timelines for different training.
 - It is the responsibility of the employee and the supervisor to ensure completion of passport trainings in accordance with the timeline on the passport.
- **3 & 6 Month Evaluations**
 - New employees shall receive an evaluation at three and six months after their date of hire.
 - These evaluations shall be focused on the employee’s training process that far, and centered around reviewing the passport with the employee’s supervisor
 - Goals shall be set for next steps. These goals may be the same as the goals on the Professional Development Plan, if utilized.

- **Annual Evaluations**

- Each employee shall receive an annual evaluation provided by the Supervisor. The format for this evaluation is available in the Forms Binder and titled *Evaluation Form*. Evaluations will follow any other guidance from the WCAP Human Resources Department.
- Staff shall be evaluated by the hire date each year.
 - Hire dates are available from Human Resources.
- Staff will be eligible for a wage increase based on their evaluation and past performance.

Additional supervision responsibilities: In addition to the responsibilities of any assigned supervisees, all staff may have additional oversight duties related to the day-to-day operation of the classroom. These duties may include the following:

- Point person for repairs in absence of Site Supervisor
- Provide guidance to volunteers, visitors

Part 1303- Financial and Administrative Requirements

Subpart A- Financial Requirements

- No Policies

Subpart B- Administrative Requirements

- No Policies

Subpart C- Protections for the Privacy of Child Records

Title: Client File Access Procedure

Policy Council Approval: 12/13/18

Board Approval: 3/28/19

Client files: All client files will be kept in locked filing cabinets located in either the Family Advocate, Teacher, or Home Visitors' office or classroom. No documents may be removed from the file unless approved by the supervisor of the staff needing copies. In order to access client files, all staff must complete the following process:

Staff Access:

For files located in the main office:

- The Office Clerk and/or the Family Services Coordinator will manage access to all client files located at the Head Start Main Office
- Any staff requesting a client file will coordinate access to client files with either the Office Clerk and/or the Family Services Coordinator when necessary
- The Office Clerk and/or the Family Services Coordinator require staff who receive a file for transit to the assigned site or classroom to sign the file out

For files in-transit to centers:

- Once a client file has been approved to leave the facility for placement, the Family Advocate and teacher are notified by an email from the Office Clerk or the Family Services Coordinator.
- The Family Advocate or Teacher will pick-up the newly accepted client's file and sign-out the file with a witness on the contact log located in the program section of the client file.

For files located in centers, classrooms, or Home Visitor offices:

- Family Advocates and/or Teachers will manage access to client files.
- Staff who are not already approved to access client files needing a file(s) must request access to the filing cabinet from the Family Advocate or Teacher.
- Staff removing files from the building must sign them out and back in using the Child File Tracking Sheet. Staff are only permitted to remove files from the building to attend a home visit, case conference, or otherwise requested by a Content Area Coordinators.
- Annually, Family Advocates and/or Teachers will establish and maintain a binder or folder containing Child File Tracking Sheet near or in each filing cabinet.
- Family Advocates and/or Teachers will double check, daily when possible, to make sure that files removed have been replaced.

Parent Access:

- A parent has a right to inspect child records.
 - WCAP asks parents to put their request in writing and return it to a WCAP staff member.
 - 1. This staff shall inform the family member that the process takes approximately three (3) business days to process.
 - 2. The written request must be copied and the copy forwarded to the Head Start Family Service Coordinator the same day the request is made. The original written request will be filed in the child's file under the notes section.
 - 3. Documentation on the contact log / progress notes in the front of the child file must be entered the same day of the request; note a copy of the request was sent to the Family Service Coordinator.
 - 4. The FSC must verify the family member making the request is a legal family member and has permission to be involved with the child/family on file.
 - 5. Once the verification is made, the FSC will notify the Program Family Service member assigned to that family that approval has been given and verify the date of the planned review with all staff involved in the services for the family.
 - 6. The designated staff will make an appointment for the family to come in and review the file at least 3 business days from the written request.
 - 7. Staff removing files must sign them out and back in using the Child File Tracking process.
 - 8. No child file will be removed from the center by a family member (qualified staff under approved circumstances only [see above]).
 - 9. No file will be reviewed without the presence of a WCAP staff member.
 - 10. No items will be removed from the file by the family member.
 - 11. The family member may make a request for copies (in writing) and the staff person supervising the review will submit the request to the FSC. The FSC will provide written permission for the items requested to be copied and the authorized staff person may remove the items to be copied, give the copies to the approved family member making the request and document the actions on the child contact log / progress notes sheet.
- A parent has the right to ask the program to amend a record that the parent believes is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's privacy.

- WCAP will consider the parent's request. This request should come in writing following the same procedure as requesting to view a child record (See above).
- The Early Childhood Director will decide whether or not allow or deny the request.
 - If the request is granted, the Early Childhood Director or Family Service Coordinator will notify the family and make the adjustments.
 - If the request is denied, the Early Childhood Director will render a written decision to the parent within a reasonable time (within five business days) that informs the parent of the detail and a right to a hearing (see below).
- A parent has the right to a copy of the record.
 - WCAP will provide a parent with one initial copy of a child records free of charge when this request is made following the same process as indicated above under the inspection of child record.
- A parent has the right to inspect written agreements made with third parties.
 - For those agreements that are kept in the child's file:
 - This request must be made in writing to the Family Service Coordinator through the normal child file access procedure as described above.
 - For those agreements that are not kept in the child file:
 - This request must be made in writing to the Early Childhood Director.
 - WCAP does not authorize copies or photos of these written agreements such as as MOUs between other agencies to be taken offsite.

Contested Records and Hearing

- A parent has the right to ask the program for a hearing to challenge information in the child record.
 - Hearing requests should go through the Family Service Coordinator. Decisions will be made in collaboration with the Early Childhood Director.
 - If the parent requests a hearing to challenge information in the child record, WCAP will schedule a hearing within a reasonable time (no later than 30 business days), and notify the parent in advance about the hearing, and ensure the person who conducts the hearing does not have a direct interest in its outcome.
 - WCAP utilizes the Human Resources Manager as the Hearing Officer.
 - WCAP will ensure the hearing affords the parent a full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the issues.
 - If WCAP determines from evidence presented at the hearing that the information in the child's records is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's privacy, the program must either amend or remove the information and notify the parent in writing.
 - If WCAP determines from evidence presented at the hearing that information in the child records is accurate, does not mislead, or otherwise does not violate the child's privacy, the program must inform the parent of the right to place a statement in the child records that either comments on the contested information or that states why the parent disagrees with the program's decision, or both.
 - This statement would be maintained with the record as long as the record is kept.

Title: Confidentiality Policy

Policy Council Approval: 12/13/18

Board Approval: 3/28/19

Rationale: Agency employees and volunteers shall exercise discretion and tact in all client related matters. All employees and volunteers shall hold and maintain all client information in the strictest of confidence.

Guidance: Confidentiality of information regarding clients means that no information that could identify the client, a child, or his/her family is disclosed to anyone who has no need to know.

A client's file and any information found within are confidential. Any information overheard as volunteering or working within a classroom is considered confidential.

All staff and volunteers, sign Confidentiality Statement upon hire and annually thereafter (see last page of this policy).

Parental Consent:

1. Confidentiality also means that no employee or volunteer shall release any client information without authorization.
2. Consent to exchange authorized information must be indicated on the Consent to Exchange Confidential Information Form
 - a. Authorization means consent by a parent or guardian.
 - i. Disclosure of personally identifiable information (PII) must be done only with written parental consent. This authorization must specify what child records may be disclosed explain the reason of disclosure and the parties to whom the records may be disclosed.
 - ii. This consent must be signed and dated.
 - iii. Upon obtaining written consent all WCAP must explain to the parent that their consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time.
 1. If a parent revokes consent that revocation is not retroactive and therefore it does not apply to an action that occurred before the consent was revoked.
3. Confidentiality means no client information should be discussed either inside or outside the program with anyone who has "no need to know".
4. Confidentiality means no information is transferred from one classroom to another, from one building to another, or from one person to another through idle talk or carelessness.
5. Confidentiality means that information may be shared with authorized individuals because of programming regulations. Employees are the only individuals that have the right to share that information (volunteers do not).
6. Confidentiality means that client records are kept in locked files at the centers and the main office. Only staff may authorize access to client records. Please See *Client File Access Procedure*.
7. Disclosure means, access to, release of, transfer of or communication of clients' records, client personal information in any way: in writing, by electronic means or any other means to any party who is not authorized.

8. Breach of client confidentiality is a violation of agency policy and is subject to disciplinary measures. Breach of client confidentiality is detrimental to the safety and privacy of the client.
 - a. Employees are subject to disciplinary measures up to and including dismissal
 - b. Volunteers are subject to disciplinary measures and may be asked not to volunteer in certain areas of the program, or asked not to volunteer at all
9. Parents are given this information through conversations at time of enrollment and first home visit. This information regarding parental consent and parental rights is shared with parents through the *Informed Consent* document.

Personally Identifiable Information:

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) should be protected at all times. WCAP will only disclose information deemed necessary for the purpose of the disclosure.

- a. WCAP may disclose such PII from child records without parental consent if the program notifies the parent about the disclosure, provides the parent, upon the parent's request, a copy of the PII from child records to be disclosed in advance, and gives the parent an opportunity to challenge and refuse disclosure of the information in the records, before the program forwards the records to officials at a program, school, or school district in which the child seeks or intends to enroll or where the child is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is related to the child's enrollment or transfer.
 - i. Authorized individuals that information may be share with, as indicated in Subpart C of HSPPS, are:
 1. Officials within the program or acting for the program, such as contractors in positions where WCAP would otherwise use employees when there is a written agreement in place (such as a mental health consultant).
 2. Representatives of the Federal Regional Office of Head Start
 3. Representatives from Maine State Childcare Licensing Unit
 4. Parties addressing a disaster, health, or safety emergency during the period of that emergency
 5. Officials when there is a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
 6. Authorized representatives from the Food and Nutrition Service acting in collaboration with the Child And Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1996
 7. Other WCAP staff with a need to know
 8. A caseworker from a state or local welfare agency who has the right to access
 9. Appropriate parties in order to address suspected or known child abuse and neglect claims
 - ii. Other authorized individuals:
 1. Collaborative partners, such as Public School Districts as outlined in the MOUs with those districts.
 - As stated in the *Client File Access Procedure*, A parent has the right to inspect written agreements made with third parties.
 - For those agreements that are kept in the child's file:
 - This request must be made in writing to the Family Service Coordinator through the normal child file access procedure as described above.
 - For those agreements that are not kept in the child file:
 - This request must be made in writing to the Head Start Director.
 - WCAP does not authorize copies or photos of these written agreements. Such as MOUs between other agencies to be taken offsite.



Confidentiality Statement

As an Employee, Volunteer, or Parent for Waldo Community Action Partners, I understand and will adhere to WCAP's Confidentiality Policy.

I agree not to disclose any client or agency information without the consent of the Executive Director to any family members or individuals not employed by the Agency.

I fully understand that my employment or other involvement with WCAP may be terminated if I violate any part of the Agency's Confidentiality Policy.

Signature of Employee/Volunteer/Partner

Date

Title: Data Management Protocol

Policy Council Approval: 12/13/18

Board Approval: 3/28/19

Rationale: A clear and well-documented practice for management of all data collected, entered and reported by Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start and Early Head Start program is critical to ensuring the safety, accuracy and confidentiality of Head Start information. Personally Identifiable Information (PII) shall be protected at all times. Only necessary PII shall be disclosed.

Paper Data Files:

Waldo Community Action Partners Early Childhood Program uses paper files to collect, analyze and report program information.

All paper files containing any personally identifiable information are to be kept in locked file cabinets in locked offices. No client files may be left unattended.

Client files are kept in paper copies. The details of client file access can be found in the Client File Access Procedure.

Maintenance of Paper Records:

- Records shall be maintained for all years in which a child is enrolled.
- After the child completes a program year:
 - The file shall be archived according to the procedure indicated on the **Client File Index**.
- When a child transitions out of a WCAP program option:
 - All child records will be archived in envelopes labeled with the child's first and last name, date of birth, program type, and program year.
 - Archived records are kept in locked storage for three years.
 - After three years the records may be destroyed.

Electronic Program Databases:

Waldo Community Action Partners Early Childhood Program uses electronic databases to collect, analyze and report program information.

1. **PROMIS** is a web-based program developed specifically for use by Head Start programs to collect Head Start specific data and produce monitoring reports including PIR data. WCAP no longer uses Promis, however, the historical records are maintained.
2. **Childplus** is a web-based program used to collect child, family, and PIR data.
3. **Teaching Strategies Gold** is a web-based ongoing observational assessment tool. Teaching Strategies is used to record observations and provide data to teachers, allowing them to accurately pinpoint where children are in their development and learning. Teaching Strategies is used by classrooms as well as the Home Visiting program. Data is generated three times per year for part year programs and four times a year for full year programs. Data is reviewed monthly and used in monthly supervisions.
4. **E-DECA** is a web-based program developed specifically for use with the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment tool to monitor early childhood social/emotional development data and to run reports for use by staff.

PROMIS & Childplus:

All information is considered confidential and only available to WCAP staff that has undergone training in the necessary areas of Childplus database usage. All staff with access to these databases use protected passwords to enter into the system. The Operations Manager and Early Childhood Director will manage access to the database.

The following WCAP staff has access to Childplus and PROMIS. (List includes level of access and data entry function.)

PROMIS and Childplus Access Key:

- View = Read Only
- No access = screens and data not visible at all
- Full Access = insert/edit/delete data entry

Security group access:

All ChildPlus users have a user name and password and receive on-going training regarding data integrity and database usage. Security is organized by user groups, and all users are in a default "Block" group which blocks them from all screens. This is to ensure integrity of data and decrease accidental access to information. Users are concurrently in the "Block" and appropriate security group below as needed for their level and access of use. Users may move in or out of security groups as appropriate. In addition, access settings for user groups may be changed periodically as new modules and components are implemented in the database. Tutorials and instructions for the database are found in the ChildPlus resources folder on the Head Start drive.

Admin level: Early Childhood Director and Operations Manager

- Full access to all screens and modules, ability to move users in and out of security groups, ability to create or pull all reports. Full access to all children, families, and personnel in the database.

Block:

- View access to dashboard, to-do list, help menu.

Ed Team:

- View access to demographic, enrollment, and attendance screens, no data entry. Full access for all disabilities and mental health screens.

Enrollment Manager:

- Full access to all child and family demographic, enrollment, and attendance screens, as well as PIR related screens and reports.

Family Advocates and Home Visitors:

- Full access to child and family demographic, enrollment, and attendance screens for their own classroom or child caseload.

Nutrition Coordinator:

- Full access to all nutrition screens and reports, view access to child and family demographic, enrollment, and attendance screens.

Health and Safety Coordinator:

- Full access to all health screens and reports, view access to child and family demographic, enrollment, and attendance screens.

Human Resources:

- Full access to all personnel data including insert, edit, and delete as needed. No access to child or family data.

Office Clerk:

- Full access to applications and all child and family demographics, enrollment and attendance data. View access to health, nutrition, and mental health/disabilities screens and data. Full access to In-Kind and volunteer data.

After three years the records may be destroyed.

Teaching Strategies Gold:

All child outcome information is considered confidential and only available to WCAP staff that has undergone training on Teaching Strategies. All staff with access to Teaching Strategies has protected passwords to enter into the system. The following staff has access to Teaching Strategies (List includes level of access and data entry function):

1. **Early Childhood Director & designated Content Area Managers and Coordinators:** full access to all Teaching Strategies data; data entry; run and analyze reports
2. **Teachers and Home Visitors:** data entry of child outcome data for their caseload only

TSG Archives:

- After a child's program year the child is changed to inactive.
- Archives are stored for children for three years; after three years their archives are deleted.
- Paper copies remain in the child's paper file.
- Every year child outcomes data will be downloaded and saved in an electronic file on the WCAP server for preservation by Education Manager.

E-DECA:

All DECA information is considered confidential and only available to Head Start and Early Head Start staff that has been granted access. All staff with access to E-DECA have protected passwords to enter into the system. Staff utilizing the database should have undergone training on the DECA tool and E-DECA database.

The following Head Start staff has access to E-DECA (List includes level of access and data entry function):

1. **Early Childhood Director & designated Content Area Managers/Coordinators:** full access to all E-DECA data; data entry; run and analyze reports
2. **Teachers & Home Visitors:** ability to enter data and run individual classroom or caseload reports

E-DECA Archives:

- After a child's program year, the child is switched from "active" to "inactive"
- Every three years children who are inactive are removed from the system.
- Paper copies of the DECA remain in each child's file.

E-Mail

Because e-mails may contain PII, all emails are handled with care.

Staff do not send emails containing children's first and last names—initials are used. External email communications are sent securely. Secure emails are sent by typing "SECURE" in the subject line of the email. This creates a password-protected email in a secure location.

Upon termination, resignation, or departure from the employ of WCAP, email accounts are closed and passwords are changed by the departing individual's supervisor, Operation Manager, or Early Childhood Director. This is completed by sending a request to Sierra Communications, WCAP's I.T. provider.

Availability & Usability of Data

- Data that is collected is selected for its usefulness in measuring outcomes, meeting HS Performance Standards, and other contract obligations.
- Data should be recorded and entered into databases in a timely manner in order to increase availability of data to staff to facilitate informed decision making.

Integrity of Data

- Staff will be trained on the collection and entry of data to ensure the highest quality data possible.
- Data entered should be checked for accuracy by the person entering it.

Data should be checked once entered for omissions, mistakes, and other errors on a regular basis.

Subpart D- Delegation of Program Operations

- No policies

Subpart E- Facilities

Title: Purchase and Renovation of Head Start Facilities

Policy Council Approval: 12/13/18

Board Approval: 3/28/19

If and when WCAP is to purchase or renovate a Head Start or Early Head Start facility, all standards 1304.40 through 1303.56 will be followed.

Materials related to the purchase and renovation of Head Start or Early Head Start facilities are kept in accordance with these standards (1304.40 through 1303.56) in the WCAP Fiscal Department.

Subpart F- Transportation

- No policies

Part 1304- Federal Administrative Procedures

- No policies

Part 1305- Definitions

- No policies