

Waldo Community Action Partners



*we care about people*

Early Childhood Program  
Policies & Procedures  
2022-23

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- *No policies*

## **Part 1301- Program Governance**

### **Title: Amending Head Start Policy**

**Policy Council Approval: 1/13/22**

**Board Approval: 7/28/22**

**Policy:** There are occasions when a family, 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:

**Procedure:**

1. Suggested change will be put into writing by the stakeholder requesting the change then 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 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 proposed adjusted policy 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: 1/13/22**

**Board Approval: 7/28/22**

**Policy:** 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.

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: 1/13/22**

**Board Approval: 7/28/22**

**Policy:** 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 the program, the following information is provided 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 this sample agenda.

**Minutes**

Each Family Group will keep minutes of their meetings. These minutes will be reviewed by the Family Services Manager then uploaded in ChildPlus under the management tab. 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**

- 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 or a group activity may be scheduled for each meeting related to 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 or planning a requested event 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 family 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 Services Manager, Human Resources Manager, and Early Childhood Director.

### **Title: Internal Dispute Resolution**

**Policy Council Approval: 1/13/22**

**Board Approval: 7/28/22**

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 President & CEO of WCAP, 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 President & CEO of WCAP, 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.

#### Title: Policy Council By-Laws

**Policy Council Approval: 1/13/22**

**Board Approval: 7/28/22**

#### **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 families in carrying out their caregiver 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 Manager, Early Childhood Director, President & CEO of WCAP, WCAP's CFO, 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 a minimum of slots equal to the number of HS/EHS classrooms currently operated plus one slot 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 number of classrooms that they represent as long as the family is enrolled in one of the classrooms 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. Community Representatives will also include family members of public preschool eligible children who are enrolled in WCAP/public school preschool collaborations.
    - i. A minimum of four 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. Community members are voted in by Policy Council annually.

#### **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 December 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 Manager 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 Manager)
- b. To provide a copy of each meeting's minutes to the Family Services Manager following the meeting.
- c. Meeting sign-in & out and attendance will be tracked by the Secretary and will be submitted to the Family Service Manager immediately following each meeting

Section 4: Treasurer

- a. The Treasurer works collaboratively with the Family Services Manager in support of preparing and maintaining Family Engagement 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 Manager.

## **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 Manager 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 01/13/2022.

**Part 1302- Program Operations**

**Subpart A- ERSEA**

**Title: Attendance Policy & Procedure**

**Policy Council Approval: 2/10/22**

**Board Approval: 3/31/22**

**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 outlined in the "Attendance/Absence Guidance" listed below. Attendance averages are verified by the Family Service Manager within the first week of each month for the prior month using the ChildPlus database. When the monthly average for daily attendance rate in a center-based program falls below 85%, the reasons for absenteeism will be analyzed by the Family Service Manager. This may include a study of the pattern of absences for each child and 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, a Modified Attendance Plan may be developed with the family to support a temporary modified attendance. This plan should be submitted to the Family Services Manager for consideration and requires approval from the Program Director.

**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 visiting program 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 prior to 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. 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 Modified Attendance Plan and follow the guidance as written. The Family Services Manager will review the plan 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; this shall be recorded. Examples may include illness or family emergency etc. 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. The signed cancellation form will be uploaded in ChildPlus under the family services tab - attachments.

### **Home Based 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.

### **Procedure:**

#### **Center Based Attendance/Absence Guidance:**

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.

1. Teachers are responsible for entering daily attendance records into ChildPlus or on an attendance sheet. In some cases, daily attendance is entered upon arrival and departure by the teacher electronically directly into the ChildPlus data system. On days when the system is not readily available, 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 Manager monthly using attendance reports available in the ChildPlus database. The codes used to record daily attendance align with the Maine State Unified Attendance Codes.

*\*A Modified Attendance 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 Manager and/or 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 reviewed for appropriateness by the Family Services Manager and approved by other members of the management team as well as the Early Childhood Program Director as indicated on the plan process. The Family Services Manager records the request and approval in the attendance follow-up section of ChildPlus where a timeline is entered and followed.
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, staff will begin calling emergency contacts. If family is still unreachable, the team 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](http://attendanceworks.org) for parents and staff
- The staff member responsible for the child/family attendance will schedule a case conference 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 other options, such as a transfer to another program or an option better suited for the family; follow the transfer plan, transfer request form, work with the required staff until a matching opening occurs
- Document all real time contact and/or attempts to contact thoroughly in the attendance details section of ChildPlus
- The staff member responsible for the child/family attendance will follow-up with the family to support and engage the family in their child's improved attendance and their on-going participation in the program
- Complete the Withdrawal Request 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, staff will direct the parent to contact the Health and Nutrition Manager to determine what is needed in order for the child to return to school. (See Health Exclusion and Admittance Policy) If the child has not returned within three consecutive school days there-after, the staff member responsible for attendance will notify the Health and Nutrition Manager 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 Manager 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 Manager and the Early Childhood Program Director. Every effort will be made to assist the client and family to be successful in the program.

4. In circumstances where chronic absenteeism persists, a *Program Attendance Letter* shall be sent to the family to determine the family's interest in having their child remain enrolled. If a parent does not respond in accordance with the timeline noted in the letter, the child's slot will be considered an enrollment vacancy.
5. Once a client is removed from the program, and a Withdrawal Request form is received or completed by the Family Services Manager the following steps will be taken to fill the vacancy within **thirty days**:
  - The Family Services Manager will follow the programs process for enrolling an new child.
  - If a child on the waitlist is appropriate for the opening, the Family Services Manager will send a new enrollment email to the Family Advocate and the Health & Nutrition Manager and site supervisor. Next, the Family Advocate will contact the family to ensure they are still interested in sending their child. An acceptance letter will be mailed to the family and the record will be made available to the program option receiving the new family to begin the enrollment process.
  - The **Family Services Manager** will accept the child in ChildPlus.
  - Once the Teacher receives the client's information and 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 Manager by email prior to the date of the first class-day. The child will then be enrolled in ChildPlus.

### **Gradual Entry Guidance**

6. 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 Attendance Modification form will be completed which is outlined under attendance modification and be approved by the Family Services Manager and Program Director.

### **Home Based Option:**

#### **Missed, Cancelled or Rescheduled Home Visits Guidance:**

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. Also see cancellations sections for further guidance.
2. For the first missed home visit, (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. For 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 does 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 Visitor's 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 and make 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 Manager for support.

- The Home Visitor will schedule a case conference with the Family Service Manager. This meeting will be conducted to generate ideas for supporting and serving the family. The *calendar of scheduled home visits* will be reviewed for possible adjustment consideration during this meeting. Ideas will be discussed to support the family and resources and referrals given as 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 ChildPlus.
5. If a family misses four (4) or more consecutive visits, the Family Service Manager will attempt contact the family again; first by phone then by mail via registered letter to initiate contact to discuss the family's interest in remaining in the program. The letter will also 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.
  6. 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 Guidance:**

The intention of the contact with the family from the Family Service Manager 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. If that is the case, the Family Service Manager will place the family on the waitlist and when a future opening occurs, the family will be contacted to inquire about their interest in returning to the program. All efforts are made by the Family Service Manager 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 Expectations:**

1. 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.
2. 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, facility, home, or community. The children are to be supervised by the home visitor with parents observing at all times and actively participating at other times.
3. Socialization activities are 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**

**Policy Council Approved: 2/10/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 3/31/2022**

#### **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-old.

### **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. Categorically eligible; the family receives Public Assistance (TANF') and/or Social Security Insurance (SSI), family is experiencing homelessness and/or child is in foster care in accordance with the definition listed prior
- b. Income eligible (IE); the family's income is equal to or below 100% of the poverty guidelines and/or.
- c. 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*
- d. 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 enrollment)
- e. Pre-K eligibility: children who are age four before October 15<sup>th</sup> of the enrolling year and 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 Manager. 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.
  - b. Infants who participate in our prenatal program will be transitioned to our home visiting option after the required "two weeks from birth" home visit is complete with mom and baby. If the family chooses to transfer the infant to a center-based option the home visitor will work with the family to support the transfer once the child is 6 weeks of age.
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):
- a. Categorically Eligible
  - b. Income eligible (IE)
  - c. 101 and 130% (OI but counted as IE if process is followed as listed next)
    - 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*.

**Redetermination of Eligibility:** A redetermination of eligibility is required:

- Prior to an Early Head Start transition to Head Start
- Prior to a 3<sup>rd</sup> program year in Head Start only

A copy of all documentation used to determine a child's eligibility will be collected and processed using the programs data base, ChildPlus for status verification and forwarded on to the Family Services Manager 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 ensure 10% of enrollment in HS and EHS includes children diagnosed with a disability. 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 following Content Area Managers/Supervisors/Specialist: Health & Nutrition Manager, Family Services Manager, Operations Specialist and Site Supervisors. Each Manager/Supervisor/Specialist reviews and approves the selection for enrollment, indicates any additional recommendations, requests further information if needed. Once any additions/corrections have been made the clients records are sent to the Ready for Review status in ChildPlus. The Operations Specialist will review then forward on to the Family Services Manager for final approval.

Once all parties have reviewed and approved the child/family for enrollment, the acceptance letter is mailed to the family. The Family Services Staff who has been assigned the new family 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 followed 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.

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 may consist of the following Content Area Managers/Supervisors/Specialist: Health & Nutrition Manager, Family Services Manager, Operations Specialist and Site Supervisors. with support from the Program Director as needed. When an opening occurs the Family Services Manager authorizes the selection, acceptance, and final enrollment. Tracking and status of the enrollment review and approval is maintained in the programs database.

### **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 *Attendance Modification form* should be completed and approved by the Family Services Manager, then 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.

### **Reserving Slots:**

WCAP Early Childhood Program works in partnership with local partners to identify children in foster care or families experiencing homelessness who will be eligible and located in the Waldo County area. In order to support a possible incoming client experiencing foster care or homelessness we reserve the right to reserve an opening when one occurs. No more than 3% of the funded slots will be reserved. If the reserved slot is not filled in 30 days the slot will then be considered vacant and will be filled based on the program’s selection process. The Family Services Manager will approve any slots being reserved for this purpose and report when in use to the program director and on the monthly federal enrollment report

### **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, any client paper records are 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 then 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**

**Policy Council Approved: 2/10/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 3/31/2022**

### **Policy**

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 Family Services Manager holds primary responsibility for recruitment. 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 Manager 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 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 Manager and other partners
- Sharing eligibility criteria with partner programs and agencies, specifically referencing homelessness.

#### **Recruitment of Children in DHHS Custody**

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

### **Title: Suspensions and Expulsion Policy**

**Policy Council Approved: 2/10/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 3/31/2022**

#### **Suspensions:**

In accordance with HSPPS 1302.17:

- WCAP limits suspensions and expulsions of children participating in the WCAP Early Childhood Program.
- 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 Early Childhood 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 the program 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*.

#### Partnerships:

All contracts and MOUs for joint delivery of services are written to follow WCAP Early Childhood Program policies and Head Start Performance Standards. In rare cases that the WCAP Early Childhood Program and a collaborative partner disagree on the policies related to suspension and expulsion, the Early Childhood Director will make every effort to come to an agreement with the partner. Should a partner act without a prior discussion with the Early Childhood Program, or in opposition to the Early Childhood Program policies, the Early Childhood Director will debrief with the partner and make determinations on reporting and next steps.

#### **Title: Training on Eligibility Policy**

**Policy Council Approved: 2/10/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 3/31/2022**

#### **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, 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 a joint policy council/board meeting, when possible; 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 will be trained within 90 days of hire, and yearly thereafter.
3. The ERSEA Manager/Family Services Manager makes the final determination on eligibility status' and selects the next most eligible client when an opening occurs. The ERSEA Manager informs the members of the management/leadership team of changes in enrollment and reports enrollment eligibility status monthly.
4. Family Services Staff members who support data collection for eligibility determinations will be trained on the following:
  - methods to collect
  - complete and assure accuracy of eligibility information from families and third-party sources
  - how to treat families with dignity and respect
  - how to deal with and support possible issues of domestic violence stigma
  - confidentiality and the privacy of others information which is shared during the application process

- 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 year.

**Title: Violating Eligibility Determination Policy**

**Policy Council Approved: 2/10/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 3/31/2022**

**Policy:**

WCAP Early Childhood Program accurately and appropriately evaluates the eligibility of each child and family who enrolls in the program. 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: 12/9/2021**

**Board Approval: 1/27/2022**

**Policy:** When considering assignments for teaching staff, WCAP will work to ensure that all classrooms are staffed with a qualified staff, and that staffing patterns reflect equitable distribution of people with the highest credentials and experience. Specific staffing determinations are made yearly by the Early Childhood Director and appropriate Managers/Supervisors. The *Program Information Chart* outlines the specific location each staff is assigned.

#### **Process:**

At the end of each program year, staff will be asked to complete a letter of intent to return to their current position. At that time, teachers may request a change in status or placement. In the summer, staff teaching teams will be reviewed by appropriate content managers and Site Supervisors. Staff placements will be decided using the considerations listed as follows. Final placements for staff will be approved by the Early Childhood Director. Teachers will be notified in writing in a call-back letter mailed as early as possible, but no later than mid-August of each year. Site supervisors are also encouraged to call staff directly to orient them to changes in teaching teams, location, or supervision.

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 descriptions are reviewed annually to ensure alignment with the requirements of the Head Start Standards and Head Start Act.
- 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.

#### **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/Head Start 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).

Assistant Teachers will have at a minimum a (CDA) credential and/or an Associate or Baccalaureate degree (in any area). A minimum 24 ECE credits is preferred.

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

Any staff who has 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 position requirements. The staff person may be placed in a site or position temporarily while the position is advertised.

**4. Experience & Training:**

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

Staff should also complete 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). If Lead Teachers have not completed the MELDS or MITG training, they will be supported to complete the training.

**5. Instructional & social-emotional supports:**

In making classroom assignments, WCAP will ensure that consideration is given to providing a balance of instructional and social-emotional supports. WCAP aims 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.

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

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

Attention will be paid to assessing each staff member's skills and efforts in supporting positive interactions between adults and children. Classroom assignments will reflect efforts to create teaching teams that can provide optimal positive environments for learning.

**7. 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.

**8. 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.

**9. Staff Request:**

Whenever possible, staff preference in assigning classroom assignments will be considered.

## **Subpart C- Education and Child Development Program Services**

### **Title: Active Play and Screen Time Policy**

**Policy Council Approved: 6/16/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

**Policy:** Gross motor development is important to overall health and is gained through regular play and movement, both indoors and outdoors. Classrooms will provide daily opportunities for children to engage in moderate activities indoors and outdoors, weather permitting. In a rich learning environment, electronic media can get in the way of exploring, playing, self-regulation and interacting with others. There will be no televisions in the classrooms. Screen time will be limited based on the program and be educational in nature.

#### **Procedure:**

##### **Active Play:**

- a. Children must have opportunities for indoor and outdoor activities. Children over the age of 12 month shall have a minimum of 60 minutes of active play outdoors daily. Infants must go outside at least once daily.
2. Physical activity must never be used as reward or punishment.
3. Active play should be encouraged as part of self-regulation strategies to promote optimal learning and overall well-being.
4. Staff will maintain all active supervision strategies during active play. *See Active Supervision and Accountability of Children Procedure.*

##### **Screen Time:**

1. There will be no televisions in classrooms.
2. Screen time will be limited to 15 minutes for Head Start/Pre-K classrooms and be educational in nature.
  - a. Screen time may be extended if part of a child's telehealth IEP or medical model work.
3. Screen time will not take place in Early Head Start classrooms unless a part of a child's telehealth IFSP or medical model work.

### **Title: Active Supervision and Accountability of Children Policy and Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 6/16/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

#### **Policy:**

Keeping children safe is a top priority for Waldo CAP Early Childhood Program. All staff members, consultants, and volunteers are responsible for the active supervision, safety, and accountability of all children within the WCAP Early Childhood Program classrooms at all times. Active Supervision ensures safety of the children in our care and our compliance with all applicable state and federal regulations including Head Start Performance Standard 1302.47 (Safety Practices).

#### **Procedure:**

##### **Rationale:**

Keeping children safe is a top priority for Waldo CAP Early Childhood Program. Active supervision is the most effective strategy for allowing infants, toddlers, and preschool children to safely explore their environments

while being closely supervised. Head Start Program Performance Standards require that programs “ensure no child is left alone or unsupervised by staff, consultants, contractors, or volunteers while under their care.” WCAP Early Childhood Program uses active supervision to create safe learning environments in all settings.

**Staff training and frequency:**

All program staff members will be trained on active supervision and accountability of children best practices at hire and yearly, at a minimum, to comply with Head Start Performance Standards 1302.47 (4), with additional trainings as needed based on monitoring oversight. Training may contain but is not limited to: policy review, reporting requirements, scenario review/role playing, problem solving, videos, or other methods as appropriate. Staff training may occur in a combination of one-on-one training such as supervision, small group meetings (team meetings and teaching team meetings) and whole group program instruction.

Providers, consultants, and other specialty service providers will be informed of our active supervision policies and procedures as it relates to their roles and responsibilities.

**Communication and review:**

Parents and families: Incidents related to active supervision will be shared with families as quickly as possible after the incident and will be documented using the *Child Incident/Injury Report Form* using the process outlined in the *Incident Reporting Policy*.

Classroom staff: As practices and regulations change, staff will be notified of updates. Additional training may be required.

Leadership/management team: Monitoring activities and data related to active supervision incidents will be reviewed regularly as noted in the monitoring section below.

Governing bodies such as childcare licensing and Office of Head Start will be notified immediately, while WCAP Board, and Policy Council members will be updated periodically on active supervision and in accordance with any requirements for reporting. Further notification to the board can be found in the *Program Management and Quality Improvement Process*.

**Monitoring:**

Monitoring and adherence to the *Active Supervision and Accountability of Children Policy and Procedure* will be done monthly and data tracked. Data will be collected via site visits, incident reports, and casual and targeted observations. Data will be entered and managed in ChildPlus and reviewed regularly by management staff. As a result of ongoing monitoring, program changes may be made to strategies, classroom environment, staffing, training, and policies and procedures to ensure compliance. Program-wide data related to active supervision will be reviewed as part of annual self-assessment and shared as outlined in *Program Management and Quality Improvement Process*.

**Human resources:**

Non-compliance with the *Active Supervision and Accountability of Children Policy and procedure*, may be remedied through feedback, coaching, and if necessary, discipline, as outlined in the *WCAP Disciplinary Procedure*.

Active Supervision:

**1. Accounting for Children - Sign in/out process:**

- a. Staff will ensure all children will be signed in and out of the classroom each day. This process may vary depending on the set up and limitations of the site or classroom. Options are:

- i. Children being dropped off or picked up by parent or guardian will be signed in or out by their parent or guardian or other authorized adult, as outlined in the child's emergency contacts, using either the classroom tablet or equivalent.
  - ii. Children arriving or departing school by bus will be signed in or out of the program by program staff using either the classroom tablet or equivalent. Staff will confirm with the bus personnel the number of expected children as well as note anyone not present.
- b. Providers, consultants, and other specialty service providers working with children throughout the day will utilize a sign in/out sheet. At all times, all children should be accounted for with a combination of the sign in/out sheet and the classroom tablet or equivalent. Children should exit and re-enter the classroom with the provider only; at no time should a child leave or enter the classroom on their own to attend a therapy session.
- c. In emergency situations, staff will utilize the provider sign in/out sheet and the classroom tablet or equivalent to confirm all children are accountable. Staff should then follow the emergency process as outlined in their classrooms YIKES plan.

## **2. Monitoring Classroom Environment and Staff Positioning:**

- a. Staff will ensure Classroom environment is structured to ensure proper visibility to supervise children and ensure accessibility to children at all times.
- b. Staff shall arrange the classroom so that play spaces remain clutter free, and children are easily seen and heard at all times.
- c. Staff will use visuals in the classroom, including but not limited to: a daily schedule for predictable routines, stop signs on classrooms doors, and other visual rules and directions to support and prompt children's classroom management skills.
- d. Staff should be properly zoned so they can see and hear children at all times, by positioning themselves in all environments to keep children safe and prevent potential harm. This means having clear pathways to children for quick reactions when necessary and using proper zoning in larger outdoor play areas.
- e. Staff will be mindful of children who may need additional support, and position themselves accordingly.
- f. Staff will communicate with each other about shifts in zoning as needed, such as a staff member needing to leave the room.

## **3. Managing frequent counts and transitions :**

- a. Staff will be aware of where children are and what they are doing.
- b. Staff will always know the number of children in a classroom at any given time utilizing a white or chalk board. The number will be updated as children enter or exit the classroom.
- c. Staff will monitor classroom doors, with awareness of who is coming and going.
- d. Children should never leave a classroom without the knowledge of a teacher or without being signed out. Utilize the sign in/out process as outlined in section 1.
- e. Staff will count the number of children frequently, so all are accounted for and communicate the count out loud to other staff.
- f. Staff will manage transitions to ensure proper counts:
  - i. When transitioning in or out of 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.
  - ii. Children must be holding on to a loop ring, or the hand of an adult during any transition. Special care should be taken in regard to safety or trip hazards such as stairs.

1. Head Start/Pre-K staff may choose to not use loop rings as part of kindergarten readiness in the last two weeks of the part year program if it is developmentally appropriate and safe for current enrollment.
- iii. Staff will be positioned throughout the line for safety, accountability, and supervision.
- iv. Upon arrival of the destination, staff will count and zone appropriately.

**4. Managing Behaviors and Concerns:**

- a. Staff will listen for specific sounds or lack of sounds that could indicate potential concerns.
- b. Staff will be aware of when children are showing signs of distress or needing assistance, and respond immediately to assist the child.
- c. Staff will use the *Positive Behavior Guidance Policy* for addressing potentially disruptive, dangerous, or very dangerous behaviors.
- d. Staff will plan for and anticipate children's behaviors to provide the appropriate and necessary support.
- e. Staff will "build the school family" in order to get to know each child's individual interests, skills, and patterns of behavior.
- f. Staff will maintain awareness of children who may take risks, wander, or get upset. Staff will remain close to these children, or others, that may need assistance throughout the day or during various activities including transitions.
- g. Staff will use child specific identified strengths, needs, and developmental skills to offer support.
- h. Staff will offer all children the opportunity to problem-solve before getting involved.

**5. Communication and Reporting:**

- a. Staff will report any and all instances where a child has been left unsupervised. The situation will be investigated immediately and reported to a supervisor.
- b. Supervisors will follow the plan for further reporting outlined in *Program Management and Quality Improvement Process*.
- c. Staff are expected to communicate regularly and ongoing all expectations of this active supervision policy and procedure with other staff, substitutes, and volunteers as needed to ensure safety, accountability and adherence to rules and regulations. Active supervision is everyone's responsibility!
- d. Active supervision strategies shall be reviewed and discussed regularly with staff during staff meetings, supervisions, after an issue, or any other time as needed to ensure adherence and safety.

**Title: Animal Visits in the Classroom Policy**

**Policy Council Approved: 6/16/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

**Policy:** Animals can play a positive role in children's learning, and support curriculum objectives. Staff will take reasonable precautions to maintain the safety of children at all times when animals are visiting the classroom and show consideration for children who may have allergies and other health concerns.

**Procedure:**

**Scheduling:**



1. Staff will schedule animal visits and complete *ChildPlus Activity Planning module* ten calendar days before the animal visits. The process for approval is outlined in the Event Planning module. 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.
2. Family Advocates will add an event to the *ChildPlus Activity Planning module* when children experience the animals at school as part of a special event.
3. Before the visit:
  - a. 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.
  - b. Parking for large animal trailers must be considered when planning visits.
  - c. Additional adult volunteers should be encouraged to ensure the safety of all children.
  - d. Proof of liability insurance may be required from owners of animals when brought in from an outside location, such as a local farm. 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.
4. Any classroom pets or insects requested must follow the same request and approval process and all health and sanitation guidelines.

**During the visit:**

1. 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).
2. Small group learning experiences with animals provide better opportunities for learning and safety for children and animals.
3. Children and adults must wash their hands before and after direct contact with any animal following the *Hand Washing Procedure*.
4. Staff will supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when near animals. Any handling of animals will be done in a kind manner appropriate for the type of animal.
5. Staff will make sure that any child who is allergic to an animal is not exposed to that animal.

Title: Child Assessment Policy and Procedure

**Policy Council Approved: 6/16/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

**Policy:** WCAP Early Childhood Program will use assessment to provide ongoing information to evaluate each child's development level and progress in school readiness goals. Assessment data will be shared with families at the end of each assessment period based on the *Program Services Timeline*. Staff will use assessment data, as well as additional information from the family, to determine each child's strengths and needs, and inform and adjust strategies to better support individualized learning and improve teaching practices.

**Procedure:**

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

#### **Ongoing Assessment:**

1. Beginning in the fall of the 2022-2023 program year, Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) assessment will be used through the online platform.
2. Staff will maintain current DRDP Rater Certification through the California Early Childhood Online (CECO) platform.
3. Staff will complete assessments of individual children utilizing authentic interactions to create observations.
  - a. Observe the situation
  - b. 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).
  - c. Write down an objective observation of the situation.
  - d. Enter the observation into DRDP.
4. Well-written observations include:
  - a. Brief description that builds a visual image
  - b. Summarize any context necessary for understanding the situation
  - c. Uses descriptive words or direct quotes
  - d. Is done factually and non-judgmentally without interpretation
  - e. Uses examples of child's work product (photos, videos)
5. Staff shall collect observations ongoing.
  - a. Observations should be entered weekly.
  - b. All children will have evidence of observations entered monthly.

#### **Checkpoint guidelines:**

1. For every checkpoint staff will enter a minimum of one observation for each DRDP Measure.
  - a. Checkpoints will be completed by the checkpoint due date. If staff are struggling to maintain the checkpoint timeline, they should notify their supervisor at least two weeks prior to the checkpoint is due. Checkpoints will not be completed sooner than 2 weeks before the due date.
2. At the end of each checkpoint staff will generate the *ChildPlus Parent Report* to be used as discussion points when meeting with families for Family Conferences and Educational Home visits. Staff will record family input directly onto this form and staff and parents will sign the report. A copy of the *ChildPlus Parent Report* will be given to the family.
3. Part year programs will have three checkpoint assessment period. Full year programs will have four checkpoint assessment periods.

#### **Individualization:**

1. Data from observations will be used in individualization.
2. Each child will have individual goals targeted no less than twice monthly and be reflected in ChildPlus. Individualization will also reflect any IEP or IFSP goals if applicable.

- a. These expectations will be at the discretion of the Child Services Manager for the last month of part year programming.

**Lesson Plans:**

1. Data from observations will be used in lesson planning.
2. HS/Pre-K classrooms will use curriculum roll out grids for lesson plans. Current roll-out grids will be displayed in the classroom.
3. Early Head Start classrooms will document lesson plans using the *EHS Lesson Planning* module in ChildPlus. Lesson plans will be printed and displayed in the classroom.

**Monitoring and training:**

1. Assessment periods are set at the beginning of each program year by the Child & Family Services team and reflected on the *Program Services Timeline*.
  - a. 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.
2. The Child & Family Services team will provide training and technical assistance as needed to ensure staff are able to complete child assessment observations.
3. Staff will be provided DRDP Observation Counts by Child and DRDP Completion Status by Location information regularly to monitor progress.
4. The Early Childhood Director or Child Services Manager will share aggregate data with collaborative partners at key points.
5. The Child & Family Services team will work together provide aggregate data to the Policy Council, Board of Directors and self-assessment team at key points throughout the year.

**Title: Child Referral Policy and Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 6/16/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

**Policy:**

If warranted through screening and additional relevant information, staff will promptly and appropriately address any needs identified through a referral to the appropriate consultant or provider as soon as possible to ensure that the child receives prompt services. In the case of special services, the referral will be sent to the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA, with parental/guardian consent, for a formal evaluation as soon as possible, and not to exceed timelines required by IDEA. The referral will be done in partnership with the child's parents/guardian and the local agency to support the family through the formal evaluation process.

**Procedure:**

- In all circumstances, the family is an active participant in the referral process. Should the family not be interested in a referral, this is their right. It is important to share with the family that any referral that leads to some extra support for their child can have a profound impact upon a child's development and school readiness.

- a. Staff should contact the appropriate party when a family does not wish to seek a referral. It will be documented in ChildPlus with the reason(s) for the family refusal noted.
- b. Staff will continue to monitor the child's progress and to work with the family around their concerns for delaying a referral.

### **Behaviors/Mental Health and Special Needs:**

1. Families will be made aware of Child Development Services (CDS) and the mental health consultant at time of application, and through ongoing conferences, home visits, and conversations throughout the program year. Families will be made aware of the referral procedure and be asked about any needs or concerns that they have for their child.
  - a. All families are given a CDS brochure that explains their services.
  - b. Families will be encouraged to contact CDS and/or their primary care physician prior to being accepted into the Early Childhood Program for a screening, especially if they have concerns.
2. For newly enrolled children who have not been previously screened, a developmental screening will occur within 45 calendar days of enrollment. *See Child Assessment Policy and Procedure.*
3. Ongoing behavioral and/or developmental concerns will be documented in writing by staff through child observations, behavior incident reporting, or as indicated by screening results.
4. Staff will contact the family in person or by telephone to express these concerns and discuss any concerns the family may have using a strengths-based approach. Staff will emphasize that a referral should be 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.
5. Parent/guardian permission must be obtained before referring a child to CDS or medical model services on the *Special Services Referral Form*. Staff can include any supporting documentation with the referral form and submit all to the Child Services Manager as soon as possible.
6. Referrals for the mental health consultant should be submitted through ChildPlus, *see Positive Behavior Guidance Policy and Procedure.*
7. Once received, referrals will be forwarded to the appropriate consultant or provider within 72 hours.
  - a. The Early Childhood Director will be notified in the event the form is not forwarded within the 72 hours.

### **Health and Nutrition:**

1. Through the screening process, the Health and Nutrition Manager will make referrals to the appropriate Consultant and/or Health Care Provider. *See Screening Policy Procedure.*
  - a. Parent signature will be obtained on the Referral to Nutritionist Form when making a referral to the program's Registered Dietician. Referrals are tracked in ChildPlus by the Health and Nutrition Manager.
  - b. The Referral Form may or may not be used in the process of making a health referral. A parent signature is not required when making a health 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 Nutrition Manager.

## Title: Classroom Design and Materials Guidance

**Policy Council Approved: 6/16/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

### **Policy:**

Classrooms will be organized learning environments that promote healthy development and children's skill growth, including children with disabilities. The environment will have appropriate schedules, lesson plans, and indoor and outdoor learning experiences that provide adequate opportunities for choice, play, exploration, and experimentation among a variety of learning, sensory, and motor experiences with age-appropriate materials. For infants and toddlers, the classroom will promote relational learning and include individualized and small group activities that integrate appropriate daily routines into a flexible schedule of learning experiences. For preschool age children, the classroom will include teacher-directed and child-initiated activities, active and quiet learning activities, and opportunities for individual, small group, and large group learning activities.

### **Procedure:**

1. Classroom environments will be set up to ensure at least 35 square feet of usable space per child.
2. Staff will have the classroom environment reflective of current enrollment, including enrollment changes throughout the year.
3. Classroom environments will be inclusive of any children with disabilities enrolled in the classroom, as well as dual language learners.
4. Classroom organization will be done in accordance with the predominant classroom curricula:
  - a. Head Start/Pre-K: Pre-K for ME beginning Fall 2022
  - b. Early Head Start Center-based: Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers & Twos
  - c. Early Head Start Home-Based: Partners for a Healthy Baby and Creative Curriculum
5. Classrooms will use defined interest areas including, but not limited to:
  - a. Block area
  - b. Sensory/Discovery table
  - c. Library/Listening
  - d. Math/science
  - e. Dramatization
  - f. Art studio
  - g. Writing & Drawing
  - h. Table toys/manipulatives
  - i. Safe Place
6. Classrooms shall provide enough equipment, toys, materials, consumables, furniture, and other supplies to meet the needs and facilitate the participation of enrolled children and adults in the classroom. Materials will be changed intentionally and periodically to support children's interests, development, and learning.
  - a. Classroom equipment and materials must be made from non-toxic materials
  - b. The fall zone under and around all indoor play equipment which would buffer a fall from a height of more than 29 inches must be covered with shock-absorbing mats or materials which extend at least 39 inches beyond the outside edge of the equipment in all directions. If the play structure exceeds 48 inches in height, the shock absorbing mat must be at least two inches thick.
  - c. Staff will follow the cleaning schedule for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting classroom equipment, materials, and environment, see *Cleaning Policy* and Procedure for more information.

7. Classroom materials will be purchased and chosen based on curriculum, developmental, or cultural and diversity needs, or necessary accommodations.
8. Staff will use the recommendations from managers, supervisors, consultants, and/or service providers around classroom design and materials. This may include, but is not limited to environmental checklists, playground inspections, and center checks.
9. Staff purses, bags, medications, and other belongings must be inaccessible to children.

**Title: Classroom Sign In/Sign Out Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 6/16/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

**Procedure:**

Any WCAP staff, substitute, volunteer, and other adult visitors acting in a caregiving capacity must record actual hours worked and break times in which they are not in a caregiving capacity and/or are not counted in the staff to child ratio. This record must be available for inspection by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and be kept on site for three years. DHHS and WCAP will use these records to assist in any investigations surrounding possible violations of Child Care Facility Licensing Rule.

**Record Keeping:**

1. Each classroom will have a Classroom Sign In/Sign Out Binder available with current and last month's Classroom Sign In/Sign Out sheets.
2. Classroom staff, substitutes, volunteers, and adult visitors will use the Classroom Sign In/Sign Out sheets to track time that they are counted toward ratio including, but not limited to before:
  - a. Starting their work shift in the classroom with children
  - b. Leaving to take a break
  - c. Returning from a break
  - d. Ending their work shift in the classroom with children
3. Those that are being counted toward ratio will mark "Y" in the appropriate column on the Classroom Sign In/Sign Out sheet.
4. Staff who are split between multiple classrooms in the same building must sign in and out of each classroom to record when they are counting toward one classroom's ratio versus another.
5. Classrooms will also use Classroom Sign In/Sign Out sheets for contact tracing for any service provider or other visitor that is not counting toward ratio during their time in the classroom. They will indicate that they are not counted toward ratio by marking "N" in the appropriate column on the Classroom Sign In/Sign Out sheet.
  - a. Service providers that are providing services to children outside of the classroom will use the Special Services Sign In/Sign Out sheet to sign the child out. See *Active Supervision and Accountability of Children Policy and Procedure*.
6. Staff will continue to use current electronic timekeeping systems for payroll purposes separate from the Classroom Sign In/Sign Out sheets.

**Record Management:**

1. Staff will maintain current and last month's Classroom Sign In/Sign Out sheets in the Classroom Sign In/Sign Out Binder.

2. At the end of the calendar month, staff will remove Classroom Sign In/Sign Out sheets from the “Last Month” tab of the Classroom Sign In/Sign Out Binder. These sheets will be sent to the Operations Specialist at the WCAP Early Childhood Program’s main office electronically as one scanned file, or by interoffice mail.
  - a. These sheets will be uploaded by classroom and by month to the Classroom Sign In/Sign Out Module in ChildPlus.
3. Staff will then move Classroom Sign In/Sign Out sheets from the “Current Month” tab to the “Last Month” section of the binder. New Classroom Sign In/Sign Out sheets will be added to the “Current Month” tab.
  - a. Classroom Sign In/Sign Out sheets can be found in the Forms Binder under Administrative Forms.
4. Classroom Sign In/Sign Out records will be maintained for 3 years in the ChildPlus database.

**Monitoring:**

1. Staff will have the Classroom Sign In/Sign Out Binder available in the classroom for any DHHS worker to review.
2. Staff will use the Classroom Sign In/Sign Out module in ChildPlus to allow the DHHS worker to review any further historically tracking data requested.

**Title:** Cultural and Linguistic Approach

**Policy Council Approved: 7/16/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

**Policy:**

School readiness and success for children who are dual language learners (DLLs) is tied directly to mastery of their home language. WCAP 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.

**Procedure:**

**Cultural Inclusion:**

1. Staff will learn about and integrate child and family’s culture, traditions and language(s) into classroom instruction and environment to honor differences and similarities.
2. Staff will educate all families on the cognitive and social advantages of a child knowing more than one language.
3. Staff will provide families with strategies to support, maintain and preserve home language learning.
4. Staff will provide families information that is written in their native language when needed or requested.
5. Staff will encourage home language and literacy development to educate families about how these activities contribute to children’s ability to acquire English language proficiency.
6. Staff will provide children a variety of ways to demonstrate what they know and can do.

**Interpretation Services**

1. Whenever possible, families will be communicated with their home or preferred language. WCAP will seek to use an interpreter or translator services as needed to assure clear communication with families as possible.
2. Services will be provided at no cost to the family upon approval by the Early Childhood Director.
3. When a family who speaks a language other than English enrolls in the program, staff will:
  - a. Take the family's information on the intake form to the extent possible.
  - b. Notify the Family Services Manager with the name of the client and the preferred language.
  - c. 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 Services Manager or Early Childhood Director.
4. Any questions around ability to provide interpretation services should be sent to the Family Services Manager.

#### **Screening and Assessment**

1. WCAP will seek to provide screenings and assessments in the child's dominant language as interpretation services and qualified screeners and assessors are available.
2. Staff will complete Home Language Survey for Head Start/Pre-K children to determine language proficiency in home language and English language acquisition.
  - a. WCAP will work with community partners to secure professionals able to assist in these services.
  - b. This will be provided at no cost to the family.
  - c. A staff person who has identified a child who may need interpretation services for an assessment shall notify the Family Services Manager to arrange for services.

#### **Community Partnerships:**

1. 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:**

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

#### **Title: Education Home Visit Approach Policy and Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 6/16/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

#### **Policy:**

Home visits will serve as an avenue for parents and family members to be involved in the program's education services and be engaged in their child's learning and development. Initial home visits for new or transitioning children will be completed before 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. Subsequent home visits will be completed based on the Program Services Timeline.



**Procedure:**

1. 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.
2. Staff will use 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.
3. For cancellations, see *Attendance Policy and Procedure*.

**Center-based Option**

1. A minimum of two home visits are due each program year.
2. Staff will use the appropriate home visiting forms to guide the conversation with families. Staff will enter the home visiting information into ChildPlus, and the form will be uploaded as an attachment. The family will be asked if they would like a copy of the home visiting form.
3. The duration of all home visits must be a minimum of 90 minutes.
4. When possible, best practice is for both teachers and family advocates to participate together in all home visits, so that family members can meet and establish a positive relationship with each of them.

**Home-based Option**

1. The home visitor will provide a minimum of 46 home visits per year per family.
  - a. See *Attendance Policy and Procedure* for more information.
  - b. Home visits take place on a weekly basis for 90 minutes each with the exception of prenatal. All home visits will focus on promoting high-quality early learning experiences in the home, and growth toward goals described in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. Staff will use these goals and the curriculum to plan home visit activities.
2. Prenatal home visits will be scheduled based on the needs of the pregnant mother.
  - a. Staff members must make monthly contact.
  - b. These visits must address needs for appropriate supports for emotional well-being, nurturing and responsive caregiving, and father engagement during pregnancy and early childhood.
  - c. Visits will provide enrolled pregnant women, fathers, partners or other relevant family members prenatal and postpartum information, education and services. This may include areas such as 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.
3. Post-partum visits are required within a two-week time frame from delivery by a health staff member or the family's home visitor (*see 1302 Subpart H*).

**Title: Family Engagement in Curriculum Planning Policy and Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 6/16/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

**Policy:**

WCAP will structure education and services to recognize families' roles as children's lifelong educators and encourage families to engage in their child's education. Families will be given opportunities for input and involvement in curriculum planning through avenues such as family groups, home visits, lesson planning, and family conferences.

**Procedure:****Family Engagement Group meetings**

1. One education staff from the site will attend the Family Group meeting when possible and present curriculum concepts and ideas to the group for discussion monthly.
2. Participants are asked to contribute ideas or activities to support school readiness goals.
3. Each classroom 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 and feedback with signatures on the provided form.
  - a. All suggestions will be considered for inclusion on the weekly lesson plan. When possible, members will be given information on how their suggestions were used.
  - b. The Family Advocate will scan and attach the form in the family group section of ChildPlus, will post in the corresponding classroom next to the curriculum lesson plan, and add any relevant information to monthly newsletter.

**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 (*see Education Home Visit Approach Policy and Procedure*).

**Weekly Lesson Plans**

1. 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**

1. Family Conferences are completed twice a year for part year programs, and three times a year for full year programs. Family conferences will be an opportunity to enhance the knowledge and understanding of both staff and families of the child's education and development progress and activities in the program. Staff will provide the family with a progress report using the family conference form and the appropriate report(s) from ChildPlus that demonstrates the child's progress.

**Early Head Start Home-based**

1. Families enrolled in Early Head Start home-based option will receive a weekly visit (*see Education Home Visit approach*). Collaboration between the family and the home visitor will promote family engagement and

school readiness goals. The home visitor and the family will discuss learning experiences that can be completed in the home between each visit and work together to develop individualized plans for the following visit.

**Title: Incident Reporting Policy and Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 6/16/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

**Policy:**

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 implement program practices responsive to the identified health, safety, behavioral, and mental health concerns of children.

**Procedure:**

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

**For all reportable events including child injuries, accidents, medical emergencies and/or active supervision incidents:**

- a. Complete *Child Incident/Injury Report* for the child involved.
  - a. 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, active supervision issue, serious injury or accident involving their child.
  - c. Staff will indicate on the report that a copy was sent home and how.
  - d. The signature of the parent or legal guardian must be obtained on the incident report within 48 hours of the event.
    - i. If on NCR paper: the white copy of the Child Incident/Injury Report will be given to the Health and Nutrition Manager, the pink and yellow copies will be sent home for parent signature. The returned, signed copy will be given to the Health and Nutrition Manager by email or 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 2 copies of the Child Incident/Injury Report to be sent home. Staff will email or fax a copy to the Health and Nutrition Manager once a week or the same day in case of emergencies or significant injuries.
  - e. A copy will be uploaded in the child file.
- b. If additional documentation is needed, please document in the child file.
- c. The Health and Nutrition Manager will review and track all incidents involving injuries.
- d. Site Supervisors will review all incident reports for safety and supervision concerns and share monthly at the monthly site staff meeting.

**For staff injuries:**

1. Complete the *Employees First Report of Injury Form* and fax to Human Resources (within 24 hours of the injury).
2. Human Resources will inform the Early Childhood Director or Site Supervisor as appropriate.

**For community volunteer/client injuries:**

1. Complete the *Community Volunteer Client Accident Form*.
2. Fax the report immediately to the Health and Nutrition Manager.
3. The Health and Nutrition Manager 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 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, the name of the child engaged in the behavior, and the staff completing the form.
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 child victims or *Employee First Report of Injury* for staff 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 Procedure*, and *Positive Behavior Guidance Policy and Procedure*.
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 Children's Licensing and Investigation and Child Protective Intake Services (1-800-452-1999) in accordance with the Child Care Facility Licensing Rule.

Any guidance provided by Children's Licensing and Investigation 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 Approved: 6/16/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

**Policy:**

The primary responsibility of WCAP Early Childhood Program 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 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)

**Procedure:**

**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 and Procedure* 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.

**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 and Procedure* for further guidance.
2. Communication with families around challenging behaviors is expected to be ongoing and documented appropriately in ChildPlus.
3. Staff can request for consultation and support from the Mental Health Consultant in the ChildPlus database. The Child Services Manager will then review and coordinate services as appropriate.
4. 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.
  - a. Staff will meet for a Case Conference, and if necessary, a Family Team Meeting with their site supervisor or corresponding manager 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.

- b. 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.
- c. A copy of the *Individualized Behavior Support Plan* will be uploaded into the ChildPlus database by the Child Services Manager
- d. *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 isolation or confinement of a student alone in a room or clearly defined area from which the student does not feel free to go or is physically denied exit. Seclusion is not timeout.
- b. Because children may never be left alone, (See: *Active Supervision and Accountability of Children Policy and Procedure*), 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 a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of a student to move the arms, legs, or head freely. Physical restraint does not include a physical escort, mechanical restraint, physical prompt or chemical restraint.
- b. Restraints will only be done by trained staff, and when:
  - i. the student's behavior poses an imminent danger of serious physical injury to the student or another person in the case of an emergency
  - ii. using the least restrictive interventions would be ineffective in stopping imminent danger of serious injury to the student or another person
- c. Any restraints performed should be indicated on an incident report and shared immediately with the site supervisor.
- d. 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 Policy and Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 6/16/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

**Policy:**

WCAP staff members will complete necessary screenings to identify strengths and/or concerns regarding a child's developmental, sensory, motor, language, social, cognitive, perceptual, and emotional skills based on program timelines. Parents and families will be informed of the types and purposes of the screening prior to, as well as the results of the screening. Staff will submit any necessary referrals when the screening results indicate that further evaluation is necessary.

**Procedure:**

1. Staff members will follow the timeline for completion to meet mandates and the periodicity of the tool used.
2. Staff will be trained in using the tool prior screening children.
3. Screenings may be completed in the spring, or summer before program services begin in the fall.

### Developmental & Behavioral Screenings

The following screening tools may be used by Early Childhood Program staff and/or collaborative partners but are not the only approved screening tools. Other tools and/or equipment may be used to meet the mandate and determine a need for further evaluation.

Screening Tool	Age of Child and/or Program	Timeframe for Completion	Screening Completed by Who
ASQ-3	Birth to 5 years old	Within 45 calendar days of entering the program	Education staff
M-CHAT (Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers Part 1 to assess risk for autism spectrum disorders)	Toddlers age 16 months up to 30 months old	Upon entering the program age applicable	EHS education staff
Speed DIAL-4 (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning)	2:11– 5 years old	Within 45 calendar days of entering the program	Education staff
DECA (Devereux Early Childhood Assessment)	Birth – 5 years old	Within 45 calendar days of entering the program; a 2 <sup>nd</sup> DECA is completed spring	Education staff

### 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 & Nutrition Manager or designated staff
Vision: Spot Screener, Developmental Milestones	Birth – 5 years old	Health & Nutrition Manager or designated staff
Lead & Anemia Screen or Laboratory Results	Birth – 5 years old	Health & Nutrition Manager or designated staff
Height & Weight: Scales, Stadiometer	Birth – 5 years old	Health & Nutrition



(within 90 days)		Manager, , or designated staff
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### Results and Follow-up

1. Following the screening, results are shared with the parents and family of the child as soon as possible. The screening results will be documented in ChildPlus, and a written summary of the screening results will be sent home to the family.
2. Families will be encouraged to contact the screener or their child's teacher to discuss any concerns they may have with the screening results.
3. 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.
  - a. Staff will follow the *Child Referral Policy and Procedure* when a screening indicates further follow-up or evaluation is needed.
  - b. If the family declines a referral for further evaluation related to special services, staff will contact the Child Services Manager. Staff will continue to monitor the child's progress and to work with the family on how best to support the child.
4. Screening results will not be used to provide rewards or sanctions for individual children or staff.
5. Screenings will not be used to exclude children from enrollment or participation.

### Individualization

1. 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 and Procedure*.

### Title: Special Events Policy and Procedure

**Policy Council Approved: 6/16/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

**Policy:** 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.

### **Procedure:**

#### **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. Invited Special Guests should be approved by the classroom's site supervisor prior to planning and arrival via the *ChildPlus Activity Planning module*.

#### **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.

1. 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 *ChildPlus Activity Planning module*. The Site Supervisor will evaluate the request, and if appropriate, approve the field trip.
  - a. 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.
2. All parents will be notified at minimum one week prior to the planned trip.
3. 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. 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.
  - a. If a child is not able to attend, staff should consider whether the trip should continue. Children who remain at the site must be offered an alternative activity that follows curriculum and classroom expectations.
4. Classroom staff will obtain additional adults as necessary to maintain safe ratios. Walking field trips will require at least a 1:3 adult/child ratio, and if transportation is being provided, ratios should be at least 1:5 adult/child.
5. Field trip destinations will not be more than one half hour from the center.
6. Financial support for approved field trips is the responsibility of the program and governed by available budget and must be approved by the Early Childhood Director.
7. In the event a scheduled field trip/special event is cancelled due to transportation, weather, illness, etc., approved trips may be rescheduled.
8. When parents attend field trips as a volunteer:
  - a. Family members who actively participate in a field trip may be counted in the adult/child ratio.
  - b. When family members participate on field trips, the classroom volunteer daily sign in and out sheet will be signed before departing the building as accountability of all those in attendance.
    - i. When a family member is participating to support their child only, they would not be considered a volunteer.
  - c. Approved 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 Family Services Manager.
9. Countable In-Kind time for a field trip:
  - a. A person/parent volunteer with a completed and approved volunteer packet on file is assisting.
  - b. 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.
  - c. All parents may attend field trips as long as teachers have recorded their attendance, but no more than four will be counted as In-Kind volunteers for the event.
  - d. 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.

**Holidays guidance:**

1. Classrooms and teachers will follow familiar and predictable classroom routines and focus on natural occurrences and changes in their environment rather than holiday events.
2. Holiday parties and gift or card giving will not be part of classroom activities. It should be reserved for families to experience outside of the classroom setting.
3. Teachers will be sensitive to and teach the children that there are groups of people who do not observe holidays and should point out how each family may celebrate in their own way.
4. Wearing costumes should not be encouraged by staff. Children who arrive to school in costume should not be forced to remove it.

**End of the Year Event guidance:**

1. An end of year event plan will be developed by teachers and family advocates using the *ChildPlus Activity Planning module* at least one month prior to the end of school.
1. *The ChildPlus Activity Planning module* will be reviewed with appropriate parties for approval.
2. 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 in the *ChildPlus Activity Planning module*.
3. Presentation of child portfolios to children and their families is expected.
4. The End of Year Event may also include volunteer recognition with the presentation of certificates for volunteer service when possible.
5. 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**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**Caring for Our Children Basics 3.6.3**

**Child Care Facility Licensing Rule: 12.H**

**Policy:** 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, and completion of an Individual Health Plan. The Program will not administer any non-prescription medications to a child, without a written order from a physician.

#### **Procedure:**

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 Manager.
- 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 Manager.
- 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**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**Performance Standards:** 1302.42(b)(4); 1302.44(a)(1)

**Performance Standards:** 1302.42(b)(4); 1302.44(a)(1)

**Policy:** All children enrolled in WCAP Early Childhood programs will have a nutritional assessment completed to identify family eating patterns, cultural preferences, and 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 will be accommodated, as necessary and approved, to 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

**Procedure:**

1. During application, staff will complete a Nutrition Assessment and refer families to the Nutrition Manager if any dietary concerns are identified.
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 95<sup>th</sup> percentile or at or below the 5<sup>th</sup> 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 Manager 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 Manager 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 Manager for review. The Nutrition Consultant and/or Mental Health & Prevention Manager 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.
8. Community nutritional issues will be included on the agenda and discussed at the Health Advisory Committee meeting.

**Title: Breastfeeding Promotion and Support Policy**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**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

**Policy:**

WCAP ECP will promote breastfeeding, including providing facilities to properly store and handle breast milk and make accommodations, as necessary, for mothers who wish to breastfeed during program hours.

**Procedure:**

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.

**Title: Building Safety Policy**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**Child Care Facility Licensing Rule: 14.A**

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 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 Early Childhood Program Centers:

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, exterior doors should remain locked and classroom with locks should remain locked.
2. Parents and volunteers visiting a WCAP Center to volunteer must sign-in and out 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 an Early Childhood Program is operating.

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.
  - i. With the exceptions of the Site Supervisors and Facilities Coordinator, keys will be issued for one entrance only unless other arrangements are made with the Director or the Main Office.
  - ii. In some cases, and with express permission from the Early Childhood Director or President and CEO, temporary keys may be issued.
2. Keys for WCAP owned buildings will be signed in and out by the Operations Specialist or designee. Keys and badges for collaborative classrooms will be signed out with the school districts.
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 Operations Specialist or designee.
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 Operations Specialist or designee will be responsible for collecting and accounting for all keys. Keys

will be turned in to be locked up by the Operations Manager or designee. 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

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**Performance Standard: 1302.47**

**Child Care Facility Licensing Rule: 14.13**

#### Policy:

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

All facilities and classroom spaces will be kept visibly tidy and orderly. **All facilities must follow a routine schedule of cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting.**

**Cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting products should not be used in close proximity to children, and adequate ventilation should be maintained during use.**

Cleaning supplies shall be labeled and kept locked and inaccessible to children at all times. Only EPA and Health & Nutrition Manager approved products will be used in WCAP classrooms. All SDS sheets for approved cleaning products will be kept on site.

#### Procedures:

##### Classroom Procedures:

- Spaces, furniture, and materials will be cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected following the Caring For Our Children National Health and Safety Performance Appendix K.
  - See Attachment below: Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards Appendix
- In addition:
  - Toothbrush holders are to be cleaned as needed, and sanitized monthly (See *Oral Health Policy*).
  - Trash will be deposited in the outside dumpster at the end of each day.
  - Water tables shall be empty and wiped clean with bleach or sanitizing solution after each use.
  - Approved EPA disinfectant must be used immediately if spills of body fluids have occurred.

Unless WCAP policy is more precautions or structured, CDC or State issued guidance will be adhered to regardless of WCAP policy.

##### Kitchen Procedures:

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



**Routine Schedule for Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting**

Areas	Before Each Use	After Each Use	Daily (At the End of the Day)	Weekly	Monthly	Comments
<b>Food Areas</b>						
• Food preparation surfaces	Clean, Sanitize	Clean, Sanitize				Use a sanitizer safe for food contact
• Eating utensils & dishes		Clean, Sanitize				If washing the dishes and utensils by hand, use a sanitizer safe for food contact as the final step in the process; Use of an automated dishwasher will sanitize
• Tables & highchair trays	Clean, Sanitize	Clean, Sanitize				
• Countertops		Clean	Clean, Sanitize			Use a sanitizer safe for food contact
• Food preparation appliances		Clean	Clean, Sanitize			
• Mixed use tables	Clean, Sanitize					Before serving food
• Refrigerator					Clean	
<b>Child Care Areas</b>						
• Plastic mouthed toys		Clean	Clean, Sanitize			
• Pacifiers		Clean	Clean, Sanitize			Reserve for use by only one child; Use dishwasher or boil for one minute
• Hats			Clean			Clean after each use if head lice present
• Door & cabinet handles			Clean, Disinfect			

• Floors			Clean			Sweep or vacuum, then damp mop, (consider micro fiber damp mop to pick up most particles)
• Machine washable cloth toys				Clean		Laundry
• Dress-up clothes				Clean		Laundry
• Play activity centers				Clean		
• Drinking Fountains			Clean, Disinfect			
• Computer keyboards		Clean, Sanitize				Use sanitizing wipes, do not use spray
• Phone receivers			Clean			
<b>Toilet &amp; Diapering Areas</b>						
• Changing tables		Clean, Disinfect				Clean with detergent, rinse, disinfect
• Potty chairs		Clean, Disinfect				
• Handwashing sinks & faucets			Clean, Disinfect			
• Countertops			Clean, Disinfect			
• Toilets			Clean, Disinfect			
• Diaper pails			Clean, Disinfect			
• Floors			Clean, Disinfect			Damp mop with a floor cleaner/ disinfectant
<b>Sleeping Areas</b>						
• Bed sheets & pillow cases				Clean		Clean before use by another child
• Cribs, cots, & mats				Clean		Clean before use by another child
• Blankets					Clean	

**Title: Diapering and Toileting Policy****Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022****Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022****Child Care Facility Licensing Rule: 14.N**

Policy:

Diapering:

- Children must be checked at a minimum of every two (2) hours for wet or soiled diapers and clothing, and must be changed as soon as possible.

- 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, or individually bagged and tied within a lidded shared garbage container.
- Diapering must be done on a changing table or washable vinyl mat which is cleaned after each use or which has a disposable single-use covering.
- The changing table or mat must not be located in the kitchen or food preparation area.
- Staff members must wash their hands and the child's hands with soap and running water after each diaper change.
- All containers of soiled 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 collaborate with families to determine the best toileting practice based on the needs of each child
- Potty-chair seats must be immediately, 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 *Administration of Medication to Children in the Classroom Policy*.

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

Children must be able to be supervised while using bathroom facilities.

WCAP staff will ensure they offer opportunities for modesty and privacy while maintaining supervision.

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.

#### **Diaper Changing Procedure:**

Reference: CFOC Basics

1. Before bringing the child to the diaper changing area, perform hand hygiene and bring supplies to the diaper changing area.
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.**
3. Clean the child's diaper area.
4. Remove the soiled diaper and clothing without contaminating any surface not already in contact with stool or urine.
5. Put on a clean diaper and dress the child.
6. Wash the child's hands and return the child to a supervised area.

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

**Title: Drop-off and Pick-up Policy and Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**Policy:**

Staff have a responsibility to ensure that all children are safely arriving to and leaving from classrooms. Staff and families must work together to ensure pick-up, and drop-off goes smoothly and as scheduled. 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/ legal guardian.

**Procedure:**

1. Staff will follow the *Active Supervision and Accountability of Children Procedure* for further guidance on accountability and supervision during these transitions.
2. Families are requested to bring children to the centers or classrooms no more than 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 the family has an appointment with a staff member.
3. 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/ legal guardian. Staff must maintain accurate Emergency Contact Information completed by the parent/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*.
4. 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.
  - a. In the event that the family 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 10 minutes, the family must arrange for someone else to pick up the child as soon as possible.
  - b. If no one comes to pick up a child after 15 minutes after the classroom closes, and no contact with the family has been made despite attempts, staff will use the emergency phone list to make arrangements for the child to be picked up. The child will be kept at the center and supervised by any available staff until the child is picked up.
  - c. After 30 minutes of no contact from the family, staff should call the site supervisor (or in their absence the Early Childhood Director or any Content Area Manager) to inform them and follow any guidance provided.
  - d. If the child is not picked up by 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 Manager) to inform them. After this the police may be contacted to come and take custody of the child.

- e. At application, families sign the emergency care permission form. The emergency care permission form outlines our pick-up policy and requirements. Once the child is accepted, a copy of this form is printed and attached to the child's emergency contact information to be on site with the child in the classroom.
5. In Early Head Start only: a copy of child's Daily Sheet will be given to their family at the end of each day. A Daily Sheet will be completed for each child between the ages of 6 weeks to 24 months, or any newly enrolled child for the first 6 weeks of their attendance.
  - a. Staff will maintain copies of children's Daily Sheets on site for the duration of the program year.
6. There may be cases in which legal guardians will be requested to pick up their child before the end of the program day. Staff will follow the *Health Exclusion and Admittance Policy*.

### **Chronic Late pick-ups**

Late pick-ups are considered "chronic" when a child has been picked up more than 10 minutes late over 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. A Case Conference will be conducted by the Family Advocate and Teacher(s) in order to discuss and plan best practices to address late pick-ups with the family. A Family Team Meeting may be scheduled to create a plan with the family for on-time pick-ups if deemed necessary.

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

Content Area Coordinator/Managers and or designees 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.

1. After 2 early drop-offs or late pick-ups staff will notify the site supervisor.
2. The site 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.

1. Public transportation agencies will communicate any instances of an inappropriate release of a child enrolled in WCAP Early Childhood Program to the Early Childhood Director immediately.

### **Title: Emergency Evacuation Policy**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

## **Child Care Facility Licensing Rule 14.Q.2**

**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.

**Policy:** The Child Care Facility must conduct an evacuation drill at least twice a year and the dates must be recorded and be available for review. A simulated drill is acceptable.

1. Medical emergencies will be dealt with according to First Aid or Individual Health Plan guidance.
2. Emergency Procedures and Health Plans will be posted in classrooms.
3. Child-to-provider ratios must be maintained. Additional support may be requested
4. 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. The emergency phone list will be attached to the evacuation plan and will be updated as necessary. A copy of the emergency phone list from the YIKES plan and children's emergency contact information shall be kept in the first aid backpack for offsite access.
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.
6. All Centers will conduct and maintain documentation of Fire System checks. Fire drills will be conducted at WCAP Early Childhood Program sites on a monthly basis as required by Maine Child Care Licensing.

### **Procedure:**

The following exits and procedures are to be used when the Center is evacuated:

1. Exit the building following the fire drill protocol posted in each classroom.
  - a. The protocol should list an alternate exit. YIKES plans are available in every classroom for additional information.
  - b. In cases where protocol cannot be followed, find the safest means of exit.
2. Teachers will conduct a head count.
3. 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.
4. Children will remain in the location until they can be safely discharged.
5. 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 or designee.
6. The Director or designee will contact the President & CEO and if necessary, assist the Center Staff in contacting parents.
7. 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.

**Title: Facility Safety Policy and Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**Policy:**

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

All facilities in which a WCAP Early Childhood Program operates will meet the appropriate standards for the location and enrollment within the classroom as below:

- Head Start Standards
- Maine Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities

At minimum this will include:

- Following all state licensing requirements;
- Clean and free from pests;
- Free from pollutants, hazards, and toxins that are accessible to children and could endanger children's safety;
- Spaces which are designed to prevent child injury and are free from hazards, including choking, strangulation, electrical, and drowning hazards, hazards posed by appliances and all other safety hazards;
- Emergency lighting;
- Dimmed, but adequate, lighting to allow visual supervision of all children must be maintained at all times.
- Equipped with safety supplies that are readily accessible to staff, including, at a minimum: fully-equipped and up-to-date first aid kits and appropriate fire safety supplies;
- Weapons are prohibited on the premises
- Designed to separate toileting and diapering areas from areas for preparing food, cooking, eating, or children's activities; and,
- Kept safe through an ongoing system of preventative maintenance.
- Staff purses, bags, medications and other belongings must be inaccessible to children

It is the responsibility of the classroom teachers to ensure the safety of their physical environment (indoor and outdoor) every day prior to opening with children.

**Procedure:**

Staff will ensure the safety of their physical environment (indoor and outdoor spaces) each day prior to using the spaces with children. Issues that require immediate attention will be resolved by the staff or referred to the Site

Supervisor immediately or as soon as practicable. Any issues that make the environment unsafe for use with children will not be used until the issue is resolved.

To ensure the ongoing safety of all buildings and facilities, in addition to the daily checks prior to daily operations, all centers and classrooms will be monitored following the table listed below:

<b>Document</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>How often</b>	<b>Submitted to the main office or entered into ChildPlus when...</b>
Fire Drill -Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist	Classroom/Center Staff or Facilities Coordinator	Monthly	Annually
YIKES Plan & Emergency Plan	Classroom/Center Staff	Annually, prior to child attendance	Upon completion, and/or when updated
Center Based Safe Environments Checklist	Health & Nutrition Manager or Designated Staff	Quarterly while in session	Quarterly
Monthly Inspection Checklist	Classroom/Center Staff	Monthly	Monthly
Start-Up Checklist	Classroom Staff	Once, before children begin school	Before children begin school
End of year center shut down checklist	Classroom Staff	Once, at the end of the school year	Before staff leave for the summer

**Title: Fire Safety Policy and Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**Policy:**

All exits must be unobstructed and easily operable.

Posted fire evacuation floor plans will be located in each classroom/office near the door.

Fire drills must be practiced and documented monthly.

Smoke detectors and emergency lighting must be placed throughout the facility following local regulations and code.



Carbon Monoxide detectors will be used in areas where children sleep, and be tested monthly.

Approved, working fire extinguishers are readily available.

**Procedures:**

**Fire Drill Procedure:**

1. Fire drills must be practiced and documented monthly.
  - a. The Facility Coordinator, or other designee, will conduct the drills in the WCAP owned centers.
  - b. In collaborative classrooms, a public-school designee may coordinate the fire drill however it is the Lead Teachers responsibility to ensure the fire drill is completed.
2. During fire drills, all Staff and children will be evacuated from the building within a 3 minute time frame.
3. 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.
4. Alternative exit routes should be practiced after routine is established, and children are familiar with the process.
5. Smoke detectors, emergency lighting, and carbon monoxide testing will occur monthly, typically concurrently with fire drills. Records of testing of smoke detectors and emergency lighting are kept on the *Fire Drill -Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist*.
6. Documentation of fire drills must be recorded on the *Fire Drill - Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist* and be visibly posted.

**Annual Procedures:**

1. All sites are inspected by the local fire marshal annually or bi-annually.
2. Fire extinguishers will be inspected annually.
  - a. Any fire extinguishers past their annual service date should be reported immediately to the Facilities Coordinator or Site Supervisor.

At the end of the program year, *Fire Drill - Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklists* are copied and turned in to the Main Office. A copy of the previous 3 year's logs should remain onsite posted behind the current *Fire Drill Log*.

**Title: Food as Punishment or Reward Policy**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**Performance Standards:** 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

**Policy:** Food will not be used as punishment or reward.

**Procedure:**

1. All components of the meal should be offered at the same time, allowing children to select and enjoy any or 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**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**Performance Standards:** 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

**Policy:** To reduce the risk of choking, menus will reflect the developmental abilities of the age of children served. **WCAP ECP** will not serve children under 4 years of age any round, firm food unless it is chopped completely.

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 \*

\*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.

**Procedure:**

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.

**Title: Food for Meetings, Training and Socialization Events Policy**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**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

**Policy:** 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**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

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

**Policy:**

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.

The Health & Nutrition Manager 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.

CFOC 4.9.0.1-13

**Procedure:**

**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 40° 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 40° 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°-40° 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.

### **Title: Food Service Employee Illness Policy**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**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

#### **Policy:**

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**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.47(a); 1302.47(b)(6)(i); CFOC 3.2.2.1

**Policy:**

Hands should be washed under the following conditions:

- 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.

All staff, volunteers, and children should abide by the following procedures for hand washing as defined by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):.

**Procedure:**

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.

**Title: Handling and Storage of Breast Milk and Formula Policy**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

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

**Policy:** WCAP ECP will follow recommended guidelines for the proper storage and handling of breast milk and infant formula 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

**Procedure:**

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 40 degrees 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 4 days, if refrigerated, or after six to 12 (6-12) 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.
9. 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**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**  
**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

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

**Policy:**

**In compliance with the FDA & Maine Food Code, 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**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**  
**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**Policy:** 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.

**Head Check Procedure:**

1. Check the child.
2. 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.
3. Notify parent/guardian and the Health Manager if live lice are present.
4. If the child attends another program or childcare after WCAP Early Childhood Programming, contact that program and make them aware of the situation.



5. Contact the Health Manager 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.
6. The child may return after treatment has begun.

In instances when infestation is extreme, the Health Manager 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**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

#### **References:**

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

#### **Policy:**

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.

Exclusion of a child for appropriate medical reasons will be discussed first with the Health Manager, Site Supervisor, or designee following the procedures outlined below.

The Health Manager, Site Supervisor, or designee will review the following 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.

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.

**Procedure:**

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 Manager 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 Manager, and or School Nurse approval.

**Return to Classroom:**

- All staff and children should be free from excludable 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 Manager 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**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**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

**Policy:**

5. Infants are held while being fed and are not laid down to sleep with a bottle or propped up.
6. 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.
7. 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.
7. In Early Head Start only: a copy of child’s Daily Sheet will be given to their family at the end of each day. A Daily Sheet will be completed for each child between the ages of 6 weeks to 24 months, or any newly enrolled child for the first 6 weeks of their attendance.
  - a. Staff will maintain copies of children’s Daily Sheets on site for the duration of the program year.

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

**Title: Mealtime Management Policy & Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.31(e)(2)

**Policy:** WCAP staff will promote pleasant, “family style” meal services that are engaging for children following the guidance and procedures below.

**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

**Procedure:**

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 mealtimes, 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, 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 Support Policy & Procedure

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**Performance Standard: 1302.40, 1302.41**

**Policy:** 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 in some cases, 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.

The intention is 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.

**Procedure:**

- Health Manager identifies need in partnership with other Early Childhood staff after exhausting all other options to obtain the medicals and dental and support. Insurance and other free clinic options must be explored prior to identification of need.
- Health Manager will make a recommendation for WCAP payment of services based on availability of financial resources.
- Services eligible for recommendation must:
  - o Be medically necessary care (excludes cosmetic treatments),
  - o Be for children enrolled as a Head Start or Early Head Start client.
  - o Special medical/dental circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
  - o The maximum funding level of financial assistance will be made available from the WCAP ECP at the current MaineCare rates.
- The Health Manager, through the use of an authorized purchase order (P.O.) which includes the date of a confirmed appointment with the health care provider. The Early Childhood Director must sign off on all medical and dental support purchase orders. The P.O. that is issued for a confirmed appointment will become void 30 days from the date. Proof of completion of services must be provided to the Health Coordinator for records.
- The purchase order must include documentation indicating WCAP is the Payer of Last Resort following the example label below.

If with all of this assistance and support, a family does not meet the program standards, it will be the responsibility of the Health Manager 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.

Note: 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.

**Documentation of Payer of Last Resort**

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Medicaid \_\_\_\_\_ Private Insurance

\_\_\_\_\_ Clinic \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's ability to pay

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Signed

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Date

**Title: Nutrition Services Policy**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**Performance Standards:** 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)  
CFOC 4.2.0.1, 4.2.0.3-7, 4.2.0.9, 4.7.0.1-2

**Policy:**

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, as appropriate and necessary.

**WCAP ECP will:**

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, increased health and well-being, as well as demonstrate the 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.
8. 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.
9. Ensure 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.
10. Ensure 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.
11. Provide a variety of healthy foods, high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar and salt will be served.
12. Not serve juice as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children will receive whole fruit which is more nutritious than fruit juice and provides dietary fiber.
13. Provide potable water throughout the day and during meal times, which is actively offered to children.
14. Appropriately schedule and adjust meal and snack periods, where necessary, to ensure that individual needs are met. Adjustments must be discussed and approved by the Nutrition Manager.
15. Post and provide menus to all parents.
16. Promote effective dental hygiene among children in conjunction with meals.

17. Provide appropriate snacks and/or meals that meet CACFP guidelines to each child during group socialization activities.
18. Ensure nutrition services are supported by a registered dietitian.

**Title: Oral Health Policy**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**Policy:**

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.

**Procedure:**

**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**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

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

**Policy:** To ensure the safety and health of all children, staff and volunteers there will be no food brought into a center for child consumption unless it is provided by WCAP ECP.

**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 Early Childhood 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

**Procedure:**

During the enrollment process, staff will explain to parents that WCAP ECP does not allow families to bring in food to the classroom. Only foods that the ECP sites purchase or that are provided by a licensed food vendor are allowed in classrooms or at any ECP 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 ECP 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 the program 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 Manager 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 or the public school partner cannot accommodate individual needs under CACFP guidelines.

Staff requests for dietary accommodations will be evaluated on a case by case basis and approved by the Early Childhood Director and Human Resources. Appropriate documentation will be required.

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 acceptable 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**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**References:** 1302.47, Child Care Facility Licensing Rules Chapter 14

**Policy:** It is the intention of Waldo Community Action Partners Early Childhood 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 daily 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.

**Procedure:**

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. 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 will be inspected daily by staff for hazards. Inspection of inside and outside play areas and equipment will be documented monthly by staff using the *Monthly Safety Monitoring* documentation located in ChildPlus.
  - Any playground deficiencies will be brought to the Site Supervisor 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. Infants younger than six months must stay out of direct sunlight, and Child Care Staff Members may not apply sunscreen to an infant younger than six months unless the Child's parent provides a physician's recommendation. Written documentation from the physician must be stored in the Child's file.
9. 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.
10. All equipment will be professionally installed using safety specifications recommended by the U. S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, Handbook for Public Playground Safety.
11. All classrooms located in public schools will complete a Playground Supervision Plan detailing safe use of available playground equipment and play areas.
12. Center family groups, teaching staff, content area managers/coordinators, and families will be invited to give input during the process of purchasing or replacing outdoor equipment.
13. Children in attendance for more than four hours and over the age of 12 months shall have a minimum of 60 minutes of active play outdoors daily. Infants must go outside at least once daily. 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
  - Temperatures above 94 degrees Fahrenheit factoring in the relative humidity
  - Heavy rain
  - Unsafe environmental hazards
  - Child Care Weather Watch chart is to be used for temperature guidance.
14. 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 using a visual barrier. 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 14.H.11

**Title: Safe Sleep Policy & Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

## **Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**Performance Standards:** 1302.47(b)(5)(ii), Child Care Facility Licensing Rules Chapter 14.L

Current CFOC and AAP, and Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities guidance will be followed.

**Policy:** To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), and the spread of contagious disease all staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, and others who care for infants in WCAP Early Childhood Program will follow safe sleep practices as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Cribs must follow 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".
- Dimmed, but adequate, lighting to allow visual supervision of all children must be maintained at all times.

### **Procedure:**

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.

16. 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 & Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 4/7/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 4/28/2022**

**Performance Standards:** 1302.31(e)(2); 1302.44(a)(2)(i); 1302.44(a)(2)(ii); 1302.44(a)(2)(iv); 1302.44(a)(2)(vi); Child Care Facility Licensing Rule 16.A.8

**Policy:** Children must be allowed time to eat their food, not be rushed during the meal or snack time, and must be seated. In general, ½ hour is allowed for meals but may be adjusted if necessary.

**Rationale:** Relaxing mealtimes 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

**Procedure:** 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.
5. Children must be awake prior to being offered a meal/snack. Staff must ensure that there is sufficient lighting in order to be able to observe children while they are eating.
6. 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.
7. 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: 5/12/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 6/23/2022**

#### **Policy:**

WCAP Early Childhood Program will reduce barriers to parent participation by providing childcare when feasible. Childcare will be made available to families when no other reasonable accommodations can be made for children in order for the family to participate in a family engagement activity outside of a classroom or family event.

#### **There are two options for childcare:**

1. **On-site childcare**, 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 childcare**, where families find their own provider to take care of their child/children in their home. Home childcare is used by families when there is no on-site childcare available or 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 Childcare:**

- 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 childcare providers for on-site childcare for each event following the childcare staff-child ratios prescribed by the office of Maine Child Care Licensing (*10-148 CMR Chapter 32, section 7.A-D*)
  1. Families must RSVP at a minimum of 2 business days (*48 hours*) prior to the event to utilize the childcare services in order to ensure appropriate staffing
- WCAP Early Childhood Program recognizes the importance of consistency in childcare givers so children and their families can develop trusting relationships
  1. As often as possible, a consistent on-site primary childcare provider will be assigned to each regularly scheduled event
  2. Each primary caregiver will work collaboratively with Family Services Manager prior to and immediately after each event in the planning of and evaluation of each event in the area of childcare services
  3. An emergency back-up plan for staffing will be in place for additional coverage if needed
  4. Staff will arrive 15 minutes before the activity it scheduled to begin and stay after to clean and secure the space used

- For children who do not attend our program, an emergency card will be completed
- Families will sign children in and out of childcare
- Staff will complete an attendance log
- 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 childcare providers will be reimbursed at their regular hourly rate

#### **Home Child Care:**

- Reimbursement for Home childcare 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 childcare 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 childcare within a 24-hour period of time
- The home childcare 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 Manager 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 and Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 5/12/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 6/23/2022**

#### **Policy:**

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 as determined by the community assessment. 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.

#### **Procedure:**

**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 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 Manager's 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 & Nutrition Manager 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: 5/12/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 6/23/2022**

**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.

**Policy:** WCAP Early Childhood Program provides 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.

**Procedures:**

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 and collaboration opportunities:
  - Both Education and Family Service staff offer home visits or collaboration opportunities as a means of supporting connections between the families, including fathers and/or father figures, child and staff. Home visits 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 collaboration opportunities 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. These opportunities connect to family goal setting, health outcomes, child outcomes, and activities to promote school readiness.
  - Home Visits or collaboration opportunities 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.
  - During these connections, staff encourage families to discuss changes they have noticed in their child’s development. Family observations are connected to the program’s curriculum, best practices in education and child development which supports growth in their parenting role.
    - See *Home Visit Approach Policy* for more information.
3. Family Group Meetings:
  - Family groups are formed in relationship to each center. At times, center groups that are geographically close together may be combined.
  - Families are also welcomed 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 Manager 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 Manager 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 Manager 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.
  - Childcare 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 Manager. The Family Service Manager, 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, program self-assessment, and joining Policy Council, 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 shared with all enrolled families
    - Newsletters are reviewed and approved by Leadership Staff 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 and Procedure

**Policy Council Approved: 5/12/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 6/23/2022**

### **Policy:**

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.

### **Procedure:**

**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 Manager when additional information or resources are needed. In the Home Based/Home Visiting model, a Home Visitor is cross trained to deliver services in both education and

family services and also have access to support from the Family Services Manager when additional family engagement information or resources are needed.

**Individual Family Partnership Agreement Process:**

- Using *WCAP Early Childhood Program's Individual Family Partnership Agreement (IFPA)*, 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 Individual 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 once the original IFPA has been created 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 Manager will review random IFPA's 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: 5/12/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 6/23/2022**

#### **Policy:**

- 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 President & CEO or WCAP CFO.

#### **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 and may cause a hardship on the family. This means that families should not be asked to fundraise dollars or purchase items 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 and Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 5/12/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 6/23/2022**

**Policy:**

It is the intent of WCAP Early Childhood Program to provide information about support services to enhance the quality of family's lives to foster engagement in their child's growth and development. WCAP staff are committed to partner with every family; identifying their strengths and needs, accessing community resources, services and/or referrals which supports the individual family's interests and goals. WCAP Early Childhood Program strives to ensure that every family has avenues of support to rely on in a crisis/emergency situation. 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.

**Key Responsibility:**

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

**Procedure:**

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.

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 work 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.

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

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

**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 shared by the home visitor and reviewed by the Health & Nutrition Manager.



## **Subpart F- Additional Services for Children with Disabilities**

### **Title: Ensuring Services for Children Diagnosed with Disabilities Policy and Procedure**

**Policy Council Approval: 4/7/2022**

**Board Approval: 4/28/2022**

**Policy:** 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 the applicable school administrative unit (SAU) and/or local educational agency (LEA) who are responsible for implementing services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Maine Unified Special Education Regulation (MUSER). WCAP will maintain annually updated Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with each of the collaborating partners. WCAP will obtain signed releases from parents to communicate with SAUs and LEAs throughout the referral process.

**Determining Eligibility:**

WCAP will participate in Child Find activities for children who are enrolled or who intend to enroll in the program by following the *Screening Procedure* and *Child Referral Procedure*.

WCAP will support families to become advocates for services that meet their children's needs, understand their child's disability, and how to best support the child's development. This includes supporting families to understand the eligibility process and informing parents of their rights.

WCAP will participate in eligibility meetings as an education provider and provide relevant information from screenings, assessments, and observations. It is the responsibility of SAUs and LEAs to determine eligibility utilizing IDEA and MUSER.

**Providing Services:**

SAUs and LEAs are responsible for providing services deemed necessary based on evaluations and/or as outline in Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs). WCAP will ensure that children's needs are accurately identified in and addressed through the IEPs and IFSPs. WCAP will work with the SAU and/or LEA to support children working towards their determined goals and will ensure that services are being planned and delivered as required.

WCAP will provide individualized services and supports, to the maximum extent possible, to meet children's needs including supports that may be available through a child's health insurance or through Section 504 if applicable (see *Section 504 Policy and Procedure*), or additional family support programs they may be eligible for. WCAP will also consider modifications to the environment, multiple and varied formats of instruction, and individualized accommodations and supports as necessary to support the full participation of children with disabilities. WCAP will individualize these services based on available information such as parent input, and child observation and assessment data. The *Payer of Last Resort Policy* will be followed if financial resources from WCAP Early Childhood Program are requested to be committed toward a child.

WCAP will plan and implement transition services as children transition from one program or agency to another, or into kindergarten.

**Maintaining records:**

WCAP will retain a copy of evaluations, IEPs, IFSPs, and any other relevant special service records received for at least the time that the child is enrolled in the program.

**Title: Section 504 Policy and Procedure**

**Policy Council Approval: 4/7/2022**

**Board Approval: 4/28/2022**

**Policy:**

WCAP will develop Section 504 plans for eligible children with disabilities. This includes children who have a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life function, a person who has a record of such an impairment, or a person who is regarded as having such impairment. Section 504 Plans will ensure the individualized needs of children with disabilities are being met and all children have access to and can fully participate in the full range of activities and services. WCAP will provide any necessary modifications to the environment, multiple and varied formats for instruction, and individualized accommodations and supports as necessary to support the full participation of children with disabilities. WCAP ensure all individuals with disabilities are protected from discrimination under and provided with all services and program modifications required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794), the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*), and their implementing regulations.

**Procedure:**

1. Any parent, legal guardian, or WCAP staff member may initiate a referral of a child who is believed to be a child with a disability under Section 504. Staff will follow the *Child Referral Procedure* for guidance.
  - a. Prior to or in conjunction with a referral under Section 504, if appropriate, children should be referred to the appropriate school administrative unit (SAU) or local educational agency (LEA).
2. The Child Services Manager (or other designated persons) will convene a meeting with the 504 Team to consider eligibility and services. Members of the 504 Team must include the Child Services Manager (or approved designee) and any appropriate Early Childhood Programs staff who are knowledgeable about the child and the evaluation data. The child's family will be invited to participate in the 504 Team; however, their participation is not required. The 504 Team may also include other individuals with knowledge about the child invited by WCAP or the family. Every attempt will be made to schedule the meeting at a time convenient for the child's family. A written notice will be given to the family 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.

3. Documentation of the meeting will be completed on the *Family Team Meeting Summary* Form. The form will be signed by the family, and a copy will be provided to them. The original will be uploaded into ChildPlus.
4. At the meeting, the family will be giving *Notice of Parent/Student Rights*. The Team will review information to make an eligibility determination through consensus. The decision will be documented on the *504 Eligibility Determination Form*.
  - a. The Team must ensure that decisions about the child's eligibility or about significant changes in the child'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 family prior to conducting that testing. If the family refuses to provide consent for an initial evaluation to determine a child's 504 eligibility, WCAP may, but is not required to, initiate a 504 Hearing challenging the family's request.
5. If the Team determines that the child is eligible under Section 504, a *Section 504 Plan* will be written. The *Section 504 Plan* will detail the accommodations to be provided for the child by WCAP as decided by the 504 Team, or that no accommodations are necessary. 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.
  - a. If the decisions mean the use of funds, WCAP fiscal procedures will be followed. WCAP will work with collaborating SAUs and LEAs, as they should take primary responsibility for covering the costs of Special Education and Section 504 related services.
6. The *Section 504 Plan* will be made available to the family, all staff who have responsibilities under the plan, and the Child Services Manager. The *Section 504 Plan* will be uploaded into ChildPlus within seven days of final development.
7. A child may not receive services or accommodations outlined in the plan without the written consent of the child's family on the *Parental Consent for Initial Section 504 Placement Form*.
8. All approaches to behavior will follow the *Positive Behavior Guidance Policy and Procedure* unless expressly described differently in the child's 504 Plan, IEP, or IFSP.
9. The 504 Plan should be reviewed at least annually by the 504 Team to determine if and what services or aids are currently needed. Continued eligibility will be reviewed no less than every three years.

## **Subpart G- Transition Services**

### **Title: Child & Family Transition/Transfer Policy**

**Policy Council Approved: 5/12/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 6/23/2022**

#### **Policy:**

#### **Definitions:**

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

Transitions are recognized as important milestones for a child and family and are part of a process that requires planning, support, and implementation. Early Head Start and Head Start/Pre-K program options must work together to maximize enrollment transitions and promote successful transitions through collaboration and communication. Head Start/Pre-K program options will collaborate with families and the local education agencies to support success transitions to kindergarten. WCAP Early Childhood Program will undertake efforts to support effective transitions to other Early Head Start, Head Start, or other early childhood program options that meet the child and family's needs.

Transfers are requested by the family from one program 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.

#### **Documentation Timeline:**

Head Start/Pre-K program option:

The transition plan/timeline documentation begins at the first family conference, is reviewed and updated at the second education home visit, then is completed at the second annual family conference.

Early Head Start & Home Visiting program option:

The transition plan/timeline documentation begins at least six months prior to each child's third birthday. It is reviewed and updated on or before the child's third birthday. Transitions into Head Start/Pre-K or another program will be completed as soon as possible after the child's third birthday. However, the child can remain in Early Head Start up to three years 6 months of age. Documentation and timeline must be maintained until the transition is complete. Any exceptions to transition after 3 years 6 months of age 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, moving out of the WCAP Early Childhood Program, etc.

#### **Transitions:**

### **1. Transition into program:**

Transitioning into WCAP Early Childhood program 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) which 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.
- Complete the application and acceptance process
- Classroom/program visits (when possible)
- Initial Home Visit
- 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:**

Transitioning within the program is from any Early Head Start option to Head Start/Pre-K. Staff members support children and families transitioning within the program by:

- Before the transition, meet with the family to complete or update application and discuss similarities & differences in the receiving school/program (ex: routines, schedules, class environments)
- Once accepted, both sending & receiving staff members meet for a *Child & Family Case Conference* before the child begins the new program, they will be transitioning in to (when possible)
- Family and child visit the new classroom together (when possible)
- Follow the new enrollment process of the child/client if enrolling in the WCAP ECP program.
  - Consider how to support the child/client with new enrollment if out of our program.

### **3. Transition out of program:**

Transitioning out of the program is moving to a different early childhood program option outside of WCAP Early Childhood Program. Staff members support children and families transitioning out of the program by:

- 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 and requested
- 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, families are also invited to participate in that experience.

- There are also times in which the kindergarten teachers attend family engagement opportunities and answer questions parents may have about what comes next.
- For any child that is identified through IDEA, staff will fill out the *CDS Teacher Summary Form for Referrals* and share the information at the kindergarten transition IEP meetings. These forms will be sent to the Child Services Manager to be uploaded as an attachment in ChildPlus under the Disabilities tab.
- For any child not identified through IDEA, staff will fill out the *Teacher Summary Form for Kindergarten Transitions* and turn it into their Site Supervisor. Site Supervisors will provide the forms to the receiving schools. These forms will be uploaded as an attachment in ChildPlus under the Education tab as “Documentation”

### **Transfers:**

#### **1. Transfer within program type:**

Transfer within program type is moving from one classroom site or location to another. Staff members support children and families transferring within the program by:

- Meet with the family to complete or update records as needed and discuss similarities & differences in the receiving school/program (ex: routines, schedules, class environments)
- Once transfer has been approved and is in process, both sending & receiving staff members meet for a *Child & Family Case Conference* 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)

### **IDEA Support through Transitions and Transfers**

- 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 Child 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 Child Services Manager attempts to contact the 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 Child Services Manager tracks and documents all paperwork related to the child’s transition in ChildPlus.

### **Title: Client Status Change Policy & Process**

**Policy Council Approved: 5/12/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 6/23/2022**

**Policy:** 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 ChildPlus. The Family Services Manager 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 (Family services staff) with the change, it is the responsibility of that staff person to inform the family services staff so that the appropriate changes can be made. Staff that need support with the following status change processes should reach out to the Family Services Manager for support.

**Procedure:**

**Transfer/ Withdrawal/Transition Request:**

1. When a request is made by the enrolled family to transfer their child to a different program option:
  - a. A transfer request will be entered in to ChildPlus as an event under the family services section. by the assigned family services staff. The plan is on-going and will continue until it is complete and/or the transfer has occurred.
  - b. When an opening occurs, which matches the families transfer request, the Family Services Manager will follow the enrollment process by notifying both the receiving and sending sites. The family service staff who initiated the plan will inform the family and in collaboration with the receiving staff will prepare the family for the change.
  - c. A case conference will be scheduled by the initiated family services staff to include both sending and receiving staff who can participate in order to support a smooth transition for the child and family.
  - d. A home visit will be scheduled with the family by the receiving staff. Modification of this process may be discussed with the Family Services Manager. A start date for the child to begin in their new classroom will be established with the teacher(s) and family at the home visit and then will be communicated with the Family Services Manager before the child's first day.
  - e. The Family Services Manager will make the appropriate changes of status of the child's placement in ChildPlus.

**Withdrawal**

1. In the event a family informs staff they are no longer in need of our program and would like to withdraw their child:
  - a. The family services staff assigned to the site where the child attends will be notified and will discuss the reasons for the withdrawal with the family. A withdrawal event will be entered in to ChildPlus under the family services tab by the family services staff and a meeting to discuss the request will be scheduled. If the family is not able to meet face to face with staff, a reason for this will be indicated on the form and may be processed for that reason without the family's signature.
  - b. If the reason for withdrawal is the child will transition to a different program (not within our early childhood program) the family services staff will offer to support the family with the transition by completing a transition plan.
    - i. If a transition plan is created, a transition event will be entered.See transition plan for more information....

**Attendance plan:**

Families may request their child be excused from regular program operating hours for a period of time for things such as but not limited to a family emergency, a family medical issue, a cultural event

or event related to the best interest of the child/family. Other reasons may include a request for regular scheduled time out of the program, often related to a custody issue or as an adjustment for the child to attend the program. Each request will be considered on an individual basis. When an attendance plan is requested:

- a. The family services staff assigned to the site where the child attends will work with the family to document the request. The plan will include the reasons for the attendance modification request and goals will be created with the family to best support the child's needs and strive to close the plan as appropriate. Family services staff will submit the plan to the Family Services Manager for review. Once the plan has been reviewed for the required content to be included as listed on the form, the family services manager will either approve the plan or submit the plan to the program team as warranted for review and approval.
- b. Once approved, the family services manager will enter the timeline in ChildPlus, upload the signed document and let the family services staff know the attendance plan has been approved. The child may not begin the modified attendance plan until approval has been granted.
- c. If the plan is not approved, the family services manager will work in partnership with the family services staff and the family to present an alternate for approval.

Please note: If an attendance plan 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 status of enrollment in the process.
2. Once received the family services manager 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 follow the acceptance process and coordinate a start date for the child with the family.

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

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



## **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**

**Policy Council Approved: 3/10/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 3/31/2022**

**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>

### **Policy:**

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**

**Policy Council Approved: 3/10/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 3/31/2022**

**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**

**Policy Council Approved: 3/10/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 3/31/2022**

**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 and Accountability of Children 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 Program Performance Standards, 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.

- b. I will inform my supervisor if I have any conflict of interest and/or personal connection to any known client
- 8. **I will maintain respectful and cordial relationships with my co-workers.**
  - a. I will work with my co-workers and/or my supervisor as 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 Early Childhood Program 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 Safety Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 3/10/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 3/31/2022**

**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. 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.
  - Identification of potentially unsafe environments
  - Strategies to ensure personal safety as well as safety of co-workers and family being served.
2. 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.
3. 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
4. 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 their 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.
5. 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.

**Title: Professional Development Policy**

**Policy Council Approved: 3/10/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 3/31/2022**

**WCAP Statement on Professional Development:**

Ongoing, quality, timely professional development is extremely important for all of Early Childhood Program 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 classroom aides to 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 family’s, 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 their current 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 will lead to the requirements of their position being met. As funds allow, WCAP will financially support the completion of these requirements. See *WCAP Career Development Financial Assistance Policy*.

If an employee 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, preferred degrees and select certificates. Pay raises for completion of full 081 credentials will also be offered with proof of credentialing. Pay raises will not apply to conditional or renewed credentials.

**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 on key areas of health and safety for classrooms
- 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 and families.

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

Each year the Early Childhood Program Managers, Director, and other content experts 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.
- Training will include key policies and procedures to ensure consistent practices and support conformance with state and federal regulations.

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, family outcomes, parent feedback and orientation of new staff members and ongoing supervision. 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 policy and procedures program changes and initiatives or changes in standards or laws, or emergent needs based on data and/or monitoring results.

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

Early Childhood Program Onboarding of new staff members or those transitioning into a new program option is coordinated by the immediate supervisor and other content area managers.

**6. Substitute teachers will receive 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
- Early Childhood Program policies and procedures that relate to the classroom with particular focus on health (including active supervision, safety and nutrition.
  - This must include Confidentiality and the Early Childhood Program Code of Conduct.
- Child Care Licensing Rules
- Classroom observations:
  - 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 choose not to 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 chef and Health & Nutrition Manager, 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 overall 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 are still responsible for upholding Early Childhood Program policies relevant to their roles and 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 their supervisor. The evaluation will include goal setting related to professional development. See *Supervisory Procedure* for additional information.

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

**10. The Early Childhood Program 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**

**Policy Council Approved: 3/10/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 3/31/2022**

**Guidance:** When a substitute is hired for any period of time training and just compensation must be provided. Training of substitutes 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 Chefs will be compensated at the current entry-level pay for a Chef or the individual's pay rate as established above.
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 Early Childhood Program parents will be given first consideration for any paid substitute position available providing the WCAP Early Childhood Program 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**

**Policy Council Approved: 3/10/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 3/31/2022**

**Policy:**

**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.

Volunteers are a key component of the WCAP Early Childhood program. Volunteers support staff in ensuring the program is carried out in the highest quality manner possible. Volunteers are an important aspect of the collection of the non-federal match (including in-kind) requirement for the Head Start and Early Head Start grants. WCAP Early Childhood Program will ensure all regular volunteers have been background checked and screened for appropriate communicable diseases in accordance with state, tribal or local laws.

**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 convey the benefits of 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.
- Each volunteer must complete volunteer Packets with a Family Advocate or Content Area Manager.
  - Volunteer packets include the following.
    - 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 (exemptions may apply)
    - Proof of volunteer Orientation & Training
    - Parental Consent (age 18 and younger)
  - In some cases, particular components of the volunteer packet may be waived based on the age and/or role 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.
  - Completed volunteer packets are kept 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 below)

### Orientation:

- Orientation for volunteer positions is held once the volunteer has been approved by HR and all health requirements have been met. Orientations are provided as needed by staff.
- All Early Childhood Program volunteers will be required to attend a meeting/training session conducted by the most appropriate Early Childhood Program 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, knowledge, and skills needed to perform essential duties of the desired volunteer position(s). Additional training may be offered as needed.

### 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:
  - Verify 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 Performance Standards 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; and
  - Ensure no volunteer arrives unannounced.
- If a staff person does not ensure the above conditions are met, appropriate performance counseling actions will be taken; this 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**

**Policy Council Approved: 1/13/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

#### **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**

**Policy Council Approved: 1/13/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

#### **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 Specialist or the Site Supervisor.
- Records of equipment sign out are kept in the ChildPlus data base and maintained by the Operations Specialist. Keys are kept in a locked file cabinet and are managed by the Operations Specialist.
- 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: Ordering Policy and Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 1/13/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

#### **Policy:**

- No staff shall purchase any items without prior approval by a supervisor
  - In some cases detailed in the procedure below purchases may not require prior approval.
- No staff shall purchase any items above their spending limit, as outlined by the fiscal office.

#### **Procedures:**

##### **Petty Cash**

WCAP provides each classroom with a set amount of petty cash (see Petty Cash Procedure), distributed twice per year. Petty cash may be used at the discretion of the team, and for emergent, small, or low-cost items, or items that can't easily be shipped and does not require prior approval. These purchases are expected to be relevant to the local classroom curriculum goals but do not need prior approval. All other classroom needs should be processed through the Classroom Supply module in ChildPlus.

##### **Staff Responsibilities:**

1. Track all expenditures on the provided account sheet.
2. Use the provided tax-exempt form for all purchases.
3. Save and submit all receipts.
4. Turn in remaining cash, receipts, and account sheet to Operations Specialist before the end of December (for the first round) and no later than June or classroom closure, whichever comes first (for the second round).

##### **Operations Specialist responsibilities:**

1. Collect all petty cash, receipts and account sheets.
2. Reconcile the account sheets/receipts.
3. Turn in to fiscal.
4. Once all remaining cash, receipts, and account sheets are received, issue the next round of petty cash.

Staff will only ever receive up to \$50 of petty cash at any given time, regardless of what is spent in the prior time period.

### **Classroom and office supply ordering**

WCAP budgets for each site for a set amount of money for classroom supplies, office supplies, and consumables each year. Classroom needs should be discussed with the team and supervisor. WCAP utilizes ChildPlus to submit and track classroom supply requests.

Staff responsibilities:

1. Discuss classroom needs with the team.
2. Submit orders through ChildPlus Classroom Supply Request module.
3. Submit packing sheets to main office.
4. Check module for notes from Operations Specialist about each order.

Site Supervisor responsibilities:

1. Review, edit, and approve orders as needed in ChildPlus Classroom Supply Request module.

Operations Specialist responsibilities:

1. Review order module and submit orders on or around the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.
2. Communicate with sites on items on back order as needed.

### **Health supply orders:**

1. Teachers will submit the *Request for Health and Nutrition Supplies and Consumables Form* to Health and Nutrition Manager or designee. When appropriate, Site Supervisors will approve the order.
2. The Health and Nutrition Manager or designee will review and fill the order twice per month on or around the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.
3. The Health and Nutrition Manager or designee will notify sites when the order is ready for pick up.

Regular health supply purchases are considered automatically approved. Any unusual purchases will be approved by the Early Childhood Director.

### **Nutrition supply and food ordering:**



Health and Nutrition Manager or designee will coordinate purchases of food and supplies to ensure alignment with WCAP fiscal policies and CACFP procurement standards. Regular food and supply purchases are considered automatically approved.

Any unusual purchases will be approved by the Early Childhood Director.

#### **Mileage and other reimbursables:**

Reimbursements should only be submitted for purchases that had prior approval.

- Mileage reimbursement for routine components of staff person's job are considered reimbursable and do not need individual prior approval (i.e. travel to sites and home visits).

Staff are eligible for mileage reimbursement as outlined in the WCAP employee handbook.

All reimbursement requests must be turned in within 30 days of completion. Any reimbursements turned in later than 60 days may not be paid.

#### **Title: Petty Cash Policy and Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 1/13/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

#### **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.
  - b. The second increment will be given after the holiday break.
2. As needed, staff will spend petty cash to purchase consumable supplies. Purchases should be discussed and planned with the classroom team, including who will make the purchase and how it will be used. This process will continue until each staff's initial sum of petty cash (\$50.00) is used.
3. 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 Operations Specialist. Once petty cash accounting logs have been reconciled, the second round will be distributed to the staff. *If the first-round receipts are 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 and no later than June, the staff will return any unspent cash with the account sheet and receipts for their center to the Operations Specialist, who will turn it to the Fiscal Department.

6. The agency tax-exempt form should be used to avoid paying tax from petty cash funds. A copy of the form will be provided with the initial distribution of petty cash. Additional copies are available upon request from the Operations Specialist.
7. In the event that a staff member leaves WCAP during the school year, that staff member's petty cash and receipts are due before their last day of employment. Alternatively, the additional staff person in the classroom will sign off and take responsibility for the remaining petty cash.

**Title: Program Management and Quality Improvement Process**

Policy Council Approved: 1/13/2022

Board of Director Approved: 7/28/2022

**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 weekly and biweekly program leadership meetings as well as in the work product of each Content Area Manager. Monitoring and data collection are used to review program adherence to regulations, policy and procedure and assess progress toward meeting goals.

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 such as active supervision and other incidents
- How data informs teaching practices, curriculum, and professional development
- What data tells us about current goals (Program Goals, School Readiness Goals, etc.)
- Safety (including active supervision and child safety)

**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<sup>1</sup>:

- 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 Supervisors 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, Family 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
- Family engagement data
- Evaluation of program's progress toward goals
- The WCAP systems contributions to school readiness of children
- Active supervision and child safety
- 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 4: 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. Cost allocation plans
6. 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, Supervisors, 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 5: Reporting**

Each year reports to the indicated officials shall include, at a minimum:

- The Regional Office:
  - Any significant incidents affecting the health and safety of program participants, circumstances affecting the [financial viability](#) of the program, breaches of personally identifiable information,

or program involvement in legal proceedings, any matter for which notification or a report to state, tribal, or local authorities is required by applicable law, including at a minimum:

- 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.
  - Compliance issues will be reported immediately, or as quickly as possible to the Regional Office.
- 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, including active supervision and child safety.

#### **Step 6: 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**

**Policy Council Approved: 1/13/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

**Policy:**

1. 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.
2. 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. Staff will not be discharged or disciplined solely because they have made a Child Abuse or Neglect report.
3. Additionally, all WCAP staff who work directly with children will be required to complete and maintain a current mandated reporter training which will include identification of child abuse and neglect signs. Newly hired staff will also review the policy and procedure for reporting as part of the onboarding process. Upon hire and annually, staff will also complete a training on how to identify and prevent shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma.

#### A. Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect

1. Staff who suspect a child or incapacitated or dependent adult is in immediate danger must call 911 to report to local law enforcement immediately.
2. Staff who know or have a suspicion of abuse or neglect must make an oral report to the appropriate intake number **within 24 hours**.
  - a. The Office of Child and Family Services Intake can be reached at 1-800-452-1999.
  - b. The Office of Aging and Disabilities Services Intake can be reached at 1-800-624-8404.
    - i. 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.
    - ii. Should a staff feel uncomfortable or need assistance, supervisors will be available to assist with the process of completing the report upon requested.
    - iii. If a staff person is unsure if an incident is reportable they may reach out to their supervisor, an available Manager, or Human Resources for guidance.
3. 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
4. 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.

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

1. It is the policy of WCAP to cooperate with DHHS or other State agency’s investigation or prosecution of a case.
2. 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 Program 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.
3. 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 Program Director or CEO must be contacted if the Human Resources Manager is unavailable.

**Title: School Cancellation Procedure**

**Policy Council Approved: 1/13/2022**

**BOD Approved: 7/28/2022**

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 Pre-K & Early Head Start classrooms 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 Early Head Start
    2. East Belfast Pre-K
    3. Weymouth Pre-K

4. Captain Albert Stevens Pre-K
  - Families will be notified to watch for school district closings at the time of enrollment, initial home visit, through the Family 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 Early Head Start building does—this is a case when the Early Childhood classroom may choose to remain open.
2. With the exception of collaborative Head Start Pre-K classrooms closed by the partnering school and/or RSU, no classrooms may be closed without approval from the Early Childhood Director and/or Child Services Manager. In the absence of the Early Childhood Director and Child Services Manager, the Site Supervisor will consult with Early Childhood managers as appropriate.
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 Fridays.
    1. Make-up days will be set by the Director 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 families to inform them of the closed classroom.
    - If this closing is the same as the district closing and advertised through media, Head Start Pre-K families may not need to be called.
    - The Early Childhood Director or designated person will notify the kitchen, main office and bus garage.
7. Site Supervisors or Lead Teachers are responsible for establishing staff call trees for use in emergencies. A copy of the call tree must be sent to the Operations Specialist.
  - Lead Teachers must include volunteers and others who are only in the center on certain days in the call tree.
  - Upon a closure, Site Supervisors start the center call tree.



## Title: Supervisory Procedure

**Policy Council Approved: 1/13/2022**

**Board of Directors Approved: 7/28/2022**

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 Site supervisor 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 Chefs and Family Advocates. The Health & Nutrition Manager will provide direct supervision of all content area related job duties of Chefs as listed in job description. The Family Services Manager 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 Managers/Site Supervisors and Head Start Consultants, monthly as appropriate, will visit and monitor classrooms and home-visits. These visits may be general observations or focus topic areas such as curriculum fidelity checks, CLASS, ECERS, ITERS, meal observations, active supervision, health and safety etc.

It is suggested that Content Area Managers/Site Supervisors 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. Data will be entered and managed in ChildPlus and reviewed regularly by management staff.

### **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 their 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 their 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 Month Evaluations**
  - Each employee shall receive a three-month introductory evaluation provided by the Supervisor following WCAP's established procedures.
- **Annual Evaluations**
  - Each employee shall receive an annual evaluation provided by the Supervisor following WCAP's established procedures.

**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: 1/13/2022**

**Board Approval: 7/28/2022**

**Client files:** Any paper client files will be kept in locked filing cabinets located in either the Family Advocate, Teacher, or Home Visitors' office or classroom. Electronic records are housed in the ChildPlus database. 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 Family Services Manager will manage access to all client files located at the Head Start Main Office
- Any staff requesting a paper version of a client file will coordinate access with the Family Services Manager when necessary

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

- Family Advocates and/or Teachers will manage access to any paper records of a client file.
- Staff who are not already approved to access client files must request access to the filing cabinet from the Family Advocate or Teacher.

#### **Parent Access:**

- A parent/guardian has a right to inspect child records.
  - WCAP asks parents/guardians 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 Services Manager the same day the request is made. The original written request will be uploaded in ChildPlus

3. Documentation of the request must be entered the same day of the request; note that a copy of the request was sent to the Family Services Manager. See ChildPlus documentation process
  4. The Family Services Manager 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 Family Services Manager will notify the Family Advocate 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. No child record will be removed from the center by a family member (qualified staff under approved circumstances only [see above]).
  8. No record will be reviewed without the presence of a WCAP staff member.
  9. No items will be removed from the child's record by the family member.
  10. The family member may make a request for copies (in writing) and the staff person supervising the review will submit the request to the Family Services Manager. The Family Services Manager 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/guardian has the right to ask the program to amend a record that the parent/guardian believes is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's privacy.
    - WCAP will consider the request. This request should come in writing following the same procedure as requesting to view a child record (See above).
    - The Early Childhood Director, in support with the Family Services Manager will decide whether or not allow or deny the request.
      - If the request is granted, the Early Childhood Director or Family Services Manager 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/guardian has the right to a copy of the record.
    - WCAP will provide 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/guardian 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 Services Manager 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 Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between other agencies to be taken offsite.

### **Contested Records and Hearing**

- A parent/guardian has the right to ask the program for a hearing to challenge information in the child record.

- Hearing requests should go through the Family Services Manager. Decisions will be made in collaboration with the Early Childhood Director.
- If the parent/guardian 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/guardian 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 Approved: 1/13/2022**

**BOD Approved: 7/28/2022**

#### **Policy:**

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. Confidentiality of information regarding clients means that no information that could identify the client, a child, or their 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 the 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/guardian 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/guardians 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 the Head Start Program Performance Standards (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 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) 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 Approved: 1/13/2022**

**BOD Approved: 7/28/2022**

**Policy:** A clear and well-documented practice for management of all data collected, entered and reported by Waldo Community Action Partners Early Childhood 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 sometimes 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.

Current client files are kept in ChildPlus database. Some older client files are 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:
  - Paper files shall be archived according to the procedure indicated on the **Client File Index**.
  - Paper records which have expired will be shredded by a professional shredding company in collaboration with the agency shredding process.
- When a child transitions out of a WCAP program option:
  - All child paper 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. **ChildPlus** is a web-based program used to collect child, family, staff, and PIR data.
2. **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.
3. **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.

### **ChildPlus:**

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



Staff access to ChildPlus is managed via security groups, as listed below. List includes level of access and general data entry function.

**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 username 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 will be reviewed annually and may be changed 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.

**Operations Specialist:**

- Full access to applications and all child and family demographics, enrollment, health, nutrition, and mental health/disabilities screens and data. Full ability to create or pull all reports related to children and families. Full access to all children and families in the database. Limited access to personnel information beyond training and credentials.

**Ed Team:**

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

**Family Services 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.

#### Facilities Coordinator:

- Full access to modules and reports related to facilities. No access to children or families.

#### Fiscal

- Full access to attendance-related reports. Only in use as a back-up option for Nutrition Coordinator.

#### Health & Nutrition Manager:

- Full access to all nutrition and 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.

#### Mental Health Consultant

- View access to application and enrollment screens only, full access to mental health tab and reports.

#### Site Supervisors

- View access to application, demographic, immunization, nutrition, and disability screens. Full access to family services, health, education, and some modules and reports. Full access to attendance app and reports.

#### Teachers

- View access to application, demographic, immunization, nutrition, and disability screens. Full access to family services and education tab and reports.

#### Access to personnel data:

Some staff personnel data is managed in ChildPlus, and care is taken to limit access to full information. Data related to staff credentials and professional development is entered by HR, the Operations Manager, or the Operations Specialist. All staff will be given access to their own professional development and credential record

and appropriate reports. The Operations Specialist will coordinate with Human Resources for filing of training certificates.

Staff that provide trainings or need access to training rosters or data will have view access to the professional development tab within the personnel section and applicable reports. All other access to staff data is limited to HR or admin security groups.

### **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 send emails containing children's first and last names only when the email is within the agency's protected email otherwise—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**

**PC Approved: 3/10/2022**

**BOD Approved: 3/31/2022**

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