Performance Standard 1304.50(b)(1) — (b)(7)

(b) Policy group composition and formation.

(1) Each grantee and delegate agency governing body operating an Early Head Start or Head Start program must (except where such authority is ceded to the Policy Council or Policy Committee) propose, within the framework of these regulations, the total size of their respective policy groups (based on the number of centers, classrooms, or other program option units, and the number of children served by their Early Head Start or Head Start program), the procedures for the election of parent members, and the procedure for the selection of community representatives. These proposals must be approved by the Policy Council or Policy Committee.

(2) Policy Councils and Policy Committees must be comprised of two types of representatives: parents of currently enrolled children and community representatives. At least 51 percent of the members of these policy groups must be the parents of currently enrolled children (see 45 CFR 1306.3(h) for a definition of a Head Start parent).

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Rationale: Established procedures for electing parent members and selecting community representatives ensure consistency and fairness in the selection of policy group members. It is essential that families receiving services play an active role in making decisions about such services, and that the Head Start program reflects the community as a whole. *This rationale serves 45 CFR 1304.50(b)(1)-(7).*

Guidance: The following are suggestions for the governing body and policy group review of procedures for parent elections:

- Inform all parents of their vital role in program governance;
- Ensure that there is a fair method of nomination, either by parents nominating themselves or by other parents nominating them; nominations should be placed only with the consent of the nominee;
- Provide proportionate representation to parents in all program options and settings. If agencies operate programs serving different geographical regions or ethnic groups, to adopt policies to ensure that all groups being served will have an equal opportunity to serve on policy groups; and
- Consider using Parent Committees to facilitate the process of nominating and electing parents to the Policy Council or Policy Committee.

Parents are involved in every step of the process for selecting community representatives. Parents may be involved, for example, in discussions of the issues of interest and the types of community representatives needed in the coming year, as well as in developing methods for soliciting and screening potential candidates.

When nominating parent members or selecting community representatives to policy groups, consider:

- The willingness and ability of the potential members to contribute time and effort to the program and to serve as mentors and role models, as well as resource persons;
- The diversity of the group of individuals nominated, with consideration being given to the programs or program options in which the children of nominees are enrolled;
- The agency's goals and the information generated by the Community Assessment; and
- The desirability of having representation from the governing body to the policy group, in order to improve communication between the two groups.

Performance Standard 1304.50(b)(1) — (b)(7) (continued...)

(3) 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, including, for example, the parents of formerly enrolled children.

(4) All parent members of Policy Councils or Policy Committees must stand for election or re-election annually. All community representatives also must be selected annually.

(5) Policy Councils and Policy Committees must limit the number of one-year terms any individual may serve on either body to a combined total of three terms.

(6) No grantee or delegate agency staff (or members of their immediate families) may serve on Policy Councils or Policy Committees except parents who occasionally substitute for regular Early Head Start or Head Start staff. In the case of Tribal grantees, this exclusion applies only to Tribal staff who work in areas directly related to or which directly impact upon any Early Head Start or Head Start administrative, fiscal or programmatic issues.

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Agencies and policy groups establish procedures for monitoring the three-year limit for both parents and community representatives. Agencies also develop volunteer opportunities that allow former policy group members to use their skills and experience to support program activities and operations. If agencies view and present the opportunity of serving on policy groups as a time to learn new skills and to gain self-confidence in a supportive environment, parents will understand the value of leaving a policy group after a few years, and of moving into other leadership roles in school organizations and in the larger community.

Personnel policies and bylaws address potential conflicts of interest between agency employment and membership on a Policy Council or Policy Committee. For example, agencies may consider developing policies that define "occasional substitute" and that determine at what point in the hiring process a candidate for a Head Start position must resign his or her membership from a policy group, that is, upon application or upon hiring.