

## **CHILD DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **SECTION (13)**

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**Purpose of this Section:**

The AACS Director of Child and Family Development/Head Start Director manages the agency's child and family development operations, including Head Start, child care services, family child care, and related child care services. *[Revised February 2001] [Revised August 2004]*

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Child and Family Development/Head Start Director's responsibilities include:

- Assuring that all agency child development programs meet federal, state, and local license requirements
- Administering, directing, and managing each unit in accordance with pertinent regulations and grant contract requirements.
- Advocating and assuring continued staff development and improvement
- Establishing programs and procedures required to meet operational goals
- Determining, with the support of the policy council, advisory boards, community areas where Head Start/child care services need to be placed
- Negotiating contracts with school systems in conjunction with the KERA pre-school program and others.
- Coordinating center and class locations
- Planning and utilizing community resources
- Composing policy groups and methods for committee recruitment
- Hearing and resolving Head Start programmatic complaints
- Directing daily Head Start/child care staff operations
- Assuring that program/center/staff equipment and supply needs are met
- Administering career development plans, grievance procedures, hiring and firing, and other staff management in accordance with approved agency policies and procedures
- Communicating AACS personnel policies and procedures to staff, assuring that employees understand and abide by agency policy and procedures
- Preparing funding and work program proposals/requests for AACS Board and Policy Council review
- Making changes in the budget and work programs as needed to assure current operational plans for staff action
- Providing to the Policy Council information as requested or needed
- Managing other Head Start responsibilities, requirements, and needs mandated by law or authority.

**Purpose of this Section:**

The Head Start Policy Council statutorily supports and assists the Child Development/Head Start Director in the operation of the Head Start Program. Certain other *advisory* boards assist the Director with the operations in one or more child care centers.

**Procedure:**

## (1) The Policy Council responsibilities:

- Initiating suggestions and ideas to improve Head Start programs.
- Receiving and reviewing local suggestions and ideas .
- Planning, coordinating, and organizing, agency-wide parent involvement activities— with staff assistance.
- Recruiting and mobilizing volunteer services of parents and community residents
- Generating community resources to meet program needs.
- Monitoring Parent Activity Funds distributed to local Parent Committees. *(Revised February 2001)*
- Participate in Head Start program evaluations. *(Revised February 2001)*
- Reviewing or recommending Head Start goals, service areas, child selection committee, and Policy Council guidelines; noting needs and services required from the central office; assisting the agency with resolving community complaints, personnel policy, program changes, AACS pre-review information, and required budget and program changes. *(Revised February 2001)*
- Administering other responsibilities mandated by law, Head Start program requirements and/or needs.

## (2) Advisory Boards' responsibilities:

- Serve in an advisory role to the Board, staff and management in the operation of child care facilities
- Promote and enhance community awareness, marketing and fund raising
- Review, evaluate and recommend areas/ways for improvement in child care operations
- Assist in carrying out the purposes and functions of the agency's respective child care facilities.

**Purpose of this Section:**

The AACS Head Start Policy Council must handle certain personnel matters as directed by Head Start Performance Standards. Accordingly, the Policy Council may designate a Personnel Committee out of its membership to review personnel actions and make recommendations to the Policy Council.

**Procedure:**

- (1) The Policy Council — in accordance with must approve or disapprove Head Start staff hiring and termination and Head Start personnel policies. It also establishes career development plans and handles programmatic employee grievance.
- (2) Hiring and/or terminating the Head Start Director and/or staff requires Policy Council approval.
- (3) The Policy Council Personnel Committee's responsibilities include:
  - Assisting the Executive Director and Head Start Director or other designated line management staff with screening applicants
  - Reviewing and recommending agency personnel policies and procedures
  - Presenting personnel recommendations to the Executive Director
  - Monitoring the personnel selection process and affirmative action program with the Equal Opportunity Officer's assistance and guidance
  - Presenting its personnel recommendations to the Policy Council for review and action
- (4) The Executive Director administers all employment actions and procedures, but his/her actions to hire or fire Head Start staff must have the concurrence of the Head Start Policy Council in order to become effective.

**Purpose of this Section:**

The AACS, Inc. Head Start-Child Care hires employees consistent with state and federal child care laws, regulations, and guidelines— including the Head Start Performance Standards.

*See Selection Procedure 2.5 for the agency's general hiring procedures.*

**Procedure:**

- (1) AACS Child Care/Head Start employees must provide a completed agency employment application and additional information including:
  - Criminal Record Check (Revised August 2004)
  - A documented initial physical exam (including a screening for tuberculosis) must be in the employee's confidential file maintained in the personnel office)

**Criminal Records Check**

All new employees must agree to state criminal record checks for all states that employee has resided in the last ten (10) years and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department of Community Based Services, Division of Protection and Permanency Central Registry Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) record check as part of the initial employment process. (Revised June 2008)

State criminal record check and CAN check will be conducted every three (3) years, or more often if warranted, for existing Head Start/Child Care employees. (Revised June 2008)

The initial employment process for any new employee is not complete until the Executive Director, or his designee, receives the results of any background check and verifies the employee is qualified for final employment.

After reviewing the background checks, the Executive Director, or his designee shall either qualify the individual for final employment status or terminate the employment process. Reasons for terminating the employee on the basis of the background checks include, but are not limited to:

- Past or present criminal behavior threatening to the welfare of children, other employees, school district employees, or the community.
- Any behavior or patterns of behavior inappropriate for the position in which they are employed are revealed.
- Background checks indicate criminal activity including but not limited to, fraud, embezzlement, or other misbehavior involving the handling of funds. (April 2008)

AACS Child Care/Head Start bears the cost of the Criminal Records Check, the initial physical exam and the TB skin test. AACS must assure that each Head Start staff member has an initial health examination (that includes screening for tuberculosis) and a periodic re-examination (as recommended by their health care provider or as mandated by State or local laws). Head Start employees must use the Agency's designated health care providers. Staff electing to use other health care providers will bear the cost of the required test and exam.

- (2) Personal and employment references are verified prior to and contribute toward the decision to employ the person. Head Start applicants must provide a thorough personal and employment history. The AACS shall research applicant information, confirming references, the person's work and personal history, and other mandated information including:
  - Child abuse and/or neglect convictions or complaints
  - Convictions for violent crimes.
  - Authorizing the agency to perform Criminal Record Checks (Revised June 2008)
- (3) AACS Head Start will hire the best qualified applicant for the position. If all else is equal, Head Start with grant preference to a parent or past parent, in which they possess the qualification. (Added April 2008)
- (4) Most AACS Head Start employees work by an agreement. Applicants and/or employees refusing agreement employment for those positions where it applies shall not be employed or retained. The agreement is required at the end of the successful completion of the nine (9) month "introductory" period.
- (5) New Head Start employees must sign the Child Abuse and/or Neglect and Violent Crime Conviction Declaration Form, which is retained in their Personnel File. The AACS retains reference information in confidential employee personnel file.
- (6) New Head Start employees initially serve only as conditional employees. Their employment approval requires a positive confirmation of their personal and work history, their reference reviews, a positive response from the Cabinet for Human Resources child abuse neglect/criminal conviction investigation, and other requirements.

- (7) The Policy Council and Executive Director shall review hiring recommendations, assess provided information, and concur in hiring and/or termination decisions. The procedure shall be that the Executive Director recommends hiring or firing and the Policy Council then considers the matter. If the Policy Council concurs, the action takes effect; if the Policy council declines, the matter goes back to the Executive Director for further action. This continues until the Executive Director and Policy Council agree or the matter is no longer presented for consideration. Should a disagreement persist beyond the Executive Director to the Board and still not be resolved between the Policy Council and the Board of Directors, then the AACCS Board, Head Start Policy Council Conflict Resolution Policy and Procedure (other-wise known as the “impasse” policy) will be engaged and followed.

**Purpose of this Section:**

Federal, state, local, and AACS/Head Start child care policies and regulations forbid corporal punishment and isolation as a disciplinary measure with children and outline other child safety measures. The Kentucky Administrative Regulation (905 KAR 2.010) prohibits hiring or retaining employees of child care facilities who have been convicted of child abuse or neglect.

**Procedure (Corporal Punishment and Isolation):**

- (1) Corporal punishment is the use of physical force as a disciplinary measure. It is unallowable.
- (2) Isolation is the separation of a child from normal association and activities within the classroom as a disciplinary or punishment measure. It is unallowable.
- (3) Childcare employees are forbidden from using these measures within a child care facility or during other Head Start/Child Care activities.
- (4) When a report is made that a child has been subjected to corporal punishment or Isolation the following steps will be taken:
  - a. The immediate supervisor in consultation with Human Resources will investigate the incident.
  - b. The employee(s) responsible for the incident will be given the option to take an unpaid suspension or to remain on the job without any classroom duties and no children will be left in their care. The employee(s) will not be allowed to return to the classroom or be responsible for any children until the investigation is complete and appropriate disciplinary action has been taken.
- (5) Employees permitting, condoning, failing to report or performing corporal punishment or use isolation as disciplinary measures for any reason are subject to immediate dismissal from AACS/Head Start employment.

**Purpose of this Section:**

The AACS requires all employees performing child and/or Head Start services to be a high school graduate or to complete the General Educational Development Program (GED).  
*(Revised February 2001)*

**Procedure:**

AACS Head Start/Child Care employees who have not graduated from high school or completed the GED program and who are hired for child care and/or Head Start shall not be retained past the “introductory” nine (9) months. *(Revised December 2003)*

Any Head Start/Child Care staff person hired without a high school diploma or a verified G.E.D. may be hired only on a provisional basis for nine (9) months while pursuing their G.E.D.  
*(Revised December 2003)*

**Purpose of this Section:**

AACS requires that Head Start teachers and teacher associates in the Head Start, Early Head Start, or Migrant Head Start programs, early care associates, and child care nurturer hold minimum credentials or obtain such credentials in accordance with timelines specified in this policy. Such employees who have completed a qualifying early childhood degree shall be considered in compliance with these minimum credentials. Determination of a qualifying degree shall be the decision of the Executive Director upon recommendation from the Head Start Director.

**Procedure:****Head Start Teachers**

- (1) Effective February 2008, all AACS Head Start teachers must hold a minimum of a qualifying associate degree in early childhood education prior to employment. *[Added February 2008]*
- (2) Head Start teachers who do not hold the minimum of an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education must obtain the minimum of a qualifying associate degree in accordance with the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 by October 1, 2011. *(Revised October 2009)*
- (3) Head Start teachers who fail to obtain the required minimum degree by October 1, 2011 shall forfeit their employment. The AACS may offer other available employment positions within the agency; if such positions are unavailable, the employee shall be terminated. *(Revised October 2009)*
- (4) Head Start teachers in blended programs with KERA preschool children shall be subject to the minimal certification requirements of the Kentucky Department of Education. Head Start teachers in blended programs who fail to maintain current certification shall forfeit their employment. The AACS may offer other available employment positions within the agency; if such positions are unavailable, the employee shall be terminated. *[Revised February 2008]*

***Head Start Teacher Associates, Child Care Nurturers, and Early Care Associates***

- (5) Head Start teacher associates, child care nurturers, and early care associates must obtain the minimum of a current, valid (not expired) Child Development Associate (CDA) credential appropriate to the age of the children being served or must submit a complete CDA application within one (1) year of their initial date of employment in or transfer to the applicable position or the adoption of this policy whichever is later. *(Added February 2008)*
  
- (6) Head Start teacher associates, child care nurturers, and early care associates who fail to obtain the required credential within the one (1) year period; who fail to maintain a current, valid (not expired) credential; Who fail to submit a complete CDA initial or renewal application within the specified period shall forfeit their employment. The AACCS may offer other available employment positions within the agency; if such positions are unavailable, the employee shall be terminated. *(Added February 2008)*

***Other Provisions***

- (7) Effective February, 2008 and in accordance with the provisions of Section 13.8, teacher associates, home visitors, child care nurturers, and early care associates who obtain a qualifying Child Development Associate (CDA) credential shall be eligible for a one-step pay increment (subject to the availability of project funds) upon receipt of the credential. *(Revised February 2008)*

**Purpose of this Section:**

To provide assistance for tuition and books to AACS Head Start employees to further their education to become more self-reliant and better serve Audubon Area Head Start. Assistance is provided based on a budgeted amount and the availability of funds.

**Procedure:**

(1) Eligibility for Grants:

- (a) AACS Head Start employees must have a high school diploma or GED and be committed to furthering their education.
- (b) AACS Head Start employees must have successfully completed their introductory period with the following exceptions; staff enrolled in an -IECE program or working toward a CDA or CDA renewal.
- (c) AACS Head Start employees must be a regular, full-time or part time employee (not temporary).
- (d) AACS Head Start employees on probation are not eligible for tuition assistance.

(2) Application Process:

- (a) AACS Head Start employees must submit a complete College Tuition Request Form within the prescribed timelines for each semester in order to be considered for tuition assistance.
- (b) Before approval of additional college hours, enrollees continuing in the tuition program must have on file in our office a copy of grades for all past course work and/or a copy of transcript of college work dated within one year.
- (c) The following application priorities will apply:
  - First Priority for approval of complete applications will be AACS HS regular full time and part time Lead Teachers working on their IECE degree or taking courses toward a BA/AA or a CDA renewal. First Priority also includes all AAHS Lead Teachers who are working on IECE degree at the Masters Level or other advanced degree if they do not possess a BA or MA degree in IECE. Earliest requests will receive priority.
  - Second Priority for approval of complete applications will be AAHS regular full time and part time Teacher Associates working on their CDA, CDA renewal or IECE degree or taking courses toward a BA/AA in ECE.

- Third Priority for approval of complete applications will be all other AACS HS regular full time employees who are working on an Associate, Bachelor's or Master's degree in field based on their current position as determined by the Head Start Executive Team.
  - Fourth Priority for approval of complete applications will be AAHS regular full time employees who are working on a specialty degree or certification relevant to Audubon Area Head Start initiatives and requirements.
  - Fifth Priority for approval of complete applications will be all other professional related advanced degrees in field based on their current position as determined by the Head Start Executive Team.
- (d) All enrollees must sign a contract for repayment of assistance received for tuition and books if requirements are not met. As stated in the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 staff must teach or work at a Head Start program for a minimum of three (3) years after receiving the degree; or repay the total or a prorated amount of financial assistance received based on the length of service completed after receiving the degree.
- (e) Upon approval of participation a letter will be sent to the employee and the institution authorizing AACS Head Start payment.
- (f) Enrollees must register for class.
- (3) College/Universities:
- Institutions of higher education must be an accredited college or university approved by the agency. State sponsored colleges or universities will be approved. Private institutions may be submitted for approval.
- (4) Limited Funding:
- As with any and all agency compensation and increment provisions, this policy is only applicable subject to the availability of funds. Should requisite available funding not be available within any Head Start/Child Care/Child Development budget (program account), no tuition assistance will be allowed.

**INCENTIVE COMPENSATION FOR HEAD START/  
CHILD CARE WORKERS ENHANCING THEIR  
EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS**

**SECTION: 13.9  
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**Purpose of this Section:**

The AACCS/Head Start and related child development programs deem it in the interest of children/families served and the agency to promote and reward the advancement of educational attainment and professional credentialing of its child development staff.

**Procedure:**

- (1) Incentive compensation may be awarded for education, family services, and coordinating staff for each level of educational attainment and/or recognized professional certification earned while employed in any of the agency's child development programs— Head Start and/or child care/child development centers.
  - (a) The recognized degrees covered in this provision are: Family Service Associate (FSA); "Associate" (AA) degree; Bachelor's (BA or BS) degrees; or Master's Degree (MA or MS) in the area for which the employee is currently employed by the agency. Determination whether a particular degree is "in area," and therefore eligible for an increment, shall be the decision of the Executive Director upon recommendation from the Head Start Director. *(Revised December 2001)*
  - (b) Covered employees only (as noted above) may receive a one-step increase for each degree earned while employed in the agency. Covered employees working toward college degree "in area" may receive a half-step increase for completion of thirty (30) college hours and may receive a one-step increase upon the satisfactory completion of sixty (60) semester hours at an accredited/approved college or university. Employees may not earn more than three and one-half steps-in-grade over their total period of employment with the agency. *(Revised February 2001)*

The following staff may qualify for an advance in a specified grade.

- Lead Teachers with certification in early childhood in accordance with requirements of the Kentucky Department of Education.
- Lead Teachers with an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education.
- Family Advocates with a degree in Social Work or in a related human services field.

Staff receiving advance in grade shall not be eligible for additional incentive compensation for degrees earned. *(Added February 2001)*

**Incentive Compensation for Head Start/Child Care Workers  
Enhancing their Educational and Professional Credentials**

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- (2) Teacher assistants/associates or early care associates may also earn additional step-in-grade increments in pay upon receipt of a C.D.A. credential or another recognized degree (as specified in (1)(a) above). *[Revised August 2004]*
- (3) The incentive provisions apply equally to all Head Start and child care personnel unless precluded by other agreements or conditions.
- (4) As with any/all agency compensation and increment provisions, this policy is only applicable subject to the availability of funds. Should requisite available funding not be available within any Head Start/Child Care/Child Development budget (program account), no salary incentive award can be allowed.
- (5) New employees for covered positions who already have attained specified degrees may receive additional steps or advance in grade for starting salary as appropriate and upon presentation of required documentation. *[Added February 2001]*
- (6) Incentive compensation increases shall not be awarded until all required information (transcripts, certifications, etc.) has been received by the agency and approved by the Executive Director.
- (7) Whether salary incentives funding is available or not, all staff are encouraged to upgrade their educational attainment and professional qualifications.

**Purpose of this Section** (*New Section Added October 17, 1995, Owensboro*):

The AACS Head Start and related child development programs deem it essential to retain qualified and experienced staff in its child development programs. In order to encourage and retain staff in the competitive work environment with public schools and other agencies, years of experience compensation will be provided to staff to ensure quality and excellence in our program.

**Procedure:**

- (1) “Years of Experience Compensation” may be awarded to each regular Head Start/Child Development staff upon the third year anniversary of employment or each third anniversary of the previous increment awarded for years of experience.
  - (a) This policy is effective as of August 1, 1995, and shall not apply retroactively. (This policy replaces and supercedes the five-year increment approved prior to August 17 1993.) Years of experience shall be based on the number of full calendar years of continuous employment with AACS between the date of hire and August 1st of the fiscal year in which payment will be made.
  - (b) The Years of Experience Compensation shall be awarded in a *one-time lump sum payment* based upon a one-half step increment (approximately 2%) of the staff’s hourly wage or salary as of August 1 of the fiscal year in which the payment is to be made.
  - (c) Years of experience increments shall be computed upon the total *Head Start hours* worked during the period from October 1 through July 31 of the fiscal year in which payment is to be made. Lump sum payment will be made on or before the last pay period in September. (See also: Section 13.11)
  - (d) Lump-sum Years of Experience Compensation may be made only on each third year anniversary as described in (a) above.
  - (e) In blended programs, Years of Experience Compensation may be awarded for KERA hours if funds are available and stated in the contract. (See also Section 13.11)
- (2) As with any and all agency compensation increment provisions, the policy is only applicable subject to the availability of funds. Should the requisite funding not be available within any Head Start/ChildCare/Child Development program accounts/budgets, no salary incentive award will be allowed.
- (3) Years of Experience Compensation, in one-lump sum payments, shall not be awarded until all required forms and information have been received and approved by the Executive Director.

**COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT (COLA)  
COMPENSATION FOR HEAD START**

**SECTION: 13.11  
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**Purpose of this Section:**

AACS Head Start and related Child Development Programs deem it necessary to set forth procedures in instances in which COLA or other Head Start compensation is awarded but not funded or available through contracted sources such as the KERA/Preschool blended programs.

**Procedures:**

- (1) Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) increases that are provided for and funded by both Head Start and KERA preschool contracts shall be awarded in standard increments by adjusting salary at designated time in accordance with either the program or fiscal year for the agencies involved.
- (2) In that Head Start requires that COLA increases be provided even if funds are not available for other such programs, a COLA increase will be provided in a lump sum payment made in September and based on Head Start hours between the period from October 1 through July 31. Payment will be made in a lump sum occurring on/or before the second pay period in September.
- (3) As with any and/all agency compensation increments provisions, the policy is only applicable within any Head Start/Child Care/Child Development budget (program account), no salary incentive can be allowed.
- (4) COLA compensation paid in wage increment or one-time lump sum payments shall not be awarded until all required forms and information have been received and approved by the Executive Director.

**Purpose of this Section:**

Safety is defined as the condition of being safe from undergoing or causing hurt, injury, or loss. Under this policy, it is *unsafe* to leave a child or children unattended for *any* length of time. It is the duty, as an AACS/Head Start employee to assure that no child will be left alone at any time, for any length of time. Every child will be accounted for while in the Agency's care.

**Procedure (Child Safety):**

- (1) Employees permitting, condoning, or failing to report any child being left unattended for any length of time for any reason are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination from the AACS/Head Start employment.
- (2) When a report is made that a child was left unattended the following steps will be taken:
  - a. The immediate supervisor in consultation with Human Resources will investigate the incident.
  - b. The employee(s) responsible for the unattended child will be given the option to take an unpaid suspension or to remain on the job without any classroom duties and no children will be left in their care. The employee(s) will not be allowed to return to the classroom or be responsible for any children until the investigation is complete.
  - c. If the incident is found to be of a severe nature the employee(s) will be immediately terminated.
  - d. If the incident is not found to be severe the employee(s) will be allowed to return to regular duties, but will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- (3) Any violation of this policy is grounds for immediate dismissal from AACS/Head Start employment. AACS reserves the right to implement this policy using its discretion, taking into consideration mitigating factors in any situation, including but not limited to the degree of threat of potential harm to the child/children left unattended and the circumstances surrounding the conduct resulting in the incident.

If applicable, any occurrence that is substantiated by the Department of Family and Children will result in immediate termination.