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Ref #: 1302.30; 1302.31; 1302.32; 1302.33	Policy Council Approval Date: 07/25/2023

COMPONENT: EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE: To be developmentally and linguistically appropriate; recognizing that children have individual rates of development as well as individual interests, temperaments, languages, cultural backgrounds and learning styles; to be inclusive of children with disabilities; provide an environment of acceptance that supports and respects gender, culture, language, and ethnicity; provide a balanced, daily program of child-initiated and adult-directed activities.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE: Classroom staff are responsible for ensuring that the classroom environment and planned activities are developmentally appropriate for all children including those with disabilities. The program will comply with Head Start Performance Standards by ensuring that:

- Teachers will utilize daily schedules which provide a balance of child-initiated and adult-initiated activities.
- Teachers, or other appropriate staff members, will complete a developmental screening for each child within the first 45 days of entry. Teachers will use the results of this screening to help determine the initial developmental level of each child.
- Teachers will complete ongoing observations to monitor each child’s ongoing progress. The *LAP: Birth to Kindergarten* will be utilized.
- The *LAP: Birth to Kindergarten* will be utilized and maintained for planning purposes during Fall, Winter, and Spring checkpoint periods and submitted to the Coach/Mentor at the end of each period.
- Teachers will plan individualized activities for children by utilizing current child assessment data from the Class Profile Report.
- Teachers will work with each child individually on a regular basis. Specific individualized activities should be documented daily.
- Teachers will plan small group activities using the most current assessment data and will ensure that small group activities occur each day.
- Teachers will supply a variety of materials that align with School Readiness Goals and planned activities designed to encourage individual and group play.
- Teachers will provide continuous opportunities for all children to practice skills and to align with School Readiness Goals experience success.
- Teachers must change materials intentionally to support children’s interests, development and learning. Changes will be noted on the lesson plan.

- In order to show respect for children’s cultures, teachers will provide an environment that reflects the cultures of all children in the program, as well as a variety of materials found in the home.
- Staff will incorporate the use of children’s home language by providing books and materials in the child’s home language.
- Classroom staff will learn key phrases in the child’s home language.
- Staff will model respect and refrain from planning activities that stereotype or limit children based on their gender, age, disability, race, ethnicity or family composition.
- Teachers will plan for variation in ability levels and interest. Teachers will use information from recent assessments in conjunction with the **School Readiness Education Crosswalk** when determining the developmental level of each child.
- Teachers will observe and communicate with children as they engage in play for opportunities to extend their thinking and range of interest and to assist them in developing problem-solving skills.
- A program must implement an intentional, age-appropriate approach to accommodate children’s need to nap or rest. For preschool age children, in a program that operates for six hours or longer per day, a regular time every day must be provided where preschool age children are encouraged but not forced to rest **or** nap. A program must provide alternative quiet learning activities for children who do not need **or** want to rest or nap.
- Teachers will utilize developmentally appropriate music provided by **Head Start** to include multicultural, instrumental, quiet and soothing.
- For children with disabilities, teachers will use routines, activities, and experiences that work toward achieving the goals set in the child’s IEP.
- Individual children will be allowed to use the rest room when needed.
- Toilet training will be encouraged when developmentally appropriate and supported by the parents.