

Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Head Start/Early Head Start

Part: 1302 Program Operations

Subpart: C-Education and Child Development Program Services

Section: 1302.31 Teaching and the Learning Environment

Subject: Teaching and the Learning Environment

Policy:

The teaching staff and other relevant staff will provide responsive care, effective teaching practices, and an organized learning environment that promotes healthy development, and children’s skills growth that is aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five and children with disabilities. The teaching staff will provide aged appropriate equipment, materials, supplies, and space for functional learning. The teaching staff will rotate and change materials intentionally and periodically to reflect children’s interests, development, learning, and the curriculum on a weekly basis in the classroom.

Procedure:

1. The teaching staff must provide a nurturing, responsive environment, and a quality classroom.
2. The teaching staff must provide a well-organized learning environment with developmentally aged 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.
3. For infants and toddlers, staff will promote relational learning and include individualized and small group activities that integrate appropriate daily routines into a flexible schedule of learning experiences. And for an infant or toddler that is a dual language learner, staff will include teaching practices that focus on the development of the home language, when there is a teacher with appropriate language competency, and experiences that expose the child to English.
4. For preschool-age children, staff will include teacher-directed and child-initiated activities, active and quiet learning activities, and opportunities for an individual, small group, and large group learning activities. And for a preschool-age dual language learner, staff will include teaching practices that focus on both English language acquisition and the continued development of the home language.
5. The teaching staff will rotate the library, dramatic play theme, blocks, art activities, sand/water play, computer programs, and manipulative toys to reflect the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Creative Curriculum for Infants Toddlers & Twos, Creative Curriculum Studies for Twos, Creative Curriculum Preschool & Teaching Guide Studies, Teaching Strategies GOLD Domains, and the monthly theme.
6. The teaching staff will provide aged appropriate equipment, materials, supplies, and space for functional learning. The teaching staff will rotate and change materials intentionally and

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periodically to reflect children's interest, development, learning and the curriculum on a weekly basis in the classroom.

7. The teaching staff must provide an intentional, age-appropriate approach to accommodate children's need to nap or rest. Preschool children are encouraged, but not forced, to rest or nap. Staff must provide an alternative quiet learning activity for children who do not need or want to rest or nap.
8. During naptime or when assisting children to sleep, staff are not allowed to lie down with children under any circumstance.
9. The teaching staff must implement snacks and mealtimes in ways that support development and learning. For bottle-fed infants, this approach must include holding infants during feeding to support socialization. Snacks and mealtimes must be structured and used as learning opportunities that support teaching staff-child interactions and foster communication and conversations that contribute to a child's learning, development, and socialization.
10. All staff will participate in family-style meals and engage in appropriate table conversation when eating with the children. Staff will also provide sufficient time for children to eat, not use food as a reward or punishment, and not force children to finish their food or drink all their milk.
11. The teaching staff must approach routines, such as hand washing and diapering, and transitions between activities, as opportunities for strengthening development, learning, and skill growth.
12. The teaching staff will intentionally plan and integrate movement and physical activity into curricular activities and daily routines in ways that support health and learning.
13. The teaching staff will not use physical activity as a reward or punishment.