Appendix C:
The Content

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Developing Policies and Procedures

Many standards require a program policy or procedure. It is important to develop these with thought and consideration.

Policies

Policies and procedures often go hand in hand. A policy is a rule or guidance and a procedure is how the policy is executed. For example, a program could have a policy to protect children from all allergens. Their procedures may be to ask parents to identify allergies at enrollment, have allergy postings in classrooms, train staff on allergies, remove pets that shed or have dander from the center, and so on. The policies assessed by a third-party quality endorsement system typically cover many different topics. Sometimes it is clear how the policy affects high quality, such as a policy on ethical behavior. Sometimes it is less clear, such as a policy on insurance coverage. While most would not disagree with the need for insurance in early childhood programs, some may ask how it correlates to high quality for children.

There are two lines of reasoning for most required policies and procedures:

1. The policy provides for a safe, stable, and predictable environment that ensures the focus can remain on learning and development. A program without these types of policies will find itself constantly distracted with ancillary issues, family/staff disputes, licensing challenges and the like.

2. Policies that don't have a direct correlation to quality are to ensure the endorsement is truly meaningful and that the program has the capacity to sustain high quality over time. While having insurance or a sound budget (another policy that does not appear to correlate to high quality) might not be indicative of quality, could an endorsement system give a program its highest rating if they didn't have the policy in place? In other words, if the classroom practices are magnificent but any child who is injured on the playground is stuck with all the medical bills, or the environment is enriched but the program may have to close its doors next month because they don't balance their budget, is the program really functioning at the highest quality?

If you find yourself in the situation where you need to create and adopt a new policy to meet high quality standards it should be looked at in the same way as a classroom improvement: an opportunity to increase the quality of care for children and families. But developing and incorporating a policy is not as simple as typing it up and distributing it, not if you really intend to integrate the policy and practice into your program.

How to Develop a Policy

When developing a new policy, here are a few guidelines to follow:

- For consistency and to ensure all readers know it's a policy, develop a template.
- Answer *what* and *why* as you write the policy.
- Make sure the policy is reflective of the program's overall mission and goals and does not contradict other policies.
- Keep the language clear, concise, and complete to ensure that the reader can fully understand the purpose of the policy.

Policy Example

Sunshine Child Development Center minimizes the spread of infectious diseases and prioritizes the health and safety of the children and staff members while at the program.

How to Write Procedures

When writing procedures, follow these guidelines:

- Develop a template to differentiate procedures from policies (they can also be a part of or attached to the relevant policy).
- Answer *when* and *how* in the procedure.
- Make sure it does not contradict other procedures or the program's mission and goals.

Procedure Example

Sunshine Child development Center will

- *require the use of gloves during all contact with bodily fluids*
- *train staff on universal precautions upon hire and annually thereafter*
- *require everyone to wash their hands upon entering the building*
- *require full compliance with hand washing and diapering procedures*

Note: The policy and procedure examples noted above were not written to meet standards and are not intended to be copied.

Implementing a Policy

Creating policies and procedures is one thing. Implementing them is another. Many programs have written a policy to meet a standard but failed to plan for its implementation. A good example of this is semiannual conferences between families and teachers. This policy is often in writing, but its implementation has not been considered or committed to and therefore doesn't always happen. If you write a policy, you also must plan how it will be implemented and make sure this is explicit in the procedures. Even if an accompanying procedure is not required, it is a good idea to develop one. Ensuring everyone knows how the policy is implemented will help contribute to its implementation.

A Plan for Introducing Policies

Developing a plan for introducing policies may sound unnecessary, but it is a good idea. Will you introduce them at staff meetings? Will you write them into handbooks each year? Will you announce them on a family bulletin board or newsletter? Determine how you will share new or updated policies so they are given the attention and commitment they deserve.

Walk the Walk

As the leader and manager of the program you must set a good example, walk the walk, and talk the talk. When a policy and procedure is in place, you should not only enforce it, you should be its role model. Do you wash your hands every time you enter a room? Do you arrange for fire and disaster drills monthly? Do you offer relevant staff training? Do you follow ratios? If you adhere to policies, new and old, they are more likely to be adopted quickly and effortlessly.

Physical Environment Quick Check

Indicator	Observational Notes	Follow-Up Needed
Materials		
Classroom shelves are well stocked with ample materials.		
The materials are varied, addressing different skill development opportunities.		
Materials are in good repair.		
Materials are accessible to children (not in covered bins or up high).		
There is an ample variety of books in good repair, including nonfiction, fiction, and teacher or child made.		
Materials are available to address all learning domains and appropriate age-level skill development.		
Materials are available to ensure variety in outdoor play.		

Physical Environment Quick Check (cont.)

Indicator	Observational Notes	Follow-Up Needed
Design		
The classroom is divided into distinct learning areas that allow for different sized groups of children to engage.		
Materials are labeled and organized in a way that helps children find them and put them away.		
The decor is child-focused. Children's work and art and real-life photos dominate.		
There are soft and cozy spaces for children to play and relax.		
The room arrangement considers the noise level of different learning centers.		
Upon entering the room, the observer can identify what children are working on and accomplishing in the room based on activity and decor.		

Health and Safety Checklist

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Criteria Evaluation Form

Criteria Number:	Category:
Intent of criteria: (information from self-study materials and staff discussion)	
How we meet the criteria: (practical application of criteria intent)	
Observable evidence (if applicable):	
Documented evidence (if applicable):	
Action plan to meet (if applicable):	

Criteria Number:	Category:
Intent of criteria: (information from self-study materials and staff discussion)	
How we meet the criteria: (practical application of criteria intent)	
Observable evidence (if applicable):	
Documented evidence (if applicable):	
Action plan to meet (if applicable):	

Interactions Self-Quiz

Interactions are one of your most important and effective teaching tools. There is a lot to learn about interactions and how to use them effectively in the classroom. This quiz will help you to see where you are and where you need to go.

Statement	Yes, or most of the time	No, or rarely
I sit and talk with children at meal and snacktimes.		
I allow children to make choices.		
I read to children at least two times every day.		
I sing to children.		
I speak to children at their eye level.		
I ask children questions to find out what they are thinking.		
I ask children questions to find out what they are learning.		
I ask children questions to find out about them.		
I verbally welcome all children, parents, and visitors to my classroom.		
I have conversations with children during routine care, such as during hand washing and diapering.		
I choose my words carefully.		
I use positional words (under, before, next to).		
I use children's names more than nicknames.		
I use words to comfort and reassure.		
I use words to help children describe their thoughts, actions, and feelings, and validate them.		
I use interactions to build children's self-confidence.		
My words are positive and not biased.		
I use open-ended questions and comments.		
When I tell children to use their words, I know they know the words they need.		
I limit my use of the word *no*.		
I explain why even to nonverbal children.		
I use words to solve problems.		
I offer specific praise, such as "I like the choice you made," more often than generic praise, such as "Good job."		

Family Questionnaire

Family primary last name: Other family last names:	Date:

We like to stay in touch with our families (for nonemergency reasons) throughout the week. What is your preferred method of communication? (please circle and provide information)

E-mail: _____   Work phone: _____

Cell phone: _____   Other: _____

Child's Development	Objectives for Education Program
Children change, grow, and develop every day. Please share information on your child's current development, likes or dislikes, or discoveries or interests at home.	Every family has different objectives or hopes for their child's experience in an early education program. Tell us about yours.

Family Questionnaire (cont.)

Family Traditions	Program Participation Opportunities
We enjoy learning about different family or holiday traditions. What family or holiday traditions do you have that we could learn more about at school? (For example, a cooking project, song, story, game, or craft.) We also invite family members to visit our center and share these traditions if possible. We welcome parents and guardians, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and other interested people. Please let us know of anyone who may be interested in sharing with our center. Describe traditions here:	We love it when family members join our program. We also understand busy schedules. Please circle any opportunities you would like more information about. • Reading to the class • Preparing materials for activities at home • Donating recyclable items • Planning center events • Helping during classroom special event • Chaperoning field trips • Cooking or craft project support • Collecting dramatic play items • Making bibs or blankets • Sharing information about your work (for example, firefighter, stylist, architect, veterinarian, nurse) or hobby (for example, rock collecting, scrapbooking, photography) • Other _____
Is there anything else you'd like to share with us about your family?	

Family Survey

(Questions can be modified to suit your program's needs/characteristics.)

Tell us how we're doing. Please provide as much detail as you can so we can provide the best care possible.		
Question	**Please circle your response.** **5 = absolutely** **1 = not at all**	**Comments**
I feel my child's growth and development is supported.	5 4 3 2 1	
I have a positive relationship with my child's teachers.	5 4 3 2 1	
The amount and type of communication with teachers and management is satisfactory.	5 4 3 2 1	
I feel my child is safe in this environment.	5 4 3 2 1	
I understand what my child is learning and how he/she is developing in the classroom.	5 4 3 2 1	
The program's family events (for example, conferences, special events) are conveniently scheduled.	5 4 3 2 1	
I am satisfied with my level of involvement in the program.	5 4 3 2 1	
I understand and am not surprised by the program policies and procedures (hours, sick child policy, and so on).	5 4 3 2 1	
Someone from management is available and receptive when I need to speak with them.	5 4 3 2 1	
If you would like follow-up on any of these items please provide your name and preferred method of contact.		
Thank you for your time and commitment to our program!		

Family and Community Activity Planning Sheet

Month 1:	Month 2:	Month 3:	Month 4:
Family connection:	Family connection:	Family connection:	Family connection:
Community connection:	Community connection:	Community connection:	Community connection:
Month 5:	**Month 6:**	**Month 7:**	**Month 8:**
Family connection:	Family connection:	Family connection:	Family connection:
Community connection:	Community connection:	Community connection:	Community connection:
Month 9:	**Month 10:**	**Month 11:**	**Month 12:**
Family connection:	Family connection:	Family connection:	Family connection:
Community connection:	Community connection:	Community connection:	Community connection:

Ongoing connections (newsletters, for example):

Daily Walkabout Sheet

Date: _____

- ☐ The center is clean and inviting.

- ☐ Correct hand-washing procedures are being followed.

- ☐ Correct diapering procedures are being followed.

- ☐ Evidence of communication with families is apparent in each classroom.

- ☐ Evidence of learning is apparent in each classroom.

- ☐ The classroom environments are set up to encourage learning.

- ☐ Sufficient materials are available in each classroom to allow for play and learning.

- ☐ Teachers are encouraging the development of age-appropriate math skills.

- ☐ Teachers are encouraging the development of age-appropriate reading skills.

- ☐ Teachers are encouraging the development of age-appropriate writing skills.

- ☐ Teachers are encouraging the development of problem-solving skills.

- ☐ Age-appropriate child guidance skills are used and are evident.

- ☐ Teachers and children are having meaningful conversations.

- ☐ Teachers are asking age-appropriate open-ended questions.

- ☐ A fair balance of teacher-driven and child-initiated activities are planned for the day.

- ☐ Each classroom has planned for large-motor activities for the day.

- ☐ Evidence of teachers observing children's learning is apparent.

- ☐ Teachers have planned for family involvement in their classroom.

☐ Evidence of respectful representation of diversity within the classroom and the community is apparent.

☐ Each classroom is inviting and child-centered.

Areas of opportunity:

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Plan of action for remediation:

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