

POLICY COUNCIL BY-LAWS

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**ARTICLE I**

**Name of Organization**

**Section 1**

The name of the organization shall be the Le Jardin Community Center, Inc. Policy Council. The location of the administration office of Le Jardin Community Center, Inc. is located at 311 NE 8th Street, Suite 203, Homestead, Florida 33030.

**ARTICLE II**

**The Objective and Purpose of the Council Section 1**

The purpose shall be to implement the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) 1301.3 establishing the Le Jardin Community Center, Inc. Policy Council who will be responsible for the direction of the program at the agency level.

The Policy Council must work in partnership with key management staff and the Board of Directors to develop, review and approve or disapprove the following policies and procedures:

1. All funding applications and amendments to funding applications for Early Head Start including administrative services prior to the submission of such application to the Office of Head Start
2. Procedures describing how the Board of Directors and the Policy Council will implement shared decision-making;
3. The composition of the Policy Council and the procedures by which policy group members are chosen;
4. Criteria for defining recruitment, selection, and enrollment procedures;
5. The annual self-assessment of Le Jardin’s progress in carrying out the intent of its grant application;
6. The annual independent audit;
7. Program human resource policies;
8. Program operational policies;
9. Decisions to hire or terminate the Executive Director of Le Jardin;
10. Approval of policies and procedures regarding hiring and terminating employees.

**Section 2**

The Policy Council must perform the following functions directly:

1. Serve as a link to the Center Parent Committee, Board of Directors, public and private organizations, and the community.
2. Assist center Parent Committees in communicating with parents enrolled in the program to ensure that they understand their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities and to encourage their participation in the program.
3. Assist Center Parent Committees in planning, coordinating and organizing program activities for parents with the assistance of staff, and ensuring that funds set aside from program budgets are used to support parent activities.
4. Assist in recruiting volunteer services from the parents, community resources to meet identified needs.
5. Establish and maintain procedures for working with Le Jardin to resolve community complaints about the program.

**Section 3**

Le Jardin staff and the Policy Council jointly must establish written procedures for resolving internal disputes, including impasse procedures between the Board of Directors and Policy Committee.

**ARTICLE III**

**Structure and Composition of Membership**

**Section 1**

The structure of Le Jardin’s Policy Council shall ensure the parental control of the Committee is maintained.

**Section 2**

The Early Head Start Policy Council shall include the following Category:

1. At least 51% shall be current parents (Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, Secretary, plus one alternate from each center) elected by the parent group of the center.
2. One or more representative from other Agencies or Community organization who are supportive of Le Jardin Community Center, Inc.

**Section 3**

Neither staff members nor members of their immediate families of Le Jardin Community Center, Inc. shall serve on the Policy Council, (immediate family means wife, husband, son, daughter, mother, father, sister, brother, grandparents or relatives by marriage of comparable degree).

**Section 4**

Members elected to the Council shall serve a one (1) program year term. Members may be re-elected, but not exceed three (3) years. After an absentee of one (1) year, a former member may be reconsidered for membership.

**Section 5**

At the time that Policy Council is electing the Representatives from the community, the policy Council will also elect one parent for membership on the Le Jardin Community Center, Inc. Board of Directors. This member will function as a liaison between the Policy Council and Le Jardin Community Center, Inc. Governing Board and serve on both Governing bodies according to their bylaws. This Representative will be elected for an annual term commencing in November of each year.

**Article IV**

**Meetings**

**Section 1**

Regular meetings of the Council shall be held once a month.

**Section 2**

Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson, or another officer upon six (6) voting members.

**Section 3**

All members shall receive written notice of special meetings at least forty-eight hours in advance. This notice shall state the purpose of the meeting, person(s) calling this meeting, and should include materials related to the Agenda items.

**Section 4**

The meeting of the Council shall be conducted in general conformity with Robert Rules of Order except as may otherwise be provided by these By-laws or as the Council may prescribe.

**Article V**

**Reimbursements**

**Section 1**

In accordance with the HSPPS section 1304.50 (f), reimbursement (payment made to cover the cost of certain expenses actually incurred as a result of attendance at a meeting or in the performance of other office duties and responsibilities in connection with Le Jardin CommunityCenter), shall be made to low income members of the Council in the following manner:

The following expenses incurred as the result of other official duties and responsibilities in connection with Le Jardin Community Center, Inc. Program may be reimbursed.

 **Travel**

 Reimbursement may be made for transportation to and from official appointment by the least expensive, convenient means of transportation. This shall be public transportation, or when no public transportation is available, by taxi, or by private automobile at a rate not to exceed twenty-five cents ($.25) per mile.

 **Child Care**

Reimbursement for child care will not be available for any local meetings for parents. Parents attending out-of-town meetings, conferences and trainings can request reimbursement for child care expenses in an amount not to exceed $25.00 per day. Reimbursement request must be presented by the traveler in writing and accompanied by a receipt. Le Jardin will follow the Accounting and Financial Policies and Procedures reimbursement policy.

 **Per Diem**

 Per Diem may be paid to both eligible and non-eligible members of policy-making bodies when attendance at a meeting requires overnight lodging. Such payment shall be in accordance with the Standardized Government Travel Regulations, OEO Instruction 6901-1 cited above and Section 112.061, Florida Statues, 1969, or as amended. (A per diem allowance is paid in lieu and lodging).

 **Other Expenses**

 Calls made on a private telephone will not be allowed as a reimbursable expense. A grantee agency may make the use of telephones in the offices of the agency available to Le Jardin parents who are members of the Policy Council.

**Article VI**

**Elections and Duties of Officers**

**Section 1**

Officers shall consist of six (6) positions; a President/Chairperson, Vice President/Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and Policy Facilitator, and Grievance representative.

Only elected parent representatives are eligible for the office of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. The Secretary, Treasurer, Policy Facilitator, and Grievance representative may be elected from among any category of membership of the committee

**Section 2**

Officers shall serve a one-year term of office, subject to reelection but not to exceed three (3) years.

**Section 3**

The duties of the officers shall be those which usually apply to those officers identified in Robert Rules of Order.

**ARTICLE VII**

**Quorum**

**Section 1**

Forty-one percent (41%) of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

**ARTICLE VIII**

 **Voting Procedures**

**Section 1**

The vote of six (6) of the Council members present at a duly constituted (i.e. quorum) or special Council meeting shall represent official action of the Council.

**Section 2**

Each member of the Council shall have one (1) vote be prepared by the Council Secretary and made available at any meeting upon request by any member. Center shall submit the names of their representatives and alternates to the Council prior to the October meeting. Such names must have been submitted to the Council in order to allow alternates to vote during the absence of an elected representative. Alternates names that have not been submitted (in writing) will not be permitted to vote under any conditions.

**Section 3**

Election of officers shall be held at the second regular Council meeting (October) of each new program year. All current officers will officially vacate their seats following the election of new officers, unless reelected.

**Section 4**

Nominations for officers will be made from the floor at the second regular Le Jardin Community Center, Inc. Policy Council meeting open or “blind ballot” shall elect all officers. The candidates receiving 51% or more of the votes cast shall be declared the winner.

**ARTICLE IX**

**Vacancies and Removal of Committee Members**

**Section 1**

Vacancies on the Policy Council shall be filled by election or selection of representatives from those Center Committees, wherein they occur. Any representative filing a vacancy does so only for the balance of the term of the Policy Council member being replaced.

**Section 2**

No representative selected shall serve in such a capacity for a period of more than two (2) months without duly being elected by the center. Vacancies can be filled by appointment if elections are not immediately feasible, but election must take place within two (2) months in order for that person to continue holding his/her seat on the Policy Council.

**Section 3**

All vacancies shall be filled within 30 calendar days of the date the Council officially declares a seat “vacant”.

**Section 4**

All Council members shall be expected to attend meetings of the Committee on regular basis. Any members missing three (3) consecutive meetings during the program year shall be automatically removed from the Committee, unless they are excused absences by the President/Chairperson or Secretary.

The member and his/her Center Parent Committee shall be notified by the Secretary of this action in writing.

**Section 5**

Policy Council member may resign from the Policy Council by sending a letter of resignation to the Policy Council Chairperson.

**ARTICLE X**

**Committees**

**Section 1**

**Permanent Committees**

**Planning and Budget Committee**

Responsibilities include:

1. Determining Center Committee and areas where program will operate;
2. Working with staff on Grant Application Process;
3. Reviewing budget changes and program direction changes;
4. Generally assisting the agency in determining priorities.

**Evaluation Committee**

Responsibilities include:

1. Assisting in the self-evaluation of the agency’s Program;
2. Working with staff to design and implement evaluations;
3. Generally working with the agency in a manner which increases the effectiveness of the program.
4. Interviews

The screening panel for Early Head Start positions should include two parents. At least one of the parents must be a member of the Policy Council.

1. Selection

The Le Jardin Executive Director will review the results of the screening, may interview those being recommended by the panel and makes selection(s) to fill the position(s).

The recommendation is given in writing to Le Jardin by the Policy Council.

1. If approved, the Executive Committee takes the recommendation before the policy Council for approval.
2. If not approved by the Executive Committee, the recommendation is presented to the Policy Council at its next regular scheduled meeting for approval.
3. After approval by the Executive Committee, the recommendation is presented to the Policy Council at its next regular scheduled meeting for approval.
4. If approved, it goes to the Le Jardin Executive Director for final approval
5. If a quorum is not present, the recommendation of the Executive Committee stands.
6. If not approved, it goes back to the Executive Committee for resolution.
7. After approval by the Policy Council, it goes to Le Jardin’s Executive Director for approval.
8. If approved, a job offer is made.
9. If not approved it goes back to the Executive Director for resolution.

**Resolution Alternates**

1. Select alternate candidate(s) from interviews and begin process.
2. Interview additional candidates and begin process again.
3. Request to re-advertise.

**Grievance Committee**

Responsibilities include:

Setting up a line of communication with parents and staff to hear any complaints that may occur within the Program. If there should be grievances presented to the Committee, it is the responsibility of the Committee to see that staff members have followed staff procedures before coming to the committee.

**Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee shall be comprised of all Officers of the Committee and Chairperson of all permanent Committee, the majority of whom shall be parents. The Chairperson may appoint additional Committee members to serve on the Executive Committee.

The Policy Council, by a major vote, may authorize the Executive Committee to transact Committee Business between meetings of the full Committee and to act on its behalf in case of emergency subject to its ratification.

 **Subsection 1**

 The Executive Committee must fairly reflect the composition of the full committee

**Subsection 2**

There must be at least fifty-one (51%) of the total Committee membership present to constitute a quorum.

**Subsection 3**

The majority of the Executive Committee seats shall be reserved for Early Head Start parents.

The Executive Committee shall assist the Council in the formulation of plans and shall also serve to make recommendations to the Council.

The Executive Committee shall meet as frequently as deemed necessary by the Chairperson or its members.

**Section 2-Ad Hoc Committee (specific task)**

The Chairperson of the Committee shall create such Ad Hoc Committees.

Such Committees shall be terminated upon completion of their assigned tasks.

The Chairperson shall be an ex-office member of all Committees established at any point in time.

**ARTICLE XI**

**Committee Associations**

**Section 1**

The Committee shall attempt to participate by representation at all related conferences and committees concerning families and children.

**Section 2**

The Committee will attempt to develop through training, a core of parents with particular skills including leadership related to the agency’s program.

The purpose of such action is to provide opportunities for skill development and participation in community related activities.

**ARTICLE XII**

**Amendments**

**Section 1**

The Council shall be guided by these by-laws for the conduct of its business and carrying out the purpose of the Council.

**Section 2**

These by-laws may be adopted, amended or repealed at any meeting of the Council by two-third (2/3) vote of the members present, provided quorum exists.

**Section 3**

Notice of all proposed amendments shall be provided to each Policy Council member at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting where such amendments are to be considered for adoption.

**These revised By-laws will become effective upon approval by Le Jardin Community Center, Inc. Policy Council, having been adopted by the Policy Council on the 26th day of October 2021.**

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Policy Council Chairperson Date

**These revised By-Laws will become effective upon approval of the Le Jardin Community Center, Inc. Governing Body**:

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Policy Council President Date