

Standard of Conduct:

Safe, Nurturing & Responsive Environment Policy

Policy No. 221

Supportive, responsive relationships among adults and children are essential components needed for healthy, social emotional development. All staff (staff from each partner organization that come in contact with children in all settings) must assure that children under our supervision are in an environment that is safe, nurturing and responsive. All staff must ensure environments and experiences promote trust, foster independence and teach self-control in children. Any staff who is observed or perceived as violating this policy will communicate “**See Something, Say Something**” practice as part of Culture of Safety and will report immediately to their manager, supervisor, or designee.

- Performance Standard 1302.31 The Teaching and Learning Environment (a) (b) (1) (c) (1) (2) (d) (e)
 - Performance Standard 1302.45 Child Mental Health and Social Emotional Well-being (a) (1) (b) (1) (2) (3)
 - WAC 110-300-0325 Creating a climate for healthy child development
 - WAC 110-300A-2040 What behavior management and guidance practices must I have in place?
1. **Safe Learning Environment:** Provide an environment that secures children’s safety while still allowing children to explore and develop. Staff must:
- a. Ensure the classroom environment will meet and maintain children’s safety by following the programs policies, protocols, performance standards and curriculum expectations.
 - b. Enforce safety precautions and practices in the classroom as children begin to grow and develop.
 - c. Provide appropriate room arrangement and materials when working with infants, toddlers, preschoolers, mixed-age groups and materials must be reflective of children’s abilities, culture and unique interests.
 - d. Develop schedules and routines that are flexible to the needs and interests of children.
 - e. Conduct safety checks of the indoor and outdoor environment each day and before children arrive to the center.
 - f. Ensure furniture and equipment are sized appropriately for the age and developmental levels of children who use the space.
 - g. Ensure furniture, materials, and toys must be in good condition and will be free of hazards to the children who use the space.
 - h. Ensure play surfaces are clean, bedding and soft toys are laundered and hard surfaces and toys are regularly cleaned and sanitized.
 - i. Ensure that frequent handwashing occurs throughout the day including, when entering the classroom, before feeding an infant, before preparing or serving food, after diapering and toileting, and after blowing or wiping a child’s nose. (See Hand Washing Policy #216)
 - j. Allow all children the freedom to move and explore in the classroom; learning areas, materials or toys will not be restricted from the children.

Standard of Conduct:

Safe, Nurturing & Responsive Environment Policy

Policy No. 221

- k. Ensure the classroom offers hands-on opportunities for children to explore.
 - l. Support uninterrupted learning time (as much time as appropriate) with learning materials and products, limiting disruptions during activities, and offering additional choices when activities are completed.
 - m. Organize classrooms around the children's interests and ideas and developmental level.
 - n. Provide opportunity for children to direct their own learning and problem solving rather than teacher-directed activities.
 - o. Honor all children's race, religion, culture, gender, physical ability and family structure.
2. **Nurturing and Responsive Care:** Providing and maintaining a positive climate to promote healthy, nurturing and supportive responsive care for all children in the program

Staff serving infants and toddlers must:

- a. Give individual attention to infants & toddlers when and as needed.
- b. Communicate with the infants and toddlers throughout the day and during feeding, diaper changing, and bonding times. (See Diaper Changing Policy #214)
- c. Talk and listen to infants and toddlers, encouraging soft sounds, naming objects, feelings, and desires, and describing actions.
- d. Provide social contact with infants and toddlers in addition to time spent feeding, diapering, playing with children, naming and acknowledging emotions, and encouraging peer interaction;
- e. Respond positively to a child's verbal and nonverbal cues
- f. Provide physical stimulation through holding, cuddling, rocking, talking, singing, playing, and carrying.
- g. Investigate immediately children's cries or other signs of distress and discomfort.
- h. Provide materials and equipment that promote social and emotional activities such as pictures of children and adults exhibiting different emotions, pictures of infants and family members, dolls and soft toys, rattles, music, and dancing scarves.
- i. Use a calm and respectful tone of voice
- j. Use facial expressions such as smiling, laughing, and enthusiasm to match a child's mood
- k. Observe children in order to learn about their families, cultures, individual interests, ideas, questions, and theories
- l. Utilize gentle warm touches, have close proximity, speak at children's eye level and communicate in their home language.

Staff Serving Preschool Children must:

- a. Provide age-appropriate opportunities for the child to grow and develop intellectually.
- b. Interact with children using positive communication and positive redirection.
- c. Promote autonomy in children in building independence, leadership and responsibility.
- d. Encourage children to try new activities, explore new learning areas and engage with peers.
- e. Utilize positive and meaningful transitions with the children.
- f. Give directions that are clear and realistic to children's age and skill level.

Standard of Conduct:

Safe, Nurturing & Responsive Environment Policy

Policy No. 221

- g. Model appropriate expressions and labeling of their own emotions and self-regulation throughout the course of the day to help promote social problem solving.
 - h. Create a classroom community by establishing positive trusting relationships with children and then helping children build positive trusting relationships with each other.
 - i. Recognize, acknowledge and have sensitivity towards children's feelings.
 - j. Speak to all children in a respectful manner.
 - k. Recognize and validate children for their own efforts, accomplishments and progress.
 - l. Have matched affect in the classroom with the children.
 - m. Utilize safe friendly touches (high-five, thumbs up, wiggle finger hand shake, friendly bear hug), have close proximity with children, speak at children's eye level and communicate in their home language.
3. **Staff must not:**
- a. Speak "down", belittle, humiliate, threaten or physically harm a child.
 - b. Use harsh or aggressive tone of voice with a child.
 - c. Leave a child unsupervised, uncared for, or ignoring a child. (See Child Active Supervision Policy #220)
 - d. Restrict children from exploring materials, a learning area, or engaging with other children.
 - e. Fail to meet or attend to the basic, social and emotional needs of a child.
 - f. Be emotionally disconnected from children or avoid to engaging with a children, individually or in a group.
 - g. Allow a child to be teased or bullied by an adult or other children.
 - h. Restrict children from moving around.
 - i. Restrict children from engaging in conversation or expressing their ideas.
 - j. Limit children's choices and opportunities to be part of the classroom.
 - k. Intentionally cause a child to become agitated, distress, cry or allow crying to continue without attention and emotional support.
 - l. Inappropriately control children's choices, behaviors, and interactions.
4. **Safe Environment Observation form:**
- a. The form will be used by both partner agencies- ESD 105 Content Team and EPICs Management team.
 - b. The observation form will be used for all programs and all age groups.
 - c. The form will be completely filled out when an observation has taken place.
 - d. The original form will be placed in the team binder at the site. A copy will be given to EPIC's Director and to the Data Manager at ESD 105 to upload in Child Plus.
 - e. If follow-up or concerns are noted on the form, then the center manager or direct supervisor must follow-up with the team immediately and communicate with the Content Team for any needed support or training.

Standard of Conduct:
Safe, Nurturing & Responsive Environment Policy

Policy No. 221

CJ/HR Dept. 4/11/19
(NEW POLICY)

Approved by Policy Council: 4/11/19
Approved by Board of Directors: 5/28/19

ECEAP Performance Standards:
Head Start Act:
Head Start Performance Standards:
1302.90 (c)(1)