

## HOW TO CONDUCT MEETINGS

### A Guide for Head Start Councils

Material for this guide was adapted from:

The First Book of How to Run A Meeting, by David Powers, Franklin Watts, Inc.,  
1967

### HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL

The Head Start Policy Council is a structure for providing a formal means of involving parents in decisions about the Head Start program.

“How to Conduct Meetings” is intended as a guide which may be useful to members of the Head Start Policy Council in conducting business at their regular meetings. Meetings usually follow a set procedure, called parliamentary procedure. The rules of this procedure are not hard to learn and once you are familiar with them, you will have more confidence with it and its usefulness.

### RULES FOR MEETING PROCEDURES

There are four principles that are important if a meeting is conducted democratically:

1. The wish of the majority is followed.
2. The rights of the minority must be protected.

People see things in different ways. Sometimes you will not agree with the majority and this is no disgrace. Parliamentary procedure assures that all members have a chance to express their opinions.

3. Respect for the dignity of all members must be assured.

When you become a member of the Head Start Policy Council, you join a group of equal partners where everyone has the same rights. If this rule is broken, your group will become a fighting group and nothing will get done.

4. An order of business must be established.

Members must agree to follow a way of getting things done. If not, much time is wasted in endless fussing and fuming.

## HOW MEETINGS ARE CONDUCTED

It is the privilege of the Chair of the Head Start Policy Council to preside at the meetings.

There are eight steps the Chair should follow in conducting a meeting. They are:

- I. Call the meeting to order.
- II. Hear the minutes of the previous meeting.
- III. Hear the reports of the officers and standing committees.
- IV. Hear the reports of special committees.
- V. Tend to unfinished (old) business from the last meeting.
- VI. Go on to new business.
- VII. Hear announcements.
- VIII. End (adjourn) the meeting.

### I. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER.

In order to conduct business, it is usually agreed that there must be a certain number of members present. This is called a quorum. The by-laws of the Oahu Head Start Policy Council state that the quorum for meetings is a simple majority of the total membership. So, if the Policy Council's membership totals 35, the quorum necessary to conduct a meeting would be 18 members present.

The Chair asks the secretary if there are enough members present to have a meeting. If there is a quorum, the Chair announces:

“THE MEETING WILL PLEASE COME TO ORDER.”

### II. HEAR THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

“Minutes” is a parliamentary word for the record of what happened at the previous meeting. Copies of the minutes of the previous Policy Council's meeting are circulated for the members to review. In order to ensure the accuracy of this record, the Chair asks:

“ARE THERE ANY CORRECTIONS TO THE MINUTES?”

If no corrections are mentioned by the members, the Chair says:

“THE MINUTES STAND APPROVED AS READ.”

If corrections are suggested, the Chair asks the secretary to make these notations on her copy. If there is a difference of opinion on any correction, the Chair will hear both sides and then take a vote.

“SHALL THE PROPOSED CORRECTION BE MADE?  
THOSE IN FAVOR SAY, ‘AYE’.  
THOSE OPPOSED SAY, ‘NO’.

When the votes are tallied, the Chair announces the outcome:

“THE CORRECTIONS WILL BE MADE (OR WILL NOT BE MADE)  
AND THE MINUTES STAND APPROVED.”

### III. HEAR REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Sometimes a large decision-making body needs smaller committees to help them. These smaller committees spend time to study a project and then report to the whole group. These reports are merely advice to the group. They may be accepted, rejected, or changed.

STANDING COMMITTEES ARE THOSE COMMITTEES THAT ARE APPOINTED FOR THE WHOLE YEAR. Examples might be the Finance committee, or a Aloha or Hospitality committee.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES ARE COMMITTEES APPOINTED FOR SPECIAL TASKS, SUCH AS PLANNING A PICNIC. When that task is finished, the committee goes out of existence, and the members are dismissed with thanks.

After a committee makes a report, the Chair says:

“YOU HAVE HEARD THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE. WHAT IS YOUR PLEASURE?”

At this point, members can enter the discussion to suggest changes to the report, or to make motions to accept or reject the committee’s report (or any part of it).

### IV. HEAR REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The procedures in Section III also apply here.

SHARING TIME was developed by the Policy Council’s members to talk about interesting activities or concerns that their class or parent group were experiencing. This is conducted on a voluntary basis.

## V. UNFINISHED (OLD) BUSINESS

Sometimes meetings are interrupted or there isn't sufficient time to finish all the items on the agenda. These items that you postpone are called unfinished business. Tasks or projects that are not completed will appear on the agenda as unfinished business; until they are dismissed.

If too many things are left undone, members get an unsettled feeling and are never too happy about it. A helpful rule to follow is to finish one bit of business before you start another. And always take up where you left off, as each meeting is a continuation of the last one.

## VI. NEW BUSINESS

New business is any suggestion for action that hasn't been discussed before.

When a new bit of business is suggested, the Chair or members of the group can ask first for informal discussion to explore various aspects of the proposal. All members can freely express their views. When the Chair feels discussion has been exhausted, the Chair asks:

“DOES ANYONE DESIRE TO MAKE A MOTION?”

The procedure for a motion is discussed below. If no motion is made, the meeting is ready for the next bit of business.

## VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Some time in a meeting is allotted to news. The Chair asks:

“ARE THERE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS TO BE MADE AT THIS TIME?”

There can be informal discussion and question about any announcements made.

## VIII. ADJOURNMENT

When the business of the meeting is finished, the Chair says:

“IF THERE IS NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING STANDS ADJOURNED.”

At any time during a meeting, a member may introduce a motion to adjourn the meeting, if by doing so one isn't interrupting another speaker. The member simply says:

“I MOVE WE ADJOURN.”



When the Chair hears the motion seconded, the Chair says:

“IT HAS BEEN MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE MEETING ADJOURN.”

### MOTIONS – HOW TO MAKE THEM, HOW TO PRESENT THEM

A motion is a way of getting your idea before the group. How to make a motion:

A proposal for action is made in the form of a motion. For the group to consider a motion, at least two people must be in favor of it. The first member makes the motion. The second member seconds the motion to show approval of it.

A motion should be expressed in the affirmative. It should suggest the Head Start Policy Council does something rather than not do something. EXAMPLE:

“I MOVE THAT THE HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF MRS. \_\_\_\_ AS A HEAD START TEACHER.”

or “I MOVE THAT THE POLICY COUNCIL APPROVE THE PROPOSED LATE ENROLLMENT POLICY EFFECTIVE APRIL 11, 1985.”

or “I MOVE THAT THE POLICY COUNCIL APPROVE THE PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT FUNDS GRANT APPLICATION AS PRESENTED.”

Steps in presenting a motion:

1. A member addresses the Chair.
2. The member is recognized by the Chair.
3. The member states a proposal.
4. Another member seconds the motion.
5. The Chair restates the motion.
6. The chair conducts any discussion.
7. The Chair puts the motion to vote.
8. The Chair announces the result.

EXAMPLE:

A member addresses the Chair by name or by raising a hand. The member waits to be recognized by the Chair with a nod or by name. When recognized, the member states the motion so that all can hear:

“I MOVE THAT THE POLICY COUNCIL APPROVE THE PROPOSED LATE ENROLLMENT POLICY EFFECTIVE APRIL 11, 1985.

Another member, who is in favor of this motion, calls out (without waiting to be recognized):

“I SECOND THE MOTION.”

The motion to adjourn is not debatable so the Chair calls for a voice immediately:

“ALL IN FAVOR OF ADJOURNING, SAY, ‘AYE’.  
THOSE OPPOSED SAY, ‘NO’.”

If the ayes have it, the Chair announces:

“THE MOTION IS CARRIED, THE MEETING IS ADJOURNED.”

If the motion did not carry a majority of the votes, the Chair announces:

“THE MOTION IS DEFEATED.”

The Chair then states:

“IT HAS BEEN MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL APPROVE THE LATE ENROLLMENT POLICY EFFECTIVE APRIL 11, 1985. THE FLOOR IS NOW OPEN FOR DISCUSSION.”

At this point, the motion is said to be pending. The members now openly discuss the pros and cons of the motion. Any member may rise to agree or disagree with the proposal after being recognized by the Chair. After discussion seems complete, the Chair asks:

“IS THERE ANY FURTHER DISCUSSION?”

If there is no response for discussion, the Chair asks:

“ARE YOU READY FOR THE QUESTION?”

The question is the vote, and if members are ready to put the motion to vote, they respond with:

“QUESTION.”

The Chair then takes the vote by first stating the motion:

“IT HAS BEEN MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL APPROVE THE LATE ENROLLMENT POLICY EFFECTIVE APRIL 11, 1985. THOSE IN FAVOR SAY, ‘AYE’. THOSE OPPOSED SAY, ‘NO’.”

The Chair then announces the results of the vote:

“THE AYES HAVE IT. THE MOTION IS CARRIED.”

or

“THE NO’S HAVE IT. THE MOTION IS DEFEATED.”

