

*Approved on February 12, 2026*

FOUNDATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, INC.

155 N Occidental Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026

**POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**January 15, 2026 – 9:30 A.M.-12:00 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 9:51 a.m.

Roll Call was taken and a quorum was established with 18 members present.

The minutes from our December 11, 2025 Policy Committee Meeting were read.

M/S/C Maldonado/Arevalo to approve the minutes for December 11, 2025 Policy Committee Meeting with corrections.

Our Chairperson thanked everyone for attending today's Policy Committee Meeting. She informed us that the P.C. Executive Committee met on Wednesday, January 14, 2026 to review all documents and reports for today's meeting. They have made their recommendations for all items on today's agenda and will be presenting them to us for approval.

Our Treasurer gave her report. She reported all expenditures incurred for the month of December 2025.

The delegates to the County Policy Council provided their report for the month of January 2026.

The Delegate to the Board of Directors provided her report for the meeting of December 17, 2025.

The Director presented her report. She provided the following information: Head Start follows consistent annual patterns, and we are currently in what we call "Refunding Season," which began in October. This involves the Head Start and Early Head Start grants with LACOE, and our grant draft is due by the end of this month, around the 30th. Budget considerations and community needs are driving several proposed changes, particularly the growing demand for Early Head Start. We currently serve 108 toddlers, with an additional 90 on the waitlist, highlighting a significant unmet need. To better respond, we plan to increase Early Head Start services next year by converting some Head Start slots and closing one site with lower community demand. While this is a difficult decision, it reflects our responsibility to align services with the areas of greatest need. The Soto site will be closing, but Foundation plans to open additional Early Head Start slots. Rising costs (pay rates, salaries, and overall expenses) are a major factor impacting the budget. The initial budget draft showed funding \$900,000 in the red, which was a significant concern. After working with Qi, the fiscal officer, the deficit has been reduced to \$272,000, showing strong progress toward closing the gap. LACOE awards two Golden Apple Awards each year, which are countywide recognitions and an important achievement to note. For many years, our teachers were nominated for recognition without being selected, but this year we are proud to share that Edith Kotey from the Estrada site has been chosen as a recipient of the Golden Apple Award and will be recognized by the County Board next week, with colleagues attending in support. At this time of year, we are also reviewing and preparing to renew our facility leases and MOUs, since we do not own our buildings and must update these agreements annually as our new year begins July 1st. Facility activity has been relatively quiet, with larger projects currently stalled despite early requests submitted in the fall, largely due to delays and shutdowns in Washington, D.C., which have slowed the flow of additional funds to the County and to us. However, our regular budget continues to support ongoing maintenance and repairs. In addition, we are preparing for the Office of Head Start (OHS) Review as part of the five-year grant cycle, during which OHS will conduct site visits and interview classroom staff individually without management present, with this year's FAI review focusing specifically on staff delivering services in the classroom.

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The Assistant Director of Family Services, Health, and Nutrition presented her report and shared the following updates. There were four unusual incidents reported for the month of December 2025: one gastrointestinal outbreak at Euclid, one whooping cough outbreak at Gregory Park, one facility issue at Evans due to a water outage, and a child abuse case at Garden of Progress. Attendance for the month was 83% for both Early Head Start and Head Start. An analysis report was submitted to LACOE to identify contributing factors to the low attendance. Recruitment efforts for the 2025–2026 program year are ongoing. Currently, Foundation is 98% enrolled in Head Start and 100% enrolled in Early Head Start. Family Service Associates continue active recruitment efforts, including hosting pop-up events at under-enrolled sites, canvassing neighborhoods, and participating in local community events. She also reported that a parent survey was distributed to gather feedback on food preferences. The survey results were reviewed with parents, and meetings with Chefables are planned to explore menu options based on the feedback received. Additionally, preparations are underway for the upcoming CACFP review scheduled for February 24th, including compiling documents for upload and conducting unannounced site reviews between now and the review date.

**Educational Announcements:** The Assistant Director of Education, Jocelyn Tucker, presented her report and shared the following updates: Within the Disabilities Department, there were two new referrals for Early Head Start and ten new referrals for Head Start, a number that typically increases around this time of year. All children first complete an initial developmental screening. If results indicate a potential risk for developmental delay, the child is given a two-month period before being re-screened. If, upon re-screening, the child is still not meeting age-appropriate developmental milestones, a referral is made for further assessment. This process involves the ASQ survey, which teachers provide to families to complete. Regarding assessments, six LAUSD assessments were conducted during the winter break. Coordinator Asiya Mahmoud opened the site for two days during the winter break to accommodate these assessments. The goal is to complete assessments as promptly as possible to avoid delays in services. For Early Head Start, the program is currently at 26% open cases, which is double the required 10%. Head Start is at 13.6% open cases. Of those cases, 28 children are receiving services for speech and language delays, and 20 children have an autism diagnosis—an unusually high number for a single program. There were no IEP meetings held this month, as assessments are currently in progress. One change of placement occurred, involving a child transitioning to Transitional Kindergarten. In Wellness Services, there were six referrals for children, three referrals for parents, and no referrals for staff. Families should be receiving the *When Families Come Together* Newsletter. If you have not received it, please be sure to ask your child’s teacher or site supervisor. The newsletter is available in both English and Spanish and includes important information, such as social-emotional strategies that are appropriate and helpful for families. In the near future, a QR code will be distributed to provide easy access to the newsletter. There will be a limited number of printed copies available for families who do not have access to a QR code. By using the QR code, we hope to reduce paper usage and overall costs. In Education, some members of the education team visited a program called *Branches Atelier*, which follows a Reggio-inspired approach. Additionally, we had a couple of program visits during the month of December, including one by the Education Specialist from LACOE. The Education Specialist was very impressed with the program and did not identify any violations or regulatory concerns. We continue to host a mobile market at Estrada on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. Additionally, we are coordinating with Grow Good Food Farms to explore bringing the market to other sites. **Upcoming Events:** *When Families Come Together Club* – January 15, *Exclusive Inclusive Club* – January 22, *Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday* – January 19 and in February, we will begin our second round of home visits. We kindly ask that parents schedule a time with their child’s teacher to meet.

We received and reviewed the Average Daily Attendance Report for Early Head Start for the month of November 2025. The average daily attendance for the month of November was 81% for Head Start, 80%

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for Early Head Start. An ADA Analysis report was sent to LACOE to explain the reason why Early Head Start fell below the average attendance for the month of November.

We received and reviewed the Claim for Reimbursement Child and Adult Care Food Program for November 2025. The total number of meals served for the month of November was 14,200. Discussion took place.

We received the In-kind report that includes parent volunteer hours, report was included with Fiscal Report.

We received the Parent Meeting Calendar for the month of January 2026. Head Start will be having a workshop on School Readiness Goal #4, Language and Literacy/DLL.

The Policy Committee held Elections for a new delegate to the Policy Council representing Head Start and a new Parliamentarian. The following delegates were elected:

Nichol Maldonado – new Delegate to the Policy Council representing Head Start

Johana Perez – new Parliamentarian to the Policy Committee

We received and reviewed the BAR/RAA 45-168 Conscious Discipline for the amount of \$6,000.

M/S/C Ramirez/Maldonado to approve BAR/RAA 45-168 Conscious Discipline for the amount of \$6,000.

We received and reviewed the Monthly Fiscal Report on the Head Start Account.

Announcements: We were reminded that our next Policy Committee Meeting will take place on February 12, 2026.

The meeting adjourned at 11:52 a.m.

Submitted by,

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P.C. Secretary