

Comprehensive Literacy Policy

Purpose: To ensure that literacy is incorporated into all content areas of Head Start and across all UMCHS programs and meets the needs of dual language learners. This includes all four literacy principles: interactive literacy activities between parents and children; parent's training on role as child's primary teacher and full partner in child's education; parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency; and age-appropriate child education.

Procedure:

All program staff will create environments rich with literacy prompts and opportunities that are also meet the needs of dual language learners. Strategies used may include:

- Books available in all learning centers/office waiting areas in appropriate languages
- Writing materials in several areas of the classroom that coincide with the specific learning center (i.e. shopping lists and recipe cards in the house/kitchen area; drawing paper in the block area for sketching designs; charts for recording data in the science/math area; sign in area at circle); a child's size table & chairs with age appropriate writing materials in office waiting areas
- Parent calendars highlighting specific books, suggestions for preparing children for kindergarten with developmentally appropriate suggestions, "Learning the Code" vocabulary, health literacy topics, financial literacy topics, and parent education topics
- Posters and pictures of children and families engaged in literacy activities
- Manipulatives and games that promote literacy
- Opportunities to tell stories and read books (in classrooms create books)
- Promoting the use of words to express feelings and describe experiences
- Fieldtrip opportunities for classes to explore literacy within the child/family's world (library, grocery store, neighborhood walks)
- Labeling of classroom materials in appropriate languages

The importance of Literacy will be stressed at both the Board of Directors and Policy Council Level. Selected meetings will begin with a Literacy Topic and the reading of a book. Policy Council will be asked to read the book to children at their centers and to share the book at Parent Center committee meetings. The Board of Directors will be asked to read the book to a child in a Head Start Center, public school setting, or to a child they personally know.

Interactive literacy activities between parents and children

All program staff will plan family focused events that incorporate interactive literacy activities for parents and children to complete together. Events will be advertised and promoted to be inviting and supportive of parents' schedules and needs. All written materials will translated into the primary language of the family. These events could include:

- Head Start Parent Center Meetings/Family Nights
- WIC Nutrition Classes
- CCR&R training
- Healthy Start parent education classes
- Materials for activities in HS, WIC and CCR&R waiting areas

- Cluster meetings
- Parent Education classes
- RIF and ROR book distributions

Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency

All programs will develop a system for screening/surveying parents with regard to their education goals in order to assist parents with referrals to appropriate educational opportunities to support their self-sufficiency. Staff will review information gathered and refer parents to appropriate resources to meet their needs, to include dual language learner needs, which may include:

- Parent Education classes (offered by UMCHS and/or community)
- WIC Nutrition Classes
- CCR&R trainings
- Healthy Start education groups
- BMCC or other college classes

Program staff may meet with parents to discuss and plan a goal or series of goals around education and development. Discussion would include issues that need to be addressed to ensure success such as finances, transportation and child care. Staff will have a system for follow up with these parents in order to track progress toward goal completion.

Age-appropriate child education

In addition to creating an environment which promotes and supports literacy development in English as well as the child's primary language, classroom staff will ensure that age-appropriate education is offered daily and that parents are welcome to participate in this experience:

- Lesson plans will include focused literacy activities that promote all forms of literacy (oral communication; pre-writing and writing activities, storytelling and read-alouds, dramatic play, visual prompts and cues)
- Parents will be included in lesson plans so they have a specific role and know exactly what tasks they have during the course of the day/time in the classroom
- Staff will ensure that children are engaged in materials and activities appropriately through role modeling and supervision
- Staff will ensure that parents understand how to role model the appropriate way to provide supervision to children
- Staff will ensure that materials and equipment are developmentally appropriate for children present (able to challenge younger children as well as older children)
- Staff will take time with parents (in advance) to ensure that parents understand the purpose and use of materials available to children and how children are to engage in the materials

Parent training on role as child's primary teacher and full partner in child's education

All program staff will encourage parents in their role as the child's primary teacher and offer resources and ideas to help them develop and strengthen their role. Some resources may include:

- Encouraging parents to take the lead in planning activities to complete in the home or at the child's school

- Promoting the ASQ screen and sharing developmental milestones cards with parents
- Include parents as leaders of activities within the classroom and at parent meetings
- Ask parents to help plan and present at WIC and/or CCR&R trainings/classes

UMCHS will develop a system to recognize parent achievement in their role as primary teacher and in their goal of self-sufficiency.

http://www.umchs.org/umchsresources/administration/pandp/Operations_Management/OM21_Comprehensive_Literacy_Policy/Comprehensive_Literacy_Policy.pdf

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