



Early Childhood Education Center Board Manual

Early Childhood Education Center Board Manual

Southern Union Conference
Office of Education

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Forward

This manual is in harmony with guidelines and policies of the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and Adventist Risk Management. It contains information for the administration of Seventh-day Adventist organization-owned early childhood education centers within the Southern Union. Additional details may be found in the Southern Union Education Code Book - Supplement A and Managing Risks and Loss Control Manual for Early Childhood Education Centers in the Southern Union. It is not intended that this Center Board Manual supersede local conference policies and regulations and is subordinate to conference updates and union policy changes.

Mission Statement

The Southern Union Conference Administration, Office of Education, and Child Development Advisory, as a result of studies and research conducted during the late 1990's, conclude that the Church has a responsibility to embrace the ministry of early childhood education. There are early childhood education programs operating within the Southern Union territory serving children from birth through four years of age. This represents many families both Adventist and non-Adventist to whom the Church may minister. Thus, our objective is to operate educationally sound Christian early childhood education programs following developmentally appropriate practices as a ministry and service to families of the church and community, and not primarily as profit centers.

The mission of the Southern Union Conference Early Childhood Education program is to provide quality care and sound educational programs for young children from birth through four years of age by well-qualified personnel in safe, age-appropriate environments while maintaining the Christian principles of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Statement of Seventh-day Adventist Early Childhood Education Philosophy

As a denomination, Seventh-day Adventists see the early education of the child as a continual growth process.

Too much importance cannot be placed on the early training of children.
The lessons that the child learns during the first seven years of life have more
to do with forming his character than all he learns in the future years.

Child Guidance, page 193

Quality child care is an urgent need in today's society. Traditionally, parents would be responsible for providing this care. However, because of the rapidly changing structure of today's family, it becomes necessary for parents to find assistance to give their child the best care possible. In 1904 the church was counseled and strongly encouraged to provide for the training of younger children in situations where parents work out of the home and/or find themselves lacking in parental skills. (See Sanitarium Church School Board Minutes of January 14, 1904; "Counsel on Early School Attendance", Review and Herald, April 24, 1975.) The Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists early childhood education centers strive to follow that counsel in offering healthy, safe, Christian environments to parents of the church and its community for their young children.

For "Jesus said, 'Let the little children come unto Me and forbid
them not, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' "Matthew 19:14

Young children should be happy and free from stress in their early years of training, education and development. The primary emphasis of the center program for children and families is to provide a spiritual foundation and character building opportunities. Play is a child's work and each child must be given the opportunity and freedom to explore both indoors and outdoors. Play is linked to many other skills and abilities that develop at this time, i.e., social interaction, proper use of language and communication, motor control, cognitive development and emotional growth. Young children learn and grow most successfully when they interact with people, objects and their environment in a natural, hands-on, active manner.

The Organization

Definition

The organization consists of the local church directly affiliated with the center, the local Conference Office of Education and Southern Union Conference Department of Education.

Membership

The organization membership for the center includes the members of the local church directly affiliated with the center, the local Conference Office of Education superintendent and associate(s) and the Southern Union Department of Education director and Early Childhood Education associate.

Meetings

The organization should meet annually or as specified in the center constitution. Special meetings may be called as needed by the center and/or church boards.

Functions

Functions of the organization:

- A. Receive reports of the center's operation
- B. Approve financial plans for major capital improvements as recommended by the center board
- C. Receive plans, policies and budgets for the operation of the center
- D. Encourage the establishment and continuation of a Home and Center Association
- E. Facilitate and adopt a constitution in harmony with denominational policies which defines the principles and guidelines by which the center shall be operated

The Organization's Administration

Starting or Closing a Center

The opening or closing of a center should be by vote of the organization in a regular or specially called meeting. The organization should study the recommendations of the church board in light of the organization size, the number of potential enrollments and a balanced budget.

Year of Operation

Early childhood education centers usually operate year-round (12 full months). However, a center affiliated closely with a church school may offer a 10-month program that operates on the same scholastic year as the elementary school. In this manual, the term "fiscal year" refers to a 12-month calendar, year-round operation. Following the organization's vote to open an early childhood education center, the center board should determine and vote at its first meeting the beginning date for the center's fiscal year and adhere to it thereafter.

Definition

A center operating board, with members elected according to the center constitution, should be organized for every center in the Southern Union Conference. The center board is responsible for the operation of the center within the guidelines and policies adopted by the local conference Board of Education and center constitution. The center board has authority for operating the center only when meeting in official session; individual members may not speak for the board. All actions of the board are implemented through its center director in cooperation with the center board chair.

Membership

The center board should be composed of members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church who represent a cross-section of the organization. It should maintain a minimum number of seven members, i.e., chairperson, center director, treasurer, Home and Center Association leader, pastor, one-to-two active church members and one-to-two parents of children enrolled in the center. In addition, the local conference early childhood education liaison is a member, and if the organization maintains a church school with a kindergarten program, the kindergarten teacher could also be a selected member. In the event that the center has virtually no Seventh-day Adventist parents of its children to be on the board, the center should have a parent advisory committee chaired by the Home and Center Association (HCA) leader. This Seventh-day Adventist HCA leader should then serve as their liaison to and representative on the center board.

The following members of the center board should be selected by the church board and/or nominating committee: Chairperson, treasurer, one-to-two active church members, and from the recommendation of the center director, the Home and Center Association leader and one-to-two parents of children currently enrolled at the center. Members hired by the local conference or church (e.g., conference early childhood education liaison, pastor, kindergarten teacher, if applicable, and center director) are ex-officio members with voting privileges.

- A. The center board members (other than ex-officio members) are to be elected by the church board or nominating committee in accordance with the center's constitution or working policies. One of the two following plans is recommended in the election of board members and their term in office:
 - 1) The members of the original board may be chosen for terms varying from one to three years according to a schedule arranged by the church board. New appointments must then be made each succeeding year for terms of three years. The purpose of this plan is to assure continuity of educational practice and policy.
 - 2) Board members may be elected prior to the close of the fiscal year and function thereafter for one fiscal year. To assure continuity of educational practice and policy, a nucleus of current members should be re-elected.
- B. Center board mid-term vacancies should be filled by the decision of the church board as outlined in the constitution. A person filling a vacancy serves only for the remainder of the unexpired term.
- C. Except in unusual circumstances, spouses and/or immediate relatives of center staff members should not be elected to the center board. Only one member of a family should serve on the center board in a designated term.

Membership Cont...

- D. Qualification for center board membership is as follows:
- 1) Being a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in good standing
 - 2) Having a commitment to Seventh-day Adventist early childhood education programs
 - 3) Being committed to following the Seventh-day Adventist Early Childhood Education Center Board Manual and the SU Education Code Book Supplement A.
 - 4) Being committed to following all denominational early childhood education policies

Meetings

Meetings may be open to all members of the organization except when the board is in executive session.

Regular Sessions

The center board should meet at a regular time and place six times or more during the fiscal year. At its first meeting, the new center board should choose dates for the regular meetings thereafter. It is important that center board officers develop the habit of beginning and ending the meetings on time. It is seldom essential that meetings last more than two hours or past nine o'clock at night. Complete reports should be given by the secretary, treasurer and chairperson at each regular session.

Executive Sessions

Executive sessions may be called to discuss a sensitive issue which might be embarrassing to a family or adult. Therefore, it is imperative that confidentiality and due process be maintained. Only regular center board members who are not personally associated with the issue should be permitted to attend these sessions. Guidelines that include an appeal process should be followed when an individual or group asks for a hearing before the center board.

Agenda

The agenda for any regular meeting of the center board should include an invocation, the reading for approval (and correction, if needed) of the minutes of the last meeting, the treasurer's report, old business, any sub-committee report, new business and adjournment. The board secretary should have a copy of the agenda for each center board member prior to each meeting.

Quorum

A quorum to transact business shall consist of a simple majority of regular center board members with voting privileges, including at least two board officers, unless otherwise specified by the center constitution. Voting by proxy will not be allowed as stated in the center constitution.

Functions of the Center Board:

- A. Ensure the implementation of policies and plans for the center
- B. Develop policies in harmony with the Southern Union Conference, local conference and Adventist Risk Management in areas of local concern such as the following:
 - 1. Use of center property
 - 2. Transportation vehicles
 - 3. Purchasing procedures
 - 4. Tuition and/or other methods of support
 - 5. Equipping and maintaining school plant
 - 6. Curriculum choices
 - 7. Maintaining state license status for center operation
 - 8. Master planning
 - 9. Due Process / appeal procedures
 - 10. Staff hiring / employment

Note on Policy Making:

It is the responsibility of the center board to write general policies regulating the operation of the center program. The center board acts officially only through its recorded minutes. It is also the center board's responsibility to become acquainted with and to enforce operational policies as set forth by its local conference and the Southern Union Education Code Book - Supplement A.

- C. Counsel the director in his/her administration of the center program, including:
 - 1. Implementation of center board policies
 - 2. Teacher employment
 - 3. Daily schedule
 - 4. Development of disciplinary plan
- D. Consider the recommendation of the director regarding a situation involving a serious disciplinary case and possible dismissal of a family. While the ultimate authority in disciplinary matters rests in the hands of the center board, it should delegate to the director the authority to suspend a child for a period not to exceed three days. The child may be readmitted to the center only after satisfactory reform and reconciliation with the teacher(s) involved. If a satisfactory basis for readmission cannot be effected, the child should be withdrawn by the parents or, as a last resort, the family dismissed. The consideration of a dismissal recommendation or appeal of the director's decision must be in compliance with the center's disciplinary plan and in closed or executive sessions.
- E. Support the Home and Center Association
- F. Ensure that official minutes of each meeting of the center board and sub-committees be kept and a copy filed at the local conference Office of Education
- G. Consider appeals and answer questions regarding the operation of the center
- H. Participate in the process of acquiring and maintaining a state license, evaluating the center program and acquiring accreditation for the center as sought after by the organization
- I. Cooperate with the local conference education liaison and Southern Union Conference associate for early childhood education in planning for in-service meetings and teachers' convention.

Functions of the Center Board cont...

- J. Formulate, in counsel with the local conference education liaison and the Southern Union Conference early childhood education director, a plan of center operation including a constitution and bylaws
- K. Implement and maintain regularly scheduled quarterly safety inspections as outlined and requested by the Southern Union Conference, local conference and risk management policies
- L. Develop and adopt a code of dress and social behavior for center staff
- M. Authorize the preparation of a center employee handbook
- N. Authorize the preparation of a center parent handbook which shall include such items as:
 - 1. Mission, purpose, and philosophy of center
 - 2. Payment policies
 - 3. Center rules and regulations
 - 4. Center calendar & holiday closings
 - 5. Curriculum description
 - 6. Code of conduct and dress code for the children
- O. Work closely with the center director for the planning of and assume responsibility for the funding of an annual operating budget, which should include but not limited to the following:
 - 1. Capital expenditures and incomes
 - 2. Operating expenses
 - 3. Curriculum materials
 - 4. Play equipment
 - 5. Media center materials and equipment
 - 6. Classroom supplies
 - 7. Accident and liability insurance
 - 8. Indebtedness
- P. Assume responsibility for planning and funding a capital budget
- Q. Cooperate with the local conference and Southern Union Conference Offices of Education, and be responsible for implementations, in matters of curriculum development and innovations, program facility, equipment, material and resources
- R. Conduct meetings in accordance with generally accepted parliamentary procedures as specified in the center constitution
- S. Support the teaching staff; it is the responsibility of the center board to support and uphold the teaching staff in the edification of the center.
- T. Plan an annual registration; the center board in consultation with the director should plan a specific time for the annual registration/opening of a new fiscal year.
- U. Visit the center in session; it is desirable for members of the center board to visit the center occasionally, encourage the staff and become personally acquainted with the work and needs of the whole program. This is not a time for evaluation of any staff member or work processes. The relationship between the center board and the staff should be friendly and on a basis of mutual confidence and respect. It is recommended that prior arrangements be made with the director for visits.
- V. Plan for additions or new buildings; when a new center building, extensive additions or alterations are being planned, the center board chairperson should seek the counsel of the organization. The center board should become acquainted with the needed municipal approval of specifications for such building and/or changes as well as the conference policies effecting such projects.

Functions of the Center Board cont...

- W. Act on family enrollment applications; all applications should be made through the office and acted upon by the director or by a designated staff member recommended by the director and approved by the board.
- X. Establish resources that will support the center's growth and promote marketing strategies that can enhance enrollment for the center
- Y. Provide a non-discrimination policy of admission to the center in harmony with the Seventh-day Adventist education code and to include the non-discrimination policy in the parent handbook
- Z. Authorize teacher and staff hiring/employment; teacher and staff employment is the responsibility of the center operating board. Under the recommendation of the center director, the employment, assignment, evaluation, transfer, retirement, termination or dismissal of personnel should be by the authority of the center board.

Functions of the Center Board Chairperson

The functions of the board chairperson include the following:

- a. Call and preside over board meetings
- b. Serve as a consultant to the director in preparing an agenda for board meetings
- c. Become acquainted with and follow parliamentary procedures at board meetings
- d. Encourage discussion which is relevant to agenda items
- e. Become acquainted with the center program and confer with the director on items pertaining to the operation of the center
- f. Support the director in the administration of the center
- g. Assist in the implementation of board actions
- h. Inform the conference education liaison and church board of the progress of the center program and any special problems or needs

Functions of the Center Board Secretary

The functions of the board secretary include the following:

- a. Prepare the agenda for board meetings in consultation with the board chairperson
- b. Take written minutes at each meeting
- c. Keep current a permanent file of board minutes
- d. Distribute minutes to board members as determined by the board and to the local Conference Office of Education
- e. Maintain necessary correspondence for the board

Note: It is recommended that the center director be the board secretary. In addition, the board may grant a request from the director to have a recording secretary serve under him/her. This person should be a non-voting member and may be the center's assistant director.

Functions of the Center Board Treasurer

Unless other provision is made, the center treasurer is responsible for keeping all financial records, issuing bills to parents, collecting payments, paying authorized bills for center operation and presenting a complete written financial report at each center board meeting.

Local Pastor's Relationship with the Center Board

The denomination/ organization considers the office of church pastor's support of Adventist education vital in the effectiveness of the center for its community plus organization. He is responsible for maintaining church involvement in the operation of the center, providing encouragement for effective parent/staff/child relationships, and fostering cooperation in the spiritual emphasis of the center. The pastor is also a spiritual counselor and resource person. He is an ex-officio member of the center board with voting privileges. It is recommended that the pastor not serve as chair of the center board.

Center Safety Initiative and Functions of its Safety Officer

It shall be the center board's responsibility to follow regulations as set forth by the state, county and/or municipal agencies as well as any policies of the Southern Union Conference, local conference and Adventist Risk Management regarding the health and safety of enrolled children and center staff.

A safety officer shall be appointed by the center board at its first meeting. The safety officer functions include the following:

- A. Conduct quarterly inspections of the facility and equipment as required by the Southern Union Conference, local conference and/or risk management safety and loss control regulations and policies
- B. Give thorough orientation to all center personnel on safety and safety procedures as requested by the board
- C. Monitor safety issues and report the same to the board

Local Conference Relationship to the Center Board

The local conference education liaison for early childhood education and the Southern Union Conference director of early childhood education are the ones to whom the center board should look for counsel and direction in its work. The local Conference Office of Education and risk management must be consulted regarding the opening or closing of a center.

Legal Responsibilities

Personal liability of center board members:

A center board member may be held personally liable for loss or damage which results from his/her own negligent acts, as well as for the negligent acts of an employee who is acting under his/her direct supervision. Board members may be held personally liable for their willful, wanton, or malicious acts.

Defamation of character involves statements to third parties which may reduce esteem, respect, confidence, or good will in which a person is held. Defamatory statements may injure a person's reputation or good name and involve an element of personal disgrace.

Board members are immune from liability from statements made at center board meetings under the doctrine of law known as "Qualified Privilege." This doctrine is applicable when it is reasonably necessary that certain information be communicated for the protection of one's own interest, the interest of third parties, or the interest of the public. This information should be communicated only during executive sessions of the board.

Any communication of information other than during an executive session may constitute defamation and the board member or members may be held individually and/or collectively liable.

Board members should be careful to avoid any conflict of interest in dealings with the center. Each member must sign a conflict of interest statement before participating on the center operating board or any sub-committee thereof.

Center Director

The director is the chief administrator of the center with responsibilities and functions as designated by state regulatory agencies, the Southern Union Conference and local conference policies. He/She must hold the appropriate administrative credential.

Responsibilities and functions of a director include, but not limited to, the following:

- A. Serve as executive secretary of the center board

Note: The center board may grant a request from the director to allow the assistant director to serve under the executive secretary as the recording secretary. This person should be a non-voting member.

- B. Implement and interpret conference and board policies
- C. Supervise the instructional program of the center via the following:
 - 1. Classroom visitation
 - 2. Personal conferences and written teacher evaluations
 - 3. Group study for curriculum planning
 - 4. Assistance in classroom management
 - 5. Assistance in the development of course objectives and teaching plans
- D. Serve as, or designate, a chair for each of the following:
 - 1. Staff meetings
 - 2. Administrative council
 - 3. Other meetings as needed
- E. Assume responsibility for religious activities and a positive religious program
- F. Accept responsibility for the management of the center program including the following:
 - 1. Creation of the annual center calendar, daily schedule, holiday schedule, minimum day sessions, and length of operational year
 - 2. Plans for regularly scheduled staff meetings, center board meetings, Home and Center Association meetings, work bees, etc.
 - 3. Assign classroom placement
 - 4. Dissemination of classroom job descriptions and assignments of other duties as needed
- G. Serve as fiscal manager and operate the center on a sound financial basis within the approved budget. The director should assist in the preparation of an annual budget, the control of accounts, and the preparation of a monthly financial statement to be submitted to the center board.
- H. Involved in employment practices of personnel as outlined by the state, county and local conference
- I. Monitor and ensure the maintenance of buildings, grounds, and equipment for operating efficiency and the safety of operation throughout the center
- J. Assume responsibility for developing and maintaining an adequate record-keeping system, adhering to the "Best Practices" recommendation given by the North American Division Adventist Risk Management regarding the federal HIPPA act, and ensure the security of all center records, including, but not limited to the following:
 - 1. Student scholastic, health and attendance records
 - 2. Personnel employment records
 - 3. Minutes from faculty meetings and committees
 - 4. Minutes from the center board meetings

- K. Promote the professional growth of educational personnel
- L. Develop and maintain positive community relations
- M. Represent the center and be its official spokesperson to the patrons of the center, the entire organization, and the general public
- N. Present a report of progress, conditions, and needs of the center at each center board meeting
- O. Articulate and communicate to the center board and the organization the educational plans and programs of the center
- P. Maintain required records in accordance with state regulations such as:
 - 1. Attendance reports
 - 2. Incident reports
 - 3. Accident reports
 - 4. Medical / special need reports
 - 5. Safety logs
 - 6. Visitation records
 - 7. Assessments
- Q. Ensure all requested items are sent to the local Conference Office of Education such as the quarterly safety inspection checklist, license, minutes, etc.
- R. Support the Home and Center Association, participate in its program and encourage all teachers and staff to participate also

Center Licensing and Inspections

All early childhood education centers and programs operated by organizations of the Southern Union Conference are required by Southern Union policy to hold a current license issued from the appropriate state regulatory agency. Centers must be evaluated / inspected periodically by representatives from municipal / county / state agencies such as a department of health and sanitation, fire department, and child care licensing authority per state regulations. An ongoing effort should be made by the center administration and board to give self-study to and monitor the extent to which the center is meeting expected standards, make a master plan for improving the center, and schedule a follow-up self-evaluation of actions taken.

Admittance to Center

Seventh-day Adventist centers are open to families of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and other families who come for the purpose of developing a Christian character. The enrollment of children in a Seventh-day Adventist center is voluntary, and every parent should have an understanding of the values and objectives of Adventist education. It is the policy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in all its church-operated centers and schools on elementary, secondary and collegiate levels in the United States, to admit students of any race, color, ethnic background, country of origin, or gender, to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available at the center. Seventh-day Adventist centers do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic background, country of origin, or gender in the administration of policies and application for admission.

When a center and its organization recognize its potential ministry to the community, non-Adventist children may be enrolled. It is suggested that the following actions be taken:

- A. Proper preparation of the teacher(s) to relate to such families
- B. Orientation of the organization to its role as a Christian witness
- C. Orientation of parents to the goals and objectives of SDA care and education, including philosophy and doctrines
- D. Consistency in daily worships, Bible study and center standards

Center Handbook

Every center should prepare a parent handbook containing policies, regulations, and financial information of the center. In addition, it should also include such information as:

- A. A calendar of events designating operating hours and holiday closings
- B. List of teachers and staff members
- C. List of center board members
- D. Curriculum description
- E. Requirements for entrance
- F. Non-discrimination policy
- G. Disciplinary policy
- H. Closings due to weather and/or emergency and a plan for immediate pick-up

Student Management and Discipline

- A. **Purpose**
Discipline is designed to be redemptive, remedial, and corrective rather than punitive.
- B. **Management and Disciplinary Authority**
The director is responsible for establishing behavioral management in the center. All members of the center staff share in the responsibility for supervision of children's conduct. Minor irregularities should be handled by individual staff members. Repeated offenses or major infractions of center rules are to be handled by the director. The director is responsible for establishing disciplinary procedures.
- C. **Corporal Punishment**
Corporal punishment is not to be used as a disciplinary measure in centers within the Southern Union Conference.
- D. **Suspension**
A child may be suspended for repeated offenses when other procedures have not been effective. Evidence of prior corrective measures and parent notification should be on file in the child's folder. In the case of a serious violation of center regulation, the director may suspend a child even if there has been no prior deviant behavior. Suspension should be effective until the parents appear at the center to discuss the conditions for readmission. The suspension period will not ordinarily exceed three days. If there's a need for suspension to exceed three days, it should be the decision of the center board. Suspension from the center must be made or approved by the director. The center director should notify the center board chair in the event of suspension.
- E. **Dismissal**
The center board is the final authority in the dismissal of a family upon the recommendation of the center director.

Note: The center administration and board should develop policies pertinent to matters of child suspension or family dismissal.

Personnel

A. **Employment of Center Personnel**

1. All teachers / staff in denominational centers should be SDA members who actively support the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
2. All staff must be free from criminal records; all staff members must be screened by a credible, independent agency and pass the background check.

B. **Hiring Classroom Teachers and Center Staff**

1. To be employed by the center, each teacher and support staff must maintain the minimal requirements related to child care workers mandated through the state licensing agency.
2. In the employment of qualified teachers, the center board is the employing entity. The organization may provide services for teachers, but this is not to be construed as accepting responsibility for their employment, assignment, or termination, except for the local conference's obligation under its Human Resource jurisdiction to ensure that legal and approved employment policies and practices are being observed.
3. All staff will be recommended for employment, assignment, termination or dismissal to the center board by the director, and final decisions on recommendations should be by action of the center board.

C. **Hiring for Special Projects and Assignments**

Part-time teachers and/or staff may be employed for special projects and assignments on a temporary basis. Such employees are subject to requirements as stated for Employment of Center Personnel, but do not qualify for allowances or severance pay.

D. **Substitutes**

Substitutes for regular staff shall be subject to requirements as stated for Employment of Center Personnel.

E. **Support for Employee**

A congenial working relationship should exist among all staff, the director, pastor and center board to foster a healthy climate for Adventist care and education. It is the responsibility of the center board to support and uphold the center staff and administration of the center. The board should make clear to all staff and patrons of the center that a verbal attack or harangue against the teacher(s) / staff will not be tolerated at any time. The center board shall stand ready to hear legitimate complaints of patrons after due process has been followed.

Note: A due process should be printed in each applicable handbook, i.e., Parent Handbook, Employee Handbook, etc.

F. **Resolution of Personnel Problems**

Situations may arise which need resolution assistance. A planned conflict resolution procedure should be followed. In the event of questions involving competency, character, cooperation, or interpersonal conflict of employees, the center board should be notified as soon as possible. The center director must be present at board meetings in which such issues are discussed.

G. **Employee Records**

The director shall be responsible for the maintenance and safekeeping of accurate and up-to-date records for all personnel under his/her direction. He/She should adhere to the "Best Practices" recommendation given by the North American Division Adventist Risk Management regarding the federal HIPPA act ensuring the security and privacy of each one's information. Personnel files / records must include the following:

1. Evidence of background checks as required by state law(s) and as directed by local conference and Southern Union Conference policy
2. Physician's endorsement by physical exam and tuberculosis test results that indicate the employee is physically fit for position and follow-up exam / test must be in compliance with local and state law.

Note: The communicable diseases policy per health department handbook applies to personnel.

Finance

A. Financial Responsibility

A center may not be opened unless there are adequate funds available to meet the current and future obligations. Total fiscal responsibility for the operation of the center rests with the organization.

B. Budget

A carefully organized and properly balanced budget is essential for successful financial operation of a center. The center board should approve a tentative budget three months prior to the coming fiscal year.

A balanced, revised budget should be prepared no later than 3 months into the new fiscal year. The items entered into the budget should be studied carefully by the board, and after adoption, the budget should be followed closely.

C. Salary Schedules

The minimum and maximum salary rates are established by the center board without going below minimum wage, following the federal laws.

D. Auditing

The financial records shall be audited annually under the supervision of the local conference treasurer. An audit report should be sent to the center board chair, director, treasurer and pastor, and reported to the finance/budget committee.

Insurance

All centers are to be insured in accordance with the North American Division working policy and the requirements of the local conference. This would include but not limited to: property insurance on the building and contents, general liability coverage on the operations, worker's compensation for center employees, and student accident insurance for the children.

Centers that operate buses, vans or center owned vehicles must carry insurance on these vehicles that meet or exceed the NAD working policy requirements, either through a local carrier or through their local conference's business auto policy. All designated drivers must meet NAD requirements to be an eligible driver. Fifteen passenger vans may not be used to transport children at any time. At no time should vehicle occupancy load exceed that of the manufacturer's recommendations.

Curriculum

Early childhood education curricula consists of a broad range of learning experiences that follow developmentally appropriate practices and curriculum as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Southern Union Conference Board of Education. Center programs are to follow the recommendations as voted by the Southern Union Board of Education regarding specific curriculum adoptions. In addition, the curricula should be supplemented with appropriate activities related to the children and families' spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical and social development in the center, home and community.

Friday Closing

While the center director should recommend the daily hours of center operation to be voted by the center board, careful consideration should be given by the board to uphold the honor of Sabbath observation beginning at sundown Friday and the needs of the families served by the center before adopting a Friday closing policy.

Functions of the Local Conference Office of Education

- A. Serve as liaison for and agent of the conference Board of Education in administering and supervising the conference system of Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade and early childhood education centers in accordance with the educational policies of the Southern Union Board of Education
- B. Provide leadership for churches in the development of long-range plans for program growth in areas such as the establishment of centers, budgeting, center accreditation, curriculum, facilities, personnel, and health and safety in centers
- C. Provide leadership for in-service in education and administration
- D. Foster positive relationships between home, center and church
- E. Develop and maintain effective working relationships with local and state offices of education, departments of family and child services, licensing agencies and accrediting associations
- F. Maintain a liaison between the Office of Education, the conference administration and the local churches on behalf of the centers
- G. Acquaint the local church pastors and center directors with the imperatives of Adventist Christian education and the Adventist EDGE
- H. Encourage the development and maintenance of an adequate center health and safety program
- I. Provide encouragement to center directors and teachers for pursuing professional growth
- J. Promote the Home and Center Association
- K. Update records and reports required by the Southern Union Conference and North American Division Offices of Education and Adventist Risk management
- L. Support regularly scheduled in-service meetings for center directors and/or teaching personnel
- M. Keep a child / family census; survey and compile data on enrollment, staff, and degrees / credentials/certification of center teaching personnel and directors within the conference
- N. Maintain a current list of active centers within the conference and cross-reference the record on a regular basis with the local conference Adventist Risk Management representative and Southern Union Early Childhood Education Department
- O. Report to the conference Adventist Risk Management representative and Southern Union Office of Early Childhood Education centers opening and closing
- P. Maintain an awareness of state programs / provisions for early childhood centers and the effects of such on faith-based entities
- Q. Monitor compliance of centers to risk management loss control policies for early childhood education centers
- R. Support center boards and attend meetings when requested
- S. Counsel with church or school boards in their deliberation / preparation of start-up budgets for early childhood education centers
- T. Implement curriculum policies of the Southern Union Conference Board of Education

Code of Ethics for Center Board Members

- A. To recognize the following:
 - 1. Members of the organization have entrusted the center board members with the care and educational development of the young children
 - 2. Welfare of the denomination depends in the largest measure upon the quality of education and care provided in Adventist Christian centers to fit the needs of every child
 - 3. Center board members take the initiative in helping the organization to have all the necessary facts about the center and provide the finest possible center program, staff and facility
 - 4. Authority of the center board is derived from the organization, which ultimately controls the operation of the center and which determines the degree of discretionary power given the center board as defined by the constitution

- B. To endeavor to do the following:
 - 1. Devote time and study to the duties and responsibilities of the center board in order to render effective and credible service
 - 2. Work with fellow board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion
 - 3. Base personal decisions upon all available facts in each situation; vote with honest conviction in every case; abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the board
 - 4. Keep inviolate all confidential committee business for the protection of children/families, center staff and God's work
 - 5. Remember at all times that each board member has no individual legal authority outside the meetings of the center board, and to conduct relationships with the center staff, organization and all media of communication on the basis of this fact
 - 6. Resist every temptation and outside pressure to use the position of center board member to benefit either self or any individual or agency apart from the local interest of the center
 - 7. Recognize that it is as important for the center board to understand the total program of the center as it is to plan for the business of center operation
 - 8. Operate a center board in accordance with the Southern Union Conference and local conference policies and guidelines
 - 9. Delegate to the center director and staff the administration of the care, educational program and routine conduct of center business
 - 10. Welcome and encourage active cooperation among the organization members, the Home and Center Association and other institutions of the church
 - 11. Work with the conference education superintendent / associate to support the policies from the conference and union
 - 12. Strive toward ideal conditions for the most effective committee service to the organization in a spirit of teamwork and devotion to Seventh-day Adventist Christian ministry.

Sample Conflict of Interest and/or Commitment Statement

Conflict of Interest and/or Commitment Statement of Acceptance

Center Board Chair: A signed Conflict of Interest Statement is required annually from each member of your center board and others with purchasing power. (See No. 1 on next page.) These forms are to be kept in the center director's office file. (Do not send to the Conference.)

1. I am in full compliance with North American Division P 35 as to "Conflict of Interest" as printed on the next page and have been in compliance at all times during the past twelve months except as to specific exclusions attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.
2. I have no financial interest or business relationship which competes with or conflicts with the interest of the _____ S.D.A. Church or its Center.
3. I have no financial interest in, been an employee, officer, director, or trustee of, or received financial benefits _____ either directly or indirectly from any enterprise (excluding less than 10% ownership in any entity with publicly traded securities), which is, or has been, doing business with or is a competitor of the _____ S.D.A. Church or its Center.
4. I have received no substantial payment or gifts (other than a token value) from suppliers or agencies doing business with the _____ S.D.A. Church or its Center.
5. I have not served as an officer, director, trustee, or agent of any organization affiliated with or subsidiary to the _____ S.D.A. Church or its Center in any decision-making process involving financial or legal interests adverse to the _____ S.D.A. Church or its Center.

THIS DECLARATION applies, to the best of my knowledge, to all members of my immediate family (spouse, children, parents), and its provisions shall protect any organization affiliated with or subsidiary to the _____ S.D.A. Church or its Center. In the event facts change in the future that may create a potential conflict of interest, I agree to notify the _____ S.D.A. Church or its Center Board in writing.

Position/ Title

Date

Name/ Please print

Signature

P 35 CONFLICT OF INTEREST P35 05 STATEMENT OF POLICY

P 35 05 STATEMENT OF POLICY

1. Individuals Included—All trustees, officers, and employees of denominational organizations have a duty to be free from the influence of any conflicting interest when they represent the organization in negotiations or make representations with respect to dealings with third parties, and they are expected to deal with all persons doing business with the organizations on a basis that is for the best interest of the organization without favor or preference to third parties or personal considerations.

2. Definition of Conflict—A conflict of interest arises when a trustee, an officer, or an employee of the organization has such a substantial personal interest in a transaction or in a party to a transaction that it reasonably might affect the judgment he exercises on behalf of the organization. He is to consider only the interests of the organization, always avoid sharp practices, and faithfully follow the established policies of the organization.

3. Conditions Constituting Conflict—Although it is not feasible in a policy statement to describe all the circumstances and conditions that might have the potentiality of being considered as conflicts of interest, the following situations are considered to have the potentiality of being in conflict and therefore are to be avoided:

- a. Engaging in outside business or employment that permits encroachment on the denominational organization's call for the full services of its employees even though there may not be any other conflict.
- b. Engaging in business with or employment by an employer that is any way competitive or in conflict with any transaction, activity, or objective of the organization.
- c. Engaging in any business with or employment by a nondenominational employer who is a supplier of goods or services to the denominational organization.
- d. Making use of the fact of employment by the denominational organization to further outside business or employment, or associating the denominational organization or its prestige with an outside business or employment.
- e. Owning or leasing any property with knowledge that the denominational organization has an active or potential interest therein.
- f. Lending money to or borrowing money from any third person who is a supplier of goods or services or a trustor or who is in any fiduciary relationship to the denominational organization or is otherwise regularly involved in business transactions with the denominational organization.
- g. Accepting any gratuity, favor, benefit, or gift of greater than nominal value beyond the common courtesies usually associated with accepted business practice, or of any commission or payment of any sort in connection with work for the denominational organization other than the compensation agreed upon between the denominational organization and the employee.
- h. Making use of any confidential information acquired through employment by the denominational organization for personal profit or advantage, directly or indirectly.

4. Statement of Acceptance— The chief administrative officer of the organization concerned shall present a statement of acceptance of the policy on conflict of interest to denominational administrators and working leaders and to each member of the boards of trustees and all employees of denominational associations and institutional corporations having responsibility in connection with the handling of trustee funds, and such statements shall be signed and made available to the responsible auditors. The boards of trustees of such organizations shall be apprised annually by denominational auditors of inherent exposures to denominational assets.

Sample Constitution and Bylaws

The following is an outline intended only to serve as a general guide for creating a center constitution. It should be given detail according to local needs and presented to the Organization for approval / adoption. After the vote of approval and adoption, a copy should be sent to the local Conference Office of Education.

Center Constitution of the

(Early Childhood Education Center Name)

Date Adopted by Official Vote

ARTICLE I - NAME

This center shall be know as the _____ of Seventh-day Adventists.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of this center shall be:

- A.
- B.
- C.

ARTICLE III - THE ORGANIZATION

Section I

The organization directly affiliated with the center shall be composed of the following:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Section II

General duties of the organization shall be:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Section III

The formula for representation at the organization meetings is:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Appendix 4.1

Sample Constitution and Bylaws Cont...

Section IV

Duties of the organization in session shall be:

- A.
- B.
- C.

ARTICLE IV - ORGANIZATION MEETINGS

Section I

Organization meetings shall be held in the following manner:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Section II

Notification of organization meetings shall be handled in the following manner:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Section III

The agenda for the organization meetings shall consist of the following:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Article V - CENTER BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Section I

The center board shall consist of the following participants:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Section II

The term of office held shall be as follows:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Section III

Mid-term vacancies are to be filled as follows:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Section IV

Center board and sub-committee quorums shall be as follows:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Sample Constitution and Bylaws Cont...

ARTICLE VI - CENTER BOARD OFFICERS AND SUB-COMMITTEES

Section I

Center board officers are as follows:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Section II

Ex-Officio members of all committees are as follows:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Section III

Sub-committees and members may be as follows:

- A.
- B.
- C.

ARTICLE VII - ELECTION OF CENTER BOARD AND OFFICERS

Section I

Process for the election of center board members shall be the following:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Section II

Process for the election of school board officers shall be the following:

- A.
- B.
- C.

ARTICLE VIII - DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

Section I

Center board chairperson:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Section II

Center board secretary:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Section III

Center board treasurer

- A.
- B.
- C.

Appendix 4.3

Sample Constitution and Bylaws Cont...

ARTICLE IX - DUTIES OF THE CENTER BOARD

Duties of the center board shall be the following:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Article X - CENTER BOARD MEETINGS

Section I

Center board meetings shall be governed in the following manner:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Section II

Notification of center board meetings shall be handled as follows:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Section III

The agenda for the center board meeting shall consist of the following:

- A.
- B.
- C.

ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended by

ARTICLE XII - DISSOLUTION CLAUSE

In the event the organization's center closes, _____

Sample Board Meeting Agenda - Regular Session

Your Early Childhood Education Center Board Meeting
July 1, 2003
7:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Devotion and prayer
2. Approval of minutes - June 3, 2003 meeting (Date of previous meeting)
3. Financial statement - June 30, 2003 (Date of last posting and balance of accounts)
4. Sale of 15-passenger van
5. Safety officer's report — Checklist due at conference office July 10
6. Teacher in-service attendance request
7. Tuition discount
8. 4-year-old class field trip request
9. Report from Home and Center Association leader
 - a. fund raiser proposal
 - b. work bee plan
10. New staff & volunteers, classroom teachers' re-assignment
11. Fall registration activities - plan for collaboration with church and school

Appendix 6

Sample Board Minutes - Regular Session

Your Early Childhood Education Center Board Meeting

July 1, 2003

7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Members Present	J. Doe, Chair; J. Doeb, Secretary; J. Doed, J. Doef, J. Doeg, J. Doeh, J. Doek, J. Doel
Devotional & Prayer	J. Doek
Approval of Minutes	VOTED to approve the minutes for the June 3, 2003, board meeting.
Financial Statement	VOTED to accept the June 30, 2003, financial statement subject to audit.
Director's Request	VOTED to approve the center director's request to attend the annual National Association of the Education of Young Children Convention to be held November 5-7, 2003 in Chicago, Illinois with expenses to be paid according to policy.
Field Trip Request	VOTED to allow the 3 and 4 year old classes to visit the local zoo on Thursday, July 17 provided the director has received needed background checks on volunteer chaperones along with driver & vehicle information as required by risk management policies pertaining to field trips for and transportation of young children.
Vote of Appreciation	VOTED to express the board's recognition and appreciation of the Home and Center Association leader and team's efforts in collaboration with the church to facilitate a Health Fair and outreach opportunity for the community on June 22, 2003. VOTED to adjourn with closing prayer by J. Doed - 8:15 p.m.

Home and Center Association

There should be an organized, active Home and Center Association (HCA) that meets regularly during the fiscal year.

“The teachers in the home and the teachers in the school should have a sympathetic understanding of one another’s work. They should labor together harmoniously, imbued with the same missionary spirit, striving together to benefit the children physically, mentally, and spiritually, and to develop characters that will stand the test of temptation.” (CT, p. 157)

Purpose

The purpose of the HCA shall be to advance the cause of Christian care and education in the home and in the center, and to assist in developing Christian characters in all its members and children. To this end the HCA shall devote itself to the following:

- A. Unite the home, center and church in a directed study of Christian care and education and in a harmonious development of common purpose, principles and application
- B. Establish in the home an atmosphere of love and discipline, of Bible study, prayer, and family worship, and of systematic, progressive instruction concerning the development of the child’s whole being
- C. Bring the center more fully into harmony with the principles of Adventist Christian education and care in spirit, content, and methods
- D. Meet the goal of enrolling Seventh-day Adventist children in SDA centers and offering Seventh-day Adventist care and education to the community.
- E. Assist in providing the center with the necessary equipment enabling it to meet the highest standards
- F. Furnish social and educational opportunities and contentment to the organization and the community through programs, social activities, and group services

Membership

Members of the church and patrons of the center who are willing to support the purpose of the Home and Center Association can be members of the HCA.

Officers

It is recommended that the officers of the HCA be members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The officers should consist of a leader, assistant leader, secretary-treasurer, the church Education Secretary and Family Life Coordinator. The officers should be elected by the center board at the recommendation of the director. For continuity, it is highly recommended that some of the officers be re-elected for a second term in the same or different role.

Leader

The leader of the HCA should be an Adventist with experience and success in training children, whose mind is open to new ideas and who believes in the importance of Christian education and parent education.

Appendix 7.1

Home and Center Association Cont ...

Assistant Leader

The assistant leader should periodically carry the work of the leader and be able to carry on the work in the absence of the leader.

Secretary-Treasurer

The secretary-treasurer is required to maintain the records of the HCA and make the specified reports to the center board at the beginning and close of the center's year. HCA funds are to be channeled through the center treasurer/accountant, kept as a separate account, and audited in harmony with denominational policy. An assistant secretary-treasurer should be trained to carry on the work in the absence of the secretary-treasurer.

Seminars and Presenters

Classes for study of child development and other subjects may be conducted as part of the Home and Center Association program, both at its regular meetings and specially called meetings. Presenters for these classes may be selected by the center board.

Committees

The center director shall be an ex officio member of any and all Home and Center Association committees and subcommittees by virtue of position. Committees deemed necessary to assist in the business of the HCA may be appointed by the leader with the center director's input, and reported to the center board upon establishment. Such committees may be created for assisting with programming, promoting HCA involvement, and/or special projects.

Promotion of Christian Education and Care

It is of great importance for every Seventh-day Adventist to promote Christian care and education.

"The subject of education should interest the whole Seventh-day Adventist body." It is the work that lies nearest to our church members, "the noblest missionary work that any man or woman can undertake." In fact, "we cannot call ourselves true missionaries if we neglect those at our very doors who are at the most critical age and who need our aid to secure knowledge and experience that will fit them for the service of God." (6 T, p. 217)

"While we should put forth earnest efforts for the masses of people around us, and push the work into foreign fields, no amount of labor in this line can excuse us for neglecting the education of our children and youth." (CT, p. 165)

It is imperative that all denominational workers, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, as well as center board members, intensify their efforts to make clear to the organization and new converts alike the fact that Christian care and education are fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

"If ever we are to work in earnest, it is now. The enemy is pressing in on all sides, like a flood. Only the power of God can save our children from being swept away by the tide of evil. The responsibility resting upon parents, teachers, and church members to do their part in cooperation with God, is greater than words can express." (CT, p. 166)

Home and Center Association Cont ...

Christian care and early childhood education may be promoted by the following means:

- A. Education Day programs with an emphasis on early childhood education centers in the local church(es)
- B. Frequent pictures and articles in the Southern Tidings
- C. Use of published / publicity materials such as the following:
 - 1. Brochures, leaflets and bulletin inserts
 - 2. Special educational bulletins in the church(es) during Education Week
 - 3. My Little Friend; Parent Talk; Adventist Review
 - 4. Books by Ellen G. White: Child Guidance; Adventist Home; Testimonies for the Church vol. 6; Counsels to Parents; Education; Fundamentals of Christian Education; Counsels on Education, Teachers and Students
 - 5. Personal and circular letters
 - 6. Displays of selected pictures of Christian early childhood education activities, posters, charts, and graphs in churches, camp meetings, camps, etc.
 - 7. Videos and other media presentations on Christian care and early childhood education
- D. Frequent brief presentations in Sabbath services by the center children to share poems, songs, or Bible memory work.
- E. Public and group meetings:
 - 1. Church service: At least two sermons on some aspect of Christian education and early childhood care should be preached in every church each year
 - 2. Education rallies: A weekend convention or rally on Christian education and early childhood care should be held once each year in the larger churches and in a convenient location for groups of smaller churches
 - 3. Camp meetings and district meetings: Sermons on Christian education and early childhood education and care should be given at camp meetings and district meetings
 - 4. Ministers' and teachers' meetings: The urgency of gathering our children into our own centers should be laid on the hearts of all who attend our church officers' meetings and other workers' meetings
 - 5. Presentation of high-quality religious programs and special programs be given by the center children for promoting "Christian Early Childhood Education Week" or "Know Your Center Week."
- F. Vacation Bible Schools can be another means of promoting the available service of the early childhood education center.

Sample Conflict Resolution Procedure and Forms

Following is an example conflict resolution procedure that could be adapted or adopted and used in an early childhood education center. (See Figure 1 for graphic outline.) The procedure is mindful of due process and founded on the Biblical principles of Matthew 18. The written procedure should be given as a form to be signed by each employee upon hiring and parent at the time of enrollment, after which a copy should be given to each signer and the original filed in the director's office.

Parent / Staff* Complaint Procedure

- STEP 1 Complainant is to meet with the staff member alone or as a family to deal with the issue/complaint.** Under no circumstance is the issue/complaint to be discussed with any other party.
- STEP 2 If the complaint remains unresolved after Step 1, the unresolved complaint is to be taken to the director (or center board chairperson) for the purpose of securing assistance in finding resolution.** A meeting among the three parties, the complainant, staff member, and director, is to be held with the director chairing the meeting. (If the "staff member" is the director, then the meeting shall consist of the complainant, director, and center board chairperson of which the center board chairperson shall chair the meeting.) The person chairing the meeting is to keep minutes of the meeting including all relevant issues and/or agreements discussed. The minutes are to be reviewed by all parties prior to the completion of the meeting. (See Figure 2 for an example of a resolution agreement form that could be used.)
- STEP 3 At each instance in which a complaint is registered, the staff member should have the right to address the complaint directly. If the complaint remains unresolved then the complaint will be referred to the Center Board Executive Committee.
- STEP 4 If Steps 1-3 prove unsuccessful and the complaint remains unresolved, a final appeal of the issue can be made to the Center Board. In order to insure fairness, the staff member is to be present at this meeting. Should the complainant be a member of the center board, he/she will remove himself/herself from the decision-making process relative to the issue at hand. A final resolution to the complaint will be acted upon at this level. All parties are to be officially notified in a timely manner and in writing of the center board's decision.

* or other individual

**All meetings must be by appointment

Employee or Parent Name
(Please print)

Date

Signature

Communication Procedures for Conflict Resolution

Figure 1

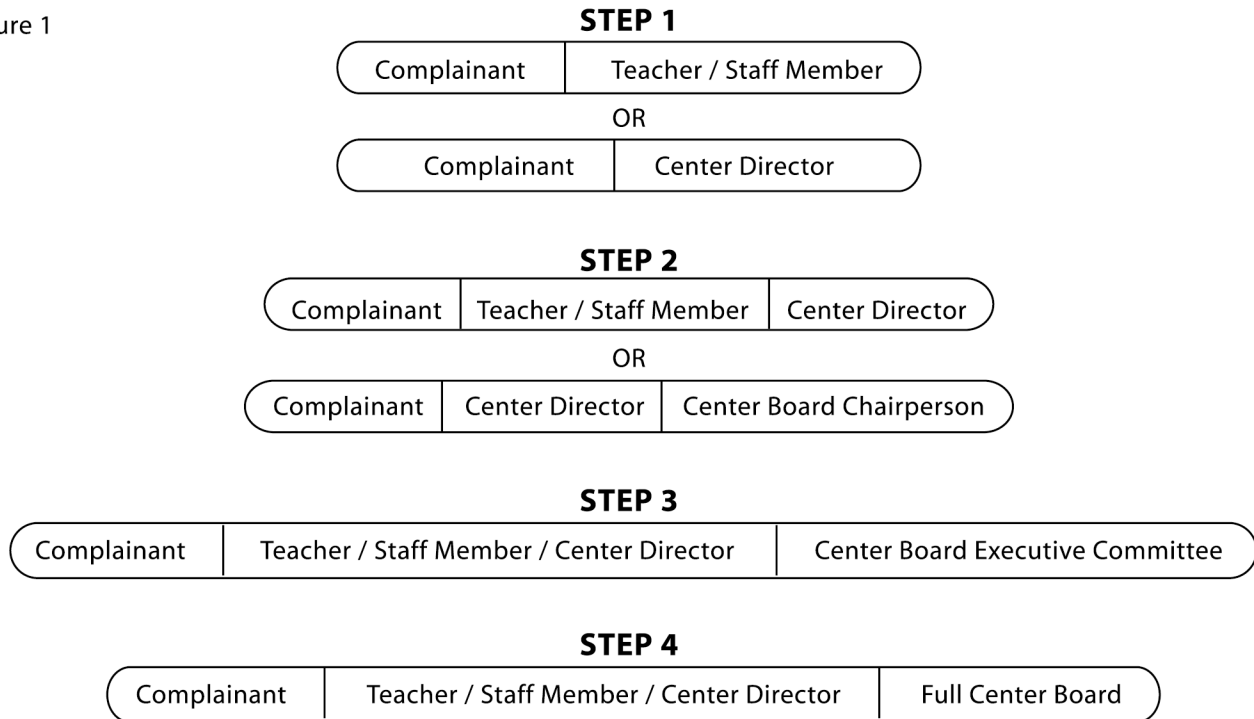


Figure 2

<p>Resolution Agreement Form</p> <p>Date of Meeting: _____</p> <p>Concerned Party _____</p> <p>Persons Present: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Concern at hand: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Statement of Resolution Agreement: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Check here if no resolution agreement was made, then fill in the following information:</p> <p>Next step: STEP # _____</p> <p>Person setting up the next step's meeting: _____</p> <p>Phone number: _____</p> <p>*****</p> <p>Complainant's Signature and date: _____</p> <p>Other Party's Signature(s) and date: _____</p> <p>Other Party's Signature(s) and date: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTER ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

