

**Head Start State Collaboration Offices  
2012-2013 Mid-Year Report (March 1-August 31, 2013)**

## **Arkansas**

**Collaboration Director**

Jacqueline Dedman  
Arkansas Head Start  
State Collaboration Office  
1400 W. Markham, Suite 406  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
501-371-0740 (phone)  
501-370-9109 (fax)  
[jackied@arheadstart.org](mailto:jackied@arheadstart.org)

**Lead Agency Contact**

Tonya Russell, Director  
Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education  
Arkansas Department of Human Services  
501-682-0495 (phone)  
501-683-6060 (fax)  
[tonya.russell@arkansas.gov](mailto:tonya.russell@arkansas.gov)

**ACF Regional Contact**

Kimberly Chalk  
Region VI ACF  
DHHS  
1301 Young Street, Ste 937  
Dallas, TX 75202  
214-767-8847 (phone)  
214 767-2038 (fax)  
[kchalk@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:kchalk@acf.hhs.gov)

**Briefly describe your accomplishments and actual outcomes in the following areas.**

Facilitate collaboration among Early Head Start and Head Start Grantees and entities that provide child and family services to low-income families. Describe your accomplishments and outcomes in the four required priority areas.
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- **School Transitions, including state data systems**

The HSSCO is collaborating and working with the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) in planning a statewide event to address several critical topics in early childhood education and maintaining communication between pre-k and Kindergarten teachers. The HSSCO has been meeting on a quarterly basis with the Department of Education and the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) to put in place an ongoing system of collaboration and communication for School Readiness (SR)/Transition between State-Funded Pre-K, Head Start, HIPPPY, and the Public School system. These groups will come together for the second time on October 9, 2013 to address transition, school readiness, and data systems. The SR Institute will feature a speaker from the National Center for Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL), a parent's perspective, and a speaker to update participants on the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). The speaker will highlight a framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating pre-K to third grade approaches, as well as, other transitional methods. An ongoing communication system called the Early Childhood Forum was also created to support the ongoing work and to maintain an open line of communication with all early childhood programs. School Readiness Teams are responsible for meeting on a regular basis on the local level throughout the school year to address school readiness, transition, and data systems.

The AECC also assigned a school readiness state team to revise the Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Checklist (KRIC). The team has been meeting on a regular basis to update and align the KRIC with the state Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The team will have a draft revision for the AECC to review and approve in October, 2013..

*{HSSCO Strategic Plan, Goal 2}*

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- **Professional Development**

The HSSCO director provides ongoing state updates to EHS/Head Start programs through scheduled bi-monthly meetings, emails, conference calls, and random visits to programs. Directors are given information and resources on the national centers, upcoming training and technical assistance, and updated resources.

Representatives from the Arkansas Head Start-State Association (AHSA) and the HSSCO participated in the 2013 Region VI Head Start (5-state) Institute. The institute was held in Shreveport, Louisiana on August 5-8, 2013. Some of the professional development opportunities and activities that took place included:

1. Pre-Institute Sessions
2. General Sessions w/Guest Speakers
3. Institute Sessions w/presenters
4. Regional Office Update
5. Exhibitors, Networking, & State meetings

The HSSCO director participated in all aspects of the institute and presented the following sessions at the institute:

- CCSS: What does This Mean for Head Start
- State of the States Forum – All collaboration directors conducted a session together

The HSSCO participated in the following professional development trainings from March, 2013 until August, 2013:

1. NHSA Conference in Washington, D.C. – April, 2013
2. OHS B-5 Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. – April, 2013
3. HSSCO Directors Meeting in Washington, D.C. – April & July, 2013
4. Bi-Monthly AHSA Meetings in Little Rock – April, May, & July, 2013 with a variety of speakers each month
5. Safe Babies Court Team Conference in Little Rock – June, 2013
6. STAM in Washington, D.C. – July, 2013
7. BUILD in Washington, D.C. - July, 2013

*{HSSCO Strategic Plan, Goal 3}*

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- **Child Care and Early Childhood Systems/QRIS**

The HSSCO director serves on the Arkansas Better Beginnings (BB) Quality Rating Improvement System committee. Programs in the state of Arkansas are currently going through the three-level process. Arkansas has approximately 891 quality approved centers that provide quality services to over 62,000 children.

In addition to these numbers, we have many programs that are in the process of completing levels one, two, and three. Head Start has approximately 88% of its programs that have completed all three levels. The BB QRIS committee is currently working on adding levels four, five, and maybe six. This committee meets occasionally. Sub-committees have been formed to add more focus on specific content areas that need to be updated. Arkansas is also looking to switch over to a starred system for BB/QRIS.

Arkansas is applying for the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTTELC) grant in the amount of \$37.5 million. The state has identified its mission, the focus areas, and activities to include in the grant. The focus areas include:

1. Professional Development
2. Collaboration & Partnerships
3. Family Engagement
4. QRIS

This grant will assist Arkansas in providing support and improvements in our voucher/subsidy, improves our QRIS centered around our Early Learning Frameworks, whereby, we will create one set of standards for all early childhood programs in Arkansas, as well as, focus on other activities in the four areas mentioned above.

The Early Childhood Assessment System (ECAS) is now in draft form. The ARCECEAM task force has completed their work in developing a statewide assessment system. This dynamic document will go before the AECC/SAC in October for approval. The ECAS has 12 indicators integrated throughout a four-part system (see model below) to support strong partnerships, an aligned system, integrated services, quality assurances, and highlight specific and lasting outcomes for all children.



The Arkansas Grantee Roundtable was held in May, 2013. The planning committee worked closely in identifying and bringing key stakeholders in Arkansas together. The HSSCO, AR Head Start Association, Dallas Regional Office, AR HIPPPY, and the Division of Child care worked very closely together in planning this event. Two speakers from the National Fatherhood Clearinghouse moved the group forward on their thought processes regarding fatherhood in the state. In January, 2014, Arkansas will form for the first time a statewide fatherhood initiative in order to support all early childhood programs on the local level and helping to, not just get more fathers involved in their child's education, but to also show the importance of fatherhood in a variety of ways.

*{HSSCO Strategic Plan, Goal 1 and 4}*

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The Traveling Arkansas Professional Pathways (TAPP) Registry details ten levels of career development based on training, education, experience in the field and professional development activities. The TAPP spectrum plots a course for any individual developing a plan for professional growth in early childhood care and education. The HSSCO director is working closely with the DCC to update this system in order to better serve its clients. A TAPP representative will attend the directors Class meeting to share some of the updates so far in September.

*{HSSCO Strategic Plan, Goal 1 and 4}*

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- **Support of Regional Office Priorities**

The HSSCO director also participates in the Regional Office conference calls when scheduled by the Dallas Regional Office. The purpose for these calls is to provide updates on each state's activities, planning updates, and to maintain effective communication between the Regional Office and each state (AR, TX, OK, NM, & LA) collaboration office. Other communications include ongoing emails and phone calls.

The HSSCO director participated in monthly conference calls with the Office of Head Start and the Dallas Regional Office. The purpose for these calls is to provide updates on each state's activities, planning updates, and to maintain effective communication between the Regional Office, each state (AR, TX, OK, NM, & LA) collaboration office, and on a national level. Other communications include ongoing emails and phone calls.

*{HSSCO Strategic Plan, Goal 5}*

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**Briefly discuss the following aspects of your work:**

**Your activities as a member of the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care**

The Arkansas Early Childhood Commission (AECC) convenes on a quarterly basis (January, April, July, and October). The commission is charged with supporting and advising the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education by ensuring that all Arkansas children and their families have access to a safe high-quality, developmentally appropriate, nurturing, learning environment and by educating and assisting parents, providers, and communities to prepare children for future success. The work continues for strengthening and expanding partnerships with other agencies and organizations for connected action, as the commission focus on a diverse set of topics and activities. The AECC met in April and July in this mid-year report. The focus of these meetings included:

- Updating AECC's Policies and Procedures
- Goals & Measurable for DCC
- School Readiness in Arkansas
- ASSET Mapping Project
- Early Childhood Assessment System
- Selecting the Outstanding Early Child Care Professionals in AR

The HSSCO director serves as chair for the AECC.

Arkansas is applying for the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTTELC) grant in the amount of \$37.5 million. The state has identified its mission, the focus areas, and activities to include in the grant. The focus areas include:

1. Professional Development
2. Collaboration & Partnerships
3. Family Engagement
4. QRIS

The UALR College of Business team is working on an asset mapping system to include all DHS resources. The goal is to have a website that is efficient for the general public. They are looking for a name for the mapping project. The goals are to create an online mapping system, online resource guide and a place for to house the "Getting Ready for School" publications. It was noted that this is still a work in progress. Tonya Russell shared that DCCECE would have brochures from UALR, social media to let folks know about the new initiative. They will use the Better Beginnings website and word of mouth to get the information out to the public. UALR will also be sharing at meetings and events that they are scheduled to attend. The ARRA funds made this state activity possible for Arkansas.

**The work you have completed to date on the required annual needs assessment update of the needs of Head Start grantees in the State with respect to coordination, collaboration, and alignment of services and alignment of curricula and assessments**

The required annual needs assessment has been analyzed and those needs have been written as goals for the HSSCO's 2012 - 2017 Five-Year Strategic Plan. The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office updates the strategic plan quarterly to identify the work that is being done and the completed goals. The AHSA's Board reviews the plan annually for updates and changes (if any). The revised strategic plan is posted on the Head Start Enterprise System, ECLKC, and the AHSA's website. The HSSCO will be preparing procedures for the next 5-year grant within the next year, whereby another needs assessment will be completed (2015).

The HSSCO has incorporated some of the strategic plan goals in the annual and mid-year report to show the connections from the strategic plan in relation to the work that is being done in the HSSCO.(see this report).

**How you have involved the State Head Start Association and other partners in the ongoing work of the State Collaboration Office throughout the grant year**

The HSSCO director serves on so many committees in the state to see how to coordinate services to Head Start/EHS programs with other state partners. Other partners include such agencies and organizations as: Arkansas advocates, Invest Early, Medical Homes, AR Health Department, Parenting In Arkansas, UALR, Oral Health Coalition, Dept. of Higher Education, and many more. The HSSCO puts forth every effort to share information with the AHSA in a variety of ways.

The Arkansas Head Start Association reviews, approves, and/or disapproves budgets, the Collaboration Grant, and all other board items prior to submission. The Collaboration Director provides state reports to the Arkansas Head Start Directors Class and Arkansas Head Start Association Board of Directors at their bi-monthly meetings. The Collaboration Director and Administrative Services Manager disseminate information via emails on upcoming initiatives and trainings frequently. The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office solicits input from the Arkansas Head Start Association about representation from Head Start and Early Head Start on state-level committees. The Collaboration Director meets via conference call with the Arkansas Head Start Association President on a regular basis

The AHSA's Board meets bi-monthly, whereby the HSSCO director provide national, regional, and state updates and information to all Head Start directors. During this time, the director plans for a state Institute planning meeting, Class (Directors, Staff, Friends, & Parents), meetings, and the AHSA's Board meeting. The AHSA's Board monitors and approves all financial changes and updates. In August, the HSSCO recommended to the 'AHSAs board to amend its policies and procedures to include a parent representative on the board. The parent representative will serve on the board as others, but would also advocate for other parents to attend so that we could get their perspective and input regarding state issues.

The AHSA supports state efforts and initiatives by identifying representatives on the following commissions, task forces, and committees:

- ECAS
- AECC
- School Readiness Task Force
- The Region VI Board

Plus, Head Start programs lead the way for coordinating and developing the school readiness local teams across the state of Arkansas. These teams work together in working on transition, school readiness goals, and data systems.

The Arkansas Home Visiting Network (HVN) was formed to build support and collaboration among all home visiting programs in Arkansas. The Arkansas Department of Health received a grant to expand the home visiting programs in Arkansas. The funds went to support the first five programs listed below, however,

existing home visiting programs such as EHS and Save the Children are still a part of the network. The network consists of the following programs:

- *Nurse Family Partnership*
- *HIPPY*
- *Parents As Teachers (PAT)*
- *Following Babies Back Home*
- *Healthy Families America*
- EHS
- Save the Children

The HSSCO director has been in communication with the State Department of Education to complete a MOU with for Part B services for pre-school children with disabilities on the state level. The department is short-handed at this time, but do plan to complete the agreement on the state level. The HSSCO will meet with a representative from DCFS in September to start the work in developing a state memorandum of Understanding/agreement to support the work with Head Start (foster care) and the local DCFS office.

The HSSCO works closely with the AHSA in updating activities, events, and resources on the association's web-site. The web-site is updated every quarter with new information, new ideas, pictures, videos, newsletters, job announcements, and new activities for EHS/Head Start programs to access.

**Your efforts to support the coordination of Head Start services to American Indian/Alaska Native and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs**

There are two migrant and Seasonal programs in the state of Arkansas and Louisiana that are also regular Head Start program providers. In coordinating services for these programs, the Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office maintains a section of its web-site that specifically indicates where these programs are located and the services that they provide. The CAPCA Head Start program is the lead grantee for migrant services in AR and LA. MCAEOC is the delegate, whereby, programs are located in AR and MO.

The HSSCO also collaborates with Welcome the Children in planning statewide training and workshops that addresses the needs of working with Migrant and seasonal children and families to ensure that the program needs are being met. The HSSCO also donates a collaborative partnership grant to Welcome the Children in the amount of \$200 to support their quality training efforts in training Head Start programs on such topics as: Cross Cultural Perspectives, Anti-Bias Curriculum, Enhancing Language Development, Exploring Differences within Families, and much more.

**We currently have no American Indian/Alaska Native programs in Arkansas.**

## **Describe additional activities and successes in the past six months.**

- In the past 6 months, The Arkansas Comprehensive Early Childhood Education/Assessment Model is in its final stages for completion. The 12 indicators' model will be used in the RTT. The SAC approved a proposal by the HSSCO director to create an early childhood system and assessment for all early childhood programs in the state. The task force has met each month over the past year to outline this model. Through these meetings and processes, the team has developed a dynamic system that will call for some a lot of changes in the state, as well as, some huge outcomes for Arkansas' children and families as we look at quality education for all children. The assessment for all early childhood programs will create consistent data to show exactly where our children are academically. This will also support our longitudinal Data system for all programs across the state.
- The HSSCO director is working closely with the Grade-Level Reading Campaign launched by the Winthrop-Rockefeller Foundation. The campaign goal is to reduce by half the number of children who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade. The issue originated from student results on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), whereby, 70% of Arkansas's children scored below proficient and AR ranked 35<sup>th</sup> in the nation on the test. Also, 24% of Arkansas' third graders scored below proficient on the 2011 Benchmark exam. Arkansas plans to foster a culture that understands the importance of reading, build capacity at the top level to make policy changes and implement programs as needed, expand the knowledge base about what works to increase reading levels, and to develop and advocate for policy solutions that will increase reading proficiency levels among elementary school children. The HSSCO is working closely with Head Start programs by:
  1. Releasing a video that showcase the importance of grade level reading,
  2. Conducting a statewide activity for Head Start programs across the state with a reading focus, and
  3. Conducting a statewide "Read-A-Thon with all Head Start programs.
- The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office and the Oral Health Coalition continue to work together to provide oral health standards and support to EHS/Head Start programs in Arkansas. The HSSCO director provided information on additional grant funding for dental hygienists in order to support the continued work with Head Start programs. This information was provided to the Collaboration director from the dental hygienist liaison, Karen Donaldson. This came at a great time since the Oral Health Coalition had lost its funding, as a result, Dr. Whitaker is no longer working with the oral health coalition. The HSSCO director also provided assistance to the coalition by sharing measurable goals from the last Oral Health Summit with the director of the coalition. .

- The Arkansas Court Team for Maltreated Infants and Toddlers meet each month to:
  1. Defining a continuum of services and how to best access early intervention services. These services will be incorporated into the case plan.
  2. The committee has established Tuesdays as the time for the post removal conferences for any new potential court team case.
  3. We established a new committee called the “Kinship Placement”. This committee is working to access what types of services are needed for relatives with permanent custody. The committee is drafting a questionnaire to ascertain what services are currently in place and which are lacking.
  4. The parent partners are working on possible grant opportunities for parent partners. They have developed new forms to use with families. These forms are being reviewed at DHS before being forwarded to OCC for legal vetting.
  
- The Social Emotional Workgroup has been working diligently to complete a state social emotional strategic plan to submit to the DHS/DCC to review for the continued work that still needs to be done, especially since DCC no longer has the grant funding to support this effort. The workgroup has been meeting on a regular basis to complete this plan. The plan has been submitted to DCC as the workgroup waits for feedback and to identify what the next steps will be.
  
- The Arkansas Mission of Mercy (ARMOM) was held in Arkadelphia, Arkansas on May 31 through June 1, 2013. It was a huge success with dentists from all across the state providing free dental services to children and families for two days at Henderson state University. The HSSCO director worked with the group during the two days in assisting with registration, cleaning utensils, prepping parents and children, and much more! ARMOM will be held in Northwest Arkansas next year.
  
- The HSSCO director has been asked to serve on three additional boards, advisory councils, and/or task force:
  1. Welcome the Children (WTC) Advisory Board
  2. Southeast Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) The SEDL Board met for the first time on July 25-26, 2013 in Texas.
  3. Head Start Performance Standards (HSPS) work group – This group is working with the Office of Head Start and the NHSA to revise the HSPS. At this time we are only making revisions in the following areas:

**a. 1305 ERSEA**

**b. 1304 Operation of Head Start Programs**

- (1) Early Childhood Development & Health Services
- (2) Family and Community Partnerships
- (3) Program Design & Management

**c. 1306 Head Start Program Staffing Requirements**

- (1) Program Staffing Patterns
- (2) Staff Qualification Requirements
- (3) Program Options

- The HSSCO director is very much involved in state decisions and is definitely a team player in working with a variety of agencies and state partners in Arkansas. EHS/Head Start programs have been included in the work of several state agencies who have received grant funding (Home Visiting, Medicaid, Oral Health, etc.) to do specific work in early childhood education.

*HSSCO – J. Dedman  
Mid-Year Report*

*Report Sent to:*

ACF  
DHS/DCC  
AHSA

*Posted to:*

ECLKC  
HSES