

**Head Start State Collaboration Office
2011-2012 Annual Report (March 1, 2011 - February, 2012)**

Arkansas

Collaboration Director

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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.

Please Note: All updates for the annual report is written in block and listed after the mid-year report (which is written in italics) in order to follow sequence.

- **School Transitions, including state data systems**

The HSSCO is collaborating and working with the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) (Curriculum and Alignment department) in planning and maintaining communication between pre-k and Kindergarten teachers. The kick –off for this dynamic event to start will be at the Region VI conference in November, 2012. The HSSCO and the ADE facilitate a networking meeting to share critical challenges and allow teachers to come together to problem-solve better ways to work together. We are looking at timelines to schedule ongoing networking between the two parties each quarter.

The HSSCO will provide assistance and support when funded for the RTT-ELC. The director for the DCC ECE has shared that the state will move forward with these goals rather we receive the RTT grant or not. It will be a slow pace without the funds, but we will move in the direction to align state systems and services.

Arkansas did not get funded for the Race to the Top, however, our plans to build a quality early childhood a system continues. The HSSCO has been meeting on a monthly basis with the Department of Education and the Division of Early Childhood Education to put in place an ongoing system of collaboration and communication for School Readiness/Transition between State-Funded Pre-K, Head Start, HIPPY, and the Public School system. These groups will come together for the first time in Arkansas on November 5, 2012 to address transition, school readiness, and data systems. An ongoing communication plan is being developed to support the ongoing work and to maintain an open line of communication.

The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office worked with the Arkansas Research Center (ARC) to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the Arkansas Department of Education, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, and Arkansas Department of Health, Arkansas Department o Workforce Services, Aransas Department of Human Services, Arkansas Department of Human Services and Arkansas Head Start Grantees. The purpose of the agreement is to share data on education, health, and service data. A 10-digit state identifier would be assigned to each child that will allow programs to access longitudinal data on children. Head Start grantees participating will be provided with reports with aggregate data indicating how children perform as they move through the K12 system as well as higher education system. Currently, nine (42.86%) of Arkansas grantees have signed the MOU. Some of the programs have already received initial reports on children from the 2009-2010 program year.

A presentation was given during the AECC meeting in April by the Arkansas Research Center. As part of the State Longitudinal System, information and data was shared on achievement gaps and poverty. Statistical data was shared to show how poverty and sickness has the most impact on children's learning.

The ARC will also be working with EHS/Head Start programs in collecting program data to track the progress of children from birth to third grade. They will also be reviewing a process to track the education levels of teachers and the impact these various levels have on student learning.

The HSSCO director attended the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission (State Advisory Council) on April 17, 2012 to request that an early childhood system be developed in Arkansas that allows support for all early childhood programs (ABC, HIPPY, Head Start, Voucher, DDTSC) in the state. The director asked that all regulations for each program be reviewed by doing a side by side crosswalk. In analyzing this data, a plan will be developed to address all issues identified in hopes to build a quality early childhood system that would meet the needs of all children in quality centers in Arkansas. The council approved the request with a couple of the council members agreeing to serve on the committee to complete this task. The HSSCO director is working to put the committee together to begin this dynamic work. The first meeting will be held in June, 2012.

- **Professional Development**

Professional development was strong for the month of October, 2011. The HSSCO participated in the Birth-to-Three conference, the HSSCO directors' meeting, and the meeting and networking session with Child care in Washington D. C. As a new director, it was great to meet the HSSCO directors from other states. A great deal of information was shared and learned.

The HSSCO participated in the Region VI conference held in Tulsa, Oklahoma on October 10-12, 2011.

The HSSCO also participated in the Arkansas Early Childhood conference and 50th early childhood anniversary. The conference was held in Hot springs, Arkansas on October 13-15, 2011. The conference entertained over 75 interest sessions, keynote speakers, a professional networking luncheon, and other educational events.

The Arkansas Parenting Education Network (APEN) conference showcased their theme, "It's a Jungle Out There" by taking participants on an expedition with two research keynote speakers who shared information on family support and technology in the family. Other sessions focused on round table discussions, national and local experts. The HSSCO shared all conference information with all Head start directors in the state so that they could attend.

The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office assisted with preparations and planning for the 2011 Arkansas Head Start Institute held July 20-22, 2011. There were 206 participants representing 19 (90.48%) of Arkansas grantees. Keynote presenters were Tonya Russell, Director of the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education; George Campbell, ACF Region 6 Office-Office of Head Start; Thomas Sheridan, National Head Start Association; Marjorie Petty, Regional Administrator, US Department of Health and Humans Services-Region VI; and Kevin Dedner, Robert Wood Johnson Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity. There were a variety of sessions offered in health, nutrition, education, social-emotional, and parent and community services.

The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office met periodically with the TTA ECE staff to discuss professional development activities scheduled in the state with grantees. The TTA ECE staff also participated in the 2011 Arkansas Head Start Institute held July 20-22, 2011. They provided educational workshops for Head Start and Early Head Start staff.

Arkansas has begun implementation phase of the Arkansas Birth through Pre-K Teaching Credential. The core competencies have been approved and it is now open for Higher Education institutes to apply for permission to offer the coursework that qualifies for the credential. Currently, Pulaski Technical College has been approved to offer the courses. The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education will administer the credentialing process. The Higher Education Workgroup is currently looking at options that may allow current teachers with degrees to apply for the credential.

The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office will be assisting with planning for the 2012 Region VI Head Start Institute to be held in Rogers, Arkansas, November 5-8, 2012.

The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office provided input for the planning of the Sixth Annual Celebrating Cultural Harmony Professional Development Institute for diverse populations and children with disabilities. The Institute is scheduled for November 15-17, 2011 in Little Rock, Arkansas. Information on the institute was sent out to all EHS/Head Start programs in the state.

The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office completed this mid-year by participating in the Arkansas Road Trip to Readiness #2 on August 31, 2011. The purpose of this event was to provide an atmosphere of collegiate learning and networking, to update participants on the Office of Head Start Goals for Early Head Start (EHS), to provide useful materials, information, and tools to assist with their work, and to review where we are with EHS and where we need to go – Road Trip to School Readiness Map. The HSSCO director shared information and resources with participants on the vision for the HSSCO, The Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge, and provided an update on the National Infant and Toddler Child Care Initiative. Information was shared on Math and Science for Infants and Toddlers and the importance of intentional teaching.

The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office director completed the year by participating in the following professional development activities:

- Region VI Board Meeting in Dallas, TX on January 5-6, 2012
- HSSCO Directors' Network in Washington, DC in November, 2011
- CDC (Address Obesity) Institute in Dallas, Texas in January, 2012
- OHS/HSSCO Meeting in Washington, D.C. in January, 2012
- Arkansas Advocates Soup Sunday in Little Rock, AR on Feb. 19, 2012
- Regional Office Meeting w/RO Staff and TTA in Dallas, TX in Feb., 2012
- APNET (AR Prevention Network) in Jacksonville, AR on March 8, 2012
- School Readiness Summit in Dallas, TX on March 27-29, 2012
- Governor's B-3rd Grade Policy Institute in Virginia on May 9-10, 2012
- AR Prescription-Drug Summit in Little Rock, AR on April 26, 2012
- ACAAA (Community Action Agencies) in NLR, AR on May 23, 2012
- Birth-to-K Licensing Summit in Little Rock, AR on May 30-31, 2012

All of these meetings, summits, and/or conferences focused on improving early childhood issues in the state of Arkansas, as well as in other states.

The HSSCO director also meets with the TTA Early childhood specialists with STG International and the Booz Allen Hamilton groups. We continue to update the School Readiness Implementation Plan that was submitted to the Dallas Regional Office. HSSCO is also working with the TTA to design cluster trainings in the state of Arkansas. The HSSCO director shared various topics from the 2011 Needs Assessment and the TTA group agreed to plan the first cluster training around those topics (Systems & Services, Behavior Management, PFC Frameworks, and Infants & Toddlers Environments). The first cluster training is tentatively scheduled for July, 2012.

The Arkansas Head Start Association and the HSSCO will host the 2012 Region VI Institute, which will be held in Rogers, AR on November 5-8, 2012. The team has worked really hard in identifying speakers, planning sessions, working with the hotel, and much more. The HSSCO director has worked

closely with the Association in putting this event together. The planning team for the five-state institute will build on the theme, "Success Through Relationships" by implementing a team-approach for this institute.

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

The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office has been working to encourage Arkansas grantees to participate in Arkansas Better Beginnings (State QRIS) since implementation in July 2010. In March 2011, the Arkansas Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education developed a reciprocity process for Head Start programs (and other nationally accredited programs including NAEYC) participating in Better Beginnings. The reciprocity agreement allows Head Start grantees to submit Form A of the application along with their recent monitoring reports and CLASS scores. The Division of Child Care reviews this information and makes a determination about the level of rating or if the grantee needs further review. Reasons for developing the reciprocity policy include: non-duplication of resources including financial, acknowledgement of systemic monitoring approaches that include program improvement, and the ability to focus resources on less resourced early childhood and school age programs. Early Head Start Centers will still have to be reviewed using the ITERS Scale. Currently, 80% of Head Start and Early Head Start Centers have received a rating of two or three stars with three being the highest level currently. Arkansas has begun working on the development of levels four and five.

The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office participated in the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) conference call on August 23, 2011, where information from the Obama Administration announced the final application and selection criteria for competitive grants. The call was conducted by the Department of Education and Health and Human Services. This competition will provide up to \$500 million in State-level grants to improve early learning and development programs. The RTT-ELC will focus on five key areas of reform: establishing successful state systems of early learning; defining high-quality accountable early learning programs; promoting early learning programs; promoting early learning development outcomes for children; supporting a great early childhood education workforce; and measuring outcomes and progress to determine whether kindergartners are entering elementary school ready to succeed. Applications are due on October 19, 2011 and the Department of Education and Health and Human Services will announce winners in December, 2011.

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 38,000 children. These numbers include the following breakdown of programs and centers:

*Head Start – 194 Centers with service to 9,808 children

*ABC – 391 Centers with service to 28,768 children

*Voucher – 306 Centers with service to 37,824 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 six. This committee meets every month at the HSSCO.

The Arkansas Better Chance program through the DCCECE is in the process of reallocating funds for ABC slots in the state. These funds will be for new and existing programs, as well as, infant and toddler expansion. The HSSCO director provided assistance in the reviewing of these grants.

- **Support of Regional Office Priorities**

The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office met with the Regional Office and ECE Managers June 7-8, 2011. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss school readiness implementation plans for the Collaboration Office and the ECE Staff. The Collaboration Office has been working in conjunction with the Head Start TTA ECE Staff on the development of a School Readiness Implementation Plan. The plan was submitted to ACF Regional Office 6-Office of Head Start on July 7, 2011.

The new HSSCO director made contacts with the Office of Head Start and the Dallas Regional Office to ask specific questions regarding the collaboration position, the frameworks, and to introduce herself as the new collaboration director.

The HSSCO director supported the Dallas Regional Office in conducting the School Readiness Summit for all Head Start programs in the region. This summit was held in Dallas, Texas on March 27-29, 2012. The HSSCO director also worked with Head Start directors during this week to get school readiness ideas for the upcoming Region VI Institute.

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 states' 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.

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) met on July 19, 2011. 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 meeting focused on updates on the following activities and topics: Licensing/Better Beginning, Child Nutrition, Arkansas Better Chance, Higher Education Proposals, Child Care Development Fund, and Common Core updates. Presentations were given on Asset Savings, Support, Education, and Training (ASSET) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) on the Individual Development Account Initiative. Interesting facts to share from the meeting include: 728 participating centers/homes-approximately 6% growth increase since January, 2011; The State Board of Education approved ABC slots for 24,507 children in July, 2011; and there are currently 10,992 families and 14,628 eligible children on the waiting list. The work continues for strengthening and expanding partnerships with other agencies and organizations for connected action.

The HSSCO has attended every Arkansas Early Childhood Commission (State Advisory Council/SAC) meeting. These meetings are held each quarter (November, 2011 and January and April, 2012).

The HSSCO director presented and shared the 2012 HSSCO's Strategic Plan with the SAC. An update was provided on the current status of EHS/Head Start programs in the State. SAC members answered questions and shared information to assist the HSSCO director in her work in the state. The director also shared data regarding other committees that she is currently serving on.

The HSSCO director went to the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission (State Advisory Council) on April 17, 2012 to request that an early childhood system be developed in Arkansas that allows support for all early childhood programs (ABC, HIPPIY, Head Start, Voucher, DDTSC) in the state. Another request was made to establish a committee to research a state assessment to be used with all early childhood programs. This assessment would work with any existing curriculum. The council approved both requests and the HSSCO director is working to put the committee together to begin this dynamic work. The first meeting will be held in June, 2012. The Arkansas Research Center will work closely with this committee from the beginning to support the state Longitudinal Data System.

The AECC approved four child care professionals as Outstanding Early Childhood Professionals in Arkansas. One of the four persons identified is a Head Start director from Phillips County in Arkansas. These award recipients will be recognized and presented with a plaque during the July meeting.

The Director for the DCC ECE asked the HSSCO director to serve as co-chair on the State Advisory Council. The SAC will be restructuring and updating their current goals during a retreat for the fall meeting. The HSSCO director developed a format for the SAC to support the existing state committees in Arkansas. All programs/committee work will be linked to support the goals of the commission.

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 Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office revised the needs assessment to include the new OHS priority areas utilizing the tool developed by a committee of Collaboration Directors. A comparative analysis of the previous needs assessment to the new and revised needs assessment will be done to identify changes in order to update the Collaboration Office's database and to prepare the assessment to send out to programs. The needs assessment will be disseminated to programs in the fall of 2011.

The HSSCO director conducted statewide focus groups in five areas in the state during the fall of 2011. The purpose of the focus groups was to introduce the new HSSCO director, collaborate with other state partners in sharing information and announcing state updates and new initiatives. The focus groups were well received and will be conducted every other year (2013).

The HSSCO's Needs Assessment was conducted in October, 2011. A SWOT Analysis was also conducted with Head Start directors and staff to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that may build/hinder us from completing goals and objectives. This information along with the needs assessment data was analyzed. The HSSCO worked with Head Start directors to develop goals and objectives for the strategic plan. This is an ongoing, active plan for the HSSCO as the work with state partners continue. The five-year strategic plan was recently updated (May) with color-coded information and is posted on the AHSA's web-site and on the Head Start Enterprise System HSES. The plan will be updated annually by the AHSA's Board members and staff.

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 Arkansas Head Start Association has the opportunity to review and approve the Collaboration Grant prior to submission. The Collaboration Director 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 about initiatives and upcoming 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 weekly.

The AHSA's Board meets bi-monthly, whereby the HSSCO director provide state updates and information to all Head Start directors. During this time, the director plans for a Region VI 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. The HSSCO director works closely with the Association's president and maintains ongoing communication via emails and phone calls.

The AHSA is serving as host for the Region VI Institute, which will be held in Rogers, Arkansas during the week of November 5-8, 2012. The HSSCO director worked closely with the association in putting together a planning team (which consists of directors and staff) to plan for this five-state Institute.

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

There are three migrant and Seasonal programs in the state of Arkansas 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 HSSCO also collaborates with Welcome the Children in planning an annual conference that addresses the needs of working with Migrant and seasonal children and families to ensure that the program needs are met.

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

Describe additional activities and successes in the past six months.

- *The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office was in a transition period during this six month. Ann Patterson, Collaboration Director, resigned in May and went to work for UAMS-Partners for Inclusive Communities as the Director of the Access to Recovery Project. The Director of the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and the Arkansas Head Start Association Executive Committee conducted the search and interviews for a new Collaboration Director. The Arkansas Head Start Association approved the selection at their July 21, 2011 Board Meeting. Jacqueline Dedman started on August 22, 2011 as the new Collaboration Director.*

The HSSCO director has implemented a “*Director-to-Director Small Talk*” with EHS/Head Start directors in the state. The purpose of these small talks is to build relationships with all EHS/Head Start directors and to discuss their program needs in relation to state updates and activities. The small talk is held every quarter, whereby, directors sign-up on the AHSA’s web-site and spend 30 minutes with the HSSCO director. Each quarter different topics are posted on the web-site to share with directors along with activity sheets.

The HSSCO director also provided support and outreach to new EHS/Head Start directors by visiting their sites to share information and to offer support for their new position. A welcome packet is given to each new director that provides information about the AHSA, the HSSCO, and a list of all EHS/Head Start programs in the state and their contact information. Currently we have four new EHS/Head Start directors in the state. All visits and information sharing will be completed by the end of June, 2012.

- *The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office attended several meetings for the Expanding Opportunities Inclusion project. The project focus on state partners providing input into the development of desired results for children birth to five years with a disability at all levels of the system, identifying key strategies and activities for the development of the Arkansas Expanding Opportunities Initiative, and having renewed energy for actively working towards inclusion of all young children. Representatives from the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center provided guidance and leadership in completing the State Perceptions of Inclusive Practices tool to help stakeholders identify how they are growing capacity to support sustainable and systematic improvements in including children birth to five with disabilities, involving families, providing integrated services to children birth to five, and supporting implementation and sustainability.*

This committee has completed a list of state approved screenings to assist early childhood programs in the state in making quality selections in these areas. The committee will finalize several projects in the area of curriculum, inclusion, and updating the state plan for special education.

- *Dental Home Initiative-The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office and the Oral Health Coalition worked to develop a proposal for the Dental Home Initiative that would increase the number of dental homes in underserved areas and the number of dentists who would accept Medicaid. Other major areas of focus will be the Oral Health Summit in the summer of 2012 as well as awareness activities focused on increasing participation of dentists and educating staff and parents about the importance of oral health.*

The HSSCO director has been working closely with the Oral Health Coalition to plan the Governor's Oral Health Summit. The summit is scheduled for June 15, 2012, whereby EHS/Head Start grantees will attend to network and communicate with dentists regarding their oral health program needs. The HSSCO director will present at the summit and share the history of Head Start, goals and objectives for the Dental Health Initiative, Head Start Performance Standards for Oral Health, and share data which outlines the oral health needs of children in Arkansas.

- *Early Childhood Nutrition and Physical Activity Summit-the Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office helped with planning for the summit held on June 22, 2011. The Collaboration Office, along with the Arkansas Head Start Association, shared information with local grantees and was able to identify representatives from Head Start and Early Head Start grantees to participate in the summit. The summit identified broad, initial strategies to improve nutrition, physical activity, and breastfeeding in Early Childhood settings. Participants from the summit will have the opportunity to join sub-workgroups of the Early Childhood Workgroup of the Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention.*

The physical activity committee has not resumed, but the HSSCO director attends the AR Children for the Prevention of Obesity (ARCOP) monthly meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to find creative ways to address obesity in Arkansas.

- *The HSSCO met with representatives from Arkansas Advocates to share information, state initiatives and updates, and to see how both offices would work together.*

The HSSCO director met with representatives and the director for AR Advocates to share the HSSCO's strategic plan and to see if AR Advocates could meet the needs of some Head Start programs in the state in the areas of income taxes, advocacy, and voting.

- *The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office attended the Zero to Three State Team meeting in Denver on April 13-14, 2011. The meeting focused on including expanding Early Head Start in State Early Childhood*

Systems and leveraging existing funding sources to support EHS-like services. The team will conduct an infant and toddler self-assessment checklist in the fall of 2011. The self-assessment checklist is based on research about effective policies and best practices and lays the foundation for building an effective early childhood development system in the state. After completing the checklist, the state will focus on one to three priorities for state action in each of the four goal areas: good health, strong families, positive early learning experiences, and collaboration and systems building. An action plan will be developed with assigned responsibilities, a timeline, and measurable outcomes.

- *The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office attended the Arkansas Children's Behavioral Health Care Commission on August 25, 2011. The meeting was very informative by providing updates on the State's System of Care (SOC), strategies for expanding systems of care study and opportunities created by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Expansion Grant Proposal and SOC Reporting Systems, and Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) with comments and feedback from commission members. The Health department has applied for a grant to address SOC in three specific areas: 1) Phase 1 – Work Group Formation, 2) Phase 2 – Planning, and Phase 3 – Launch. Through this grant, 15,000 children will be served in wraparound and 4,000 in residential services.*
- *The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office participated in the planning for the Arkansas Governor's Work-Life Balance Initiative. The purpose of this initiative is to focus on recognizing Arkansas employers for establishing policies and providing resources that support employees in balancing the needs of both work and family. Profit and non-profit businesses are nominated for the award, and then complete the application process, which consist of 74 questions. The committee met on August 26, 2011 to identify and update the content questions for this initiative. The questions address information in the areas such as career personal development, child care, work-time options, wellness, leave, collaboration, workplace culture, and benefits. The committee will begin receiving nominations for this award in September and the award will be announced in April, 2012.*

The Arkansas Governor's Work-Life Balance Initiative Banquet was held on May 8, 2012. The HSSCO supported the event by providing feedback and helping to set up for the banquet. The Governor's office recognized several businesses in Arkansas for their unique and creative support of their workers. Even the companies who did not win, went home as winners and shared how they were going to make changes in the workplace to support families.

- *The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office maintained an open line of communication with OHS, the Dallas Regional Office; the Arkansas Head Start Association, the Division for Child Care and Early Childhood Education, and the former HSSCO director.*
- Arkansas celebrated Arkansas Children's Week during the week of April 23-27, 2012. The theme for this event was "Meet me Under the Storytelling Tree." The HSSCO supported this event by posting on the AHSA's web-site some tips for teachers on things they could do before, during, and after they read a book to children, shared by demonstration on the web-site how to make a storybook come alive, and shared information via email on discount quality books to use in EHS/Head Start programs.
- In September, 2011, Arkansas was awarded two federal grants to help develop, expand, and evaluate home visiting services in the state. Arkansas' funded proposals have four key components that will provide early childhood services to our most at-risk families and provide a strong foundation for excellence as a national model. This initiative is called the Arkansas Home Visiting Network. Head Start programs are a part of this network. The network was developed due to the continued poor outcomes for low-income and medically fragile children in the state. The network will help reach across economic, geographic and culture boundaries to help raise Arkansas children out of the lowest quartile in measured health and education outcomes. The network will share training, conferences, and other state activities.
- The HSSCO director works on a special committee with other Collaboration directors and the Office of Head Start (OHS) to develop a logic model in one of the priority areas. This logic model will be on systems and services to showcase what HSSCO directors do on the job. This logic model should be completed by the end of the summer, 2012.
- The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE), Arkansas Department of Education (DOE), and the HSSCO has been working together to support the recommendations for the State Teacher Licensure/Mentoring program for early childhood education after decisions were made by the DOE accept recommendations to change the P-4 early childhood licensing to K-3. The DCCECE agreed to pilot mentoring for early childhood teachers beginning July 1, 2012 (as soon as details are finalized and after the fiscal year begins) through the fiscal year June 30, 2013 on a trial basis. At the end of the pilot period, DCCECE and DOE will meet to discuss future plans for mentoring. The HSSCO director developed a teacher licensure mentoring plan for the DCCECE, which will be utilized with some minor changes. The HSSCO director also recommended that AR Beginnings QRIS sites be used for mentoring sites.

- The HSSCO director served as part of the Arkansas team in attending the National Governor's Association (NGA) for Best Practices in Arlington Virginia on May 9-10, 2012. The NGA supported governors' offices and early childhood advisory councils in working together to develop a robust policy agenda. The purpose of this institute was to attend sessions and work as a team to build a birth to third grade state policy agenda. Topics covered included:
 1. How councils and governor staff can connect early childhood policy to K-12 reform activities;
 2. Implementation of Common Core State Standards implementation for early childhood and early elementary policies; and
 3. Promoting 3rd grade reading proficiency through a birth-to-eight agenda.

The outcomes for Arkansas in attending this institute include restructuring the State Advisory Council, adding more responsibility to the SAC, add two co-chairs to the SAC, conduct strategic planning with SAC members in October, and assigning adhoc committees (people who are doing the work in the state) to showcase the work to support the established goals for the commission.

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 in Arkansas.

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Annual Report - May, 2012*

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Uploaded to the HSES & ECLKC