

ANNUAL STATE PROFILE

Activities for March 2009 – February 2010

Arkansas

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Briefly describe your accomplishments in the following areas. Where possible, indicate the goals from your work plan and the desired and actual outcomes.

Facilitate collaboration among Early Head Start and Head Start grantees and entities that provide child and family services to low-income families in the following areas.

- **Health Care**
- **Welfare**
- **Child Welfare**
- **Childcare, including coordination of activities with the State Child Care Administrator, child care programs and child care resource and referral agencies**
- **Education**
- **Professional Development**
- **Community Services**
- **Family Literacy Services**
- **Services to Children with Disabilities**
- **Services to Homeless Children and Families**

The Arkansas Head Start Collaboration Office goals were revised and incorporated into our strategic plan in May and are based on the needs assessment survey completed by Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant & Seasonal Head Start programs in Arkansas. The current strategic plan is used as a management tool in directing activities of the HSSCO in our efforts to enhance collaboration with state and local community partners.

- **Health Care**

Goal 1: To enhance collaboration and coordination by Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant-Seasonal Head Start program with local providers for access to comprehensive health services.

The HSCO director participates in Arkansas Finish Line Coalition, leading an effort to ensure every child in Arkansas with health insurance. The Coalition continues to work to reduce the number of eligible, un-enrolled children in ARKids First. Access to health services for children already enrolled is another priority of the coalition. HSSCO director is member of Enrollment & Retention workgroup.

The HSCO director worked in partnership with Arkansas Children's Hospital to schedule mobile dental outreach van services to central Arkansas Head Start programs during the summer break. The dental outreach van visits elementary schools in the central Arkansas area during the school year.

The HSCO works to strengthen partnerships with medical home providers through the Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative. The HSSCO, in cooperation with the State-Based Head Start TA System and the Arkansas Head Start Association, developed a fact sheet on Head Start which is shared with Arkansas pediatricians and family practice physicians through outreach with the Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care.

The Head Start Collaboration Office director continued to support the Arkansas Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative to promote the importance of positive social emotional development of young children from low-income families to support school readiness. Ongoing research and evaluation continue in the Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative, with results showing that children in classrooms where consultation was available had fewer behavior problems and more positive social skills were exhibited. Current participation includes child care centers serving children on vouchers.

The HSCO director continues involvement in workgroups of the Arkansas Children's Behavioral Health Commission which has developed recommendations for state policies and procedures, focusing on models and strategies that extend and enhance community-based children's mental health services, with active family involvement in all aspects of service delivery. One group is working on training and proposed certification for mental health para-professionals in area of early childhood.

The third annual Mission of Mercy (ArMOM) was held in northwest Arkansas in May, with the Arkansas HSCO and local HS programs assisting with preparation and volunteering during the event. During two-days, 1,970 patients received 1,480 fillings and had 3,015 teeth extractions, amounting to a total of \$822,075 of donated dental care. There were 974 volunteers, including 184 dentists, 85 dental hygienists, 228 dental assistants, 12 pharmacists, 40 nurses, and 425 support staff. Work has begun on the fourth annual Ar-MOM to be held in southeast Arkansas.

HSCO director is active in the Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention, also serving on the Education and Early Care committee.

- **Welfare**

Goal 3: To enhance collaboration and coordination by Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant-Seasonal Head Start programs with welfare and child welfare services providers.

HSCO continues to work on emerging welfare reform issues, in cooperation with Department of Human Services, and other agencies and organizations serving the target population.

HSCO continues to work with Arkansas Coalition for Economic Security (ACES) in promoting economic security of all Arkansans through public education, advocacy and collaboration.

- **Child Welfare**

Goal 3: To enhance collaboration and coordination by Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant-Seasonal Head Start programs with welfare and child welfare services providers.

HSCO worked in collaboration with Arkansas Commission on Child Abuse, Rape & Domestic Violence in co-sponsorship of a two-day Endangered Children in Arkansas Forum held in Little Rock in March. Topics presented during the two-day event included children's cognitive and social emotional development, trauma issues, drug-endangered children, and children's mental health.

The HSCO director is working with the Arkansas Children's Trust Fund to improve awareness of partnership activities with the Head Start community, which included a Community Café Training held in March. Several Head Start programs participated in the event.

HSCO participated in meetings with Department of Human Services and Arkansas Association for Infant Mental Health in preparing for pilot project for Pulaski County Community Court Team, in cooperation with the court system, serving infants and toddlers in the child welfare system.

- **Child Care**

Goal 4: To enhance collaboration and coordination by Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant-Seasonal Head Start programs with Child Care to provide full-day, full year comprehensive and quality services for children and families.

HSCO worked closely with Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education, in coordination of opportunities for extended and summer care through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and expansion of voucher program opportunities for child care. Director of Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education presented workshop at Arkansas Head Start Institute in May on "Utilizing CCDF in Head Start for Extended Day and Summer Care."

The Head Start Collaboration Office continues its work with the Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education, Arkansas Head Start Association, Invest Early Coalition, and other early childhood education partners in educating and promoting the importance of local collaboration for making available an array of quality early childhood education options for low-income children, including extended day services, full year options, and enhanced partnerships.

HSCO continued active participation with Arkansas Children's Week committee and local programs for Arkansas Children's Week activities held in April. The theme was "Together We Learn" and included professional development training opportunities throughout the state. A document was also developed and distributed to all child care & early childhood providers with suggested activities and resources that linked learning with children and families.

HSCO director continued involvement with Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Planning Initiative, including plans and information sharing about Better Beginnings, the quality rating improvement system for child care and early childhood education that will begin in July 2010. Participated and encouraged participation by the Arkansas Head Start community in the QRIS meetings held around the state in September, October and November.

HSCO director, Head Start State-Based TA System, and Arkansas Head Start Association continue to work closely with the Child Care Resource and Referral Networks to promote local linkages and professional development opportunities across the state.

- **Education**

Goal 8: To support collaboration, coordination, and alignment of services and curriculum by Head Start programs with state-funded Pre-K programs and public schools.

HSCO director was involved in the review of the School of the 21st Century (21C) Research and Practice Issue Brief, "The School of the 21st Century and Head Start Working Together." The brief outlined successful partnerships and opportunities for 21C Schools and Head Start to improve the quality and accessibility of early education services and enhance parent involvement to more children and families than each individually serve. The policy brief was printed by the Arkansas HSSCO and distributed to participants at the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success-Arkansas 21 Century-Arkansas Head Start networking meeting held in April, as well as to Head Start programs and participants at the Arkansas Annual Head Start Institute held in May. HSSCO director met with 21 Century School superintendents on evolving partnerships at the local level. HSSCO director serves on the Advisory Board for Arkansas Schools of the 21st Century.

Arkansas has a document entitled "Association of Measurement," which describes the relationship of Arkansas Early Childhood Education (AECE) Framework Benchmarks to other measurements, including alignment with the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. The document consists of relationship documents which also include Kindergarten Readiness Indicators, Arkansas Department of Education English Language Arts Framework, Creative Curriculum Development Continuum for Ages 3-5, Work Sampling System Development Guidelines for Preschool 4, and Arkansas Framework for Infant and Toddler Care. These alignments, continuums, correlations and connections are helpful tools for the early childhood educator who wants a more in-depth look at the AECE Framework.

HSCO director meets routinely with representatives from Department of Education, including the Early Childhood Coordinator, and Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education, our lead agency for state-funded pre-k, on issues relating to local transition and enhancing partnership opportunities with the Head Start community.

HSCO promotes linkages among Head Start programs with various partners including Bookcase for Every Child, an Arkansas-based initiative, Imagination Library, and Reading is Fundamental, to promote more books in homes of Head Start children, as well as additional books and literacy activities within the local Head Start program.

HSCO assisted in planning for the Arkansas Annual Head Start Institute in May, which offered two workshops to address English proficient children. One workshop was on "Working Collaboratively to Address Needs of ELL (English Language Learners) Children" and the other on "Dual Language Learners."

- **Professional Development**

Goal 9: To enhance Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant-Seasonal programs ability to access professional development opportunities.

HSCO director serves on the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development Steering Committee, which has worked to implement changes in our professional development system, including the registry process for child care and early childhood education workforce.

HSCO director is member of state summit team and participated in 2009 National Summit of States Third Annual State Professional Development Leadership Team Work Day, held in June, and sponsored by NAEYC.

The HSCO, along with representatives from the Arkansas Head Start Association and Team Arkansas, participates in Early Childhood Education Higher Education workgroup meetings to discuss issues including birth to five licensure, professional development, articulation, and other areas of concern for early childhood professional development.

HSCO worked closely with Team Arkansas, the Head Start State Based Training System, in identifying cluster groups in promoting professional development opportunities for supporting Arkansas early childhood partners.

HSCO supported professional development opportunities through partnership efforts with the Southern Early Childhood Association and the Arkansas Early Childhood Association.

HSCO director, in partnership with the Arkansas Head Start Association, works closely with Resource and Referral Centers throughout Arkansas in coordination of professional development opportunities linking Head Start and other early childhood education programs.

- **Community Services**

Goal 7: To enhance collaboration and coordination by Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant-Seasonal Head Start in building early childhood systems and access to comprehensive community services and supports for children and families.

HSCO director is member of Arkansas Crisis Response Team (ArCRT) and participated in annual and regional crisis response training in May and October. HSSCO director continues to serve as co-chair of Education and Training Committee for ArCRT, as well as chairing the Mental Health Protocol Work Group. HSSCO director participated in local call-outs for crisis response. Director elected to serve as board member for ArCRT beginning in January.

HSCO director serves on MidSouth Summer School (MSSS) Task Force and attended the 2009 MSSS held in Little Rock in June. The week long summer school offers professional development and educational opportunities in the areas of substance abuse treatment and prevention, mental health, education and early childhood education, community organization, and motivation.

HSCO director served on planning committee for 2009 Arkansas Head Start Institute, where Regional Office staff presented on various topics including "Improving Grant Applications and GABI" and "Regional Update." Discussion included identification of resources for the provision of in-kind services for grantees.

HSCO and Arkansas Head Start Association worked in partnership with the Arkansas Public Policy Council in outreach to low-income families in south Arkansas and the Delta on the importance of quality early childhood programs.

HSCO director, in partnership with Team Arkansas, worked with representatives from Arkansas Tech University, School of Emergency Management, in research focusing on emergency preparedness in Head Start and other early childhood settings.

- **Family Literacy Services**

Goal 5: To enhance collaboration and coordination by Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant-Seasonal Head Start to support state and local efforts in the area of family literacy.

HSCO director serves on Parent Information Resource Center Board, a program of the Center for Effective Parenting, Arkansas Children's Hospital.

HSCO director worked with Arkansas Foundation of Medical Care in linking with local Head Start program as they developed a grant for improving health literacy targeting Head Start families. Grant was funded and services and activities are focusing on working with the Marshallese population in northwest Arkansas. HSCO director continues to serve on Advisory Committee for this grant program.

HSCO works closely with Department of Education, Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education, and Arkansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics in promoting importance of family literacy in early childhood settings.

- **Services to Children with Disabilities**

Goal 6: To enhance collaboration and coordination by Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant-Seasonal Head Start with providers of services for children with disabilities.

The HSCO is working in collaboration with Arkansas Head Start Association, with funding provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, through Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education and Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, in bringing the Special Quest Initiative to early childhood educators throughout the state. The Arkansas Special Quest Initiative began in October with an awareness event targeting parents of young children with disabilities, early childhood programs, Part B and Part C, Head Start, mental health, and higher education. Seven community teams were selected to participate, along with a state team. The first wave of training was held in January, with additional training scheduled for May and August of 2010.

The HSCO director continued work with partners in ECHO (Early Childhood Hearing Outreach) project, through Arkansas Children's Hospital, in coordination with NCHAM, the National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management, Utah State University. HSCO director is working with State ECHO team in preparing for additional training for new Early Head Start expansion and new Early Head Start grantees in Arkansas, with the goal of having 100% of our Early Head Start programs involved in ECHO.

HSCO director is member of the Arkansas Coalition for the Education of Children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing. Through work in this Coalition, HSSCO assisted with preparation for State Summit on Early Intervention & Education of Children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing held in August. Director appointed as member to legislative Interim Study Committee on Infant Hearing Support and Services for Parents of Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

The HSCO director served on ABCD (Assuring Better Child Health Development) Stakeholders group, which focused on preventive care for children whose healthcare is covered by Medicaid. This project supports efforts to improve early identification of young children with developmental problems.

HSCO continues its support of the Welcome the Children project, by serving on the advisory committee and the conference planning committee. The fourth annual conference was held in October. The conference goal is to enhance the understanding of cultural issues and to teach strategies to support Latino children and make appropriate referrals of children who exhibit possible developmental delays.

HSCO, in partnership with Part C, hosted a roundtable discussion for Early Head Start, Migrant & Seasonal Head Start, and Head Start programs on services to infants and toddlers with disabilities, including transition to Head Start and Part B.

- **Services to Homeless Children and Families**

Goal 2: To enhance collaboration and coordination by Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant-Seasonal Head Start programs in accessing and identifying needed services for children experiencing homelessness.

HSCO director continues to be involved in the Arkansas Homeless Coalition. Presented workshop at Arkansas Department of Education Homeless Coordinators meeting in April, emphasizing ways in which Head Start and public education can work together in addressing needs of homeless children and families. Director continued work with Department of Education Homeless Coordinator in collaborative training and events between Head Start and public education; with two workshops held in October and November that included representatives from local Head Start programs, the GPSS Network, and Team Arkansas, the state-based TA Network.

HSCO was actively involved in the annual Homeless Outreach Event, held in October in North Little Rock and in coordination with City Fest of Central Arkansas. HSCO director co-chaired the committee for children and family activities at the event. Director also participated in annual Homeless Conference.

Facilitate Head Start's involvement in the development of state policies, plans, processes and decisions.

Goal 10: To facilitate the involvement of Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant-Seasonal Head Start programs in outreach and public awareness at the state and local level.

HSCO director worked in partnership with Arkansas legislative representatives, Department of Education, Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education, and the early childhood community, including Head Start and Early Head Start, to create a Birth through Pre-Kindergarten teaching credential for Arkansas. Work continues with Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education, Department of Education, and Department of Higher Education, including representatives from two-year and four-year institutions, and Head Start and Early Head Start programs, on specific guidance for the credential.

HSCO director worked closely with other partners in initiating effort to begin an Arkansas Association for Infant Mental Health. Meetings among interested parties, including the Early Head Start community, began in the spring and continued through the summer. A charter membership drive was held, with bylaws and procedures being finalized. Director elected to serve on board of AAIMH.

HSCO is collaborating partner for Arkansas Governor's Work-Life Balance Awards Luncheon held in May. The Arkansas Governor's Initiative recognizes Arkansas employers for establishing and providing resources that support employees in balancing needs of both work and family. Major funding provided from Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education and Arkansas Workforce Investment Board.

The HSCO director serves on Arkansas Kids Count Steering Committee which sponsored Kids Count Day at the Capitol during the 2009 legislative session, as well as sponsoring the Kids Count Post-Legislative Conference held in May. Kids Count Day at the Capitol included participation by Head Start

children and staff and highlighted numerous priorities including education, quality early childhood education, and out-of-school and summer options for children.

Ongoing communication with Governor's staff, legislators, state agencies, and professional organizations to ensure that Head Start continues as an important component of the comprehensive system for early education options within our state.

HSCO worked in partnership with other early childhood advocates and the business and corporate community in sponsoring the Arkansas Economic Summit on Early Childhood Investment. The event was held in Little Rock in September.

A joint newsletter of the Arkansas Head Start Collaboration Office, the Arkansas Head Start Association and the Arkansas Head Start Technical Assistance Network is disseminated quarterly, with the first issue disseminated in the fall of 2009. Each newsletter has articles on specific focus topics, as well as the sharing of information on upcoming events and initiatives and spotlighting local programs.

If applicable, describe your activities as a member of the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care.

During the 87th General Assembly for the state of Arkansas, Act 28 was signed into law that expands the membership of the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission, to include members from the Head Start Community, including additional members representing the Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office, an Arkansas Early Head Start program, and an Arkansas Migrant & Seasonal Head Start program. Head Start programs were already represented on the Commission. Governor Beebe has established the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care.

The HSCO director participated in the Early Childhood Commission retreat held in April, and addressed the commission regarding Head Start legislative changes and the role of the State Advisory Council. During the July Commission meeting, the HSCO director introduced the Head Start State-Based TA program manager, content specialist, and infant-toddler specialist to the Council. A short presentation was made to the Commission by the state-based program manager.

Current State Advisory Council members representing different aspects of Head Start are active on the State Advisory Council and reports are routinely shared with the Arkansas Head Start Association and the Arkansas Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start directors.

Briefly discuss the following aspects of your work:

Provide a detailed description of 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, alignment of services and alignment of curricula and assessments, and a description of the work you have completed on developing the five-year strategic plan.

HSCO worked with independent evaluator to obtain appropriate needs assessment data, as required by Head Start Reauthorization. Survey initially distributed to Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant & Seasonal Head Start programs through Survey Monkey, compiled and analyzed for strategic plan submitted in June 2009, updated in the fall of 2009, and submitted with current year (March 2010-February 2011) grant application. The needs assessment and plans were shared with the Governor, state and local partners, and are listed on our website at www.arheadstart.org. All activities of the HSCO, with respect to coordination, collaboration and alignment of services are addressed throughout this report, in relationship to goals identified within the Arkansas plan.

Describe how you have supported and collaborated with the Regional Office on national and regional priorities (such as Fatherhood, Faith-Based and Community, Health Marriage, Youth and Rural Initiatives and TA Network, professional development, Community Action Agencies, State Head Start Association, and other activities.

HSCO director participated in Region VI Head Start Collaboration Directors conference calls with Regional Office, and attended meetings in Dallas with Regional Office staff in September and January.

HSCO director participated in bi-monthly meetings with Arkansas Head Start Association (AHSA) Board of Directors, Head Start directors, staff and parents. HSCO director was also a member of AHSA Annual Institute Planning Committee; 2009 Institute held in May in Springdale. During the Annual Institute, the AHSA announced the 2009 Outstanding Head Start Award winners at the opening general session. Winners were recognized in the following categories: Head Start Director, Head Start Staff, Head Start Teacher, Early Head Start Teacher, Teacher Assistant/Aide, Friend of Head Start, and Head Start Parents. A special Lifetime Membership Award was presented to Ivory Conley, upon her retirement for over forty years of hard work and dedication in Washington County, the state and the nation.

HSCO director met routinely with Head Start Technical Assistance Network and with Team Arkansas, the Head Start State-Based Technical Assistance System.

Briefly describe your efforts to support the coordination of Head Start services to American Indian/Alaska Native and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program in the state.

Migrant & Seasonal Head Start programs are invited and included in all activities between the HSCO and Arkansas Head Start Association. A representative from Migrant & Seasonal Head Start is included as a member of the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care. Each of the Migrant & Seasonal Head Start programs in Arkansas is operated by an Arkansas Head Start program, which eases the exchange of information to include Migrant & Seasonal services to support coordination.

Describe additional activities and successes in the past year.

HSCO director met with Partnership Specialist from US Census 2010 to discuss opportunities for Head Start programs to assist in outreach and educational awareness for 2010 census. Partnership Specialist made presentation to Head Start directors and staff at their September meetings.

Partnership activities with Arkansas Children's Hospital, and Arkansas home-visiting programs, to identify current home visiting services offered in state. Traveled to Cincinnati Children's Hospital to see their Every Child Succeeds program, a home visiting service being considered as a joint effort between the two Children's Hospital, and how linkages would work with early childhood providers within the state.

The HSCO continues its work with the Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education, Department of Education, Arkansas Head Start Association, Invest Early Coalition, and other early childhood education partners in educating and promoting the importance of local collaboration for making available an array of quality early childhood education options for low income children and families, including enhanced partnerships.

HSCO director served as liaison and point of contact for Governor and state legislative representatives noting expansion of Early Head Start slots in Arkansas.

How do your responses to the questions above impact your approved strategic plan for the current or coming year?

The Arkansas Head Start Collaboration Office is pleased with progress achieved in the program year March 2009-February 2010. We are excited about our partnership with Team Arkansas, our Head Start state-based training and technical assistance network, and have included them in meetings and partnership activities to enhance their potential in serving the early childhood community throughout Arkansas. Due to rich collaborative partnerships at the state level, tremendous positive interaction occurs routinely. Flexibility of the HSCO affords positive strength to enhance linkages and integration of policies and services for children and families throughout our state.