

**Head Start State Collaboration Offices
2011-2012 Mid-Year Report (March 1-August 31, 2011)**

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.

- School Transitions, including state data systems

The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office worked with the Arkansas Research Center to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the Arkansas Department of Education, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, and Arkansas Department of Health, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, Arkansas 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.

- Professional Development

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 Human 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 to 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.

- 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.

- 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.

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 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.

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.

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.

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