

ANNUAL STATE PROFILE REPORT

March 1, 2010 – February 28, 2011

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, including Head Start transition and state data system**
- **Professional Development**
- **Community Services, including services for military families**
- **Family Literacy Services**
- **Services to Children with Disabilities**
- **Services to Homeless Children and Families**

The Arkansas Head Start Collaboration Office (HSCO) goals were revised and incorporated into our strategic plan in May 2009 and are based on the needs assessment survey updated 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 HSCO 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 its work to reduce the number of eligible, un-enrolled children in ARKids First, with emphasis on improving access to health services for children already enrolled in ARKids First. Act 771 of 2011 makes several changes to the enrollment and renewal process for ARKids First to “cut the red tape.” More eligible children will enroll and stay enrolled, while government becomes more efficient through better use of technology and paperless options.

The HSCO works to strengthen partnerships with medical home providers through the Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative. The HSCO, in cooperation with the Medical Homes Work

Group, designed and disseminated a brochure on the importance of identifying medical homes for children and families throughout the state.

The HSCO director continues 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. Additional emphasis will be focused on training within early childhood and mental health, with direct linkages with the Social Emotional workgroup of the Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems initiative.

The fourth annual Arkansas Mission of Mercy (ArMOM) was held in southeast Arkansas in May 2010, with the Arkansas HSCO assisting in the planning of the event. Work is being finalized for the 2011 ArMOM scheduled to be held in central Arkansas in May.

Head Start participation in the Oral Health Public Policy Summit held in August, identified priorities for an oral health public policy agenda for Arkansas in the 2011 legislative session. The passage of three pieces of legislation made it clear that oral health was an important topic. Act 89 allows dental hygienists to perform hygiene procedures in public settings without the direct supervision of a dentist. This will allow more children to get preventive oral care since many Arkansans live miles from the nearest dentist. Act 90 authorizes trained physicians and nurses to apply fluoride varnish to children's teeth during regular check-ups, and through Act 197, approximately 87 percent of all Arkansans will now have access to fluoridated drinking water. This Act requires all community water systems serving more than 5,000 people to fluoridate the water system. HSCO director continues partnership work with the Arkansas Oral Health Coalition, Delta Dental of Arkansas, and the Arkansas State Dental Association.

In partnership with the Arkansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education, the HSCO and the Head Start Association, are striving to improve medication safety for young children. Arkansas was selected as one of a small number of states to pilot curriculum developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. A workshop on the curriculum was presented at the 2010 Arkansas Head Start Institute held in July.

HSCO director is working in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Health, and other early childhood organizations including Arkansas Children's Hospital, Arkansas Children's Trust Fund, Arkansas HIPPPY, Arkansas Parents as Teachers, and Arkansas Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education in the development and implementation of maternal, infant and early childhood home visiting programs that provide comprehensive and coordinated services to improve outcomes for families residing in soon-to-be-identified at-risk communities.

HSCO director is active in the Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention; serves on the Education and Early Care committee and shares information about I am Moving, I am Learning initiative with other early childhood and education professionals.

The HSCO director is working in coordination with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, College of Public Health, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health, and the Arkansas Department of Health in facilitating communication with local Head Start programs in the collection of blood lead data. The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention reports that Arkansas is one of four states that does not report blood lead data. Direct monitoring of exposure levels helps to identify vulnerable groups that are still being poisoned by lead and assist in the development of new programs (e.g., outreach, education, lead abatement) to help reduce the number of children with lead poisoning.

The HSCO director continues to work with the Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care and Arkansas Medicaid in the education of physicians on their required involvement in screening for lead in children.

- **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.

Several Head Start families will benefit from a bill included in the tax cut agreement during the 2011 state legislative session that fixed a tax glitch that has kept many families paying more in state taxes than intended. While low-income families were exempt from most state taxes in 2007, an error in the law left out single-parent families with two or more children. Many legislators worked hard to pass Act 736 to see that this mistake was corrected. More than 50,000 working single-parent families will have as much as \$200 a year to help them through the effects of the recession. Local economies will also benefit as these families pay for food, housing, and transportation.

- **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 director met with representatives from the Division of Children & Family Services to discuss enhancing education and awareness of partnership opportunities between Arkansas Head Start programs and child welfare throughout the state.

The HSCO director works with the Arkansas Children's Trust Fund to improve awareness of potential partnership opportunities within the Head Start community, including home-visiting programs throughout the state targeting prevention of child abuse.

The Early Head Start community continues to be involved in the Pulaski County Community Court Team, in cooperation with the court system, serving infants and toddlers in the child welfare system. Plans are being examined for implementation outside Pulaski County.

- **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.

The HSCO director and the chair of the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission, our state early childhood advisory council, presented information to the Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Partnership Council about the state advisory council, potential opportunities for collaborative efforts in development of a comprehensive early childhood system in Arkansas, and an overview of the funding from OHS to assist with the Arkansas Early Childhood Asset Map.

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. Recent activities include the setting of legislative priorities for early childhood education, with an emphasis on serving more infants and toddlers in quality programs and enhanced partnership opportunities. Act 636, the public-private partnership bill, allows for the Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education to use interest from the Arkansas Child Care Facilities Loan Guaranteed Trust Fund to support an early childhood foundation. Planning for the early childhood foundation will take place over the next couple of years.

HSCO continued active participation with Arkansas Children's Week committee and local programs for Arkansas Children's Week activities held in April 2010. Partnership grants from the Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education and administered by the Arkansas Head Start Collaboration Office, were available to local early childhood providers, including Head Start, for Children's Week activities.

Implementation of Better Beginnings, the quality rating improvement system for child care & early childhood education went live on July 1, 2010. A public “Roll Out Event” was held in October. Information on Better Beginnings can be found at: www.ARBetterBeginnings.com A reciprocity agreement was developed and has been implemented for participation by Arkansas Head Start programs in the Better Beginnings QRIS program.

HSCO director, Head Start TA Network, and Arkansas Head Start Association worked 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 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 continues to support partnership efforts focusing on home-based and parent education services, including HIPPPY and PAT programs in our state.

The HSCO director is working with the Arkansas Research Center, the Arkansas Department of Education, and the Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education in promoting Head Start involvement in the State’s Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). An outcome specified in the current SLDS Implementation and Modernization Project is expansion of data sharing agreements to maximize the amount of data about the pre-k population in Arkansas. HSCO director is working closely with Arkansas Head Start Association and Head Start directors in securing commitment for involvement in this initiative; eight Head Start grantees have shared data for inclusion in the SLDS; three other Head Start programs are in the process of participating. A Memorandum of Understanding and a Guidance document are being developed with input from Head Start directors and staff from the SLDS Initiative.

- **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 2010 National Summit of States Annual State Professional Development Leadership Team Work Day, held in Phoenix in June, and sponsored by NAEYC.

The HSCO, along with representatives from the Arkansas Head Start Association and the TA Network, participated 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 and Head Start Association worked closely with TAPP, Traveling Arkansas’ Professional Pathways, by offering The Program Administration Scale (PAS) basic training at the Annual Arkansas Head Start Institute held in July. This session, intended for administrators under the key component area

Program Planning and Management, is a part of the new Better Beginnings system for center-based programs.

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.

HSCO and Arkansas Head Start Association were involved in the development of the Birth-Pre-K Teaching Credential. Rules and regulations for the Birth-Pre-K Credential were open for public comment until November 15; one comment was received. The Birth-Pre-K Teaching Credential was implemented in January 2011. One college has already submitted documentation to offer course work leading to the credential.

- **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 mandatory crisis response training. HSSCO director continues to serve on the Board of Directors, as co-chair of Education and Training Committee, and chair of the Mental Health Protocol Work Group.

HSCO director serves on MidSouth Summer School (MSSS) Task Force and attended the 2010 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 continues involvement with representatives from Arkansas Tech University, School of Emergency Management, in research focusing on emergency preparedness in Head Start and other early childhood settings.

HSCO director and Head Start TA Network have been involved in the Mass Care for Child Care Sector meetings. The goal of this group is to actively collaborate, pool resources and plan for pre-and-post – disaster events.

- **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 serves on Advisory Committee with Arkansas Foundation of Medical Care for Improving Health Literacy and targeting Head Start families of the Marshallese population in Washington County, Arkansas.

HSCO director shares information with local programs on national family literacy initiatives, as well as local family literacy resources available in communities.

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.

HSCO director is active in Welcome the Children Project with Partners for Inclusive Communities in supporting efforts addressing issues for dual and second language learners.

- **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 continued its work in collaboration with the 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 Arkansas early childhood educators, parents and partners. The Arkansas Special Quest Initiative included representatives of parents of young children with disabilities, early childhood programs, Part B and Part C, Head Start, mental health, and higher education. Six community teams and a state-level team participated in training held in January, May and August of 2010. The community teams are located in Northwest/Western Arkansas, Hope, Forrest City, Conway, Little Rock, and Jonesboro.

Representatives from Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education, and Division of Developmental Disabilities, Part C, Department of Education, Part B, and Head Start State Collaboration submitted a proposal for Expanding Opportunities project that would provide technical assistance to promote inclusion of children with disabilities in more early childhood education settings. Arkansas is one of four states selected to participate in the Expanding Opportunities training and technical assistance initiative.

The HSCO continued work with partners in the 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 worked with State ECHO team in offering training for Early Head Start programs who had received Early Head Start expansion and a new Early Head Start grantee. All Arkansas Early Head Start programs have been trained in the ECHO model. Information is shared with local programs on the availability of pediatric audiologists throughout the state. HSCO director worked with Arkansas Department of Health in submitting proposal to assist with funding for a stand-alone Early Head Start to receive OAE screening equipment.

HSCO director is member of the Arkansas Coalition for the Education of Children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing. Director continues to serve 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 serves on ABCD (Assuring Better Child Health Development) Stakeholders group, which focuses on preventive care for children whose health care 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 fifth annual conference was held in December 2010. The conference enhances the understanding of cultural issues and teaches strategies to support Latino children and make appropriate referrals of children who exhibit possible developmental delays.

- **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. An outreach event, in coordination with a holiday celebration, was held in December 2010. HSCO director served as co-chair of children's activities during the event.

HSCO director continues partnership efforts with Arkansas Department of Education emphasizing ways in which Head Start and public education can work together in addressing needs of homeless children, including collaborative training and events between Head Start and public education.

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 closely with other infant toddler 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 2009 and charter members have developed bylaws and procedures. Officers were elected for the AAIMH Board, with the HSCO director being on the Board of Directors. Monthly meetings are held, with professional development being offered, and down-linked to several sites throughout the state, so individuals do not have to travel to Little Rock for meetings. The first annual Infant Mental Health "Bright Futures Begin Early" conference is being planned for June; the HSCO is assisting with the conference, including partnership efforts to support infant mental health throughout the state.

HSCO was collaborating partner for Arkansas Governor's Work-Life Balance Awards Luncheon held in May 2010. 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. Plans are in process for the 2011 award nominations and Governor's Luncheon.

The HSCO director serves on Arkansas Kids Count Steering Committee. A Pre-Legislative Conference was held in December and focused on priority issues for the upcoming 2011 legislative session. Kids Count Day at the Capitol was held in February targeting "cutting the red tape" in Medicaid, quality early childhood education, and out-of-school and summer options for children, as well as other targeted issues affecting low-income children and families.

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.

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

In 2009, Governor Mike Beebe established the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care. 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. The Arkansas Head Start Association and the State Collaboration Office hosted the July Arkansas Early Childhood Commission meeting, and the HSCO director served as chair of the meeting in August, as the current chair was out-of-state.

The state advisory council application, through ARRA funding, was approved in August 2010. Arkansas is developing an Early Childhood Asset Map, which will provide interactive demographic information in a web-based system and accessible to the general public, as well as to early childhood providers. This unified data initiative proposes to reduce barriers and improve data flow to encourage and provide more opportunities for coordination among all early childhood education and child care programs.

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 or revising 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 and updated in the fall of 2010. The needs assessment and plans have been shared with the Governor, as well as state and local partners, and are listed on our website at www.arheadstart.org. All current program year 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, Healthy Marriage, Youth and Rural Initiatives and TA Network, professional development, Community Action Agencies, State Head Start Association, and other activities.

HSCO director routinely participates in Region VI Head Start Collaboration Directors conference calls with Regional Office.

HSCO director participates in bi-monthly meetings with Arkansas Head Start Association (AHSA) Board of Directors, Head Start directors, staff and parents. HSCO director was a member of 2010 AHSA Institute Planning Committee which was held in Little Rock in July. At the Institute, the Arkansas Head Start Association honored outstanding Head Start directors, staff, teachers, teacher assistants, parents and friends, as well as recognizing teachers and staff who had received higher education degrees from May 2008 – May 2010. Yasmina Vinci, Executive Director, National Head Start Association, was a guest of the Arkansas Head Start Association and key-note speaker, where a record number of participants were a part of the Institute.

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

HSCO director assisted OHS and Region VI staff in dissemination of information for replacement grantee funding announcement for nine counties in northeast Arkansas and facility tour event held in Jonesboro and Paragould in April 2010.

Briefly describe your efforts to support the coordination of Head Start services to American Indian/Alaska Native and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs 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 the Dental Home Initiative (DHI) activities you have been involved in during the past year such as the mentoring team, presentations/launches, Head Start program visits, dental clinic visit, or other activities. In addition, describe DHS training and technical assistance activities you have been involved in during the past year. Who was the audience? Describe the challenges and successes in managing the DHI in your state.

Arkansas has yet to be selected for Dental Home Initiative activities; plans are being made to implement the DHI within our state during the next program year (2011-2012). Numerous oral health initiatives are a part of the HSCO, including collaborative activities with the Oral Health Coalition. (See activities listed under Goal 1: Health Care; page 2).

Describe additional activities and successes in the past year.

Arkansas HSCO director served as the Region VI representative with OHS in designing the agenda for the national Head Start Collaboration Directors meeting which was held in conjunction with Early Childhood 2010 in Washington D.C. The president of the Arkansas Head Start Association, along with other early childhood partners, attended the Early Childhood 2010 meeting which was held in August. This group continues to meet and work together. Arkansas HSCO director also served on the planning committee for the February 2011 Head Start Collaboration Directors meeting held in conjunction with the Head Start Education Summit in Baltimore.

Arkansas HSCO director spent two days in June 2010 with New Mexico HSCO director as a part of the Office of Head Start Collaboration Mentoring Initiative. This project paired experienced HSCO directors with new HSCO directors who had been in their position less than two years to give new collaboration directors the opportunity to spend time and receive information and guidance. Both HSCO directors felt the visit and exchange of information to be extremely beneficial for both Arkansas and New Mexico.

HSCO director continued work with Partnership Specialist from US Census 2010 to discuss activities for Head Start programs to assist in outreach and educational awareness for 2010 census.

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

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

The Arkansas Head Start Collaboration Office is pleased with progress achieved in the final year of the five-year project grant period, March 2010 – February 2011. The Collaboration Office worked well with Team Arkansas, our Head Start state-based training and technical assistance network, and the local GPSS staff in various early childhood activities. We have worked closely with our new TA System and have included them in meetings and partnership activities to enhance potential opportunities 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.