

HSSCO QUARTERLY REPORT

Activities for June - August, 2007

Arkansas

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

- 1. *Help build early childhood systems and access to comprehensive services for all low-income children.***

Include a description of how you are supporting Head Start-child care-pre-kindergarten collaborations at the local level and Head Start- pre-kindergarten collaborations at the state and local levels.

Working in partnership with Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education and Invest Early in Education (a coalition of early childhood professionals, parents and other individuals who led the campaign to make high quality preschool an important part of education in Arkansas and secured additional funding for the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success programs) in sponsoring roundtable discussions across the state. The forums were held throughout June in Hope, Batesville, Harrison, and Fort Smith and provided an opportunity for Head Start, Community Action Agencies, ABC providers, and other early childhood programs to take an objective look at the current status of early education in the community and link all stakeholders who have an interest in the success of our youngest citizens. A total of 58 participants from a variety of early childhood education programs attended the roundtable discussions. Common needs/expectations and issues were discussed in the forums, as well as related opportunities and potential solutions. Three areas were identified as a common thread in all locations: collaboration, enrollment, and uneven playing field. The summary report is being shared and discussed with various organizations, stakeholders, and public officials, as well as being available from the Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office.

In preparation for the Early Education Community Collaboration Roundtables, three Head Start directors (Linda Cooper, Barbara Sisco, and Jerry Adair) were a part of a video taping for an early education collaborative showcase of Arkansas programs involved in innovative partnerships at the local level. This video was a part of the Roundtable Forums held in June.

Met with Governor's staff on August 22nd to discuss various issues on Head Start and State Pre-K in Arkansas, as well as the proposed Head Start reauthorization. Arkansas Head Start Association President Jerry Adair was also involved in this meeting.

**2. Encourage widespread collaboration between Head Start and other appropriate programs.
Describe your accomplishments and outcomes in the eight priority areas.**

- ***Health Care***

Continued leadership role in collaborative effort with Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education and Division of Behavioral Health Services in the Arkansas Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative. Participation in routine conference calls with sponsoring organizations, pilot sites and evaluation team.

Attended monthly CASSP Coordinating Council meetings.

Participation in monthly meetings of Arkansas Oral Health Coalition. HSSCO director completed two-year term as chair of the Coalition in June. ASTDD-HSSCO Planning Team conference call with Office of Oral Health on June 27th.

Participated in curricula review on July 12th of proposed training for child care & early childhood educators in the area of Pre-K social-emotional foundations.

- ***Welfare***

Participation in Arkansas Coalition for Economic Security (ACES) activities. Working on draft of economic security fact sheet which will be a part of the packet for attendees at the Family Economic Security Conference to be held in Pine Bluff on November 5th-6th. ACES' mission is to promote the economic security of all Arkansans through public education, advocacy and collaboration.

- ***Childcare***

Hosted Arkansas Children's Week planning committee meeting on August 28th to begin preparation for 2008 Arkansas Children's Week activities to be held in April.

Participation in Arkansas Out of School Network meeting held on August 21st to finalize agenda for annual state conference to be held September 14th-15th in Little Rock.

- ***Education***

Participated in Arkansas Department of Education sponsored focus group held in Clarksville on July 11th to discuss coordination of early education services and transition.

Attended School of the 21st Century national conference held in Little Rock on July 23rd-25th.

Assisting Arkansas Parent Education Network and State Department of Education in planning for state conference on family involvement to be held October 8th-10th in Hot Springs. Participation in Parent Education and Involvement task force on June 11th.

- ***Community Services***

Finalized Mental Health Protocol which was adopted by the Arkansas Crisis Response Team (AR-CRT) Board of Directors on July 19th. Serving as Co-Chair of the Education & Training Committee for AR-CRT; meeting held on June 26th.

Participated in Governor's Family Friendly Awards Committee meeting on August 22nd to discuss past year event and initiate plans for 2008 Governor's Awards Recognition.

- **Family Literacy Services**

Continuing work with education partners and Head Start in the area of family literacy.

- **Services to Children with Disabilities**

Accepted as a state team for Special Quest training held July 31st-August 2nd in North Carolina. Participated in conference call with Sonoma University on July 3rd for preparation of state team training. Meeting held on July 13th to view Special Quest video and complete preliminary assignments prior to training. HSSCO director serving as team coordinator; other members include Tonya Russell, director of Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education; Karan Burnette and/or David Deere, UAMS Partners for Inclusive Communities; Terrie Baker, Child Care Resource & Referral; and Dianna Varady, parent of a child with a disability. Special Quest follow-up meetings held throughout August to prepare for next steps in Arkansas.

Continued work with partners in ECHO (Early Childhood Hearing Outreach) project, through Arkansas Children's Hospital, in coordination with the National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management, Utah State University. Participated in panel presentation at IPP meeting held in Washington DC on July 19th-20th to discuss Arkansas activities and potential opportunities for replication throughout the state and region. Meeting held on August 28th with state ECHO team and Arkansas TA Specialists to discuss expansion of ECHO projects to all Early Head Start programs in Arkansas. Mississippi County Early Head Start ECHO team will be trained in October.

Participated in ACED (Arkansas Coalition for Education of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing) meeting on August 29th to discuss ongoing activities and finalize plans for State Summit on Early Intervention and Education of Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing to be held in September.

- **Services to Homeless Children and Families**

Serving on Arkansas Homeless Coalition and Arkansas Homeless Policy Academy. Attend monthly meetings of Homeless Coalition and quarterly meetings of Homeless Policy Academy. Member of Action Task Force and Legislative Committee for Arkansas Homeless Coalition.

Serving on conference planning committee for state homeless conference, "Children The Forgotten Homeless" scheduled for October 1st-3rd. These will be a children's art & poetry contest on "What a Home Means to Me" which is being supported by the HSSCO. Art will be on display at a reception prior to the conference and winners will be recognized during the conference.

Attended meeting with Little Rock Mayor and City Manager on August 27th which gave opportunity for individuals and families who are homeless to share concerns regarding the need for appropriate shelter, housing opportunities, and services in central Arkansas.

Assisted with Little Rock cooling station for homeless at Dunbar Community Center on August 24th. Cooling stations were hosted by the Arkansas Homeless Coalition and other volunteer organizations, in coordination with the City of Little Rock and North Little Rock, to assist people who are homeless, disabled, or elderly during the recent heat wave.

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

Continuation of service on Arkansas System of Care Stakeholders Planning Committee. Active participation in Medicaid workgroup, Special Language task force, and committee on Cultural Competency. Recommendations presented to the newly appointed Governor's Behavioral Health Commission on August 30th to assist in the reform of delivering appropriate services to children and families in need of mental health intervention and treatment.

Attended First Lady Ginger Beebe's press conference on July 3rd to hear report from Children's Mental Health Listening Tour when the Arkansas First Lady toured the state to visit with children and parents of children with mental disorders about their plight to attain appropriate services and supports.

Selected to serve as member of ABCD (Assuring Better Child Health Development) Stakeholders Group; meetings held on July 9th and August 20th. Arkansas was selected by the National Academy for State Health Policy to participate in the ABCD Screening Academy, a multi-state learning project focusing on preventive care of children whose health care is covered by Medicaid. This project will support efforts to improve early identification of young children with developmental problems.

Participated in Arkansas Center for Health Improvement Summit held July 10th in Little Rock.

B. Briefly discuss the following aspects of your work:

1. Describe how you have supported and collaborated with the Regional Office on national and regional priorities (e.g. 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).

Meetings held among Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office, Arkansas Head Start Association, Arkansas Community Action Agencies Association, Arkansas Department of Health & Human Services Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education and Office of Community Services to discuss ongoing priorities. Plans have been finalized, in collaboration with Region 6 TA Network, for training on leadership, finance, governance and management to be held in Little Rock on November 14th-15th.

Participated in Region 6 Head Start State Collaboration Directors conference calls with Regional Office.

Assisted and co-sponsored activities at Arkansas Head Start Institute held in Batesville on July 16th-18th. Participated in panel presentation on "Collaborative Partnerships" with Tonya Russell, Director, DHS Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education, Tom Kimbrell, Director, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, and Dee Cox, Director, Special Programs, Department of Education. The Institute included a luncheon hosted by the AHSA Board of Directors and Arkansas Head Start directors with Regional Office participation from Betty Simmons and George Campbell, as well as Carl Williams and the Region 6 TA Network staff for Arkansas.

Attended the Arkansas Head Start Association annual meeting held on July 18th. New AHSA officers were elected and installed. Arkansas Outstanding Teacher of the Year awards were also presented during the annual meeting, as well as recognition for the Region 6 Scholarship nominees.

Participated in conference call with Arkansas Head Start Association executive committee on June 14th. Nominees for Region 6 Scholarships and changes in the Arkansas Outstanding Teachers of the Year awards were discussed. Two new categories will include Early Head Start and Teacher Assistant awards, as well as the current Head Start Outstanding Teacher of the Year.

Routine meetings with Jan Cox, liaison from Booz-Allen-Hamilton, contractor for Region 6 ACF Head Start, to Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office.

2. Describe additional activities and successes in the past quarter.

The Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration and the Arkansas Commission of Child Abuse, Rape & Domestic Violence are planning another forum on "Endangered Children in Arkansas" to be held October 30th in Searcy. The forum will include topics on indicators of child abuse and the relationship between substance abuse/use and family violence.

Participated in Arkansas Kids Count Coalition Steering Committee meeting on August 23rd. Plans being made for retreat to be held on November 14th in Hot Springs to discuss and prioritize upcoming public policy issues for children and families.

C. Briefly describe your efforts to support the coordination of Head Start services to Hispanic children and families in your State.

Serve on Welcome the Children Advisory Committee; the project is funded by the Division of Child Care & Early Childhood education and administered by Partners for Inclusive Communities. Using research-based training materials, the primary goal is to provide training and technical assistance to help early childhood providers, including Head Start, and other educators in understanding cultural issues, learning strategies to support Latino children, and making appropriate referrals of children who exhibit possible developmental delays. Community team trainings were held throughout the summer for early childhood providers, including Head Start. Workshop on "Welcome the Children: Colors of the Earth" was presented at Arkansas Head Start Institute by Sabrina Zarco of the Welcome the Children Project.

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

The Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office is pleased with progress made during the second quarter of our current grant period. We continue to spend an extensive amount of time in promoting and enhancing state and local collaborative efforts between Head Start and Arkansas Better Chance for School Success, the state-funded pre-k program for 3 and 4 year old children from families at 200% or below of the Federal poverty level. Arkansas Head Start programs are very concerned about additional funding of Arkansas Better Chance for School Success programs in certain areas of the state, and the effect it will have on enrollment numbers for Head Start programs. The HSSCO is working in conjunction with the Arkansas Head Start Association in surveying Arkansas programs on enrollment this fall. More and more time is being spent in the area of pre-k and Head Start collaboration.