

HSSCO QUARTERLY REPORT

Activities for September-November 2008

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.

Worked with Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education, our state funded pre-k administering agency, and developed a joint letter signed by HSSCO director and DCCECE director addressing the new requirement of Head Start reauthorization that Head Start programs have a signed MOU with state funded pre-k programs within their communities. Letters were distributed to all state-funded pre-k programs in Arkansas, as well as with the Head Start community. Feedback from several Head Start programs indicated that this assisted them with development of appropriate MOUs at the local level.

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

The Head Start State 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.

Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office and representative from Arkansas TA Network participated in collaborative development of parent handbook for Arkansas Better Chance for School Success programs. Two documents were developed; one for Arkansas Better Chance programs and one for other early childhood education and child care providers, including Head Start.

Met with Sarah Mead of the New America Foundation to discuss state pre-k collaborative efforts that are working well in Arkansas.

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

- ***Health Care***

Participating in Arkansas Finish Line Coalition leading an effort to ensure every child in Arkansas with health insurance. The Finish Line Coalition is working to reduce the number of eligible, un-enrolled children in ARKids First, expand ARKids eligibility from 200 to 300 percent of poverty, and develop a buy-in program for families at and above 300 percent of the poverty line. Access to health care services for children already enrolled is another priority of the coalition. HSSCO director is member of Enrollment & Retention workgroup.

Attended Governor's Round Table on Health Care on October 2nd.

HSSCO continues 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. Initial early childhood partners phased-out formal pilot site linkage with identified community mental health centers, in an effort to increase and support early childhood mental health in newly identified early childhood education programs other than state funded pre-k and Head Start. Most of the original pilot sites have sustained an in-formal linkage with community mental health. Ongoing research and evaluation continue in the Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative.

Attend monthly CASSP Coordinating Council meetings and quarterly Arkansas Children's Behavioral Health Care Commission meeting. The HSSCO director continues active participation on Services, Supports & Standards workgroup, in developing 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. HSSCO director met with students from the Clinton School of Public Service in identifying strategies that Head Start utilizes in engaging families, as well as discussion of the importance of including early childhood mental health as a foundation for community based services.

Participation in monthly meetings of Arkansas Oral Health Coalition, as well as ongoing networking opportunities with coalition members relative to community water fluoridation issues.

Continued collaborative relationship with Delta Dental Plan of Arkansas in partnership activities with the Arkansas Head Start Association, HSSCO, and local Head Start, Early Head Start and Migrant & Seasonal Head Start programs in Arkansas. With support from Delta Dental of Arkansas, Cavity Free Kids training and curricula were provided to participants from Arkansas Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant & Seasonal Head Start programs, as well as Arkansas TA Specialists on November 12th-13th. An Arkansas for Better Chance state employee was a part of the training also and we are discussing ways in which Cavity Free Kids can extend beyond Head Start into the child care & state pre-k funded programs across the state, to enhance oral health education and practices to more young children.

Head Start State Collaboration director is member of Arkansas Coalition on Obesity Prevention and is active member on the Education and Early Childhood team. Discussion at an upcoming Coalition meeting will include information on the Head Start Initiative, "I Am Moving I Am Learning."

- ***Welfare***

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

Attended Cradle to Prison Pipeline Summit at Philander Smith College on October 16th.

- **Childcare**

Member of the Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Partnership Council; meeting held on November 18th.

Attended Arkansas Early Childhood Commission meeting on October 21st.

Participated in Arkansas Early Childhood Association Conference held in Hot Springs on October 16th-18th. Working to enhance Head Start participation and partnership activities in AECA at the community and state level.

Attended numerous meetings of the Quality Rating Improvement System Evaluation workgroup.

Working in partnership with Arkansas Children's Trust Fund, Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education, and other child care partners to explore options of hosting Community Cafes across the state to enhance family involvement activities.

- **Education**

Working with Arkansas legislative representatives, Department of Education, Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education, and the early childhood community in proposing a "Birth to Five" licensure program for Arkansas. This effort is in response to an Interim Study of the State Legislature. Meetings held with Higher Education partners, with a White Paper drafted to share with legislators and the general public on the importance of a Birth to Five licensing program for early childhood educators in Arkansas. Recommendations from the Interim Study Committee presented to the Legislative Education Committee on November 24th, with proposed legislation to be filed in the upcoming 2009 Arkansas Legislative Session.

- **Community Services**

Participated in Arkansas Crisis Response state training on October 24th. Also participated in crisis call-out on November 3rd.

Serving as Board Member for Arkansas Supportive Housing Network. Participation in various committee meetings and board meeting.

Assisted with and co-sponsored MOU workshop with Community Action Association, Head Start Association, Office of Community Services, Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education, and Child Care Resource & Referral agencies, held in North Little Rock on September 30th. The day-long workshop included topics identified at the earlier planning retreat, including technology and communications, rural health, and full day/full year options and services for child care. Guest speaker included Executive Director of Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families, who addressed the upcoming 2009 legislative session and state priorities concerning low-income children and families.

Participated in Governor's Work-Life Initiative Advisory Committee meeting on September 29th.

Worked in collaboration with Arkansas Commission on Child Abuse, Rape & Domestic Violence in co-sponsorship of Endangered Children in Arkansas Forum held in Springdale on October 30th. Topics presented at the Forum included children's cognitive and social emotional development, trauma issues, and children's mental health.

- ***Family Literacy Services***

Continuing work with Department of Education and Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education in developing materials showcasing quality early childhood opportunities in Arkansas, with focus on family literacy, through Reach Out & Read effort with Arkansas Pediatricians and Family Physicians.

Assisted Parent Education Network and Department of Education in state conference on family involvement held in Hot Springs in October. HSSCO director serves on Parent Education and Involvement Task Force.

Participated in State PIRC (Parent Information Resource Center) Board meeting on October 27th.

- ***Services to Children with Disabilities***

Attended Arkansas Coalition for Education of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing meetings, which included preparation for State Summit held in September.

Part C MOU agreement updated with participation from representatives of Part C, HSSCO and Arkansas TA Network. Signatures have been obtained and final document is available on the Arkansas Head Start Association website.

Disability Awareness Day activities held at the Capitol on October 15th.

Meetings held with Part B and Head Start TA disability representative in discussing new language in IDEA. Joint letter prepared and distributed to Arkansas Head Start programs by Head Start State Collaboration Office and Department of Education, Special Education, in addressing key changes.

- ***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.

Arkansas Homeless Coalition took the lead in sponsoring a Homeless Outreach Event on September 13th. The HSSCO was a co-sponsor of the outreach event and coordinated and assisted with activities for children & families during the event. Books, toys and backpacks were distributed, as well as other services offered to participants such as counseling, medical services, dental services, spiritual assistance, legal services, clothing and meals.

Participated in Homeless Conference held in North Little Rock on October 13th-15th.

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

Met with Arkansas Medicaid and Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care in addressing potential solutions for identified problems that Head State programs are having with blood lead screening not being completed by physicians as required. A Health Care Round Table was held September 23rd for the Arkansas TA Network, Health Managers from Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant & Seasonal Head Start programs in Arkansas, and with representatives from Medicaid and AFMC, to assist in linkages with physicians in appropriate education and awareness of EPSDT requirements. Articles have been being included in routine communication with Medicaid providers about blood lead screening.

Met with Governor's staff and director of DCCECE in making recommendations for adding members to Arkansas Early Childhood Commission to address requirement of Early Childhood Advisory Committee, as identified in Head Start reauthorization. Proposed legislation will be submitted to make the necessary membership changes in the 2009 Arkansas Legislative Session.

Attending quarterly meetings of Child Health Advisory Council which focuses on childhood obesity and other health matters of children and youth in our state. Serving on Education & Early Childhood Work Group to discuss options and methods for addressing proper nutrition and appropriate physical activity to assist in the prevention of this growing epidemic within our state.

Continued involvement with Arkansas System of Care reform initiative, focusing on children's mental health reform in Arkansas.

Participated in numerous Kids Count Steering Committee meetings. HSSCO director moderated panel on Education held at the Kids Count Pre-Legislative Conference on October 23rd in Little Rock.

Routine meetings with ABCD (Assuring Better Child Health Development) stakeholders group, a multi-state learning project focusing on preventive care of children whose health care is covered by Medicaid. The project supports efforts to improve early identification of young children with developmental problems.

Participated as member of legislative Task Force on Substance Abuse Prevention; assisted with written report presented to Public Health Legislative Committee on October 20th, with recommendations for substance abuse prevention activities and potential no-cost legislative initiatives.

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.

Participated in Region VI Head Start State Collaboration Directors conference calls with Regional Office, and attended Head Start State Collaboration Directors meeting in Dallas with Regional Office on November 6th – 7th.

Participated in meetings with Arkansas Head Start Association Board of Directors, as well as Head Start directors and staff.

Routine meetings with Jan Cox, liaison from Booz-Allen-Hamilton, contractor for Region VI ACF Head Start to Arkansas HSSCO.

Region 6 representative to Office of Head Start for planning agenda for 2009 national meeting of Head Start State Collaboration Directors, scheduled for February.

Participated in various cluster conference calls with TA Network, Regional Office, Early Head Start and Head Start programs addressing health and education issues.

Participated in OHS / AAP conference call on October 23rd to discuss partnership efforts between Head Start and pediatricians. Initial contact made with Arkansas Pediatric Liaison, with meeting to follow after the first of the year.

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

Worked with current evaluator of HSSCO past projects in addressing new requirements of Head Start reauthorization in obtaining needs assessment information from local Head Start programs. Survey discussed with Head Start directors at meeting and we are utilizing Survey Monkey to solicit input from Arkansas Head Start programs for needs assessment. To date, a large percentage of Arkansas programs have completed the survey, with a goal of 100% by the end of the year.

HSSCO director invited to participate in newly formed group addressing Shaken Baby/Abusive Head Trauma Prevention activities. Other members include representatives from Arkansas State Police, Arkansas Attorney General, Arkansas Children's Hospital, Arkansas Commission of Child Abuse, Rape & Domestic Violence, Division of Children and Family Services, and other early childhood advocates.

Participated in numerous events and activities, including 30-Year Dinner Celebration for Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families, Arkansas Parent Education Network annual luncheon, Arkansas Prevention Network state-wide training, the Lynn Harris Memorial Lecture, featuring Craig Ramey, Ph.D, discussing "Intervention & Prevention Programs: What We Have Learned from Science & Practice about Human Neuroplasticity."

HSSCO director invited as participant in policy briefing with Senator Mark Pryor, led by Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families. Other participants included representatives from Community Action and Early Childhood. The focus of the briefing was on the impact on low-income children and families due to policy decisions at the Federal level. Worked in cooperation with the Arkansas Head Start Association in collecting information and data, which was shared with Senator Pryor, as well as the Governor's staff.

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

Continued participation in Welcome the Children Advisory Committee. The primary goal of this project is to provide training and technical assistance for 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 delays. Plans are being made for the 2009 annual conference. Ongoing training is held throughout the year and is offered to early childhood educators, including Head Start. Staff from Welcome the Children Project attended the Second Language Institute sponsored by the Office of Head Start in Washington DC. Information was shared with HSSCO director.

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 of the third quarter of the grant period. As always, other early childhood and partnership issues surface and are being addressed, even though not identified as a specific part of the current work plan. The HSSCO works in cooperation with the Arkansas Head Start Association and other early childhood education partners in identifying opportunities for enhancing collaborative efforts between pre-k in Arkansas and Head Start. Work also continues in other priority areas with state and local partners.