

Ohio's Experience



STATE INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE EARLY LEARNING: NEXT STEPS IN COORDINATING SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE, HEAD START, AND STATE PREKINDERGARTEN



Center for Law and Social Policy

By Rachel Schumacher, Mark Greenberg, and Joan Lombardi

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For the full report: State Initiatives to Promote Early Learning: Next Steps in Coordinating Subsidized Child Care, Head Start, and State Prekindergarten, or individual descriptions of the studied initiatives in Georgia and Massachusetts, please see our website at www.clasp.org, or call (202) 328-5140.

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Introduction

At least 17 states are committing state funds to expand access to the Head Start program's targeted population of poor three and four year old children.¹ Such state initiatives recognize that current federal funding levels provide Head Start services to less than half of eligible children.² Most state initiatives follow federal Head Start eligibility requirements that at least 90% of children served be from families with incomes less than the federal poverty level (FPL). Often, states choose to prioritize this population due to specific concerns about school readiness for those children, coupled with a desire to target what policymakers may consider a limited resource pool to those children most in need. Ohio's commitment to reaching all poor three and four year old Head Start children is the most extensive example of these models, with an estimated 71% of eligible children served through a combination of Head Start programs and partnerships with other providers.³

Most of the general funds states are committing to Head Start expansions are earmarked to provide increased access to early learning and services intended to meet federal performance standards for Head Start. State initiatives differ in several ways:

- **Allowable Grantees:** Some states decide to direct funds only to previously approved federal Head Start grantees, while others allow state dollars to flow directly to other community-based agencies or school districts not already participating in the federal Head Start program.
- **Targeted Purposes vs. Enrollment Expansion:** Some states leverage state funds for certain purposes such as to enhance teacher salaries (e.g. Massachusetts) or to increase full-day, full-year services (as in Ohio), while others focus only on expanding access to Head Start services for more children.
- **Service Providers:** Head Start services may be provided by approved federal grantees and delegates only; by separately approved state grantees; or by subcontracted community-based child care providers.
- **Extent to which state Head Start initiatives result in joint policy, planning, and service delivery with other pieces of the state's early care and education system:** States may simply appropriate dollars to grantees, or they may use state dollars as a lever to build coordination among the segments of the early care and education system. Ohio's experience is unique in its focus on developing collaboration and partnership at the state level to coordinate policy and at the local level to provide services.

This chapter describes Ohio's experience in developing and implementing both significant expansion of the Head Start program and collaborative efforts between Head Start and other state early education institutions. What started as initial demonstration projects of state-funded Head Start and Public

Preschool programs has grown to \$100.8 million in state funds for Head Start services and initiatives and \$19.5 million for public preschool in state fiscal year 2001 (for comparison, the state will dedicate \$76.5 million in state funds and \$284.6 million in federal funds to the subsidized child care program in 2001).

The Head Start expansion was the first major early childhood initiative operating in Ohio, begun with a gubernatorial goal to offer all Ohio's Head Start eligible children the opportunity to participate in comprehensive early childhood education and services. In addition to using state funds so that 38% of children receiving Ohio Head Start services do so through use of state dollars,⁴ the state has also developed collaborative models among Head Start, child care, and Public Preschool providers to meet family needs for full day, full year care. Recently, the state has allowed grantees to apply for waivers to extend eligibility for state-funded Head Start services to children in families with income above the federal limit, up to 125% of FPL. These efforts, as well as several other early education projects, were undertaken in collaboration with state and local early childhood administrations and organizations, such as: the federally-funded Head Start Collaboration Office; the state and local departments of education and job and family services; the state's Head Start Association; and the state's Family and Children First (FCF) initiative.⁵

The Ohio experience provides a useful example of the policy choices and implications involved in the targeted Head Start expansion model. This chapter includes:

- A brief description of the context of the state's early childhood system, including child care, public school, and other early childhood initiatives;
- Historical background on the creation and development of Ohio's initiative;
- Chart of key dimensions and choices in Ohio's policy; and,
- Details on how Ohio's Head Start expansion and partnerships initiatives work including state and federal administration, local administration in terms of expansion and partnership activities, and data and evaluation efforts.

All data were verified as of December 2000.

I. Ohio's Early Childhood Systems: Some Context

Before offering a detailed description of the Ohio experience, this section provides a brief background on the child care, Public Preschool, and other relevant early education policies to supply context for Ohio's expansion and collaboration initiatives.

A. Child Care

Responsibility for administering the state's portion of the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and the state subsidized child care system lies with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), Bureau of Child Care Services. Ohio is a home rule state, with 88 counties. County departments of job and family services (CDJFS) are responsible for much of the local administration of the child care subsidy program, including eligibility determination, child care arrangement and placement, and provider payments.⁶ For state FY2001, the total state budget for child care services under the Bureau is \$361.1 million, including \$76.5 million in state dollars. The state transferred 30% of its Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant to CCDF in 2001 to accommodate growing demand for subsidies that year.⁷

Families seeking assistance to pay for child care services must meet certain criteria. Ohio child care subsidies serve qualifying families receiving Ohio Work First (OWF) cash assistance or transitioning from assistance, and other low-income families or families with special needs children regardless of prior OWF status. OWF families and families in their first 12 months off of cash assistance are guaranteed subsidies, while other low-income working families are not. Families receiving Transitional Child Care (TCC) must have family income less than 150% of FPL or 85% of State Median Income (SMI), whichever is lower. Families receiving Income Eligible Employment and Training child care benefits must have family income less than 185% of FPL or 85% of SMI, whichever is lower. For a family of three, 150% of FPL was \$1,735/month in 1999, and 185% of FPL was \$2,140/month.⁸ Children up to and including age 12 are eligible for CCDF-funded subsidies. Children who have special needs, are under court supervision, or in protective services may receive child care subsidies through other funding sources.⁹

The state has expanded the number of children receiving subsidy in recent years, but still falls short of serving all potentially eligible children. In 2000, approximately 72,500 children received ODJFS subsidies in an average month, including 16,500 in families receiving cash assistance, 8,500 in families transitioning from welfare to work, and 47,000 in income eligible families.¹⁰ About 564 children (365

receiving OWE, 169 receiving TCC, and 30 receiving non-guaranteed child care) receiving subsidy in an average month are also participating in Head Start-Child Care partnerships.¹¹ According to analysis of FY99 data released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, about 10% of the children that would be eligible for CCDF funded subsidies if Ohio raised eligibility to the maximum allowable (85% of State Median Income) were served. This figure is less than the national average of 12%, but does not reflect children served through non-CCDF dollars such as in Ohio's state Head Start program.¹²

Ohio parents must navigate certain processes in order to secure and maintain child care subsidies. After parents submit an application, CDJFS have 30 days to process family applications for child care. According to ODJFS policy, families whose TCC benefits end after their twelve months or due to rising income should automatically continue to receive subsidy under the Income Eligible rules.¹³ After receiving an initial certificate of eligibility or voucher, parents may choose a licensed child care center, school age program, Head Start or a home provider (relative or non-relative) or in-home aide/caregiver that is certified by the county department.¹⁴ The state does not currently provide any child care subsidies through the purchase of slots directly from child care providers, preferring to rely on a voucher system. Parents may receive assistance in locating child care from their caseworker or may be referred to a statewide network of resource and referral agencies that have state contracts to assist families. Due to policy changes in 2000, caseworkers conduct redetermination of eligibility for child care subsidies every twelve months instead of the former policy of every six months, although parents are expected to report changes in job and income status to their caseworkers in the interim.¹⁵ All parents are assessed a copayment based on family size, income and number of children in child care, with no family paying more than 10% of income as per state statute and rule.¹⁶ Families are assessed the same copayment whether the child is in a part- or full-day arrangement.

Ohio reimburses child care providers commensurate with the 75th percentile of a market rate survey, most recently conducted by the Bureau of Child Care and the Legislative Budget Office in June 2000. New rates are to be implemented as of January 2001. CDJFS offices reserve the right, however, to negotiate lower rates with those child care providers serving more than 75% subsidized children, if agreeable to the provider. Providers caring for special needs children, providing care during non-traditional work hours, or providing care in a setting accredited by certain national organizations may receive rates up to 5% higher than the reimbursement ceiling, although the new rate may not be higher than the provider's customary charge to the public.¹⁷ The Ohio General Assembly recently asked the state Legislative Budget Office (LBO) to investigate the feasibility of implementing a "cost-based prospective payment system," which would have provided funds to providers prior to the provision of the child care services. After conducting a survey of county ODJFS and child care providers, the LBO revealed that while providers were in favor of a prospective payment system, counties were mostly against such a system. As a result, LBO did not recommend moving forward with prospective payments due to concern about the difficulty of implementing such a system through the county offices.¹⁸

ODJFS is responsible for licensing and monitoring private child care centers and homes, and camp facilities. This includes child care centers and large ("Type A"- seven to twelve children or four or more children under age two) family child care homes.¹⁹ Licenses are issued for two years, with two routine

compliance visits a year (at least one is unannounced) and a required inspection upon renewal. The 1999 ODJFS licensing budget was \$4 million, up 14% from 1996. According to a 2000 report by the General Accounting Office, there are 9,809 child care facilities and 66 licensing FTEs in Ohio, with an approximate caseload of 149 facilities per FTE.²⁰ ODJFS does not license smaller family child care homes (“Type B” - six or fewer children), but CDJFS are responsible for certifying and monitoring those which care for subsidized children.²¹ There are approximately 11,500 home care providers and Type B homes, which are also inspected twice a year (including at least one unannounced visit). The Department of Education is responsible for licensing all programs operated under Head Start Performance Standards, including Head Start grantees, public preschool, and child care providers.

Ohio is moving toward implementation of a tiered certification system by July 1, 2001. The system will be voluntary, but will provide financial incentives to child care centers serving subsidized children to meet or exceed standards in such areas as staff:child ratio, staff qualifications, in-service training, and staff compensation. The new system will also provide support to programs working toward meeting the voluntary goals, and will target those providers of services to subsidized children.²²

ODJFS has several initiatives focused on increasing child care quality in the state. ODJFS has allocated the CCDF quality set-aside funds to each of the state’s counties. Each county must submit a plan for use of the funds either directly or through subcontracts, including a description of activities to enhance infant-toddler care. ODJFS is also consulting with its statewide Child Care Advisory Council as to appropriate uses of some of the funds for some statewide initiatives. The eight key areas of focus are: special needs child care, networking within and among system stakeholders, health and safety, regulatory policy, evaluations, capital improvements and supplies, awareness, and compensation, benefits and incentives.²³ In the CCDF plan, the state indicated that quality set-aside funds will be used for “comprehensive consumer education, grants or loans to providers to assist in meeting State and local standards, monitoring of compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements, training and technical assistance, compensation for child care providers, and other quality activities that increase parental choice and improve quality and availability of care.”²⁴

B. Department of Education - Public Preschool Program

Ohio’s funding for Public Preschool programs dates back as far as its investment in state Head Start programs. While increases in funding for public preschool have not matched those for Head Start, the legislature has remained committed to continuing these programs.

Public Preschool programs were first piloted in 1988 along with the state Head Start pilots as part of education reform. Administering authority lies within the Office of Early Childhood Education (OECE) in the Ohio Department of Education, the same agency that administers state Head Start funds. In state FY90, state funding for public preschool was \$5.4 million. By 1999, the appropriation had risen modestly, to \$17.9 million.²⁵ In state FY99, 114 public school districts in 55 out of Ohio’s 88 counties were awarded funding for preschool programs through a continuation grant program. The local school district may opt to provide the educational program and comprehensive services on its own or through

subcontracts with local Head Start agencies, chartered non-public schools, and licensed child care providers.²⁶ At this juncture, 22 of the districts are working with Head Start programs and six are contracting with CDJFS to partner with the subsidized child care system.²⁷

Public Preschool is limited to three- and four-year-olds, and state funding is limited to children under 185% of the FPL. Families above 100% of the FPL may be required to pay a fee to enroll their children in public preschool in Ohio, with a sliding fee scale similar to that used by ODJFS for the child care subsidy system. Children above 185% of the FPL may participate on a private pay basis, once a school district has enrolled the number of low-income children projected in its grant.²⁸

According to state FY99 data, 37% of Public Preschool children were from families with income up to 100% of the FPL; 39% were from families between 101% and 185 % of the FPL; and 24% were from families at 186% and above the FPL. This represents a decline in the percentage of children under the poverty level, and may be related to the coinciding expansion of Head Start services in the state. In that same year, the total number of children served was 7,694.²⁹ The cost per child to the state for public preschool is \$2,937 in state FY00.³⁰ This is less than for the state Head Start program, which may be related in part to the reduced costs that school-site facilities have for overhead, transportation, staff benefits, and rent compared to private providers.

School readiness and social competence are the basic program goals established for Ohio's Public Preschool programs.³¹ According to state law and grant terms, they must follow Head Start Performance Standards and provide comprehensive programming for, at minimum, three hours per day. Most Preschools work to meet Head Start standards for comprehensive services by providing linkages to community resources. Such services are to include education, health, social services, parent involvement, and disability services. The programs are mostly half-day programs that follow the school year calendar, although some districts have developed collaborative efforts to extend the hours and months of services. The enabling legislation allows school districts to use school district vehicles to provide transportation, and some choose to do so under the kindergarten schedule.

All Public Preschools must be visited for licensing and monitoring purposes on an annual basis, by state law. OECE conducted announced and unannounced visits to verify compliance with health and safety regulations for all 114 preschool sites in state FY99. In addition, OECE visited every school district with a preschool grant to assure compliance with other program measures, including: enrollment and eligibility requirements, use of a sliding fee scale for families above 101% of the FPL, documentation of at least two home visits per child, and required components of health screenings and family and child assessments.³²

Up to 1% of the Public Preschool budget may be set aside for management assistance activities, which may include: improving agency management capacity; assisting programs to comply with Head Start Performance Standards; helping school districts develop collaborative practices and integrated, developmentally appropriate services; funding conflict management services provided by the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management; and providing staff professional development.³³

C. Other Relevant Early Education Initiatives

Ohio has several early education initiatives focused on children from birth to age three. Grantees received \$7.2 million in federal funds for Early Head Start in FFY 2000, and enrolled 836 children in fifteen different programs.³⁴ In addition, Ohio has been dedicating increased funding levels to Early Start, a comprehensive home visiting program for families with high risk infants and toddlers, with \$6.3 million in general funds and \$28 million in TANF funds in state FY00.³⁵ Ohio Early Start is administered through the Ohio Department of Health and ODJFS. As funding for Early Start has increased, ODJFS has worked to encourage CDJFS to take full advantage of the funds and to reach out to at risk families, and FCF has been urging local Councils to participate in that effort.³⁶

The OECE administers several programs in addition to Head Start and Public Preschool, including Even Start (a family literacy program), Parents as Teachers (a program aimed at improving parenting skills related to child-learning), Preschool Special Education, and Enriched Learning Opportunities for school age children. OECE has launched an Early Childhood Accreditation Project which is working to assist over 600 child care, Head Start, and Public Preschool classrooms become accredited with the National Association for the Education of Young Children.³⁷

State officials are also collaborating on three separate projects looking toward the future of the Ohio early care and education system. One project is examining options for financing a system of early care and education with assistance from Richard Brandon at the University of Washington, Human Services Policy Center and Sharon Lynn Kagan at the Yale Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy. The state's Child Care Resource and Referral Network is also working on financing issues with the assistance of Louise Stoney, an expert on financing alternatives for early education. Ohio receives technical assistance as one of five states to participate in the National Governors' Association's (NGA) Center for Best Practices' effort entitled: "Building Public and Political Will for Early Childhood Education." Although the projects are separate, they are coordinated and inform one another through the NGA team and work plan.

II. Historical Background on the Development of Head Start Expansion and Partnerships Initiative

Ohio's appropriation of state dollars to provide Head Start services dates back to pilots conducted as part of education reform during state FY88, but the groundwork for moving Head Start expansion onto the political agenda and developing a collaborative policy approach began years earlier. For example, increased interest in early childhood issues on the part of the state Board of Education led to the creation of a Commission on Early Childhood in 1984; an Ohio affiliate office of the Children's Defense Fund (an advocacy organization focused on child and family policy) was established in 1982; and in 1986, Ohio Head Start Association, Inc. was incorporated. The Commission on Early Childhood recommended increased planning across state agencies on early childhood issues. The other entities were central to developing a campaign calling for state funds to expand access to Head Start for eligible children.

In 1987, funds were allocated to the Department of Education's early childhood section to distribute grants to Head Start agencies for demonstration purposes. In 1988, legislation passed requiring the Board of Education to develop rules to govern the funding of state Head Start and Public Preschools. These programs were to be located within the Early Childhood Education section of the Department of Education, along with the pre-existing early childhood special education staff. This legislation set the precedent in Ohio for state funding for Head Start, while at the same time co-locating the administration of two key segments of the growing early childhood system.³⁸

In 1990, many important administrative and legislative initiatives occurred. The Office of Governor Celeste and the Ohio Head Start Association jointly applied for and received a grant from the Administration for Children and Families, Head Start Bureau to create a Head Start State Collaboration Project.³⁹ Ohio was one of twelve states to receive funding for this project, whose goals were to create a visible Head Start presence at the state level and to develop strategies to integrate local Head Start programs with other local and state education, health, and human service programs. The Collaboration Project has enjoyed the support of multiple administrations and both political parties in Ohio. Implementation of the Project started under Governor Voinovich in 1991, and has continued under current Governor Taft. The Collaboration Project Director in Ohio was originally placed in the Governor's Office, with implementation to be jointly shared with the Ohio Head Start Association. Over the next few years, the Collaboration Office took leadership in organizing several conferences and training sessions to facilitate partnerships and develop a more unified early childhood agenda in Ohio. Also in 1990, the General Assembly approved its first large state investment in Head Start and Public

Preschool, appropriating a total of \$19.2 million for the biennium budget. Finally, the state Board of Education authorized the Division of Early Childhood Education (today's OECE) to administer these and pre-existing early education programs in the Department of Education.⁴⁰ Despite the separate creation and line-items of state Head Start and Public Preschool, the joint administration of the two programs allowed opportunities for interaction and streamlining.

In 1992, Governor George Voinovich established the Family and Children First (FCF) Initiative through an Executive Order. The goal was to improve the delivery systems of education, health and social services for families and children. The Order created both a Cabinet level policy council and individual county level councils. Under Voinovich, the Cabinet Council had representation from eight departments, staffed by loaned executives from each department. This "Action Team" made early childhood issues one of its four areas of concentration. In 1993, the Governor created a Head Start Task Force including administration staff, legislators, corporate and foundation leaders, Head Start directors and parents to discuss Head Start expansion issues.⁴¹ The work of this Task Force later influenced the development of an Early Childhood Coordination Committee (ECCC) within the FCF structure. The ECCC was chaired by the Head Start Collaboration Director with participation by the Director of the Division of Early Childhood Education. Six subcommittees (family literacy, facilities approval and coordination, technology, birth to age three, partnerships, and professional development) informed the Team regarding policies for families and children.⁴² The number of county level Councils grew from 13 in the first year to all 88 counties. Each one develops their own specific agendas, but in some areas Councils have played strategic roles in encouraging collaboration across early care and education systems, and the FCF initiative set a collaborative tone at the state and local levels. Under Governor Taft, the FCF vision is to enable every child to be safe, healthy, and successful in school. FCF is facilitating a new Community Partnership initiative to use the local Councils to engage local leaders in community planning processes to increase efficient use of existing resources, as well as working to address Governor Taft's priority interest in promoting literacy.⁴³

State early childhood leaders also come together more informally as part of a group called the Head Start Budget Coalition. Representatives of the state early childhood agencies, the state Office of Management and Budget, the Children's Defense Fund of Ohio, the Head Start Association, Community Action Agencies and the Head Start grantees meet regularly to plan and strategize for the state's biennium budget process. In the process, the group tries to head off issues of competition and turf among the systems.⁴⁴

With the above structures in place, state and local early childhood leaders continued to work across systems to foster joint projects and advocate for increased funding on state Head Start initiatives. State officials and organizations have worked together to develop training and conferences regarding cross system collaboration, to seek grant-making opportunities to fund technical assistance and the development of materials, and to develop policy agendas.⁴⁵

Over time, Ohio's goal to reach all Head Start eligible children led to a policy shift: bring Head Start services to children where they were currently served, not assume children had to be moved to Head Start facilities. That meant recognizing that many thousands of Head Start eligible children were already

in full-day, full-year child care programs and subsidized by the child care subsidy system. At the same time, many low-income parents were either working or would soon need to work due to changes in welfare law. Ohio's traditional reliance on double-session half-day Head Start needed to be reassessed. In 1995, state officials invited the Associate Commissioners of the Head Start Bureau and the Child Care Bureau to discuss methods of blending funding streams and designing program options.⁴⁶

Discussion and brainstorming among the groups led to the development of new potential models of collaboration between Head Start and child care. In 1996-97, a consortium of state agencies and organizations, including the Ohio Head Start Collaboration Office, the Ohio FCF, the OECE, the Ohio Head Start Association, and the Bureau of Child Care, developed an initiative to promote full-day, full-year services.⁴⁷ In the original initiative, blended funds from the state Head Start line-item (\$3 million) and the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (\$3 million) were provided to 25 existing grantees to develop "partnerships" to deliver full-day, full-year Head Start. Grantees were to maintain Head Start Performance Standards. Children had to be eligible under Head Start guidelines, but grantees were encouraged to give priority to families who were working or enrolled in job training. In exchange for additional state funds, the grantees were to serve more children with extended hours and days through partnerships with another local early childhood provider or the CDJFS.⁴⁸

Implementation could take the form of several suggested models. At first, collaborations were developed and negotiated at the local level between Head Start grantees and interested child care programs with the assistance of CDJFS. Now, the extra start-up funding is no longer available, and contracts may be negotiated without the assistance of counties. According to survey data released by the Head Start Collaboration Office, there are 8,442 children receiving services under this state initiative, in addition to 5,037 children receiving full-day services through federal Head Start dollars. Together this represents around 22% of the state Head Start population, with 84% of Head Start grantees involved in offering some sort of partnership full-day, full-year opportunity.⁴⁹

III. Key Dimensions and Choices in Ohio’s Head Start Expansion and Partnerships Initiative

Key Dimension/Choice	Ohio Policy
Which specific age group is included?	Three- and four-year-old children.
Intent to reach all or some of this group?	Head Start model limited to Head Start eligible children and families up to the FPL; grantees may apply to serve up to 125% of FPL.
What is the balance between goals of school readiness for children and work supports for parents?	Focus on expanding access to opportunities to improve school readiness, with a strategic effort to increase participation by expanding full day, full year capacity among some grantees.
Principal focus on educational competence and/or comprehensive services?	Both goals are addressed.
How is educational competence enhanced?	Intended to meet Head Start Performance Standards; child care teachers involved in partnerships participate in professional development through Head Start.
What are the state and local roles?	State guides policy and facilitates collaboration, but local grantees have much latitude in designing partnership parameters.
Relationship to pre-existing Head Start, child care, and public school programs?	Services delivered in Head Start sites, child care centers and family child care homes.
Relationship of the initiative to other parts of the early education system?	State dollars flowing to child care centers and family child care homes to enhance quality expected to have spillover effects for non-Head Start funded children.
How is the initiative funded?	Services provided through state appropriations; some joint system enhancements efforts funded through private grants.

IV. The Ohio Head Start Expansion and Partnerships Initiatives: How They Work

A. Administration - Federal and State

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Region V, administers the federal funds flowing directly to local Head Start grantees in Ohio. Federal funding was \$178.3 million in federal FY99.⁵⁰ State funds are administered by OECE within the Ohio Department of Education, the same agency that administers the state's smaller Public Preschool program (see above). Ohio appropriated \$92.6 million for the state Head Start line-item in state FY99, \$97 million in FY00, and \$100.8 million in FY01.⁵¹

As described in the historical background section, there is a significant amount of state level collaboration in the administration of Ohio Head Start. Key state officials in the OECE, the FCF office, the Head Start Collaboration Office (which is housed in FCF), the Ohio Child Care Bureau, and representatives from the Ohio Head Start Association work jointly on projects to discuss and develop policy initiatives. There is a Head Start/Child Care Technical Assistance Workgroup staffed out of the Head Start Collaboration Office, that includes representation from many key stakeholders, state and federal officials. State officials are also in communication with the ACF Region V office, as well as drawing upon the resources of the QUILT (Quality In Linking Together) technical assistance program, an initiative of the Child Care and Head Start Bureaus in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to facilitate collaboration between child care and Head Start programs at the local level. A QUILT representative participates in the Workgroup as well.

State and federal officials also work jointly to administer the monitoring piece of the state Head Start expansion initiative. OECE collaborates with the ACF Region V office in monitoring programs to assure that programs meet Head Start Performance Standards, with a comprehensive review to assure compliance, a follow up review to monitor implementation of improvements based on the first visit, and a third data verification visit focused on fiscal and enrollment requirements.⁵² The state office works in tandem with the federal staff in determining whether programs have deficiencies and whether to terminate grants due to insufficient ability to correct deficiencies. One program was terminated in state FY99.⁵³

The Ohio OECE has been responsible for state licensing and monitoring of all Head Start agencies and programs operated with state Head Start dollars since 1998 (the ODJFS was previously responsible for this function). In state FY99, 674 Head Start centers were visited at least two times, for one

announced and one unannounced visit to monitor compliance with health and safety regulations.⁵⁴ Beginning in state FY00, OECE implemented new procedures to systematize data collection across program areas for both state-funded Head Start and the state public preschool program.⁵⁵ This initiative standardized data collection across programs in order to accurately compare progress toward key indicators within and among program types, e.g. staff and child turnover rates, attendance, and staff qualifications.⁵⁶

Both federal and state dollars are used for enhancing quality of Head Start services. Funding for quality enhancement differs somewhat according to federal or state sources, with the state funding stream not requiring the federal stipulation of a set aside for quality enhancement. However, up to 2% of the line item appropriations for Ohio Head Start is designated to support administration, management assistance and initiatives for the purpose of promoting quality (up to 1% of the state's funding for public preschool is also set-aside for these purposes; both streams are managed by OECE). The purpose of these funds is to help grantees identify expansion needs and develop expansion plans, recruit and train staff, improve management capacity, help programs comply with Performance Standards, and assist Head Start agencies in developing collaborative practices and building integrated and developmentally appropriate services. OECE uses some management assistance funds to expand the scope and intensity of the work of the Region V Head Start Quality Improvement Center which serves Ohio, Illinois and Indiana. The supplemental funds provide additional full-time staff to provide technical assistance to state and federal Head Start grantees on such issues as recruitment and retention of children, technology support, and improving program quality to comply with Head Start Performance Standards.⁵⁷ Some of the 2% in funding has been used to award \$10,000 grants to Special Education Regional Resource Centers to provide the necessary training and technical assistance required to implement local agreements around special needs children.⁵⁸ Also, some of the set-aside has been directed to Ohio's Community Finance Fund for child care facility development planning.

B. Local Activities - Expansion

According to the Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) data for 1998-1999, there are 52 federal grantees in Ohio and six Early Head Start grantees.⁵⁹ All but one of the federal grantees in the state currently receive state Head Start expansion dollars, but non-federal grantees were allowed to apply when the program was expanding. There are 54 state Head Start grantees, of which two are not federal Head Start grantees or delegates.⁶⁰ Most grantees are Community Action Agencies. All federal and state funds go directly to grantees on an annual basis through a continuation grant process. Grantees must apply for expansion funds based on the priorities set at the federal and state level. For example, state funding in state FY98 was prioritized for those programs interested in providing full day/full year Head Start services to OWF families. No further state expansion applications are being accepted at this time.

Ohio has used its' state dollars to increase the flexibility for income eligibility in intake. Federal Head Start grantees follow federal income eligibility guidelines: children must be from families under the FPL, although up to 10% of enrolled children may be from families with income above that limit. In the Ohio 2000-2001 biennium budget, Head Start state-funding grantees were given the opportunity to

apply on an annual basis for a waiver in order to serve children and families with income up to 125% of FPL.⁶¹ In state FY00, eight grantees applied and five were approved to serve these higher income families.⁶² Ohio is the first state in the country to move toward higher income guidelines for Head Start families.

Ohio's average cost per Head Start child has tended to be much lower than the national average, for slots funded by federal dollars and those funded with state dollars. The average cost per Head Start child nationally was \$5,464 in federal FY99. Ohio ranked 49th out of 56 states and territories in average federal cost per child in FFY99, according to the Ohio Head Start Association, and 53rd out of 56 when state and federal average costs are combined.⁶³ The relatively low rankings come despite increases in what the state spends per child in recent years; the average cost per child for state funded slots in 1998 was \$3,802, while in 2001 it was \$4,403.⁶⁴ It is also true that while the national average cost per child figures take into account the significant set-aside of federal Head Start funds for quality improvements, the state funds do not mirror the federal in those set-aside requirements.

Although there are differences in the average cost per Head Start child between federal and state funded slots, state grantees must provide the same type of comprehensive services required of federal grantees, including education, health, social services, parent involvement, and disability services.⁶⁵ In order to receive state Head Start expansion dollars, grantees must sign an Assurance that federal standards will be met, and that no other federal or state funds will be supplanted with the grant award.⁶⁶ It is possible that some Head Start state grantees, many of whom are also federal grantees, are only able to meet the federal Performance Standards for state funded children because they also have federally funded children, and that federal dollars are in part supplementing their ability to do so.

Ohio has greatly expanded the total number of children and families served in Ohio through use of state funds. According to an annual OECE report to the state legislature, during the state FY99, federal funds served 35,286 children, while state funds served an additional 22,072 children.⁶⁷ Grantees may not count the same child for the purposes of both federal and state funds. In a Task Force report released in the Spring of 2000, an ODJFS' unduplicated count of children at or below the poverty line was used to estimate the percentage of poor children reached by state early education initiative funds. According to that report, federal and state Head Start serve 71% of the eligible population, while all publicly funded early childhood programs serve 77%.⁶⁸

According to the ACF FY98-99 Performance Information Report (PIR), of the children served from all sources in Head Start programs, 50% were white, 46% were African-American, and only 3% were Hispanic. The majority (53%) of the children served were four years old, while 39% were three years old. Around a third of Head Start families were receiving benefits under TANF (37%) and more than half of the families were working full time, part time or seasonally (63%). (Previous year PIR data reported a much higher percentage of families receiving TANF—around half.⁶⁹) The ACF data show 59% of Head Start families were headed by single parents.⁷⁰

C. Local Activities - Head Start/Child Care Partnerships

The first applicants for Partnership funding were recruited based on previously demonstrated ability to meet Head Start Performance Standards, and on agencies' relationships with their CDJFS.⁷¹ No further applications are being solicited at this point. Local grantees have much latitude in developing their Head Start/Child Care Partnership activities, including selection of partnership agencies. Some technical assistance is provided by OECE, the Child Care Bureau at ODJFS, the Collaboration Office, the Head Start/Child Care Technical Assistance Workgroup and the Ohio Head Start Association. Head Start/Child Care Partnerships (or partnerships between Public Preschools and community organizations) may be formed in a number of ways, including several models described in a technical assistance document produced and distributed by state leaders as part of the early recruitment process in 1995.⁷² However, there are two main Partnership formations that are being used by the 24 state grantees at this point in Ohio:

- **Enhanced Services (multiple agencies/providers, multiple funding sources):** This model may take two forms: one in which the Head Start grantee contracts with a child care center to provide services and one in which the grantee contracts with multiple family child care providers. The child is enrolled in the child care center or family child care home and Head Start simultaneously. Parents pay a copayment based on the state's established sliding fee scale for child care. The expected result is that the child receives comprehensive Head Start education and services full-day, full-year, based on family needs and parent work and education schedules. Head Start state funds supplement the child care subsidy dollars programs receive so that they may provide comprehensive services and a program that meets Head Start Performance Standards. In many cases, the child care provider also receives technical assistance, supplies, full access to Head Start professional development opportunities, and other assistance in meeting Head Start Performance Standards. However, the child care provider must negotiate this with the grantee and contracts vary across the state.
- **Self-contained (one agency, multiple funders):** Full-day services are provided at the Head Start site, with partial funding from state Head Start dollars and partial funding with child care subsidy system dollars. Head Start Performance Standards would typically be required for the Head Start portion of the day only. Parents pay a sliding fee calculated according to the state's rules.

Grantees that partner with child care providers have been learning about and developing responses to a host of issues. One key technical issue is that the rate of reimbursement child care providers receive from the subsidized child care system is less than that of the typical Head Start grant amount per child. Also, up until recently, some CDJFS were counting the 3.5 hours of a typical half-day of Head Start against the partnering child care providers, and adjusting the state reimbursement amount accordingly. These policies make it difficult for child care providers to meet Head Start Performance Standards in relation to the educational portion of their services. For example, the staff:child ratio required of programs receiving Head Start differs from that of state general licensing standards. Without access to funds above and beyond the state child care subsidy reimbursement rates, child care partners may struggle to meet the quality standards of the Head Start program. State officials are encouraging CDJFS

to stop this practice through a state rule.⁷³ Through technical assistance and conference training events, officials are also educating Head Start grantees as to the funding constraints faced by child care partners. Therefore, partnerships are requiring consideration of how much of a grantee's Head Start state funds ought to be provided to the child care partner in order to ensure that Performance Standards are met and that children are truly receiving Head Start services.

Other key issues arise when Head Start/Child Care partnerships must address historic differences between the two systems, including differences in required staff:child ratio, parental involvement, access to professional development and training, and programming approaches. Child care staff often are not familiar with Head Start Performance Standards. Therefore, many state Head Start grantees are spending funds to hire mentors or specialists to assist centers and family child care providers. Still, many child care providers have stated a need for the contracts they negotiate with grantees to include funds to enhance the actual educational component of the day (e.g. enable them to pay higher salaried to attract better staff), not just the other services. Finally, another key question is whether all of the Head Start Performance Standards must be met by the individual child care provider, including such provisions as required parent participation in agency governance.

Data gathered by the Head Start Collaboration Office and the Head Start/Child Care Workgroup indicate that in total 46 state and federal Head Start grantees receive funding to implement full-day, full-year programming (full day is defined as six hours or more). The grantees work with 380 child care centers and 200 family child care homes. An additional 117 Head Start grantees reported providing full-day full-year services without working with another provider agency; although many work with CDJFS to use subsidized child care system funding to finance such services. State funded providers were projected to provide full-day, full-year services to 8,442 children in Fall of 1999, while federal funds were projected to serve an additional 5,037 children. Approximately 69% of the children received these services in child care center or family child care home through partnership agreements. The total number of children receiving full day services, 13,479, represents 22% of Ohio's Head Start enrollment.⁷⁴ The majority of Ohio Head Start programs continue to be part day, however, with 53% of the children enrolled in programs running double sessions according to PIR 1998-1999 data.⁷⁵

D. Evaluations and Data Collection

Ohio has maintained a commitment to monitoring the progress of the above described initiatives, both through process and outcomes evaluations. Ohio OECE, the Head Start Collaboration Office, and Head Start Association have commissioned a series of process analyses in regard to the Head Start/Child Care Collaboration Initiative. The OECE has also begun an outcomes oriented research project that cuts across Head Start, Public Preschool , and the Partnerships.

The most recent Partnerships process description was released in June 2000. The report findings are based on information gathered at the "Head Start/Child care Leadership Forum" held in December 1999. The Forum was expressly planned by all the key state stakeholders to bring together the grantees and their center and family child care and CDJFS partners to discuss Partnership issues. The participants identified successes, challenges, strategies, recommendations, and stakeholder differences as follows:⁷⁶

- **Areas of Success:** Participants agreed that more low-income families were now receiving comprehensive, full-day/year services, that the level of comprehensiveness and quality of care in child care had improved, and that partners were communicating and sharing information about local service delivery issues as a results of Partnerships.
- **Challenges:** Participants also agreed that the different guidelines, standards, requirements and history of the partnering agencies required energy and work when first implementing Partnerships, but that through ongoing commitment to communication and building trust Partnerships could solidify. Another key challenge is that when parents go to work, families often become ineligible for services as their incomes rise above accepted Head Start eligibility levels.
- **Strategies:** Participants identified numerous approaches to the challenges they faced, including assigning a Head Start Mentor to assist child care partners in learning Performance Standards, increasing hourly pay rates to child care teachers involved in Partnerships in order to retain staff, and altering Head Start professional development training schedules to accommodate the full-day work schedules of partnering child care staff.⁷⁷
- **Recommendations to Funders, Training and Technical Assistance Providers, and Partners:** Participants believed funders should invest more in Partnerships, but ensure flexibility in financial and reporting requirements. They were particularly concerned that the amount of funds available per child was not sufficient. Some also requested more consistency among CDJFS offices in interpreting child care subsidy reimbursement rules and in assuring timely payments. Partnering agencies also wanted more opportunities like the Forum to share ideas and strategies with other grantees and partners, and urged recognition that Partnerships are most fruitful when approached as an ongoing process with gradual stages of development.
- **Stakeholder Differences:** Participants representing the Head Start grantees were primarily concerned with the difficulty in increasing child care and CDJFS partners' understanding and commitment to Head Start Performance Standards. Those representing child care centers were divided, with some finding the Partnerships rewarding and others describing them as challenging on an ongoing basis (particularly in relationship to the current level of payment rate and meeting Head Start Performance Standards). Family child care providers were also concerned with payment issues, as well as the additional burden of paperwork they felt as a partner with Head Start. These providers also identified a need for more training on how to improve curriculum for infants and toddlers who were in their care along with state funded Head Start children. CDJFS staff voiced a need for improved clarity and direction from ODJFS on certain relevant regulations, and a need for more monitoring of the quality of Head Start services provided through Partnerships.

The authors of the June report concluded with series of issues for state policymakers involved in administering the Partnerships to consider, including: a need to explore the partners' perceptions that they have inadequate resources to meet project expectations; methods of strengthening the technical assistance component, e.g. directly linking Partnerships with a specific advisor; and improving monitoring and accountability systems. In addition, the authors suggest that state officials consider

whether more Partnerships ought to be created (less than half of Ohio's Head Start grantees participate now), and whether an expansion of supply of quality infant and toddler services could be developed through Partnership relationships between those participating grantees that are also Early Head Start grantees. The findings of the June 2000 report mostly reinforce the recommendations of previous years' studies by the same authors. One additional recommendation of the 1999 report is that state and local agencies work toward increasing the comparability and capacity of their databases on need and eligibility in order to increase their ability to inform policy planning.

Ohio is also working across multiple programs in the development of outcomes measures for early education programs. A political concern about accountability of the growing amount of public dollars targeted for the state Head Start, Public Preschool, and Preschool Special Education initiatives led the state legislature to pass a provision in 1998 that all programs collect child progress data using a common assessment instrument. The bill required that the Ohio Department of Education develop a set of key indicators of early education performance to be tracked over time. The Indicators of Success project uses specially developed assessment tools to help early education teachers log observational data in every classroom receiving state dollars for these early education programs. All Head Start programs must have access to a selected computer program software for this purpose by July, 2001.⁷⁸ Child care classrooms and family child care homes that do not receive the state initiative dollars are not included, however, those which are engaged in partnerships with Head Start or Public Preschool are participating on a limited basis at this time. Researchers are able to analyze the data by school, class, program type, or demographic variables. Teachers may access the data in order to track children's progress, and adjust their strategies accordingly.⁷⁹ Data are not yet publicly available.

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