

HSSCO ANNUAL STATE PROFILE REPORT

Activities for January – December 2008

Arkansas

Collaboration Director

Ann Patterson
Arkansas Head Start
State Collaboration Office
1400 W. Markham, Suite 406
Little Rock, AR 72201
501-371-0740 (phone)
501-370-9109 (fax)
ann@arheadstart.org

Lead Agency Contact

Tonya Russell, Director
Division of Child Care & Early
Childhood Education
Arkansas Department of
Human Services
501-682-0494 (phone)
501-683-6060 (fax)
tonya.russell@arkansas.gov

ACF Regional Contact

Susan Johnston
Region VI ACF
DHHS
1301 Young Street, Ste 937
Dallas, TX 75202
214-767-8844 (phone)
214 767-2038 (fax)
susan.johnston@acf.hhs.gov

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. Describe your accomplishments and outcomes in the following areas.

- **Health Care**
- **Welfare and Child Welfare**
- **Childcare, including coordination of activities with the State Child Care Administrator, child care programs and child care resource and referral agencies**
- **Education**
- **Professional Development**
- **Community Services**
- **Family Literacy Services**
- **Services to Children with Disabilities**
- **Services to Homeless Children and Families**

The following goals are cross-cutting across priority areas for the Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office.

Goal 1: To support a collaborative system of quality early childhood education options to include Arkansas Head Start programs and the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success State Pre-Kindergarten program for three and four year old children.

Goal 2: To support a sustainable system for young children's social-emotional health to include consultation, education, and early intervention for children, families, teachers, and caregivers.

Goal 3: To increase the number of Head Start and Early Head Start centers who have attained and maintained State Quality Approval.

Goal 4: To assist in building early childhood systems and access to comprehensive services and support for all low-income children.

Goal 5: To promote widespread collaboration between Head Start and other programs, services, and initiatives.

Goal 6: To facilitate the involvement of Head Start in the development of State policies, plans, processes, and decisions affecting the Head Start population and other low-income families.

- **Health Care**

The Head Start State Collaboration Office Director continued 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. Initial early childhood partners were phased out as formal pilot sites linked 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. Ongoing research and evaluation continue within the Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative; an initial report was finalized and shared with stakeholders and other interested agencies and organizations, including the Arkansas Children's Behavioral Health Commission.

The HSSCO continued involvement in the Services and Supports workgroup of the Arkansas Children's Behavioral Health Commission 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 worked with students at the Clinton School of Public Service in identifying strategies that Head Start utilizes to engage families, as well as discussion of the importance of including early childhood mental health as a foundation for community based services.

HSSCO director participated in Integrating Behavioral Health into Early Childhood Summit held in April.

The HSSCO assisted with the second annual Mission of Mercy (ArMOM) held in Little Rock in May. ArMOM treated 1,569 patients in desperate need and provided in excess of \$643,859 in donated dental care. There were 1,711 fillings and 2,816 teeth extracted, supported by 790 volunteers that included 143 dentists, 58 dental hygienists, 237 dental assistants, 19 pharmacists, 32 nurses, and 301 lay support staff. Arkansas HSSCO assisted with sponsorship of the pediatric area at ArMOM.

The HSSCO director participates in Arkansas Finish Line Coalition, leading an effort to ensure every child in Arkansas with health insurance. The 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 poverty. Access to health services for children already enrolled is another priority of the coalition. HSSCO director is member of Enrollment & Retention workgroup.

HSSCO 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 programs, as well as TA Specialists in November. An Arkansas 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 and state pre-k funded programs across the state, to enhance oral health education and practices to more young children.

HSSCO director is member of Arkansas Coalition on Obesity Prevention and is active member on the Education and Early Childhood team. Discussion at a coalition meeting included information on the Head Start Initiative, "I Am Moving, I Am Learning." Participated in Arkansas Obesity Policy Summit in May.

- **Welfare and Child Welfare**

HSSCO worked in collaboration with Arkansas Commission on Child Abuse, Rape & Domestic Violence in co-sponsorship of Endangered Children in Arkansas Forums held in Monticello in March, Newport in April, and Springdale in October. Topics presented at the forums included indicators of child abuse, children's cognitive and social emotional development, trauma issues, drug-endangered children, children's mental health, mandated reporting, and working with children of incarcerated parents.

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 in October.

HSSCO director worked in partnership with Southern Good Faith Fund in distribution of material and information about the Aspiring Scholars Matching Grant Program as an outreach effort to Arkansas Head Start programs. The Aspiring Scholars program offers matching funds for eligible families who save money for college in the State's GIFT College Investing Plan.

A new program, Benefit Bank, which expands the locations where low-income people may apply for public assistance was piloted in seven counties in Arkansas. Currently, a lack of transportation and limited hours of operation and locations of county offices pose hurdles for some who sought public benefit programs. Information shared with Head Start directors in March and several Head Start programs in the pilot counties were trained to offer services at local sites convenient to and serving Head Start children and families.

- **Childcare**

HSSCO continued active participation with Arkansas Children's Week committee and local programs for Arkansas Children's Week activities held in April. The Head Start State Collaboration Office and the Arkansas Head Start Association, in cooperation with the Region VI Technical Assistance Network, sponsored workshops for early childhood providers on the topic of "Teaching & Enhancing Learning through Music & Movement."

HSSCO director continued involvement with Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Planning Initiative; attended national meeting for state partners held in Baltimore in March.

The Arkansas Head Start Association, in cooperation with the HSSCO, set a goal to increase the number of state quality approved child care programs, and consequently, comprise thirty percent of the quality centers in the state. Two-thirds of the Head Start centers in Arkansas are State Quality Approved or have NAEYC accreditation. Work continues in cooperation with the Arkansas Technical Assistance Specialists to support Head Start programs and centers who want to achieve state quality approval and several have developed plans to move in that direction.

The HSSCO director is a member of the newly formed evaluation team for QRIS looking at tools to evaluate the Quality Rating Improvement System when it rolls-out in Arkansas. Participated in QRIS training for representatives who are working with identified early childhood sites prior to implementation of the quality rating system.

- **Education**

HSSCO director worked 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 Arkansas Legislature. Meetings held with Higher Education partners, with a White Paper developed which was shared with legislators and the general public about 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 in November, with proposed legislation to be filed in the 2009 Arkansas Legislative Session.

Assisted Parent Education Network (APEN) and Department of Education in state conference on family involvement held in October in Hot Springs. The HSSCO Director served on the Parent Education and Involvement task force.

- **Professional Development**

HSSCO director serves on the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development Steering Committee, which is working to implement changes in our professional development system, including the registry process for child care and early childhood education workforce. HSSCO director participated in Trainer Competency Workgroup meetings for Arkansas Professional Development, and also participated in NAEYC Early Childhood Workforce System Initiative Focus Group.

The HSSCO, along with representatives from the Arkansas Head Start Association, 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.

HSSCO director participated in Arkansas Out-of-School Network meetings and served on AOSN Communications Workgroup. Attended High Scope quality training for out-of-school providers held in Little Rock in August. Attended luncheon at Governor's Mansion for release of report from Governor's Task Force on Best Practices for After School and Summer Programs.

- **Community Services**

Arkansas Crisis Response Team (ArCRT), of which HSSCO director is a member, has added the Arkansas State Police as a partner in our efforts. Participated in group crisis intervention simulation during training for Arkansas State Police in May and also participated in annual and regional crisis response training in May and October. HSSCO director continues to serve as co-chair of Education and Training Committee for ArCRT. HSSCO director participated in local call-outs for crisis response.

HSSCO director met with representative from Office of Child Support Enforcement to discuss outreach efforts to custodial parents in Arkansas. OCES representative spoke during meeting in Hot Springs in June which included participants from Head Start, Community Action, and Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies.

- **Family Literacy Services**

Assisted with 'city-wide read' event of "Same Kind of Different As Me," with authors to benefit homeless advocacy programs and services for families in central Arkansas.

Working with Department of Education and Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education in showcasing quality early childhood opportunities in Arkansas for use with "Reach Out & Read," a project of the Arkansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Serving on Parent Information Resource Center Board, a program of Center for Effective Parenting, Arkansas Children's Hospital.

HSSCO director worked with Arkansas Foundation of Medical Care in linking them with local Head Start program as they developed a grant for improving health literacy targeting Head Start families.

- **Services to Children with Disabilities**

The HSSCO Director 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. Invited participant to meeting in May held in Colorado, sponsored by N-CHAM, to discuss enhanced and continued Early Head Start involvement with ECHO; also present at the meeting were Region VI T/TA representatives.

Part C MOU agreement updated and finalized with participation from representatives of Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office, the Department of Human Services Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, Part C, Arkansas Early Head Start programs, Migrant & Seasonal Head Start programs, and the TA Network.

The Head Start State Collaboration Director, working in coordination with Part B, distributed a letter to Head Start programs in Arkansas outlining changes in IDEA regulations pertaining to general education teachers and involvement in the IEP team and team meetings. A conference call was held to discuss coordinated efforts and other issues pertaining to serving Head Start children with disabilities and their families.

The HSSCO director served on ABCD (Assuring Better Child Health Development) Stakeholders group, which focused 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.

Co-sponsorship of Welcome the Children “Celebrating Cultural Harmony” third annual conference held in May. The conference enhanced the understanding of cultural issues and taught strategies to support Latino children and make appropriate referrals of children who exhibit possible developmental delays.

- **Services to Homeless Children and Families**

The HSSCO serves on the Arkansas Homeless Coalition and Arkansas Homeless Policy Academy. Director served as co-chair for Children & Family activities at the Homeless Outreach Event held in September, where we distributed books, toys and backpacks to children and families. Other services available included counseling, medical services, dental services, spiritual assistance, clothing and meals. Director is member of the Legislative Committee for Arkansas Homeless Coalition. Director participated in panel presentation, “The Culture of Homelessness” at Welcome the Children conference held in May.

HSSCO director served as Board member for Arkansas Supportive Housing Network. Participated in various committee and board meetings, as well as assisting with public awareness fun-walk focusing on homeless issues in central Arkansas.

The HSSCO director serves as member of Arkansas Coalition for Children of Incarcerated Parents. Linkages made with local Head Start programs to support families and children of incarcerated parents. Attended various meetings with Arkansas Voices for Children Left Behind and was co-sponsor of Fourth Annual Southern Summit for Children of the Incarcerated and Their Families in April. This conference was held in cooperation with The National Advocacy Partnership for the Bill of Rights for Children and Families Impacted by Incarceration.

Facilitate Head Start’s involvement in the development of state policies, plans, processes and decisions. If applicable, include your activities as a member of the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care.

The HSSCO Director and representation of the Arkansas Head Start Association met and shared information with Governor’s staff in the area of state pre-k and Head Start collaborative efforts, Head Start reauthorization updates, and other items pertinent to services for low-income children and families.

HSSCO director served on legislative Task Force on Substance Abuse Prevention; worked on sub-committee to identify community prevention providers and organizations throughout the state and assisted with writing of final report to legislative committee on Public Health.

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

HSSCO director worked with Governor’s staff, in collaboration with Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education, in establishing the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care for children from birth to school entry. The option being considered, with proposed legislative changes in membership, will utilize and add to the current Early Childhood Commission, coordinated through the Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education.

Briefly discuss the following aspects of your work:

- **Provide a detailed description of the work you have completed to date on the required assessment 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 the five-year strategic plan.**

HSSCO is working with independent evaluator to obtain appropriate needs assessment data, as required by new Head Start reauthorization. Survey was distributed to Head Start programs through Survey Monkey. The report will be shared with the Governor, as well as the general public, when tabulated and analyzed. Arkansas HSSCO director served as representative for Region VI to Office of Head Start State Collaboration workgroup for development of needs assessment tool for State Collaboration Offices. Work will begin on development of the five-year strategic plan when needs assessment data is complete.

- **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).**

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 staff in November. HSSCO director served as Region VI representative to OHS for planning agenda for 2009 national meeting of Head Start State Collaboration Directors, scheduled for February, in conjunction with Migrant & Seasonal Head Start national meeting.

Participated in meetings with Arkansas Head Start Association Board of Directors, as well as Head Start directors, staff and parents. Member of AHSA Annual Institute Planning Committee; Institute held in Eureka Springs in May. Luncheon held during Annual Institute to recognize and honor recent Head Start teachers and staff who had received Associates, Bachelors, and Masters degrees.

Routine meetings with liaison from Booz-Allen-Hamilton, contractor for Region VI ACF Head Start Technical Assistance Network to Arkansas HSSCO. HSSCO director participated in cluster training with Arkansas Head Start programs, TA Specialists, and Region VI Network on various topics.

Participated in Office of Head Start – American Academy of Pediatrics conference call in October to discuss partnership opportunities between Head Start and pediatricians. Initial contact made with Arkansas Pediatric Liaison, with meeting to follow after the first of the year.

Assisted with and co-sponsored MOU retreat with Community Action Agencies Association, Head Start Association, Office of Community Services, and Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education held in Hot Springs in June. Other partners participating in this retreat included representatives from Arkansas Resource & Referral Agencies, who are now full partners in this collaborative endeavor of shared training opportunities and resources. A one-day workshop was held in September which included topics identified at the retreat, including technology and communications, rural health, and full-day / full year options and services for child care.

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 your State.

Migrant & Seasonal Head Start programs are invited and included in all activities between the HSSCO and Arkansas Head Start Association. A representative from Migrant & Seasonal Head Start will be 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 additional activities and successes in the past year.

Meetings held with Arkansas Medicaid and Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care in addressing potential solutions for identified problems that Head Start programs are having with blood lead screening not being completed by physicians as required. A Health Round Table was held in September to bring the Arkansas TA Network, Health Managers from Head Start, Early Head Start and Migrant & Seasonal Head Start programs in Arkansas, along with Medicaid and AFMC, to assist in linkages with physicians in appropriate education and awareness of EPSDT requirements. Articles were also included in routine communication with Medicaid providers about blood lead screening. Linkages are improving throughout the state in this effort.

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 and state agencies 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.

Collaborating partner for Arkansas Governor's Work-Life Balance Awards Luncheon held in May at the Peabody Hotel in Little Rock. 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.

Served on Advisory Committee for Evaluation through Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families to collect information and evaluate programs involved in addressing childhood obesity in Arkansas. Assisted in development of online survey tool to gather information on types of groups and what they are doing to address the issues of childhood obesity. Survey results shared at Arkansas Obesity Policy Summit held in May.

The HSSCO Director serves on Arkansas Kids Count Steering Committee and moderated a panel discussion at the October Kids Count Pre-Legislative Conference on education priorities in the upcoming state legislative session beginning in January 2009. Plans are being made to sponsor a Kids Count Day at the Capitol during the legislative session, highlighting numerous priorities, including education, quality early childhood education, and out-of-school and summer options for children.

HSSCO director assisted Head Start programs in arrangement of timely receipt of criminal background checks for potential employees through liaison with Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education, Licensing Unit.

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 achieved in 2008. Work continues in addressing the challenges and opportunities of local collaboration between Head Start and Arkansas Better Chance for School Success. Due to rich collaborative partnerships at the state level, tremendous positive interaction occurs routinely. Flexibility affords the Arkansas HSSCO the strength to enhance linkages and integration of policies and services, although it is a struggle to continue our current work, as well as new directions defined by Head Start reauthorization, with the current flat funding structure for Head Start State Collaboration Offices.