

Charting a New Course for Head Start

Head Start Directors Retreat
July 9, 2008



Federal Landscape: Head Start Reauthorization

1. **Greater Accountability (competition, fiscal scrutiny, governance)**
2. **Stronger Academic Approach (teacher degrees, professional development plans, child outcomes)**
3. **Infants and Toddlers (Early Head Start expansion, flexibility)**
4. **Collaboration/Systems (Collaboration Office, Advisory Council)**
5. **Special Populations (Migrants/Tribal/ELL)**



Funding and Regulations

Head Start Funding

House Labor HHS Subcommittee = \$242 million increase for 2009

Senate Appropriations Committee = \$223 million increase for 2009

Continuing Resolution Likely = Flat Funding

Head Start Regulations

OHS working on new regulations/standards

Head Start community will have opportunity to comment



Competition

Timeline

- Panel met in June 2008
- Draft report due in October 2008
- Final report due to HHS by December 2008
- Opportunity to Comment by March 2009
- Programs Must Meet New Requirements by June 12, 2009

Automatic Competition

- Suspension of services by ACF;
- Revocation of license to operate (or if not in your state, then revocation of fire/safety licenses);
- Either undergoing bankruptcy or being placed on the federal debarment list; and
- Confirmed case of child abuse or neglect by agency staff operating the Head Start program.



Competition

Scoring Criteria for Competition

If the grantee would not fall into any of the automatic indicator categories, the SAC suggested (based on OHS' presentations of ideas) that the grantee's data should be reviewed against a matrix of "key quality indicators" to determine whether the grantee falls below a threshold that would trigger competition. Such key quality indicators are intended to be markers of program performance that would be predictive of a program's inability to sustain improvement.

The SAC decided that there should be four (4) areas of key quality indicators: Governance; Education; Comprehensive Services; and Fiscal Management.

Each of these four (4) key quality indicators would be comprised of numerous elements which the SAC also discussed.



Pre-K Bills

There have been several bills introduced related to pre-k in this session of Congress. Most notable is Congresswoman Hirono's (D-HI) legislation (HR 3239).

The Act authorizes \$500 million per year for fiscal years 2008 to 2013 for grants to states, tribes, and tribal organizations to enhance or improve state-funded pre-kindergarten programs. A vote in the House this summer is possible, but no companion bill in the Senate.



Pre-K Bills

- Under the bill, two classes of states, Qualified and Selected states, are eligible to receive funds.
- Qualified states are already meeting a certain set of quality standards and selected states are encouraged to move toward those standards. Selected states have a lower state match requirement than qualified states.
- To be a Qualified state, a state must operate a state-funded pre-kindergarten initiative that requires programs to use research-based curricula aligned with state early learning standards, follow nationally established best practices for group size and teacher-to-student ratios, require that each teacher hold an associate's degree or higher in early childhood education or a related field, and operate for at least the length of an academic year. In addition, these states must:
 - Have a plan for moving toward a requirement for state-funded pre-kindergarten programs that each teacher holds a bachelor's degree in early childhood education within five years of the state receiving its grant.
 - Provide a 50 percent match of federal funds.



Pre-K Bills

Selected states must:

- Demonstrate that, if selected, the state will become a qualified state within two years of receiving the grant.
- Provide a 30 percent match of federal funds.
- Once it receives the grant, a state may use the funds for a range of activities that would improve the quality of the state's pre-kindergarten programs.
- To ensure that a portion of funds is targeted toward infants and toddlers, all states must use 10 percent of their funds to improve the early learning environments for children from birth to age three through research- and evidence-based methods.



Pre-K Bills

- Funds may only be used by states to improve the quality of pre-kindergarten programs – except in two cases. When total funding reaches \$250 million, a qualified state may use up to 50 percent of its funds to increase the number of children enrolled in preschool programs that prioritize low-income communities. Qualified states that meet additional criteria can also use funding to increase the number of children served, before the appropriation reaches \$250 million.
- A description of how the state will ensure that any funds made available to preschool providers are made available to a range of preschool providers, including local educational agencies and community based providers such as childcare and Head Start.



Pre-K Bills #2

Education Begins At Home Act

EDUCATION BEGINS AT HOME ACT (S. 667/H.R. 2343)

The bipartisan Education Begins at Home Act, introduced by Senators Bond (R-MO) and Clinton (D-NY) in the Senate and Representatives Davis (D-IL) and Platts (R-PA) in the House, would provide grants to help establish or expand voluntary home visiting programs for families with young children.

The Education Begins at Home Act would authorize \$400 million over three years in grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to states for voluntary home visiting programs. These programs help new parents learn skills to promote healthy child development and be better parents. The bills would also authorize \$100 million over three years in grants for voluntary home visiting programs for English language learners and military families, as well as a parent and public education campaign about caring for infants and toddlers. Finally, the legislation would strengthen Early Head Start, which includes center-based and home visiting components. (The bill passed out of the House Education and Labor Committee)



Pre-K Studies/Impact Study

- Impact study may come out as early October
- New Pre-K studies being funded. Latest study found that OK Pre-K got better results than Head Start.
- OK study found that pre-k program had more academic and rigorous curriculum.



Pre-K Now Polling Conducted in June 2008

- Nearly 7 in 10 voters want a new federal grant for state pre-k.
- By a nearly 3-to-1 margin, voters say they will support candidates who favor greater investment in pre-k.
- Voters say that government is doing too little to ensure that parents have access to affordable pre-k programs.
- Voters see a great deal of value in pre-k programs.
- Large majorities say it would be a problem if there were not enough programs to go around or if these programs were not high quality.



Pre-K Now Polling

66% of people say that it is very important for a four year to spend time in an early learning environment, but only 44% believe it is very important for a 3 year old

Public supports academic focus, but believes social skills more Important

Highest Factors in Quality Program: #1 Getting Families Involved; and #2 Good Teachers

Slight majority of people believed that teachers do not need to have BA Degree to be a good teacher



Pre-K Now Polling

Two major arguments against expansion of early learning: #1 Mother should take care of children; #2 The federal govt. has already messed up the k-12 system

Strongest argument in favor of pre-k: Pre-K should be for all children because low income have subsidized care and wealthy can purchase. 72% supported this concept vs. 55% that early learning benefits help everyone



MA Polling and Ohio Messaging

MA Polling

- The survey showed strong *demand* for early education programs with 85% of families with 3- and 4-year-olds expressing interest in enrolling their preschool-aged child in a universal, high-quality early education program.
- Parents want *higher quality* early education opportunities for their children than they receive today.
- Parents want *flexibility* to choose to enroll their children in MA UPK for a range of hours per day, days per week, and weeks per year, and public and private providers.

Ohio Messages

Found and tested strong messages to appeal to moderate and conservative voters and policymakers: "Children who *learn how to learn* very early are more likely to realize later academic success." "Getting children *on the right track* early in their lives leads to more success in the long run." Early childhood education programs provide children with a *sturdy academic foundation* to build on. "Support programs that would *help parents do what's best for their kids.*"



Obama and McCain Campaigns

Obama

Increase funding for Early Head Start
Create Regional Training Centers for Head Start
Early Learning Challenge Grants
Early Learning Council
Supports Universal Pre-School

McCain

Wants to reform Head Start
Lessen tax burden



Election 2008

1. Obama now leading.
2. 30 Republicans have decided to retire or are leaving.
3. Could be up to 75 seats in play: switch from Republican to Democrat.
4. 6 Open Seats in Senate: All Republican. Contest races all across the country including in MN, Alaska, and Oregon.



Thoughts from Zigler and Blank

1. Push for Early Head Start and Infant and Toddler Programs.
2. Continue pushing degrees and rigorous academic approach.
3. Talk more about child outcomes.
4. Get behind universal pre-k movement.
5. Be at all the tables and be nice. Head Start can't live in its own silo.



State Landscape

Basic Education Taskforce

WSA testified in favor of early learning being apart of k-12 funding formula. Received well, but majority of lawmakers and members of task force not in our corner.

Early Learning Table

Coalition started by the Children's Alliance and funded by Gates. Goal is to create a unified message and advocacy strategy around early learning.



State Landscape

Local Coalitions

Foundation for Early Learning fostering local coalition work in the state.

Gates Foundation

Strong interest in birth to three/child outcomes/and strong accountability measurements.

City of Seattle

Developing assessment and evaluation tool for ECEAP, Step Ahead, and Head Start.



State Landscape: DEL and Thrive by Five

Thrive By Five

Interested in birth to three. Focus is on the development of a QRIS.

Department of Early Learning

Washington Head Start



State Landscape: Fiscal

Latest budget projection: \$2.7 billion in hole

More forecasts likely

Likely new House Appropriations Chair is a supporter of early learning. New taxes could be on table, but must prepare for potential cutbacks.

May be some changes in committee assignments after Election



Critical Questions

How does Head Start position itself within a larger pre-k system?

- Who should we become?
- Only for low income and at risk populations?
- Move to infants and toddlers?
- Do we support a targeted or universal approach?



Critical Questions

How can the Head Start community do a better job of telling our success story?

- What is good about Head Start?
- What does the research show?
- How do we track down alumni?
- Should we change the way we talk about Head Start?
- Do we speak differently to Foundation than to state lawmakers?



Critical Questions

What role should the Head Start community play (directors, staff, alumni) in influencing federal and state policy makers?

- Do we just advocate for more funding?
- Focus on regulations?
- Get involved in other early care issues? Anti-Poverty Issues?
- Are we a model program?
- If so how do we share that?
- Where is the “Head Start movement” going?



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