

## Notes from WSA Conference Call 8/11/08

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From our advocacy survey, there was significant interest in pursuing Early ECEAP/Head Start and reforming the subsidy system. Many parents lose the subsidy when they get a better job, which means the child loses eligibility.

### **Guest Speakers:**

Danielle Ewen ([www.clasp.org](http://www.clasp.org)) and Elizabeth DeLauro (Advocacy specialist with Zero to Three) have written extensively about these topics. They recently worked together on a paper exploring what states are doing on Early Head Start.

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### **Early Head Start/ECEAP**

About a year and a half ago Clasp and Zero to 3 talked about the opportunity of states investing in Early Head Start, programs that have been shown to be very effective. How do you get more access to these programs? So we started looking at states that had invested in the EHS model. About 20 states have done that, with a variety of models and funding streams. They've largely done it through bureaucratic approaches, and most remain small programs.

What we mean by 'building on EHS' - it doesn't always mean more EHS slots, though they do build on that model.

4 main approaches, with different goals and partners:

1. Extend the day or year of existing EHS - 12 of 20 states
  - a. 2 main strategies - 1. Add dollars from state child care subsidy funds to existing EHS/HS programs so they can meet the needs of full day or full year care. Performance standards must be met. 2. Make it easier for child care subsidies to be used for these purposes - braiding funding between EHS and subsidy. Added flexibility to child care subsidy rules - extend eligibility, etc.
2. Expand capacity of EHS and HS programs to serve more infants and toddlers (10 states)
  - a. 2 main strategies. 1. Provide funds to EHS/HS programs to create more slots and/or enhance quality. 2. In states with a traditional supplemental funding stream

3. Provide resources and assistance to child care providers who provide EHS services (2 states – OK and IL)
  - a. New approach – grants to child care providers to work toward HS performance standards, NAEYC accreditation. Outreach to child care providers about what the EHS model was, what the standards are, etc.
4. Support partnerships between EHS and child care providers – 5 states.
  - a. Key strategies – delivering EHS services in partnership with child care centers and family care centers; bring comprehensive services to family child care and FFN settings. Grants to EHS grantees to recruit FFN and family child care and community child care providers to provide the home-based EHS component.

Overall 4500 infants, toddlers and expectant mothers served; only Kansas surpasses the EHS children served. Funding comes from federal and state sources – CDBG quality set aside, CDBG subsidy funds, general fund, gaming, TANF, private donors.

### **Recommendations from Report**

1. Provide sufficient funding. The people we talked with said that to get the benefits of the EHS impact study, it's important to provide sufficient funding. Given the promising research, this level of comprehensive services are needed, and standards of EHS should be paid attention to.
2. Build in sufficient training, TA and monitoring. Many states said it's important to set aside funds at the beginning to develop a training and TA infrastructure, particularly for programs not yet familiar with the EHS model. Many contracted with state Collab office for training.
3. Set up a system for data collection and assessment. Having data helps make the case to continue and expand the program.
4. Use resources to improve the quality of child care.
5. Buy-in from champions, both inside and outside government, is critical. Proponents need to be savvy about the political process, how to get \$\$ in budget, how to maintain support.
6. Federal reauthorization includes possibility of expanding EHS. That creates a nice opportunity to leverage dollars.

### ***Comments:***

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Maybe Gates or Thrive by Five could be a partner.

How could this work with QRIS?

Big budget problems this year, and getting money out the CDBG quality pool may be difficult, given how it's used now.

We need to develop a plan for what we want, then backtrack and look at what funds we might have now, and figure out how to get to our ultimate goal. What is the sequence of steps?

We want to make sure we don't close off HS or ECEAP programs. Need a model that would be available to both.

Where do we stand with regard to the knowledge level of our legislators? Are they supportive of 0-3? Joel says he thinks they would be supportive if the money were there. The lawmakers may be ahead of the public on this.

Community Child Care center – we had a toddler classroom that we serve a combo of subsidized and private child care. That structure might be a possibility, or a home-based model, since facilities are so difficult.

## ***Child Care Subsidy***

The state has control over how the subsidy is parceled out. The federal government allows programs to set eligibility for the length of the Head Start year so they can have a seamless experience. The state has the option of putting that in place or not. They can prioritize certain children – HS children, state pre-school program, etc. Some states extend their periods of redetermination because the constant paperwork forces some families out of the program. Massachusetts went to an annual system.

There are also some options on the provider level – some providers elect not to participate in the system because of the paperwork, having to eat costs of people who drop off the system, etc. Some states have put procedures into effect that help lessen that effect.

Biggest issues are all state choices. You may get pushback on longer eligibility requirements, since there's some pressure from the feds on avoiding fraud.

It's worth visiting the program instructions from the feds – it lays out the argument of continuity of care, etc and the benefit of extending eligibility.

It's critical that subsidy requirements (work requirements, etc) don't make it difficult to participate in HS/ECEAP.