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Collaboration Director
Tom Rendon, Coordinator
Head Start State Collaboration Office
Iowa Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
E. 12th and Grand
Des Moines, IA 50319
(515) 242-6024 Phone
(515) 242-6019 Fax
tom.rendon@ed.state.ia.us

**Help build early childhood systems and access to comprehensive services
for all low-income children**

Improve the availability and affordability of quality child care services

Iowa Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers (PITC)

The Iowa PITC, started in 2001, is an initiative to create high quality infant/toddler care in Iowa through intensive training and support in using PITC materials developed by WestEd and the California Department of Education. This year, trainers completed Modules III and IV of the training. The program now has 65 certified trainers in the first four modules. Iowa has a 95 percent trainer certification rate for the Infant and Toddler Caregivers suggesting a strong commitment by trainers to the program. The program began as a Collaboration Office initiative in 2001. By June, 2002, more than 275 reached 1459 child care providers, two-thirds of whom were center-based staff and the remaining home-based providers. Though each module is 10 hours of, completion rates during the first six months for the Module I and II were 21% and 12% respectively. These trainings continued through 2002.

Collaborate with existing community services activities

Iowa Early Childhood Care and Education Congress

The ninth annual Iowa Childhood Care and Education Congress took place March 4-5, and focused on literacy and childhood outcomes and evaluations. Featured speakers included Donna Bryant, author of the evaluation for North Carolina's Smart Start, presented on developing and assessing outcomes for early childhood initiatives. Co-creator of the PBS children's series *Between the Lions*, Christopher Cerf, addressed how visual media can support early literacy development. The Congress attracted 324 participants.

Joining forces with Community Empowerment for tenth annual Congress on November 19- 20 (moved up align with Empowerment's meeting), the gathering featured former North Carolina governor, James Hunt, the recently re-elected Iowa governor, Tom Vilsack, Linda Lewis, Region VII Administrator for ACF and Dr. Ross Thompson, professor of psychology at the University of Nebraska and co-editor of *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*. Four hundred and sixty four individuals participated in the Congress and paved the way to future congresses conducted with Community Empowerment. The

Congress has become an important vehicle for disseminating the latest research on early learning as recommended by the Good Start, Grow Smart initiative.

Day on the Hill

On March 6, the annual advocacy training and action event was held in Des Moines. The Forum for Early Childhood Organization and Leadership Development partnered with Region VII Head Start Association, the Iowa Head Start Association and the Head Start Collaboration Office to provide advocacy and leadership training for 74 Head Start parents, staff and partners. The Midwest Center for Non-profit Leadership provided facilitation for the day and speakers included a legislator, a lobbyist, and Head Start staff. The theme for the day was "Footsteps to Our Future" and included a march to the Capitol with a chain of children's shoes on a rope. More than 140 people participated in the event. An advocacy notebook, funded by the Iowa Head Start Association, was developed.

Iowa Early Care and Education Professional Development Project:

Infant-Toddler training

Alice Eberhart Wright, a Region VII Early Head Start Resource Specialist, provided training on mental health and home visiting strategies for Iowa's infant and toddler home visiting programs on September 18. Seventy-five professionals attended, representing seven home visiting services programs, including Early Head Start.

Child Development Homes

Training sessions over the rules for the new legislation about family child care in Iowa were conducted over the Iowa's fiber-optic network (ICN) in December. Sixteen sites were linked up to accommodate 374 participants. Head Start participated in the training as background with its home-based collaborations. Other participants included staff from the Department of Human Services, Child and Adult Food Program, Child Care Resource and Referral, Iowa Community Empowerment, social services agency providers, CAP agencies, Area Education Agencies, Visiting Nurse Association and county departments of health.

Child Care Development Specialist/T.E.A.C.H.:

Continued funding for the Apprenticeship project, established in Iowa in 2000 with support from the Collaboration Office, was received from the Department of Human Services through the quality earmark of CCDBG. The system design will be refined and adapted to combine the benefits of the T.E.A.C.H. program and the past success of Iowa's apprenticeship training program. A meeting to redesign the current system was held on December 9, 2002 with Wheelock College personnel facilitating the session with over 40 participants attending. A new coordinator was hired at the end of 2002. The committee supporting this work involved a broad collaboration including the Head Start Collaboration Office, Department of Labor personnel, two concerned citizens, and representatives from two successful pilot sites.

Encourage widespread collaboration between Head Start and other appropriate programs, services, and initiatives and augment Head Start's capacity to be a partner in State initiatives on behalf of children and their families

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Head Start-Child Care Professional Development Projects

Fourteen funded Head Start-Child Care professional development partnerships resulted in professional development for 326 participants, many receiving CDA accreditation or college credit toward 2-4-year degrees. Participants were more committed to continuing professional development and most of the grantees plan to offering similar training after the grant expires. Some training introduced Head Start Performance Standards as a measure of quality. One partnering agency reported a 22 percent decrease in staff turnover that was attributed these professional development activities. More broadly, in direct support of the Good Start, Grow Smart's initiative on statewide partnerships, collaborations were developed or enhanced, including community college links with each grantee, increased collaboration with Community Empowerment areas, and stronger ties to Child Care Resource and Referral and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Expand partnerships with school systems

DECA Training

Partnering with the Success 4 project and Part B Early Childhood Special Education, the Collaboration Office held a training on the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) on April 15-18. Personnel from Area Education Agencies, Head Start, Child Care Resource and Referral, health organizations and Community Empowerment participated. Thirty 30 "local program mentors" were trained and will be providing training for child care and Head Start centers in using this nationally recognized assessment tool.

Strengthen family literacy services

RTL/First Book in Iowa

Support and funding for the RTL/First Book in Iowa project continued in 2002 under the administration of Iowa Public Television's Ready To Learn Service. The project provides free books, training and literacy support materials to families of low income on a monthly basis. More than half of the 25 sites in Iowa are operated by Head Start. In 2002, the project reached 1902 parents and 2199 children, distributing more than 7,000 free books.

Support access for homeless children

Iowa's Homeless Population Study

The Collaboration Office contributed resources for the development of a study to estimate the size of the homeless population in Iowa; provide a basic demographic profile of the homeless population, including young children, and investigate the causes of homelessness. This annual survey by the Department of Education, which traditionally

has only involved K-12 schools, was designed with the assistance of the Collaboration Office and directly solicited information from Head Start grantees about their awareness and understanding of Iowa homelessness.

All priorities

Collaboration Reapplication

The Iowa Head Start State-Collaboration Office submitted an application to the Head Start Bureau for another five years of funding and was approved. The objectives developed to improve services in the next five years are:

- 1) Supporting the Iowa Head Start agencies in their efforts to achieve desired program results and to meet and exceed the expectations of the Head Start Performance Standards and other Federal initiatives.
- 2) Promoting collaborations at the state and local level between agencies that have as their vision improving the well-being of the lives of young children and their families.
- 3) Supporting the development of a comprehensive, compelling and unifying vision for all Iowa's young children and their families.

New Collaboration Office

On the retirement of Anita Varne at the end of the year, Tom Rendon was hired as the new Iowa Head Start-State Collaboration Office Coordinator. Tom was the Coordinator of the Ready To Learn Service at the Iowa Public Television.

Facilitate the involvement of Head Start in the development of State policies, plans, processes, and decisions affecting the Head Start target population and other low-income families.

Improve the availability and affordability of quality child care services

Voluntary Early Learning Guidelines

The Early Learning Team at the Iowa Department of Education, which includes the Collaboration Office coordinator, has been charged with the development of early learning guidelines. The Department of Education is also responsible for creating an assessment tool for early childhood to be used by the Empowerment Areas. Early Learning Standards. This effort, based on the President's Good Start, Grow Smart initiative, resulted in a meeting of the team met with Region VII Partners and has expanded the planning team to include Head Start, higher education and child care representatives. The first meeting of the enlarged group was on December 6.

Collaborate with existing community services activities

Iowa Empowerment

The Collaboration Office continues to work closely with the state Community Empowerment effort and reflects the priority on close partnering with the state as recommended by Good Start, Grow Smart. The Smart Start Technical Assistance Team has been providing leadership to the Iowa Empowerment Team in developing Indicators of Success. The Empowerment Team has conducted focus groups throughout the state to

provide input into the development of the Indicators. A key result of this work is the adoption of a common statewide vision and commonly agreed on goal areas and indicators for early childhood, which have been adopted by many organizations including the Iowa Head Start Association. The vision reads: *"Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful."*

Promote access to timely health care services

Iowa Head Start Health Project

This year the Iowa Collaboration Office received a grant from Region VII to start the Iowa Head Start Health Project. The project is designed to link Head Start programs with health services to ensure consistent and comprehensive health care services for Head Start children. At year's end a half-time health coordinator was hired to carry out this work and is being administered jointly between the Iowa Department of Public Health and the Head Start Collaboration Office housed at the Iowa Department of Education.

Increase opportunities for children with disabilities

Natural Allies

Iowa was selected as one of four Natural Allies states from the Frank Porter Graham Child development Center of the University of North Carolina. The grant will help states in preparing personnel to work with young children (0-5) in inclusive community settings. The purpose of the grant is to enhance early childhood programs at community colleges. Iowa was selected because of their strong community college system.