## HSSCO ANNUAL STATE PROFILE REPORT 2004 Activities

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### A. Briefly describe your accomplishments in the following areas. Where possible, indicate the goals from your work plan and the desired and actual outcomes.

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

Two key accomplishments of the Iowa Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) in the area of system development were the ongoing work of the Early Childhood Core Stakeholders, now called *Early Childhood Iowa* (ECI) and the annual Iowa Early Care, Health and Education Congress. The group united under a single legislative agenda in advance of the 2005 session. The agenda included the priorities of the ECI strategic plan along major recommendations of the Governor-appointed commissions, the Iowa Learns Council, looking at P-16 education. A strategic plan for the system development work has been drafted and is now seeking the support and buy-in from all the original stakeholder groups. Iowa HSSCO serves on three of the ECI's six component groups and attended a SmartStart/BUILD initiative training on early childhood system governance in August. The group is closely allied with the HRSA system building grant which is using some of its dollars to support facilitation and planning of the group. Iowa HSSCO has worked to ensure strong Head Start participation in all of the component groups and will encourage the Iowa Head Start Association to be among the active endorsers of the strategic plan.

The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Early Child Care, Health and Education Congress took place on November 16 and 17. The Congress is an annual convention that brings together disparate elements of the early, health and education system in Iowa. Featured keynoters included Lori Dorfman from the Berkeley Media Studies Group, Dr. Robert Koob, President of University of Northern Iowa and J. Barry Griswell, chairman and CEO of Principle Financial Group, an Iowa-based Fortune 500 Company. Iowa HSSCO provided leadership on the planning committee and financial support, as well as led a session on parent involvement in literacy activities. Head Start and the Collaboration office assisted in four other breakout sessions. Overall 32 Head Start staff attended the congress representing more than half of the state's grantees.

2. Encourage widespread collaboration between Head Start and other appropriate programs. Describe your accomplishments and outcomes in the eight priority areas.

#### Health Care

Planning, funding and a launch of the Healthy Smiles project took place in 2004. The project will support one of the goals of the oral health strategic plan developed last year by the HS/EHS Oral Health Work Group. It will develop 15 mini-modules addressing pregnant women and parents of young children in lessons that will be delivered through home visitation by Early Head Start and other programs. The project will represent a broad range of collaborative partners including the state's Oral Health Bureau, the Iowa Dental Hygienists Association and the University of Iowa School of Dentistry. Funding for the project is coming from Delta Dental of Iowa and the Mid-Iowa Health Foundation.

Other efforts under the direction of the Head Start/Early Head Start Oral Health Work Group and based on the action agenda from the 2003 Oral Health Forum include:

- → Identifying three oral health prevention practices were identified (tooth brushing protocols, fluoride varnishing, and EPSDT oral health guidelines), developing sharable handouts and distributing these to Head Start grantees and partners. These efforts will provide a common base for shared communication between oral health practitioners and Head Start grantees.
- → Coordinating a series of information sessions, including a packet at child care conferences across the state. The sessions were designed to raise awareness of the importance of early childhood caries as a major health issue among Iowa's children. The packets were also distributed to state legislators, county boards of health and local Community Empowerment coordinators.

Iowa HSSCO met with Iowa school psychologists to acquaint them with Head Start and the Collaboration office. Iowa school psychologists have been called in by early childhood programs to address children exhibiting challenging behaviors. PIR data on mental health services were shared. More Iowa programs use psychologists to address mental health needs than any other kind of mental health professional. Future efforts discussed included addressing relationships on a local level and possibilities for training for Head Start staff on emotional competence.

Iowa HSSCO has worked with the Iowa Department of Public Health to assure full compliance by Head Start with state regulations regarding keeping original immunization certificates on site in classrooms, and a review of EPSDT requirements around lead screening, particularly accessing lead screening services from community health care providers.

#### Welfare

Iowa HSSCO continued its service on the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) Council, including its grant review committee, approving 18 FaDSS grants for next state fiscal year. Many FaDSS grantees are also Head Start grantees. HSSCO is exploring how FaDSS might help Head Start address family partnership agreements and its coordination with other family plans (c.f. 45 CFR 1304.40(a)(3)).

#### Childcare

Iowa HSSCO initiated regular discussions with the State Child Care Administrator to address a concrete collaboration agenda. Together, an emphasis was made on improving Head Start participation in the state's "wrap-around child care grants." For the 2004-05 year, the number of wrap-around grants awarded to Head Start increased 20 percent. Overall Head Start went from accounting for 67 percent of all grants to 81 percent of all grants. To acknowledge support for this work, the Iowa Head Start Association presented an award to the coordinator of the state wrap-around grant program.

The collaboration agenda also addressed Iowa HSSCO desire to support a number of child care quality efforts including the development of a Quality Rating System, supporting the development of Early Learning Guidelines, a licensed T.E.A.C.H. project, the "Gold Seal" program, an Iowa Program for Infant and Toddler Caregivers, a Child Care Center Business Practices project. In each of these efforts, HSSCO has ensured strong Head Start support and involvement.

- → Iowa HSSCO worked closely on the initial research and development of a framework for a Quality Rating System and facilitated some public response sessions. A final system design and report was delivered to the state legislature in December 2004. The five level system gives acknowledgement to programs meeting Head Start Program Performance Standards.
- → Iowa's Early Learning Standards, 3 to 5 years, were developed and made available for public comment during 2004. Iowa HSSCO ensured Head Start involvement at every level, provided financial support for the project through the Iowa Head Start Association and encourage IHSA involvement with the development and execution of a focus group protocol to facilitate public response to the standards.
- → Iowa T.E.A.C.H./Apprenticeship Project expanded in 2004, increasing the number of its scholarships and growing the program across all parts of Iowa. To support the T.E.A.C.H. initiative, HSSCO office is chairing the advisory committee and encouraging the use of T.E.A.C.H. scholarships for Head Start child care partners. In the fall, the committee supported an extension of TEACH scholarships to center directors. In its first year of operation the program is serving 88 providers earning 238 college credits. Six of these providers are Head Start staff.
- → Iowa HSSCO encouraged Head Start programs to apply for legislatively established "Gold Seal" status to child care homes or centers receiving national accreditation. At the Early Care, Health and Education Congress, 43 programs were awarded the Gold Seal for achieving NAEYC accreditation. Of these, 24 were Head Start classrooms.
- → Iowa HSSCO has supported Head Start involvement in the leadership of Iowa's Program for Infant and Toddler Caregivers, promoting use of the West Ed training among Early Head Start programs. Many of PITC trainers are Iowa Early Head Start staff. In 2004, HSSCO promoted Head Start participation in Module V training (see below under Children with Disabilities).
- → To support the Business Practices initiative, HSSCO helped evaluate loan applications, encouraged the recruitment of trainers from the Head Start community and ensured Head Start participation on its advisory council. Two Head Start staff were trained as National Administrator Credential trainers. The Some loan applications were made by child care centers that partner with Head Start.

Another agenda item was to work on stronger collaboration training. In 2004, a survey of all Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) training coordinators were compiled and that revealed some opportunities to enhance communication, shared training invitations and co-trainings. It also revealed that most CCRR regions make use of Head Start staff as trainers.

#### Education

Iowa HSSCO serves on the Early Learning Team at the Iowa Department of Education. The Team completed a draft of the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards and submitted them to Iowa State Board of Education at their May meeting. The new Iowa Preschool Program Standards are based on the new NAEYC accreditation criteria. Iowa HSSCO also gathered data to highlight the presence of Head Start classrooms within Iowa LEAs. In 2003, Head Start was in nearly 25 percent of all LEAs that served preschoolers.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa Head Start Association that spells out the expectations and procedures for the Iowa HSSCO was signed in 2004 by IHSA President Georgia Sheriff and the Director of the Iowa Department of Education.

#### Community Services

Iowa HSSCO continued to meet regularly with the statewide Community Empowerment team. The new state coordinator for Empowerment spoke at the IHSA Council in February. HSSCO spoke briefly at a statewide Empowerment Technical Assistance Meeting, emphasizing the need of grantees to match their Head Start grants. Head Start made a formal presentation about its programs and services to a training of local Community Empowerment board members.

#### Family Literacy Services

Iowa HSSCO collaborated with early literacy colleagues to host "Building Blocks to Early Literacy Conference," sponsored by the Iowa State Library and the Iowa Department of Education featuring the noted non-fiction expert Barbara Moss. Twenty-four Head Start participants participated in the conference that included workshops on parent participation and innovative practices about how to combine an Iowa-developed early literacy curriculum, Every Child Reads, with Head Start's CIRCLE program. Literacy specialists from Head Start also met separately during the conference to discuss additional state support for their literacy, including more training. Leading up to the conference, Iowa HSSCO conducted a book inventory survey of Iowa grantees to determine the number and kinds of books. The survey showed that Head Start classrooms have, on average, 5.6 books per child and 125 per classroom. According to a largescale study of child-care centers, 1 fewer than 15 percent of centers have more than 4 books per child or over 100 books per classroom. The percentage of books that are storybooks and nonfiction books is similar to national findings with Head Start in Iowa having 50 percent story books and 22 percent non-fiction versus 55 percent and 17 percent in the national study. These data were reported to Iowa grantees and supported the need for more attention on non-fiction books.

Iowa HSSCO promoted Head Start involvement in Iowa Public Television's Ready To Learn First Book for the upcoming school year, and helped support the effort financially. At the conclusion of end of the 2003-04 year, First Book had provided parent literacy training with more than 600 Head Start parents and distributed more than 1400 books to Head Start children in Iowa.

Iowa HSSCO worked with literacy colleagues at the Iowa Department of Education to produce an updated version of Every Child Reads: 3-5 Year Olds curriculum, and plans to support more training of the curriculum when the new version becomes available. Six grantees currently use or have used the curriculum.

#### Services to Children with Disabilities

Iowa HSSCO promoted registration by Early Head Start in the June training of the new Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers module covering infants/toddlers with special needs. This is the fifth module in the nationally-recognized training by West Ed. Of the 58 participants, ten were from Head Start.

Meetings began with representatives from Iowa's Part B and Part C programs to discuss how to implement a 2002 Interagency Memorandum of Understanding. The effort began by analyzing the local agreements to assess their compliance with the desired process and elements recommended in the 2002 agreement.

3. Facilitate Head Start's involvement in the development of state policies, plans, processes and decisions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Neuman, Susan B.; Celano, Donn C.; Greco, Albert N.; and Shue, Pamela (2001), *Access for All: Closing the Book Gap for Children in Early Education*, Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

#### B. Briefly discuss the following aspects of your work:

 Describe how you have supported and collaborated with the Regional Office on ACF priorities (e.g. Fatherhood, Faith Based and Community, Healthy Marriage, Youth and Rural Initiatives), Regional priorities, TA Network, professional development, legislation, CAP Agencies, Head Start association, and other activities.

*Fatherhood* Supported statewide coordination and networking of Head Start staff working on fatherhood issues, especially those who attended the national conference in June. Two follow-up networking sessions took place after the conference.

Rural Initiatives Most HSSCO collaborations involve rural communities and support rural families and communities. Also helped facilitate a few local meetings between Head Start grantees and rural school districts or local Community Empowerment coordinators.

TA Network Participated in quarterly regional meetings of the Region VII TA Network. Iowa HSSCO met regularly with state specialists and worked together on many of the collaborations outlined in this profile, especially in the area of training and professional development. The TA State specialists also serve on the HSSCO Management Team. Participated in TA Network-led workshops on developing professional development plans and new director training. Provided recommendations and evaluation feedback to TA Network leadership in filling vacancies or evaluating state specialist staff. Regularly communicated with and involved content specialists in statewide meetings and relevant collaborations.

*Professional Development* Co-sponsored, endorsed or otherwise supported training events in 2004 that served Iowa Head Start staff or parents including:

- 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Early Care, Health and Education Congress
- Day on the Hill Advocacy training
- Spanish-language NRS assessor training and follow-up refresher trainings.
- Building Blocks to Early Literacy
- Iowa Head Start Parent Leadership Conference
- Parents as Presenters training
- Iowa AEYC Annual Conference
- Region VII Head Start Leadership Conference

Not including events mentioned above, connected Head Start with at least a dozen additional professional development opportunities available in Iowa and the surrounding region.

Working with the Iowa Head Start Association, reinstituted bi-monthly networking sessions for staff specialists in Iowa.

Legislation Helped plan and sponsor the 2004 Day on the Hill event featuring Abby Thorman, Governor Tom Vilsack and, from Children's Defense Fund, Taj Brown.

Iowa HSSCO helped move toward a single early childhood advocacy by combining a number of groups, committees and initiatives. These efforts were folded into a new mobilization effort by the Iowa-based Child and Family Policy Center called Every Child Counts. That group is sponsoring a day-long advocacy gathering that included strong Head Start involvement and held a special consultation meeting with Tony Solari, advocacy consultant with SmartStart in North Carolina. Iowa HSSCO has ensured strong linkages between these efforts and Iowa Head Start Association and its Parent Leadership Conference.

Coordinated communication between IHSA and key state staff to ensure positive Head Start roles were envisioned in new early childhood proposals being developed for the 2005 state legislative session.

*CAP Agencies* Secured Iowa Community Action Association support for HSSCO Supplemental Grant proposals. Project work began with a scheduled end date of September 2005.

Head Start Association Iowa HSSCO played a key coordination role in facilitating the implementation of an association strategic plan. At the July meeting, a strategic plan update showed the following accomplishments:

- → Establish procedures for regular feedback and back-home reporting.
- → Addressed major issues surrounding Head Start Reauthorization, TANF and CCDF reauthorization
- → Orchestrated Head Start involvement in caucus-related activity
- → Expanded Head Start involvement at a state level, especially with new initiatives like QRS, ELS, Iowa Learns Council.
- → Rewrote bylaws
- → Establish Council and Board membership orientation procedures and materials.
- → Updated and improved financial reporting
- → Re-started Education Committee and developed a 2004-05 training plan.

#### 2. Describe strategies you found to be successful in overcoming barriers.

The most effective strategy we have found is the establishment of a common vision and goals for collaborative work at the very start, and then keeping your eyes on the prize: improved services for children and families of low income. Another useful strategy has been to involve more people rather than less in the beginning. While more cumbersome to coordinate, more involvement usually means no single individual or organization can become a barrier.

3. Indicate barriers that exist and the technical assistance support that is needed. Here are three of the tallest barriers: 1) insufficient staffing that makes projects move slowly, 2) frequent turnover in staff of collaboration partners, and 3) difficulty prioritizing work. Collaboration frequently means more work for partners and HSSCO must take on some of that work to move the partnership forward. This among other factors makes the work time-consuming for our one-person office. While these demands persist and costs increase, the Collaboration Grant has remained flat. The situation is not sustainable long-term. Turnover means relationships must be re-established and plans revisited which slows progress. Prioritizing the wide range of activities of collaboration work is a constant challenge because the goals and priorities are far and wide-ranging, the additional ACF priorities increase the need for more collaboration even further, and the state and national trends in early childhood (increased push on assessment and accountability, expanded state engagement with pre-k services, increased professionalization of the field) demand responses to counter new threats and seize new opportunities.

Technical assistance to address these might include: 1) some common indicators of success that would create a *de facto* prioritization on only the most important work; 2) more knowledge and skills on system change strategies so we can be more effective with less effort; 3) focus on fewer and more timely priorities (the current 8 priorities date back to the 1990s) and there is no commonly understood desired results for these activities, not to mention ACF priorities and other points of emphasis on a local level.

4. Describe additional activities and successes in the past year.

Developed a comprehensive HSSCO Action Plan with a new reformed HSSCO Management Team. Expanded membership includes participation from child care, health and community action. The plan included how team members can contribute to the action plan.

Provided regular information on federal activity regarding Head Start reauthorization to state agencies.

# C. Briefly describe your efforts to support the coordination of Head Start services to Hispanic children and families in your state. Report by HSSCO priority areas.

HSSCO was involved in four ways that supported Hispanic children in families. Iowa HSSCO:

- 1. began planning to develop an Every Child Reads follow-up module for teachers and child care providers who are working with English Language Learners. The module development is awaiting the completion of the new ECR version.
- 2. Ensured emergency NRS assessors were available for grantees to use so all Spanish speaking children could be assessed.
- 3. Initiated discussion with the Division of Latino Affairs of the Iowa Department of Human Rights which will lead to local dialogue between Latino leadership and Head Start grantees on issues of enrollment and improved service delivery to families.
- 4. Initiated conversations with the Center for New Iowans at the University of Northern Iowa to do diversity training with the Iowa Head Start Association.

## D. Based on your responses to the questions above, how does that information impact your work plan or focus for the current or coming year?

Few efforts make much sustainable change without multi-year emphases. So we plan to focus on new and continuing initiatives, including:

- Oral Health Adopt-a-Classroom Project
- An Iowa Head Start Annual Report
- Local Area Preschool Collaboratives
- HSSCO Office Services & Promotion
- Latino Family Outreach
- FaDSS/Head Start Collaboration
- IHSA Training/Professional Development Plan
- Finish ICAA/IHSA T&TA Resource Bank
- Parent Training and Networking
- ECI System Development (strategic plan implementation; system governance and professional development)

In addition, we are looking to build on our fatherhood work by hosting a workshop with the Head Start TA Network on a systems approach to fatherhood involvement and exploring how to work with local ministerial alliances as part of a indigenous faith-based effort. At the same time, we hope to continue our ongoing coordination with the TA Network, support for the Head Start Association, realize the full potential of collaboration with CAP through the supplemental grant, and encourage a vigorous and vital IHSA-directed professional development work.

In the face of these aspirations, the other clear impact from reflecting on these questions is the challenge of how to prioritize and focus to avoid a scatter-shot approach to collaboration. This represents a daily challenge to our work which has so many important dimensions at the same time as new and immediate demands that require sensitive and deliberate response.

Two possible responses from the Bureau might help State Collaboration Offices to address this challenge. First, increase support to the State Collaboration Offices. Second, either narrow the

number priorities, directives and initiatives to a manageable size or provide lower expectations about how many of these are going to receive the direct and immediate attention they deserve.