

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and Child Care Partnerships

A Report from the Field

By Valentina I. Kloosterman,
Sheila Skiffington,
Yvette Sanchez,
and Ellen Kiron



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About the Authors

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Yvette Sanchez directs the office for Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Collaboration in EDC's Washington, D.C. facility. Ms. Sanchez's experience in Head Start and in designing and administering migrant and seasonal programs for young children guide her as she facilitates and supports collaborative efforts nationally and at the state level that advance services for young children of migrant and seasonal farmworker families.

Ellen Kiron has lead QUILT's efforts to develop local partnership profiles as well as contributed to the development of other materials QUILT produces. As a senior research associate she works on a range of early education projects. Ms. Kiron is also a principal contributor for the Partnership Impact Research Project funded by the Child Care Bureau and coauthor of *Early Care and Education Partnerships: State Actions and Lessons Learned*.

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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This report is the result of a collaborative study conducted by the *Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Collaboration Office* and the *Quality In Linking Together: Early Education Partnerships (QUILT)* project located at Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) in Washington, D.C. and Newton, Massachusetts respectively. Twelve states were selected for the study because of their significant migrant and seasonal populations: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, Washington, and Wyoming.

The purpose of the study was threefold. First, we wanted to examine the extent and nature of collaborative efforts between Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and state child care systems; such braiding efforts can result in enhancing the quality of services for low-income children and their families and in helping families become familiar with child care systems (Schilder, Kiron, Elliott, 2003). Second, we wanted to assess the extent to which migrant and seasonal farmworker families are knowledgeable about the child care system and child care services, given the temporary nature of these families' residency in any particular location as well as frequently cited linguistic and cultural barriers among this population. Third, we aimed to assess the ability of migrant and seasonal families to access child care services for their children birth through school age—in other words, the same range of needed services experienced by families in the general population and by low-income non-migrating families.



Early education program quality, health care, environmental hazards, and child outcomes are the primary focus areas of the Collaboration Office in its work to address issues facing young children of migrants and seasonal farmworkers. The office stimulates collaboration among national organizations and states serving this population in order to maximize accessibility and quality of services; it also works to support Head Start–state collaboration offices in their efforts to affect services for migrant and seasonal farmworker children and families.

QUILT is a national training and technical assistance project that assists and supports full-day, full-year partnerships between early education programs—Head Start, child care, pre-kindergarten (preK)—at the federal, tribal, state, and local levels in order to enhance the quality of services to young children in low-income families. QUILT focuses on systems alignment across programs to raise the quality of educational services for children and to meet working families' needs.

This report first presents a background and literature overview with respect to migrant and seasonal farmworker families. It then describes federal and state eligibility requirements and funding for early care and education services, and the types of Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs. The study methodology is presented next, followed by the study's research findings on program blending and partnering efforts at the state, county, and local levels. These findings are followed by a set of recommendations which we believe will enhance collaborations between Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and child care, as well as state preK initiatives. Four profiles that describe promising and successful collaborations between child care and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs comprise the Appendix that concludes the report.



BACKGROUND

MIGRANT POPULATION

Migrant and seasonal farmworker families constitute approximately three to five million people in the United States who each year relocate to work in agriculture or fishing to improve their financial situations (National Center for Farmworker Health, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 1994). The majority (92 percent) of farmworkers are culturally and linguistically diverse; of these 97 percent are Latinos and half are bilingual, with dominance in Spanish (Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Quality Improvement Center, 2003). Mexican Americans make up the largest Latino

Migrant and seasonal farmworker children continue to experience significant setbacks in basic education. In 2001 the average highest grade completed by migrant and seasonal farmworkers was the fifth grade. Twenty percent had completed less than three years of schooling, while only 15 percent had completed 12 years or more (U.S. Department of Labor, 1996). The average level of education for these farmworkers is sixth grade; 70 percent of adult migrants have less than a high school education.

subgroup, followed by Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Central and South Americans (Kissam, 1993). Migrant and seasonal farmworkers primarily harvest fruits and vegetables. They traditionally have migrated along three geographic routes: the East Coast Stream, the Mid–Continent Stream, and the West Coast Stream (Menchaca, 2003).

Migrant and seasonal farmworker families are not homogeneous as a group, yet they share many characteristics. They work seasonally in agriculture, earning more than half their annual income from agricultural work. The average annual income for these families is less than \$5,000, well below the federal poverty level (Rothenberg, 1998). In 2001, the labor–intensive work of migrant families helped to harvest more than \$28 billion of fruit, vegetables, and horticulture crops in the United States (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2002), but this did not occur without dramatic consequences for the children of these families. Children, often as young as 12, are taken to the fields or left in camps under the care of siblings. Owing to the inaccessibility

of adequate assistance, the circumstances of migrant and seasonal children have not radically changed from those of 40 years ago. While 84 percent of migrant and seasonal farmworker children under the age of three are born in the United States, no single level of government is charged with responsibility for the education of migrant children. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999)

Although the federal government supplements the funding of states' education programs to provide services to the migrant and seasonal farmworker population, there is very little accountability. Local schools are not equipped with the staff or activities to serve farmworker children who are enrolled in several schools throughout the school year, often too briefly to become acquainted with teachers and peers; nor are these schools equipped to measure the academic achievement of these children. Migrant and seasonal farmworker children continue to experience significant setbacks in basic education. In 2001 the average highest grade completed by migrant and seasonal farmworkers was the fifth grade. Twenty percent had completed less than three years of schooling, while only 15 percent had completed 12 years or more (U.S. Department of Labor, 1996). The average level of education for these farmworkers is sixth grade; 70 percent of adult migrants have less than a high school education (U.S. Department of Labor, 1996; Velasquez, 1994).

Inadequate lodging, another serious challenge, usually consists of substandard housing units, such as barrack-like structures, run-down farmhouses, trailer homes, or small shacks (National Center for Farmworker Health, 2001). These living conditions pose serious safety and health hazards and undermine efforts to advance education services for migrant families. Among the possible occupation-related health



problems faced by migrant families are injury from farm machinery and pesticide poisoning (Interstate Migrant Education Council, 1992; Menchaca, 2003; Menchaca & Ruiz–Escalante, 1995; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1997). Dermatitis is common, as are respiratory problems such as tuberculosis, influenza, and pneumonia. Frequently reported health problems among migrant children include low height and weight, respiratory diseases, infections, parasitic conditions, diabetes, chronic diarrhea, dental problems, and congenital and developmental problems (Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Quality Improvement Center, 2003; Ruducha, 1994). Migrant and seasonal farmworker families are often unable to obtain services such as housing assistance and Medicaid because they are not usually permanent residents of states in which they may be working (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1993).

FEDERAL FUNDING FOR EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SERVICES

Much of the funding for early care and education for migrant and seasonal farmworker children comes from several federal agencies, states, and tribes. The administration of the funds may be the responsibility of federal, state, or local entities. Often a combination of these entities supports the child care, preK, and Head Start programs in which migrant and seasonal farmworker children are enrolled.

Nationally, Head Start and the Child Care and Development Fund block grant (CCDF) are governed by distinct federal acts and are separately implemented. In Head Start, ACF awards grants to public or private, profit or nonprofit agencies, also called grantees, to administer the Head Start programs. Grantees can contract with one or more other public or private, profit or nonprofit organizations in the community to serve as delegates, which can run all or part of the grantee's Head Start program. Grantees for migrant and seasonal farmworker Head Start services are under the authority of the Migrant and Seasonal Program Branch within ACF's Head Start Bureau. Head Start grantees and delegates must meet federal Head Start Program Performance Standards and other federal policies and regulations. Usually, Head Start grants are noncompetitive; yet initiatives such as new Migrant and Seasonal and Early Head Start grants are open competitions. Twenty percent of the federal funding award of a Head Start program must be contributed by the community as cash or in-kind services.

The Migrant Education Program, also a federal program, is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and serves children up to 21 years of age, providing some

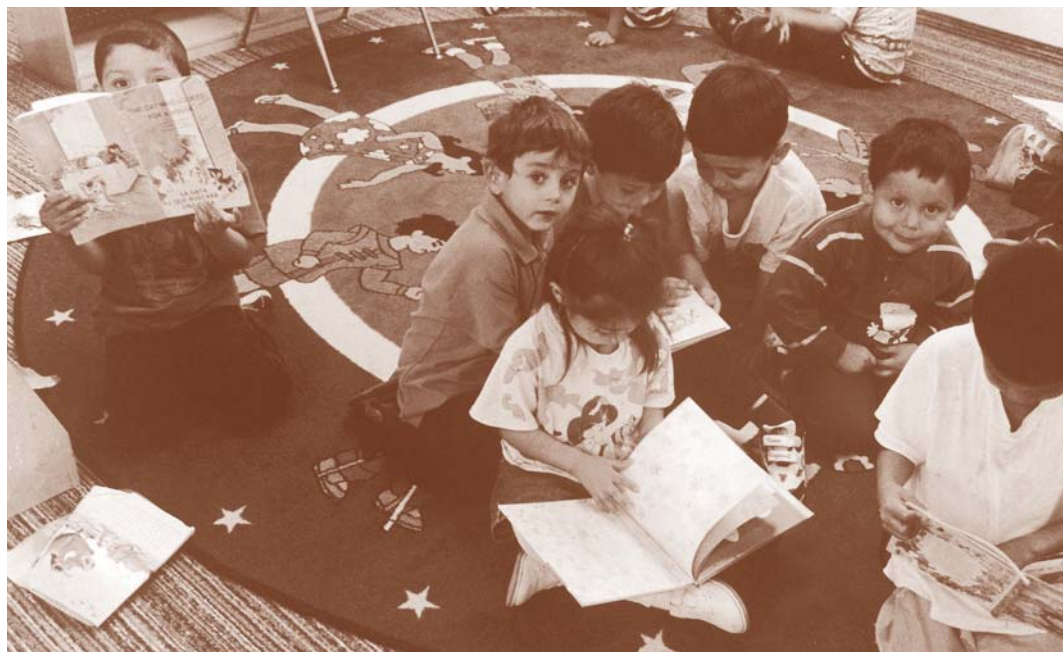
child care services for migrant and seasonal farmworker families, but mostly centering on elementary and secondary education. One of the eligibility requirements for this program is that the child must have moved with his or her family in the preceding three years. Other eligibility criteria for Migrant Education Program services vary at the state and local levels.

Although the migrant population frequently relocates, currently no Migrant Education Program and/or Migrant and Seasonal Head Start data system exists to track, transfer, and/or exchange migrant and seasonal farmworker information on children from state to state or nationwide. Further, despite the fact that statutes and performance plans articulate goals for obtaining outcome data on children in Head Start, there remains a lack of outcome studies about how well children in Migrant and Seasonal programs are achieving these goals (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1999).

Below we provide additional background information on both the Head Start program and child care.

CHILD CARE

The federal government awards child care grants to states, tribes, and territories through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Child Care Bureau. Child care funding is a block grant to states; therefore enormous diversity of policy and practice exists across states and tribes. Because of this variability, the services that migrant families need and secure in one state are often different from those provided in other states. Families' access



to these services varies widely from state to state, as migrant families are challenged with navigating different systems in different states to access care. Although federal law establishes a baseline of requirements that states must meet in order to receive the federal CCDF block grant, states have flexibility in the basic design of their programs and can set different eligibility requirements and priorities within the established federal framework. Federal beneficiary eligibility criteria are:

children under age 13 (or, at the option of the grantee, up to age 19, if physically or mentally incapable of self-care or under court supervision), who reside with a family whose income does not exceed 85 percent of the State median income for a family of the same size, and who reside with a parent (or parents) who is working or attending job training or educational program; or are in need of, or are receiving protective services. (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, 2003)

CCDF is the major source of federal funding allocated to states to subsidize the child care expenses of low- and moderate-income families so they can work or participate in work-related activities. Many states also tap Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding to support child care, as well as provide state funding to meet their federally required maintenance of effort match.

States use their child care funds to provide certificates, vouchers, grants, and/or contracts for child care services for families that meet state established income eligibility requirements for child care. Families can choose care in settings that are public or private, profit or nonprofit, religious or nonreligious, and center-based or in-home, some of which is provided by family, friends, and neighbors.

As migrant and seasonal farmworker families seek child care, often their first contact point is a local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency, county child care office and/or a Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program. In most states, CCR&R agencies are located at the county or community level and assist families in locating child care throughout their catchment area.

MIGRANT AND SEASONAL HEAD START

Head Start is a national program that provides comprehensive education, health, nutrition, and social services for low-income preschool children ages birth to five and for pregnant women and their families. The Head Start constellation of programs includes Early Head Start (serving pregnant women and children from birth to three years olds), Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (serving children six weeks through five years of age), and traditional Head Start (serving three to

five-year-olds). To be eligible for any Head Start program, families must be at or below federal income poverty guidelines. Head Start is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Head Start Bureau.

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start is a federally funded and administered program that provides local programs with the flexibility they require to meet the unique needs of the families they serve. Local programs are encouraged to provide services that are individualized, multicultural, and developmentally appropriate. Migrant and Seasonal Head Start was established in 1969 so that infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children could be engaged in education activities while their families work in the fields. Migrant and Seasonal Head Start centers serve children as young as six weeks of age. ACF eligibility requirements state that Head Start migrant and seasonal services can serve families:

... with children under the age of compulsory school attendance who change their residence by moving from one geographic location to another, either intrastate or interstate, within the past 24 months, for the purpose of engaging in agricultural work that involves the production and harvesting of tree and field crops and whose family income comes primarily from this activity.
[45 CFR 1305.2(1)]

Yet programs can also serve seasonal farmworker families—those families engaged primarily in seasonal agricultural labor; but who have not changed their residence to another geographic location in the preceding two-year period. To be eligible for assistance, families must meet the annual Head Start poverty income guidelines and earn their income primarily from agricultural work that involves harvesting tree and/or field crops. Head Start programs provide services at the local level, often in the same area where a family resides.

As of 2003, there were 26 Migrant and Seasonal Head Start grantees and 43 delegate agencies in 34 states, serving 30,568 migrant children and 3,052 seasonal children in 450 Migrant and Seasonal Head Start centers in areas of highest migrant and seasonal farmworker concentration across the country (reported by Head Start Bureau, Migrant and Seasonal Program Branch, 2003). On average, infants and toddlers made up over 40 percent of farmworker children (Duarte & Rafanello, 2001). Like all Head Start programs, Migrant and Seasonal programs provide services to children with disabilities, working to secure appropriate and timely services and follow-up as the family travels through migrant agricultural streams. Owing to the large Latino population, many programs have bilingual-bicultural (Spanish-English) staff to



serve children and families. A broad range of medical and dental services is also provided to promote sound physical, mental, emotional, and social growth and development. Family involvement is a key component of Head Start, yet involving migrant and seasonal families entails special provisions for transportation, extensive hours of program operation, and adaptation to unpredictable work schedules.

There are two types of Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs: *home-based** and *upstream*. Home-based programs are in communities where farmworker families reside when they are not migrating and harvesting crops, usually October through May. Many of these programs are located in the southern part of the United States (i.e., Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, New Mexico, Texas, and Washington), and deliver services generally from six to nine months a year to migrant and settled seasonal farmworker families. Upstream programs (states usually include Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, and Wisconsin) deliver services to families anywhere from four weeks to seven months as they migrate for their agricultural work.

Most Migrant and Seasonal Head Start children, six weeks through five years of age, are served in full-day Head Start centers. Migrant and Seasonal Head Start centers provide extended-day services, commonly up to 10–12 hours per day and up to seven days a week, inclusive of holidays during the peak of the harvest season. Given the short and unpredictable work seasons and operating hours, staff turnover

* The term home based as used here is different from the Head Start home-based option.

is approximately 35 percent (Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Quality Improvement Center, 2003), creating unique staff recruitment, training, and retention challenges for programs.



THE STUDY

To determine the extent of Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and child care partnerships and to surface successes and barriers to such collaborative efforts, researchers conducted telephone interviews with individuals representing a variety of roles in each of the participating states. At the state level, we interviewed child care administrators, Head Start–state collaboration directors, and National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) state specialists. At the county level, we contacted CCR&R agencies’ staff and county level state child care office staff who administer child care subsidy funds. At the local level, we interviewed Migrant and Seasonal Head Start grantee and delegate administrators. Through a convenience, single–stage sample we gained access to the names in the population and sampled the people directly (Creswell, 2003). Detailed narrative profiles of four Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs from the states of California, Florida, Washington, and Wisconsin were included to augment data collection and analysis. During phone interviews, data were collected by means of surveys containing closed and open–ended questions on an average of six items per survey. Similar items were posed for each survey, and between three and four questions were specific to each of the five representative roles. The items were constructed on the basis of the specific topic of study presented above in this report and the expert knowledge in issues of migrant families and child care services of the research staff. The following are some sample items from the instruments:

- What do you view as the issues facing migrant and seasonal farmworkers in accessing child care subsidies?
- Are there specific agreements or Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) regarding child care services and migrant and/or seasonal farmworkers in your state? If yes, please describe.
- Over the past couple of years, have there been state policy changes related to child care services for migrant or seasonal farmworkers and/or undocumented workers in your state? If yes, please describe.

- Do undocumented farmworkers have difficulties accessing child care subsidies in your state?
- Please describe the ways your program accesses state child care subsidies. Are there barriers to accessing subsidies, or ways access is made easier?
- What recommendations do you have to facilitate your program's ability to blend/braid Migrant and Seasonal Head Start funds and state child care subsidies?

Surveys were field tested before data collection in order to improve questions, formats, and scales. A descriptive analysis was conducted using the items of each survey. Given the categorical nature of many of the items, frequencies of responses (type of scale: yes–no–not sure) were explored. Strauss and Corbin's (1990) coding paradigm of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding was implemented for the analysis of open–ended questions.

Owing to the nature of exploratory studies and the small sample size in this study, some limitations exist. It was not the intention of this study to generalize the data, but rather to obtain information that would present a general overview of how migrant and seasonal child care issues are being addressed by select states and counties and of the degree of Head Start Migrant and Seasonal program collaboration with child care. Nevertheless, we believe our findings offer valuable information about issues facing migrant and seasonal farmworker families and programs that serve them. The following research findings reflect the experiences and opinions of 12 state child care administrators, 12 Head Start–state collaboration directors, eight CCR&R agency contacts and/or county level state offices, 10 National Child Care Information Center State specialists, and eight Migrant and Seasonal Head Start grantees and delegates (five grantees and three delegates) from the 12 selected states.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

STATE LEVEL

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers face issues in accessing child care subsidies, such as too few or no programs that could meet their unique child care needs, too few or no vacancies in available programs, and long waiting lists for Head Start and child care.

Most of the Head Start–state collaboration directors and state child care administrators said that migrant and seasonal farmworkers face issues in accessing child care subsidies, such as too few or no programs that could meet their unique child care needs, too few or no vacancies in available programs, and long waiting lists for Head Start and child care. Others mentioned insufficient resources and personnel, issues related to immigration status and health care, and lack of information about available child care and how to access child care services. Many interviewees pointed out that language barriers and lack of cultural competence greatly affect the trust and communication between migrant families and child care subsidy offices.

Most Head Start–state collaboration directors, state child care administrators, and NCCIC State specialists (59 percent) responded that their states do not have any specific agreements or MOUs regarding child care services to migrant and

Few others noted that the work of developing such agreements has not even begun and that they were just becoming aware of the unique needs of migrant and seasonal farmworker families.

seasonal farmworkers, while 29 percent (including half of the 12 Head Start–state collaboration directors) were not sure whether such agreements exist. One state child care administrator explained, “At the state level we blend state and federal child care funds; we then provide these child care funds to the local Head Start program for them to blend with Head Start federal dollars. We didn’t see a need for an MOU.” On the other hand, a few administrators were disappointed because when

key individuals at the state or local level left their positions, resulting in changes in leadership and priorities, the work of developing agreements with Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs did not continue. A few others noted that the work of developing such agreements has not even begun and that they were just becoming aware of the unique needs of migrant and seasonal farmworker families.

Representatives from the states of California and Oregon mentioned that there were specific state child care funds designated for migrant families.

Most state child care administrators were aware that the Head Start Bureau/Migrant and Seasonal Program Branch encourages Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs to blend Head Start and child care funding to enhance services and quality for their families. In fact, some Head Start–state collaboration directors and some state child care administrators explained that Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs in their states were blending Head Start and child care subsidy funds. But some states' groups were in disagreement about whether the state considered it permissible to blend Head Start and state child care funds. A Head Start–state collaboration director explained:

Currently, a small but influential group of state–level decision makers in our state has tried to discourage the practice of blending funding. They say that Head Start gets money to provide all the children and families with all the



services that they need, so the state doesn't have to spend its child care resources on the migrant population. Over the years, one of our state's Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs has worked out a system that meets Migrant and Seasonal Head Start families' needs solely on Head Start dollars. Our state uses them as an example to make a case for not blending resources, for the state clearly doesn't want to use state money for the migrant population.

However, almost half of the Head Start–state collaboration directors and some state child care administrators were unsure about the practices of local Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs in regard to the braiding of Head Start and child care funds.

California has implemented a subsidy program that provides migrant families with a child care voucher they can use throughout the state.

With respect to the encouragement of partnerships between Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and child care programs, 58 percent of the state child care administrators were unaware of any initiative or approach specifically targeting migrant or seasonal farmworker families. Representatives from the states of California and Oregon mentioned that there were specific state child care funds designated for migrant families.

State child care administrators gave mixed responses on issues facing Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs as they strive to blend Head Start and child care funding; half of them did not know if there were issues in this regard or stated that they could not respond to the question. Administrators from two states explained that there were no issues around blending Head Start and child care funding in their states. Interviewees in three states mentioned issues of accessibility with respect to mobility, poverty, waiting lists, and funding availability. Another state–level administrator described issues around what she termed as “double dipping”:

Because Migrant and Seasonal Head Start is full day (child care services are provided 10 to 12 hours per day and on Saturdays and holidays), there are perceived issues around double dipping when child care funds are used in addition to Head Start. Questions are raised about why they need child care funds if Head Start is already providing full–day services. Programs also face

a dilemma of how to serve migrant and seasonal farmworker families for part-year, full time and still keep full enrollment for the remaining months.

A significant number of Head Start–state collaboration directors and NCCIC state specialists (59 percent) were unsure if undocumented farmworkers could access child care subsidies in their assigned states; and most (86 percent) were unaware of any policy changes or state issuances related to child care services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers and/or undocumented workers over the past couple of years. They pointed out that migrant and seasonal advocates in their states had not raised issues concerning farmworkers’ access to child care subsidies. Nevertheless, California has implemented a subsidy program that provides migrant families with a child care voucher they can use throughout the state as they travel seeking work in the fields.

Knowing that many migrant and seasonal adults are undocumented workers and that this status often presents a barrier to accessing services, we asked child care administrators and county–level staff what documentation of immigration or citizenship status is required of migrant and seasonal workers when they apply for child care subsidies. State child care officials noted that they are required to have systems to ensure that child counts are unduplicated. Therefore, most states’ child care applications are designed with a line for recording social security numbers, although it was noted that families are not required to provide this information. Some states assign household numbers or use other identifiers to ensure an unduplicated count.

None of the 12 states had any interstate agreements to facilitate migrants’ access to child care services or to share informational data on children and their families.

Seven of the 12 state child care administrators had never met with Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program leaders in their state. Five had met, yet do not regularly meet, with migrant and seasonal program leaders to discuss issues of eligibility, state and federal program requirements and funding, migrant/seasonal services, and state contracts. However, none of the 12 states had any interstate agreements to facilitate migrants’ access to child care services or to share informational data on children and their families.

Most state child care administrators (66 percent) stated that there are special services in place for migrant and seasonal farmworkers to access child care serv-

ices. These include, for example, translation services and extended office hours to accommodate families in applying for child care. Often, the county child care subsidy administrating office provides such accommodations. However, state child care administrators that we interviewed noted that decisions about whether to provide these services are made at the discretion of the state's CCR&R agency or county child care office; states give no specific direction or guidance to counties for meeting migrant and seasonal farmworker families' unique needs. According to the state child care administrator in one state with significant migrant and seasonal populations:

CCR&Rs are charged with providing services to all programs and families in their geographic area regardless of special characteristics; each CCR&R has a specific geographic area of responsibility . . . However, the extent to which they truly reach out to and design services for migrant and seasonal families and the programs that serve this population varies from CCR&R to CCR&R. We don't have any specific responsibilities identified for CCR&Rs relative to migrant and seasonal populations.

COUNTY LEVEL

Child care funds are often administered through state-supervised child care county offices or county-level CCR&Rs. We asked individuals at the county level if undocumented farmworkers could access child care subsidies in their states, 63 percent of CCR&R agency contacts responded that they were unsure. None were aware of any policy changes related to child care services for migrant or seasonal farmworkers, including undocumented workers. Most explained that the issue of migrant and seasonal farmworkers' access to child care subsidies was raised neither by their agencies nor by other groups or entities in their states. Most CCR&R agencies which participated in this study were not providing extra support or special services for the migrant and seasonal farmworker community.

LOCAL LEVEL

The one barrier we found is that in the summer, migrant families' weekly incomes increase, resulting in the families' loss of child care subsidies or higher co-payments.

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start grantee and delegate administrators were asked if their programs were blending Head Start and child care subsidy funds; a little less than half of the sample responded affirmatively. Three delegates expressed appreciation for their states' willingness to make it possible for Head Start to provide a continuum of services. In Colorado, for example, the state distributes child care funds directly to counties which exercise decision-making authority with respect to distribution of funds to local programs. Although county decision making groups empower local decision makers, the system is not without difficulties, especially with respect to eligibility requirements for family enrollment. One Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program administrator discussed the issue of fluctuating family income:

The one barrier that we found is that in the summer, migrant families' weekly incomes increase, resulting in the families' loss of child care subsidies or higher co-payments. Because of this families sometimes withdraw their child from child care. This is a real problem, because this higher weekly income is needed by families for the rest of the year when their income is not good. We are also concerned about who is caring for the children when they are withdrawn from child care.

One Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program director commented on a different set of barriers:

Everything is very county-based, and each county spends its funds in its own way. Counties frequently aren't aware of migrant and seasonal families' issues



or the services they need. Each county has its own eligibility requirements and process, and very few of our families have the proper work or citizenship documentation to qualify for child care services. There are also language barriers, so migrant families don't receive the information they need to get child care services.

In one state, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs or their families had not accessed state child care funds at all. One program director commented that "child care funds are very limited and the migrant population is not a priority group. It seems that the state's priority is to serve state residents, not migrants who are in the state for only a few months."

From our interviews it was clear that in many states, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and their enrolled families see themselves or the families they serve as having no access to state child care subsidies to supplement the services provided by Head Start. As a result, many programs do not even attempt to access state child care subsidies or to provide their families with information about the state child care system. We found that some migrant and seasonal programs do access state child care "wrap around" funds that states designated for Head Start programs to extend the Head Start day and year for families that are child care eligible.

In programs in which migrant and/or seasonal farmworker families do access state child care subsidies, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program administrators interviewed did not understand how families used those subsidies. Most Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs (62 percent) do not contract with either child care centers or in-home family child care to serve Head Start children and their families in a more seamless way. Four Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs indicated that in the near future they plan to initiate efforts to secure state child care funding, vouchers, and/or certificates; but this was a longer-term goal. One delegate program administrator stated that there is a dire need to raise awareness of subsidies and eligibility requirements both among administrators and migrants and seasonal farmworker families:

We should talk more about subsidies and Head Start dollars and how this affects our migrant and seasonal farmworker population. Our Head Start programs need to understand our state's child care system and our counties' eligibility requirements. It is important to find some common ground between state and county child care and our Head Start requirements. Unfortunately, farmworker families don't access child care services, and we don't know how to help them access child care. As a result they rely totally

on the Head Start funding, which there isn't enough of to serve families thoroughly. I think we need to get Head Start staff and its programs' families to understand child care eligibility requirements, because at this point in time they don't.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Migrant and seasonal farmworker families are among the most deprived groups in our nation. Despite the fact that the United States has promoted education and health services for this population, most children of migrant and seasonal farmworker families still live in unfortunate circumstances. High-quality early education services are critical to children's development, (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000) and farmworker families can benefit when the resources of *both* Head Start and child care programs are blended to maximize education and support for these vulnerable children and their families. Yet across the nation too few Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs are currently blending Head Start with child care resources to provide more comprehensive and seamless services to the families they serve. Clearly, more needs to be done at the federal, state, county, and local levels to advance knowledge of migrant and seasonal farmworkers' unique needs and ways they can better be met through families' and programs' improved access to child care subsidies.

Below we suggest ways to advance Migrant and Seasonal Head Start's collaboration with child care. And, although this report focuses largely on partnerships with child care, several of these actions can also further Head Start programs' efforts to partner with state preK initiatives:

1. Raising awareness at all levels of the unique needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their children.

Many of the individuals we interviewed commented on how the interview process raised their awareness of migrant and seasonal children's issues. They noted that migrant and seasonal farmworkers face many challenges in accessing child care;

As a result of our study, interviewees expressed an interest in learning more about the challenges and benefits of braiding Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and child care resources.

yet these challenges are often overshadowed by other pressing state child care and early education issues.

As a result of our study, interviewees expressed an interest in learning more about the challenges and benefits of braiding Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and child care resources. We later learned that subsequent to our interviews, one Head Start–state collaboration director contacted the state’s Migrant and Seasonal Head

Given the overwhelming need to improve migrant and seasonal farmworkers’ access to high-quality early education services for their children, it is essential for stakeholders at all levels to continue to spotlight this population’s need and to foster awareness of and sensitivity to linguistic, cultural, and migratory work issues unique to farmworker families.

Start program and requested a meeting to explore issues. Another state’s child care administrator compiled a list of all the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs in his state and conducted his own research to determine which programs are accessing state child care subsidies to augment Head Start services.

Federal memoranda and guidance issued to states also must take into account the unique circumstances of this population, and must continually encourage state leaders to create mechanisms that can assist in addressing farmworker families’ needs.

Given the overwhelming need to improve migrant and seasonal farmworkers’ access to high-quality early education services for their children, it is essential for stakeholders at all levels to continue to spotlight this population’s need and to foster awareness of and sensitivity to linguistic, cultural, and migratory work issues unique to farmworker families. Such knowledge is critical for federal, state, tribal, and county child care decision makers as they shape early education policies and guide practice.

Federal memoranda and guidance issued to states also must take into account the unique circumstances of this population, and must continually encour-

age state leaders to create mechanisms that can assist in addressing farmworker families' needs. For example, issuances from state-level child care administrators to county-level child care subsidy offices might encourage them to be mindful of migrants' particular needs by providing easy access to child care subsidy offices and to ensure that subsidy office staff are welcoming, speak families' dominant languages, and work to break down cultural barriers to badly needed child care services. It is also essential for child care subsidy staff to conduct outreach activities to make known the availability of child care, Head Start, and other early education services.

Farmworker families in other states and counties might benefit from local programs' assistance in completing the child care subsidy application and certification process.

Often migrant and seasonal farmworker families do not independently apply for child care services because of fears of linguistic and cultural barriers and apprehension about involvement with government systems. Some states and counties therefore use Head Start staff to assist migrant and seasonal families in completing child care applications and obtaining the family and work documentation they need to qualify for child care. Farmworker families in other states and counties might benefit from local programs' assistance in completing the child care subsidy application and certification process.



California recognizes this problem and sets aside child care grants that make it possible to eliminate waiting lists for farmworker families and enable them to access child care at any time in the year.

When farmworker families do apply for child care, they are often placed on long waiting lists, since they apply in late spring and early summer, when many states have nearly expended the year's child care funding. A few states, like California, recognize this problem and set aside child care grants that make it possible to eliminate waiting lists for farmworker families and enable them to access child care at any time in the year.

Another key aspect to consider is migrant and seasonal farmworkers' significant income fluctuation during the year, which causes instability in their eligibility for subsidies. At peak times in the growing season, families' higher incomes may make them ineligible for child care subsidies or may necessitate copayments that families cannot afford to sustain because peak-season income needs to carry families throughout the off-season. One possible solution is for states to consider implementing provisions that address income fluctuations by using a family's average quarterly or yearly income as a qualifier for child care subsidies. Virginia, for example, lets its county child care offices base income eligibility on a family's average income over a six month period.

2. Issuing federal and/or state policies and guidance to ensure that migrant and seasonal farmworkers fully access child care subsidies, in addition to Head Start, for their children.

At the national level, federal leaders' understanding of both Head Start and the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), which are both federally funded, can help promote collaboration between these two significant programs to improve services for children of farmworker families. Congress, as well, needs to be aware not only of the laws that govern these two programs, but of provisions in each that can be strengthened to address migrant and seasonal populations' unique needs. For example, the Child Care Bureau's issuance clarifying that only the citizenship of the child is relevant for determining subsidy eligibility (ACYF-PI-00-04) was an important step in ensuring that children born in the United States, regardless of their parents' immigration or work status, receive child care services.

State leaders' knowledge of federal policy and issuances from all federal offices—the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as well as the U.S. Department of Education—regarding migrant and seasonal children and their families is essential to effective efforts to coordinate and strengthen partnership efforts between child care, Head Start, and preK programs. Communication among state and federal leaders about partnership barriers, and state and federal leaders' communication with local-level stakeholders about the importance of blending Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, CCDF, and state preK resources, are key to advancing service delivery and heightening the quality of the programs in which children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers are enrolled.

When communications about migrant and seasonal collaborative efforts and concerns are issued jointly by the Head Start and Child Care Bureaus and/or state leaders in different departments, it demonstrates federal and state leaders' unified intent and strengthens the message.

Specific issuances related to the benefits of blending federal and state resources to improve the access to and quality of services for children are needed at both the federal and state levels to encourage local program partnerships across Head Start, child care, and preK programs. When communications about migrant and seasonal collaborative efforts and concerns are issued jointly by the Head Start and Child Care Bureaus and/or state leaders in different departments, it demonstrates federal and state leaders' unified intent and strengthens the message.

State leaders acknowledge that migrant families' access to child care services usually varies from state to state, and even from county to county within some states that have county-administered child care systems. Creating an interstate system to facilitate families' access to child care services along the migration stream could be extremely useful in ensuring continuity for children. An interstate data tracking system could serve to support migrant and seasonal families' access to child care services, by not only increasing access for families but also streamlining government tracking systems for service administration.

In addition, although some Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs have developed effective systems for sharing child and family information through the creation of a child and family portfolio of information that travels with the family, (see

There is a need to create a technological information transfer system for migrating farmworker families . . . that can be appropriately accessed by programs and schools as they work together to support positive child outcomes.

the Redlands Christian Migrant Association Partnership Profile included in this report's Appendix) there is a need to create a technological information transfer system for migrating farmworker families that provides child education and health information that can be appropriately accessed by programs and schools as they work together to support positive child outcomes.

3. Strengthening local Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and child care provider collaborations.

Partnerships among Head Start, child care, and preK programs across the country have increased significantly over the past decade. Such partnerships provide greater continuity for children and their families, meet the working needs of today's families, heighten child care accessibility, and raise the quality of services by braiding Head Start funding with other early education resources. Although several Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs have very successfully braided Head Start and child care resources for many years, many more migrant and seasonal programs operate Head Start only. While across the nation partnerships in Head Start and Early Head Start have flourished, it is evident that partnerships in Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs have lagged behind. Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs can greatly benefit from understanding their state's child care system and the ways to braid Head Start and child care funds.

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs can greatly benefit from understanding their state's child care system and the ways to braid Head Start and child care funds.

Our research and the work of the QUILT project have found that migrant and seasonal Head Start programs perceive several challenges to the process of braiding Head Start and child care funding within their own agency. To overcome these chal-

allenges, it is essential for program administrators to:

- Learn to manage child care subsidies usually received as reimbursement for services provided, rather than upfront funding as is the case with Head Start grants
- Develop procedures for collecting and managing parent copayments as required by child care subsidy system
- Work through the complexities of braiding Head Start and child care funding by creating, implementing, and monitoring a cost allocation plan
- Understand families' issues in accessing child care subsidies and support them in those efforts through having family service staff that is fully knowledgeable of the child care system and its requirements

Most of the partnerships in Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs consist of the program directly accessing child care subsidies from the state and/or migrant families and blending them with Head Start resources to extend services and enhance quality. Fewer partnerships exist between Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and child care centers and/or in-home family child care providers that are separate legal entities. To forge such partnerships, it is essential for program administrators to:

- Develop solid working relationships with child care providers in their communities
- Establish oversight and quality control systems to ensure that Head Start standards are met by providers

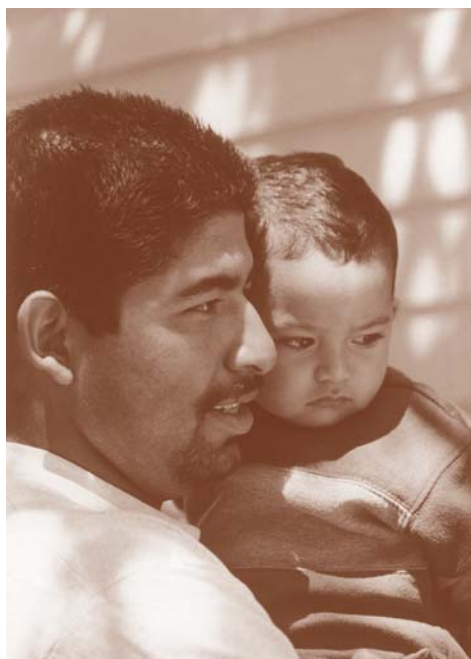


- Create written partnership agreements that contain the specifics of the partnerships' day-to-day and financial operating procedures
- Work collaboratively with partners to recruit, select, enroll, and provide services to farmworker families

The Head Start Bureau and other federal and state early education decision makers can stimulate partnership activity by clearly articulating the benefits of partnering through clear and compelling communication with migrant and seasonal programs. ACF program specialists, working with Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program leaders, should also be conversant in partnership strategies, and should strongly encourage their assigned grantees to develop partnerships with child care centers and/or in-home providers or through blending child care subsidy funding into their program's Head Start operations. Federal and/or state funding incentives incorporated into requests for proposals (RFPs) that require partnership activity or provide additional proposal scoring points for partnerships often provide a catalyst for partnership action.

Examples of successful Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, child care, and preK partnerships can assist programs as they design their unique partnership initiatives. Programs also benefit from consultation with knowledgeable and skilled technical assistance providers to lend support in the beginning stages of partnering and to help further existing initiatives.

The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Collaboration Office can also assist in helping state-level decision makers collaborate within and across states and in identifying strategies to further partnerships at the state and local levels.





SUMMARY

The three to five million people who constitute migrant and seasonal farmworker families in the United States are severely under-served in terms of early care and education services. The need to perennially relocate for work; lack of inclusion in federal, county, and local data tracking systems for services; and linguistic and cultural barriers to accessing services have gravely limited or diminished their enrollment in child care, health, and education programs. As a result, migrant and seasonal farmworker families and their children are more prone to accident and illness and are unlikely to proceed beyond a fifth-grade education.

Partnerships serve to advance child and family outcomes, align early education practice, integrate services, and strengthen early education relationships within communities. At the same time, when federal, state, and local-level services are accessible to migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their children, partnerships are facilitated and support is maximized. Through the blending of financial and staffing resources, partnerships also result in increased funding that partnering programs can use to improve professional development efforts and other quality initiatives.

It is also vital to hear from farmworkers about their progress in gaining access to services—families' voices are critical in shaping strategies and future research. Families' success in accessing child care and programs' partnership efforts in migrant and seasonal farmworker early education communities are pivotal in improving and aligning school readiness efforts that will help ensure success, rather than failure, for the children of migrant families.



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FOUR PARTNERSHIP PROFILES

I. Enterprise for Progress In the Community Yakima, Washington

Basics

Enterprise for Progress In the Community (EPIC) serves rural agricultural communities in central and eastern Washington through Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, and state preschool programs in five counties. EPIC operates several partnerships that braid multiple sources of funding. About 700 children are served through child care partners—some home based and others center based. Because the families served by EPIC are largely Hispanic/Latino migrants who prefer the home environment for child care services, EPIC has focused on bringing the Head Start experience to 10–12 family child care homes that serve 42 children accessing child care subsidies.

The Partnership

When EPIC recognized that its farmworker families greatly preferred having their children in home-based rather center-based care, it approached the Catholic Family Services, the region's Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency, to establish a process for offering Migrant and Seasonal Head Start services to children accessing subsidy services in family child care homes. The two agencies signed an interagency agreement to that end.

First, the CCR&R identified a pool of strong family child care homes with whom EPIC could partner. Then, EPIC hosted a large gathering for all the potential partners. EPIC made an hour-long presentation describing Head Start's philosophy and its performance standards, the benefits of partnership for the provider and its staff, approaches to cost underwriting, and expectations for partners. Providers had time to give input to EPIC staff about the partnership design and other issues. About half of the providers attending the presentation signed contracts and became partners with EPIC.

To receive this partnership option, a family first obtains its state child care voucher at the Catholic Family Services CCR&R agency, which is also a subcontractor to the state for subsidy administration. If a parent chooses a family child care

home that has contracted with EPIC as a partner, then the CCR&R contacts EPIC, saying this family is likely to qualify for partnership services. After EPIC verifies that the family meets criteria specific to Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, they begin paying the provider directly for the number of children served. Additionally, the state pays child care subsidies to providers, and parents are responsible for state-assessed copayments that are based on their family income.

Ingredients of Success

- EPIC credits its continuous connection with partners for facilitating the partnership's operations. Its staff visit each partner's home weekly to mentor, model, and coach the provider. EPIC helps the home provider to meet the three major components of the Head Start Program Performance Standards, specifically taking the lead in parent involvement and health, nutrition, and social-emotional well-being, and the provider takes the lead in education activities, with strong support, mentoring, and modeling from EPIC staff. This arrangement works to effectively elevate practices and support providers' development because of the frequent contact between providers and EPIC staff.
- In its contract with providers, EPIC commits to paying providers a daily rate per child, drawing on its Head Start funds. EPIC also makes available a lump sum amount from which providers use to implement quality improvements efforts that they determine are needed. For example, providers use the funds to improve the education environment, teacher qualifications and training, and to purchase materials. Giving providers discretion over this additional source of revenue signaled EPIC's respect for the ability of owners and staff to identify areas needing improvements. EPIC supports this financial freedom by being in close contact with the homes and having its Migrant and Seasonal Head Start staff offer regular feedback and mentoring about what heightened quality looks like.

Overcoming Problems

- With state budgets tightening, the amount allocated for child care subsidies decreased over the past two years. As the supply of subsidies shrinks, migrant and seasonal families have more difficulty obtaining subsidies if they return to the area later in the state's fiscal year. For example, in Washington State, seasonal farmwork can start in February or March but the first big harvest—

cherries—starts in July, and the largest harvest—apples—begins in September. This means that by the time most farmworkers come into the area, the bulk of child care vouchers are already committed and long waiting lists often exist for child care services. For this reason EPIC has found it increasingly difficult to recruit farmworker families with child care subsidies who are eligible for partnership care in the family child care home.

- Home child care and EPIC are essentially two unique small businesses. Therefore, simultaneous partnerships between EPIC and 10–12 family child care homes present challenges. Each provider enters the partnership at a different level of quality and capacity. EPIC continues to stretch itself in learning how to effectively support quality services in the home, not so much in terms of providing a nurturing and caring environment, but in creating intentional, well-designed education experiences, which is a very different emphasis and orientation for some family home providers.

Growing and Changing

EPIC plans to remain at its current capacity for partnership homes through the end of next year. Once systems are solidly in place, EPIC would like to expand its partnership options because its families favor home care and EPIC recognizes the opportunity that the partnership offers in aligning its community's early education practices.

II. Economic Opportunity Commission San Luis Obispo, California

Basics

Changing patterns in migrant families' work and education decisions have prompted Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs to make scheduling and program adaptations. In many cases, partnerships and new funding opportunities facilitate these changes. The Economic Opportunity Commission (EOC) of San Luis Obispo Inc. has one of the largest Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs in California, serving 1,600 children in nine counties. In 1998, EOC decided to create a full-year program after noticing that many migrant families were moving less frequently because of increasing awareness of the burden relocation created on their children's education.

The Partnership

Migrant Head Start programs traditionally serve seasonal workers who move into communities after regular Head Start programs are in session and fully enrolled. As migrant families increasingly elect to stay in one place for longer periods of time, Migrant Head Start programs have been unable to find enough families who meet the eligibility requirement of having moved within the last 24 months. In 1996, the federal Migrant Head Start branch amended the definition of “migrant” to include “seasonal” families who have not moved within the last 24 months, yet who perform agricultural work. This expanded definition enabled EOC to pursue a full-year program for migrant and seasonal farmworker families who moved less frequently.

In 1998, EOC created a full-year program in a rural area of Fresno, California, at EOC’s Kerman Center by combining the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and state child care funds targeted for migrant families. If families qualify for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start services, they automatically qualify for state migrant child care funding (with its less stringent eligibility requirements). When a family enters the Kerman Center’s Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program, staff identify whether the parents plan to remain in the area. If so, the child is given a partnership-funded slot so that the blending of funding occurs “behind the scenes” without the family experiencing a disruption or change in services. Through blending funds, EOC is able to maximize available funding and increase the number of children it can serve, while its families are provided with comprehensive services and continuity of care in extended hours that meet the needs of agricultural workers.

Ingredients of Success

To blend funds at the Kerman Center, EOC’s director first needed permission from the Department of Education, which administers state migrant child care funds. EOC proposed a combined funding plan to DOE officials that involved transferring funds from an underused program to the Kerman Center. The state officials agreed to the plan after EOC effectively demonstrated that the full costs would be shared equitably by the two funding sources and that the children would receive the full array of comprehensive services funded by Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (not possible with child care funding alone). The funders’ understanding of the benefits of braiding child care and Head Start funding and the EOC director’s presentation of critical data allowed for the creation of a comprehensive, high-quality full-year program.

Overcoming Problems

- With Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, services are free to families. However, state migrant child care funds require a parent copayment, based on a sliding scale. Though the copayment may have been as small as \$5 per week, the new requirement confused parents. EOC now recognizes that the program needed to explain the copayment policies by including them in the Head Start parent handbook and discussing the policies at the beginning of the school year. With this “heads up,” families can plan ahead for the new expense.
- When blending the two funding streams, EOC had to accommodate different kinds of funding mechanisms. While Migrant and Seasonal Head Start is grant-funded, the state child care program is fee-for-service and based on children’s average days of attendance. EOC had to establish new procedures to avoid financial problems when children dropped out or did not attend services. As a result, program staff closely monitor attendance from week to week and maintain a waiting list so that available slots are quickly filled.

Growing and Changing

EOC Migrant and Seasonal Head Start also braids Head Start and child care funds through contracts with licensed family child care providers. For 13 years such partnerships have been a viable solution in addressing EOC’s space shortages, as well as offering parents the choice of serving infants in family child care homes rather than center-based settings. EOC plans to expand its partnerships with family child care homes as another way of meeting farmworker families’ needs for full-year care.

III. Redlands Christian Migrant Association

Immokalee, Florida

Basics

Having served migrant and seasonal farmworker communities for almost 40 years, Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) stays true to its roots by recruiting providers and staff from the communities served. In one such community in South Florida, RCMA blends state and federal funds to serve 25 Migrant and Seasonal Head Start-eligible children with disabilities at their child care center. The children receive full-day care through state child care subsidies, and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start funds support a complement of related services to augment their care.

The Partnership

Founded in Dade County, Florida, in 1965, Redlands Christian Migrant Association operates 75 programs in 19 counties for children from infancy to five years old through Head Start/Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, or state-subsidized child care funding. This large, private nonprofit agency began as a grassroots effort by a group of dedicated Mennonite volunteers wanting to improve community child care for migrant families. RCMA grew out of the volunteers' recruitment of known and respected women from the migrant church community to provide care for migrant children. Eighty-five percent of the current RCMA staff come from the migrant farmworker communities they serve.

RCMA became a Migrant Head Start delegate in 1967; the agency was also the grantee for both regular Head Start and Early Head Start in 1996. In the 1980s, before RCMA became a Head Start delegate or grantee, it operated three large child care centers in different counties serving children with disabilities who were also Migrant Head Start-eligible. East Coast Migrant Head Start Project, a large Migrant and Seasonal Head Start grantee serving 12 eastern seaboard states, and RCMA began a grantee-delegate relationship in which RCMA received funds to provide a disability component to children in its child care centers who were dually eligible for child care subsidies and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start. RCMA was a perfect fit for this partnership, given its expertise in serving children with disabilities and the migrant community's confidence in and respect for its services.

In 2003, RCMA has two child care locations where about 70 children receive the disability component funded by the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs. The partnership services for children in these centers decreased as RCMA, as a delegate, started to operate increasingly more Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs in other locations. Now, RCMA provides partnership services to children in eight of its own child care centers in Homestead County. RCMA manages the partnership by blending its own Migrant and Seasonal Head Start dollars with child care subsidy funding for children of families who have traveled within the past two to three years (and therefore are candidates for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start) and who are identified by either a parent or a screening/assessment as eligible for disability services. If children are identified as dually eligible and cannot be enrolled in the child care center because there is no space, then RCMA delivers the disability component in the child's home until space becomes available. The services include transportation to appointments, translation at appointments, social services, services related to the disability, multidisciplinary referrals, and assessments.

Ingredients of Success

- RCMA's Head Start staff provide the enhanced Migrant and Seasonal Head Start services to the partnership-eligible children in RCMA-operated child care centers. This arrangement minimizes turf issues and builds on the child care staff's education/classroom skills. RCMA must still work to ensure that all staff understand the chain of command so that partnership staff make suggestions in a cooperative manner. Furthermore, RCMA facilitates the staff's joint efforts by supporting and preparing child care teachers for additional tasks tied to a child's receiving enhanced services.
- Partnership services operate smoothly, in large part, owing to strong communication between partners. For example, when staff from both agencies realized they were not planning transitions for partnership children as well as they might, they met to problem solve, defining responsibilities and roles and developing new policies. The fact that both agencies maintain the same basic philosophy and mission makes it possible for them to find common ground.
- RCMA understands and accommodates migrant and seasonal farmworker families' unique needs. Because farmworkers begin their day early, the child care centers open very early in the morning and close at 5:30 p.m. RCMA's families have recognized the good fit of the services with their needs. Families returning to the area after spending the summer working up north know that child care openings will be full in October, so they come back earlier, even if it means that one parent returns later.
- RCMA prepares a portfolio of important documents for traveling families of partnership children. The portfolio allows RCMA to exchange resources and information with other programs under the wing of the East Coast Migrant Head Start Project; the portfolio contains vital information that supports families as they move from location to location. The portfolio might include a multidisciplinary evaluation, most recent staffing or therapies information, summaries of assessments, and newborn records. RCMA staff spend significant time educating parents about the portfolio's documents and their contents. Most RCMA staff speak Spanish, which is the language spoken by the current, largely Hispanic migrant population. RCMA staff also provide translation services. Medical documents related to disability may not get translated but are explained.

Overcoming Problems

In providing partnership services, agencies found they needed to continually work to support best practices and staffing for all children, and especially those with disabilities. For example, additional staff were often assigned to children with moderate to severe disabilities and this staff person was then assigned as the child's one-on-one teacher. However, this person was often a new, temporary hire and not the best match for a child with greater needs. The partners continue to discuss staffing in such situations and how best to support the main teacher so that she or he is equipped to address the child's full needs. In that way, the center can better support children's care by building capacity of staff who will likely return, and by providing extra assistance with all children in the classrooms.

As they strive to support better practices for integrating children with disabilities in child care classrooms, the partners focus on providing the main teacher with regular encouragement, offering opportunities for staff to ask questions and problem-solve, and providing a wide range of assistance, from translating therapists' recommendations to using special equipment, to assisting the children with finger painting.

IV. United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc. Oshkosh, WI

Basics

To meet the unique needs of migrant and seasonal families in the community, United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc. (UMOS), a multipurpose agency, blends its state-funded migrant child care program with Migrant and Seasonal Head Start funds and resources. In so doing, UMOS is able to augment core services, extend into new geographic areas, serve three times more children, and adapt services to migrant work cycles.

The Partnership

Since 1985, UMOS has been offering a migrant child care program to a range of families in need—those who are currently migrating, those who are “settled out” (remaining temporarily in an area), and other low-income families in Wisconsin. In the mid to late 1980s, UMOS provided child care services directly to about 40 children in one location and operated like a resource and referral service for other children by directing their families to the services of other community agencies and family child care providers. Many families encouraged UMOS to start serving more chil-

dren directly. Farmworker families appreciated the multilingual and multicultural strengths of the UMOS program and staff. UMOS decided to expand its directly operated child care services by blending that program with an existing but separate UMOS program—Migrant and Seasonal Head Start—which, unlike their existing child care program, included an array of comprehensive services for enrolled children and their families.

In 1991, UMOS blended its Head Start and child care programs, and as a result was able to reach an additional 84 children. UMOS achieved this in two ways: by becoming a Migrant and Seasonal Head Start grantee receiving Head Start funds directly from the federal government, and by becoming a Head Start delegate agency of the Texas Migrant Council. As UMOS started offering partnership services at six center-based sites, what had been solely migrant child care shifted to a comprehensive child development program offering both Head Start and child care through braided services.

Ingredients of Success

- UMOS leaders understood the need for strong, constructive relationships with state officials and senators. They worked to keep these decision makers abreast of migrant-related child care issues and of the need for extended services such as those that UMOS could provide by blending funds. To that end, UMOS offered to develop reports for the state to track families and children served by age and need. These reports provide lawmakers and administrators with important state statistics about migrant families. Additionally, the reports facilitated communication between the UMOS executive director and state leaders. These efforts opened the door to other forms of regular communication in which UMOS could articulate problem issues and work with state decision makers to find solutions.
- Blending funds from multiple sources can be challenging when the participating organizations have different funding mechanisms and regulations. UMOS attributes its success in developing and supporting Head Start-child care partnerships to the skilled staff in its fiscal department. With a high level of expertise, these administrators could effectively design financial systems to support the partnership's intent while meeting each funding source's fiscal requirements.

Overcoming Problems

Wisconsin's child care licensing standards do not permit programs to serve children more than 11 hours per day. The nature of migrant families' responsibilities, however, often requires working from 4:00 a.m. until 8:30 p.m. Given this discrepancy between services needed and services provided, UMOS has had to find alternatives for those early-morning and late-night hours. Alternative arrangements often mean that children have two to three providers in a given day. The executive director of UMOS is currently working with a state senator and the state migrant coalition to consider amending licensing codes or obtaining temporary waivers that would allow for extended hours at a single location (through shift work) to ensure continuity of care.

UMOS explained that a great deal of planning and coordination were required to manage multiple funding sources and braid funding to raise service quality. Costs were appropriately allocated so that all sources equally support the partnership services. Creating a comprehensive and equitable cost allocation plan required thoughtful planning and involved fiscal and accounting staff as well as the UMOS independent auditor.

Growing and Changing

UMOS plans to open drop-in centers at some of its sites. These centers will make child care services more accessible to families that have limited access to licensed providers. During drop-in hours the centers would access state subsidies in order to serve children from birth through 12 years of age. The drop-in concept evolved as a strategy for matching the child care needs of migrant families who work an average of 13 hours per day with the ability of UMOS to provide continuous services at a single location.



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