



Spotlight on Collaboration: Deepening Our Focus 2007 Forums Report



The Illinois Department of Human Services Head Start State Collaboration Office, in conjunction with Dr. Sarah Mulholland, compiled the information and data for this report. This report and its printing are made possible by the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Head Start State Collaboration grant, number 05-CD-0019.

Spotlight on Collaboration: Deepening Our Focus 2007 Forums

Table of Contents

Introduction	1-2
Purpose	2
History of the Collaboration Forums	2
Overview of the Day	2
Sharing Our Stories and Learning – Morning Panels	3-5
Early Childhood Education Topics in Collaboration – Afternoon Small Groups	6
Promising Practices	7-10
Relationship/Planning, Communication and Administration & Fiscal Education	7-8
Parent Engagement & Support	8
Community Involvement & Outreach	8-9
Enrollment	9
Challenges and Strategies	9-10
Vision/Relationship, Communication and Administration & Fiscal Education	11-12
Parent Engagement & Support	11
Community Involvement & Outreach	12
Resources and Training/Technical Assistance Needs	12
Take Home Highlights	13-14
Conclusions and Next Steps	15
Appendix A: Panel Facts Sheets – Springfield Forum	16-18
Appendix B: Panel Facts Sheets – Lisle Forum	19-24
Appendix C: Discussion Reflections Form	25-29
Appendix D: Forum Participant Overviews	30-31
Appendix E: Forum Evaluation Results	32-35

The Illinois Department of Human Services Head Start State Collaboration Office, in conjunction with Dr. Sarah Mulholland, compiled the information and data for this report. This report and its printing are made possible by the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Head Start State Collaboration grant, number 05-CD-0019.

INTRODUCTION

Purposes

The purposes of the 2007 Collaboration Forums were:

- ✓ To spotlight promising collaboration practices and strategies to continue addressing opportunities and challenges in Illinois early care and education partnerships;
- ✓ To learn more about current successful Illinois community-based coalition strategies and practices;
- ✓ To determine next steps and actions to take away with local team members; and
- ✓ To inform conveners of additional technical assistance needs and issues.

History of the Collaboration Forums

These Forums extended the work of the October 2005 statewide “Spotlight on Collaboration” sponsored by the state/federal Good Start, Grow Smart team.

Good Start, Grow Smart (GSGS) is President George W. Bush’s Early Childhood Initiative aimed at helping states and local communities strengthen early learning for young children. The goal of GSGS is to ensure that children enter kindergarten with the skills they need to succeed by partnering with States to improve early childhood education; strengthening Head Start; and providing information based on scientific research to teachers, caregivers, and parents.¹

The Illinois GSGS team is a state-federal partnership that includes the:

- State Child Care Administrator, Linda Saterfield, Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Care Bureau Chief
- State PreK Administrator, Kay Henderson, Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Early Childhood Division Administrator
- DHS Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) Director, Gina Ruther
- Acting Program Manager, Katie Williams, DHHS Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Region V

This team was formed in 2002 at an ACF Region V GSGS event and has met regularly since to stay updated on program issues and changes and to address collaboration issues. Other partners are brought in as needed or as issues warrant. The GSGS team sponsored the first “Spotlight on Collaboration” in October 2005 as a preconference institute to the Sharing a Vision Conference in Oak Brook. It was planned as a beginning to formal communications and sharing among state and federal agencies and local providers about collaboration.

¹ Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education, [Good Start, Grow Smart, A Guide to Good Start, Grow Smart and Other Federal Early Learning Initiatives](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ccb/ta/gsgs/fedpubs/GSGSBooklet.pdf), U.S., 2006, pg. 1 <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ccb/ta/gsgs/fedpubs/GSGSBooklet.pdf>
Spotlight on Collaboration Forums 11.07

In 2006, the HSSCO received supplemental funding to support state partners' participation in a national meeting sponsored by the National Head Start Association, ACF Office of Head Start, and PreK NOW. Funds were also included for a project, so the two Collaboration Forums were planned. The National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) and the DHS Child Care Bureau supplemented the Forums with additional funds, in-kind time, and materials. The Illinois Head Start Association (IHSA) assisted with planning and facilitation. The GSGS team distributed the invitation flier to its constituents to advertise the Forums.

Overview of the Day

The forums were held Thursday, September 20, 2007 at Crowne Plaza in Springfield, and Friday, September 21, 2007 at the Hilton in Lisle. The target audience was early care and education program administrators. Early Learning Council Executive Committee members, local community coalitions, Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) staff, Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) representatives, and training and technical assistance contractors were also invited. Participants were strongly encouraged to come as interagency teams with their current partners or as intra-agency teams with their own management staff.

The Illinois GSGS team gave a welcome to participants and shared pertinent information and updates for the state child care and PreK and federal Head Start programs. The participants spent the rest of the day in various sessions hearing and discussing how collaboration is meeting the needs of families with young children across the state. They were given an opportunity to share their successes, challenges, and technical assistance and resource needs in four focus areas: Administration and Fiscal, Education Services, Community Involvement and Outreach, and Parent Engagement and Support Services.

SHARING OUR STORIES AND LEARNING

After the GSGS and agenda overviews, each Forum's morning session, *Sharing Our Stories and Learning*, focused on a panel presentation conducted in interview format. Susan Rohrbough and Eva Carter, NCCIC State Technical Assistance Specialists, facilitated the interviews and panel discussions. Panelists were given a set of five interview questions ahead of time to prepare.

Springfield Panels

- *Southern Illinois University Carbondale*. Two types of collaboration: Head Start/PreK-Preschool for All (PFA) in a consortium and Head Start/Child Care.
- *Champaign County Regional Planning Commission*. Three types of collaboration: Head Start/PreK-PFA, Early-Head Start/Child Care and Head Start/Child Care/PreK-PFA
- *Early Childhood Coalition of the Illinois Quad City Area* and *Skip a Long Child Development Services* - Child Care/PFA home collaboration.

Lisle Panels

- *Lifelink Corporation*. Two types of collaboration: Head Start/PreK and Head Start/Child Care.
- *Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services*. All types of collaboration.
- *Evanston Early Childhood Community Collaboration*. Community coalition and several types of program collaboration.

A facts sheet for each panel was provided to participants and contained the following information: type of collaboration and collaboration model used; description of how the collaboration operates in the areas of administration and fiscal, education services, community involvement and outreach, and parent engagement and support; and, a description of a typical classroom and typical day for a child in the collaboration. *See Appendices A & B: Panel Facts Sheets.*

The panels addressed the following five questions:

1. What have been the **benefits** of your collaboration?
2. Will you share with us what you think has been a **success**, a key **strategy**, or set of strategies that you have undertaken in your partnership?
3. Have you experienced any **challenges** along the way in your partnership or are you currently experiencing any challenges or issues that you can share with us?
4. Tell us about **lessons** you have learned/experienced as you have worked together in partnership. As you think about your collaboration and its continued success, what would you like to say regarding **next steps**? What are your needs?

Participants were given an opportunity to ask questions of the panelists and to share their own thoughts about the collaboration benefits, strategies, challenges, lessons, and next steps. The HSSCO Director and the consultant recorded the discussions at each Forum.

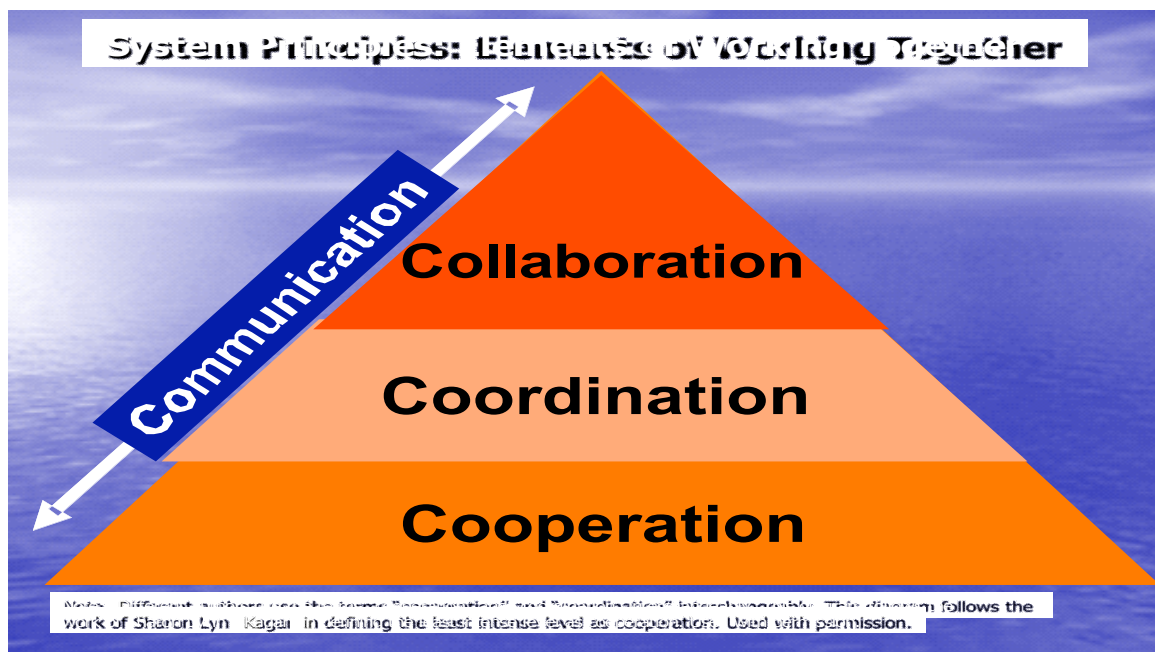
The NCCIC facilitators began with a discussion of the primary goals of collaboration in early childhood education, which were characterized as:

- To ensure that we are making the best use of public funds
- To get as many children enrolled in our programs as possible
- To provide seamless services
- To improve outcomes for the children

The facilitators also made the following points to participants about collaboration and collaborative leadership prior to beginning the panel discussions.

- Leadership is the key to success. Collaboration is a process. It is okay to be at whatever stage you are. Collaborations will ebb and flow.
- Like a garden, you cannot ignore collaboration. Keep your focus on mission, purpose, and goals.
- Decision makers, administrators and staff, need to think in terms of the life a child, not of the agency. Look at the value for the children in all decisions. As you plan, take a day in a life of a child and see how many transitions the child makes.
- PACT² is developing training modules on the underlying principles, skills, and issues that cross all partnerships. Some of the modules will be in the areas of leadership, facilitating, communication, finance, evaluation, and management.
- We must work with our partners on the relationship. It helps to walk in their shoes. To develop and strengthen relationships, take someone to lunch or coffee weekly. The world is getting wider, i.e., moving farther out from “who I am.” There is increased diversity across culture and values. Collaboration is harder as we get more diverse partners.
- Often, somebody in an agency leaves or changes positions and the collaboration has to be rebuilt.
- Do not try to develop collaboration in isolation from your staff.
- Collaborations are like small business development, which usually take 3-5 years to earn a profit.
- Must find the common ground and develop common vision for success.

The NCCIC specialists presented the pyramid on the next page, *System Principles: Elements of Working Together*, based on the work of Sharon Lynn Kagan. A participant compared the pyramid to Maslow’s hierarchy of need. It is hard to stay at the top - at the self-actualization or collaboration level. There is always something to work on.



² PACT = Partnerships, Alliances, and Coordination Techniques, a service of NCCIC.
Spotlight on Collaboration Forums 11.07

Following is a summary of the points from the morning Forum panel and participant discussions.

Collaboration Benefits

For Children

- Improved outcomes.
- Better quality, i.e., more consistent and deeper level of care in collaboration.
- Children with special needs are served immediately in collaboration with school districts. In some collaborations, the special needs staff are on site for the children.
- Full day/year services – increased hours and weeks/days.
- Improved and more staff training to better serve the children.

For Families

- Increased outlets, activities, and education for families and additional staff have resulted in stronger relationships with families.
- Services that better meet parents' needs.
- Continuity of care - children are receiving services at the same site, including siblings.
- Services are provided in communities where families live.

For Providers and Communities

- Serving a wider range of children.
- Maintaining full enrollment by reducing the competition for children.
- Additional support staff so the center director has more time for program development.
- Increased non-federal share, using space and transportation as match.
- Increased staff development, staff salaries and benefits, staff retention, and additional supplies.
- New perspectives and strategies.
- A variety of program options gives you the power to solve many challenges.
- All results in improved services to children and families.

Lessons Learned

Collaborative Relationships, Planning, and Attitude

- Have patience and be accountable. Different regulations, mindsets, backgrounds, and experiences have to be bridged. Collaboration equals flexibility; it is not going to happen overnight.
- Be willing to think and step outside the box. Be aware that you may have an older perception or mind set. Respect other views.
- Relationships are key! Rich relationships take time to develop. Commit to the long haul.
- It is okay to be exactly where you are in the collaboration. Begin with sharing information and inviting all interested parties to the table.
- Understand that we have a common goal, common purpose.
- Allow an agency or person to take the lead.

Cautions, Tips and Final Thoughts

- Couch how you communicate.
- Parents can make or break your program. They do not care who is funding their services, but they do want to know that their child is healthy, safe, loved, and cared for in their absence.
- All come to the partnership with our own agenda.
- Collaboration has strained some relationships, due to the additional responsibilities.
- Some “ramping up” of compliance issues has cost some partnerships.
- There is a lot to learn.
- We could have been collaborating for years. Just do it!
- Collaboration defeats competition. You are one piece of a larger system.
- We have created a new line of business.
- Illinois, the “State,” has been flexible with Child Care and PreK policies for collaborations.

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION TOPICS IN COLLABORATION

Following lunch, the participants self-selected one of four concurrent “Early Care and Education Topics in Collaboration” sessions. Local team members were encouraged to attend separate sessions to maximize the learning from and involvement with the topics. Each session had two co-facilitators and GSGS team members and the consultant rotated among sessions. Participants each used a Discussion Reflections form to record notes and thoughts during the small group. The three areas on the form were: Key Ideas to Share with My State Team, Take Away Messages, and Contacts.

The discussions focused on:

1. Promising collaboration practices in both program collaborations and community coalitions
2. Remaining collaboration challenges and possible strategies to address them
3. Resource and technical assistance needs
4. Next Steps

The four focus areas were:

Administration/Fiscal, which included, but was not limited to, such topics as braiding differing regulations and requirements, eligibility, cost allocation and managing different payment methods, enrollment and attendance, and written agreements.

Education Services, including issues such as curriculum, child screening and assessment, class size, teacher and assistant roles and qualifications, standards (e.g., Illinois Early Learning Standards and Head Start Program Performance Standards), daily schedule and length of day, community screenings, serving special populations (e.g., English language learners), and serving children with disabilities/special needs.

Community Involvement and Outreach, including topics such as recruitment and joint recruitment strategies, community assessment and how data is shared and used, referrals and community agency relationships, and interagency work and meetings.

Parent Engagement and Support Services, including things in the vein of involving families in the child’s education, involving families in the program in meaningful ways, communicating with families, talking to families about issues, and making referrals.

Following the small group sessions, each team met, reviewed the Discussion Reflections sheet, and worked together on completing the Strategic Planning Tool.

PROMISING COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES

Collaborative Relationship and Planning

- Be open and honest and respect each other. Develop trust to the point that it is okay to bring any problems to the table; there is a win/win attitude.
- Attitude is critical. Come to the table as equal partners. No one is the only expert. Each partner has strengths *and* assets to offer to the collaboration. Be aware of jealousy of others' strengths.
- All partners need to be flexible and persistent. Work toward the same reality, but accept different methods.
- Relationships grow deeper with program collaboration experience. Partners understand each other much better, especially after experiencing each other's monitoring systems.
- Have one agency take the lead and then another; develop trust to share leadership.
- Establish a framework for problem solving.
- Be moved by heart, but follow the regulations.
- Involve parents and staff as the partnership develops. Include them in decision-making.
- Develop relationships with the parents. Do they feel vested in the program?

Communication

- Have round table discussions and peer-to-peer interaction.
- Weekly meetings with the teacher and the assigned staff.
- Communicate with each other continuously. Regular meetings - prepare for the meetings and follow up. Have a reason for a meeting and come out with the "next step."
- Master email list.
- Assign someone the authority to make a decision for the collaboration.
- Use information on the web.
- Gather and share testimonies, both successes-benefits and challenges.
- Include everyone in the decision making process. If you are used to deciding everything yourself, this is a new way of running "your business."
- Hire staff that speaks the families' languages and ensure written materials are multilingual. Watch the reading levels of materials. Invest resources in simultaneous translation systems.
- Use a variety of marketing strategies to reach families and the community.

Administrative/Fiscal Services

- Take into account salary equitability. Pair long-term teachers with certified teachers; use a percentage of the funds to the agency to increase teacher salaries and benefits.
- Participate in each other's reviews, i.e., the Head Start federal review and the PreK accountability assessment, to help partners learn more about each other.
- Review the collaborative memorandum of understanding or contract a minimum of once a year. Lay the contract out in a series of monthly timelines and topics. At the monthly meetings of directors, review the contract and it can become a type of training as well as a monitoring tool. Over the course of the year, all "components" are covered.
- Begin the collaboration with several informational meetings for the parents and the staff. Provide training on policy for staff and parents. Examine how standards align.
- Consider and establish shared services, such as transportation, food service, joint purchasing, training, mental health, legal or other special services, consultation, health fairs, and community-wide screenings.
- Look at the possibility of stipends for additional collaboration responsibilities.
- Leadership must send the message that degrees and certificates are valued and staff will be supported. Make staff aware of the TEACH program and other resources to assist them with completing a college degree.
- Maintain a variety of program options so you have the power to solve many challenges. Develop other program models to meet families' needs.
- Provide 101 training about your program to partners.
- Use a grant writer and other contractual services to ease staffs' loads.

- Assign a staff person to manage partnerships.
- Research and learn from other collaborations.
- Have much tighter policies and procedures when collaborating.
- Consider the whole budget when braiding funding; work with auditors and legal on this.

Education Services

- Consider using the same curriculum, assessment tools, and staff training.
- Use screening tools that align with the school district to facilitate referrals.
- Communicate the Early Learning Standards with the kindergarten teacher.
- Have community-wide screenings.
- Develop relationships with colleges and universities to develop qualified teachers:
 - Allow student teaching at the teacher's site
 - Provide classes on site
 - Provide options, like online classes
 - Work with the professor to tailor classes
 - Create program cohorts
 - Provide "combined" training for all teaching staff from all partners.
- Provide substitutes so teachers are able to attend training.
- Have a master teacher to provide mentoring and coaching.
- Curriculum:
 - Work together to develop a common choice for curriculum and strategies for how the curriculum will be implemented.
 - Move from themes to projects.
 - Use many tools.
 - Help teaching staffs understand that the curriculum provides a framework for what children learn and that implementing a curriculum requires planning and organization.
 - Creative Curriculum and High Scope are good curriculums.
 - Provide training on the curriculum for teaching staff.

Parent Engagement & Support Services

- Collaborate so well that the parents do not think about the splits in the program.
- Remember that parents are the first and best teachers of their children. Remember and find out what parents want from a program and for their children.
- Teach families how to negotiate the bureaucracies. Show them where their alternatives are, even if they are not eligible for your program.
- Provide centralized screening for all participants in the collaboration.
- Share parent success stories.
- Define for parents what the program means by accountability, i.e., the child attending regularly, the child arriving on time and being picked up on time, participating in parent activities.
- Provide transportation for parent activities.
- For Home Based, add parent days to the schedule at the site, in addition to group socializations for children.
- Have parents assist with the recruitment process. Do intakes as individual interviews.
- Provide a parent mentoring program. Team current parents with new parents, especially in completing the enrollment process.
- Make connections with other providers so you can make referrals if a parent loses eligibility.
- Team with the local CCR&R to provide training. For example: What is CACFP³? Provide this training for both the social service and the teaching staff so that all staff are informed.
- Write grants or find other funding to provide translation services. Have your bilingual staff assist your partners with translation.
- When a parent loses eligibility for one program, find other enrollment options, refer and advocate for them.
- To increase parent involvement:
 - Ask the parents personally, do not just send a flier.
 - Provide a variety of activities that actually engage parents in their children's education. Provide family projects that can be completed at home.

³ CACFP = Child and Adult Care Food Program; federally funded and administered by ISBE.
Spotlight on Collaboration Forums 11.07

- Ask the parent what he/she wants to do.
- Use the parents' skills and interests. Encourage parents to share the skills or strengths you observe in them.
- Explain the variety of volunteer activities and how they contribute to the program.
- Send out a volunteer interest survey.
- Have a Grandparents day.
- Provide Lucky Bucks or other incentives as parents complete portions of the partnership agreement.
- Assist families in getting library cards.
- Use community events, i.e., library reading nights, parades, Week of the Young Child⁴, etc.
- Provide a lending library.
- Encourage the parents to visit the classrooms and meet the teaching staff.

Community Involvement & Outreach

- Use the community assessment of needs and resources to develop your collaboration.
- Hire staff that live in the community.
- Share community resources among partners.
- Use the United Way as source of information about service providers in the community. Use state entities involved in early childhood collaboration, such as the Illinois Facilities Fund.
- Ensure that you have the same level of decision makers in the decision making process.
- Practices for successful meetings include:
 - Evaluate if the time and location for the meeting is the best for the membership.
 - Have a reason for the meeting.
 - Conduct initial planning, including what is to be discussed, food provided, meeting time, length of meeting, meeting location, etc.
 - Luncheons should be topic driven.
 - Survey the membership and provide topics for discussion or training that are important and relevant to the membership.
 - Share information about the your agency's family needs, or case studies, and ask for assistance from the members present.
 - End the meeting with a "next steps" plan or outcomes.

Enrollment Strategies

- Have a community-wide screening with all the agencies and then make the decision for the best placement for the child.
- Conduct a mass media campaign on a broad level. Do a recruitment kick-off with all partners. Have the phone numbers for all partners on all recruitment materials. Work together on recruitment using joint fliers and combined meetings.
- Have one site parents can contact for information about all possible programs. Work with partners as a coalition.
- Provide training and informational meetings for all agencies in the community.
- Enlist the mayor and city government system in recruitment and making referrals.
- Use doorknockers and ask parents to assist in recruitment.
- Understand each program's parameters around the services provided. Train staff so they understand the rules for all the various programs and collaborations to help get every child into a program that best fits their needs.
- What you say to parents is important. Child care, through IPACS⁵, is verifying parents' income information. Staff must be specific about the rules, regulations and consequences when doing parent intake interviews during recruitment.
- Complete the DHS Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) application with parents. Staff can help parents through the process step by step. Staff can also follow up and ask parents, for example, "Did you receive this letter?" The CCAP application is at an eleventh grade reading level and can be confusing for some parents.

⁴ Week of the Young Child is a nationwide awareness event created by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

⁵ IPACS – Illinois Public Aid Communication System.

- Share a guide of early childhood programs in the community with all applicants. Have a list of child care providers also available.
- Take a look at offering incentives, such as a free membership to the YMCA, paying tuition for one month, offering the first 50 referrals an incentive that you get donated, and offering incentives to staff and agencies that encourage referrals.

COLLABORATION CHALLENGES & STRATEGIES

Shared Vision and Collaborative Relationship

- Challenges come up all the time – expect and address them.
- With all the work to be done, it is difficult to find the time to “groom” the next level of leaders. Need support with succession planning.
- Addressing the perception of the differences between preschool and child care.

Communication

- Miscommunication. Develop a protocol/communication approval process for the collaboration.
- People are “meeting out” and have limited energy. Make meetings as meaningful and efficient as possible.

Administrative & Fiscal Services

- Lack of money, facilities, and space.
- Staffing issues. Differences in requirements among programs. Staff attitudes when you bring in new people, especially more credentialed or degreed staff.
- Recruiting and retaining more bilingual staff.
- Barriers created by the differing regulations and practices among various programs - state and federal administrators need to understand and continue to address these. Examples: approval systems, payment mechanisms, eligibility definitions and criteria, co-payments/parent share paid in child care but not in other programs, definitions of supplementing/supplanting and enhancing, salary differences, etc.
- Staying fully enrolled.
- Sharing information, yet maintaining confidentiality.
- Insufficient infant and toddler slots.
- Local collaborations need a mechanism for reporting issues to the state/federal GSGS team.
- Recruitment with private providers to add services, such as speech.
- Understanding all the programs and systems and their restrictions.
- Support systems for delegate agencies, especially the enrollment focus.
- Helping administrators balance service duties with paperwork.
- Look at streamlining the application processes for the different programs; could there be a joint application?
- Reporting administrative costs under the regulations of different programs.
- Keeping funding streams separate and appropriately accountable, yet braiding programs for seamless services.
- Staying abreast of financial changes and issues with all programs.
- Braiding funding for the inclusion of children with disabilities/special needs.

Education Services

- Providing seamless classroom services for children.
- Differences in the assessment practices of collaborative partners, including the forms used and the number of assessments required per year.
- Partners using different curriculums.
- There is not a lot of agreement of what is the “best” model of language in the classroom.
- Language differences and customs in programs: adjusting to change, need bilingual staff, multiple languages in a classroom, assessing staff competency in other languages, etc.
- Helping teachers to embrace new teaching methods.
- Need cohorts to get the early childhood certificate.
- Some staff persons are unwilling to complete a college degree.
- Have a master teacher in the child care center to provide mentoring and coaching.
- The time required for additional paperwork.
- School phobias, i.e., past school experiences impact parents’ ability or willingness to go back to school.
- Differences in the length of day.
- Not enough forms, literature, etc. are in other languages.

Parent Engagement & Support Services

- Parents can be resistant. Hold meetings, inform them of the collaboration and the complaint process.
- Getting parents involved in the program and partnerships.
- Parents' perception of "the real school" vs. "child care is babysitting."
- Recruitment and parent awareness of the different programs, the curriculum, etc.
- Parents may not be truthful until trust has been developed with the staff member.
- If the child is provided services at more than one site, there may be a disconnect between staff and parents.
- Parents are sometimes afraid to ask for services because they do not know if their legal status will be an issue. Staff needs to understand all the possible ramifications regarding legal status with all the community services that a family might use.
- Parent accountability such as children being dropped off or arriving late.
- Getting home-based parents to collaborate and support each other.
- Getting dental, physical, and other paperwork from parents.
- Working events and activities around parents' work schedules.
- Caseloads are large so staff may only have a few contacts with the parents, resulting in it being difficult to build trust with the parents.
- Different perceptions from each of the partners of the parents' role.

Community Involvement & Outreach

- Making everyone in the community aware of the variety of programs available.
- Neighborhood gentrification has caused many slots to be privatized.
- Duplication of services creates competition between partners and is not good use of public funds.
- The expansion of one program has impacted enrollment for others, especially where there is not good collaboration. In some rural areas there are more funded slots than there are children, while there are limited services in other service areas.
- Children who participate in collaborations often have several transitions throughout the day, which interfere with continuity of care.
- DCFS licensing requirements, such as a requiring a separate entrance and exit.

Resources and Technical Assistance Needs

Possible Resources

- Channing-Bete grant opportunities
- DHS grant list serve
- 708 County Board Mental Health money
- Wisconsin Collaborating Partners website
- National initiatives
- www.grants.gov
- Soft support, i.e., hard cash
- Finance Project
- Rich people
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- PreK, Child Care & Early-Head Start
- Private Pay
- United Way
- Early Reading First grants
- Gifts
- Private funds
- Parents
- T/TA Providers – STARNET, CCR&Rs, BAH
- List serves and websites
- Partnering with other program staff
- Education teams – using staff strengths, talents and interests to train the rest of the staff
- Incentives for staff
- Call for excellence and provide displays from staff “experts”
- Child Development Specialists who train classroom staff
- Literacy & special needs grants
- Local Government
- IL Early Learning www.illinoisearlylearning.org
- Reading Is Fundamental
- USDA
- www.fieldtripfactory.com
- ACF
- Agency money
- Foundations (My Stash)
- CDBG/SS
- TANF
- In-kind
- Employee Funds
- NCCIC & Illinois web sites www.nccic.org and www.ilearlychildhoodcollab.org
- The book Ready or Not: Leadership Choices in Early Care and Education, by Stacie G. Goffin and Valora Washington
- Gateways to Opportunities
- Professional Development Advisors (INCCRRA)
- CCR&Rs
- The United Way

Training and Technical Assistance Needs

- Clear information and guidance on supplanting/supplementing and administrative costs.
- Current information about locating other resources and funding sources.
- Specific information about how each type of collaboration works, who the primary contact people are for each program, etc.
- Strategies around program options and how to offer a menu of services.
- Information on English Language Learners.
- Training on taking staff from idea A to idea B.
- On-site training and training-of-trainers. Peer training
- A community-wide needs assessment system or prototype that could be used by all partners or in joint community assessment.
- Curriculum and assessment options and tools.
- Information about school districts and school district boundaries.
- T/TA on how to develop local community coalitions, bringing all partners to the table.
- Strategies to strengthen existing partnerships or create new ones.
- Specific training on the following topics:
 - DCFS licensing regulations, especially for partners using the standards for the first time
 - Transition practices
 - Where can providers and families go for help
 - Different levels of collaboration training - Collaboration 101 & Advanced Collaboration
 - Specific child care needs
 - Training for school districts on how to work with child care partners
 - A detailed explanation of the services provided by each of the partners’ programs – PreK-PFA, Child Care and Early-Head Start
 - Strategic planning (SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)
 - Facilitation
- Marketing resources. The State needs to do better marketing.

- Consistency with health regulations and documentation among the partners.
- Training on how to make our 1st contacts and the enrollment process less intimidating for parents; how to shorten enrollment and make it more parent friendly.
- Training for staff and parents on the systems related to their legal status.
- More of a system of “seamless” regulations and requirements at the state level.
- Strategies for developing full buy in of partnership staff. How each partner can develop and maintain their own identity within shared vision and partnership.
- Training resources for parents, i.e., behavior classes.

TAKE HOME HIGHLIGHTS

Finally, below are the comments the participants shared at the end of the day about things they learned, that stood out to them, and that they will take home.

- It is important to have a written memorandum of agreement or understanding.
- Collaboration can be a murky process – the shared stories helped to crystallize how to engage various parties.
- Looked at a variety of teaching staff structures, including the roles, duties, full time, part time, and the inclusion of early childhood certified teachers.
- The value of the TEACH program.
- The discussion of the challenges of working with family child care providers helped me better understand the differences in the regulations between our two partners.
- The possible impact of the increase of the minimum wage on enrollment and recruitment.
- Use of and engaging private pay needs more thought and discussion.
- With the influx and engagement of non-English speaking families, programs need to think about engaging them as staff and involving them in the recruitment process.
- Reaching out beyond “specified” service areas to support family needs.
- Issues and concerns related to reports with school district and follow-up reporting.
- It was an opportunity to talk to Head Start staff.
- Addressed enrollment issues.
- How to be notified about various funding sources. Learned about other sources of money.
- Learned that CCAP reimbursement may go up.
- Why partners had not participated.
- It helped me take a step back and focus.
- Got ideas from the fiscal group.
- Thankful for the information on the fact sheets.
- Learned new models of collaboration.
- Will be using the information learned when she meets with the school superintendent.
- Met possible new partners.
- Learned of possible resources for birth-age 3 services.
- Will use the puzzle pieces from the parent involvement session for our local family fun night.
- Learned about new websites.
- I have a better understanding of the differences in the regulations among the three partners – Head Start, PreK-PFA, and Child Care.
- A new term: “Begindergarten.”
- Clarification of “Preschool for All” was requested.

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Conclusions

Early childhood collaborations are alive and well in Illinois; the variety is limited almost only by the imagination. The Participant Overviews in the matrices of this report give an idea of the diversity in providers and collaboration types operating in Illinois.

The three-legged stool still exists. The three different programs - Child Care, PreK/Preschool for All, and Early/Head Start - have different missions; compatible, but different.

- Early-Head Start provides child development, within the framework of comprehensive services, including intensive work with the families
- Child Care provides quality early care and education for children while parents are working or in school
- PreK-Preschool for All's focus is on children's education and school readiness

Many broad and specific successful practices were highlighted at the Forums. However, there are still frustrations and challenges to be addressed at both the state/federal and local levels, especially with the differences in the rules and regulations among the state and federal funders of these programs. Many of the challenges and concerns expressed were the same regardless of the geographic location in the state.

Illinois is one of the few states that has an active GSGS team, whose members are available and willing to work together to ensure that every child in Illinois receives a quality early childhood education. Some members of this team also serve on the Executive Committee of the Illinois Early Learning Council and all GSGS members serve on at least one Committee of the Council.⁶ The members of the Illinois GSGS team are:

Linda Saterfield, Chief
DHS Bureau of Child Care and Development
400 W. Lawrence, 3-W
Springfield, IL 62762
linda.saterfield@illinois.gov
(217) 785-2559
Kay Henderson, Administrator
ISBE Early Childhood Block Grant Program
100 N. First Street
Springfield, IL 62777
khenders@isbe.net
(217) 524-4835

Katie Williams, Acting Program Manager
Region V Administration for Children and Families
233 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 400
Chicago, IL 60601
katie.williams@acf.hhs.gov
(312) 353-4237
DHS Head Start State Collaboration Office
Director

⁶ Information about the IL Early Learning Council can be found at www.illinois.gov/gov/elc/.
Spotlight on Collaboration Forums 11.07

Forum Follow Up

The HSSCO has completed a number of follow up activities since the September 2007 Collaboration Forums in response to requests from participants. These activities included:

- ✓ A grants alert web site address (<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/grants/gas>) was distributed. This site is a grants alert system web link operated by DHS. It has information about various funding opportunities and grants trainings. People can join the list serve and receive the alerts by emailing dhs.grants_listserve@illinois.gov.
- Both the braid diagrams and the QUILT Shaping a Partnership Checklist were also distributed via email to Forum Participants.
- Develop a matrix of the difference of regulations between the three partners –Early/Head Start, Child Care, and PreK. Possible regulations to include are income guidelines, eligibility, service days, service year, health screenings, legal status of undocumented families, class size, reporting administrative costs, etc. Also include ways that collaborations have resolved these differences.
- Provide a list of collaborations with their contact information, so a program can contact similar collaborations in their area.

Next Steps

In addition to the T/TA needs expressed on pages ___ of this report and the state/federal and local level “next steps” cited below, Forum participants also requested:

- Bring the early intervention/birth to three and the family support/home visit communities to the table.
- Work towards one location and one classroom collaboration as the model. Track children’s transitions.
- Dual enrollments are still a collaboration opportunity, where a child is in one program in the morning and another in the afternoon. Do more planning and sharing around these children to make better experiences and ease the transitions.
- Increase communication and awareness about all programs and how they can work together as one. Gather and share collaboration testimonies, both success-benefits and challenges.
- Succession planning – groom the next collaborative leaders.

Specifically more progress is needed in resolving the differences in the areas of:

- ❖ income eligibility including income guidelines;
- ❖ eligibility requirements;
- ❖ “birth date” used for enrollment;
- ❖ class size;
- ❖ health screenings;
- ❖ fiscal regulations such as how to report administrative costs;
- ❖ length of school, i.e., program year;
- ❖ how undocumented families are addressed;
- ❖ the early learning standards and the Head Start performance standards;
- ❖ teaching staff qualifications; and,
- ❖ the redundant and long enrollment process for the families.

State/Federal/Technical Assistance Provider Level

- Provide information about the best mechanisms or avenues for reporting collaboration issues among PreK, Head Start, and Child Care.
- Provide training for those wanting to start collaboration.
- Provide a web site where we can post questions to other collaborations on how they have addressed a specific problem.
- Provide guidance on aligning the Head Start Program Performance Standards and Illinois Early Learning Standards with the most common curricula.
- Research what the colleges and universities are doing around the state of Illinois to assist early childhood educators to complete a bachelor's degree and share with programs so that they can discuss these possibilities with the institutions of higher education in their community.
- Provide an overview the three partners (Early/Head Start, Child Care, and PreK-PFA), including but not limited to: eligibility criteria, description of services, state and federal contact information, etc.
- DCFS licensing issues are not always clear. It would be helpful to get clarification from the state level.
- Redetermination often interferes with children's continuity of care. It was recommended that at a minimum it be an annual process.
- Develop and implement a shared enrollment application or process for all three partners [Child Care, Early/Head Start, and PreK-PFA].
- Explore the possibility of shared electronic databases to help eliminate the duplication in the application process. [Might also be local level.]

Local Level

- Approach new partners.
- To help develop relationships with both the parent and other staff, whenever possible do information sharing in person.
- Understand your own system and know where there is room to change. Federal or state regulations can not be changed. Program policies can be changed.
- Staff has to build a sound relationship and partnership with each parent.
- Within each of the partnerships, staff must buy into the fact that: Parent Involvement is Everybody's Business!

Appendix A

SIUC Head Start & Southern Region Early Childhood Programs Preschool for All (PSFA) Collaboration Facts Sheet

Type of Collaboration. Head Start/PreK-Preschool for All

Collaboration Model. Two or More Agencies Partnering

Administrative and Fiscal.

The collaboration operates at a Head Start facility. The PSFA program shares some of the costs for office, classroom, playground supplies and equipment, transportation, site supervisor. The Site Supervisor/Teacher ensures that the daily operations meet federal DHHS and state DCFS rules and regulations. The Head Start program provides training and monitoring and follow-up to ensure Head Start program requirements are being met.

Education Services.

PSFA provides a 0-4 certified teacher, the Head Start teacher has bachelors in early childhood, and a substitute is provided two days a week for teachers' planning time. An integrated locally designed curriculum and the Creative Curriculum are implemented. Creative Curriculum assessment is used to meet both programs requirements.

Community Involvement & Outreach.

Head Start actively participates in Pre-K Child Find. During the Head Start application process, PSFA conducts developmental screenings and a coordinated process is used to determine eligibility.

Parent Engagement & Support Services.

Head Start provides family assessment and goal setting with an assigned Family/Community Service worker to each family. Head Start parent involvement activities also comply with PSFA expectations.

A Typical Classroom and Typical Day for a Child in the Collaboration.

The classroom environment is designed to meet the Head Start Program Performance Standards, DCFS Licensing Standards, and the Illinois Early Learning Standards.

During a typical day, the PSFA teacher, who serves as the lead, and the Head Start teacher interact with children for the full session and implement a planned daily schedule with age appropriate activities including, but not limited to: family style meals, tooth brushing, hand washing, large group time, individualization, center time, and gross motor (outdoor time).

**Marilyn Queller Child Care Center &
Champaign County Head Start/Early Head Start
Collaboration Facts Sheet**

Type of Collaboration. Child Care/Head Start

Collaboration Model. Two or More Agencies Partnering

Administrative and Fiscal.

Champaign County Head Start/Early Head Start (CCHS) pays a stipend to our partner, Marilyn Queller Child Care Center, for providing HS/EHS child development services for 14 Head Start enrollments and 8 Early Head Start enrollments. The stipend is paid per child for each day the child is enrolled, unless the attendance rate falls below 85%. These classrooms operate a standard child care full day, year-round.

A CCHS Child Development Specialist provides monitoring, support and training for the partnership. A CCHS Family Advocate provides family support services, including child health services, through a Family Partnership agreement. The Family Partnership agreement process includes a family identifying its strengths and goals.

Education Services.

Marilyn Queller staff provides the child development and education services described by the Head Start Program Performance Standards. They complete developmental screenings, including a social-emotional screening, and conduct home visits and parent-teacher conferences. Further, the Marilyn Queller staff conducts ongoing child assessment and use the results, combined with parent input, in lesson planning, individualizing for each child and other classroom planning activities.

Community Involvement & Outreach.

Marilyn Queller identifies itself as a CCHS partner in its materials and signage. CCHS includes Marilyn Queller on its list of locations in program flyers, advertising and presentations. CCHS and Marilyn Queller have ongoing relationships with community entities that provide resources such as the University of IL Book Mentor program (volunteers read to children and the program gives each child a book), health and dental services, etc.

Parent Engagement & Support Services.

Head Start parents at Marilyn Queller have a Parent Committee, from which the parents elect a representative to the CCHS Policy Council that shares in governance of the whole program. As stated above, a Family Advocate provides family support services, including child health services, through a Family Partnership agreement. The Family Partnership agreement process includes a family identifying its strengths and goals. Family nights include a quarterly business meeting and family activities, such as literacy activities, make-it/take-it projects, parent education presentations on child development, nutrition, wellness, etc.

A Typical Classroom and Typical Day for a Child in the Collaboration.

Our child care collaboration classrooms use the same curriculum as our Head Start sites, The Creative Curriculum. Each room is set up with interest areas, labeled in both print and pictures. Classroom posters, displays and books are inclusive of diverse cultures, family types, language and individuals with differing abilities. Interest areas include but not limited to: dramatic play, manipulatives, blocks, writing, sensory, quiet, library, art and science. All meals meet CACFP requirements at a minimum. Health and dental care routines such as hand washing and tooth brushing are incorporated into the schedule throughout the day.

A typical schedule includes: 7:30-8:00, Children Arriving; 8:00-8:30, Family Style Breakfast; 8:30-8:45, Music; 8:45-9:00, Large Group; 9:00-9:20, Small Group Activities and Individualizing; 9:20-10:20, Work Time; 10:30-11:00, Outside Activities; 11:00-11:30, Lunch; 11:40-12:00, Story Time; 12:00-2:00, Nap; 2:00-2:45, Bathroom/Snack; 2:45-3:30, Work Time.

Champaign County Head Start/Early Head Start & ISBE PreK/Preschool for All Collaboration Facts Sheet

Type of Collaboration. Head Start/PreK and Child Care/Head Start/PreK

Collaboration Model. One Agency/Two or More Funding Sources

Administrative and Fiscal.

Champaign County Head Start (CCHS) has been awarded Early Childhood Block Grant Pre-K and Preschool for All (PFA) funding. The Pre-K and PFA funds have allowed CCHS to hire one certified teacher and replace, through attrition, a Head Start qualified teacher in a total of 9 classrooms. The Pre-K and PFA budgets include supplies, staff development activities, parent activities, rent, janitorial services and an allocation for administrative costs, among other smaller line items. Most of the classrooms are six-hour sessions and operate a standard school year. For two of them, we also combine child care services and revenue for 10 hours full-day and full-year programming.

Education Services.

CCHS implements the national Head Start Program Performance Standards in all classrooms no matter the funding source. CCHS uses the Creative Curriculum, which is sanctioned by the Illinois State Board of Education Early Childhood Division, in all classrooms and assesses children with the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum.

Community Involvement & Outreach.

CCHS has ongoing relationships with community entities that provide program resources such as the University of IL Book Mentor program, where volunteers read to children and the program gives each child a book, and Rotary and Schools, where volunteers read to children. CCHS also expands services to enrolled families/children through partnerships, such as Central Illinois Education and Services for dental exams, fluoride treatments and follow-up care. CCHS staff participates on a number of community committees such as the Latino Partnership, Birth to 5 Council, and United Way. Staff distribute flyers and applications to various service providers and participate in community events such as a job fair for the village of Rantoul, the University of IL graduate student fair, National Night Out, etc.

Parent Engagement & Support Services.

Head Start parents at each CCHS site have a Parent Committee from which the parents elect a representative to the CCHS Policy Council, which shares in the governance of the entire program. Each site holds monthly events which include the Parent Committee quarterly business meeting and family activities, such as literacy activities, make-it/take-it projects, parent education presentations on child development, nutrition, wellness and other topics chosen by the families.

Family Advocates provide family support services, including child health services, through a Family Partnership agreement. The Family Partnership agreement process includes a family identifying its strengths and goals.

A Typical Classroom and Typical Day for a Child in the Collaboration.

Each room is set up with interest areas, labeled in both print and pictures. Classroom posters, displays and books are inclusive of diverse cultures, family types, language and individuals with differing abilities.

On a typical day the children arrive to school at 9:00. Shortly after arrival, the children eat breakfast. The morning schedule includes circle time, child choice for learning centers, small group activities, and outdoor/gross motor play. Late in the morning, the children eat lunch and then have a rest period. After rest time, the children eat snack. The children are dismissed at 3:00.

Meals follow the CACFP guidelines at a minimum. Health and dental care routines such as hand washing and tooth brushing are incorporated into the daily schedule.

**Early Learning Quad Cities
Collaboration Facts Sheet**

(The Early Learning Quad Cities is the PreK/PFA component of our Early Childhood Coalition)

Type of Collaboration. Child Care/Head Start/PreK-Preschool for All (PFA)

Collaboration Models. One Agency/Two or More Funding Sources
 Two or More Agencies Partnering
 Agency and Family Child Care

Administrative and Fiscal.

The collaboration rests on the principle foundation of two main partners: the Coalition Board and the Regional Office of Education. These two entities work hand in glove to implement the initiatives that receive grant funds.

Education Services.

In partnership with the Rock Island County Regional Office of Education and several early care and education providers since 2003, Early Learning Quad Cities (ELQC) provides pre-kindergarten support services to children three to five years of age in community-based settings in Rock Island County. Teachers certified in early childhood education partner with site staff to provide educational programming based on the Illinois Early Learning Standards and Creative Curriculum. As of FY07, ELQC serves 540 children in 27 center and home-based classrooms at 10 early care and education programs. ELQC is supported by grant funds from the Illinois State Board of Education.

Community Involvement & Outreach.

The diversity of the members of the coalition enable natural outreach and sharing of materials/information, for example, United Way's current initiative "40 Developmental Assets" is brought in depth to all members for dissemination to all families; all home and center providers and schools are solicited for involvement; we participate in community events with our banner and materials; we conduct media conferences to promote awareness of our projects.

Parent Engagement & Support Services.

We offer home visiting services, parent and child interaction activities, parent education meetings, screenings, overall support, mental health consultations/referrals, nutritional educational, family social gatherings, we promote community family events.

A Typical Classroom and Typical Day for a Child in the Collaboration.

At the family child care providers in our collaboration, the 04 certified teacher arrives at 9 and provides direct instruction with all the pre school children in the home. The home provider participates and assists the teacher, working as a team. Together, they create a curriculum to be used for the week. The Parent Educator also makes weekly visits and provides support to the provider and parents.

6:00 – 9:00 am child arrives

8:00 am	breakfast
8:30 am	free play in learning centers
9:00 -10:30	04 certified teacher arrives for PreK/PFA session
10:30- 11:30	Outside time
11:30 – 12:30	Transition time/lunch
12:30-2:30	Naptime
2:30-3:00	Snack
3:00-parent arrives	Play in learning centers

Early Childhood Coalition of the Illinois Quad City Area (ECC)

Coalition Facts Sheet

Community Included in the Coalition.

Rock Island County: Rock Island, Milan, Moline, East Moline, Silvis and smaller municipalities

How the Coalition Formed. Purpose and Goals.

Supported by the University of Illinois Extension and the Rock Island County Regional Office of Education (RI ROE), ECC has evolved from an informal group of individuals that began meeting in 2001 to a membership organization governed by a Board of Directors with active committees. Bylaws were created and a formal governance structure was adopted in 2005. The first Board of Directors was voted in by the ECC membership, with terms starting in July 2005. ECC was incorporated in January 2006 and received 501c(3) nonprofit status in December 2006.

The Early Childhood Coalition of the Illinois Quad City Area (ECC) is a dynamic collaboration of educators, service providers, parents and community members working as one to create a comprehensive system of services for young children and their families.

- Identify and fill gaps in services to young children and their families
- Facilitate communication regarding issues and initiatives impacting young children, families and service providers
- Secure funding sources to expand services to young children and families
- Promote parent education and professional development opportunities
- Provide networking opportunities for those working on behalf of young children and families

Three Major Challenges Experienced in Coalition Development and How They Were Addressed.

- a. Identifying the stakeholders, creating awareness, defining purpose, deciding organizational structure, who answers to who, how are final decisions are made with so many different perspectives and systems in place, and yet all striving to best serve young children and families together in a coalition for which there is no existing pattern
- b. Willingness of participants to set aside any past history and create a new future, together as mutual partners on behalf of all children and families in this community—our tagline which became “together, we are better”
- c. So heavily volunteer dependent, it is a challenge for each participant to be as involved as needed

How the Coalition Operates.

Board positions consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Committee Chairs and At Large Board Members. Board positions are elected by the ECC membership for two-year rotating terms: the Vice President, Secretary/Chair of Communications, Chair of Child Find, Chair of Parenting and one of two At Large Board members are elected one year; the President, Treasurer/Chair of Funding, Chair of Early Care & Education and the second At Large Board Member is elected the next. All Board Members serve on a voluntary basis. Elections take place at the June ECC general membership meeting. Bylaws, policies, and procedures are developed by the Board and approved by vote by the ECC membership and/or Board as appropriate. Standing committees, staffed and operated by volunteers are: Executive, Child Find, Communications, Early Care and Education; Funding; Parenting and Ad Hoc.

Our PreK 2003 formed itself into “Early Learning Quad Cities” (ELQC) with classrooms located at five sites. ELQC selected ROE as the Fiscal Agent and Program Manager in partnership with ECC governance. Paid staff is limited to positions supported by grant funds, of which there are two administrative and 20+ direct service positions in classrooms/with parents (04 certified teachers, parent educators, etc). Additionally, we have one more paid position with a different fiscal agent, Mental Health Coordinator (IDHS). Main funding comes from Early Childhood Block Grant and IDHS. All other activities are also volunteer driven and annually supported by grants. Tracking in kind volunteer hours would demonstrate significant time invested by partners around our table.

Major Activities of the Coalition.

The ECC has both short and long-term projects. Examples of short-term projects include Voter Awareness & Registration Campaigns and a Community Resource Directory. Examples of long-term projects follow: *Birth to Five Developmental Screenings*. Since 2003, ECC has been part of a collaboration to provide free early learning and developmental screenings for children ages birth to five. At these free screenings children are assessed in the areas of: vision, hearing, speech, developmental milestones, and if over age three, preschool readiness. These screenings are conducted in collaboration with many agencies including but not limited to: Black Hawk Area Special Education District, Rock Island Health Department, Child and Family Connections, Rock Island Regional Office of Education, Department of Specialized Care for Children, and local school districts.

Caregiver Connections. In partnership with the Robert Young Center for Community Mental Health and Community Child Care Resource & Referral since 2006, Caregiver Connections provides mental health consultation services to early care and education providers in the Illinois Counties of Henry, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, Mercer, Rock Island, and Warren. Caregiver Connections is supported by grant funds from the Illinois Department of Human Services.

Early Learning Quad Cities. In partnership with the Rock Island County Regional Office of Education and several early care and education providers since 2003, Early Learning Quad Cities (ELQC) provides pre-kindergarten support services to children three to five years of age in community-based settings in Rock Island County. Teachers certified in early childhood education partner with site staff to provide educational programming based on the Illinois Early Learning Standards and Creative Curriculum. As of FY07, ELQC serves 540 children in 27 center and home-based classrooms at 10 early care and education programs. ELQC is supported by grant funds from the Illinois State Board of Education.

Quad City Early Childhood Conference. Since 2004, ECC has been a sponsor of the Quad City Early Childhood Conference, a bi-state initiative, along with Black Hawk College, Community Child Care Resource & Referral, Iowa State University Extension, Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency, Project NOW Head Start, Quad Cities Association for the Education of Young Children, Rock Island County Regional Office of Education, Scott Community College, Scott County Empowerment, Western Illinois University, and WQPT-Quad Cities PBS.

Quality For All Early Childhood Teacher Preparation. In partnership with the RI ROE, Bureau/Henry/Stark ROE, Henderson/Mercer/Warren ROE, and Western Illinois University since 2007, the Quality For All (QFA) Early Childhood Teacher Preparation project identifies and supports candidates in pursuit of Early Childhood Teacher certification. QFA is supported by grant funds from the Illinois State Board of Education.

In addition to our formal projects, this Coalition requires annual Action Plans from each committee of the Board. These Action Plans drive the work of the upcoming year and outline the accomplishments from prior years. Communications amongst members is a major activity in and of itself, as there our field undergoes such growth! Examples of communications shared include: advocacy, opportunities for training, research and reports, and other community initiatives.

How the Coalition Supports the Community's Early Care & Education Providers and Collaborations.

This Coalition has come to be recognized as the foundation for high quality initiatives in the IL Quad Cities. Hence, all the key players join together to share, advocate, fund, volunteer, and pool resources in support of continual quality improvement and efficiency. This coalition has made new opportunities available for so many; premiere staff training is available which results in significant professional growth and program improvement.

Appendix B

Lifelink Corporation Collaboration Facts Sheet

Type of Collaboration. Head Start/Child Care & Early Head Start/Child Care

Collaboration Model. One Agency/Two or More Funding Sources

Administrative and Fiscal.

Lifelink extends the Early/Head Start days for children and families by using CCAP in the certificate program through the YWCA CCR&R. This braiding of funding and programs has resulted in smaller child:staff ratios, with 4 full time staff in Head Start classrooms and 3 for 8 children in Early Head Start. Staff turn over is low. The centers are NAEYC and COA accredited. Staff is reflective of the families' cultures. The full day program does not provide transportation. Braiding the CCAP funding has resulted in more paperwork for program administrative staff, with the eligibility reports and records required and the reimbursement process. Both programs' services are available to children and families in the same classrooms.

Education Services.

Head Start Program Performance Standards are implemented in all aspects of the program. In education, this means curriculum, screening and ongoing assessment, child outcomes tracking, and individualization. In Early Head Start collaborations, therapists come to the full day sites to provide services to children with disabilities/special needs through the Child & Family Connections. A strong referral system is also in place. Staff has adequate out of classroom time for planning, training and home visits.

Community Involvement & Outreach.

The Head Start Community Assessment was used to identify the need for additional full day/year services in the community. Head Start comprehensive services bring an array of community partnerships to families. The Health Services and Family & Community Partnerships Advisory Committees bring local resources and expertise to the program. Staff training is open to local providers and the program has served as a HeadsUp! Reading site. Strong partnerships are in place with the local school districts, LEAs and Child & Family Connections.

Parent Engagement & Support Services.

Families participate in parent groups and support groups at the centers. Families are also involved in program decision making via Head Start Parent Committees and Policy Council. An array of parent training and participation opportunities is available at each center.

A Typical Classroom and Typical Day for a Child in the Collaboration.

The classrooms operate from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day. Classrooms are set up according to the Head Start Program Performance Standards, with classroom time, both individual and group activities, and outdoor time scheduled. Infants and young toddlers are on their own home schedules. Older toddlers and preschoolers spend time in classrooms and outdoors in the mornings, have lunch, and rest time after lunch. Breakfast and 2 snacks are also provided.

Lifelink & District 45 First Step Early Childhood Program Collaboration Facts Sheet

Type of Collaboration. Head Start/PreK

Collaboration Model. Two or More Agencies Partnering

Administrative and Fiscal.

The Head Start – PreK classrooms are at Schafer Elementary School. Villa Park District 45 provides space, transportation, and services to children with disabilities at no cost to Head Start. Materials and equipment are shared. Both classrooms are double session, so children attend PreK in the morning and Head Start in the afternoon or vice versa.

Education Services.

Educational services implement the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the IL Early Learning Standards, so children benefit from both approaches. The staff from both programs works collaboratively to individually meet the needs of the children. Team meetings are held regularly to coordinate instruction & to discuss children’s needs. A research-based curriculum is used, child outcomes are tracked, families benefit from home visits and parent conferences, and staff implement ongoing child assessment. Some of the children in this collaboration that have disabilities are also in early childhood special education classrooms.

Community Involvement & Outreach.

Head Start comprehensive services bring an array of community partnerships to families. Interns from local institutions of higher education work in the program. The Health Services and Family & Community Partnerships Advisory Committees bring local resources to the program. Head Start and the School District collaboration on Child Find and the Preschool Screening process to ensure the identification of children and families who would benefit most from services.

Parent Engagement & Support Services.

Families are able to participate in parent groups and support groups at the center. Families are also involved in program decision-making via the Head Start Parent Committee and Policy Council. Joint participation in all aspects of the program is so strong that parents do not make a distinction between staff, but see them all as their children’s teachers.

A Typical Classroom and Typical Day for a Child in the Collaboration.

The program operates about 7 hours per day, with one group of children attending 2.5 hours of PreK in the morning, eating lunch, and attending 3.5 hours of Head Start in the afternoon. All children eat lunch together. The second group of children reverses this schedule. Classrooms are set up according to the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the IL Early Learning Standards.

Chicago Department of Children & Youth Services' (CYS) Delegate Agencies and Partners

Collaboration Facts Sheet

Types of Collaboration. Child Care/Head Start, Child Care/PreK, Child Care/Head Start/PreK, and Head Start/PreK

Collaboration Models. One Agency/Two or More Funding Sources, Two or More Agencies Partnering, and Agency and Family Child Care

Administrative and Fiscal.

CYS administers both Early/Head Start and child care funding via contracts with a network of delegate agencies and partners throughout Chicago. Some of the delegates/partners also access CCAP certificate funding through Action for Children's CCR&R. Many of the delegates are part of the Chicago Public Schools' Community Partners program and collaborate PreK/Preschool for All funding to the benefit of the children and families they serve.

A number of delegate agencies partner with multiple child care agencies in their communities. Others operate family child care home networks in which collaborative services are provided in homes. CYS delegates and partners serve more than 500 Child Care/Early Head Start, more than 4,000 Child Care/Head Start, almost 300 Child Care/PreK and almost 3,000 Child Care/Head Start/PreK children in Chicago. Collaboration has aided in the retention of qualified staff, provided enhance programming as centers comply with the highest of standards, and provided funding for improved materials and equipment.

Education Services.

Implementation of the Head Start Program Performance Standards provides for use of a research-based curriculum (generally, Creative Curriculum is used), screening and ongoing child assessment, daily health checks, social/emotional screening, and child outcomes tracking through COPA. PreK classrooms also implement the IL Early Learning Standards. Children's needs are met through developmentally appropriate, individualized and group programming. Children with disabilities/special needs receive services in classrooms and through referrals.

Community Involvement & Outreach.

The full range of comprehensive services is provided to all collaboration families through a variety of partners in each Chicago community. Community and citywide partnerships focus on increasing services in collaboration slots to foster children and homeless children. Strong health, workforce development, social services, literacy, and education partnerships are maintained at both the community and citywide levels, among them with Chicago Public Schools, various institutions of higher education, Chicago Dept. of Public Health, and DCFS. The University of Chicago's Chapin Hall for Children maintains a web site of community data, which CYS and its delegates/partners use in community assessment to ensure service needs match delivery points.

Parent Engagement & Support Services.

Parents are engaged in program governance through a network of Head Start Parent Committees, Policy Committees and the citywide Policy Council. Each center provides parent training and activities. Parents are linked to career development programs such as the University of IL Chicago's FAST Center for Literacy. Local agencies pay particular attention to male involvement through fatherhood programs. Parents have the opportunity to take advantage of supports needed to realize their goals and work on their family plans with center staff.

A Typical Classroom and Typical Day for a Child in the Collaboration.

Specific schedules of care vary somewhat among delegate agencies and partner programs, however, all are designed to: structure individual, small group and large group activities into a predictable daily routine; provide a physical environment organized into interest areas, with a quiet area and outdoor play space; make available a supply of quality books; maintain a home lending library for families to use on a regular basis; place special emphasis on daily and weekly emergent literacy activities; and, provide directed and child-initiated activities.

Child Care Network of Evanston (CNE) Program & Coalition Collaboration Facts Sheet

Types of Collaboration. Child Care/Head Start, Child Care/PreK, Child Care/Head Start/PreK, Head Start/PreK, and Evanston Community Foundation--Communityworks

Collaboration Model. One Agency/Two or More Funding Sources, Two or More Agencies Partnering, and Agency and Family Child Care

Administrative and Fiscal.

Childcare/Head Start/PreK: Administration and fiscal responsibility is with the Evanston/Skokie School District 65 (child care is only for full day Head Start slots).

Childcare/Early Head Start: Administration and fiscal responsibility is with the Child Care Network of Evanston.

Child Care/PreK: Both District 65 and CNE administer PreK At Risk grants for collaboration in the community with programs that may or may not include child care.

Evanston Community Foundation (ECF) has awarded grants to two agencies, CNE and Infant Welfare Society, for collaborative efforts to do Birth to Three Home Visiting. These Communityworks grants are supported by Grand Victoria Foundation's support of the ECF.

Community Included in the Coalition.

This Collaboration is within the Township of Evanston, which includes School District 65. According to the Metro Chicago Facts Online, the number of Evanston children under five years in 2007 is approximately 5,369. Of these children, roughly half are in the birth to three years age range. Census data indicates that in Evanston 28% of children living with a single mother are poor. The poverty rates for children under 5 years of age are: White-3.5%; Black-13%; Asian-4%; and, Hispanic-8%. Latinos/Hispanics are the fastest growing population (2000 Census 6.1% to 2009 projection 13%) Evanston has thirty early childhood center based programs and twice as many family child care homes.

How the Coalition Formed. Purpose and Goals.

The Coalition originally formed in 2000 to bring together all the stakeholders in Early Childhood Care and Education/Family Services throughout the Evanston community. The purpose was to work together and pool energy and resources to create a more cohesive whole, in order to better serve Evanston children and families.

Vision: Every child in our community will have the opportunity to experience an excellent early childhood education that reflects the diversity of our community.

Purpose of the Collaboration: To support, maintain, and build capacity for a comprehensive, high quality early childhood system serving all children, birth to age 8, and their families.

Three Major Challenges Experienced in Coalition Development and How They Were Addressed.

Current challenges:

- 1) Keeping up with responsibilities for the leadership and facilitation of the Collaboration.
- 2) Engaging the religious community, social services and the local businesses.
- 3) High involvement when programs benefit from 'what's in it for me?' and lower investment of time and energy when programs must be focused on it's own priorities.

How the Coalition Operates.

The Collaboration has become a dues-paying, membership organization comprised of organizations and individuals who are involved and interested in the field of early childhood education, especially in the Evanston community.

The Collaboration serves as an Advisory Body to the Childcare Network of Evanston, which provides operational support and functions as the fiscal agent for activities and programs undertaken by the Collaboration. It will be the responsibility of Collaboration members to define goals and action plans for its efforts.

Childcare Network will share its resources to enable the efforts of the Collaboration. However, funding for activities of the Collaboration will come from membership dues and shared fundraising efforts of its members.

A Steering Committee was established to create the agenda for the full Collaboration, to make recommendations to the Collaboration regarding governance and structure, and to seek out and share information regarding funding opportunities. The Steering Committee consists of 10 members representing a variety of stakeholders in Early Childhood in the community, as well as two standing members, the CNE Executive Director and a representative of the CNE Board of Directors.

Major Activities of the Coalition.

Community Forums of interest to stakeholders—State Legislators to discuss early childhood issues; Reporting on the changing demographics of the community; Advocacy leaders from Action for Children; Information on the Preschool for All funding opportunities.

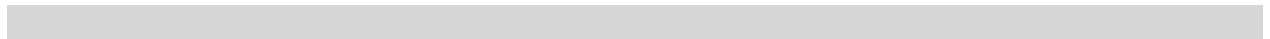
Professional Development workshops—Early Childhood Symposium for parents and professionals; Early Learning Standards training offered twice annually; Evanston Public Library, Children’s Librarians—Every Child Ready to Read for parents and professionals.

Collaborating on grant applications to support the entire early childhood community—Preschool for All being the largest focus.

How the Coalition Supports the Community’s Early Care & Education Providers and Collaborations.

Collaboration Members ...

- Share ideas and resources that benefit members
- Participate in shared efforts to attract private and public funding for Evanston’s early education community
- Contribute to and benefit from shared data on Evanston and its early education community
- Recognize that the growth and strength of early childhood education is a shared community effort
- Create greater influence and credibility than any single group
- Establish better trust and communication
- Reduce unnecessary duplication of effort
- Engage in shared leadership and shared decision making



Appendix C

Participant Overview: Springfield Forum

Fifty-six (56) people registered, with 51 (91%) actually attending.

Participant Representation included:

- ✓ 3 people from two different CCR&Rs; 1 was also an Early Learning Council member
- ✓ 1 person from the Region V Head Start T/TA system (Booz Allen Hamilton)
- ✓ 1 INCCRRA Executive Director
- ✓ 3 DHS Bureau of Child Care & Development staff
- ✓ 1 ISBE Early Childhood Division Administrator
- ✓ 1 person from a Regional Office of Education
- ✓ 1 from a Community College Early Childhood Dept.
- ✓ 1 from University of IL Extension
- ✓ 1 consultant/report writer
- ✓ 2 specialists from NCCIC
- ✓ 1 Coordinator from a regional PreK/PFA consortium
- ✓ 21 Directors and staff from 12 Head Start grantees
- ✓ 1 Early Head Start-only grantee Director
- ✓ 13 Directors and staff from 7 child care agencies

Collaboration Types represented by participating agencies included:

1. Child Care/PreK-PFA – 3 agencies
2. Head Start/PreK-PFA – 1 agency
3. Child Care/Head Start – 2 agencies
4. Child Care/Early Head Start – 1 agency
5. Child Care/Early and Head Start – 1 agency
6. Child Care/Head Start & Child Care/PreK-PFA – 2 agencies
7. Head Start/Child Care & Head Start/PreK-PFA – 5 agencies
8. Head Start/Child Care & Early Head Start/Prevention Initiative – 1 agency
9. Head Start/Child Care/PreK-PFA – 2 agency
10. 2 with no current collaborations – one person was hoping to develop collaboration and 1 used to have a Child Care/Head Start collaboration

Notes about Collaboration Types: The difference between numbers 6-8 and 9 above are that in 6-8, the agencies have both kinds of collaboration, but all three programs/funding streams are not in the same slots, as they are in #9. For example, agencies in #s 6-8 may have some CC/HS classrooms and some CC/PreK-PFA classrooms, but they have no CC/HS/PreK-PFA classrooms, like the agencies in #9 do.

Team Approach and Representation

The original idea was to have local teams participate in the Forums. This was expressed in the announcement flier that advertised them. However, this idea didn't seem to translate well into registrations. This is a concept that should be followed up on in future "Spotlight on Collaboration: Deepening Our Focus" efforts. Participants were encouraged to and did take extra packets to help with planning local collaborations. *See Appendix H: Participant Packet Contents List.*

Nine local area teams attended, including 4 community early childhood teams and 5 intra-agency teams, i.e., more than one staff person attended from the agency, but no local partners. The rest of the participants came as individuals.

Appendix C

Participant Overview: Lisle Forum

Eighty-one (81) people registered, with 68 (84%) actually attending. Four (4) people registered on site.

Participant Representation included:

- ✓ 3 people from 2 different CCR&Rs
- ✓ 4 ACF Region V staff
- ✓ 3 DHS Bureau of Child Care & Development staff
- ✓ 1 ISBE Early Childhood Division Administrator
- ✓ 2 STARNET representatives
- ✓ 1 person from an early childhood advocacy agency
- ✓ 1 person from an early childhood coalition with no program collaborations
- ✓ 1 consultant/report writer
- ✓ 2 NCCIC specialists
- ✓ 21 Directors and staff from 6 Head Start grantees
- ✓ 7 Directors and staff from 4 Head Start delegate agencies
- ✓ 1 Early Head Start-only grantee Director
- ✓ 2 (Director and staff) from an Early Head Start grantee that is also a Head Start delegate agency
- ✓ 18 Directors and staff from 14 child care agencies
- ✓ 1 school district representative

Collaboration Types represented by participating agencies included:

1. Child Care/PreK-PFA – 7 agencies
2. Child Care/Head Start – 2 agencies
3. Child Care/Early Head Start & Child Care/Head Start – 1 agency
4. Child Care/Early Head Start & Child Care/PreK-PFA – 1 agency
5. Child Care/Early Head Start & Child Care/Head Start/PreK-PFA – 2 agencies
6. Child Care/Head Start & Child Care/Head Start/PreK-PFA – 1 agency
7. Head Start/Child Care & Head Start/PreK-PFA – 2 agencies
8. Head Start/Child Care/PreK-PFA – 9 agencies
9. 1 with no current collaborations

Notes about Collaboration types: The difference between numbers 3-4 and 8 above are that in 3-4, the agencies have both kinds of collaboration, but all three programs/funding streams are not in the same slots, as they are in #8. For example, agencies in #s 3-4 may have some CC/HS classrooms and some CC/PreK-PFA classrooms, but they have no CC/HS/PreK-PFA classrooms, like the agencies in #8 do.

Teams Approach and Representation

As in Springfield, the original planning idea was to have local teams participate in the Forums, but again this didn't seem to translate well into registrations. Once more, participants were encouraged and did take extra packets home to plan with their local teams. *See Appendix H: Participant Packet Contents List.*

There were 9 teams in attendance, including six community and three intra-agency teams. The six community teams included three Head Start grantees and their delegate agencies.

Appendix D

Evaluation Results: Springfield Forum

Participation

- 56 registered for the Forum.
- 51 attended.
- 18 returned evaluation forms out of a possible 45 (total registrants minus organizers and facilitators, or 40%).
- 13 (72%) of the evaluation forms had comments and 5 (28%) included just ratings.

Please put an “X” in the box that best describes your opinion as a result of attending this forum ...	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
1. I increased my knowledge about promising collaboration practices, opportunities and challenges in the IL early care & education partnerships.	16/89%	2/11%			
2. I learned more about community-based practices currently working in IL.	10/56%	8/44%			
3. I determined with my local team members next steps & actions to take away.	6/33%	8/44%			3/17%*
4. I am better informed about available technical assistance.	7/39%	7/39%	2/11%		2/11%

*1, or 5%, didn't mark #3.

The best features of this forum were ...

- I enjoyed the Community Involvement group topic.
- The facilitators from NCCIC were great.
- Panel
- Discussion group
- Collaboration forum
- Collaboration
- Listening to others' ideas – better understanding of collaboration & how it works.
- Just hearing stories of other agencies.
- The organization of the day – overview, panel stories, time to discuss specific topics.
- Pace of the day – thanks to everyone who kept it moving along.
- The information that came from people's questions – especially answers from people who are practicing in program – the good specific tips.
- Sharing – many opportunities to listen & learn & a wonderful packet of resources.
- Networking
- Discussion & sharing
- Shared info
- Break outs & table discussions

Suggestions for improvement ...

- Nothing
- We need more of these professional development opportunities if we are expected to implement & participate in collaborative practice.
- I would have liked a summary of the 4 break out sessions before we had time to “discuss” with our teams – especially as I wasn’t part of a “team” that was here today.
- Disappointed that more PreK folks weren’t here – sends a message.
- More time for each break out topic – perhaps a full day for each topic with GSGS team in attendance to provide technical assistance.
- N.A.

Other comments and reactions I wish to offer ...

- I would love an easy way to understand all the state/national initiatives/funding sources in early childhood education/social emotional learning & in recruitment of child care workforce.
- We also need more written information on Preschool for All and more talk about the models that day cares are having success with.
- I love the idea of the state grant information web site.
- Would like to see more school district staff represented.
- For my part, I would like more child care providers.
- Enjoyed talking with other people.
- The break out session was informative.

Evaluation Results: Lisle Forum

Participation

- 81 registered for the Forum.
- 68 attended, including 4 who registered on site.
- 42 returned evaluation forms out of a possible 62 (total registrants minus organizers and facilitators), or 68%.
- 39 (93%) of the evaluation forms had comments and 3 (7%) included just ratings.

Please put an “X” in the box that best describes your opinion as a result of attending this forum ...	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
1. I increased my knowledge about promising collaboration practices, opportunities and challenges in the IL early care & education partnerships.	22/52%	20/48%			
2. I learned more about community-based practices currently working in IL.	13/31%	26/62%	2/5%*		
3. I determined with my local team members next steps & actions to take away.	15/36%	18/43%	2/5%	2/5%	4/10%**
4. I am better informed about available technical assistance.	15/36%	18/43%	8/19% 1? – 2%		

*1, or 2%, didn’t mark #2. **1, or 2%, didn’t mark #3

The best features of this forum were ...

- Interactive quality of panel; panel was great/effective! (8/21%)
- The speakers – how open they were to us.

- Liked the format in the morning – interviewing style kept things rolling.
- Participant list. (2/5%)
- Having state/federal people present.
- Bringing together this body of people.
- Interactive nature.
- Really good ideas about providing resources to make sure all families in need get service.
- Interaction w/entire IL early childhood network.
- To have the opportunity to speak about issues that we have.
- To have the opportunity to share with the group facts that work for us. (2/5%)
- Conversations around real issues! Open discussion about “real” issues. Freedom to speak our minds about our concerns. (4/10%)
- Great opportunity for participation.
- Break out sessions. Discussion & resources in small groups. (8/21%)
- Representation of child care and educational services, PreK, Head Start & CCR&R. (2/5%)
- Opportunity to hear first hand what other programs are doing and what has been tried and didn’t work for their program.
- Networking; opportunity to network with new people; mixing with others to develop strategies to meet our challenges. (5/13%)
- Hearing other ideas for funding.
- [Hearing about] the training opportunities available for staff and parents.
- Hearing best practices.
- Different aspects of the collaborations.
- All of the information about the Head Start/collaboration program.
- Identifying issues that are affecting programs so that further discussion can occur on how to work through these issues.
- Opportunity to express concerns & issues relevant to successful collaboration.
- Fiscal/administrative discussion went very well. (2/5%)
- Forum is useful for practitioners.
- Hearing how many programs share same concerns, issues.
- Creative options – to accommodate families.
- Braiding vs. blending.
- Cost allocation.
- Revisit budget based on business plan & mission.
- Share the challenges of providing affordable child care.
- Lunch.
- Energy of presenters & facilitators.

Suggestions for improvement ...

- It would be good to have more than one and perhaps discussing different content by panel, having people from different agencies but responding to same topic.
- Form future work groups on issues raised.
- More time for Q & A.
- Break out sessions could have gone a little longer; topics got hot & interesting; longer time for all group discussion on what strategies are used program-wide. (4/10%)
- Have these more often; should have annual meetings. (2/5%)
- Provide different level of TA for collaboration.
- Nothing – great planning.
- Having more training for agencies on the Licensing Standards and the community assessment procedures.
- Need more time to talk about strategies & how to work through issues; didn’t seem to have enough time to come up w/solutions to problems. (2/5%)
- The community partnerships break out was not very productive – felt like focus on complaining about problems versus looking at best practices & solutions.
- Description for the purpose of afternoon activities & more structure to discussion.
- Invite partners & have small working groups to communicate issues.
- Less talking from “panel” and more participants input; cut off long winded panel members. (2/5%)

- More opportunities for additional sessions.
- More break-outs.
- More hands on & video supports.
- Look for other available resources. Is there a clearinghouse or resource that lists all available sources of funding?
- Have separate meetings for Head Start & Child Care/PreK, because it seems like our mission & goals are very different.
- Serve continental breakfast.

Other comments and reactions I wish to offer ...

- Take participants' suggestions into consideration.
- Excellent training.
- Would like to get the "summary" report from both forums.
- Would like information on how the data gathered today will be used.
- Feel personally that a community-wide assessment completed with all major players would be a great starting place for beginning the collaborative process.
- Thank you for the opportunity to network & learn from our colleagues & peers.
- Excellent facilitators & resources. Thank you!
- Have more forums – job well done.
- Doesn't all of society, starting within our own community, benefit from every child receiving a quality preschool/child care experience?
- Well planned.