



Ohio Head Start Plus Study Final Report

by

Diane Schilder, EdD
Benjamin Chauncey
Ashley Smith
Sheila Skiffington

Education Development Center, Inc.
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02458

Funded by Ohio Department of Job and Family Services in partnership with the
Ohio Department of Education

Submitted to:

Terrie Hare

Bureau Chief, Bureau of Child Care and Development
Office for Children and Families
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
Columbus, Ohio

Sandra Miller

Office of Early Childhood Education
Center for Students, Families, and Communities
Ohio Department of Education
Columbus, Ohio

March 2005

Copyright © March 2005. Education Development Center, Inc. With attribution, this report may be freely reproduced and distributed without permission for educational, non-commercial purposes, but cannot be sold or republished without written permission.

This report was developed by the Education Development Center, Inc. to learn about the nature of the new Head Start Plus program in the state of Ohio.

The research activities conducted by Education Development Center, Inc. have been funded through a grant from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services in partnership with the Ohio Department of Education (Contract #05-115). Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funders.

OHIO HEAD START PLUS STUDY

FINAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose and Design of the Study

To address questions of Ohio decision makers about the Title IV-A Head Start Plus program, researchers at the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) conducted a survey research study between June and December 2004. The purpose of the study was to provide data about differences between child care centers receiving Head Start Plus grants and comparison centers. EDC researchers administered surveys to 50 child care centers in the summer and fall of 2004. The research team analyzed differences between centers receiving Head Start Plus grants and comparison centers that did not receive such grants in terms of: background characteristics; teacher education and professional development; use of assessment instruments and standard curriculum; linkages to comprehensive screenings, referrals, and services; and resources accessed and challenges faced in administering services. The survey was developed with feedback from a national expert advisory committee and a review of existing instruments. It included closed-ended items as well open-ended qualitative questions. The survey research study did not address the causes of the differences and was designed to provide a snapshot of the differences that currently exist between Head Start Plus and comparison centers.

RESULTS IN BRIEF

Researchers found differences between the child care centers receiving Head Start Plus funding and comparison centers. Survey data reveals that Head Start Plus centers are more likely than comparison centers to provide full-time care and comprehensive services to low-income families in Ohio. While these centers report challenges, many of the challenges are consistent with participating in a new program in which policies and regulations are evolving.

Differences Exist in Educational Attainment of Teachers and Professional Development Opportunities

Higher percentages of the Head Start Plus centers surveyed had teachers with at least a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential than comparison centers. Thirty-six percent of Head Start Plus center teachers reported that they had at least a CDA, while 16 percent of teachers at comparison centers reported the same. A slightly higher percentage of Head Start Plus centers reported that they had at least one teacher with an associate's degree or higher than comparison centers (74 percent versus 68 percent). No significant differences were reported in other levels of teacher education.

Researchers also found differences in some of the professional development opportunities offered to teachers at Head Start Plus centers and comparison centers. All of the Head Start Plus centers reported that they offered off-site workshops to teachers, while 79 percent of comparison centers reported that they offered such opportunities. Head Start Plus centers were also more likely to offer college courses to teachers, as 64 percent of Head Start Plus centers reported that they offered such courses versus 28 percent of comparison centers.

Differences Exist in the Use of Structured Curriculum and Assessment Tools

Head Start Plus centers reported a higher likelihood of using a published curriculum than comparison centers. Head Start Plus centers were more likely to use: Creative Curriculum (43 percent versus 16 percent); High/Scope (17 percent versus 0 percent); and High Reach (22 percent versus 11 percent). By contrast, Head Start Plus centers were less likely to use a teacher-designed curriculum (43 percent versus 74 percent). Head Start Plus centers were also more likely to report using standardized child and classroom assessment tools. Nearly 70 percent of Head Start Plus centers reported that they used *Get It Got It Go!* in November 2004, compared with 5 percent of the comparison centers. Head Start Plus centers were also more likely to report using the following classroom assessment instruments: the *Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) Toolkit* (33 percent versus none of the comparison centers); the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)* (39 percent versus 7 percent of the comparison centers); and the *National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Self-Study Tool* (57 percent versus 21 percent of the comparison centers). Comparison centers were more likely to use center-designed child assessment tools or no standardized instruments: 58 percent used center-designed child assessment tools compared with 30 percent of Head Start Plus centers; 21 percent reported using no child assessment instruments compared with none of the Head Start Plus centers.

Differences Exist In Linkages to Comprehensive Services

Head Start Plus centers were more likely to provide workshops to parents, to invite parents to regular meetings, and to recruit parents to volunteer. Moreover, Head Start Plus centers were more likely to offer screenings and referrals and services than comparison centers, but analysis of survey data suggests that these centers offered fewer screenings than centers partnering with federally funded Head Start programs.

Head Start Plus centers were also more likely than comparison centers to make appointments for families with service providers. Furthermore, Head Start Plus center directors were more likely to meet one-on-one to link families to these services. Head Start Plus centers reported spending more time each month collaborating with social service providers—about 12 hours compared with less than 5 hours reported by the comparison centers. Despite the differences in hours spent coordinating services, Head Start Plus centers and comparison centers reported spending the same amount of time—approximately 11 hours—each month completing paperwork related to coordination of services.

Resources and Challenges

Head Start Plus centers were more likely to report that they had accessed specific resources and had more government funding than comparison centers. Yet, Head Start Plus centers were also more likely to report challenges around stretching existing resources. Analyses of survey data, as well as qualitative data, reveal that child care providers are challenged by the dynamic nature of policies as they attempt to provide high-quality care with limited control over their monthly budgets. Directors reported that they had difficulties hiring staff and providing services because their monthly funding changed as a result of parent eligibility and program enrollment shifts. Programs that had access to additional funding reported that they used such funding to address the challenges brought about as a result of the changing nature of the population and program regulations.

Conclusion

As state policy makers deliberate changes to the Head Start Plus program, the researchers suggest that Ohio support a large-scale evaluation of its early care and education initiative. A larger sample would produce information about what variables are most predictive of the desired outcomes. Furthermore, in-depth case studies of programs could provide details about the challenges child care providers face and the promising approaches they use to provide high-quality integrated care to Ohio's low-income children and their families.

OHIO HEAD START PLUS STUDY

BACKGROUND

In early 2004, with the passage of H.B. 95, the Ohio General Assembly created the Title IV-A Head Start Plus program. This program was designed to provide children of low-income working families with access to high-quality early learning opportunities and child care through an integrated approach (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, 2004). The authorizing legislation jointly charged the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) with administering the program (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, 2004).

In collaboration with ODJFS, ODE has overseen the administration of the Title IV-A Head Start Plus program since 2004. In the summer of 2004, ODE issued contracts to 64 early care and education providers throughout the state that had applied for funds to provide integrated early learning opportunities to low-income families (Ohio Department of Education, 2004a). To meet the goals of Head Start Plus, these programs partnered with other providers and social services agencies to offer seamless services to families. Only Head Start programs, child care centers, and family child care providers approved by the ODE for participation were eligible (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, 2004).

Following the legislative requirements, ODE required early care and education providers receiving Title IV-A Head Start Plus grants to:

- Offer full-day, full-year services defined as an average of 40 hours per child per week and 12 months per year
- Require teachers to attend a minimum of 20 hours of professional development and require lead teachers to obtain an associate's degree in Early Childhood Development or Child Development
- Address education and assessment performance standards and use an assessment instrument called *Get It Got It Go!* to assess children's progress
- Follow the federal Head Start program performance standards for comprehensive services in health, nutrition, mental health, family partnership, and social services (Head Start Partnership Study Council, 2003)

The Head Start Plus program has been operating since July 2004. State policy makers are now considering legislative changes to the program. To address this need, ODJFS contracted with researchers at the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) to conduct a small-scale study to provide data to inform future decisions.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

To obtain information about Title IV-A Head Start Plus, ODJFS contracted with EDC to administer surveys to a small sample of programs that had received grants and to analyze the results. The objectives of the study were to:

- Address questions of ODJFS and ODE decision makers about how early education providers receiving Title IV-A Head Start Plus grants differ from comparison providers in terms of:
 - background characteristics
 - teacher education and professional development
 - use of assessment instruments and standard curriculum
 - linkages to comprehensive screenings, referrals, and services
 - resources accessed and challenges faced in administering services
- Brief state decision makers about the preliminary findings
- Produce a report summarizing the findings and discussing the implications

To achieve these objectives, EDC researchers built on an ongoing study and collected survey data from a sample of 50 child care centers of the 832 licensed child care centers throughout the state that provide full-day, full-year services to preschool-aged children.¹ Researchers invited 94 randomly selected child care centers that had been participating in a three-year longitudinal research project to participate in the Head Start Plus study. A total of 50 centers completed surveys in November 2004—resulting in a 53 percent response rate. The sample included: 23 centers receiving Head Start Plus funds; 19 comparison centers not receiving any Head Start funds; 5 centers partnering with federal Head Start only; and 3 centers receiving both Head Start Plus and federal Head Start. Survey data from the summer of 2004 were available from each of the participating centers as a result of their participation in the longitudinal study.

Participating child care centers completed in-depth surveys with questions about: population of children served; participation in state and federal programs; services provided; teacher education/professional development; curriculum used in preschool classrooms; and challenges. Each participating center had completed similar surveys in the previous year.

Researchers analyzed the Head Start Plus survey data and the data collected the previous year to address Ohio policy makers' questions. Analyses included Chi-Square statistics, logistic regression analyses, regression analyses, t-tests, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVAs). Researchers analyzed differences among groups depending upon whether they received federal Head Start funds, state Head Start Plus grants, both, or none. Researchers completed separate analyses to examine differences between the centers that receive Head Start Plus funding and comparison centers that were not receiving federal or state Head Start funds.

Budgetary and time constraints led to limitations in the study. While the small sample size provides illustrations of the trends among the participating providers, it leads to some limitations in the generalizeability of the findings. Researchers completed non-response analyses to

¹The study focused on child care centers that had participated in an existing research study. Family child care homes were not included in the survey. Head Start programs were not specifically targeted, but some of the child care centers were Head Start Plus grantees.

determine if the centers participating in the study were significantly different from the universe of randomly selected centers and found no differences in the center budget, total enrollment, demographics of the population, and urbanicity.² Researchers recognize the importance of increasing the sample size for future evaluations of the state's early care and education initiative. Furthermore, while the analyses reveal differences, the study does not address questions about causation. To answer causal questions in this study would have required randomly assigning child care providers to either participate in the Head Start Plus program or serve in the control group. Since this did not occur, the information presented illustrates relationship but does not describe whether the Head Start Plus program caused the differences.

The results of the study are framed around five themes. The first section of the report provides background characteristics of the sample of centers participating in the study. This is followed by a description of teacher education and professional development. The third section describes the centers' use of curriculum and assessments by centers, and the next section presents a description of the comprehensive services offered by centers. The final section of the report describes the resources accessed and challenges faced by centers.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE OF CENTERS IN THE STUDY

The Head Start Plus program targets services to low-income children (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, 2004). To address the needs of low-income children throughout the state, early care and education programs from each county in the state were eligible to apply for funds. Researchers found that participating child care centers varied in terms of partnership status, urbanicity, size, populations served, and selected structural indicators of quality. (See Table 1 for a snapshot of the characteristics of the centers.) Details regarding the characteristics are presented below.

- **Partnership Status:** Approximately 10 percent of the centers were in partnership with federal Head Start only, 46 percent were partnering with Head Start Plus only, 6 percent were partnering with both, and 38 percent were not in partnership. However, many of the centers that were in the comparison group had previously been in partnerships with federal or state Head Start. Furthermore, all but two Head Start Plus centers had been in partnership with federal Head Start or the previous state Head Start program prior to participating in the Head Start Plus program.

²The differences that are reported are based on tests of statistically significant differences at either the .05 or .01 levels. This means that there is a less than 5 percent or 1 percent likelihood that the observed difference occurred by chance. Confidence Intervals could also be used to test hypotheses, but perform precisely the same function as the significance test. Therefore, the analysis provides strong evidence that the reported differences are real. Nevertheless, the statistical precision—and therefore the ability to detect small differences—could be improved by a larger sample.

- **Urbanicity:** Forty percent of the centers were urban, 42 percent were suburban, and the remaining centers were in small towns or rural areas. No statistically significant differences existed in the urbanicity of Head Start Plus centers and comparison centers.
- **Size:** The average total number of preschool-aged children enrolled in the centers was 34. While the comparison centers appeared to serve more preschool-aged children than the Head Start Plus centers, the differences were not statistically significant. Consistent with this, the average annual child care center budgets were similar—with an average budget of 380,000 dollars per year. No significant differences were reported between partnership and comparison centers.
- **Populations:**
 - *Percent of Population Receiving Subsidies.* On average, 32 percent of the families served by study centers received child care subsidies. Thus, the child care centers served an economically diverse population. Partnering and comparison centers reported that similar percentages of the population received child care subsidies.
 - *Demographics.* On average, 62 percent of the students that attended the child care centers were white, 33 percent were African American, and 5 percent were Hispanic, Asian, or other. Researchers found differences in the demographics of centers in partnership and comparison centers. Comparison centers reported that 83 percent of the children were white compared with 44 percent of children attending Head Start Plus programs.
 - *Full-Time Status.* On average, 53 percent of the students that attended the child care centers attended 40 hours per week or more. Head Start Plus centers reported that on average about 62 percent of students were enrolled full-time, whereas comparison centers reported that about 43 percent of students were enrolled full-time.
- **Selected Indicators of Quality:**
 - *Accreditation.* Twenty-three percent of all centers were accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). While 43 percent of the Head Start Plus centers were accredited, none of the comparison centers were accredited.
 - *Ratios.* The average number of children to teachers was 9.7 for all centers. While the differences between centers in partnership and comparison centers was not statistically significant, partnership centers reported slightly lower ratios.

Table 1. Characteristics of Child Care Centers in the Sample

Characteristic	
Partnership	
Percent HS Plus centers	46%
Percent federal HS centers	10%
Percent HS Plus and federal HS	6%
Percent comparison centers	38%
Urbanicity	
Percent urban	40%
Percent suburban	42%
Small town/rural	18%
Size	
Average number of preschoolers enrolled	34
Average center annual budget	380K
Population	
Percent of families receiving subsidy	32%
Percent full-time	53%
Demographics of children	
Average percent white	62%
Average percent African American	33%
Average percent Hispanic, Asian, or other	5%
Quality indicators	
Percent of centers accredited	23%
Average child/teacher ratio	9.7

EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

The authorizing legislation for the Title IV-A Head Start Plus program requires teachers to have or to be working towards at least an associate’s degree in Early Childhood Development or Child Development and also requires that teachers receive a minimum of 20 hours per year of Ohio Department of Education-sponsored professional development (Ohio Department of Education, 2004b). Higher percentages of the Head Start Plus centers studied had teachers with at least a CDA credential than comparison centers. (Note that a CDA is not an associate’s degree, but certifies that the Associate has successfully completed training and has experience in early childhood education.) Thirty-six percent of teachers at Head Start Plus centers had at least a CDA credential, while 16 percent of teachers at comparison centers reported the same. A slightly higher percentage of Head Start Plus centers reported having at least one teacher with an associate’s degree or higher than comparison centers (74 percent versus 68 percent). No significant differences were reported in other levels of teacher education.

Researchers also found differences in some of the professional development opportunities offered to teachers at Head Start Plus centers and comparison centers. All of the Head Start Plus

centers reported that they offered off-site workshops to teachers, while 79 percent of comparison centers reported that they offered such opportunities. Head Start Plus centers were also more likely to offer college courses to teachers, as 64 percent of Head Start Plus centers offered such courses versus 28 percent of comparison centers.

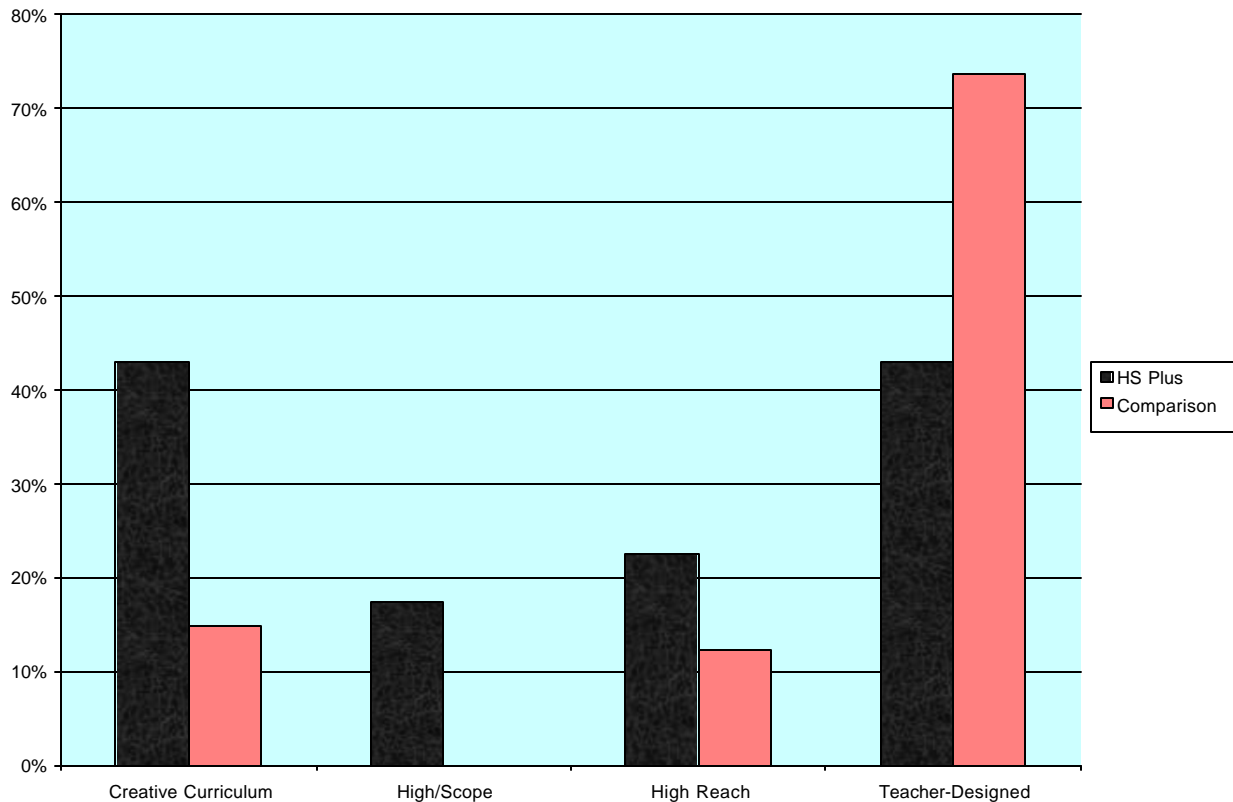
Head Start Plus centers reported higher satisfaction with the amount of teacher training than comparison centers. However, no differences were reported in satisfaction with the quality of teacher training.

While it might appear that more Head Start Plus centers offered literacy training than comparison centers, with 65 percent of Head Start Plus centers reporting that teachers attended such training compared with 50 percent of comparison centers, the differences were not statistically significant. Nonetheless, the majority of Head Start Plus centers reported that this training was supported by federal Head Start or Head Start Plus funds. A majority of Head Start Plus centers also reported that teachers attended training to learn about Head Start Program Performance Standards, while only 6 percent of comparison centers reported that teachers attended such training.

USE OF STRUCTURED CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Head Start Plus programs are required to provide enhanced educational services that are aligned with the state's early learning content standards and to use standard assessment instruments (Ohio Department of Education, 2004b). Consistent with these requirements, Head Start Plus centers reported a higher likelihood of using a published curriculum than comparison centers. Head Start Plus centers were more likely to use: Creative Curriculum (43 percent versus 16 percent); High/Scope (17 percent versus 0 percent); and High Reach (22 percent versus 11 percent). By contrast, Head Start Plus centers were less likely to use a teacher-designed curriculum (43 percent versus 74 percent). See Graphic 1 on the following page.

Graphic 1. Percentage of Centers Reporting Use of Structured Curricula



In addition, Head Start Plus centers were more likely to report using standardized child and classroom assessment tools. Nearly 70 percent of Head Start Plus centers reported using *Get It Got It Go!* in November 2004, compared with 5 percent of the comparison centers. Head Start Plus centers were also more likely to report using the following classroom assessment instruments: the *Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) Toolkit* (33 percent versus none of the comparison centers); the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)* (39 percent versus 7 percent of the comparison centers); and the *National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Self-Study Tool* (57 percent versus 21 percent of the comparison centers). Comparison centers were more likely to use center-designed child assessment tools or no standardized instruments: 58 percent used center-designed child assessment tools compared with 30 percent of Head Start Plus centers; 21 percent reported using no child assessment instruments compared with none of the Head Start Plus centers.

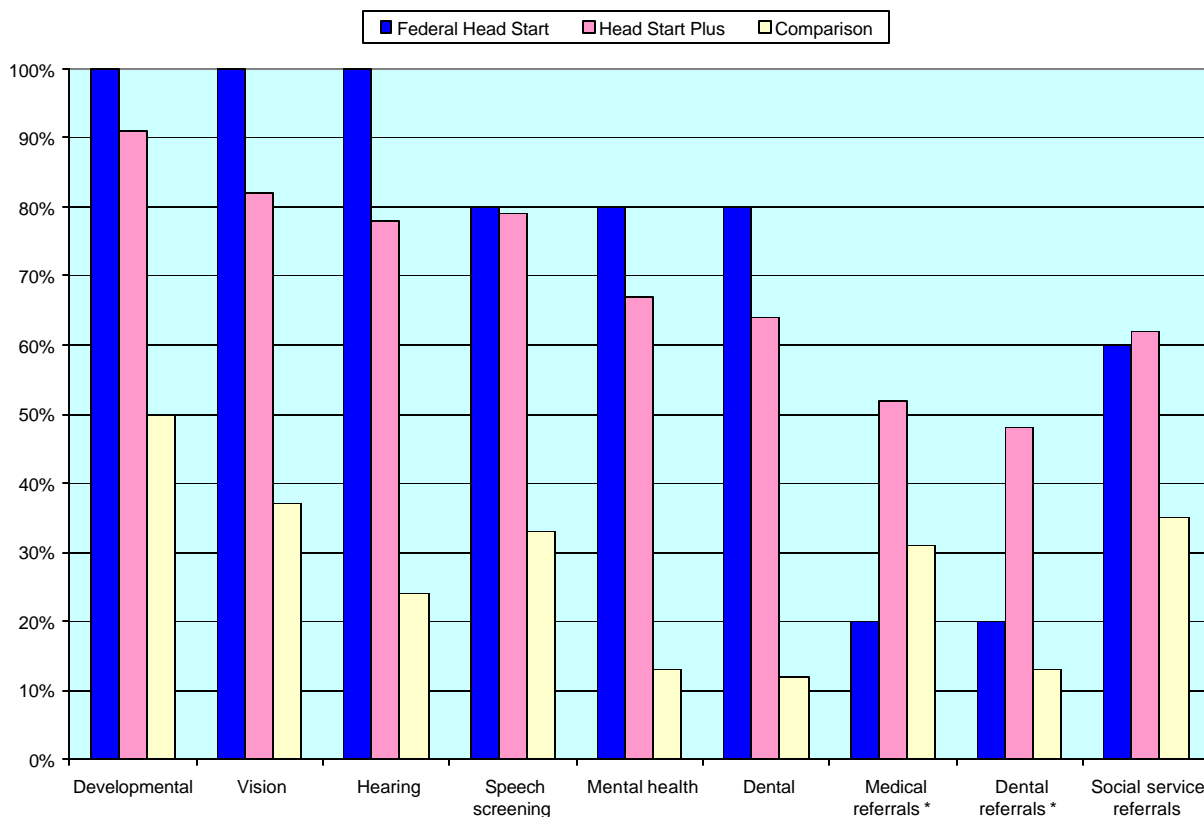
Head Start Plus centers were more likely to engage trained Head Start staff in the assessment process than comparison centers. While all of the comparison centers reported that teachers and/or center directors conducted child assessments, 26 percent of the Head Start Plus centers reported that Head Start-trained staff conducted the child assessment.

LINKAGES TO COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

The Head Start Plus program requires grantees to refer participating children and families to needed services (Head Start Partnership Study Council, 2003). Child care centers in partnership are required to follow a range of program performance standards including screenings, referrals, and services to children and their families.

Consistent with these requirements, researchers found that Head Start Plus centers were more likely than comparison centers to provide workshops to parents, invite parents to regular meetings, and recruit parents to volunteer. While Head Start Plus centers were also more likely to offer screenings, referrals, and services than comparison centers, survey data suggests that these centers offered fewer screenings than centers partnering with federal Head Start. Graphic 2 below illustrates differences in the screenings and referrals offered by Head Start Plus centers, by centers partnering with federal Head Start, and by comparison centers.

Graphic 2. Percent of Centers Offering Screenings and Referrals



* Note: Head Start Plus only requires referrals, whereas federal Head Start requires screenings, referrals, and services. Furthermore, Head Start could provide screenings, referrals, and services to families independently from their child care partner.

Head Start Plus center directors were more likely to meet one-on-one to link families to services, to set up appointments with service providers, and to ensure transportation was provided than comparison center directors. Head Start Plus centers also reported that they spent more time each

month collaborating with social service providers—about 12 hours compared with less than 5 hours reported by the comparison centers. Despite the differences in hours spent coordinating services, Head Start Plus centers and comparison centers reported that they spent the same amount of time—approximately 11 hours—each month completing paperwork related to coordination of services.

To determine changes in screenings, referrals, and services, researchers examined whether centers added or dropped specific screenings, referrals, and services between the summer of 2004 and the fall of 2004. The analyses reveal that the majority of centers added some services but at the same time most of the centers dropped at least one screening, referral, or service. Most Head Start Plus centers (78 percent) reported adding some screenings and services. Moreover, these centers were somewhat more likely than other centers to add some referrals such as medical referrals. At the same time, Head Start Plus centers appeared more likely to drop some parent referrals such as legal services referrals.

RESOURCES AND CHALLENGES

Head Start Plus centers were more likely to report that they had accessed specific resources and had more government funding than comparison centers. Yet, Head Start Plus centers were also more likely to report challenges around stretching existing resources. Director reports of the resources they received and the challenges they faced are presented below.

All center directors were asked if they received specific resources from another agency such as Head Start or a nonprofit agency. While 74 percent of Head Start Plus centers reported that they received training paid for by another agency, only 32 percent of comparison centers reported that they received such training. Similarly, 41 percent of the Head Start Plus centers reported that they received supplies versus 6 percent of the comparison centers. Higher percentages of Head Start Plus centers also reported that family service workers who delivered services to their sites were paid by an outside agency—nearly 40 percent compared with 6 percent of comparison centers.

The average weekly public funding per child that Head Start Plus centers reported that they received was also higher than comparison centers. Researchers asked directors to report the weekly child care funding they received from the county Department of Job and Family Services for a full-time preschool-aged child at their center. Head Start Plus centers reported receiving an average of 116 dollars per week, compared with 94 dollars reported by comparison centers.

While the dollar amount is higher for Head Start Plus centers, directors at these centers were more likely to report that they believed the public funding did not cover the cost of the services offered. Possible contributing factors are that the Head Start Plus program requires participating centers to offer more screenings, referrals, and services and to spend more time linking families to services and connecting with other agencies on behalf of families. For example, Head Start Plus centers reported spending 12 hours per month collaborating with other social service providers, compared with 5 hours per month reported by comparison centers.

Consistent with these Head Start Plus requirements, Head Start Plus center directors were more likely than comparison centers to report challenges in meeting program requirements—44

percent of Head Start Plus centers and 11 percent of comparison centers reported experiencing this challenge. Further, meeting programmatic requirements presented challenges for Head Start Plus centers that served both Head Start-eligible and non-eligible children. One director noted that in addition to meeting the Head Start Plus standards, she had challenges finding ways to accommodate the differences between her “regular” child care classrooms and her Head Start classrooms: *We have one teacher per class in our regular classrooms—not a head teacher, special needs, teacher’s assistant, and parent aide.* This director reported that she felt as though the children that were not in the Head Start classrooms did not get the same benefits as the Head Start children.

While all centers reported challenges finding and keeping qualified staff, higher percentages of comparison centers reported this as a challenge—68 percent compared with 44 percent of Head Start Plus centers. One director stated that she was challenged to retain qualified staff at lower wages per hour than most potential employees expect. She stated: *They are surprised to hear the salary...and most often turn the job down due to wages.* Another director reported: *Finding qualified staff is our biggest challenge...we have spent a lot of money on ads but we have not found anyone.* Many directors reported that they believed they had adequate funding for training and equipment, but they felt challenged to pay teachers adequate salaries.

Several directors also reported that they experienced challenges from participating in a new and evolving program. For example, one director reported that with the shift from state-funded Head Start to Head Start Plus, the “partnership coordinator” employed by the Head Start program to coordinate services for her child care centers no longer served in that role. With the new staffing arrangement, some services were dropped.

Moreover, with the new program came changes in eligibility that created challenges for many child care centers. One director provided comments that were echoed by others: *The biggest challenge we have faced this year is the change in eligibility requirement for Head Start and county Job and Family Services child care funding. With the changes in income-eligibility requirements came significant increases in our parents' consumer fees. Many of them left our program because they simply could not afford the increased fees. One parent's fee in particular increased from \$1.85 per day to \$9.85 per day, even though her income remained the same. We lost several families because of this change.* Consistent with this report, 30 percent of Head Start Plus centers reported challenges addressing changes in reimbursement rates compared with 11 percent of comparison centers.

While Head Start Plus centers were more likely to report experiencing some challenges, they were somewhat less likely to report challenges getting parents to complete paperwork. Approximately 40 percent of Head Start Plus centers reported this was a challenge compared with 63 percent of comparison centers. Nonetheless, the challenge of “excessive paperwork” emerged as a theme in a review of the qualitative data reported by all centers. One owner/director noted: *I have always felt the invoices and requests for each month could be lessened.*

Finally, several Head Start Plus directors reported that the funding and opportunities provided by Head Start Plus allowed them to provide higher quality services to children and their families.

Directors noted that through the program they could link children and families to services. One director noted: *Head Start brings so much more to our program.*

CONCLUSION

Early data from child care centers participating in the Head Start Plus program reveals that Head Start Plus centers are more likely than comparison centers to provide full-time care and comprehensive services to low-income families in Ohio. While these centers report challenges, many of the challenges are consistent with participating in a new program in which policies and regulations are evolving.

Analyses of survey data, as well as qualitative data, reveal that child care providers are challenged by the dynamic nature of policies as they attempt to provide high-quality care with limited control over their monthly budgets. The study's results indicate that directors find it difficult to hire staff and provide services because their monthly funding fluctuates as parents' eligibility changes and program enrollment shifts. Findings also indicate that programs that have access to additional funding through churches or non-profit agencies are able to use such funds to address the challenges brought about as a result of the changing nature of the population and program regulations.

As state policy makers deliberate changes to the Head Start Plus program, the researchers suggest that Ohio support a large-scale evaluation of its early care and education initiative. A larger sample would produce information about what variables are most predictive of the desired outcomes. Furthermore, in-depth case studies of programs could provide details about the challenges child care providers face and the promising approaches they use to provide high-quality integrated care to Ohio's low-income children and their families.

Bibliography

Ohio Department of Education, 2004a. *Head Start Plus providers*. Retrieved January 30, 2005 from <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/TitleIVPrg.stm>

Ohio Department of Education, 2004b. *Head Start Plus request for proposals*. Columbus, OH: Ohio Department of Education.

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, 2004. *Title IV-A Head Start Plus program 10-05-04*. Retrieved January 30, 2005 from <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/TitleIVPrg.stm>

Head Start Partnership Study Council, 2003. *Final report and recommendations of the Head Start Partnership Study Council*. Columbus, OH: Ohio House of Representatives.

Appendix A: Data Points

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE OF CENTERS IN THE STUDY

Partnership Status	Total	Percent of sample
Federal Head Start only	5	10.0
Head Start Plus only	23	46.0
Federal & Head Start Plus	3	6.0
No Partnership (Comparison)	19	38.0
Total	50	100

Urbanicity	Total	Percent of sample	Percent of Head Start Plus centers (n=23)	Percent of Comparison centers (n=19)	Percent difference between Head Start Plus & Comparison
Urban	20	40.0	52.2	36.8	15.4
Suburban	21	42.0	39.1	42.1	-3.0
Small Town	3	6.0	0.0	5.3	-5.3
Rural	6	12.0	8.7	15.8	-7.1
Total	50	100	100	100	

Size	Total	Mean of Sample	Mean of Head Start Plus centers	Mean of Comparison centers	Difference in means between Head Start Plus & Comparison
Average total enrollment	49	34.4	28.3 (n=22)	38.9 (n=19)	-10.6
Budget					
Average annual budget	29	378398	413727 (n=11)	377878 (n=12)	35849

Populations	Total	Mean of Sample	Mean of Head Start Plus centers	Mean of Comparison centers	Difference in means between Head Start Plus & Comparison
Percent of population receiving subsidies	41	32.1	28.0 (n=16)	33.7 (n=18)	-5.7
Demographics					
Percent African American	46	32.8	50.8 (n=21)	13.1 (n=17)	37.7 ^b
Percent Hispanic	46	2.4	2.9 (n=20)	2.7 (n=18)	0.2
Percent White	45	62.4	44.2 (n=21)	82.5 (n=16)	-38.3 ^b
Percent Asian	45	1.0	1.1 (n=20)	0.9 (n=17)	0.2
Percent Other	44	1.3	1.9 (n=19)	1.0 (n=17)	0.9
Full-Time status					
Percent of children attending 40+ hours per week	43	52.5	62.1 (n=19)	42.5 (n=17)	19.6 ^a
Percent of children attending 25–39 hours per week	41	24.7	19.3 (n=16)	31.5 (n=18)	-12.2
Percent of children attending <25 hours per week	44	18.4	15.4 (n=19)	23.5 (n=18)	-8.1

^aStatistically significant at the .05 level.

^bStatistically significant at the .01 level.

Center NAEYC Accreditation Status	Total	Percent of sample	Percent of Head Start Plus centers (n=21)	Percent of Comparison centers (n=19)	Percent difference between Head Start Plus & Comparison^b
Centers with accreditation	11	23.4	42.9	0.0	42.9
Centers seeking accreditation	6	12.8	19.1	0.0	19.1
Centers without accreditation	30	63.8	38.1	100.0	-61.9
Total	47	100	100	100	

^bStatistically significant at the .01 level.

	Total	Mean of Sample	Mean of Head Start Plus centers	Mean of Comparison centers	Difference in means between Head Start Plus & Comparison
Child to teacher ratio	50	9.7	9.2 (n=23)	10.0 (n=19)	-0.8

EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

CDA Status	Total	Percent of sample	Percent of Head Start Plus centers	Percent of Comparison centers	Percent difference between Head Start Plus & Comparison
Percent of centers with at least one teacher with a CDA	50	36.0	47.8 (n=23)	31.6 (n=19)	16.2
Percent of centers with a teacher working toward a CDA	50	28.0	26.1 (n=23)	21.1 (n=19)	5.0
Percent of teachers per center with a CDA	38	21.4	35.6 (n=16)	15.9 (n=15)	19.7 [†]

[†]Not statistically significant at the .05 level, but $p < .10$.

Level of Education	Total	Percent of sample	Percent of Head Start Plus centers	Percent of Comparison centers	Percent difference between Head Start Plus & Comparison
Percent of centers with at least one teacher with an associate's degree or higher	50	70.0	73.9 (n=23)	68.4 (n=19)	5.5

Professional Development Opportunities	Total	Percent of sample	Percent of Head Start Plus centers	Percent of Comparison centers	Percent difference between Head Start Plus & Comparison
Centers that offer teachers off-site workshops	49	91.8	100.0 (n=22)	79.0 (n=19)	21.0 ^a
Centers that offer teachers college courses	48	43.8	63.6 (n=22)	27.8 (n=18)	35.8 ^a

^aStatistically significant at the .05 level.

Director reported satisfaction with. . .*	Total	Mean of Sample	Mean of Head Start Plus centers	Mean of Comparison centers	Difference in means between Head Start Plus & Comparison
Amount of teacher training offered	49	3.6	4.0 (n=23)	3.2 (n=18)	0.8 ^a
Quality of teacher training offered	49	3.8	4.1 (n=23)	3.6 (n=18)	0.5

*Note: Based on a 5 point scale where 1=Not at all satisfied, 2=Not very satisfied, 3=Neutral, 4=Somewhat satisfied, 5=Very satisfied.

^aStatistically significant at the .05 level.

Teacher training	Total	Percent of sample	Percent of Head Start Plus centers	Percent of Comparison centers	Percent difference between Head Start Plus & Comparison
Centers where teachers receive literacy training	49	63.3	65.2 (n=23)	50.0 (n=18)	15.2
Literacy training supported by Head Start	32	37.5	56.3 (n=16)	0.0 (n=9)	56.3 ^b
Centers where teachers receive training in the Head Start Performance Standards	49	40.8	60.9 (n=23)	5.6 (n=18)	55.3 ^b

^bStatistically significant at the .01 level.

USE OF STRUCTURED CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Curriculum used at center	Total	Percent of sample	Percent of Head Start Plus centers	Percent of Comparison centers	Percent difference between Head Start Plus & Comparison
Creative Curriculum	50	36.0	43.5 (n=23)	15.8 (n=19)	27.7 [†]
High/Scope	50	8.0	17.4 (n=23)	0.0 (n=19)	17.4 ^a
Montessori	50	0.0	0.0 (n=23)	0.0 (n=19)	0.0
Bright Beginnings	50	0.0	0.0 (n=23)	0.0 (n=19)	0.0
High Reach	50	14.0	21.7 (n=23)	10.5 (n=19)	11.2
Teacher/center designed	50	52.0	43.5 (n=23)	73.7 (n=19)	-30.2
No curriculum	50	4.0	0.0 (n=23)	10.5 (n=19)	-10.5
Other curriculum	50	16.0	21.7 (n=23)	5.3 (n=19)	16.4
Child assessment tools used at center					
Get it Got it Go!	50	42.0	69.6 (n=23)	5.3 (n=19)	64.3 ^b
High/Scope CORE	50	4.0	8.7 (n=23)	0.0 (n=19)	8.7
Galileo	50	28.0	34.8 (n=23)	15.8 (n=19)	19.0
Creative Curriculum	50	24.0	21.7 (n=23)	15.8 (n=19)	5.9
Work samples	50	22.0	26.1 (n=23)	21.1 (n=19)	5.0
Center-designed tools	50	42.0	30.4 (n=23)	57.9 (n=19)	-27.5 [†]
No assessment tools	50	8.0	0.0 (n=23)	21.1 (n=19)	-21.1 ^a
Classroom assessment tools used at center					
ELLCO	44	18.2	33.3 (n=21)	0.0 (n=15)	33.3 ^a
ECERS	43	25.6	38.1 (n=21)	7.1 (n=14)	31.0 [†]
NAEYC Self-Study	43	48.8	57.1 (n=21)	21.4 (n=14)	35.7 ^a
Other assessment tools	43	32.6	14.3 (n=21)	50.0 (n=14)	-35.7 [†]
Who conducts assessments at centers					
Child care teacher	46	78.3	69.6 (n=23)	93.3 (n=15)	-23.7
Child care director	46	73.9	73.9 (n=23)	77.3 (n=15)	-3.4
Family service worker	46	2.2	0.0 (n=23)	0.0 (n=15)	0.0
Head Start specialist	46	21.7	26.1 (n=23)	0.0 (n=15)	26.1 [†]
Head Start director	46	0.0	0.0 (n=23)	0.0 (n=15)	0.0
Other	46	13.0	4.4 (n=23)	20.0 (n=15)	-15.6

^aStatistically significant at the .05 level.

^bStatistically significant at the .01 level.

[†]Not statistically significant at the .05 level, but $p < .10$.

LINKAGES TO COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

Parental Involvement Opportunities	Total	Percent of sample	Percent of Head Start Plus centers	Percent of Comparison centers	Percent difference between Head Start Plus & Comparison
Parent/Teacher conferences	50	92.0	100.0 (n=23)	79.0 (n=19)	21.0 ^a
Parent advisory group	49	53.1	68.2 (n=22)	21.1 (n=19)	47.1 ^b
Family goal setting process	49	75.5	81.8 (n=22)	63.2 (n=19)	18.6
Workshops or support groups	50	42.0	47.8 (n=23)	26.3 (n=19)	21.5

^aStatistically significant at the .05 level.

^bStatistically significant at the .01 level.

Average number of times per month that. . .	Total	Mean of Sample	Mean of Head Start Plus centers	Mean of Comparison centers	Difference in means between Head Start Plus & Comparison
Center holds meetings in which parents are invited to attend or participate	44	0.6	0.8 (n=19)	0.3 (n=18)	0.5 ^a
Center sends any type of written communication home to parents	48	8.4	8.6 (n=22)	6.8 (n=18)	1.8
Center administrator verbally communicates with parents	48	19.3	18.1 (n=22)	20.3 (n=18)	-2.2
Parents volunteer in classroom	42	1.5	2.3 (n=20)	0.7 (n=16)	1.6 ^a
Teacher meets with parents to review child's development	41	3.2	3.0 (n=21)	3.9 (n=16)	-0.9

^aStatistically significant at the .05 level.

Child services offered by center	Total	Percent of sample	Percent of Federal Head Start centers	Percent of Head Start Plus centers	Percent of Comparison centers	Chi-Square
Vision screening	49	65.3	100.0 (n=5)	81.8 (n=22)	36.8 (n=19)	12.1 ^b
Hearing screening	47	59.6	100.0 (n=5)	76.2 (n=21)	27.8 (n=18)	13.4 ^b
Dental screening	48	43.8	80.0 (n=5)	63.6 (n=22)	11.1 (n=18)	13.9 ^b
Mental health observation	44	50.0	80.0 (n=5)	66.7 (n=21)	13.3 (n=15)	12.2 ^b
Developmental screening	48	75.0	100.0 (n=5)	90.9 (n=22)	50.0 (n=18)	10.8 ^b
Speech screening	48	60.4	80.0 (n=5)	77.3 (n=22)	33.3 (n=18)	8.9 ^a
Nutritional screening	46	23.9	20.0 (n=5)	38.1 (n=21)	5.9 (n=17)	5.5 [†]
Lead screening	46	15.2	0.0 (n=5)	28.6 (n=21)	0.0 (n=17)	7.3 ^a
Medical referrals	44	40.9	20.0 (n=5)	52.4 (n=21)	31.3 (n=16)	2.7
Dental referrals	44	29.6	20.0 (n=5)	47.6 (n=21)	12.5 (n=16)	5.6 [†]
Social service referrals	46	52.2	60.0 (n=5)	61.9 (n=21)	35.3 (n=17)	2.8
Physical therapy	45	17.8	0.0 (n=5)	20.0 (n=20)	11.8 (n=17)	6.5 [†]
Speech therapy	46	34.8	20.0 (n=5)	47.6 (n=21)	17.7 (n=17)	4.3
Transportation	46	13.0	0.0 (n=5)	9.5 (n=21)	23.5 (n=17)	2.5
Parent services offered by center						
Social service referrals	49	69.4	60.0 (n=5)	77.3 (n=22)	63.2 (n=19)	1.2
Medical referrals	48	45.8	20.0 (n=5)	68.2 (n=22)	27.8 (n=18)	8.1 ^a
Mental health referrals	48	56.3	60.0 (n=5)	77.3 (n=22)	33.3 (n=18)	7.9 ^a
GED preparation	46	21.7	20.0 (n=5)	35.0 (n=20)	11.1 (n=18)	3.1
English proficiency classes	46	10.9	20.0 (n=5)	15.0 (n=20)	5.6 (n=18)	1.2
Immigration services	45	8.9	20.0 (n=5)	10.0 (n=20)	5.9 (n=17)	0.9
Employment placement referral	45	15.6	20.0 (n=5)	21.1 (n=19)	11.1 (n=18)	0.7
Adult literacy	45	8.9	20.0 (n=5)	10.0 (n=20)	5.9 (n=17)	0.9
Assistance obtaining food stamps	48	33.3	20.0 (n=5)	38.1 (n=21)	31.6 (n=19)	0.6
Assistance with financial aid	48	31.3	20.0 (n=5)	28.6 (n=21)	31.6 (n=19)	0.3
Marriage counseling	46	10.9	40.0 (n=5)	5.0 (n=20)	11.1 (n=18)	4.8 [†]
Legal service referrals	45	8.9	20.0 (n=5)	5.0 (n=20)	11.8 (n=17)	1.2
Energy/fuel assistance	47	23.4	20.0 (n=5)	33.3 (n=21)	11.1 (n=18)	2.8
Processes for working on family issues and family goals	48	41.7	40.0 (n=5)	45.5 (n=22)	33.3 (n=18)	0.6
Transportation	46	13.0	20.0 (n=5)	15.0 (n=20)	11.1 (n=18)	0.3

^aStatistically significant at the .05 level.

^bStatistically significant at the .01 level.

[†]Not statistically significant at the .05 level, but $p < .10$.

When referring families to services, to what extent does the . . .*	Total	Mean of Sample	Mean of Head Start Plus centers	Mean of Comparison centers	Difference in means between Head Start Plus & Comparison
Director or teacher gives families printed information such as brochures or flyers	46	3.2	3.3 (n=21)	3.1 (n=17)	0.2
Director or teacher meets one-on-one with parents to give them information	48	3.4	3.5 (n=22)	3.3 (n=18)	0.2
Director or teacher calls service providers and sets up appointments	47	2.2	2.3 (n=21)	1.9 (n=18)	0.4
Director or teacher ensures transportation is available for the family to obtain the services	47	1.5	1.6 (n=21)	1.4 (n=18)	0.2
Director or teacher follows up with family to make sure they received services	48	2.8	3.0 (n=22)	2.8 (n=18)	0.2
Head Start family service coordinator meets with parents to give them information	44	2.2	2.6 (n=21)	1.2 (n=15)	1.4 ^b
Head Start family service coordinator sets up an appointment with service providers	43	2.1	2.4 (n=21)	1.1 (n=14)	1.3 ^b
Head Start family service coordinator ensures that transportation is available for the family to obtain the service	42	1.7	1.9 (n=20)	1.1 (n=14)	0.8 ^b

*Note: Based on a 4 point scale where 1=Not at all, 2=Not really, 3=Sometimes, 4=Mostly.

^bStatistically significant at the .01 level.

[†]Not statistically significant at the .05 level, but $p < .10$.

Hours per month spent. . .	Total	Mean of Sample	Mean of Head Start Plus centers	Mean of Comparison centers	Difference in means between Head Start Plus & Comparison
Collaborating with other social service providers	44	8.0	12.1 (n=20)	4.8 (n=16)	7.3 [†]
Completing paperwork related to licensing	48	18.3	20.4 (n=21)	17.3 (n=19)	3.2
Completing paperwork related to coordination of child or parent services	45	15.0	11.6 (n=18)	11.0 (n=19)	0.6

[†]Not statistically significant at the .05 level, but $p < .10$.

Services added or dropped	Total	Percent of sample	Percent of Federal Head Start centers	Percent of Head Start Plus centers	Percent of Comparison centers	Chi-Square
Centers that dropped child or parent services	50	62.0	60.0 (n=5)	65.2 (n=23)	57.9 (n=19)	0.3
Centers that added child or parent services	50	64.0	60.0 (n=5)	78.2 (n=23)	47.4 (n=19)	4.4

Has the center received the following from another organization such as a Community Action Agency, a Head Start program, or a non-profit organization?

	Total	Percent of sample	Percent of Head Start Plus centers	Percent of Comparison centers	Percent difference between Head Start Plus & Comparison
Books	49	32.7	43.5 (n=23)	21.1 (n=19)	22.4
Equipment	49	22.5	22.7 (n=22)	15.8 (n=19)	6.9
Supplies	47	27.7	40.9 (n=22)	5.6 (n=18)	35.3 ^a
Training	49	61.2	73.9 (n=23)	31.6 (n=19)	42.3 ^b
A teacher paid by another organization	49	8.2	4.4 (n=23)	5.6 (n=18)	-1.2
A family service worker paid by another organization	50	30.0	39.1 (n=23)	5.3 (n=19)	33.8 ^a
Classroom observation by a specialist and feedback	49	40.8	43.5 (n=23)	31.6 (n=19)	11.9

^aStatistically significant at the .05 level.

^bStatistically significant at the .01 level.

What are the biggest challenges the director faces in managing the center	Total	Percent of sample	Percent of Head Start Plus centers	Percent of Comparison centers	Percent difference between Head Start Plus & Comparison
Meeting different programs' regulations and requirements	50	26.0	43.5 (n=23)	10.5 (n=19)	33.0 ^a
Addressing changes in reimbursement rates	50	20.0	30.4 (n=23)	10.5 (n=19)	19.9
Parents losing child care subsidy eligibility due to work requirements	50	58.0	60.9 (n=23)	47.4 (n=19)	13.5
Child care subsidies don't cover costs of care	50	44.0	60.9 (n=23)	26.3 (n=19)	34.6 ^a
Meeting parents' expectations	50	10.0	8.7 (n=23)	10.5 (n=19)	-1.8
Losing contract with Head Start	50	10.0	4.4 (n=23)	21.1 (n=19)	-16.7
Meeting increased center expenses	50	56.0	65.2 (n=23)	36.8 (n=19)	28.4 [†]
Getting parents to complete paperwork	50	52.0	39.1 (n=23)	63.2 (n=19)	-24.1
Getting parents to pay co-payments	50	56.0	65.2 (n=23)	52.6 (n=19)	12.6
Meeting heightened early childhood standards	50	28.0	39.1 (n=23)	10.5 (n=19)	28.6 [†]
Retaining/recruiting qualified staff	50	56.0	43.5 (n=23)	68.4 (n=19)	-24.9
Parents losing subsidy eligibility due to state policy changes	50	60.0	60.9 (n=23)	57.9 (n=19)	3.0
Other	50	12.0	4.4 (n=23)	15.8 (n=19)	-11.4

^aStatistically significant at the .05 level.

[†]Not statistically significant at the .05 level, but p<.10.

Child Care subsidy	Total	Mean of Sample	Mean of Head Start Plus centers	Mean of Comparison centers	Difference in means between Head Start Plus & Comparison
The weekly child care subsidy reimbursement from ODJFS for full-time preschool-aged children	41	107	116 (n=19)	94 (n=15)	22 ^a

^aStatistically significant at the .05 level.