

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 304 218

PS 017 819

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 TITLE The Challenge of Coordination: Head Start's Relationship to State-Funded Preschool Initiatives.
 INSTITUTION Education Development Center, Inc., Newton, Mass.
 SPONS AGENCY Administration for Children, Youth, and Families (DHHS), Washington, DC. Head Start Bureau.
 REPORT NO DHHS-CA-90-CD-0554
 PUB DATE May 88
 NOTE 110p.; For a separate edition of the executive summary, see PS 017 820.
 PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Comparative Analysis; *Compensatory Education; *Competition; Coordination; *Disadvantaged; Educational Finance; *Financial Support; Government Role; Models; *Preschool Education; State Government; *State Programs
 IDENTIFIERS *Project Head Start

ABSTRACT

Data were collected from more than 180 respondents through a lengthy interview protocol in a study of the current trend toward state funding of preschool programs intended primarily for economically disadvantaged children. The study also explored the implications of the findings for Head Start planning and policy development. An executive summary is followed by eight chapters. Topics covered include: (1) background information and study rationale; (2) the manner in which the study was conducted; (3) ways in which states support preschool education; (4) the comparison of state-funded preschool programs with Head Start; (5) Head Start's collaboration in the implementation and development of state-funded preschool efforts; (6) competition between the programs and Head Start for children, staff, and space; (7) models of funding mechanisms for services to preschool children and their families; and (8) conclusions and implications for planning, coordination, funding mechanisms, dissemination of information, salaries, qualifications, facilities, and program standards. Approximately 75 references are cited. (RH)

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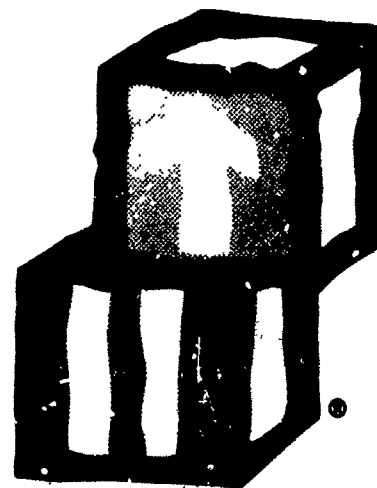


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The Challenge of Coordination

Head Start's Relationship to State Funded Preschool Initiatives

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Preschool Initiatives

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May 1988

This document was prepared pursuant to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Cooperative Agreement Number 90-CD-0554. The statements and conclusions herein are those of Education Development Center, Incorporated, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the sponsoring agency.

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NOTES

Acronyms

- ACYF** *Administration for Children, Youth and Families.* The division in the Department of Health and Human Services that administers Head Start programs.
- CDA** *Child Development Associate.* A competency based credential awarded nationally to early childhood education workers.
- LEA** *Local Education Agency.* A local school district or corporation.
- NAEYC** *National Association for the Education of Young Children.* The national professional organization of the early childhood education field.
- SEA** *State Education Agency.* The state agency responsible for administering public education programs.

Federal Regions by State

Region 1
Connecticut
Maine
Massachusetts
New Hampshire
Rhode Island
Vermont

Region 2
New Jersey
New York

Region 3
Delaware
Maryland
Pennsylvania
Virginia
West Virginia
District of Columbia

Region 4
Alabama
Florida
Georgia
Kentucky
Mississippi
North Carolina
South Carolina
Tennessee

Region 5
Illinois
Indiana
Michigan
Minnesota
Ohio
Wisconsin

Region 6
Arkansas
Louisiana
New Mexico
Oklahoma
Texas

Region 7
Iowa
Kansas
Missouri
Nebraska

Region 8
Colorado
Montana
North Dakota
South Dakota
Utah
Wyoming

Region 9
Arizona
California
Hawaii
Nevada

Region 10
Alaska
Idaho
Oregon
Washington

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Carrying out a study of this magnitude in such a short time frame relies on the good will and thoughtful participation of many people. We would first like to thank the many professionals at the Administration for Children, Youth and Families, and particularly the staff of the Head Start Bureau for their guidance, review, and support of this project. Special thanks are due Commissioner Debie Truman Borup, Deputy Commissioner Joseph Mottola, Associate Commissioner Elizabeth Strong Ussery, and Deputy Associate Commissioner Clennie Murphy, Jr.

We are especially grateful to Douglas Klafehn, Chief, Program Management Operations Branch, and Karen Mitchell, Program Analyst, who provided us with helpful feedback throughout the process—from design of study to production of this report.

Our colleagues in the national network of Resource Centers deserve a special thank-you for assisting in our data collection efforts. Resource Center staffs, at their most hectic training time, added many precious hours to their already long days to gather information that was crucial to our study. In addition, we appreciate the contributions of the federal regional office staff in providing us with important regional perspectives.

We are especially grateful to the following people who were generous with their time and candid in their responses to our questions: administrators of state-funded early childhood programs, governors' assistants, Head Start directors, and particularly the eight directors who participated in our day-long focus group. Thank you to Michelle Seligson and Fern Marx of the Wellesley College and Bank Street College Public School Early Childhood Study who kindly shared information about their study with us.

Many of our colleagues at EDC deserve our appreciation for their assistance. Each played a role critical to our success. A special acknowledgment goes to Nancy Ames, Associate Director of SSP, and Ruth Bowman, Associate Director of the New England Resource Center, for their careful review and substantive suggestions along the way. Our colleagues Margaret Enright and Sheila Skiffington were always there when we needed them, and for that we express sincere thanks.

Special mention should also be made of the following people for their technical support: Sandra Belk, Anne Corrigan, Cecile Heimann, Claire Karesky, Maureen Kelley, Philip Pennie, Carol Quintiliani, Ruth Rappaport, Carole Teves, and Michelle Toledo; Suzi Wojdyslawski for her design; and Lisa Lightman for her research assistance. Their skills and good humor were essential in the production of this report.

Executive Summary

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Project Head Start has been the foremost publicly funded child development program for low-income children and their families since 1965. First conceived as a model demonstration effort, and funded at the federal level, it was for many years virtually the only program of its kind, unmatched in its scope, reach, and ambition. In Fiscal Year (FY) 1988, \$1.2 billion in federal funds is allocated for Head Start programs.

In the 1980s, however, there has been a notable increase in *state* funding of preschool programs, particularly for economically disadvantaged children. In FY 1988, 28 states project a total program expenditure of almost \$226 million.

The momentum for state-funded preschool programs has come from many areas:

- major shifts in national demographics, such as a rise in the number of preschool-age children and the increased need for child care;
- an increased number of economically disadvantaged children;
- mounting evidence that demonstrates the value of early childhood education, especially for economically disadvantaged children;
- a growing consensus about the need for more rigorous academic standards; and
- a changing political and economic climate, making possible new state initiatives.

These factors have led to a spirit of cooperation among teachers, child advocates, parents, members of the business community, academicians, politicians, and policymakers, with a view to finding new resources to improve the quality of life for our nation's young children. The state-funded preschool movement is one outcome of this coalition-building effort.

Recognizing a national trend in this preschool movement, the Head Start Bureau at the Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) felt that it was critical to examine this burgeoning activity and its implications for Head Start planning and policy development. Therefore, in August 1987, ACYF funded the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) in Newton, Massachusetts, to study this movement in a systematic way, and to explore Head Start's relationship to state-funded preschool programs across the country.

Data were collected from more than 180 respondents through a lengthy interview protocol.

Our six major data sources included:

1. State-level early childhood education/preschool program administrators
2. Governors' executive assistants or education liaisons
3. Head Start regional office staff and other members of the Head Start regional network
4. Head Start Directors Association presidents
5. A day-long focus group of eight Head Start directors from around the country
6. Legislation, regulations, program standards, and other relevant materials from the states

The national network of Head Start Resource Centers assisted us by conducting initial interviews with program administrators. After conducting additional phone interviews and collecting other data, EDC staff reviewed, tabulated, and analyzed the data.

We wish to underscore three points about this study. First, it does *not* include data on migrant, Native American, or trust territories Head Start programs, since these programs were not within the scope of our project. Second, we concentrated on state funding rather than local funding sources for preschool programs. Thus, we interviewed state-level program administrators, but not local school district administrators. The two exceptions, included because of their all-encompassing city-wide approaches, were New York City's Giant Step Program and the District of Columbia's universal access program for four-year-olds. Third, data were current as of March 1988. Because the state funding situation changes daily, it is possible that some of the projected dollar allocations have altered since then.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The major findings of the study are organized by the six research questions described below.

Question 1: How are states currently supporting preschool education?

States are supporting preschool education in two major ways:

1. Head Start-Only Enactments

Eight states have *Head Start-only enactments* that provide supplemental funds exclusively to Head Start programs. Five of these eight states also have general enactments, and three do not.

- The eight states are Alaska, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Rhode Island, and Washington.
- The total funding in FY 1987 was \$12.5 million, with a range of \$290,000 in Hawaii to \$4.5 million in Massachusetts.
- The projected total funding of \$16.8 million for these states for FY 1988 represents a 34 percent increase from FY 1987.
- The majority of Head Start-only enactments are clustered in New England and, in contrast to the general enactments programs, are administered by a state social service or community development department.

2. General Enactments

Twenty-five states and the District of Columbia have *general enactments*, in which funding goes to school districts only or to school districts and other nonprofit agencies. The number of programs reported is 30 because we included New York City and the District of Columbia, and because Vermont, New Jersey, and Oregon each have two programs.

- The amount of funding in FY 1987 was \$165.4 million, increasing by 26 percent to \$208.8 million in FY 1988.
- In 15 of the 25 states, the amount of money allocated to general enactment programs has increased from FY 1987 to FY 1988.
- In FY 1987, a total of 269,818 children participated in programs (median = 10,790 children per program).
- There is not a one-to-one correspondence between funding levels and number of children served because the scope of the programs differs.
- State education agencies administer the funds in all but four of the 30 programs.
- Almost half of the programs serve only four-year-olds; 37 percent serve three- to four-year-olds or three- to five-year-olds.
- Two-thirds of the states target programs to disadvantaged children, while one-fourth have open enrollment in a district or districts.

General enactments: preschool programs have employed one of four basic approaches:

- **The Head Start Model**
Five of the thirty programs have adopted this model and are required to provide comprehensive services including education, health, social services, parent involvement, and services to children with special needs. Many of the other programs seek to emulate the Head Start model, but their program features are not as comprehensive as Head Start's.

- **Child-Centered Programs**
Two-thirds (20 out of 30) focus primarily on providing education services to children although some have other features such as health and nutrition. The majority (64 percent) of these programs are half-day with another third offering the option of a full day. Eighty-four percent are center-based. The remaining six have both center-based and home-based (home-visit) components.
- **Family-Focused Programs**
Three of the programs can be characterized as family-focused because they involve parents in a substantive way. These programs serve parents and their children from infancy through age four or age eight, and offer both prevention and intervention services. Services are usually offered in a center-based setting, and the amount of contact with families ranges from 2 hours to 18 hours per week.
- **Parent Education Programs**
Only two programs focus on parent education services designed to help parents enhance their parenting skills and knowledge of child development. The fact that these services require relatively low start-up or overhead costs allows these parent education programs to serve a large number of families for the dollars allocated.

Question 2: How do state-funded preschool programs compare with Head Start?

Because of Head Start's long track record and its success with low-income children and their families, it is understandable that state programs would be compared with Head Start. We compared state-funded programs with Head Start on comprehensiveness of services, written standards for early childhood education curricula, and licensing of staff and facilities.

Comprehensiveness of Services

Head Start's comprehensiveness is unique among early childhood programs. The services include:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| • Education | • Mental Health |
| • Parent Involvement | • Social Services |
| • Parent Decision Making | • Mainstream Setting for Handicapped Children |
| • Medical and Dental Screening | • Program Evaluation |
| • Medical and Dental Services | • Staff Training |
| • Nutrition | • Transportation |

All of these are considered important in the design and delivery of services to children and their families.

In contrast to Head Start, only seven of the state-funded programs provide comprehensive services. While every program contains an early childhood education component and a majority report having a parent involvement component, fewer than 50 percent reported having other components that are crucial to Head Start programs. The definitions of these program components vary widely among programs. Almost three-quarters of the state-funded programs report having developed program standards, but only eleven sent their standards to us. Those that we received showed a wide variation in standards and guidelines, ranging from very general to very comprehensive.

Early Childhood Education Curricula

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has developed a guide for developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood programs. These curriculum guidelines, recognized as *the* standard of good practice in the early childhood field, are very similar to Head Start Program Performance Standards. Head Start programs do not have a standardized national curriculum; rather, they follow a set of principles accompanied by implementation guidelines. Some programs have elected to use or adapt published curricula, while many others have designed their own.

The curriculum used by a state-funded program depends, in large part, on the philosophy of the state education agency (SEA), or of the local education agency (LEA), if the program content is determined locally. As is the case with Head Start programs, some of the state-funded programs have adopted curricula approved by the state, and others have adapted published curricula or have developed their own.

Licensing of Staff and Facilities

It is in this third area that the greatest differences exist between Head Start and state-funded preschool programs, particularly those in public schools. The difference centers on what criterion is considered the most important qualification for teachers—experience working with preschool children, a college degree, or a public school teaching credential.

Head Start teachers must have the minimum qualifications established by the state agency licensing the Head Start program. Although many teachers in Head Start programs do not meet NAEYC's recommended guidelines for accreditation, they have the relevant coursework and experience necessary for working with young children. Because they often do not have the formal college education and public school teaching credential required by SEAs, they cannot teach in state-funded programs. The lack of public school certification of Head Start teachers is one of the barriers to Head Start programs' receiving state funding. In its draft regulations, ACYF is considering requiring, for the first time, qualifications that would include either a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or a an AA, BA, or advanced degree in early childhood education for each Head Start classroom teacher.

In contrast to Head Start, teachers in two-thirds of the general preschool programs are required to have a college degree and a public school teaching credential. Just under half the programs require a bachelor's degree in early childhood education (ECE) or a related field, while a fifth require a bachelor's degree in any field. Many of those programs requiring a BA and a teaching credential are in public schools. Only five states recognize the CDA credential for teachers in a state-funded

preschool program. However, 38 states and the District of Columbia have incorporated the CDA into their state licensing regulations as an option for child care staff qualifications.

Question 3: How has Head Start coordinated with state-funded preschool programs?

Coordination between Head Start and state-funded programs has taken several forms, as described below.

Head Start's Role in Legislative Activity

Head Start personnel have been involved and can be involved in legislative activity in five major ways:

1. Representing Head Start on state advisory boards or task forces
2. Providing written and oral testimony at State House and Senate hearings
3. Meeting with legislators and governors to provide data on services
4. Inviting legislators to visit Head Start programs to illustrate Head Start's comprehensive services
5. Helping to draft legislation

In 42 percent of the general enactments, Head Start was represented on a statewide committee, whether or not Head Start was eligible to receive allocations as a result of the enactment. Both Head Start directors' associations and individual Head Start directors were involved in this process. (The more Head Start is involved, the more likely its standards and goals are represented in legislation.)

Even though the legislative processes are often the same, the extensiveness of Head Start's involvement in Head Start-only enactments is quite different from the extent of its involvement in general enactments. Head Start programs, usually through their state directors' associations, have been the catalyst for legislation providing for supplemental funds. Head Start directors and directors' associations were very active in helping to draft legislation, meeting with key legislators, mobilizing parents, testifying at legislative hearings, and working with ACYF.

In the eleven states with proposed legislation, Head Start has become increasingly involved in legislative activity and is playing a major role in seeking state funds. The Head Start community now has the benefit of experience in other states, and its strength as a force in the state preschool movement is growing.

Coordination as a Result of Legislation

In seven states, legislation required coordination with Head Start in the implementation of state-funded preschool programs, either at the state or local level. For instance, in some states a state interagency coordinating council must include a Head Start representative, and at the local level each school district must have an interagency council that includes Head Start representation.

Interagency Initiatives

Over the years, ACYF has instituted a number of interagency efforts designed to strengthen Head Start's services to children and families. Our data indicate that 39 states have state-level interagency agreements between the SEA and Head Start on serving handicapped children. Of these 39 states, 22 have funded preschool programs. Sixteen of these 22 states have invited Head Start representatives to participate in state-funded preschool activities. This participation has included involvement on a state advisory committee, providing testimony in support of legislation and/or participating in advocacy efforts. These data suggest that interagency efforts to serve handicapped children have substantially contributed to Head Start's visibility as a significant service provider and, in almost three-fourths of the cases, have paved the way for Head Start participation in state-funded preschool activities.

Informal Working Relationships

Although formal interagency agreements at the federal, state, and local levels are most evident for programs serving handicapped children and not very prevalent for non-handicapped children, *informal* working relations for serving both populations exist at the local level.

We sought information not only about relationships with state-funded preschools, but also with other agencies. In more than two-thirds of the states, significant informal collaboration was reported by Head Start directors. Head Start has joint activities with LEAs and other service agencies, including agencies that provide dental, health, and mental health screening and diagnostic services, joint training, joint curriculum planning, and transition activities. Cooperating with social service agencies handling protective care cases, sharing waiting lists, and working together to avoid overlap in recruiting in a particular area are other examples of informal working relationships.

Question 4: What are the barriers to coordination?

Although coordination is beginning to occur, there exists a heightened sense of competition between Head Start programs and state-funded preschool programs, especially those in the public schools. This competition makes the prospect of collaboration difficult for the two systems.

In our interviews, most of our respondents—regardless of the agency receiving state preschool funds or of the manner in which funds are distributed—reported at least some competition. In two-thirds of the general enactment programs, competition was reported in one or more of the following areas:

- **Competition for Children**

For many years Head Start was virtually the only program in many states offering educational services to disadvantaged preschool children and their families. In the past five years, however, more and more states have instituted programs that target some of that same population of preschool children from low-income families. When target populations overlap, the duplication of services increases the competition for children. (Many parents are confused by the choice of services because they do not receive enough information about the options.)

- **Competition for Staff**

Competition for staff exists because of the disparity in job requirements and salaries of Head Start teachers and teachers in state-funded public school programs. Many Head Start programs have seen a drain on their college-educated, certified teachers who can receive higher salaries—as much as \$10,000 more—teaching in public school programs.

- **Competition for Space**

Competition for space is another serious issue to resolve. In the 1970s and early 1980s when school enrollments declined, Head Start programs were able to rent or use space without charge in public schools. Now that enrollments are on the increase again, school districts are taking back that space. Moreover, during the same period many schools were turned into other types of facilities and now are not reclaimable, so competition for space is a problem for both the public schools and Head Start programs.

Question 5: To what extent does Head Start receive support from state-funded programs?

States generally use one of four mechanisms to fund preschool programs. In all but the first of these, Head Start may be able to receive state funding. The funding mechanisms operate in the following ways:

1. The SEA distributes funds to LEAs, without allowing LEAs to subcontract to Head Start or other nonprofit agencies (10 programs). This model is used in New York, New Jersey, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Louisiana, and Oklahoma.
2. The SEA distributes funds to LEAs, with subcontracts by LEAs allowed by law (11 programs). This model is used in Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, South Carolina, Texas, and West Virginia. Only three of these states actually subcontract with Head Start programs.
3. The state administrative agency distributes funds to LEAs or nonprofit agencies (such as Head Start and other community agencies) that apply competitively for funds (6 programs). This model is used in Vermont, New Jersey, New York City, California, Oregon, and Washington.
4. A state administrative agency distributes funds only to Head Start programs in order to supplement federal Head Start funds (8 programs). This model is used in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Minnesota, Hawaii, Alaska, and Washington.

Question 6: What are the conclusions and implications of this study?

Planning

While a proliferation of state-funded programs has led to increased competition for staff, facilities and children in many communities, Head Start administrators, child care professionals, and public school personnel would all agree that this competition is not the result of too many resources being applied to early childhood services. It is, rather, the consequence of a lack of planning for an integrated service system on state and community levels.

The growth of state-funded preschools has underscored the need for a long-term approach to planning. Creating interagency groups state wide can be a vehicle for such planning because groups such as these can tackle many priority issues, using basic demographic data as a backdrop for the planning process.

Coordination

A compelling need exists to coordinate existing services provided by Head Start and state-funded preschool programs at both state and local levels. For instance, local planning committees could be formed along the lines of those that already exist in some states. In addition, there is a need for an official, state level contact person representing Head Start, since many respondents identified the absence of a liaison as a major barrier to coordination.

Funding Mechanisms

Depending on the goal of preschool legislation, funding approaches and models will vary. For instance:

- If a state wishes to allow for maximum flexibility in communities, it might consider permitting any agency to be eligible for state funds.
- If a state wishes to provide comprehensive services to additional low-income children and their families, it might consider expanding Head Start as a cost-effective route to that goal.
- If a state wishes to furnish universal access to education for four-year-olds, it might consider the LEA-only model.
- If a state wishes to offer a choice of services in a community while keeping administrative control in the public schools, it might consider the LEA-with-subcontracting model.

When money goes exclusively to one group or another, coordination with other early childhood providers is not enhanced or promoted. Alternatively, when there are multiple delivery systems, coordination is encouraged, and the community has more flexibility in deciding what services it needs.

Dissemination of Information

Closely tied to the issue of coordination is the need for more widespread dissemination of information about the scope and character of the Head Start program. Lack of information exists about Head Start programs in general, and about Head Start's extensive early childhood services in particular.

In addition, it is critical that state policymakers have more information about what Head Start means when it identifies itself as a comprehensive child development program. Its longevity and success as a program serving low-income children and families place Head Start staff in a unique position to assist state agencies wishing to support programs for children at risk.

Salaries and Qualifications

Head Start and state-funded preschool programs often compete for teaching staff. There is a disparity between the qualifications and salaries of teachers in these two types of programs. Pay disparity will continue unless everyone in the early childhood field (public school preschool programs, day care, Head Start, and other early childhood providers) works toward common personnel standards set by the profession.

Facilities

Because the population of children under five years old has increased, public schools have taken back space they had given or rented to Head Start programs. Consequently, Head Start programs are faced with a shortage of affordable and appropriate facilities.

Some Head Start directors have approached local corporations for financial assistance in this area. Long-range community planning is desirable, and should be coordinated among state education agencies, state departments of community development, and Head Start.

Program Standards

Program standards, an important element in the development of any community program, need to be defined in a common manner because quality varies so much among programs. Relatively few of the state-funded preschool programs have developed standards for all of their program features. Through its National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, NAEYC has developed accreditation criteria and procedures for early childhood programs, and both Head Start and state-funded preschools may want to think about obtaining accreditation.

CHAPTER 1

Background and Rationale

Project Head Start has a unique place in the history of our nation's social and educational programs. Rooted in a vision of social change and a commitment to improving the quality of life for our nation's poor, Head Start has been unrivaled in its scope, reach and ambition. In Fiscal Year 1988, \$1.2 billion has been allocated for Head Start programs.

First conceived as a model demonstration effort and funded at the federal level, it was for many years virtually the only child development program available for low-income children and their families. However, in the 1980s there has been a notable increase in states' interest in preschool education, particularly for economically disadvantaged children. Today, 28 states project a total program expenditure of almost \$226 million for FY 1988. It is critical to examine the relationship between Head Start as a long-standing, national program and this burgeoning activity on the state level.

HEAD START

Launched in 1965 as part of the War on Poverty, the Head Start program has grown and matured in its nearly 25 years of working with low-income preschool children and their families. There are now 1,291 Head Start programs serving more than 450,000 children with an average cost per child of \$2592 projected for 1988. The stated purpose of Head Start is to "bring about a greater degree of social competence in children of low-income families." The term "social competence" refers to a child's "everyday effectiveness in dealing with both the present environment and later responsibilities in school and in life." (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Head Start Performance Standards, Section 1304.1-3, 1984).

Head Start's mission has remained relatively unchanged over the years and its positive accomplishments have been cited by almost every policy statement on preschool education. "It is the nation's foremost publicly funded program for meeting the child development needs of low-income families; and it has a relatively stable institutional structure designed to respond to a wide range of needs" (Schweinhart et al., 1987, p. 528). In fact, the Committee for Economic Development, an independent research and educational organization of more than 200 business executives and educators (1987), urges

federal funding of Head Start to be brought up to levels sufficient to reach all eligible children . . . it is more important than ever for the federal government to fund high-quality research, development, evaluation, and technical assistance for Chapter 1, Head Start, and related programs (p. 18).

What makes the Head Start model unique is the comprehensive nature of its services. The model consists of four major components—education, health, social services, and parent involvement—all of which are considered to be equally important in the design and delivery of services to children and their families. Each program component has a set of standards that specifies the critical elements of the services to be provided.

The Head Start program is funded through a federal system which channels money from the central office of the Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) to ten regional offices throughout the country. From the regional office, money goes to Head Start grantees in the communities. Using Head Start Performance Standards, ACYF program specialists at these regional offices are responsible for monitoring program compliance for all Head Start grantees in their region.

While the majority of Head Start children are served in classrooms, programs operate a homebased option. Services in the homebased option are delivered by home visitors for a minimum of 1 1/2 hours per week, and are family focused. These individual family services are supplemented by a group socialization session for three hours each month. Homebased programs are required to deliver all component services that are required for classroom-based services.

In addition to Head Start's program for three-to-five-year-olds, the Head Start Bureau also funds 33 Parent/Child Centers for children from birth to three years of age, and their parents. Parents are expected to participate in the program on a daily basis, and numerous activities are geared to parent education and support.

In 1970 a transmittal notice was issued by the Department of Health Education and Welfare and the Office for Economic Opportunity to clarify the intent of parent involvement in center-based, homebased, and Parent/Child Center programs. This document 70.2 (referring to the year and month the policy was developed) delineates the minimal requirements for parent participation in all Head Start programs. Areas covered include the structure, function, and composition of policy groups, rationale and strategies for parent participation in the classroom, and ways to coordinate the home/program partnership. The policy statement also includes a detailed matrix which indicates the level of responsibility of each decision maker (Board, Executive Director, Head Start Policy Council, and Head Start Director) for

five program functions. The functions covered include: planning, general administration, grant application process, personnel administration, and program self-evaluation.

The ACYF national office has reserved 18 percent of its budget to fund a national network of Resource Centers to work with grantees in their respective regions. Resource Centers provide training and technical assistance to staff in education, social services, and parent involvement components as well as management training for administrative personnel. In Fiscal Year 1988, the projected amount is \$4.6 million.

In addition, since 1976 ACYF has funded a separate national network of Resource Access Projects (RAPs) to enhance Head Start staffs' abilities to mainstream handicapped children. RAPs provide training in a range of areas, including identification, evaluation procedures, adaptation of the curriculum, information on specific disabilities, and collaboration with public schools. RAPs also distribute resource materials to Head Start programs in their service areas that provide information on good practice as well as specific disabilities. Developing interagency agreements has been a specific task in RAPs' contract, and consequently RAPs are required to work closely with state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs). Fiscal Year 1988s allocation for RAPs is \$2.38 million.

THE STATE-FUNDED PRESCHOOL MOVEMENT

The impetus for state-funded preschool programs has come from many areas:

- major shifts in national demographics
- an increased number of economically disadvantaged children
- mounting evidence that illustrates the value of early childhood education, especially for the economically disadvantaged
- growing consensus about the need for educational reform
- a changing political and economic climate, making new state initiatives possible

Shifts in Demographics

Over the past decade there has been a major shift in national demographics. The Census Bureau reports that there has been an increase of more than ten percent in the number of preschool children, while the percentage of older children in a number of states has declined (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1988). This surge in the preschool population has refocused attention on the needs of the younger child. Many families are in desperate need of child care; almost 60 percent of mothers of three- and four-year-olds are now employed outside the home. This need for child care becomes even more critical because 24 percent of all American children now live with just one parent (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1987a).

Increase in Economically Disadvantaged Children

At the same time, children as a group are now the poorest segment of the nation's population. For instance, 21 percent of all children in this country below the age of six live in poverty—more than four million children. Forty-five percent of all black children and approximately 40 percent of all Hispanic children live in families whose incomes fall below the poverty line (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1987b). The 1988 federal poverty line is \$ 11,650 for a family of four (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1988).

A number of factors are associated with poverty. Poverty poses immediate risks to children's health and well-being. Malnutrition affects at least 500,000 American children. One in every eight poor children has no regular source of medical care. The immunization status of the youngest American children also poses serious problems: in 1985 a smaller percentage of two-year-olds was fully immunized against the seven major childhood diseases than in 1980. In addition, members of families with children make up close to one-third of America's homeless population, and homelessness can threaten the psychological and physical well-being of these families for years to come (Children's Defense Fund, 1988).

Moreover, the long-term evidence indicates that poor children are more likely to fail in school, to drop out of school, and to live in poverty as adults (e.g., Bachman et al., 1971; Boston Public Schools, 1986; Ekstrom et al., 1986). One quarter of our nation's youth never finish high school, while many graduate and still need remediation in order to reach functional literacy (CED, 1985). Poverty and academic failure are also linked to crime, juvenile delinquency, and adolescent pregnancy (Schweinhart, 1985a,b).

The Value of Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education appears to be one of the most effective ways of breaking this pattern. Longitudinal studies such as those from the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies suggest that high-quality early childhood education programs have both short-term and long-term benefits for the child, particularly for economically disadvantaged preschool children. Quality programs are defined as those that are developmentally-based and culturally relevant, have the participation of parents, involve necessary community resources, and meet at least four days a week (e.g., Berrueta-Clement et al., 1984; Schweinhart et al., 1986; Lazar & Darlington, 1982; Weikart et al., 1978; Schweinhart & Weikart, 1980).

Specifically, participation in high quality early education programs has been shown to help children become more competent socially and emotionally. For instance, children who received such education in these programs were more responsible, talkative, and initiating in social situations, showed more interest and participation in classroom activities, and showed short-term gains on tests of cognitive ability.

The families of children participating in a high-quality program have been found to benefit as well. For example, mothers viewed themselves and their children as more competent, and parents' involvement in the program led to changes for other

children in the family similar to the benefits found for enrolled children (e.g., Berrueta-Clement et al., 1984; Bronfenbrenner, 1984; Lazar & Darlington, 1982; McKey et al., 1985; Ramey & Haskins, 1981; Ruopp et al., 1979). In other words, sound early childhood education is an extension of the home, not of the school (Elkind, 1986).

In the long term, participation in these programs can significantly reduce the number of children assigned to special education classes and retained in grade, and increase the likelihood of their completing high school and pursuing vocational or academic training. Young adults who attended a high-quality preschool program are also more likely to be self-supporting and employed, and are less likely to be in trouble with the law and to become teen parents than are similar young adults who did not attend preschool (Lazar & Darlington, 1982).

Economic analyses have been conducted as a result of these positive social results. Designers of the Perry Preschool Project have projected that for every dollar spent on a preschool program for disadvantaged children, the government will, in the long run, save four to seven dollars in welfare payments; in penal, judicial, and rehabilitative costs; and in generated tax revenues (Berrueta-Clement et al., 1984; Schweinhart et al., 1987).

The Call for Educational Reform

Numerous reports have criticized public education for failing our nation's students (e.g., *A Nation at Risk* by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; *Improving Our Schools* by Felt and Education Development Center, 1985), particularly at the secondary school level (e.g., Boyer, 1983; Goodlad, 1983; Powell et al., 1985; Sizer, 1984). In response, several states have adopted sweeping, stringent public-school requirements for testing, grade advancement, and graduation. In some states, preschool programs have been developed as a part of the general school reform movement.

Both the educational and business communities have advocated early intervention, especially for economically disadvantaged children. Advocates point to recent research that illustrates the relationship between early intervention and school success. Citing such research, the Committee for Economic Development proposes early childhood programs that respond to the whole child and provide support services for children's parents. CED calls for "Prevention through Early Intervention" (CED, 1987), stressing that the educational problems of disadvantaged children need to be addressed.

We strongly support quality preschool education for disadvantaged three- and four-year-olds and recommend that the nation continue to expand these programs until every eligible child has the opportunity to be enrolled (p. 33).

The Changing Political and Economic Climate

Governors and state legislatures are in a unique position to encourage preschool initiatives on the state level, since parents of preschool children have become a large and more vocal constituency in most states. Policymakers have become much more informed over the past several years about early childhood, child care, and family issues in their own states (Riley, 1986). Legislators have become more sophisticated in their approach to policymaking (Pound, 1986). Specialized legislative staff now exist in many states, including staff with special expertise in the areas of education and child and family issues. There are legislative liaisons from state education agencies (SEAs), and more information is made available by groups such as the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL, 1986; 1987). Many legislators, armed with this information, have become advocates of early intervention. State legislators and governors are especially persuaded by the compelling economic analyses of the Perry Preschool Project.

Finally, state funding of preschool programs is emerging in a very favorable political and economic climate. As more states enact legislation for preschool education, the movement takes on a "snowball effect." Many state leaders feel compelled to do something for the growing numbers of disadvantaged children. These state policymakers have determined that preschool education for disadvantaged children serves both the needs of the individual and of the larger society (Gnezda & Robison, 1986).

The educational, social, and economic factors described above have converged to create a climate of readiness for coalition-building among teachers, child advocates, parents, members of the business community, academicians, politicians, and policymakers. The focal point of their concern is finding new ways to marshal resources to improve the quality of life of our nation's young children. The state-funded preschool movement is one of the major responses to this growing national need.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The Head Start Bureau at ACYF recognized the growing trend in state funding of preschool education and felt it was critical to examine the implications of this burgeoning activity for Head Start planning and policy development. Therefore, in August 1987, ACYF funded the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) to examine state activity in a systematic way and to explore Head Start's relationship to state-funded preschool initiatives and programs across the country. Because of ACYF's need to develop policies and plan for the future, it was necessary for us to conduct the study in a short period of time.

Using a variety of data sources, the study addressed six major questions:

- How are states currently supporting preschool education?
- How do state-funded preschool programs compare with Head Start?

- How has Head Start coordinated with state-funded preschool programs?
- What are the barriers to coordination?
- To what extent does Head Start receive support from state-funded programs?
- What are the conclusions and implications of the state-funded preschool programs?

Other projects have described recent state-funded initiatives (e.g., National Conference of State Legislatures; Children's Defense Fund; National Association for the Education of Young Children; Wellesley College/Bank Street College Public School Early Childhood Study), although the foci of their studies have been different from ours. Aside from providing information on the status of state activities, the unique contribution of our study is the investigation of Head Start's role in this movement. This report explores existing and possible models of collaboration between Head Start and other providers of state-funded preschool programs, and contains implications for policymakers and practitioners.

CHAPTER 2

How the Study Was Conducted

The task of examining the scope of state-funded preschool programs across the country and their implications for Head Start required the collection of data from several different sources. In this section, we describe briefly the interview protocol, data sources, data analysis, and project timeline.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

EDC's research team designed a lengthy interview protocol which was used as the basis for obtaining the kinds of data we thought important. The protocol, in four sections, focused on state-funded preschool initiatives and their impact on Head Start. Many questions in the interview were yes-no or otherwise close-ended. However, respondents were always encouraged to amplify their answers and to provide specific examples. (The interview protocol is available from EDC upon request.) The sections of the protocol and their respective topics are described below.

States with Preschool Enactments

The first section of the protocol was designed for states with preschool enactments that had already been implemented. For each state, we provided a grid containing some of the basic background information about the enactment and asked respondents to verify the information and make changes as necessary. That information included objectives, program standards and components, teaching staff requirements, and plans for changes in legislation or in the nature of the preschool program.

We also asked respondents to describe

- the extent to which Head Start received support from the state-funded preschool enactments;
- the role Head Start played in the development and passage of the legislation;
- the positive impact of the legislation in general and on Head Start programs in particular;
- opportunities for collaboration between Head Start and state-funded programs;
- areas of competition between Head Start and LEAs (space, children, educational staff, other support services and staff), and differences in philosophical approach.

States without Preschool Enactments

The second section was for states without state-funded preschool enactments, including states in the planning or proposal stage or states that had enactments pending or whose enactments had been defeated. Questions addressed the reasons for lack of funding in those states without pending or planned legislation, and the possible future role of Head Start in legislation. For states with proposed legislation, many of the same questions from the first section were asked.

All States

The third section, designed for all states, dealt with collaboration between Head Start and public schools. It asked whether formal state and local interagency agreements for serving handicapped and non-handicapped preschoolers exist. It also included questions about the extent of informal working relationships and joint activities between Head Start and LEAs, and other service agencies at the local level.

States with Head Start-Only Enactments

The final section was for the eight states in which state money has been allocated directly to Head Start grantees only. This short section asked for basic information about the enactment, the role played by Head Start associations in its formulation, and the fiscal or programmatic issues raised in the development or implementation of the enactment.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

We used six major data sources for our study, each of which is described below.

State-Level Early Childhood Education/Preschool Program Administrators

First, the Head Start regional Resource Center network administered the interview protocol to all principal preschool program administrators in state agencies. These program administrators were, for the most part, early childhood education specialists in the state education agency (SEA), but they also included relevant program specialists in other state agencies. The Resource Center staff members conducted phone interviews with these respondents and, in some cases, asked the administrators to provide written answers to the questions. We received protocols for all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

There was some variability in the completeness of responses. In order to obtain complete data, the EDC research team conducted follow-up telephone interviews with all of the state-funded preschool program administrators.

Governors' Executive Assistants or Education Liaisons

Our second source of data involved phone interviews with Governors' executive assistants or education liaisons in all states. EDC's research team asked for information on gubernatorial activities or plans for state-funded preschool programs such as task forces, blue ribbon committees, statewide interagency councils, conferences, or proposed legislation.

Head Start Regional Office Staff and Other Regional Network Members

The Head Start Regional office staff constituted our third major data source. EDC researchers conducted phone interviews with Head Start regional bureau chiefs and/or ACYF regional program directors in all regions. These respondents provided a regional perspective on state-funded activities, and discussed Head Start's involvement in state legislative activities. The Resource Center network staff were able to provide some of the necessary information first-hand because of their involvement in state-funded preschool legislative activity. In addition, EDC and other Resource Center staff spoke with Resource Access Project (RAP) directors in several regions to obtain data on collaboration regarding handicapped preschool children.

Head Start Directors Association Presidents

Fourth, we surveyed by phone key Head Start directors in most states, usually the state Head Start Directors Association presidents. Regional Resource Center staff were very helpful in identifying Head Start directors who played a role in legislation. The Head Start directors provided a perspective on collaboration and competition that was distinctly different from that of state-level early childhood administrators.

Focus Group of Selected Head Start Directors

As a result of lengthy interviews with Head Start directors who have been active in state preschool legislation, the FDC research team felt it would be productive to bring some of them together to discuss Head Start's involvement in this movement. Thus, our fifth data source was a day-long focus group of eight Head Start directors from around the country who represented states with different models of state-funded preschool or proposed legislation: California, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Washington. They validated and verified the data we received from our other sources, and provided rich descriptive information of their own. The focus group had the added benefit of providing an opportunity for participants to share their experiences and learn from one another.

Legislation, Regulations, Program Standards, and Other Relevant Material

Our sixth data source consisted of the legislation, regulations, and program standards for states with state-funded preschool programs. We obtained legislation from every state with preschool funding, as well as proposed legislation. While we requested regulations and program standards from the administrators of all state-funded programs, we received materials from only 11 of the 25 states with programs in operation for at least the past eight months.

Limitations on Data Collection

It is important to note that we did not obtain data on migrant, Native American or trust territories Head Start programs, since these programs were not within the scope of our project. Second, we concentrated on state funding of preschool programs and did not focus on local funding sources. Thus, we interviewed state-level program administrators, but not local school district administrators. The two exceptions were New York City's Giant Step Program and Washington, D.C.'s universal access program for four-year olds. We included these two programs because of their all-encompassing, city-wide approaches. Finally, although state-funded day care and welfare reform programs are quite prevalent in many states, we also excluded these efforts from our study in order to concentrate our limited time and funds on examining state-funded preschool programs.

ANALYSIS

All 52 surveys and our interview notes from the over 180 respondents were read and analyzed. Project staff coded most answers for tabulation and conducted simple descriptive analyses to compute means, medians, percentages, ranges, and standard deviations. In a few instances, variables were tested for statistical