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AUTHOR Stowe, Carol Ann
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ABSTRACT

Language minority children (those whose primary language is other than English) are significantly more likely than their non-minority peers to live in poverty, thereby qualifying for federal Head Start and bilingual education programs. An examination of the policies in these programs focuses on their area of overlap. It begins with an overview of the origins of the programs, the specific federal legislation and policy initiatives for them, the practice and theory underlying each, and public perceptions. A parallel examination of the programs and their policies looks at similarities and differences, weaknesses and strengths, and differences in their funding agencies. It is argued that interagency collaboration and coordination of funding would strengthen both programs and make them more efficient. A 68-item bibliography is included. (MSE)

At Risk - Language Minority Preschool Children

Carol Ann Stowe
Northwestern University
School of Education and Social Policy
2003 Sheridan 1-184
Evanston, IL 60208

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Language minority preschool children (children whose primary language is other than English) are significantly more likely than their non-minority peers to live in poverty, thereby qualifying for programming under both Head Start and Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) - also known as the Bilingual Education Act (BEA). This paper provides an examination of policies in these two federal programs focusing on their area of overlap. Parallels are drawn between the two programs in terms of need and structure, and differences between their federal funding agencies (Education Department and Department of Health and Human Services) are noted. Public perception of the programs - often positive in the case of Head Start and negative in the area of bilingual programming - is discussed. Strengths and weaknesses of each program are weighed and an argument is advanced for a coordination of funding for comprehensive programs based on developmental criteria and implemented by well-trained professionals. Additional funding sources available to a collaborative effort are noted. The paper concludes by placing the programs that have been discussed in a larger, society-wide perspective. Data for this paper was gathered from multiple sources including a literature review; personal conversations with educational researchers and practitioners; federal program representatives; and federal documents.

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At Risk - Language Minority Preschool Children

Many American children are "at risk." The Task Force on Screening and Assessment of the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System (NEC*TAS) specifies three general risk categories: established conditions, which refers to diagnosed developmental delays or disabilities such as Down syndrome and cerebral palsy; biological risk which includes prematurity and respiratory disease; and children who are at environmental risk. Environmental risk includes those born into extreme poverty, abused children, and children from dysfunctional families (Meisels & Provence, 1989). Many agencies such as the Chicago Public Schools include language minority children - those whose primary language is other than English - in this last category (Jose Cuevas, Chairperson, Multicultural Task Force, City of Chicago, personal communication, June 4, 1990). In June of 1991 the U. S. Department of Education drew further attention to language minority children when it highlighted this group as constituting a growing proportion of U. S. youngsters which it classified as disadvantaged (U. S. Department of Education, 1991). This paper will examine two federal programs with major components for one at risk population - language minority preschool children; Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) also known as the Bilingual Education Act (BEA), and Head Start, a preschool program for disadvantaged children. A parallel examination of these two programs is particularly appropriate because of the overlap between the populations that they serve, and presents an example of the potential value of inter-agency collaborative efforts. This overlap results because minority children, including language minority children, are significantly more likely than their non-minority peers to live in poverty, thereby qualifying them for both Title VII and Head Start programming (Children's Defense Fund, 1990).

America's Melting Pot - A Historical Overview

The romantic ideal of the American melting pot, a nation made up of the best qualities of many nations, does not stand up under careful scrutiny. A close and honest look at history reveals a xenophobic British colony, the character of which has changed and broadened over time, but only because of political and economic pressures. Indeed, these same pressures have often been instrumental in controlling the flow of immigrants into the United states. Some came voluntarily, seeking a better life. Voluntary immigrants were primarily European until 1965 when racial quotas set earlier in the century were abolished. The majority of immigrants since that time have originated in Asia and the West Indies. Additionally, a number of groups can be classified as involuntary immigrants. These include Africans, brought to this country as slaves, and Native Americans and Mexican-Americans whose involuntary intra-country relocations share many of the characteristics of immigration (Stowe, 1989). All of these groups shared a common need upon their settlement. Communication. Their primary, and often only, language was not the official national language - English. This situation continues today.

There is an intimate relationship between language and culture, with most groups clinging to their language as a primary means of cultural identification. This same relationship can be attributed to the colonists' perceived need to adopt a national language. Herein lies the problematic nature of bilingualism in this country. America may call itself a "nation of immigrants," but it does not prize the primary manifestation of immigrant group cultures - language. Bilingualism is regarded as dysfunctional with speaking English as the native tongue being associated with social and economic opportunity (Cafferty & Rivera-Martinez, 1981). Hence, language minority children are at risk.

The history of bilingual instruction in American schools is emotionally, psychologically, and politically charged. Many immigrant groups, both past and present, have operated parochial schools to teach the language of their native land. Political pressure existed to create bilingual programs in the public schools even before attendance was mandatory, and bilingual programming was not uncommon between 1840 and 1880, with some German-English public schools continuing to operate until the First World War. The intent of these early programs was to prepare students to function in two monolingual communities (the native language community, and the larger English-speaking community). It is important to remember that these programs were not embraced, but rather were tolerated by the English speaking (Cafferty & Rivera-Martinez, 1981). By the time of the First World War the public schools had become the prime vehicle for Americanization. Language, loyalty in the form of civic religion, and cleanliness became the schools' primary goals (Stowe, 1989). The issue of bilingual education reentered the public school arena in the 1960s, during President Lyndon Johnson's building of the "Great Society" programs. Program Head Start also has its roots in that era. The next sections of this paper will address the parallel growth of these two programs.

Bilingual Education Act

The Bilingual Education Act (BEA) was voted into being in 1968 by a Democratic controlled Senate that was supportive of Johnson's domestic policy, and a conservative House that did not vote on the BEA separately, but rather as one of many amendments (Title VII) to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). No funds were appropriated until 1969. The BEA was originally intended to serve low-income children who spoke limited English. It provided grant money that could be awarded to local educational agencies (LEAs), institutions of higher education

(IHEs), or regional research facilities. Grants could be awarded to:

1. develop and operate bilingual education programs, native history and cultural programs, early childhood education programs, adult education programs, and programs to train bilingual aides;
2. make efforts to attract and retain as teachers individuals from non-English-speaking backgrounds; and
3. establish cooperation between home and school. (August, 1986, p. 2)

Controversy concerning the goal of the Bilingual Education Act has surrounded it since its beginning, with individuals from all perspectives asking if the intent of the program was transition to English, or maintenance of the native language (August, 1986; Corral, 1991; Ravitch, 1983; Rippa, 1988). In 1974, under Public Law 93-380, Congress amended the Act with the stated purpose of "instruction given in, and study of English and, to the extent necessary to allow a child to progress effectively through the education system, the native language" (August, 1986, p. 2). At the same time, financial status was eliminated as an eligibility criterion and new programs were added for teacher training and materials development. The BEA has been further modified three times; in 1978 under P.L. 95-561, in 1984 under P.L. 98-511, and again in 1988 under P.L. 100-297. These modifications have stressed English proficiency as it relates to academic skills, parental involvement, and institutional capacity building (August, 1986; P.L. 100-297, 1988).

Public Law 100-297, that which is currently in effect, authorizes federal funds in four areas. Part A authorizes grants for:

(1) programs of transitional bilingual education;
(2) programs of developmental bilingual education;
(3) special alternative instructional programs for students of limited English proficiency;
(4) programs for academic excellence;
(5) family English literacy programs; and
(6) bilingual preschool, special education, and gifted and talented programs preparatory or supplementary to programs such as those assisted under this Act. (P.L. 100-297, 1988, 102 STAT. 279)

Part B authorizes funds for data collection, evaluation, and research; Part C for training and technical assistance; and Part D for the administration of the program (P.L. 100-297, 1988).

Educational Programs for Language Minority Children - Practice and Theory

Controversy concerning the education of language minority children persists despite numerous evaluations conducted during the more than twenty year history of the Bilingual Education Act. Many of the studies have been questioned on methodological issues, and a study can be found to support almost any perspective. This is at least in part due to the nature of federal funding for educational programs. Federal funding agencies are "forbidden by law" to dictate a particular educational approach. That is considered to be the provence of local and state education agencies. This situation is further complicated by action taken by the judicial branch of the government and other government agencies such as the Office of Civil Rights (Barbara Wells, Contact for Special Populations Program, Office of Bilingual Education and Language Minority Affairs [OBEMLA] personal communication, June 6, 1990).

Approximately 25 preschool programs have received funding under the Title VII Special Populations Program between 1985 and 1990. Funding has been made for one, two, or three year cycles, depending on when it was awarded. The mode of instruction for each of these programs was determined locally before the funding proposal was submitted. In most cases programming matches that of the local schools if operated under their jurisdiction. Other agencies are eligible to apply and have been funded, however, no Head Start program (as a free-standing entity) has received funding under a Title VII grant. Title VII official Barbara Wells stated that certain programmatic differences would make any future funding for the language component of Head Start programs problematic. Specifically, Title VII requires a "full instructional program" run by "certified teachers," and does not fund certain elements central to Head Start programs, notably social, nutritional and health components (Barbara Wells, OBEMLA, personal communication, June 6, 1990). There is hope, however, that this situation might change as both the Department of Education (1991) and the Department of Health and Human Services (1991) have begun actively encouraging collaboration of agencies and individuals in their attempts to serve targeted populations.

Programs for language minority children take many forms. There are, however, four basic program types under which most variations fall. They are:

1. Submersion Programs. These programs follow, as the name suggests, the "sink or swim" approach. Children are placed in classrooms where English is the only language spoken and many classmates are native English speakers. Language minority children are often forbidden to speak their native language, even during free-time activities.

2. Immersion Programs. This type of programming follows much the same format as submersion programs, with one primary and crucial difference - all of the children in a class are language minority, so English is used in a manner that is more appropriate to the learners' comprehension level.

3. English as a Second Language (ESL). ESL classes are often used to augment submersion programs. ESL classes are basically tutorial sessions in English that are conducted on a pull-out basis.

4. Bilingual Programs. Children in bilingual programs are gradually introduced to English while instruction in subject matter is given in the native language. While bilingual programming has eventual fluency in English as a goal, it does aid in the maintenance of the native language. Great variety exists in the manner in which both the native language and English are structured into the program (Pai, 1990; Ramsey, 1987).

Bilingual programs are by far the most politically and emotionally controversial. The general public often questions the purpose and cost of native language instruction. Bilingual education is, however, thought by many educators to be the most effective in terms of cognitive development and academic progress. Many also feel it important in terms of self-respect and identity (Commins, 1989; Quality Education for Minorities Project, 1990; Quintero & Velarde, 1990). Affective issues aside, there is a growing body of knowledge that supports the maintenance of native language. Two major arguments are frequently made. First, many people - including educators - are often mistaken in their assessment of the extent of a child's English language acquisition. This is due to the fact that while most children become conversationally proficient in approximately two years, it generally requires several years for them to become academically proficient. A child may well be in academic trouble even if able to negotiate within the social environment of the classroom and playground. Second, it is generally accepted that languages do not develop independent of each other. A firm base in an individual's native language provides the foundation for growth in a second language (Hakuta & Garcia, 1989; Pai, 1990; Ramerez, 1985; Soto, 1991). These issues are further complicated by the fact that young children appear to master a second language faster than older children. Some suggest that this may be due to their being better able to sort sounds (one of the primary developmental tasks at this stage) and therefore better hear the language and speak in a less accented fashion than children who begin study at a later age. Others attribute this phenomenon to a lack of inhibitions in young children and frequency of social contact during the period in which they are learning the second language. Older individuals do, however, have a distinct advantage in terms of more sophisticated language tasks (i.e. academic tasks) because they build on the base they have already established in their native language (Pai,1990; Soto, 1991).

Preschool language minority children are particularly vulnerable to programming efforts for two reasons. First, it is believed essential that the native language be maintained in order to foster appropriate growth of the parent - child relationship. The parent and the teacher each play a large role in the young child's life and consistency between home and school is critical. Second, native language maintenance is paramount in terms of cognitive development. The early childhood years, those associated with the Piagetian stage of intuitive thought (approximately 4 to 7 years of age), constitute a critical stage in language development because language has not yet been firmly established. Interruption of the language development process during this period risks irreversible damage in the brain growth process. This can result in retardation of language, even to the extreme of it remaining at the infant level. Preschool language minority children are indeed at risk if placed in programs inappropriate to their developmental level. (Anne Kiefer, Professor, National College of Education, personal communication June 7, 1990; Patrick (Paddy) O'Reilly, Head Start Teacher, Whittier Elementary School, personal communication, May 5, 1990 and February 8, 1991).

Head Start

Head Start celebrated its 25th anniversary last summer, its initial authorization predating Title VII by three years. "Head Start is a federally sponsored preschool program designed to enable disadvantaged children to cope better with traditional schooling and to help children and their families achieve economic self-sufficiency" (Slaughter, Washington, Oyemade & Lindsey, 1988). It has been heralded as not only a pioneer, but an exemplary program in terms of meeting the needs of the nation's poor children (Cohen, 1990). The program's current objectives and performance standards provide for:

> (1) The improvement of the child's health and physical abilities, including appropriate steps to correct present physical and mental problems and to enhance every child's access to an adequate diet. The improvement of the family attitude toward future health care and physical abilities.
> (2) The encouragement of self-confidence, spontaneity, curiosity, and self-discipline which will assist in the development of the child's social and emotional health.
> (3) The enhancement of the child's mental processes and skills with particular attention to conceptual and communication skills.
> (4) The establishment of patterns and high expectations for success in the child, which will create a climate of confidence for present and future learning efforts and overall development.
> (5) An increase in the ability of the child and the family to relate to each other and to others.
> (6) The enhancement of the sense of dignity and self-worth within the child and his family.
> (Federal Register, March 29, 1990, p. 11671 - 11672)

Head Start requires, as part of its social competence objective, "that staff must be present that reflect the native language in every instance" (E. Dollie Wolverton, Chief of Educational Services Branch Head Start, personal communication June 4, 1990). This staffing requirement is often met by parents hired as program aides, or volunteers. The program issued a request for proposal (RFP) for grants for a Multicultural Infusion Demonstration

Network in 1990, listing the following principles:

(1) Every individual is rooted in culture and language.
(2) The cultural groups represented in the communities and families of each Head Start program are the primary sources for culturally relevant programming.
(3) Culturally relevant and diverse programming requires learning accurate information about the culture of different groups and discarding stereotypes.
(4) Cultural relevance is to be addressed along with developmental levels and learning styles of children in selecting appropriate curriculum activities and materials.
(5) Every individual has the right to maintain his or her identity while acquiring the skills required to function in our diverse society.
(6) Language and culture are joined for all of us. This is especially true of children whose language is other than English.
(7) Culturally relevant programming requires staffing reflective of the community and families served.
(8) Culturally diverse programming for children includes enabling children to develop an awareness of, respect for, and appreciation of individual cultural differences and it is beneficial and essential for the development of social competence.
(9) Culturally relevant and diverse programming examines and challenges institutional biases.
(10) Culturally relevant and diverse programming and practices are incorporated in all components and services. (Federal Register, March 29, 1990, p. 11673)

Preschool Programs - Practice and Theory

Head Start is considered by much of the public to be an overwhelming success (Cohen, 1990), and is widely supported by all but a small conservative element in Congress. The House voted in 1990 to expand the program's current efforts, which then met the needs of a minority of eligible children (estimated as either one in five or six), to reach all those eligible by 1994 (Education Week, May 23, 1990). Both the House and the Senate have reaffirmed this commitment (Education Week, November 13, 1991). The program has not, however, been without its detractors. Like Title VII, Head Start has been evaluated many times during its history and one can find a study to support almost any perspective in terms of the program's value to children directly (Borden & O'Beirne, 1989; Cole, 1986; Gamble & Zigler, 1989; Grimmett & Garrett, 1989; Head Start Evaluation Design Project, 1989; Laosa, 1985; Schweinhart & Weikart, 1986), or indirectly through their parents (Oyemade, Washington, Nakagawa & Gullo, 1989; Parker, Piotrkowski & Peay, 1987; Slaughter, Lindsey & Kuehne, 1989). There is, however a growing body of research to support long-term gains of Head Start participants. Much of this literature focuses on the Perry Preschool Program which has been particularly well-documented (Borden, & O'Beirne, 1989; Ford Foundation, 1989; Head Start Evaluation Design Project, 1989, Johnson, 1990; Karweit, 1989; Slaughter, Washington, Oyemade, & Lindsey, 1988; Stein, Leinhardt, & Bickel, 1989; Weikart, 1989). Head Start philosophy and objectives are firmly rooted in developmental psychology and the program's goals have received wide professional support. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) featured Head Start in its September 1990 journal "Young Children" in commemoration of the program's twenty-fifth anniversary.

Several features are considered essential to quality preschool programming. In June of 1989 the Ford Foundation Project on Social Welfare and the American Future published an occasional paper written by David P. Weikart titled "Quality Preschool Programs: A Long-Term Social Investment." In that paper Weikart listed the following as characteristics of a quality preschool program, one that would promote intellectual, social, and physical development:

* A clearly stated, validated curriculum that features child-initiated activities. This kind of curriculum accepts children at whatever developmental level they are on. It provides ample opportunity for children to solve problems independently, to initiate meaningful conversations with peers and adults, and to explore materials and interests on their own.
* At least two adults for each group of sixteen to twenty children.
* Staff trained in early childhood education and care, and a clear plan for continued in-service training and for systematic classroom supervision in the curriculum methodology.
* Effective evaluation procedures that help the staff observe each child's response to the environment and the programs.
* Active involvement of parents in developing and operating the program, and in parent training activities.
* Good administrative backup, and clear links to such comprehensive services as health, nutrition, and social supports. (pp. 18-19)

Similar lists can be found in the work of David Elkind (1986), and Polly Greenberg (1990), and in policy statements issued by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (1986), the National Association of the State Boards of Education (NASBE) (1989 - authored by Schultz and Lombardi), and the U. S. Department of

Education (1991). These lists are compatible with the objectives and performance standards for Head Start. In addition, they are philosophically compatible with the Head Start principles for a Multicultural Infusion Demonstration Network. There is some question, however, about whether the program is able to meet the goals it sets for itself.

Head Start is a federally funded program and is, by the very nature of that fact, highly decentralized in terms of programming, allowing for many different designs. Staff training is one area that varies widely between individual programs. Credentialling of staff, in the form of a Child Development Associate (C.D.A.) is available through the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition in the following categories; Infants and Toddlers, Day Care, Home Visitors, and Teachers of Three to Five-year-olds. These categories reflect the different types of programs funded under Head Start. In addition, Bilingual Specialization is available to individuals credentialled in any of the above categories. Approximately 700 Bilingual Specializations were awarded between 1975 and 1990. This credentialling requires that the individual demonstrate the ability to provide developmentally appropriate care in English, the second language, and the culture of the children. This can be done by documenting three training experiences, either formal or informal. This follows the format for credentialling under the four basic categories. No further education requirements are made (Carol Phillips, Executive Director, Council for Early childhood Professional Recognition, personal communication, June 4, 1990).

Certain Head Start programs do require more extensive training, notably those provided under the auspices of public schools. These programs compensate staff according to salary scales negotiated by district teachers and Head Start teachers must meet state teacher certification requirements. In Illinois that means a minimum of a B.A. degree with K-9 certification, and Early Childhood credentialling. The Early Childhood credentialling need not at this time, however, be in the form of state licensure which is quite demanding. Rather, this requirement can be met with a C.D.A. (Jose Cuevas, Chairperson, Multicultural Task Force, city of Chicago, personal communication June 6, 1990). Illinois is, however, significantly more advanced than many states, nearly half do not even offer specialized early childhood certification (Education Week, October 30, 1991).

It is currently possible for Head Start programs that are not run by public schools to have no one on staff who has completed a formal college education, or any type of extensive training - even the director (Caruso, 1991). Head Start does recognize the limitations of its present system and has set the goal of more extensive staff training (Paula Jorde-Bloom, Head Start Directors Training Program, National College of Education, personal communication June 7, 1990). Other entities are also involved in this effort. Notably, The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recently announced a new Professional Development Institute (NAEYC, 1991) and further delineated the recommendations that it was making in a joint effort with the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) (ATE and NAEYC, 1991).

Several factors contribute to the current staff credentials situation. Perhaps the most significant is financial. It is, at the present time, often difficult for Head Start programs, other than those operated by the public schools, to attract and retain qualified staff - even at the C.D.A. level. While approximately 80% of those applying for C.D.A. recognition are Head Start staff members, many leave the program for other positions. A recent study done at the University of California found a 41% annual turn over rate in early childhood program staff. That figure can be considered representative of many Head Start programs. Salaries and working conditions were given as the primary reasons for leaving a position. It is, however, necessary to be cautious when addressing salary disparities that exist between early childhood workers (including Head Start) and those in different, but similar occupations requiring comparable training, because of the manner in which data is often gathered. One of the reasons that it is difficult to establish an accurate relationship to other fields is the part-time nature of many early childhood positions. Part-time status is reflected in both lower salaries and loss of benefits including health care, vacations, sick pay and retirement funds (Carol Phillips, Executive Director, Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition, personal communication, June 4, 1990). All factors considered, the situation is not encouraging. A study released at the National Association for the Education of Young Children 1991 Annual Conference and authored by NAEYC, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health and Human Services reported that despite increased levels of training, child-care teachers' wages have declined in real terms over the last fifteen years and average $11,500 annually (Education Week, November 20, 1991). Present conditions make it often impossible to attract college educated individuals to the field, even when scholarships for training are available (Patti Adachi, Assistant Director, Asian Program, National College of Education, personal communication, June 4, 1990). Unionization is one approach being considered by early childhood educators. The National Association for the Education of Young Children had been asked at the organization's 1990 annual meeting, and later declined, to become a collective-bargaining agent for early childhood educators. Ironically, another influence on Head Start program quality, including staff preparation, has been recently noted by program directors. The recent rapid expansion of the program, as funded by Congress, has sent directors scurrying to provide services to more children (meaning greater staff and program needs) at the same level of funding per participant, resulting in strain on the system and further dilution of adequately prepared staff.

Politics or Children

A parallel examination of the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) and Head Start yields some very interesting insights into both the policy process and programmatic efforts. First allow me to list the similarities between the programs.

* Both programs have their roots in the Great Society programs of the Johnson administration.
* Both programs serve largely impoverished populations of children, a disproportionate percentage of whom are from minority populations.
* The need for both programs has not diminished over the last twenty-five years, but rather has grown and changed with target populations coming from disproportionately larger and larger minority populations that face an increasing number of debilitating conditions.
* Both are federally funded grant award programs. This means a wide variety of programs administered by a range of agencies, all of which depend on being refunded on a cyclical basis.

There are, however, certain striking differences between the programs.

* BEA is administered through the Department of Education and, although it funds a variety of program types, is narrowly focused on "full instructional programs" taught by "certified teachers." It was also consistently referred to as "highly political" by almost every individual I spoke to.
* Head Start is administered through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and, although philosophically grounded in developmental research, has been criticized for implementation of programs by untrained individuals. HHS takes a holistic view of the problems it addresses, as opposed to a narrow focus. This is reflected in the Head Start objectives and performance standards and the principles and policies that underlie the department's programmatic efforts. Those principles and policies read in part:
    * Human service needs are best defined through institutions and organizations at the local community level...
    * Social problems are complex..Interagency coordination can help avoid duplication and fragmentation of services to maximize utilization of existing resources and to promote joint solutions to benefit clients...
    * Both applied research and demonstration efforts are needed to solve emerging social issues. (Federal Register, March 8, 1990, p. 8555)

I would suggest that each of these programs has weaknesses and strengths. A careful and honest self-examination could prove beneficial to both programs, and yet more importantly, to the populations of children that they serve. These children are at risk.

The holistic approach taken by Head Start has made it one of the most successful social service programs in the nation. This success has come on many levels. Head Start has popular, and therefore political, support. The program's popularity waned slightly when short-term gains of participants appeared to "wash-out" after a couple of years, but increased markedly when long-term gains of those same participants were documented in subsequent years. Professional organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children have consistently supported Head Start objectives. Even parties interested in the bottom-line have become advocates when presented with figures documenting long-term financial gains for a small initial investment. The recent congressional vote to authorize funding to expand the program to reach all those eligible, from the current 15 to 20 percent receiving services, is overwhelming testament to the program's success. The picture is not without a blemish however (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1986). The National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) mobilized against expansion of Head Start funding based on their understanding that present guidelines for serving language minority children are not being followed due to lack of qualified personnel (Schmidt, 1990). And, as noted earlier, the increased funding by Congress has been aimed at more of the same instead of more in terms of both numbers served and program quality.

Head Start must clearly upgrade its training standards if it is going to take full advantage of the growth possibilities additional funding could bring. All center directors must have at least the equivalent of state licensure at the early childhood level. Teachers need to be certified at a standardized level and C.D.A. requirements for classroom aides must be strengthened. Qualified staff must be retained. Stronger programs follow stronger staff. Even more funding than that approved by Congress is needed to ensure that these staffing requirements are met and that all eligible children have a genuine opportunity to participate.

Additional funding could come in the form of more extensive appropriations being made to the program itself. There are, however, a variety of other possibilities. Funding for the multicultural/multilingual component could come from Title VII if Head Start staffing and program are strengthened. The state boards of education, local public school systems, and federal programs such as Chapter I (formerly Title I) funds for disadvantaged children offer other alternatives. All of these sources present possibilities. They also present a clear and real danger. Head Start could lose its focus on developmentally appropriate programming. That is the major criticism made of most pre-K programs currently run by the public schools (Elkind, 1988; Greenberg, 1990; Mitchell & Modigliani,

1989). This concern, and the benefits and hazards of collaborative efforts, has been succinctly addressed by Kagan and Rivera (1991).

It is not possible to comment on Title VII preschool programs from the objectives made available in RFPs because there is simply not enough said. Caution needs to be exercised by those evaluating grant proposals submitted, in terms of minority language and preschool needs. Children must be the bottom-line, not politics. I am concerned that this is not the case. These concerns stem from two much larger issues. First, services to preschool children in Title VII programs risk being fragmented given the program's emphasis on academic programming unless the local agency is creative in its financial packaging. Given that current research supports comprehensive services to at risk populations (Children's Defense Fund, 1990; Cohen, 1990; Flax, 1990; Ford Foundation, 1989a, 1989b; Schorr, 1989; US General Accounting Office, 1990), Title VII preschool funds might very well be put to better use if they were to be awarded for the language element of comprehensive programs, such as Head Start, provided appropriate staff qualifications are met. This approach, coordination of funding from various sources, has recently been supported by a Carnegie Corporation funded commission that met at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University (Education Week, December 4, 1991). Similar statements have been made by National School Board Association as well as both the Department of Education and the Department of Human Services. This is encouraging given that Congress has committed to increased spending in both bilingual education and Head Start. Additionally, the final Report of the National Commission on children (1991) clearly and dramatically outlines the needs of today's children and suggests several means of covering federal costs of comprehensive programming. Momentum is gathering to support the needs of our children Professionals from all involved fields must not let that momentum dissipate.

Of overriding importance with the specific population addressed here, however, is the political nature of the Title VII program. Bilingual education continues to be a controversial issue in a country that may pride itself in being a "nation of immigrants," but which continues to act like a xenophobic colony. This is an issue that has direct bearing on the education of language minority children. It is, however, even larger than that. It has a profound impact on the way we live, think, care for, and educate all of our children. David Spener (1988) makes a convincing argument concerning the impact current programming for language minority children has on maintaining an all but unbreachable class system. Poorly educated language minority children face a bleak future. We can no longer placate ourselves with the rationale offered by immigrants of earlier generations that "we did it, so can they." Remarkable changes have taken place in the last several decades. The abundance of jobs for minimally educated individuals that awaited earlier immigrants no longer exists (Hakuta & Garcia, 1989; Pai, 1990; Ramsey, 1987). Present day immigrants also face the added burden of racial discrimination with their majority originating in Asia, Latin America, and the West Indies (Banks, 1990; Education Week, 1990; Henry, 1990). Our schools are not prepared for the challenge they face (Education Week, 1990; Elsner, 1990; Schmidt, 1990a, 1990b) and the political nature of bilingual education funding does not present visions of a secure future.

Ours is not the only nation that faces the demands of language minority children and a demographically changing society. In 1990 the U.S. Education Department and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development cosponsored an "International Conference on Children and Youth at Risk" (Cohen, 1990). I find this more than somewhat ironic given the United States' poor standing on services provided its children. Our children were found to be the poorest and among the least healthy in the industrialized world by a recent study (Children's Defense Fund, 1990). We also provide less preschool programming than any European country, Western or Eastern (Johnson, 1990), and are among a minority of countries that does not strive to provide literacy in mother-tongue languages (Jennings, 1990).

I began this paper with the statement that many American preschool children are at risk and proceeded to examine some of the programming available to one sub-group of that population - language minority preschool children. I can only conclude this paper with the much broader statement that our country is at risk. A country that does not provide for and nurture its children has no future. We can follow the example of European countries. We can examine the programs that we currently offer and work towards a more efficient and effective system through interagency collaboration. We cannot wait for the problems to go away. They will not. We are no longer (if we ever were) the land of limitless opportunities, but opportunities do exist. The disgrace is the imbalance of opportunities between individuals and between groups.

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