INVISIBLE CHILDREN

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The INVISIBLE CHILDREN

of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

in the United States: An Examination of existing Pre-K Partnerships

DEDICATION

The National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Collaboration Offices has named this document "Invisible Children" due to the fact that in our research, we have found little information regarding the children of the migrant and seasonal farmworkers who feed our nation. This "Invisible Children" document is dedicated to the migrant farmworkers across the nation who toil the fields of America under a blanket of fear for the simple reason that they seek a better life for their children.

The MSHS Collaboration Office offers this document as a key for quality Pre-K partnerships in working with migrant farmworker families. If you have received this document, it is likely because migrant and seasonal farmworkers reside and labor within the borders of your state. It is our hope that the information contained herein will bring awareness to local, state and national early childhood agencies and will include the thousands of children born to migrant and seasonal farmworkers in every state Pre-K service plan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start grantee and delegate agencies who took part in our survey, sometimes under difficult technical circumstances, and to the dedicated staff of the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Technical Assistance Center for their outstanding efforts in supporting MSHS programs to submit information that was critical to this report. Most of all, we acknowledge and thank the gracious nature of the migrant farmworker families with whom we work, whose sense of family and community gives them the necessary endurance and strength to continue in the important work they do with dignity and with pride.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The INVISIBLE CHILDREN

of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

in the United States: An Examination of existing Pre-K Partnerships

INTRODUCTION

The National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Collaboration Office under the auspices of the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Technical Assistance Network undertook a small scale study to document the early learning needs and experiences of the migrant farmworker child and to explore current efforts to include this vulnerable population in Pre-K partnerships and state level planning efforts. Through the course of our research which is explained in more detail in the following pages, we found that in spite of the tremendous contributions and sacrifices of migrant farmworkers to the strength and security of our nation, the voices of their children remain silent, invisible in the world of state level early childhood collaborations and planning efforts. Thus we have entitled this document, "The Invisible Children of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers: An Examination of existing Pre-K Partnerships." It is our hope that this document will bring to light some of the important issues impacting these children who are perhaps our nation's most vulnerable and least visible.

Purpose

The National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Collaboration Office focuses on early care and education, program quality, health care, environmental hazards and child outcomes in its work to address issues facing young children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers. The Office strives to enhance collaboration among national organizations and states serving this population in order to maximize accessibility and quality of services; it also works to support Head Start State Collaboration Offices (HSSCO) in their efforts to affect culturally and linguistically appropriate services for migrant and seasonal farmworker children and families in the 39 states where locally based Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) programs operate.

Current national figures show an increase in attention to early care and education particularly Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K); 70 percent of four- year- olds and 40 percent of three- year- olds are enrolled in preschool programs.[1] Studies show that high quality preschool programs close the achievement gap that many young children experience entering school for the first time.[2] The gap is particularly prevalent for low-income and minority children and, given the unstable nature of the migrant lifestyle, is most likely even more significant for children of migrant and seasonal

[1] Barnett, S.W., Hustedt J.,.Friedman, A., Boyd, Judi., & Ainsworth, P. (2004-2007). The State of Preschool 2007: State Preschool Yearbook. New Jersey: National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers.
[2] Institute for Women's Policy Research, (2008) "*Meaningful Investments in Pre-K: Estimating the per child costs of Quality Programs*" 2008

farmworkers, although research performed specifically on the early learning of migrant children is scant.

The majority of migrant and seasonal farmworkers are culturally and linguistically diverse, with close to 85 percent Spanish speaking.[3] Latinos in the United States (migrant farmworkers included) remain the largest underserved group in early care and education programs, despite the remarkable growth in the numbers of Latino children. A number of elements have contributed to this gap including:

- Multiple funding streams that create barriers for some segments of the population
- Distrust and fear on the part of families of "government" programs
- Language barriers that prevent access or awareness of program's existence
- Lack of staff that is culturally and linguistically representative of the community
- Lack of families' familiarity with educational systems

These factors, among others, have tended to cause distrust and discomfort and have created a disincentive for Latino families to access services.

In addition to the rapid and continued growth of the Latino immigrant population in the "traditional" states such as California, Florida and Texas, there has also been a nationwide dispersion of Hispanic populations into states and communities not familiar with them. This change in immigrant settlement has resulted in a challenging shift in school-age immigrant populations. For example, North Carolina, Arkansas and Georgia have experienced large increases in their Latino immigrant child population under the age of five [see chart below].

Top 10 States w/ the Fastest-Growing Latino Child Population Ages 0-4, by Percent Growth, 1990-2000

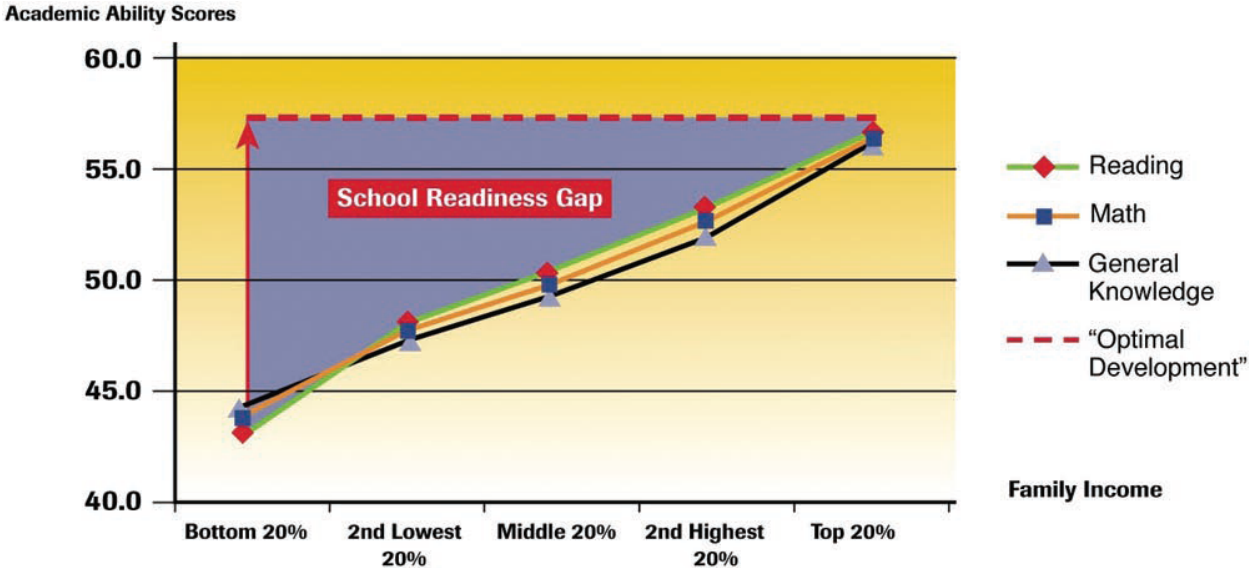
State	Percent Growth
North Carolina	417.3
Arkansas	392.2
Georgia	342.2
Tennessee	339.2
Alabama	260.8
Nevada	238.5
South Carolina	194.0
Kentucky	193.2
Iowa	187.0
Minnesota	159.7

[3] National Center for Farmworker Health adapted from the National Agricultural Workers' Survey (2000), "*Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker demographics Fact Sheet*"

Note: *Adapted from Latino Issues and Universal Preschool, Emerging Hispanic Communities, Washington, DC: National Council of La Raza.*[4]

A large portion of these students are English language learners. It must be emphasized however that this is not only an English/ Spanish issue. With over 460 languages spoken in Pre-K through third grade in public schools, it is understandable that providing support for all English language learners is challenging[5]. English-language fluency serves as a strong predictor of later school performance and early care and education programs have the potential to begin to address the needs of English language learners helping to close the school readiness gap[6]. Research has demonstrated that high-quality child care and other early education programs can contribute to later educational attainment and life success, with related economic and social benefits to the individual and the larger society[7]. This service and outcome gap highlights issues of equity and equal access to educational opportunity. In addition, opportunity costs are levied on children, families and society when the benefits of child care and early childhood services are not available for working parents with children from birth to age five.

Achievement Gap as Children Begin Kindergarten



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, Fall 1998. In Barnett, W. S.; Hustedt, J. T.; Robin, K. B.; & Schulman, K. L. (2004). *The state of preschool: 2004 state preschool yearbook*. Washington, DC: National Education Association <nieer.org/yearbook2004/pdf/yearbook.pdf>.

[4] National Council of La Raza, 2008. Latino Issues and Universal Preschool.

[5] Kindler, A. L. (2002). *Survey of the states' limited English proficient students and available educational programs and services, 2000–2001 Summary Report*. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs.

[6] Garcia, E., & Gonzales, D. (2006). Pre-K and Latinos: The Foundation for America's Future. Washington, DC: Pre-K Now Research Series.

[7] Barnett, S.W., Hustedt J.,.Friedman, A., Boyd, Judi., & Ainsworth, P. (2004-2007). The State of Preschool 2007: State Preschool Yearbook. New Jersey: National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers.

A large body of research and literature demonstrates that with comprehensive, ongoing early interventions it is possible to narrow the achievement gap and change the educational odds for low-income children. High quality early childhood programs with an intentional curriculum and teachers that promote early literacy and math skills in the context of nurturing and emotionally supportive classrooms increase the achievement of low-income children.[8]

Children from vulnerable populations and specifically the children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers experience many educational challenges in their early years that greatly impact their later school achievement and success. These children need programs that are culturally and linguistically diverse and of high quality in order to grow and thrive. The knowledge of the direct correlation between high quality pre-school programs and later school and life success has precipitated the need for early childhood programs such as Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) and other Pre-K partners to think differently about how they develop high quality culturally and linguistically sensitive programs designed to meet the unique needs of this diverse population. It has also forced all Pre-K programs within communities to think about how they will collaborate in order to provide consistency across programs and provide on-going high quality culturally and linguistically appropriate experiences designed to help every child reach his or her full potential.

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES

It is estimated that there are between 3 million and 5 million migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the United States. Migrant farmworkers are defined as families who migrate in search of work in agriculture, and seasonal farmworkers are defined as families who no longer migrate, but continue working in agriculture, a typically seasonal occupation. Seasonal families are sometimes referred to as "settled out" migrants. The states with the highest farmworker populations are California, Texas, Washington State, Florida, Oregon and North Carolina. Migrant and seasonal farmworkers contribute substantially to the wealth of the United States serving as the backbone for a multi-billion-dollar agricultural industry. Agricultural labor is defined as:

- The production and harvesting of tree crops
- Preparing the soil, planting, cultivating, picking, canning and processing
- Crop production, irrigation, crop protection (pesticide spraying, pruning, etc.) and operation of farm machinery
- The production and harvesting of greenhouse and nursery products

Migrant farm labor supports the $28 billion fruit and vegetable industry in the U.S.; 85 percent of which is hand harvested and/or cultivated.[9] The production of fruit and vegetable crops in the United States has steadily increased over the last decade. There is also a great deal of

[8] Garcia, E., & Gonzales, D. (2006). Pre-K and Latinos: The Foundation for America's Future. Washington, DC: Pre-K Now Research Series

[9] (National Center for Farmworker Health, (2000). "*Facts About Farmworkers*")

handwork needed in processing meat, eggs and poultry. But because farms are no longer worked by families that can supply sufficient labor, the demand for a large, mobile, low-wage labor pool has skyrocketed. Growers want large numbers of temporary workers, hired for the duration of the harvest, who will work long hours for low pay when perishable crops are time-sensitive. Consequently, farm work throughout the centuries has long been filled with minorities, oppressed groups and the most financially vulnerable. Without the seasonal influx of migrant farm labor during peak periods the production of many fruit and vegetable crops would not be possible.

A HISTORY OF MIGRANT STREAMS

Since the late 19th century large populations of migrant farmworkers have followed three "streams," trailing harvest seasons throughout the country in search of employment. The three primary streams in the United States, each with its own ethnic and social history are the **Eastern, Mid-Continental and the Western**. The **Eastern** stream starts in Florida, following local crops up the east coast, ending chiefly in New York State but sometimes going as far as Maine. The second is the **Mid-continental** stream, starting in Southern Texas and going in several directions. Since Texas is a border area, many migrants move or "shuttle" within the state. Those who follow harvests in the Mid-Continental stream start in Texas, travel to the Great Lakes Region or to the Rocky Mountain area and the Northern Pacific, often looping back through the Texas Panhandle. The third stream is the **Western** stream that goes through California (the state which employs the most farmworkers and has the longest growing season), into Oregon and Washington.

Groups who populated migrant farmworker streams throughout the 19th and 20th centuries

Historical Period	Eastern Stream	Mid-continental Stream	Western Stream
Late 1800s and early 1900s	• Displaced rural African-Americans who were once sharecroppers and tenant farmers • European Immigrants (Irish, Italian, Scandinavian) • Local white laborers • Canadian Indians	• European Immigrants	• Chinese immigrants that had been railroad workers. Anti-Chinese sentiment later forces them out;,Japanese and Southern Europeans take their place • Poor native whites and transient “hoboes” • Urban women and children during WWI • Mexicans recruited during WWI
1930s to 1980s	• Rural white laborers and transient “hoboes” • Italian immigrants • African-American migrants based in Florida • German POWs during WW II • Native Americans from Canada and French Canadians • Jamaican and other Caribbean guest workers recruited early in the H2-A program • Puerto Ricans on “contracts” arranged by the U.S. Department of Labor	• AfricanAmericans • Puerto Ricans • Canadians • Native Americans • Appalachian Whites • European Immigrants (Polish, German, Italian, Eastern European, Irish, Finnish, Swedish) • German POWs during WWII • Texan, Mexican and Chicano workers from the border area (particularly in cattle and sheep ranching, cotton , etc.)	• Mexicans recruited through the Bracero program (1944- 1964) • Mexican-Americans • Filipino immigrants

1980-2000	• Urban Asian immigrants (Bangladeshi, Southeast Asian, Cambodian) • Haitian migrants based in Florida • Mexican and Mexican-American migrants based in the South • Mexican and Jamaican H2-A guest workers	• Mexicans and Meixcan-Americans • Guatemalans • Mexican Mennonites	• Mexican-Americans

In recent years, the phenomenon of a continuous stream has become significantly less pronounced. The National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) reported in 2000 that fully 60 percent of its respondents held only one farm job in the previous year and 33 percent held two or three jobs. Only seven percent held more than that. The survey also reveals that while 56 percent of farmworkers are migrants, 39 percent of these migrant workers were considered "shuttle" migrants traveling to a single area for one job in particular or a few jobs clustered together. Only 17 percent were so-called "follow-the-crop" migrants in the tradition of streams.[10]

Several factors may change the patterns of migration in farm work. Increased specialization of farms (producing, for example, only apples instead of a variety of fruit) results in a shorter season. The advent of mechanical harvesters' ability to pick specific fruits and vegetables interrupts the sequence of employment within a stream. Furthermore, there is an increased use of crew bosses, who can direct workers to specific farms.

In spite of the changes observed in the traditional migrant streams, the use of migrant agricultural labor is not waning in the least. NAWS reminds us that 65 percent of farmworkers have to travel for employment. Travel patterns are changing to include a good deal of cross-over between the original streams. Workers will travel from Mexico to the Northeast, from the Midwest to the East, etc. There are still a considerable number of migrants who travel the Eastern Stream, starting from Florida in the winter, but the demographic of those travelers is very different than it once was. Today people of Mexican and Haitian origin have replaced what was once an African-American majority.

Migrant streams are an deep-rooted tradition in the United States. The diverse and disenfranchised children and families who have populated these streams for centuries constitute the most vulnerable and underserved human beings in our nation. Throughout its history -- and continuing to the present day – the United States has come to rely on migrant farmworkers to

[10] (National Agricultural Workers Survey, 2006)

feed the nation and bring economic prosperity to local communities and to the nation as a whole.

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF MIGRANT FARMWORKERS

California migrant farmworkers, a segment of society numbering over 1 million individuals, supply the United States with more than half the produce consumed each day. But their contribution is not found only in California. The economic contributions of migrant and seasonal farmworkers to local communities and to the nation as a whole are extensive. The presence of farmworkers has been shown to increase the overall economic output of the regions in which they work. All immigrants pay taxes; whether income, property, sales, or other; sources vary in their amount, but a range of studies estimate between $90 billion and $140 billion a year is generated in taxes by the presence of migrant farmworker families. Though they are required to pay these taxes, as non residents they are not able to realize many of the benefits. Eliminating the presence of farmworkers or switching to less labor-intensive crops has been shown to have a negative impact on regions and to reduce the number of jobs available to permanent local residents. [11]

Barriers to Learning

Research indicates the neurological connections formed by life experiences in the brains of babies and young children during the early childhood years (especially the first three years) are critical to later learning and school success. [12] Low-income children -- especially those of migrant farmworkers -- are assaulted by a variety of environmental, social and economic factors which impede this much needed optimal growth and development in the early years. For young migrant children, this ensnarement comes in many forms associated with the migrant lifestyle of their parents such as working conditions, income level and substandard housing. These combined risk factors greatly impact the child's health, development and sense of well being.

Working Conditions for Migrant Farmworker Parents

Migrant and Seasonal farmworker adults work under distressing and difficult conditions. Exploitation by employers and environmental dangers create ever present challenges to security and safety. Often, migrant farmworker parents experience challenges and difficulties in advocating for themselves due to fear, lack of knowledge of English or American culture or other factors. They are often not covered by workers' protective legislation, and when covered, their coverage is less extensive than workers in other occupations. This can create extreme stress in the home when a breadwinner is laid off or injured on the job. It becomes almost impossible to obtain the basic necessities such as food, clothing and shelter. When children are hungry and parents are stressed, it is difficult for them to grow and thrive.

[11] National Center for Farmworker Health, (2000). "*Facts About Farmworkers*")
[12] National Research Council Institute of Medicine, (2000). From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development

Farmworkers also have no federal right to sanitary facilities in their work place. There is no national legislation that requires toilets, drinking water or hand washing facilities in farmworker labor sites. All other Americans are protected by Occupational Safety and Health Administration laws which require these facilities. The omission of these basic facilities takes on greater health complications for children when parents have no other alternative than to take their children to the fields while they work or are unable to wash pesticides and other hazardous materials off before touching, feeding or playing with children.

Poverty Level Wages

Farmworkers average annual income is about $11,000 for individuals and approximately $16,000 for a family. Often migrant farmworkers are compensated by the bucket – performing piece-work labor; in some states they earn as little as 40 cents for a bucket of tomatoes or sweet potatoes.[13] At that rate, farmworkers have to pick around two tons of produce (125 buckets) to earn $50. Regardless of how migrants are paid, a basic premise is that the only way to "make it" financially is for families to work as a unit, which includes young children. Laws provide for those as young as 10 years old to work in the fields under certain conditions. Agriculture is the only industry left in the country that allows for and is somewhat dependent upon child labor. Lax enforcement of laws still permits young children to work in the fields. Lack of child care often forces parents to bring children to the fields resulting in exposure to serious environmental hazards including pesticides and other toxins, motorized machinery and moving vehicles. Children have been killed in the fields or camps by trucks and machinery. Parents who need to work may put their children in or under cars thinking this will keep the child safe and under their watchful eye. The intense sun can heat the temperatures in or under the car to unsafe levels thus causing children to suffer and die from dehydration.

Housing

Migrant farmworkers have two sets of housing problems. First, in their home state areas their housing, like that of other rural, low-income and largely minority Americans, is notoriously sub standard with poor construction and overcrowding. When farmworkers leave their home state, their situation usually becomes even worse. The supply of available "in-stream" farmworker housing is grossly inadequate and is in fact also decreasing in availability. A survey conducted by Interamerica Research Associates estimates that the supply is equal to about half the demand. Also, the supply of in-stream farmworker housing that exists is of poor quality and deteriorating condition. More than one-fourth of the housing lacked inside plumbing and almost 30 percent lacked heat. In assessing structural condition, it was found that at least half was on the worst end of the quality scale. This bad situation is exacerbated by the fact that farmworker housing is consistently and notoriously overcrowded. Most migrant housing is more than 20 years old. It has considerably less plumbing, heat, interior finishes and space than seasonal farmworker housing. In addition 18 percent of migrant housing provides only outdoor pit toilets or privies, which is a sanitation hazard by definition.

[13]Bowe, j. (2003). "*A shameful Harvest*" The American Prospect

Making a difficult situation even more strenuous, this undesirable housing is not cheap. Nationwide less than one-fourth of camp housing was furnished as a condition of hire. Growers, especially on small farms, report that they no longer provide housing because of the expense of meeting newly legislated housing code requirements that apply to farmworker housing.

And in areas where housing is provided, most farmworkers have substantial rent payments deducted from their paychecks. Frequently, those rent deductions are so large that their take-home pay is reduced to below the legal minimum wage. In some states migrant housing is furnished as a condition of hire. However, this also means that all family members old enough to work must do so in order to qualify for their housing.

Migrant farmworker housing is frequently isolated and predominantly lack on-site telephones. This contributes to the isolation and dependency on farm owners. To avoid this difficult lack of social contact, some families choose homelessness, preferring instead to live in cars, under bridges, at rest stops or in the fields.

It goes without saying that this type of housing and these living conditions are less than ideal for children who suffer along with their parents in unsafe, unsanitary and stressful living conditions that can result in hunger, danger and serious health issues.

Health

Living in substandard conditions, including chicken coops, barns, cars or under bridges greatly effects the health and nutrition of young farmworker children and their families. Many farmworkers are unable to store food safely, prepare a warm meal, or even shower after a long day of working the fields.[14] During a recent visit to Congress, migrant farmworkers described hugging their children after a long day in the field, and then seeing a rash or sores breaking out all over their little bodies. Poor sanitation and overcrowded living conditions put children at an increased risk for ear and respiratory infections, exposure to lead, tuberculosis and pneumonia, poor nutrition, tainted or rotten food, accidents, exposure to toxic pesticides, etc. Young migrant children often find themselves unsafe, whether at home or in the fields.

Migrant farmworkers and families experience major health problems. Consider the following:

- The migrant's life expectancy is 49 years, compared to the national average of 73 years.
- The infant mortality rate among migrants is 25 percent higher than the national average.
- The miscarriage rate for female farmworkers is seven times the national average.
- The migrant death rate is 25 times higher than the national average for tuberculosis and other communicable diseases and death from influenza and pneumonia is 20 percent higher

[14] (Food Security Learning Center. World Hunger Year.)

- The migrant's two most chronic conditions are diabetes and hypertension; both require continuous, ongoing care.
- Poor nutrition causes pre- and post-natal deaths, anemia and extreme dental problems as well as poor mental and physical development of children.

With regards to the health of migrant farmworker children, the National Center for Farmworker Health reports:

"Of the farmworkers with children, 66 percent migrate with their children, and an estimated 250,000 children migrate with their parents each year. This high mobility inhibits long-term relationships with health providers and creates barriers to continuous and follow-up care.

Additionally, in two other studies, one found that 61 percent of the migrant children had at least one health problem while 43 percent had two or more problems, while another found more than a third of the migrant children examined suffered from "intestinal parasites, severe asthma, chronic diarrhea, Vitamin A deficiency, chemical poisoning or continuous otitis media."

Another significant health risk for migrant children is their exposure to pesticides. A study conducted in New York State found that 48 percent of the migrant children surveyed worked in fields still wet with pesticides with 36 percent having been sprayed directly with pesticides. Exposure to pesticides, infectious disease and sub-standard living conditions makes farmworker children susceptible to poor health."[15]

The issue of immunization records has a tremendous impact on young migrant children. Migrant children suffer from both over immunization and under immunization. Children suffer from over immunization when, due to the migrant lifestyle, parents lose or misplace immunization records. Since proof of immunization is required to enter a child care center in most states, when immunization records are lost, young migrant children may receive repeated and unnecessary immunizations. Additionally, one study found that migrant farmworker children consistently receive their immunizations "significantly later than the recommended schedule." This study found that, while migrant children are eventually adequately protected, they are unprotected at an early age when they are most susceptible to diseases. [16] Ensuring migrant children are not over or under immunized is a tremendous challenge for early childhood care providers, and something they must consider when offering services to this unique population.

In summary young migrant farmworker children face enormous challenges in the critical years of their early growth and development. Parent's unsafe and often unsanitary working conditions, low-income levels, inadequate housing and parental and child health factors all impact the young migrant child's ability to explore, grow, develop and thrive. The challenge for early childhood education service providers is to 1) understand the unique factors impacting the lives of these young vulnerable ones; 2) design curricula and programming focused on creating optimal learning environments for these young children that are sensitive to their individual

[15] National Center for Farmworker Health, (2000). "*Maternal and Child Health Fact Sheet*")
[16] Ibid.

language, circumstances and culture and; 3) engage in partnership building with other early care providers in the community designed to ensure these high quality culturally and linguistically appropriate early childhood experiences remain consistent for the young migrant child across all early childhood care and education settings.

MIGRANT AND SEASONAL HEAD START PROGRAMS: AN EARLY EDUCATION MODEL FOR YOUNG MIGRANT CHILDREN

Head Start is a federally funded program that provides grants to local public and private agencies to provide comprehensive early child development services to economically disadvantaged children and families, with a special focus on helping preschoolers develop the early reading and math skills they need to be successful in school. There are four types of Head Start programs:

Type of Head Start Program	Focus of Early Childhood Education Services
Regional Head Start	Low Income Young children ages 3-5
Early Head Start	Low income pregnant mothers and infants and toddlers ages birth to three
American Indian and Alaskan Native Head Start	Focused on services in Tribal communities and operating a Regional Head Start program and/or an Early Head Start program depending on their grant award.
Migrant and Seasonal Head Start	Focused on services to the young children of migrant farmworkers ages 0-5

All Head Start programs:

- Promote school readiness by enhancing the social, cognitive and emotional development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutrition, social and other services to enrolled children and families;
- Engage parents in their children's learning by providing child development and parenting skills classes and support;
- Utilize family action plans called Individualized Family Partnership Agreements to support parents in making progress toward their educational, literacy and employment goals; and
- Value parents as true partners not only in education of their children, but also in the administration of local Head Start programs which includes having parents assist in hiring staff, reviewing budgets, approving policies and procedures, etc.

MSHS programs in particular adhere to these ideas and utilize the following unique and innovative approaches to serving the young children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers:

- Because of the close societal and familial ties of MSHS families, involve parents as primary teachers and active partners in the education of young children by communicating and interacting respectfully with families in the family's home language.
- Provide state of the art, research based, developmentally appropriate early childhood education experiences that are culturally and linguistically sensitive.
- Provide a comprehensive array of culturally and linguistically appropriate services focused on the whole child that includes health, dental, mental health, nutrition, disabilities services, etc.
- Engage in advocacy at local, state and national levels by creating collations, task forces and other groups focused on addressing the unique needs of the young migrant children.
- Offer comprehensive full day services-often of 12-15 hours duration during the peak season summer harvests and sometimes on weekends and holidays allowing for quality care for children while parents spend long hours working in the fields.
- Provide professional development opportunities for staff through degree programs that focus on promoting cultural competency and research based strategies for creating high quality early childhood education environments, classrooms and experiences for dual language learners.
- Offer diverse program options (center based, home based, family childcare home, etc.) based on needs as indicated though a comprehensive community assessment conducted by the program.

MSHS Program and Qualifications

The MSHS Program was established in 1965 to provide comprehensive early childhood education/Head Start services migrant farmworker infants/toddlers, preschoolers and their families. The program receives federal funding to provide Head Start services to low-income migrant farmworker families with children zero to five that migrate during the harvest season and relatively small numbers of low-income seasonal families (approximately 3,000 children of 36,000 children served annually). The priority of the MSHS programs is mobile migrant families who are new to communities and who have recently arrived to work in agriculture. There are currently 26 MSHS grantees operating 450 centers in 39 States nationwide.

MSHS programs seek to prevent needless deaths like that of a young migrant child named Virginia Garcia who was injured while accompanying her parents while they worked in the

Oregon farm fields. She died from a treatable infection because she lacked appropriate health care and no one spoke to her family in Spanish, the only language they understood.

MSHS programs follow two types of criteria when enrolling migrant vs. seasonal children (keeping in mind, migrant children always have priority for enrollment)

In order to qualify as a migrant child, the family must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Entire family must have moved within the last 24 months in search of work in agriculture.
- Family income must be below the federal poverty guidelines.
- The children in the family must be birth to compulsory school age.
- Family income must come primarily from agricultural work (interpreted as 51 percent of total income from agricultural work.)

In order to qualify as a seasonal child, the family must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Family income must be below the federal poverty guidelines.
- The children in the family must be birth to compulsory school age.
- Family income must come primarily from agricultural work (interpreted as 51 percent of total income from agricultural work).

As previously mentioned, the main difference between migrant and seasonal families is that seasonal families remain in the community – they no longer migrate – and continue to earn poverty level wages and obtain the majority of their income from work in agriculture.

Since parents are working long days, MSHS programs often operate from 8 to 12 hours a day, including some holidays or weekends at the peak of the agricultural season. MSHS services are provided during the time of the various harvests nationwide, most often from midspring until the fall, although this varies considerably, depending on a program's location. A child enrolled in "Seasonal Head Start" receives identical services as the Migrant Head Start child, except for the fact that since they don't move, they remain in the program longer.

Many communities and state and county level agencies do not accept responsibility for serving migrant farmworkers who are mobile because migrant families are not permanent residents. It is asserted that this is the federal government’s responsibility. Services provided by state departments of social services or health may be inaccessible due to lack of outreach and bilingual staff who would increase awareness and access. In addition, a transient life creates difficulties in maintaining documentation of eligibility for the programs or in getting adequate transportation from the migrant camps to the service provider, and with limited resources that are already stressed, states also have low motivation to seek additional consumers of state services.

In many of the isolated rural communities in which MSHS families reside, MSHS has been a life line – a place where families feel safe and valued. Many times it provides the first opportunity for comprehensive family support to the often isolated migrant farmworker community. MSHS

programs operate long hours, tailor their hours around peak harvest seasons, support parents in their primary language and provide culturally and developmentally appropriate early childhood education services in classrooms and other settings. MSHS programs have decades of experience serving this under-served, under-studied and isolated population. As the current early childhood climate now pushes for universal Pre-K, state funded Pre-K programs and school district based early childhood programs, MSHS programs are in a position to be strong advocates for quality early childhood education services that take into account the unique needs of the young migrant farmworker children who most likely will at some point enter these early childhood settings.

The Invisible Children Study

The National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Collaboration Office conducted this small scale study to begin to expand, document and disseminate migrant-specific early learning information and to develop a long-range strategy for addressing/increasing collaboration between MSHS and state Pre-Kindergarten programs serving or having the potential to serve, young children of migrant and seasonal farm workers. The project focused on obtaining additional information regarding the young migrant child's early learning characteristics and experiences and the status of collaboration between MSHS programs and state funded Pre- K programs. The Office is particularly interested in obtaining information on:

- Ways to improve the coordination of collaborative relationships and activities between migrant and non-migrant Pre-K programs, in an effort to better align, to promote and to ensure school readiness for migrant children.
- Identifying appropriate goals for a MSHS/Pre-K collaboration partnership.
- Identifying "best practices" occurring between MSHS and Pre-K programs.
- Identifying the unique strengths, needs and collaboration opportunities among MSHS programs as a whole.
- Identifying the barriers within/among programs, in the larger community, and the political environment that impede meaningful collaboration and services to migrant and seasonal farm worker families and their children.

To obtain this information, the National Migrant Head Start Collaboration Office engaged in four activities:

1. Conducted a review of the scientific and main stream literature regarding migrant farmworker families

2. Conducted a survey of currently operating MSHS programs

3. Held conversations with many Head Start State Collaboration Directors located in states where migrant farmworkers are employed

4. Reviewed Early Childhood Comprehensive System plans which were created by each state and posted on the internet.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An extensive literature search was conducted in order to locate reliable research studies and other information addressing the young migrant child's social, emotional or intellectual school readiness, Pre-K access and usage, its value, intellectual outcomes or skill level achievement as well as other areas. The works consulted are listed in the bibliography, and the main research findings are summarized in the "Introduction and Purpose" section. Although there is extensive information available on the skills young children need in order to be considered successful in their early childhood years, as well as limited information on the importance of high quality Pre-K programming Hispanic children, research information specifically addressing the young migrant child (age 0-3 years) is extremely limited. We also find that quite often agencies that collect information on migrant farm workers such as the USDA, the National Agricultural Workers Survey and the Center for Farmworker Health mainly focus on information regarding health, demographics, educational level of adults, etc. Information is not collected surrounding the young migrant child's needs for an optimal learning environment. This is a glaring gap in the area of early childhood research that begs to be investigated and addressed.

Conversations with Head Start State Collaboration Directors

In order to obtain a national and state perspective regarding effective efforts that include the needs of migrant children in state plans, we engaged in conversations with eight Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) Directors from various states. The conversations were informal and consisted of questions about their experiences with migrant children in state level early childhood planning. Although all the respondents stated that they had experienced some degree of success, they felt that there needed to be 1) a more consistent representation of the needs of young migrant children at the state level and 2) more information and better education for early childhood professionals and decision makers regarding the unique needs of migrant children.

THE MSHS PRE-K SURVEY

In order to obtain information on the status of existing Pre-K partnerships in MSHS programs, the MSHS Collaboration Office, working in concert with the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Technical Assistance Center conducted a survey to address the following four areas:

1. The status of partnerships among childcare subsidy in their state and the degree of formality of those partnerships.

2. The status of partnerships with other Pre-K providers and the degree of formality of those partnerships.

3. The effectiveness of the transition of MSHS children from one early childhood care/education setting to another

4. The MSHS Program's view of the role the MSHS Collaboration Office should play in assisting the development of effective Pre-K partnerships for young migrant children.

The survey consisted of 17 questions. Seven of the questions were yes/no answers. The remaining 10 questions offered participants a menu of choices with multiple possible answers and included a space to fill in any additional information not covered in the choices. The survey results are based on the responses of 19 out of 26 (73 percent) Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs (19 grantees and 3 delegate agencies).

The status of partnerships among childcare subsidy in the state and the degree of formality of those partnerships

The MSHS Pre-K survey revealed the following related to childcare subsidy usage and partnerships:

- Only 23 percent of respondents receive funds from/have a partnership with their state child care subsidy office.
- Of the five who responded and reported that they do have a partnership/receive funds - one reported that they have a MOU,
- Two of the five reported that there are specific staff members assigned to work with state child care subsidy partners.
- Four of the five reported that they contact only as needed
- Four of the five reported that they share information and resources.

Implications

The childcare subsidy partnerships between MSHS programs and the states were scarcely evident in this sample questioned. HSSCOs have mentioned that there are issues with states allowing MSHS programs to access childcare subsidy monies. The MSHS Collaboration Office has begun discussions with the Child care Bureau in an attempt to address any eligibility or other issues that may be impacting usage of these funds by MSHS programs. Clearly, additional work and advocacy is needed by the MSHS Collaboration Office in the area.

The status of partnerships with other Pre-K providers and the degree of formality of those partnerships

Respondents indicated that 90.5% of states funded Pre-K programs in their respective states.

The vast majority of respondents (85.7%) reported that they have a relationship/collaboration with the state funded Pre-K program in their state.

Relationships with State funded Pre-K programs consist of:

41.2 percent memorandums of understanding
41.2 percent joint training/professional development activities
35.3 percent specific staff assigned to work with Pre-K partner
41.2 percent coordinated records transfer and
35.3 percent provide resources and engage in information sharing (35.3 percent.)

45.5 percent reported a migrant Pre-K program in their state (apart from Migrant Head Start Programs)
83 percent of those respondents indicated a relationship with those migrant Pre-K programs

Relationships with migrant Pre-K programs consist of:

75 percent joint training
37.5 percent coordinated outreach and recruitment
37.5 percent shared classroom space
50 percent joint planning
25 percent shared transportation resources
50 percent staff designate to assure transition were also identified by a significant number

Programs reported that the migrant Pre-K program in their state provided services for children for one to nine months.

Fifty five percent of the respondents indicated that migrant children attend both MSHS and State Pre-K programs as well as utilize the following forms of childcare:

Family child care provider 50 percent (six)
Relative/grandparent care 50 percent (six)
State Pre-K program 75 percent (nine)
Regional Head Start 33 percent (four)
Early Head Start 25 percent (three)
Community child care center 42 percent (five)

Implications

Respondents overwhelmingly indicated the existence of a Pre-K program in their state (90.5%) with 85.7 percent indicating a relationship with their state Pre-K program. Of interest is that although respondents engage in activities and collaborations with the MSHS program, consistently less than half have an MOU. Roughly half of respondents indicated the existence of a migrant Pre-K program in their state and of those, 83 percent indicated a relationship with those migrant Pre-K programs. Although MSHS programs engage in a high level joint training with migrant Pre-K programs and smaller percentages of other activities, the need for an MOU with migrant Pre-K is also evident. Of interest, the migrant Pre-K programs indicate that over half of the young migrant children served by their program also utilize other forms of child care with the highest percentage (75 percent) utilizing state funded child care, according to the MSHS Collaboration Office survey. This indicates that young migrant children are receiving services in state funded Pre-K settings which have huge implications for the need to ensure that there is continuity of high quality culturally and linguistically appropriate early childhood education services for these children across settings.

The effectiveness of the transition of MSHS children from one early childhood care/education setting to another

When asked about the types of activities that occur to help children transition from one early childhood care setting to another, MSHS programs reported:

- Designated Pre-K and MSHS staff person to assure smooth transition occurs 66.7 percent (14)
- Open house at MSHS program and invite other Pre-K partners 57.1 percent (12)
- Visits to early child setting receiving child (schools, community child care center, home child care providers, etc.) 85.7 percent (18)
- Coordinated records transfer 71.4 percent (15)
- MSHS Locator Directory and other resources are utilized to inform parents of the location of other early childhood programs 57.1 percent (12)
- Home visits 52.4 percent (11)
- Individualized Family Partnership Agreement goal/activity item 66.7 percent (14)

Programs reported that they assist parents in accessing other forms of early childhood care if needed by providing:

85.7 percent provide a list of local early childhood programs such as Head Start and Early Head Start
81 percent provide a list of local licensed home child care providers
71.4 percent providing a list of community child care centers
81 percent referring parents to their local resource and referral agency

In addition to MSHS, many of the programs also operate the following Head Start programs:

- Regional Head Start 75 percent (14)
- Early Head Start 50 percent (8)
- Family childcare Head Start 12.5 percent (2)
- State funded Head Start 25 percent (4)
- State Pre-K Head Start 25 percent (4)
- Migrant Education Head Start 44 percent (7)

<u>Implications</u>

MSHS programs have consistent systems for helping with transitions for parents from one early childhood care setting to another with the highest percentage (85.7) indicating they do this through visits to receiving schools. Interestingly, 75 percent of respondents indicated they operate a regional Head Start program. This should offer smooth transition for children from the MSHS program to the regional Head Start program if the child is eligible within that agency. Respondents also indicated high percentages of referrals to other forms of early childhood care settings for young migrant children for families if necessary. This fact once again highlights the importance of ensuring high quality culturally and linguistically appropriate early childhood

education and care that takes into account the uniqueness of this population across settings, especially in regards to summer care and extended day service.

Reviewed Early Childhood Comprehensive System plans which were created by each state and posted on the internet

Fifty-nine percent of respondents said they are working with the Head Start State Collaboration Office in their state in support of Pre-K partnerships.

When asked what role the MSHS Collaboration Office should play in supporting MSHS programs to develop effective Pre-K partnerships. Respondents indicated:

MSHS Collaboration Office Activity	Percentage
Encourage MSHS programs to partner with Pre-K	64
Promote comprehensive services in non Head Start settings	55
Promote articulation agreements within the state and among institutions of higher education	73
Inform non Head Start partners about the Head Start Program Performance Standards in relationship to the services provided for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start children	64
Convene MSHS Pre-K forums with other partners	50
Organize and promote joint planning, training and sharing of best practices among MSHS staff and Pre-K partner staff	82
Promote the development of state level task forces among Pre-K partners designed to address the unique needs of MSHS children	73
Promote awareness of culturally and linguistically appropriate environments in early childhood care/education settings especially those serving young migrant farmworker children and families	95.5

<u>Implications</u>

MSHS programs are working with HSSCOs on issues of Pre-K partnerships. They overwhelmingly view the role of the MSHS collaboration office that should:

- Support articulation agreements and professional development activities for early childhood care and education service providers;

- Organize and promoting on-going training, advocacy and sharing of best practices among early care and education settings;
- Promote the development of task forces, coalitions and other leadership groups focused on the unique needs of young migrant farm worker children; and;
- Promote awareness of the unique factors that impact the lives of young migrant children to ensure continuity and respect of linguistic and cultural diversity across early childhood care and education settings.

Survey Summary--Important overall findings of the MSHS survey:

Although partnership activities and communication does occur among Pre-K providers in any given state, it is important to acknowledge that the success is limited. The results indicate that only half of MSHS programs have MOUs with Pre-K providers and that the MOUs are sporadic at best. One of the most important findings of the survey is that young migrant farmworker children are being referred to additional sources of childcare and early education services by MSHS programs. Inasmuch as children of migrant farmworkers experience extreme stressors that greatly impact their learning, Pre-K providers need to work together to ensure all early childhood care and education settings are ready to receive these children and provide them with high quality services that take into account their unique lifestyles and their cultural and linguistic diversity. Overwhelmingly, MSHS programs agreed that this need to educate and advocate for the young children of migrant farmworkers across early childhood settings is one of the major functions of the MSHS Collaboration Office.

Migrant Children and the Child Health Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative

One of the activities of the study included a review of the Child Health Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative (ECCS) plans for each state. The Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) launched the Child Health Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) initiative to support states and communities in their efforts to build an integrated and focused early childhood system. The intent was to smooth access paths to 1) comprehensive health services and medical homes; 2) social-emotional development and mental health of young children; 3) early care and education; and 4) parenting education and family support. The first ECCS grants were issued in 2003. Since that time 49 States, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Republic of Palau and the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Mariana Islands have participated in ECCS. Most of the states have developed a plan for building a comprehensive system for young children and posted it to the ECCS website. In reviewing these plans, there was little mention of migrant children or families, despite a focused effort by the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Technical Assistance Center to inform and encourage ECCS Directors in all states where MSHS programs.

The ECCS planning efforts represent a tremendous opportunity for states to address the needs of migrant children and families. However, upon comprehensive review of ECCS plans, the needs of migrant children specifically are not mentioned or addressed even in the plans of states with large migrant populations such as California, Oregon, and Washington State.

Virginia and Maryland did address to some extent the needs of young migrant farm worker children in their ECCS plans. Even though there were few details, strategic steps or outcomes, we commend their efforts of bringing their migrant populations from the shadows and acknowledging their presence.

The review of the ECCS plans nationwide coincides with the MSHS grantee survey, the conversations with HSSCOs, and the literature review of migrant children and families. These findings jointly indicate the need for additional work within state early childhood planning committees. The need to increase awareness of the unique challenges of the young migrant child and the steps to be taken to effectively address these needs in a coordinated, consistent and dependable manner grows daily more urgent. .

OVERALL STUDY ACTIVITY FINDINGS

After having reviewed the literature, surveyed MSHS programs, interviewed key stakeholders and reviewed ECCS plans on the internet, we found that:

1. There is little research-based information/literature available on the subject of a young migrant child's social, emotional or intellectual school readiness, his access and usage of state Pre-K programs, its value, nor of the intellectual outcomes or skill levels achieved..

2. Head Start State Collaboration Offices agree that although efforts are being made, the vast majority of Pre-K environments tend to not be proficient in addressing the unique needs of the young migrant child.

3. There is need for greater collaboration and MOU development between Pre-K programs, family childcare providers, health service providers and other early childhood service programs in order to ensure that services are systematic, culturally and linguistically appropriate and consistently high quality across settings.

4. The primary role of the MSHS collaboration office is to work at the local, state and national levels to help ensure high quality services for young migrant children that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

YOUNG MIGRANT CHILDREN-PROMISING COLLABORATION PRACTICES

In an attempt to demonstrate what is possible for young migrant farmworker children when committed partners come together, this next section of the paper highlights effective early childhood collaborations that revolve around addressing the unique needs of this vulnerable and often invisible population.

North Carolina

The North Carolina Head Start State Collaboration Office (NC HSSCO) believes that North Carolina's Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and Regional Head Start programs have been impacted significantly by the influx of immigrants and ongoing changes to industry. To ensure

that families with young children continue to receive high quality services, whether they are classified as Migrant, Seasonal, Early or Preschool Head Start, communication between programs and state resources must be strengthened. In addition, leadership must come together to identify obstacles, and implement successful methodologies that will enable programs to meet the challenges of an ever changing landscape to ensure that as many eligible children as possible receive high quality Head Start services.

Migrant/Seasonal Head Start & Regional Head Start Task Force:

The Migrant/Seasonal Head Start & Regional Head Start Task Force was spearheaded by the North Carolina Head Start Association. The intent is to partner with the North Carolina Head Start Collaboration Office, the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Collaboration Office, East Coast Migrant Head Start Project and state early childhood and health agencies to create a taskforce charged with the following tasks:

- To bring key partners together for the purpose of strengthening collaboration between NC Migrant and Seasonal Head Start providers, NC Regional Head Start providers, and state partners who provide key resources for services to Head Start participants;
- To strengthen referral and transition between Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs, Regional Head Start programs and state partners;
- To ensure shared resources and implementation of successful methodology resulting in higher quality services to Head Start participants; and
- To ensure continued collaboration between partners.

Mobile Dental Services Pilot Project:

The NC HSSCO conducted a statewide dental services needs assessment among Head Start programs. As a result, a pilot project was developed with the "Friendly Neighborhood Dental Van" to bring dental services to children served in regional and Migrant/Seasonal Head Start programs in areas lacking oral health services. The agreement is supported by a Memorandum of Understanding established between the HSSCO, participating Head Start programs and the mobile dental provider. The pilot supports the programs in their effort to meet the deadlines and requirements for dental screenings and follow-up services – particularly in the case of migrant families that are highly mobile. Additionally, the agreement includes a provision that the dental provider will treat children with Medicaid as well as those who are uninsured. The provider bills the programs at a rate equal to the Medicaid fee schedule for all uninsured children who are treated. This has become a tremendous financial savings to programs. The pilot project began in June 2008 and runs through May 2009. Success with this pilot project will prompt expansion to additional counties for the 2009-2010 program years.

Medicaid Portability Initiative

As a result of efforts and conversations with the National MSHS Collaboration Office, The North Carolina HSSCO is teaming up with the Florida HSSCO to create an initiative to address gaps

in Medicaid portability for families migrating from Florida to North Carolina. Once children leave the state of Florida, they lose their Medicaid coverage. In the receiving state, by the time the child applies and receives their Medicaid, it is time for them to migrate back to Florida or move upstream. This results in children who are uninsured while they are out of state and additional medical care costs for Head Start and MSHS programs as payers of last resort. The Medicaid portability efforts between the two states will allow these families to continually access needed health and dental services and provide substantial savings to MSHS and Head Start programs in the long term. This initiative is very early in development, and is expected be finalized by late 2009.

California

Tulare County Office of Education, Migrant Head Start (TCOE MSHS) program describes a successful model for collaborations at the Richgrove Center. The program uses "blended" funding to provide a variety of services including:

- Half-day enrichment (preschool.)
- Full-day preschool.
- Regional Head Start services
- Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (Child care for families with 51 percent or more of their income from agricultural work.)
- Migrant Child Care services (Child care for families with 50 percent or more of their income from agricultural work.)

The staff interviewed reported that this collaboration focuses on planning and evaluation with a strong staff development component. Agencies involved include the California Preschool Instructional Networks, the California Department of Education, Child Development Division, the Center for Child and Family Studies at WestEd and the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association. High quality professional development and technical assistance is provided to preschool teachers and administrators, including MSHS to ensure preschool children are ready for school. Additionally, TCOE MSHS contracts with the California Department of Education to serve approximately 1200 state funded preschool children in addition to the 1766 Head Start children and 200 Early Head Start infants and toddlers they currently serve.

This collaboration is successful, according to TCOE MSHS staff because they were "willing to take risks and were one of the pioneers in exploring a blended funding model". Moreover, communication between TCOE MSHS and the state Department of Education is ongoing using multiple methods. General information regarding program changes, guidance and expectations are disseminated through an email list serve. Through this communication tool, "All of the programs hear the same information the same way." More individualized communication occurs on a one on one basis, as needed. When asked about challenges, staff identified differences in regulations as a hurdle. For example, different requirements for group size and staff to child ratios make consistency difficult. Programs must meet state requirements to gain certification, and they must also meet federal Head Start requirements to retain Head Start funding. And to

make it even more complicated, the families must meet the eligibility requirements for both programs.

This program is effective in spite of the challenges because the Department of Education and other agencies recognize and respect TCOE MSHS as the "experts" as far as working with the migrant and seasonal population. "We help each other, all involved are open and honest…It's the willingness to work together, the people make it a success."

Washington State

In the Yakima Valley, in the state of Washington, a group of committed early childhood education and care providers from a variety of agencies came together in January of 2007 and created the Waná, Rios, Rivers of Coalition. The Coalition advocates for easily accessible comprehensive early childhood education systems by:

1. "Building on the language, culture, and worldview of the families and communities we serve"

2. Creating schools that are ready for children and children who are ready for school

Early childhood partners in the coalition include MSHS, American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) Head Start, the MSHS Local Technical Assistance Specialist, the AIAN Local Technical Assistance Specialist, the Washington State HSSCO Director, Childcare Resource and Referral, Education Services District 105, Catholic Family Children's Services, Department of Social and Health Services–Indian Policy, Northwest Community Action Council, six local school districts (Grandview, Granger, Mt. Adams, Toppenish, Yakima, and Sunnyside), Thrive by Five, Northwest Indian College, Yakima Valley Community College, and Heritage University. The work of the Coalition is on-going and has resulted in increased collaboration and understanding among partners, the funding of a grant application by the Washington Foundation for Early Learning to promote the continued development of the Coalition, and a comprehensive professional development needs assessment of all early childhood care/education providers in the lower Yakima Valley.

Michigan

In the state of Michigan, the MSHS Collaboration Office and the Michigan State HSSCO worked together to form the Migrant Child Task Force under the auspices of Michigan's Interagency Migrant Services Committee. Members of the Migrant Child Task Force include the Michigan HSSCO Director, Jackson Public Schools, Michigan Head Start Association, Michigan 4C, Office of Migrant Affairs-DHS, Migrant Education, Michigan Childcare Licensing, Bureau of Community Action Agencies, University of Michigan, Cooperative Extension program, Early Childhood Investment Program, Farmworker Legal Services, and the Department of Community Health. The work of the Task Force is on-going and has resulted in a cooperative agreement for the sharing of public school classroom space between Migrant Education and MSHS, MSHS training and outreach to non MSHS child care providers, several state and national conference presentations, including a video conference call to the federal Migrant Interagency Council, a new migrant farmworker research study and data collection and new, expanded partnership development.

Ohio

The majority of MSHS programs operate in the summer months when the agricultural season is at its peak. However, in the summer months in most states, the Local Education Agencies are closed. This greatly impacts young migrant children in that:

- It is difficult, if not impossible to obtain IEPs/IFSPs for MSHS children who are newly identified with a suspected disability
- Therapists (occupations, speech, physical, etc.) associated with the school districts may also be off during the summer and not available to provide services.

Another issue impacting young migrant children with special needs is transition. The challenge with transition is to ensure there is no interruption in therapy and records are transferred from community to community or across state lines in order to ensure continuity of services.

The Ohio HSSCO decided to address these issues by creating a collaboration agreement between the HSSCO office, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) Office of Early Learning and School Readiness and the Texas Migrant Council (TMC) Ohio Regional Office. Through the 619 Part C Coordinator for Preschool Education, federal IDEA special education discretionary funds are accessed to provide a $15,000 subsidy to provide services to TMC MSHS children with special needs during summer months. The HSSCO is located in ODE and works closely with the state 619 Part C coordinator for preschool special education to plan and implement the project and visits the site bi-annually. TMC implements a system that provides migrant families with appropriate IEP documentation to take with them as they proceed to the next migrant location or home and provides a monthly report to the HSSCO.

Recommendations for Successful Partnerships to Support the Young Migrant Farmworker Child

When individuals and communities come together to meet a need, there is nothing they cannot accomplish. The examples listed above of successful collaborations promoting school readiness and success for the young migrant child clearly demonstrate the need to view the migrant child in the context of his or her lifestyle, culture and language. These partners understand that due to the migrant lifestyle, many of the basic needs of these vulnerable young children are not being met. They also understand that school readiness for the migrant child may mean including a host of supports that address the needs of the whole child and involve collaborating with a number of community agencies including health, mental health, etc. to ensure that child's needs are addressed. In looking at a holistic, whole child model of Pre-K partnerships, successful collaborations for migrant children include, but are not limited to:

- Embracing a model of the whole child that examines and seeks to lessen, where possible, the extreme risk factors for young migrant children that impact their early

learning and later school readiness (pesticides, hunger, constant mobility, poor health, unsanitary living conditions, etc.)
- Addressing specific issues related to learning such as summer services for children with special needs, effective Pre-K partnerships, dental services, etc. and creating working relationships with MSHS programs and migrant family/child experts to Identify key stakeholders who can bring resources and information from a variety of disciplines (health, nutrition, disabilities, etc.)
- Creating a coalition or task force of multiple stake holders focused on ensuring the voices of young migrant children are heard at local, state and national levels and to strategically work to address issues of importance.

Additional recommendations include:

- Taking the lead in pulling together all Pre-K agencies in the state and other child care providers to discuss continuity of culturally and linguistically appropriate early learning environments across settings. Ensuring the voice of the migrant child is represented in all state level early childhood planning and policy making activities.
- Engaging in professional development activities, opportunities, and/or degree programs designed to help early childhood educators create optimally effective early learning environments and experiences that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- Informing and educating parents about the importance of high quality early childhood education environments and help them to advocate for their children and their communities.

OVERALL STUDY CONCLUSIONS

Very little research-based information or literature is available with regards to the young migrant child's social-emotional or intellectual school readiness, and only slightly more regarding their Pre-K usage, its value to them, or what the intellectual outcomes or skill level achievements may be if utilized.

There is consensus among HSSCOs and other early childhood education professionals that many current Pre-K environments do not address the unique cultural, linguistic and socio-economic, challenges and needs of young migrant farmworker children.

State collaborative relationships need to be explored in order to bring additional resources to bear on quality early childhood education services for the young migrant child, such as child care subsidy and child care block grant monies.

The voice of young migrant children is not heard in state level planning events related to early childhood development and education such as the ECCS. There is a need for more systematic and more formal coordination and collaboration among state departments and Pre-K providers with regards to young migrant children.

Systems, procedures and adequate training need to be in place to ensure all early childhood care and education providers in the state are aware of and can effectively implement culturally and linguistically appropriate curriculum that will help migrant farmworker children maximize their ability to reach their full potential.

The role of the MSHS Collaboration office is to support MSHS programs in accessing resources for professional development and high quality programming and advocate for culturally and linguistically appropriate early childhood education services across multiple early care settings. Further, it should advocate within the states to ensure the voices of young migrant children are heard in all state level planning meetings.

Bringing committed partners together in the spirit of collaboration has greatly impacted the provision of a comprehensive set of early childhood services designed to address the unique needs of migrant farmworker children. These collaborations, task forces and coalitions offer a model of collaboration and partnership that can be implemented nationwide.

Questions for Further Research/ Study:

The migrant and seasonal farmworker population has been left out of every major study of which we are aware. In spite of their tremendous contributions to the overall economic prosperity of the nation, the children and their families continue to suggest they are an "invisible population." This small scale study has revealed tremendous gaps in the knowledge base surrounding this unique and vulnerable people. Much is still to be learned about what constitutes quality programming and the impact of early childhood programs on young children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Research in this area can have a critical impact on the way services for these children are delivered. Below are some questions that can and should be considered for future research:

- How do the early education experiences of children of migrant farmworkers differ by state, in regards to access to services, ethnicity and primary language?
- How do migrant families navigate the child care, Pre-K and MSHS systems; how knowledgeable are they about the available services, and how do these differ state to state?
- How do specific barriers—for example language and culture— influence ways in which migrant families make informed decisions about available early education programs?
- What can be determined about the quality and the continuity of the early education experiences of children of migrants?
- What are the most effective ways to reach out to migrant groups in order to make quality early education programs accessible to them?
- What types of communication/campaigns are effective given the political climate and political issues surrounding immigration?

- How do we support MSHS programs' implementation of effective collaborative agreements with their partners or potential partners?
- What is the cumulative health impact of the migratory lifestyle on children, i.e., exposure to the elements and toxins, poor nutrition, lack of access to health care, etc.?
- What are the multiple funding streams targeted to migrant children and to what extent are they coordinated?

The MSHS Collaboration Office welcomes suggestions and input regarding the information contained in this study. We especially seek anecdotal and objective data regarding the status and effectiveness of state systems working for the early care and education of migrant preschool children.

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In collaboration with local and national partners, AED fosters sustainable results through practical, comprehensive approaches to social and economic challenges. AED implements more than 250 programs serving people in all 50 U.S. states and more than 150 countries.

The Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Collaboration Office was established to address the unique characteristics of the migrant and seasonal farmworker children. We engage in partnership and outreach efforts at the national, state and local level to advocate for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start children-birth to compulsory school age. We believe that passion, respect and teamwork help us to achieve results.

For more information about Migrant and Seasonal Head Start please contact:

Office of Head Start:	202-205-8572
MSHS Grantee or Delegate Agency:	"Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Locator Directory"
Technical Assistance Center:	202-884-8475
National MSHS Collaboration Office:	202-884-8005
National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association:	202-223-9889

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