# New Mexico 2016
# Head Start Needs Assessment

May 2016

Head Start

cyfd
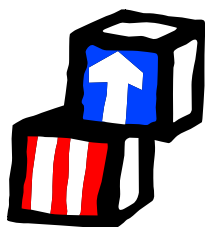
Children Youth & Families Department

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# Introduction

Head Start was the United States' first large-scale effort at providing publicly funded early childhood education. Begun in 1965 as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty, Head Start was an early acknowledgement that children from low-income families did not start their public schooling on equal footing with their more affluent counterparts, and that high-quality early learning could provide a crucial support.

More than 50 years have passed since Head Start's inception, and during that time the evidence has mounted that early childhood education is an effective way to support young children and their families, particularly those experiencing poverty, food insecurity, and other adverse circumstances. As this evidence base has grown, many states have expanded their state-funded early childhood programs, including some high-profile efforts to make pre-kindergarten universally available. New Mexico is among the states where funding for early learning has steadily expanded, funding NM PreK, home visiting, child care assistance, and other programs.

While this excitement surrounding early learning is undoubtedly good news for children and families, it also means Head Start and Early Head Start programs operate in a new and more complicated context. As more programs provide early childhood education, they may find themselves in competition for the low-income four-year-olds in communities, and precious resources may be wasted through duplicative services.

In this context, it is more important than ever for Head Start and Early Head Start programs to have strong collaborations with other parts of the early childhood system. Two-way communication, data sharing, and coordination of services are essential for creating a system that works for children and families, meets the needs of communities, and makes efficient use of limited resources from federal, state, local and private sources. This report aims to describe Head Start programs' collaboration successes and challenges, and to guide future efforts to support Head Start as an integrated part of New Mexico's early childhood system of systems.

# About the Report

This report was prepared in accordance with the Head Start Act, which requires state Head Start Collaboration Offices to annually assess the needs of Head Start agencies in the state with respect to collaboration, coordination and alignment of services, and alignment of curricula and assessments. The survey was organized around six national priority areas for Head Start Collaboration Offices, which are:

1. Partner with state child care systems, emphasizing the Early Head Start/Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnership Initiatives
2. Work with state efforts to collect data regarding early childhood programs and child outcomes
3. Support expansion of and access to high-quality workforce and career development opportunities for staff
4. Collaborate with State Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS)
5. Work with state school systems to ensure continuity between Head Start and Kindergarten Entrance Assessment (KEA)
6. Any additional regional priorities.

Using this report as guidance, the state Head Start Collaboration Office (HSCO) is charged with coordinating and leading efforts for diverse entities in early learning to work together through strategies that include:

- **Communication** - Convene stakeholder groups for information sharing, planning, and partnering and serve as a conduit of information between regional offices, the state, and local early childhood systems.
- **Access** - Facilitate Head Start agencies' access to and use of appropriate entities so Head Start children and families can secure needed services and critical partnerships are formalized.
- **Systems** - Support policy, planning, partnerships, and implementation of cross-agency state systems for early childhood, including the State Advisory Council, that include and serve the Head Start community.

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The report is based on a survey, which was developed collaboratively by the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) and the University of New Mexico Center for Education Policy Research (CEPR). It was sent to Head Start directors electronically and filled out in March and April of 2016. Surveys were filled out by twelve Head Start directors out of nineteen, for a response rate of 63 percent. The survey instrument is included as Appendix A, and all responses to open-ended questions are included as Appendix B. CYFD and CEPR extend sincere thanks to the twelve programs who took the time to fill out the survey and to provide thoughtful answers. This report would not have been possible without them.

# The Landscape of Head Start in New Mexico

Head Start programs in New Mexico serve more than 9,000 children across Head Start, Early Head Start, tribal programs, migrant programs, and Early Head Start/Child Care Partnerships. Figure 1 shows the locations of those programs, color coded by program type. The dots are laid over a map showing the county-level percentages of children under 5 years old whose families live at or below the federal poverty level (FPL).

Tables 1, 2, and 3 list New Mexico's Head Start providers, as well as the number of children they served in fiscal year 2015. Enrollment numbers are not readily available for migrant programs.
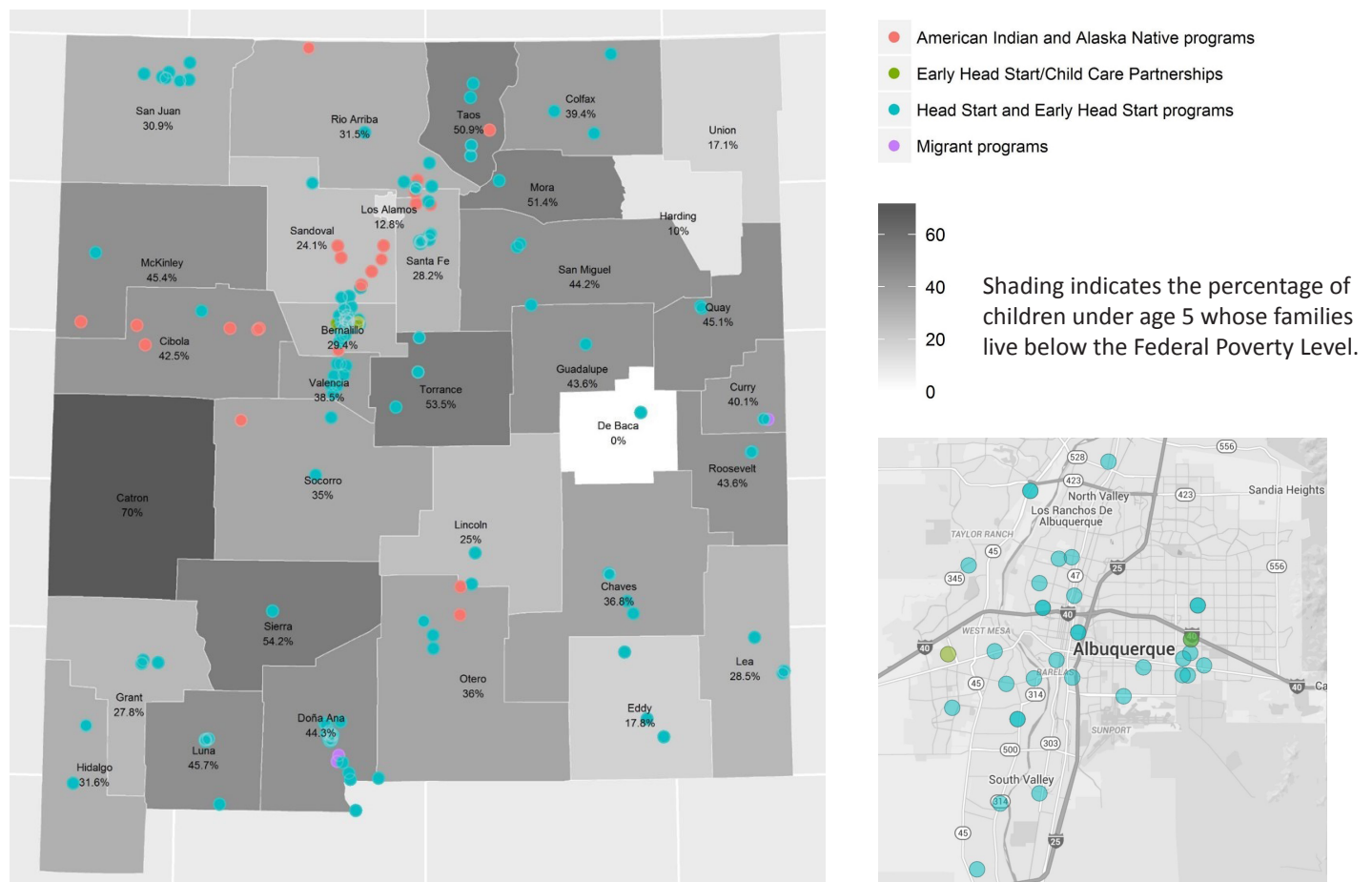


Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 2010-14, 5-Year Estimates. Table B17001.

*Figure 1: New Mexico Program Locations*

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*Table 1. Head Start and Early Head Start Providers*

| Provider | Counties Served | FY15 Children Served |
|---|---|---|
| Child & Family Services, Inc. of Lea County | Lea | 312 |
| City of Albuquerque | Bernallillo | 204 |
| New Mexico State University Education Research | Doña Ana | 274 |
| Eastern Plains Community Action Agency, Inc. | Curry, De Baca, Guadalupe, Quay, Roosevelt, San Miguel | 431 |
| El Grito, Inc. | Grant | 184 |
| HELP-New Mexico, Inc. | Doña Ana, Hidalgo, Luna, Otero, Sierra | 412 |
| La Clinica de Familia | Doña Ana | 111 |
| Las Cruces School District | Doña Ana | 413 |
| Mid-West NM Community Action Program | Cibola, McKinley, Socorro, Valencia | 824 |
| Mora Independent School District | Colfax, Mora | 169 |
| NAPPR, Inc. | Bernalillo | 72 |
| Presbyterian Medical Services | Sandoval, San Juan, Santa Fe, Torrance | 1509 |
| Region IX Education Cooperative | Lincoln | 115 |
| Southeast New Mexico Community Action Corporation | Eddy, Chaves | 878 |
| West Las Vegas Head Start | San Miguel | 200 |
| Youth Development, Inc. | Bernalillo, Rio Arriba, Taos | 1547 |
| | **GRAND TOTAL** | **7,655** |

*Table 2. Tribal Head Start Providers*

| Provider | Location | Children Served |
|---|---|---|
| Alamo Navajo School Board, Inc. | Magdalena, NM | 108 |
| Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council, Inc. | Nambe, San Ildefonso | 36 |
| Five Sandoval Indian Pueblos, Inc. | Cochiti, Santa Ana, Zia Pueblos | 53 |
| Jicarilla Apache Nation | Dulce, NM | 162 |
| Mescalero Apache Head Start | Mescalero, NM | 120 |
| Pueblo of Acoma Haak'u Learning Center | Acoma Pueblo, NM | 112 |
| Pueblo of Isleta | Isleta, NM | 135 |
| Walatowa Head Start | Jemez, NM | 68 |
| Pueblo of Laguna | Laguna, NM | 200 |
| Pueblo of San Felipe | San Felipe Pueblo, NM | 93 |
| Ohkay Owingeh Tribal Council | Ohkay Owingeh, NM | 81 |
| Pueblo of Santa Clara | Espanola, NM | 38 |
| Pueblo of Santo Domingo | Santa Domingo Pueblo, NM | 308 |
| Pueblo of Taos | Taos, NM | 56 |
| Pueblo of Zuni | Zuni, NM | 153 |
| Ramah Navajo Head Start | Pine Hill, NM | 60 |
| | **GRAND TOTAL** | **1,783** |

*Table 3. Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Providers*

| Provider | Location |
|---|---|
| Mesquite Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Center (Texas Migrant Council) | Mesquite, NM |
| Clovis Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Center (Texas Migrant Council) | Clovis, NM |
| La Mesa - Mesquite MSHS Satellite Center (Texas Migrant Council) | La Mesa, NM |

# Findings

## *Partnerships Between Early Head Start and Child Care*

Key Findings:

- Most programs would be interested in Early Head Start/ child care partnerships.

- Programs believe such partnerships would help meet the needs of their communities.

- Programs view relationship challenges as a potential barrier to EHS/CC partnerships.

- Training and technical assistance would be helpful supports in forming such partnerships.

Partnerships between Early Head Start and state child care systems are a national Head Start priority, and some grant funding has been awarded for such partnerships. The purpose is to combine the strengths of child care and Early Head Start to provide high-quality, full-day care to infants and toddlers. New Mexico Head Start grantees were asked whether they would be interested in applying for EHS/CC grants if funding were to become available, and to explain their answers. They were also asked to identify potential barriers to such partnerships and the tools they would need to be successful.

Three-quarters of responding programs said they would be interested in such funding in the future (see Figure 2). Several respondents wrote that such partnerships would help meet the

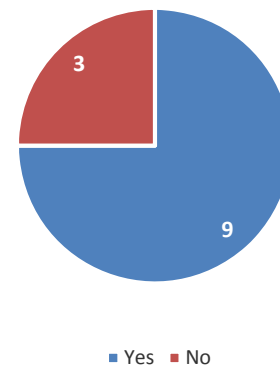If funding for EHS/Child Care partnerships became available in the future, would you be interested?



*Figure 2*

needs of families in their communities. For example, one respondent wrote: "Adopting Early Head Start practices would improve the overall child development industry. Head Start exemplifies best practices." Another wrote that such a partnership would help ensure "that all children would have an equal, nutritional and safe start in their education and care."

Among programs that said they would not be interested in such funding, two programs said there are no child care programs in their area. A third program responded that they are just starting up with Early Head Start, and want to strengthen their core program before launching into a collaboration.

Programs named partnerships, relationships, and communication as potential barriers to developing EHS/child care partnerships. Two programs raised concerns about whether child care programs would be willing and able to work within federal Head Start requirements, and FOCUS regulations were also raised as a potential challenge. Some programs also named specific challenges, like locating a facility and payment arrangements. One program wrote, "The EHS partnership relies heavily on using child care subsidies as the first level of payment, the second level is the EHS CCP grant to enhance services and the third level is private for pay."

Training and technical assistance were identified as key needs for programs. Specifically, programs requested access to grantees who have experienced partnerships in the past and have lessons to share, help understanding FOCUS and child care subsidies, and education on how to successfully establish such partnerships under Head Start requirements. One program raised concerns about training for child care partners, writing, "The Office of Head Start provides training and technical assistance to all new grantees. Technical assistance includes legal assistance in drafting up contracts, training on the performance standards, Board training on roles and responsibilities for the partners. The only trainers I can think that could do this work are current Early Head Start practitioners."

## Data Reporting

Key findings:

- Most programs report that they produce a publicly available annual data report, although the extent of this reporting, and whether it has an intended purpose beyond federal compliance, is unclear.

- Five of twelve respondents reported they are engaged in some kind of data sharing partnership. These ranged from sharing assessments and screens to a research partnership to examine student outcomes.

- Relationships and reciprocity are key barriers to data sharing.

- Assistance in facilitating relationships and trust among data partners would be a useful support.

Data is important to Head Start/Early Head Start and informs decision-making at the federal and state level. Programs were asked about the ways in which they share data, beyond required federal reporting. All but one program reported that their program produces a publicly available annual data report, either individually or in partnership with other programs (see Figure 3). However, it is unclear from programs' responses whether they are referring to required federal reporting or to additional reports, and it is also unclear what kinds of data are being reported. This survey question could be improved in future years to elicit more specific responses.

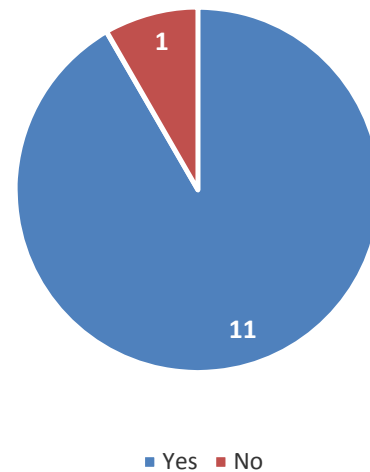Does your program produce a publicly available annual data report?



*Figure 3*

Asked to describe the extent of their public data reporting, programs largely reported on the ways they distribute their reports (online, through the mail to families and partners, placed in local shops, and through community newsletters). One program was more specific about the nature of the report, and wrote, "The Annual report must comply with all the requirements of Head Start. In addition, the focus should be on data that demonstrates child and family outcomes. Most notably, what is the program doing to prepare children for kindergarten and how do you demonstrate school readiness."

Five of the twelve respondents said they are engaged in data sharing partnerships with other entities, which included a range of collaboration types (see Figure 4). One program reported they are engaged in a research project through a local foundation and a local school district. Other programs reported data sharing on assessments and screenings, and with other Head Start programs.

Several programs reported barriers related to relationships and reciprocity. One program reported that data sharing feels like a "one-way street," in that Head Start is willing to share data but doesn't get any back from other partners. Other programs reported a lack of time, a need for a more sophisticated database, and a desire for better understanding of how data is used and protected. Some respondents tapped into larger challenges with the system. One wrote, "The concerns that our program experiences when sharing data is the effects of other programs (pre-k) being funded and opening, which feels as if we are in competition for children in the communities." Another respondent wrote about the need for an interconnected data system for early childhood and public schools, to allow for two-way data sharing across systems. Such a system is currently under development using funds from the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, and is expected to exist in some form by the end of 2016.

Are you engaged in any data sharing partnerships (e.g., sharing data with a local school district to look at outcomes for Head Start students)?
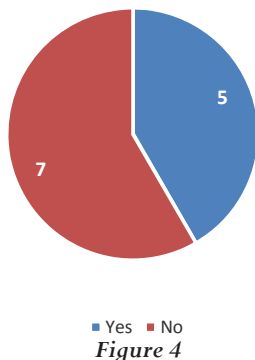


■ Yes ■ No

*Figure 4*



# COLLABORATION SPOTLIGHT: CHILD OUTCOMES RESEARCH

Although there is a wealth of evidence that high-quality early childhood programs boost student achievement, many questions remain about which elements of an early childhood program make the most difference, how effects vary for different populations of children, and how various effects persist into a child's future.

Youth Development Inc. (YDI), New Mexico's largest Head Start grantee, is partnering with Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) and the Thornburg Foundation to study outcomes for children who attended YDI Head Start programs and then went on to APS schools. The study will examine measures of academic achievement, as well as other measures such as attendance and behavioral referrals. The intention is to better understand the ongoing effects of Head Start, and to get specific about what is and isn't working for children.

"We want to know how our children are faring, and then how we can improve our program," said Debra Baca, vice president for early childhood education at YDI. She said YDI has about eight years of solid data, so some children who attended YDI Head Start programs are now in middle school. Over time, Baca said she envisions a "phase two" of the project that will look at even longer-term outcomes like high school graduation and college attendance.

"We want to know, academically and socially and emotionally, how resilient our children are when they move on to the school system, and what are the factors that contributed to their success," she said.

APS will perform the data matching and analysis for the project, linking Head Start information to data APS already collects about its students. Rose-Ann McKernan, APS executive director of accountability, said a study like this one can help make the case for high-quality early childhood education.

"We know that quality preschool makes a difference," McKernan said. "But without being able to demonstrate the long-range impact of a quality preschool, it's difficult in tight budget times to get folks to really address the issue."

McKernan said a study of APS students can help make the evidence base for early childhood education seem more real to local policymakers, and also shed light on what APS schools can do to sustain any benefits students get from Head Start. For example, the study may reveal that student gains are more enduring when students go on to attend a community school or other school that provides robust supports.

"It gives APS a way to think about scaling up different programs, like community schools, and where are the best places to do that," she said.

Michael Weinberg, the early childhood education policy officer for the Thornburg Foundation, said he hopes the project can influence policy at the state level, given the scale of the players involved.

"Some of what was particularly interesting about partnering with YDI was the scale of their operation, and expecting we could see real differences within the program," he said. "This isn't a monolith, there's nuances between sites, and they might be able to tease out more granular findings by site."

Weinberg said he hopes the study leads to more concrete understanding of what practices lead to early childhood success.

"We're very interested in improving quality of programs, and this was an exciting way to use longitudinal data to look back at specific program elements that are worth strengthening, replicating, and expanding," he said. "And we think it could benefit YDI, other Head Starts, and the preschool experience more generally."

Programs identified a need for help with relationships and collaboration. Some suggestions for how to support programs in this challenge included funding for facilitators or for a person whose job is to collaborate with other programs and share data. One respondent called for a strict requirement that public schools must work with early care agencies. Another wrote, "Investment of funding that would meet the mandated reporting requirements of Head Start and the State of New Mexico CYFD needs. Training for staff, on-going monitoring of the system, software and hardware."

## Professional Development

Key Findings:

- Programs use a combination of in-house professional development and outside trainings.

- Programs set professional development priorities largely based on the specific needs of staff, which are identified through individual PD plans and self-assessment.

- Seven of twelve programs currently have at least one teacher receiving a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarship. Two others have benefitted from T.E.A.C.H. in the past.

- In general, programs say T.E.A.C.H. enhances their professional development capacity, and they do not perceive barriers to accessing the program.

The Office of Head Start requires annual professional development for all program staff who support children's learning and growth, and programs were asked about how they approach this professional development requirement. All twelve responding programs reported that they use a combination of in-house professional development and external trainings, with some specifying that they tap into trainings at the local, state, and national levels. One program wrote, "We complete a (professional development plan) for all staff that is inclusive of their selected topics, and the program topics. We design our group staff development around program needs and large requests for the same topics. We also give staff opportunities to select their own topics at state trainings when feasible and in our area."

In response to a question about how they set professional development priorities, most programs reported that they are driven by the particular needs of their workforce, and by the professional development plans that employees develop through self-assessment and monitoring. One respondent also linked professional development to the broader context of the system, writing, "We look at the Head Start requirements and train to that, then to the Child Care Licensing regs and FOCUS, then hot topics we may be dealing with that year such as curriculum, assessment and observations."

Programs were also asked about whether T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarships are part of their professional development structure. Seven of twelve programs reported that at least one teacher in their program uses T.E.A.C.H. scholarships, and the remaining respondents all reported that they had heard of T.E.A.C.H. (see Figure 5). Most respondents said they would not like to be contacted with information about T.E.A.C.H., most likely because the program is already well known to Head Start directors (see Figure 6).

Of the seven programs where T.E.A.C.H. scholarships are currently in use, six reported that access to T.E.A.C.H. scholarships has enhanced their programs' professional development capacity, while one reported that it has not (see Figure 7). That respondent noted that T.E.A.C.H. provides individual scholarships, which is different from professional development for the staff as a whole. Among programs who said T.E.A.C.H. did enhance their professional development capacity, respondents reported that educators have been able to earn credentials that they likely would not have earned otherwise, and have been able to meet professional goals. One respondent wrote, "We have had several staff on TEACH and it has been hugely successful, and encouraged staff who might not have pursued their degrees to do so." Another wrote in some detail about how T.E.A.C.H. enabled the director to earn a degree and three more T.E.A.C.H. scholars from the program are set to graduate this spring.

Among the five programs that do not currently use T.E.A.C.H., most did not report any barriers to using the program. They cited reasons such as a lack of need (all staff have bachelor's or master's degrees), a lack of interest among staff, or natural cycles (sometimes they have T.E.A.C.H. scholars, but they don't right now). Only one program identified a potentially systemic barrier, writing, "It takes staff away from their regular work hours. We have attendance problems with teaching staff and this would take them away even more."

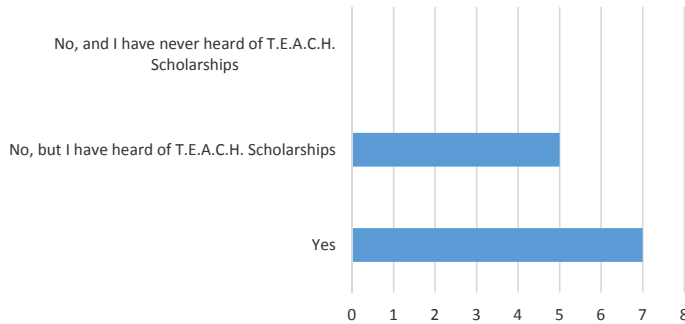## Does anyone in your program receive T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarships?



*Figure 5*

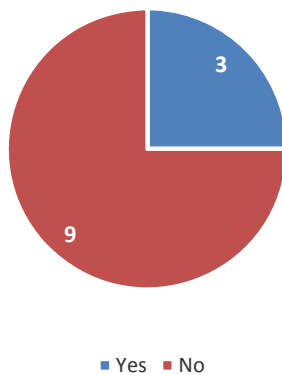## Would you like to be contacted with information about T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarships?



■ Yes ■ No

*Figure 6*

## Has access to T.E.A.C.H. scholarships enhanced your program's professional development capacity?



■ Yes ■ No

*Figure 7*

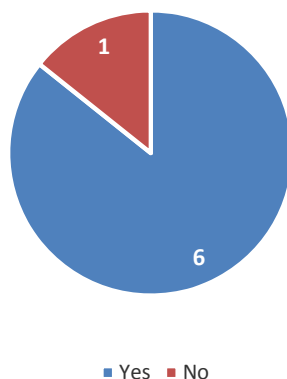## *FOCUS*

Key Findings

- About half of responding programs are participating in FOCUS and say they feel "very knowledgeable" about it.

- Programs participating in FOCUS say they want to improve their programs and see their high quality acknowledged through their STAR rating. Those not participating cite a lack of support and resources from the state.

- Participating programs rated their overall experience with FOCUS as either "positive" or "neutral."

- Consultants are central to the FOCUS experience for programs, in both good and bad ways. Programs reported frustration in initially being connected with a consultant, but reported that these relationships were very helpful once they were established.

One of Head Start's goals is for Head Start programs to collaborate more closely with state Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement Systems for child care. New Mexico is in the midst of a multi-year process of transitioning to a new Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, called FOCUS. Programs were asked whether they felt knowledgeable about FOCUS, and programs that are participating in FOCUS were asked a series of follow-up questions about their experiences so far. Of the twelve respondent programs, six reported that they felt "very knowledgeable" about FOCUS, and five chose, "I know the basics but not the details." One program chose, "I know very little about it" (see Figure 8).

Five of the twelve responding programs indicated that they are participating in FOCUS, while six said they are not and one program skipped the question (see Figure 9). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the programs that are participating in FOCUS had significant overlap with the program directors who said they felt "very knowledgeable" about the system.

Six programs offered explanations for why they chose to participate (or not) in FOCUS. Those who are participating indicated that they want to improve their program quality, and that they want their quality "to be acknowledged by the stars on our licenses." Programs that are not participating in FOCUS reported a lack of resources and support from the state, as well as ever-shifting training requirements. One program wrote that they initially joined the pilot, then left it after investing in sending staff long distances for training, only to find that the training had changed and was no longer valid.
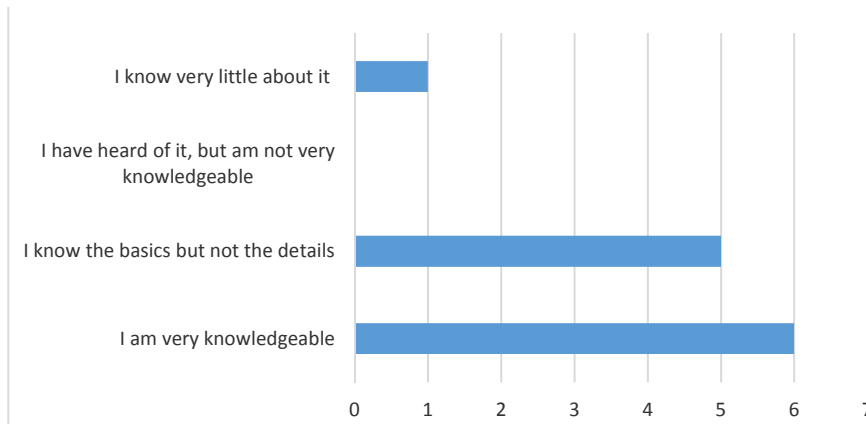
## How much do you know about NM TQRIS FOCUS?



*Figure 8*

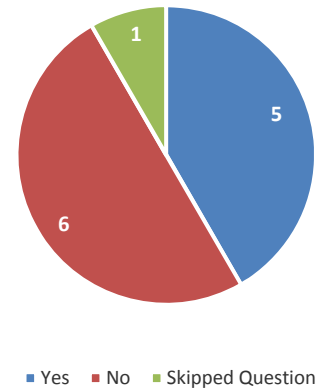## Is your program participating in NM TQRIS FOCUS?



*Figure 9*

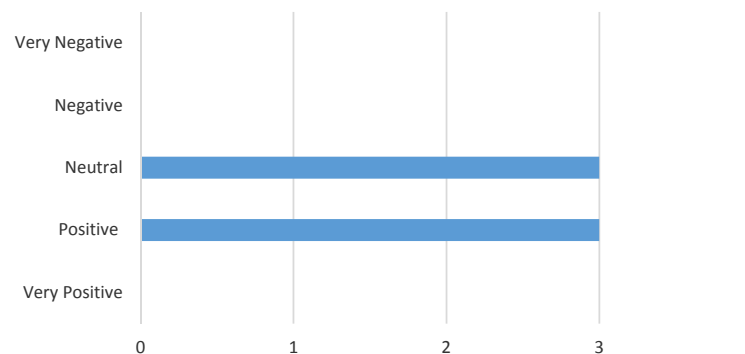## Please rate your experience with FOCUS so far



*Figure 10*

Of the programs participating in FOCUS, half rated their overall experience so far as "neutral," and half rated it as "positive." No programs selected "very negative," "negative," or "very positive" (see Figure 10). Asked to describe their greatest challenge with FOCUS, two programs listed challenges connecting with a consultant. One program pointed to a lack of consistent information, and another said FOCUS "doesn't blend well with OHS requirements. We already exceed FOCUS requirements, but are required to participate anyway."

Asked about the most helpful aspects of FOCUS, two programs complimented their consultants, with one calling them "supportive and engaged." Consultants are clearly central to the FOCUS experience for programs, as they are listed repeatedly as both a challenge and an effective support — in one case by the same program. For some of the responding programs, they seem to have encountered frustrations getting assigned a consultant, but found their consultant very helpful once a connection was made. Programs also listed training topics, documentation and training as helpful elements of FOCUS.

## *Kindergarten Alignment*

Key Findings:

- Head Start programs do not feel knowledgeable about the Kindergarten Observation Tool.
- Three-quarters of respondents reported ongoing partnership with local kindergartens to work toward aligned expectations.
- Programs report many successes in kindergarten alignment and partnership, and report that their biggest barrier is finding time and coordinating schedules.
- A full-time Head Start Collaboration Director could be a key support in this area, and the vacancy in this position is felt by programs.

New Mexico is piloting a new statewide observational assessment for incoming kindergarteners. It is called the Kindergarten Observation Tool (KOT), and is expected to be fully implemented in fall of 2016. Programs reported minimal knowledge of the tool, with half of respondents choosing, "I know very little about it." Only one program identified as "very knowledgeable" about the KOT, with four choosing "I have heard of it, but am not very knowledgeable" and one choosing "I know the basics but not the details" (see Figure 11).

Most programs reported strong partnerships with local kindergartens, with nine of twelve respondents reporting, "We have an ongoing partnership to work toward alignment between Head Start and local kindergarten expectations." One program chose, "We have occasional meetings and transitional activities, but do not consistently partner," and two reported "very little collaboration with local kindergartens" (see Figure 12).

How much do you know about the New Mexico Kindergarten Observation Tool?



- I am very knowledgeable
- I know the basics but not the details
- I have heard of it, but am not very knowledgeable
- I know very little about it

*Figure 11*

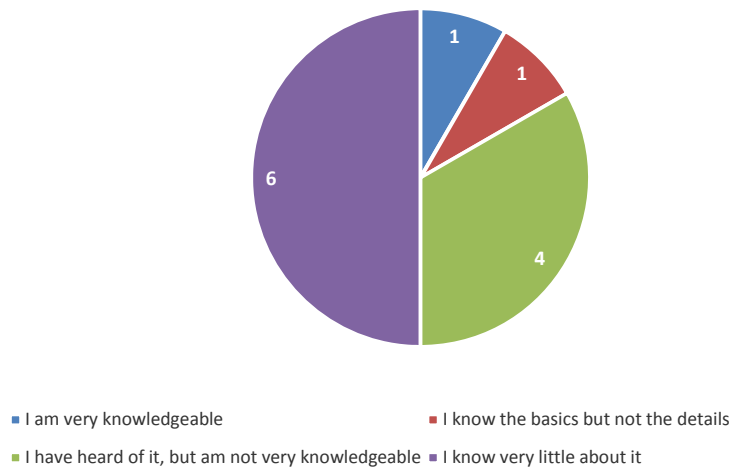How, if at all, does your program partner with local schools or school districts to facilitate smooth transitions to kindergarten?



- We have an ongoing partnership to work toward alignment between Head Start and local kindergarten expectations
- We have occasional meetings and transitional activities, but do not consistently partner
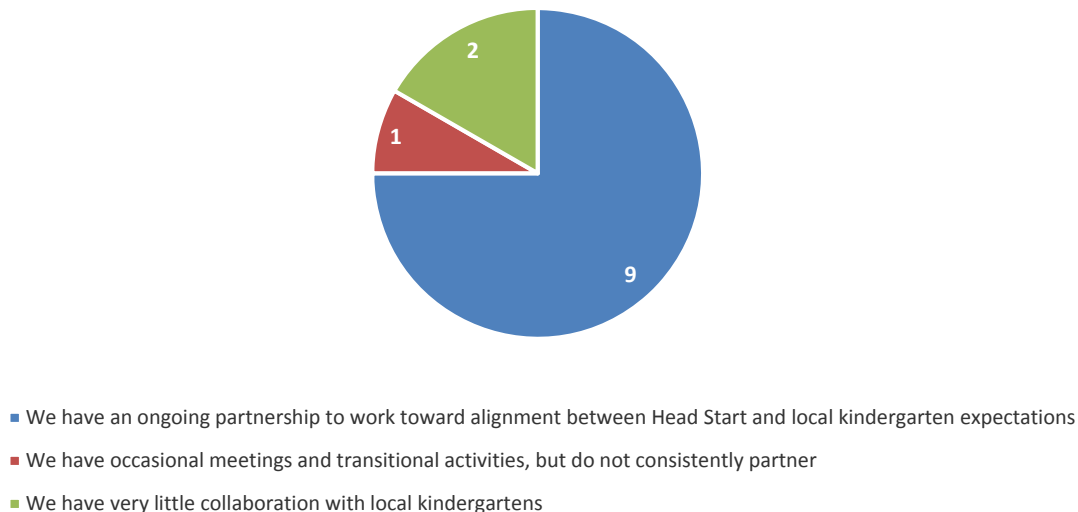- We have very little collaboration with local kindergartens

*Figure 12*

Lack of time is a key barrier for programs working on kindergarten alignment, with several reporting that finding the time to initiate partnerships and schedule with school administrators is a challenge. One program also reported challenges with getting principals and teachers to participate, and with accurately identifying the receiving elementary school for children in Head Start.

Programs reported diverse successes with kindergarten alignment, including hosting events that connect Head Start families with kindergarten teachers and principals, helping parents fill out kindergarten application packets before they leave Head Start, discussing and sharing school readiness goals, and working with Child Find to ensure a smooth transition for children with special needs.

Two programs raised the importance of hiring a Head Start Collaboration Director for New Mexico, a position that is currently vacant. One respondent wrote that this vacancy greatly affects the direction of Head Start programs in New Mexico, and having a dedicated Collaboration Director is a key acknowledgement of Head Start's role in the state. Other suggestions included facilitating a partnership summit with various stakeholders in kindergarten alignment, and helping schools understand the importance of such transitions with Head Start.

## *New Mexico Priorities*

Key Findings

- Programs report ongoing collaboration with school districts and FIT, and weaker collaboration with New Mexico PreK and child care centers.

- Programs report they are very knowledgeable about social/emotional development and dual language learners. They report less knowledge about reauthorization of the child care block grant.

- Five of twelve programs participate in ELAC, and two expressed an intention to participate in the future.

- Ten of twelve programs said they would participate if more face-to-face meetings were held to support understanding of services and programs.

- Programs use a variety of rich strategies to provide cultural and linguistic services to families.

Head Start programs were asked several final questions specific to New Mexico's priorities and policy context, including rating their levels of collaboration with various entities (see Table 4). Programs report the strongest relationships with school districts and the Families, Infants, and Toddlers (FIT) program, with two-thirds of programs reporting "ongoing collaboration" and no programs reporting "challenging relationships." More challenging relationships include state-funded PreK and child care centers, where programs reported less ongoing collaboration and more challenging relationships. Programs also reported fairly strong relationships with home visiting, and more occasional cooperation with Child Care Resource and Referral.

*Table 4: Does your Head Start/Early Head Start program collaborate with these programs and services for children?*

|  | Ongoing collaboration | Occasional cooperation around a single event or issue | Little to no collaboration | Challenging relationship | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School Districts | 8 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 12 |
| Child Care Resource and Referral | 3 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 12 |
| State-funded PreK | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 12 |
| Child care centers | 1 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 12 |
| Families, Infants and Toddlers (FIT) | 8 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 12 |
| Home Visiting | 7 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 12 |

Programs were also asked to rate their levels of knowledge on six topic areas of early childhood (see Table 5). Social/emotional development and dual language learners were areas of strong knowledge for respondents, with many programs choosing "I am very knowledgeable," and none choosing from the lower half of the scale. Respondents also indicated high levels of knowledge about PreK and home visiting, although these were less consistent. Programs reported they were least knowledgeable about the child care block grant reauthorization, with zero respondents indicating they felt "very knowledgeable" about the topic. Infant mental health was another less knowledgeable area, with three-quarters of respondents choosing, "I know the basics but not the details."

*Table 5: How much do you feel you know about the following services, topics, and domains?*

| | I am very knowledgeable | I know the basics but not the details | I have heard of it, but am not very knowledgeable | I know very little about it | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PreK** | 5 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 12 |
| **Home Visiting** | 5 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 12 |
| **Child Care Block Grant/Reauthorization** | 0 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 12 |
| **Infant Mental Health** | 1 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 12 |
| **Social/Emotional Development** | 7 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| **Dual Language Learners** | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 12 |

## Services for Children with Disabilities

Programs reported that in their communities, children with disabilities are served through a combination of Head Start, the public schools, IDEA Part C, Child Find, FIT, and child care centers. One program also named specific community non-profits. Most programs did not respond to a question about what services and resources would help better serve children with disabilities, although one program called for additional funding. Another said they have very good Part C programs, but communication is sometimes lacking when children are transitioning at their third birthday.

## ELAC and Other Meetings

Five of twelve programs reported that they participate in the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC), and several offered explanations for why they do or do not attend (see Figure 13). Two respondents indicated they do not attend now but will in the future (one is a new director and one "just found out the importance of attending"). One respondent wrote that ELAC needs more Head Start representation, and expressed gladness that the ELAC chair is a Head Start director. Another simply wrote, "There is no movement."

Asked whether they would attend if more face-to-face meetings were held to support understanding of services and programs, ten of twelve programs said they would (see Figure 14). The two programs that answered "no" wrote that time does not allow for travel, and that more meetings are not needed. One wrote, "It's not about the meetings … we have enough of those. It's about following through with services and support." Another respondent suggested the location of trainings and meetings could change periodically to relieve the stresses of long drives.

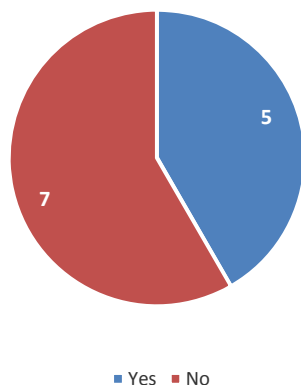Do you participate in ELAC (Early Learning Advisory Council) meetings?



■ Yes ■ No

*Figure 13*

If more face-to-face meetings were scheduled to help support better understanding of services and programs, would you attend?
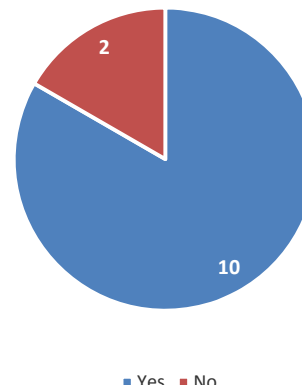


■ Yes ■ No

*Figure 14*

## Cultural and Linguistic Services

Programs described a rich variety of ways they provide cultural and linguistic services to families and children. These included staff that are bilingual and representative of the children and families served, as well as classroom materials and correspondence provided in English and Spanish. Respondents described partnerships with the Pueblos Department of Education and trainings from the University of New Mexico, as well as efforts to engage with families and provide them with appropriate referrals. One respondent wrote, "We meet them where they are, welcome them into our community, include their cultures and languages, (and) celebrate them." While most programs did not make suggestions about the kinds of tools and supports that would help them in this area, one program said more funding would be useful, and another wrote, "Training, best practices, collaboration with Head Start T&TA network."



# Conclusion

Head Start programs serve some of New Mexico's most high-need families, and do so in an increasingly complex early childhood landscape. This survey shows strong collaboration in some parts of the early childhood system, including partnerships with public schools and provision of cultural and linguistic services. It shows that programs are all aware of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarships, but don't feel very knowledgeable about the reauthorization of the child care block grant or the Kindergarten Observation Tool. It also highlights more challenging relationships with New Mexico PreK and with child care, as the early childhood world expands to serve more children in a variety of settings. These challenges are not easily solved, but thanks to the candor of responding programs, this report can serve as a guide for the Head Start Collaboration Office to support Head Start programs as an integrated part of a high-quality early childhood system.

# Appendix A: Survey Instrument

## Introduction

This needs assessment survey is organized around six national priority areas for Head Start Collaboration Offices. The six priorities include: 1) Partner with state child care systems, emphasizing EHS-CC Partnership Initiatives;  2) Work with state efforts to collect data regarding early childhood programs and child outcomes; 3) Support expansion of and access to high-quality workforce and career development opportunities for staff; 4) Collaborate with State Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS); 5) Work with state school systems to ensure continuity between Head Start and Kindergarten Entrance Assessment (KEA); 6) Any additional regional priorities.

Head Start Collaboration offices coordinate and lead efforts for diverse entities to work together through:

**Communication** - Convene stakeholder groups for information sharing, planning, and partnering and serve as a conduit of information between regional offices, the state, and local early childhood systems.

**Access** - Facilitate Head Start agencies' access to and use of appropriate entities so Head Start children and families can secure needed services and critical partnerships are formalized.

**Systems** - Support policy, planning, partnerships, and implementation of cross-agency state systems for early childhood, including the State Advisory Council, that include and serve the Head Start community.

## Survey Questions: EHS/Child Care Partnerships

**Partnerships between Early Head Start and state child care systems are a national Head Start priority, and some grant funding has been awarded for such partnerships. The purpose is to combine the strengths of child care and Early Head Start to provide high-quality, full-day care to infants and toddlers.**

1. If such funding became available in the future, would you be interested in the opportunity?

◯ Yes

◯ No

If yes, why? And if no, why not?

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2. What barriers, if any, do you foresee to the development of a successful EHS/child care partnership in your community?

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3. What tools, resources, or supports would you need to successfully establish an EHS/child care partnership in your community?

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## Survey Questions: Sharing Data

**Data is important to Head Start/Early Head Start and informs decision-making at the federal and state level. We want to know how you share data, beyond required federal reporting.**

4. Does your program produce a publicly available annual data report, either individually or in partnership with other programs?

◯ Yes

◯ No

5. Please describe the extent of your program's public data reporting.

6. Are you engaged in any data sharing partnerships (eg, sharing data with a local school district to look at outcomes for Head Start students)?

◯ Yes

◯ No

7. Please briefly describe any such data sharing partnerships.

8. What are the barriers and challenges to your program sharing data, either with state entities like CYFD or with other programs in New Mexico that serve children?

9. What tools, resources, or supports would you need to successfully share data, either with state entities like CYFD or with other programs in New Mexico that serve children?

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## Survey Questions: Professional Development

**The Office of Head Start requires annual professional development for all program staff who support children's development. We want to know how your program approaches professional development.**

10. Does your program design and provide its own internal professional development, or do staff attend regional trainings with other early childhood professionals? Or both? (Please briefly explain)

11. How does your program set professional development priorities?

12. Does anyone in your program receive T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarships?

◯ Yes

◯ No, but I have heard of T.E.A.C.H. scholarships

◯ No, and I have never heard of T.E.A.C.H. scholarships

13. Would you like to be contacted with information about T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarships?

◯ Yes

◯ No

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## Survey Questions: Professional Development: T.E.A.C.H.

UNM | *Center for Education Policy Research*

14. Has access to T.E.A.C.H. scholarships enhanced your program's professional development capacity?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Please explain.

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## Survey Questions: Professional Development: T.E.A.C.H.

15. If you know about T.E.A.C.H. scholarships but your program does not currently participate, please explain why. Has your program encountered barriers to participation?

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## Survey Questions: TQRIS Collaboration

**One of Head Start's goals is for Head Start programs to collaborate more closely with state Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement Systems for child care. New Mexico is in the midst of a multi-year process of transitioning to a new TQRIS called FOCUS.**

16. How much do you know about NM TQRIS FOCUS?

◯ I am very knowledgeable

◯ I know the basics but not the details

◯ I have heard of it, but am not very knowledgeable

◯ I know very little about it

17. Is your program participating in NM TQRIS FOCUS?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Please explain why you chose to participate or not.

> ```
> 
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> 
> ```

## Survey Questions: TQRIS Collaboration: FOCUS Participants

18. Please rate your experience with the system so far.

○ Very positive

○ Positive

○ Neutral

○ Negative

○ Very negative

19. Please briefly describe your greatest challenge in participating in FOCUS.

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20. Please briefly describe aspects of the FOCUS system that have been most helpful to your program.

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## Survey Questions: Kindergarten Alignment

**New Mexico is piloting a new statewide observational assessment for incoming kindergarteners. It is called the Kindergarten Observation Tool, and is expected to be fully implemented in fall of 2017.**

21. How much do you know about the New Mexico Kindergarten Observation Tool?

○ I am very knowledgeable

○ I know the basics but not the details

○ I have heard of it, but am not very knowledgeable

○ I know very little about it

22. How, if at all, does your program partner with local schools or school districts to facilitate smooth transitions to kindergarten?

○ We have an ongoing partnership to work toward alignment between Head Start and local kindergarten expectations

○ We have occasional meetings and transitional activities, but do not consistently partner

○ We have very little collaboration with local kindergartens

23. What are some barriers and challenges your program encounters when planning kindergarten alignment and transitions?

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|  |

24. What are some of your program's successes in kindergarten alignment and transitions?

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|  |

25. How can the Head Start Collaboration Office better support programs with kindergarten transitions?

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|--|
|  |

## Survey Questions: New Mexico Priorities

**The last set of questions is specific to the New Mexico Head Start Collaboration Office's goals.**

26. Does your Head Start/Early Head Start program collaborate with these programs and services for children?

|  | Ongoing collaboration | Occasional cooperation around a single event or issue | Little to no collaboration | Challenging relationship |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| School Districts | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Child Care Resource and Referral | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| State-funded PreK | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Child care centers | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Families, Infants and Toddlers (FIT) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Home Visiting | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

27. What other services in your community serve children with disabilities?

28. What community resources or services would be most helpful when serving children with disabilities?

29. Do you participate in ELAC (Early Learning Advisory Council) meetings?

◯ Yes

◯ No

If yes, please provide your thoughts on the process. If no, why?

30. How much do you feel you know about the following services, topics, and domains?

| | I am very knowledgeable | I know the basics but not the details | I have heard of it, but am not very knowledgeable | I know very little about it |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| PreK | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Home Visiting | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Child Care Block Grant/Reauthorization | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Infant Mental Health | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Social/Emotional Development | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Dual Language Learners | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

31. If more face-to-face meetings were scheduled to help support better understanding of services and programs, would you attend?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Why or why not?

32. How does your program provide cultural and linguistic services to children and families?

33. What tools, resources, or supports could the Head Start Collaboration Office provide to help your program meet the cultural and linguistic needs of children and families?

## Conclusion

**You have completed the survey. Thank you for your participation!**

# Appendix B: All Open-Ended Responses

1. If funding for EHS-CC partnerships became available in the future, would you be interested in the opportunity (Yes/No question), then, Why or why not?

   Brings about quality services for children and families!

   We currently have on Early Head Start grant but see the need to expand this program to nearby communities.

   We would be interested, that all children would have a equal, nutritional and safe start in their education and care.

   No child care within area.

   There is not another child care program in our area. It would be difficult to monitor them for compliance with the Head Start Performance Standards.

   It would help to meet the needs of families

   We do not have EHS.

   Yes, possibly.

   We are just starting with Early Head Start so we'd like to get good at this before we wrote for collaboration funds.

   We are already engaged in a CCP

   To serve more children at the center-based option

   Adopting Early Head Start practices would improve the overall child development industry.  Head Start exemplifies best practices.

2. What barriers, if any, do you foresee to the development of a successful EHS/child care partnership in your community?

   Finding the right partnership.

   Regulations regarding FOCUS

   The state child care system being open and willing to work with the federal requirements needed to obtain the funding.

   Lack of child care programs in area

   Communication and understanding of community needs

   None

   I feel the barriers that could be encountered are the entity may not fully understand the requirements of the OHS.

   Commitment from all parties

   Locating a facility within our catchment area.

   Building relationships.  Also the EHs partnership relies heavily on using child care subsidies as the first level of payment, the second level is the EHS CCP grant to enhance services and the third level is private for pay.

3. What tools, resources, or supports would you need to successfully establish an EHS/child care partnership in your community?

   Other grantees that have experienced the partnerships and have lessons learned!

   Conversations regarding FOCUS and understanding of subsidies

   Funding, Training and Support from the Federal Funding source.

   Not sure

   Collaboration with other ECE programs and needs

   Assistance in establishing an agreement because we currently do not have EHS.

   To become better educated on how to implement and establish this working relationship under OHS requirements.

   Direction.  There are so many questions, and few answers.

   The Office of Head Start provides training and technical assistance to all new grantees.  Technical assistance includes legal

assistance in drafting up contracts, training on the performance standards, Board training on roles and responsibilities for the partners. The only trainers I can think that could do this work are current Early Head Start practitioners.

4.  Please describe the extent of your program's public data reporting.

    Shared on our website.

    Mailed out to families, place in local vendor shops, posted on the web site. Mailed out to our partners and posted on the LEA's web pages.

    We maintain a list through the year and at year end we analyze the information and pick out the pieces that need to be in the annual report.

    It is in the Community newsletter & Web page

    We produce an annual report.

    Annual report and PIR.

    Our completes an annual report and shares with the public

    We just do the annual report. We have committees that we share internal data with outside agencies and always if someone asks and we can share we do so.

    Report to the Public is posted on our program's website. At the end of this program year, it will be completed jointly, and posted on both program websites.

    Annual reports are posted in the program's website

    The Annual report must comply with all the requirements on Head Start. In addition, the focus should be on data that demonstrates child and family outcomes. Most notably, what is the program doing to prepare children for kindergarten and how do you demonstrate school readiness.

5.  Please briefly describe any data sharing partnerships (such as sharing data with a local school district to look at outcomes for Head Start students).

    None.

    Assessments and screenings.

    Our committees, councils and LEA's look at the data for decisions and to determine if changes need to be made.

    Yes, our program has agreements in place with local school districts. While conducting children's assessments, data is gathered to share with these entities.

    2 other Head Start programs

    Research project in conjunction with a local foundation and the local LEA.

6.  What are the barriers and challenges to your program sharing data, either with state entities like CYFD or with other programs in New Mexico that serve children?

    No barriers just need to know what data is needed.

    We need time to collaborate to determine what tools and aspects that will be measured.

    It is one way street. Head Start is able to share but the outside agency will not share data.

    CYFD has never wanted to see the information unless they access and download it from the district website.

    Time constraints

    Understanding of the need and usage of the data as well as how it will be protected

    None.

    The concerns that our program experiences when sharing data is the effects of other programs (pre-k) being funded and opening which feel as if we are in competition for children in the communities.

    We share when we can and if we have the data people are requesting. We really need to work on a system to track children from early care programs through to the public schools so we can ask them to share the data with us. Weather they do that or

not remains to be seen.

Forming partnerships

Data base system that can import and export information.

7.  What tools, resources, or supports would you need to successfully share data, either with state entities like CYFD or with other programs in New Mexico that serve children?

A listing of data that is needed.

Facilitators

Partnerships at the state and federal levels to allow the sharing of information.

Really no resources or tools are needed unless there are recommendations from those agencies.

Funding to hire a specific person to collaborate with other programs and share data

See above

None.

Not too sure

Support from people higher levels to REQUIRE public schools to work with the early care agencies

Bridging programs.  Express to partners the need for collaboration.

Investment of funding that would meet the mandated reporting requirements of Head Start and the State of New Mexico CYFD needs. Training for staff, on-going monitoring of the system, software and hardware.

8.  Does your program design and provide its own internal professional development, or do staff attend regional trainings with other early childhood professionals? Or both? Please briefly explain.

Both. Within the program and in the community at the local, state or national levels.

A combination of both

Local, state and regional.

We complete a PDP for all staff that is inclusive of their selected topics, and the programs topics.  We design our group staff development around program needs and large requests for same topics.  We also give staff opportunities to select their own topics at state trainings when feasible and in our area.

Both, staff attend internal professional developments, workshops & conferences

We do both. We collaborate with other agencies to train together as well as provide training by in-house staff

Both.

Our program is designed to provide our staff with internal training for professional growth and they also attend other regional training offered.

We do internal professional development and we send staff out as well

Both

Professional development is conducted both internally and by the participation in regional trainings.

Both

9.  How does your program set professional development priorities?

Through individual staff plans, on-going monitoring and initiatives.

Based on data from Self-Assessment, federal reviews, GOLD assessment, and staff input.

Professional development priorities are set through staff PDP set the staff.

By data and program need.

According to their Professional Development plans

Yes, Annually

Through program needs and staff training needs.

Our professional development priorities are set once a new staff is hired. They are informed of the requirements of the OHS. We guide them with enrolling in a CDA/CDC program or college programs.

We look at the Head Start requirements and train to that then to the Child Care Licensing regs and FOCUS then hot topics we may be dealing with that year such as curriculum, assessment and observations.

We complete Professional Development plans with each staff member annually. I review them regularly, collaborating with our PB Coach and Management team to meet needs.

Ongoing monitoring

Individual professional development goals are established and monitored. Practice based coaching and mentor coaches are also utilized.

10. Has access to T.E.A.C.H. scholarships enhanced your program's professional development capacity? Please explain.

More scholarships can be offered to staff.

It has supported assistants and teachers to attend classes to better service students' needs

Scholarships have been used for education, not professional development of the staff as a whole

Personally, the utilization of the TEACH scholarship provided many benefits which supported my ability to obtain my AA degree in ECE. Under my leadership, I have seen 2-4 graduate with either a BA or AA. Coming up in May 2016, I have 2 who will obtain their BA degrees in May and 1 AA in May in ECE

We have had several staff on TEACH and it has been hugely successful, and encouraged staff who might not have pursued their degrees to do so.

Yes, through the T.E.A.C.H. scholarships staff have been able to meet their PD goals.

11. If you know about T.E.A.C.H. scholarships but your program does not currently participate, please explain why. Has your program encountered barriers to participation?

All our staff are at the BA or MA level, so TEACH is not necessary within our program.

None of the staff have expressed an interest.

It takes staff away from their regular work hours. We have attendance problems with teaching staff and this would take them away even more.

We have staff that have received TEACH scholarships in the past. Only barriers have been lack of funds.

The staff member who was utilizing it has graduated.

12. Is your program participating in NM TQRIS FOCUS? Please explain why you chose to participate or not.

We chose to participate because we want our quality to be acknowledged by the stars on our licenses.

Funding and never contacted by the state.

To improve the quality of our program

We used accreditation instead. We have been a part of the TQRIS, but had to provide our own resources, and support, were not able to move up the Star system, so we felt that accreditation was a better system for us.

This is quite difficult. Our program started with FOCUS as a pilot program so that we could become the trainers to our program, then be assessed by someone from FOCUS for one of our largest centers who struggled with the TTAP staff to observe all classrooms. However, our program made the decision to remove ourselves from this pilot because as we continued to support the FOCUS program and obtain the required trainings, they were forever changing and no longer valid to our staff. So, we would have to travel (from Clovis to Abq) for either a 4 hour or 1 day training. It just didn't seem reasonable, because once we'd train our staff they training had changed.

All centers are already accredited through NAEYC. However, Prek sites just received their FOCUS four star ranking.

13. Please briefly describe your greatest challenge in participating in FOCUS.

Assignment of a consultant and lack of consistent information.

Time Consuming

Not having a consultant was horrible but now we have one it is heading in the right direction.

It doesn't blend well with OHS requirements. We already exceed FOCUS requirements, but are required to participate anyway.

Start the system

14.  Please briefly describe aspects of the FOCUS system that have been most helpful to your program.

Training Topics!

We are still new to the process not sure yet

Having a consultant

Our representative has been very supportive and engaged.

Documentation and training

15.  What are some barriers and challenges your program encounters when planning kindergarten alignment and transitions?

Just coming together and discussing how we can work with one another. Finding the time to initiate the partnerships.

LEA administers only willing to work with a schedule that meets their needs.

Time

None

None

Time, scheduling meetings, attendance

Getting principals and kinder teachers to participate.  Accurate identification of the receiving school for many of our children.

16.  What are some of your program's successes in kindergarten alignment and transitions?

Having principals and teachers talk with our parents!

Many…

Three classroom transitions per year and kindergarten application packets and all data completed before they leave Head Start

Good partnerships/collaboration

One of our centers were able to have the parents to take the children to the Early Childhood center  to meet with the teachers and some of the ECH staff have also visited the other centers to talk with the parents.

We discuss and share School Readiness Goals

Ability to work with Child Find for smooth transition of children with IEP's.  Good percentage of parent participation.

17.  How can the Head Start Collaboration Office better support programs with kindergarten transitions?

Facilitating a partnership summit with stakeholders.

Allow the Head Start Collaboration Office Staff member to do their job and not be confined to state oversight.

IDK

n/a

By letting the schools know the importance of providing some type of transition activities at the local Head Start centers.

Interview and hire a Head Start Collaborator person. The lack of this position greatly affects the overall guidance and direction of the Head Start Association.  An acknowledgment of the importance of the position and the ability to operate independently of the State department but in the best interests of the Head Start agencies.

18.  What other services in your community serve children with disabilities?

No other.

LEA and Child Find.

Part C programs

Tobosa in Roswell ,CARC In Artesia and Carlsbad. The Public Schools.

FIT, Head Start, Child care

19. What community resources or services would be most helpful when serving children with disabilities?

n/a

Additional funding.

We have very good Part C programs however communication is some times lacking as children are transitioning at their 3rd birthday.

Not sure.

20. Do you participate in Early Learning Advisory Council meetings? If yes, please provide your thoughts on the process. If no, why?

Will begin to attend because just found out the importance of attending.

There is no movement.

We attend all meetings

I'm a new director, I haven't yet made a connection

Need more representation of Head Start on the ELAC. Glad the Chair is a Head Start Director.

21. If more face-to-face meetings were scheduled to help support better understanding of services and programs, would you attend?

Yes, it is important to know in order to better serve.

No, it's not about the meetings…we have enough of those.  Its about following through with services and support.

No, time does not allow travel.

Yes, to receive information, network and collaborate

Yes, if the location of trainings could change from time to time to communities closer to our homes rather than traveling 4 hours away from home and as long as they are longer than 1 day.

22. How does your program provide cultural and linguistic services to children and families?

Ensuring that our staff are representative of the children and families served.

Staff are all bilingual.

Through parent support, teacher implementation and support.

Through the Pueblos Department of Education

We provide dual language opportunities in our classrooms, we focus our environments on our community assessments, we provide resource and referrals as support services, we engage with families and work to address their goals through our services.

Through bilingual correspondence, and. classroom materials labeled in English and Spanish.

We have a solid curriculum which address diversity as well as year and years of experience

We meet them where they are, welcome them into our community, include their cultures and languages, celebrate them

Dual Language program in conjunction with training from UNM, Dr. Barbara Rodriquez

23. What tools, resources, or supports could the Head Start Collaboration Office provide to help your program meet the cultural and linguistic needs of children and families?

None.

Funding…

Not sure

Any materials you are to provide.

Training, best practices, collaboration with Head Start T & TA network.