September 2014:
Establishing Strong Partnerships

"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." --*Helen Keller*

Background

Since the President's Early Learning Initiative was announced, and Congress allocated $500 million for new Early Head Start partnerships, many of your programs have been having enthusiastic conversations about Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships. The new grants will provide exciting opportunities for Early Head Start programs to be agents of change in communities across the country.

Early care and education for infants and toddlers is fragmented in many communities, with Early Head Start, subsidy-funded child care, and private child care working in parallel but without formal partnerships. Much research has shown that when a community's programs come together and leverage their funding, the entire community benefits. We know you are quickly undertaking this process, but as you will read in the articles provided, much planning and preparation must take place as partnerships are established to ensure they are effective.

In this Research Blast you will find articles and studies that highlight the benefits of partnerships, as well as lessons learned from programs that have established partnerships in the past. Not all communities are alike and there is no magic formula for establishing successful partnership, but we believe that Head Start programs - with 50 years of innovation behind them - can lead the way! As always, we welcome you to share your thoughts and other resources you've found helpful, and we encourage you to visit our Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Project website for more articles, resources, webinars, and FAQs.

Resources

Education Development Center, Inc
Child Care/Head Start Partnership Snapshot: What the Research Says About Financial Arrangements and Resources
This snapshot highlights the findings from a study of Head Start-Child Care partnerships and the partnerships' use of financial resources. Examples of how some partners used funding are given. Most importantly, it underscores the importance of having a process in place to review funding

between partners.

Visit our EHS-CC Partnership Project Research [page](#) for additional snapshots and research briefs!

National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement
[Community Engagement: Forging Effective Partnerships](#)
This webinar on forging effective partnerships from the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement is designed to help programs identify the role of positive goal-oriented relationships in supporting successful partnerships; explore ways to work with families and community partners from involvement to engagement; and effectively engage community partners in achieving shared goals for progress toward child and family outcomes. Most helpful are the real-life examples of how programs have engaged families and communities to help children get ready for school and the series on forging partnerships. Explore the whole webinar series!

IDEA Partnership
[Building Connections](#)
Ready for collaboration, but don't know where to start? Check out the Leading by Convening book and material from the IDEA Partnership, an effort of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education to share their strategies for engaging all stakeholders. Tools to help drive your collaboration include: Coalescing Around Issues, Ensuring Relevant Participation, Doing the Work Together, Bringing It All Together, and Meetings to Co-Create.

Research

Public Administration Review
[Collaboration Processes: Inside the Black Box](#)
by Ann Marie Thomson and James L. Perry

In this article, the authors present a five part collaboration process as one way that program leaders can conceptualize their daily interaction with their partners. This process includes the following dimensions: Governance, Administration, Autonomy, Mutuality, and the Trust and Reciprocity Dimension. The authors underscore the importance of reconciling individual and collaborative interests since tensions can arise when a collaborative goal conflicts with an individual partner's goals. To help in this, the authors state that there should be transparency in the information shared between collaborative partners and that the information shared should increase the partners' understanding of the problem that they are seeking to address.

Early Child Development and Care
[Collaborative services for infants and toddlers with disabilities: perspectives from professionals in an urban setting](#)
by Chun Zhang, Barbara Schwartz & Hwa Lee

Infants and toddlers with disabilities need extra support during their early years. This study examines the issues and challenges faced by ten urban Early Head Start (EHS) programs in collaborating with their early intervention (EI) partners. The authors highlight the perspectives of directors from the EHS programs regarding the process of developing Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs). Most problematic were scheduling conflicts and the use of different sets of documents for goal-setting for the families. Multiple meetings and lack of communication between partners are difficult for high-needs families and can intensify the stress already felt from navigating services for their children. The authors make recommendations about how EHS and EI providers can collaborate to promote and enhance positive child and family outcomes; these recommendations may also apply to Early Head Start programs creating new partnerships with child care and working to articulate to families the various resources that are available to them through the partnership.

Zero to Three Policy Center

[Quality Child Care for Infants and Toddlers: Case studies of Three Community Strategies: Executive Summary](#)

by Diane Paulsell, Renée Nogales, & Julie Cohen

This executive summary is based on a 2000 study that analyzed common opportunities and challenges faced by infant and toddler care partnerships in three case studies, including one area that was implementing Early Head Start-child care partnerships. These lessons are still relevant today. The case studies for the diverse sites included parent perspectives. A common theme for parents throughout all locations was lack of access to quality child care. In addition, two main themes were the challenge of braining funding streams and ensuring high-quality care for infants and toddlers - a concern of many EHS programs today. One important piece that the executive summary mentions is the importance of educating the community on the impact of high-quality care for the healthy development of infants and toddlers. Through these education efforts, community partners may be more open to contributing and collaborating with early childhood programs.

[The Impact of Nonprofit Collaboration in Early Child Care and Education on Management and Program Outcomes](#)

by Sally Coleman Selden, Jessica E. Sowa, & Jodi Sandfort

Due to the myriad funding streams for early care and education, partnerships are vital for a program's success. This article focuses on interorganizational relationships - such as partnerships between public, private, and nonprofit organizations. The authors found that interagency collaboration between early care and and education providers improved the working environments and resources available to staff and enhanced the services available to children and families. Perhaps unsurprisingly, partnership had the greatest impacts when collaboration happened at higher levels of intensity. Explore the full article to see the varied impacts of partnership on staff, children, and families.

Discussion Questions

1. After reviewing the article *Collaboration Processes: Inside the Black Box* how can the resources for Building Connections be incorporated and best used?
2. Zhang, Schwartz & Lee underscore the need to implement family-friendly policies and practices between partners to enhance positive outcomes for children with disabilities and families. What other special populations within your program need additional planning to ensure families don't struggle to navigate services?
3. What challenges did the programs face in the article *Quality Child Care for Infants and Toddlers* that are similar to the those faced by your program? How have you addressed them in the past and what could you try differently in the future?

Do you know of other recent research that may be of interest to the Head Start field? Do you have other questions, comments or concerns? E-mail Emmalie Dropkin (edropkin@nhsa.org).