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Collaborating with Head Start: State-Level Challenges and Opportunities

Joint Subcommittee on the Virginia Preschool Initiative
September 19, 2018
Richmond, Virginia

What is Head Start?

Key Details

- ▶ **\$9.86 billion** comprehensive federal early childhood program
- ▶ Heavily regulated
 - Teacher/child ratio and group size
 - Comprehensive services (dental, health, and cognitive screenings; medical home)
 - Family engagement
- ▶ Average per child allocation of **\$7,000** for Head Start (3- to 4-year-olds) and **\$12,000** for Early Head Start (birth to age 3)
- ▶ Grants limited to five years with strict accountability system



Head Start in Virginia

Key Details

- ▶ Virginia received **\$133.4 million** for Head Start in 2017
- ▶ Funded enrollment: **Over 15,000**
 - 12,670 Head Start
 - 2,452 Early Head Start
- ▶ Number of grantees: **79**
 - 51 Head Start and 28 Early Head Start grantees
 - 931 classrooms



Challenges for Head Start State Collaboration



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Why Is It Difficult to Coordinate and Collaborate with Head Start?

	HEAD START	VIRGINIA PRESCHOOL INITIATIVE (VPI)	CHILD CARE
Administrative Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal to local 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State grant with local match 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State-administered within federal guidelines
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Below federal poverty line (FPL) with categorical eligibility Year-long eligibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At or below 200% of FPL, homeless; parents are dropouts; disability at or below 350% of FPL; Up to 15% of a division's slots may be filled based on local criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 150-250% of FPL median income Meet work requirements of TANF, VIEW, or SNAP; or participate in regular employment or training activities
Program Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Head Start Program Performance Standards</i> Virginia Quality Standards (voluntary) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VPI Guidelines Virginia Quality Standards (voluntary) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsidy guidelines Child care licensing Virginia Quality Standards (voluntary)
Monitoring & Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual self-assessment Triennial federal monitoring Designation Renewal System (DRS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once every five years unless cause for additional monitoring CQI process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-approval inspection No less than 2 inspections annually (licensed) 1 inspection annually for unlicensed

Differences in Quality Standards



EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS

In general Head Start requires higher levels of education of ECE staff than does VA Quality.



CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

Head Start has more robust standards around curriculum & professional development and includes family engagement, screening, etc.



ENVIRONMENT

VA Quality has more specific criteria about learning environment (as measured by *Environment Rating Scales; ERS*)



INTERACTIONS

VA Quality standards are higher than Head Start minimum quality standards (that would trigger re-competition)

Examples

Lead Teacher Qualifications (VA Level 2)

Head Start: Associate's degree (≥ 50% nationally must have bachelor's degree)

VA Quality: Child Development Associate (CDA) or 12 child-related credits (≥ 50% teachers within a program)

Training and Support Requirements (VA Level 3)

Head Start: All education staff have ≥ 15 hours/ year of research-based professional development + coaching

VA Quality: Lead teachers have ≥ 8 hours of training on curriculum or teaching framework

Learning Environment Criteria (VA Levels 4 & 5)

Head Start: General guidance around types of learning experiences, materials, and space

VA Quality: Average *ERS* score of ≥ 4.00 across four *ERS* subscales (Level 4); average score of ≥ 5.00 (Level 5)

CLASS Threshold Scores (VA Levels 4 & 5)

Head Start: Minimum scores of 2.00–4.00 across dimensions

VA Quality: Average scores of ≥ 3.25–5.00 across dimensions (Level 4); average of ≥ 4.25–6.00 (Level 5)

Vehicles for Head Start State Collaboration



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Collaboration with Head Start

Head Start State Collaboration Office

- ▶ Funding under Section 642 B of the 2007 Head Start Act.
- ▶ Located in the Virginia Department of Social Services.
- ▶ Required to conduct annual assessment to address needs of state Head Start programs with regard to collaboration, coordination, and alignment of services.
- ▶ Develop strategic plan based on the assessment that will enhance collaboration with state programs.



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Collaboration with Head Start

(New) Preschool Development Grant Opportunity

Funding:	\$242.5 million total Up to \$15 million for an individual state
Eligible applicants:	All 50 states, DC, US Territories (states choose agency to apply)
Number of Awards:	40
Application Post Date:	September 7, 2018
Application Due Date:	November 6, 2018



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Alignment Opportunities within the Preschool Development Grant

- 1** A statewide early care and education needs assessment of the availability and quality of existing programs.
- 2** A strategic plan that recommends collaboration, coordination, and quality improvement activities.
- 3** Maximize parental choice and knowledge about the state's mixed delivery system of existing programs and providers.
- 4** Sharing best practices among early care and education providers to increase collaboration and efficiency of services.
- 5** Improving the overall quality of early care and education programs in the state.



Collaboration with Head Start

Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships

- ▶ Competitive Early Head Start funding opportunity that places EHS slots in child care programs
 - Child care providers meet Head Start standards for those children and receive additional funding
 - Improves overall program quality
 - “Spillover” effects for non-EHS children in the program
- ▶ **\$115** million in new EHS–CC partnership and EHS expansion (out this fall)
- ▶ States can be the grantee



Collaboration with Head Start

Virginia Head Start Competition

- ▶ If Head Start programs fall below certain quality standards, they are required to compete
- ▶ Four Virginia Head Start programs with **\$6.4** million in grants must compete this fall
- ▶ Competitions provide the opportunity to:
 - find new high-capacity organizations to run Head Start
 - rethink/reinvigorate programming
 - form new partnerships
 - think innovatively



Programs That Are in DRS Re- Competition

VIRGINIA

Community	Head Start or Early Head Start	Estimated Total Program Funding	Expected Number of Awards
The City of Alexandria, Virginia	Head Start and/or Early Head Start Grantee	\$2,345,753	1
Mecklenburg, and Halifax Counties, Virginia	Head Start and/or Early Head Start Grantee	\$1,312,536	1
The City of Williamsburg within James City, and York Counties, Virginia	Head Start and/or Early Head Start Grantee	\$1,597,830	1
The City of Fredericksburg, and King George County, Virginia	Head Start and/or Early Head Start Grantee	\$1,166,849	1
State Total:		\$6,422,968	4

Collaboration with Head Start

ESSA Coordination Requirements

A Toolkit for State and Local Educational Agencies, Head Start Programs, and the Early Childhood Field



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Concluding Thoughts

- ▶ Fragmentation of early childhood programs derives from federal and state legislation.
- ▶ Creates a policy context that makes coordination difficult.
- ▶ Until federal legislative changes are made, must leverage the opportunities we have to support system coordination.





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