

6 Roles for States in Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships

There has been a lot of discussion about the roles of states in Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships. While they are eligible to apply to be Early Head Start grantees, for several reasons, the National Head Start Association believes strong local grantees are best positioned to meet the individual needs of communities and that states can be extremely effective supporters of systems building and continuity of care for children and families through the following roles:

1. Be the Convener

- Bring together Early Head Start, Child Care, State agencies and community partners
- Host conversations about Early Head Start regulations and the needs of EHS children
- Work with Head Start programs to connect them to high quality child care partners who are currently serving CCDF children and families
- Sponsor workshops, webinars and other forums for interested parties to learn more about the partnerships

2. Reform CCDF

- Conduct internal meetings regarding subsidy policy changes
- Maximize subsidy reimbursements for families accessing partnership settings
- Revise State policies to better facilitate such partnerships, including CCDF eligibility rules and waivers

3. Gather and Share Data

- Review state census data to determine where the greatest needs in the state are and make it accessible
- Conduct community surveys and identify underserved geographic areas
- Share demographic data, child care data, and Head Start data

4. Create Supportive Policies and Resources

- Develop/Enhance MOUs that are in place
- Expedite licensing for new partnership sites
- Conduct internal meetings with other departments (Family Assistance, Child Support, SNAP, etc) to ensure their awareness of and support for partnerships
- Look at systems level changes regarding policy to see how these partnerships can be reinforced through state policy
- Review monitoring requirements and look at developing a joint monitoring protocol
- Build Head Start Program Performance Standards into state QRIS to encourage and reward partners who meet high-quality standards



5. Create Opportunities for Workforce Development

- Encourage community colleges and other institutions of learning to provide instruction for CDAs and other early learning credentials
- Develop joint professional development opportunities and align regulatory standards

6. Expand Access

- Some states provide funding for EHS and partnership slots to expand the reach of the program
- If a state provides child care vouchers, ensure it is simple for families to use them to enroll in partnerships

The National Head Start Association is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization committed to the belief that every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, has the ability to succeed in life. The opportunities offered by Head Start lead to healthier, empowered children and families, and stronger, more vibrant communities. NHSA is the voice for more than 1 million children, 200,000 staff and 1,600 Head Start grantees in the United States.