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early developments Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center

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Long-Term Consequences of Child Care

From the Director's Office: Long-Term Consequences of
Child Care

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Depression

Relationships, Child & Teacher

NCEDL News: Georgia Conference

NCEDL News: Nearly 1,000,000 Served

Georgia Conference

Nearly 1,000,000 Served

Innovative ideas in early education exchanged at Georgia conference

Educators, researchers, and legislators from Europe, Australia, and America came together just over a year ago in Atlanta, to talk about the “single most important investment we can make” as Georgia Gov. Zell Miller said. That investment is providing early education opportunities for the nation’s young children.

Participants in the conference “Education in the Early Years” heard from domestic and international programs; considered the most recent research; and discussed alternatives to structuring and financing these programs. Sponsors included the National Center for Early Development & Learning.

Following are excerpts from states
trying innovative techniques 

Collaborative innovations

Massachusetts’s discretionary grant program requires the collaboration of early care and education providers, families with young children, and other members of local communities, reports Elisabeth Schaefer of the state Dept. of Education. Local Community Partnerships for Children Councils:

- choose the lead agency that administers the project (public school, Head Start or child care agency)
- conduct needs assessments
- create comprehensive service systems for 3- and 4-year-old children and their families
- evaluate community plans, implementation of plans, and outcomes and
- serve as policy and planning bodies. The state mandates collaboration, a needs assessment plan, and then provides funds. Partnerships serve 3- and 4-year-olds in families with incomes up to the state median, \$55,000 for a family of 4. The state requires communities to use a sliding-fee scale to determine what parents pay for services, including services provided in schools.

Minnesota has created the State Department of Children, Families & Learning (CFL) that brings together K-12 education with community service programs, according to Barbara Yates of CFL. Parents and community members are part of program, advisory, and planning committees.

This means:

- Creation of a single voice for childhood services which gives these issues more prominence in the executive and policy arenas.
- More comprehensive and coordinated access to data.
- More integrated funding. Policymakers have a better opportunity to examine state-level barriers that impede services and give a more coordinated response.

Connecticut has two major collaborative thrusts, according to **Elaine Zimmerman** of the Connecticut Commission on Children.

- The school reading program (passed in 1997) offers full access for three- and four-year-olds, the pooling of dollars across social service and education departments to expand hours and quality, service integration linking healthcare, literacy, employment and job training at the preschool site. A career ladder supports the work experience, training and career paths of providers. Preschool programs must be accredited or in the process of accreditation with NAEYC, Head Start or other similar standards. The program gets \$80 million for the first two years of a five-year plan; it also contains \$70 million in loan funds for capital expansion.
- The literacy program (passed in 1998) creates a comprehensive early intervention strategy targeting at-risk children K-3rd grade. The state appropriated \$20 million for intensive reading programs, reduced class size, full-day kindergarten, after-school and summer school programs, and teacher training.

Parents are written into both bills as consumers with whom institutions must collaborate proactively.

Oregon's collaborative early childhood system serves children, ages 0-8, and their families, according to **Dell Ford** with the state Department of Education. The essential elements are family involvement, inclusion, positive relationships, child development, professional staff, continuity, health, an appropriate environment, and effective administration.

Oregon has an open competitive process for funding programs; all service providers can apply except religiously oriented programs. Also, schools must look at transition issues for preK students. Schools must coordinate with child care. Partnerships ensure that someone at the school works with health and human resources.

It is time that America determines to make the most out of this critical time in a child's life. If our children are going to compete in a global market, we must make them global thinkers. It is incumbent to do everything we can – as soon as we can – to prepare them to learn and to function in a world no longer limited by state or national boundaries.

— **Zell Miller**
Georgia governor

The state has allocated money for preK to partner with federal Head Start to increase the number of low-income children receiving early education services. This is known as Head Start Prekindergarten. Also, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families money is used to help federal Head Start expansion efforts to extend the day/year of Head Start services. Oregon's goal is to serve 50% of eligible children by 1999 and 100% by 2004.

Infrastructure innovations

Vermont, through its Early Childhood Workgroup, has developed a number of inter-related factors to strengthen its infrastructure, according to **Cheryl Mitchell** of the Vermont Agency of Human Services. These include:

- Core standards for all center-based, home-based, and home-visiting programs.
- A career lattice that links early childhood services across the career spectrum.
- Increased incentive payments for NAEYC-accredited programs.
- An extensive training system and the involvement of higher education in professional development.
- A revolving loan fund for improving child care settings and a mini-grant program for equipment, supplies, and specialized training.
- Use of interactive television and outreach.
- Partnership between state and community collaboratives around enhanced quality in early care and education.
- Links between schools, centers, and home-based providers.
- Reinforcement of family-centered practice.

Texas has formed the Texas Head Start-State Collaboration Project (THSSCP) which creates and supports statewide partnerships among Head Start, child care and preK programs. Parents are members of the THSSCP Task Force and participate in various workshops. THSSCP gets \$300,000 a year from Head Start (federal) and child development block grant (state). (continued on page 16)

(Texas continued from page 15)

These major projects are being implemented:

- Texas Core Standards
- Texas Career Development System
- Early Care and Education Collaboration Tool Kit
- Transition Training Pilots

North Carolina's "TEACH" component of its statewide Smart Start initiative is an umbrella for a variety of scholarship programs that help child care workers take college courses and get paid for it, according to **Sue Russell** of the Day Care Services Association. TEACH has operated for eight years and provided more than 4,000 scholarships.

Another state program—Child Care WAGES Project— provides salary supplements to eligible child care teachers, directors, and family child care providers linked to the level of their education.

Both projects maintain comprehensive databases that track participants' demographics, history, progress, increased education, turnover, and so forth. TEACH funds come from private and public sectors, including foundation and corporate sources. The Child Care WAGES Project is funded with Smart Start money. Both projects have shown that increased compensation can have a dramatic impact on turnover.

Funding innovation

Thirty nine states fund preschool programs with their own money from special taxes, lotteries and gaming, state general funds, state education appropriations, and other methods, according to **Anne Mitchell** of the Early Childhood Research Institute and **W. Steven Barnett** of Rutgers University Graduate School of Education.

Nationwide, child care and early education is funded 60% by families, 39% by government, and 1% by the private section.

PreK is rapidly growing in state budgets. Some 39 states have money for preK or add on to Head Start. The trend is for three- and four-year-olds with few initiatives for children birth to five.

Funding solutions suggested include

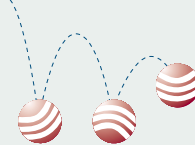
- Educating parents, the public and the government about the costs of low quality and a lack of services
- Building a system on existing resources and models
- Creating a funding partnership among parents, government, and employers
- Using a mix of public sources, such as general revenues from taxes and lotteries, state budget surpluses, increased tax on upper income families (especially capital gains), dependent care assistant plans with matching contributions and rollover, a children's trust fund similar to the Social Security system, and a 50% tax on campaign funds.

Evaluation innovation

Georgia's ongoing evaluation of its Prekindergarten Program looks for program characteristics that produce a "competitive advantage" for children, according to **Gary T. Henry** of Georgia State University. The evaluation also examines which educational practices in the years after preK enhance or dampen the effects of the preK program on four-year-olds.

Program quality, teachers' beliefs and practices, and developmentally appropriate practices in preschool are measured on a stratified probability sample of more than 3,000 children. Family background and preschool program characteristics are monitored. Parents are interviewed each year for the first three years.

These outcomes are measured: rating of student performance on cognitive, behavioral, and social skills, attendance, promotion, referrals to special programs, and expectations for each student by parents and teachers.



Nearly 1,000,000 preK children being served in public school areas

Schools and school districts are becoming increasingly involved in providing services to children and families prior to entry into formal school at the customary kindergarten entry age.

Using data from the 1995 National Household Education Survey (US Department of Education), a new study by researchers at NCEDL estimates that some 900,000 prekindergarten children were served in a public elementary, junior high or high school in 1995.

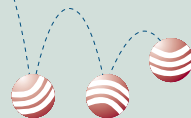
“School systems are a major new force in early childhood. This has both positive and negative implications for the field,” said Researcher **Richard M. Clifford**, who is also co-director of the National Center for Early Development at UNC-Chapel Hill.

On the positive side, he said, schools bring a strong tradition of service to all children. A 1999 report showed that standards for state-funded pre-kindergarten programs in many states are quite high. “Second, schools represent a strong potential ally in securing revenue for early childhood programming.”

On the negative side, school officials have been historically reluctant to incorporate services to children prior to kindergarten entry age—a position sometimes supported by public opinion regarding the appropriate role of the education system, said **Diane Early** who also worked on the study.

She said, “Schools have been slow to meet the needs of families for services beyond the traditional school day (usually about six-and-a-half hours/day) and school year (usually around nine months). Today most families with children three to four years old age need full-day (at least eight hours a day) and full-year services.”

In an article published in a recent *Young Children*, the researchers wrote, “We propose the creation of a National Commission on Early Childhood Services to examine the issue of how we, as a country, will serve our youngest citizens. Until we have agreement on the basic issues of who has responsibility for governing early childhood services, who has responsibility for financing these services, and how we can best take advantage of the rich resources for serving children in this country, many families will continue to face a patchwork of services with many children spending their early years in settings of unknown quality.”



For more information:

“Almost a Million Children in School Before Kindergarten: Who is responsible for Early Childhood Services?” Richard M. Clifford, Diane M. Early & Tynette Hills. *Young Children* 54 (5), 48-51.

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– *Richard M. Clifford*
Researcher, Co-director
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Early Development
& Learning



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