

# Partnering with Head Start and Early Head Start

▶ A Primer for Childcare Providers

Created by the  
**Kansas Head Start  
Collaboration Office**

## Raising Healthy Kids is a Group Project



As a childcare provider, you play a vital part in the lives of Kansas kids. During the hours spent in your care, you nurture and guide these children, feeding their bodies and their minds. Yet there will always be some aspects of a child's development you can't control.

Ideally, a good care provider is one of many positive influences in a child's life. In addition to regular visits to doctors and dentists, healthy overall growth also depends on the stability of a child's home environment and familial relationships.

## How Head Start and Early Head Start Can Help?



Many families lack the resources – financial and otherwise – to meet all their children's needs. One way care providers can help overburdened families cope is by connecting them with the comprehensive services available through Head Start and Early Head Start.

Founded in 1965, Head Start (HS) is a federally funded program that supports the health and education of preschool-age children. Early Head Start (EHS) focuses on pregnant women, infants, and toddlers. Together they offer a range of services that promote the healthy development of children from birth to 5, with an emphasis on school readiness.

Both HS and EHS serve children from families with low income, as well as children in foster care, homeless children, children with disabilities, and children from families receiving public assistance (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or Supplemental Security Income).

In Kansas, partner programs located throughout the state offer:

- ▶ Health, developmental and behavioral screenings
- ▶ High health, safety and nutrition standards
- ▶ Professional development for teachers
- ▶ Parent engagement opportunities

<sup>1</sup> Less than \$24,300 annual pre-tax income for a family of four, per federal poverty guidelines.



## What is an Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership?



In August of 2015, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) provided grants to develop partnerships between Early Head Start programs and local childcare providers. The Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnership is a federally funded initiative that integrates EHS comprehensive services and resources into the child care setting.

The partnerships are designed to support high-quality early learning opportunities for low-income working families with infants and toddlers. These high-quality early learning opportunities includes full-day and full-year programs that enable working parents to meet their child-care needs, while helping children reach their full potential.

## Benefits of partnering with Head Start and Early Head Start



HS and EHS offer quality improvement funds that can be used for supplies, equipment, materials and facility improvements. Support is also available for staff training and professional development, as well as improving childcare worker compensation and benefits.

In addition to developmental screenings and referrals for needed medical, dental, nutrition, vision and mental health services, families enrolled in HS and EHS may be eligible for home visits and other family support programs; diapers and formula; and expanded childcare hours to enable parents to work.

Benefit from the standards of quality maintained by HS and EHS partners, including lower teacher-to-student ratios and increased training and education for providers.

## What does a successful partnership look like?



The primary advantage of partnerships between childcare providers and HS or EHS programs is that they unite the strengths of both participants to offer our most vulnerable children, and their families, more comprehensive, timely, and high-quality care.

A successful, community-based early childhood partner program is:

- ▶ Child-focused, allowing primary caregiving and continuity of services;
- ▶ Built on identified community needs and strengths;
- ▶ Geared to the childcare needs of parents and the developmental needs of children;
- ▶ Utilizing and coordinating existing services within a community;
- ▶ Providing high-quality, comprehensive care for low-income children and families;
- ▶ Meeting or exceeding federal Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS);
- ▶ Maximizing federal and state funding;
- ▶ Employing highly qualified professionals.



To find out more about EHS-CC Partnerships, go to [eclks.ohs.acf.hhs.gov](http://eclks.ohs.acf.hhs.gov)

