AN ANALYSIS
OF HIGH QUALITY
HEAD START PROGRAMS

**RECOMMENDATIONS
FROM THE
LUCAS COUNTY
HEAD START TASK FORCE**

MARCH 25, 2012

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal legislation aimed at improving Head Start quality resulted in notification in December to the Lucas County Head Start provider and 131 other grantees that they must re-compete for their Head Start grants. Interest by local stakeholders in a collaborative and successful grant application led to the assembly of a "Lucas County Head Start Task Force" (hereafter called Task Force), charged with researching effective Head Start models and sharing its findings with stakeholders.

From the onset, each member of the Task Force made a commitment to the goal of recommending a model that meets the unique needs of Lucas County, grounded in theory and research, and draws from best practices from around the country. The Task Force developed a theoretical framework and program model based on research and review of exemplary Head Start programs, identified community assets available for implementing the model, and developed a shared governance model that promotes collaboration, transparency and sustainability.

The theoretical framework places the child at the center, with community collaboration and cultural relevance and cultural competence as overarching principles. Additional components that structured the Task Force's research included 1) assessment, 2) program & pedagogy, 3) curriculum, 4) teacher professional development, 5) parent, family & community engagement, 6) health & wellness, 7) governance & administration, and 8) accountability.

Within this framework, the Task Force identified core elements of exemplary programs:

1) research-based practices
2) reflective supervision and practice
3) emphasis on social-emotional development, language and literacy, and the arts
4) high teacher qualifications and intensive professional development
5) small child to adult ratios
6) individualized family support services
7) an interdisciplinary approach

Because starting early is critical, many exemplary programs also offer Early Head Start to pregnant women, infants and toddlers. Although new Early Head Start grants are not included in the grants up for re-competition, pursuit of this funding when available would help ensure children are born healthy and are able to achieve optimal development before beginning Head Start.

Collaborative partnerships, which provide a focused and sustainable range of services, are vital to the success of an early childhood program. A review of community assets confirms that Lucas County has resources available to form such partnerships and therefore provide a range of comprehensive services to the families and children in our community.

The federal grant provides only a portion of the funds needed to implement Head Start. Public-private partnerships are necessary to achieve the quality needed to gain results. A shared governance model is proposed to ensure collaboration, accountability and effective decision-making. This model separates grant administration and service provision through formation of a LLC, and contracts with service providers capable of implementing the proposed model.

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in 1965, Head Start has aimed to improve school readiness among young children from low income families by enhancing their social, emotional and intellectual growth by providing critical educational, health, nutritional, and social services. The program, touted as one of President Johnson's most significant and successful initiatives, has grown from serving around 500,000 children and families to over 900,000 at a cost in excess of $7 billion in federal funding (Haskins and Barnett, 2011; Kalifeh, Cohen-Vogel & Grass, 2011). Given the size and cost of delivering this laudable program, it has endured numerous reform efforts and impact studies over the course of its lifetime. Some of the most memorable include the following:

> 1975: Head Start Performance Standards were issued in an effort to improve program efficiency

> 1991: Congress called for biennial reports to monitor program quality

> 2005 & 2010: Two contentious impact studies showed that Head Start may not be fulfilling its promise (Haskins and Barnett, 2011; Kalifeh, Cohen-Vogel & Grass, 2011; Mervis, 2011)

> 2007: The Improving Head Start Readiness Act required that all Head Start teachers must possess associate's degrees by 2011 and at least 50% must have bachelor's degrees.

The latest reform effort announced in December 2011 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) "notified 132 Head Start grantees that they have been designated to compete for continued Head Start funding. Under new regulations announced by President Barack Obama in November 2011, grantees who do not meet quality thresholds established by the Office of Head Start will have to compete, for the first time ever, with other potential providers for Head Start funding" (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/news/press/2011/ HHSHeadStartPush.html). According to HHS, the goal of this reform is to ensure that "the most qualified entities are deliver[ing] a high quality and comprehensive Head Start program."

Considering the context described above, there are at least three factors that make HHS's announcement important to our community. First, Toledo Lucas County Head Start has been placed in re-competition. Next, collaboration among those who are committed to the success of young children and have the resources needed to ensure that success will help determine that the federal funds are used to support local resources. Finally, submission of a proposal that reflects a deep understanding of our local population, community assets, education system, and economic and social context is critical. In order for our community to maintain local control of Head Start, the most competitive and collaborative application possible must be submitted. To that end, the following report examines high quality Head Start programs across the country in order to understand how they are governed, evaluated, and how they deliver exemplary services for children and families.

This report's purpose is to understand and depict an effective, high quality Head Start model by evaluating other programs that have demonstrated excellence beyond compliance to federal standards.

OVERVIEW OF THE TASK FORCE AND ITS OBJECTIVE

In January, 2012, Toledo Community Foundation invited corporate and educational leaders to discuss the announcement that local Head Start services were designated to compete for continued funding. With input from the community, Toledo Community Foundation facilitated the process of assembling the Task Force. Selection of members was aimed at engaging a broad base of stakeholders, each with an advanced degree and a specialization in child development, education, family support services or system delivery. From the onset, each member of the Task Force made a commitment to the goal of recommending a model that meets the unique needs of our community, grounded in theory and research, and draws from best practices from around the country. A list of Task Force members can be found in Appendix A.

At the initial meeting, the group was asked to identify and present an example of what a high quality Head Start program might be like in Lucas County, Ohio. The group was asked to utilize their education, research and experiential backgrounds to identify innovative models of early childhood education. It was suggested that rather than reviewing existing practices, that a more appropriate approach would be to consider what might be possible, and to present those ideas that would facilitate the creation of the best possible Head Start program.

The Task Force divided into four sub-committees, each charged with specific objectives. These included:

> Framework Committee: Develop a theoretical framework that is research-based and includes all components necessary for creating a high quality Head Start program in Lucas County.

> Models Committee: Research and investigate exemplary models of Head Start programs in Ohio and throughout the United States; identify those models that would best address the needs of children and families in Lucas County.

> Community Assets Committee: Research and identify community assets in Lucas County that would be capable of and willing to collaborate in implementing a high quality Head Start program.

> Governance Committee: Research and identify a governance structure that is clearly articulated and aligned with theoretical framework and program components identified.

While each sub-committee did work on its own, the large group continued to meet at least weekly to ensure continuity of ideas and processes.

METHODS & DATA COLLECTION

Framework Committee

In determining what the theoretical framework for this report would entail, a variety of resources were considered, including resources from the Federal Office of Head Start (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs/), the Ohio Department of Education (http://www. ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDefaultPage.aspx?page=1) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (http://www.naeyc.org). Thoughtful discussions were held, and experts from a variety of fields had many opportunities to provide insight and recommendations to the Task Force. It was determined that any findings would be grounded in the fact that while compliance with Head Start regulations would be mandatory, compliance alone would not be enough to create a powerful program that would impact student learning. The Task Force agreed that excellence would be the goal in all aspects of developing recommendations.

Models Committee

Selection criteria

Given the short timeframe for completing the review and goal of excellence, the Models Committee began by reviewing the Office of Head Start's list of twenty "Centers of Excellence in Early Childhood," which are awarded grants to develop and disseminate exemplary practices for Head Start programs. To be designated "Centers of Excellence," programs had to submit proposals for consideration to HHS describing both past accomplishments and plans for disseminating exemplary practices to other Head Start programs. The process included nominations by the Governor of the state in which the Head Start program operates, along with other rigorous criteria. As a result, members of the Models Committee had confidence that these programs would provide examples of high quality programs to assist the Task Force in developing a model for Lucas County.

Several other programs were added to the list of programs reviewed in order to provide local examples or to explore a high quality model that was recommended. A list of Head Start programs reviewed can be found in Appendix B.

Selection process

A spreadsheet was developed to help document review of each program's website based on each component of the framework. Review of program websites helped identify a subset of programs the Committee wanted to examine further, based on fit with the framework. For these programs, Committee members conducted one to two in-depth telephone interviews with agency directors, program directors, and other administrators. The goal of these interviews was to gather as much information as possible about each component of the framework, as well as governance, financing, challenges and keys to success. Questions used to structure these interviews are provided in Appendix C.

Community Assets Committee

Selection criteria

The Community Assets Committee was asked to determine the types of resources available to support and augment early childhood services. The group's work was divided into eight areas of concentration as defined by the Task Force's framework rubric: assessment; program & pedagogy; curriculum; teacher professional development; parent, family & community engagement; health & wellness; governance & administration; and accountability.

Selection process

The committee utilized web searches, personal knowledge and expertise of all committee members, on-site visits, and telephone interviews to collect data. A community resource database was created from the information collected. Group members identified individuals and agencies available to serve as resource partners. It was determined that within each of the framework's areas of focus, there are ample community resource assets in Lucas County capable and willing to collaborate in the implementation of a high quality Head Start program.

Following thoughtful discussion and careful consideration, it was clear that collaborative relationships must be built between local agencies and the Head Start grantee to achieve optimum success. Sustainability with these agencies over time will be critical.

Governance Committee

Selection Criteria

The Governance Committee implemented the same selection criteria as the Models Committee—it reviewed the Office of Head Start's list of twenty "Centers of Excellence in Early Childhood," which are awarded grants to develop and disseminate exemplary practices for Head Start programs. Just as stated above in the Models Committee section, several other programs were added to the list of programs reviewed in order to provide local examples or to explore a high quality model that was recommended. A list of Head Start programs reviewed can be found in Appendix B.

Selection Process

In an effort to discern common governance characteristics among exemplary Head Start programs, the governance committee researched federal regulations, compared and contrasted organizational charts and board compositions of the programs, and evaluated relevant interview data gathered through the interview protocol described in Appendix C.

Like the Models Committee, the Governance Committee used the spreadsheet framework to help review each program's administration and governance structure through information provided on websites and interviews. Review of program websites helped identify a subset of governance structures, which the Committee examined further based on fit with the overall framework. Finally, given that an implicit goal of our report is to help provide a blueprint for building a competitive community collaborative grant application, special attention was paid to exemplary programs that incorporated shared governance and alignment of community assets.

Rationale for Method

First and foremost, the intent of this report is to analyze, understand and depict an effective, high quality Head Start model by examining programs that have demonstrated excellence beyond compliance to federal standards. Therefore, a qualitative design is preferred for this study because it facilitates "investigation by comparing, contrasting and classifying experiences, and perceptions" (Yon, Nesbitt, & Algozzine, 1998; p. 78) within its real-life context (Yin, 2003). Additionally, this design corresponds to the nature of the data sought: descriptions, preferences and behaviors (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003). Thus, the method selected for this inquiry unifies the data sought with the overarching purposes of this report.

To understand and depict excellence beyond compliance, it is important that this report considers more than data related to compliance. In fact, it is crucial that people's voices and experiences are considered. According to Patton (2002), Head Start directors' voices should "not be constrained by predetermined analytical categories" (p.227), because qualitative research embraces and encourages in-depth interviews as a means of collecting data. Consequently, the strategy for this report involves a series of in-depth telephone interviews, which not only produce rich data for analysis, but will set forward insights into exemplary Head Start models.

The following section presents the Task Force's findings. First, the theoretical framework is presented as a way to explain the overarching goals of the findings. Following are the key program components which include Task Force recommendations and research findings.

Theoretical Foundations

A visual representation of the framework was developed (see Appendix D). Included are three theoretical foundations: 1) a child-centered focus, 2) community collaboration, and 3) cultural relevance and cultural competence. Additionally, eight key program components are included:

> Assessment
> Program & Pedagogy
> Curriculum
> Teacher Professional Development
> Parent, Family & Community Engagement
> Health & Wellness
> Governance & Administration
> Accountability

Child-Centered Focus

Research has documented that successful early childhood services are those that include the child as the central focus in all decision making (Pianta, Howes, & Burchinal, 2005). Much like Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory (1992), the proposed framework reflects a belief that multiple systems affect children. Such systems include, but are not limited to, families, schools, communities and government regulations. Knowing that the proposed framework would be complex in nature (in order to ensure the best possible programs for children), it became crucial to emphasize the fact that the child should be at the center of all decisions. In other words, all decisions would be made keeping the best interest of the child in mind. This particular component shaped the framework as a whole, as it provided a foundation for adding other components.

Community Collaboration

Quality early childhood programs cite local partnerships as key to their success in achieving quality and outcomes. Strong partnerships with public schools have helped support children's transition from preschool to kindergarten, engage parents in schools, provide services and supports to children with special needs, and participate in the governance of Head Start programs. Partnerships with high quality child care centers and homes enable services to be provided full-day and full-year through a combination of funding sources, personnel and facilities. Medical, dental and mental health providers partner with Head Start to establish a medical and dental home for each child/family, improve health outcomes, and increase access by delivering some services to families on-site (Wat & Gayl, 2009).

Collaboration with an impressive array of social services in the community help ensure that parents and other family members receive the support they need to achieve economic self-sufficiency, meet their children's health and developmental needs, and be fully engaged in their children's education (Caspe, Lopez, & Wolos, 2006/2007). These include: general education diploma (GED), jobs and English as a second language (ESL) programs; public, legal and tax assistance; programs to assist with a range of issues including domestic violence, mental health concerns, substance abuse, teen pregnancy; and others.

Cultural Relevance & Cultural Competence

Cultural competencies allow educators to provide a student-centered approach to learning within the cultural contexts of the learner. Culturally relevant teaching is founded on the premise that the cultural practices of learners affect cognition and emotional processes. Multiculturalism must be incorporated on a regular basis in the curriculum and daily learning experiences. The atmosphere of the classroom should include posters, photographs, and artifacts that reflect the cultures of the families. An example would also be the dramatic play area: it should include food items, clothing, textures, fabrics, dolls, toys and instruments that represent the children and their families.

Administrators, teachers and staff must be trained to evaluate all classroom literature and materials to assess for any biases, misconceptions or negative portrayals. It is imperative for teachers to research and learn about the cultural lives of children and their families to understand how to effectively communicate and avoid any misconceptions they may have. Learning in-depth about the child's background is essential for establishing a positive classroom climate, sustaining a trusting and secure teacher-child relationship, and effectively planning instruction for student achievement.

Therefore, to maximize student achievement, motivation and potential, instructors must display appropriate cultural competencies and embed such competencies into course curriculum and communication. Teachers, staff and administration should demonstrate knowledge, skills and dispositions that reflect cultural competencies (Tabors and Snow, 1994). These are necessary to support family communication and establish reciprocal relationships between teachers and parents. The demonstration of cultural competencies of administrations, staff and teachers impact the school climate and promote a welcoming, nurturing environment that fosters school and family communication, necessary for the academic and social potential of the child (NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, 2005a).

Head Start services are designed to be responsive to each child and family's ethnic, cultural and linguistic heritage (Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/about). Exemplary programs assure this through ongoing professional development, reflective practice and supervision, diverse representation in staffing and governance, and provision of culturally relevant assessments, curriculum and services to children and their families (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

KEY PROGRAM COMPONENTS & TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

General

Children who are at high risk of academic failure due to poverty typically enter school significantly behind their economically advantaged peers, and this gap widens with each year (Lee & Burkham, 2002). High quality Head Start programs help ensure that at-risk students arrive at kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed in school. Research shows that children in programs like the Educare Centers in Denver, Tulsa and other cities across the country have school readiness skills similar to children of all risk and income levels. Those who spend more time in these programs have even exceeded the national average for school readiness (Yazejian & Bryant, 2010). Historically, high quality preschool programs like Head Start (i.e., Perry Preschool and Abecedarian Project) have shown positive outcomes throughout the school years and well into adulthood, as well as economic returns for every dollar invested (Heckman, 2008).

Overall, exemplary Head Start programs share a number of key characteristics, including:

> recognition by external entities for quality and innovation, such as the HHS Centers for Excellence in Early Childhood, accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC);

> integration of core features so each informs the other, such as using program practices to inform research and research to inform practices;

> public-private partnerships to fund, deliver and sustain comprehensive, high quality services to at-risk children and their families;

> transparency and accountability through communicating program goals, services and outcomes to a variety of audiences through a range of methods; and

> a commitment to not only achieving full compliance with federal requirements, but also the highest possible quality through evidence-based practices and innovation.

Finally, exemplary programs start as early as possible in achieving positive outcomes for children and families by providing prenatal and birth-to-three services, either directly or through community partnerships. Although Early Head Start is not included in the current funding opportunity, the Task Force strongly recommends that community partners plan for serving infants and toddlers and apply for the Early Head Start grant when it is available.

The remaining sections present recommendations for implementing each of the key program components.

Assessment

Task Force Recommendations:

> Use data to inform and enhance all aspects of service provision
> Use nationally recognized assessment tools that have demonstrated acceptable reliability and validity

> Use **child assessments** that are:
  - < developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate
  - < valid and reliable in the language in which they are used
  - < aligned with state standards, adopted curriculum and kindergarten entry assessment tools
  - < aligned with IDEA regulations for children on IEPs
  - < both formative and summative
> Use **family assessments** to:
  - < plan program activities
  - < identify families' strengths and needs
  - < assess families' satisfaction with the program
  - < demonstrate program outcomes for families
> Use **program assessments** to:
  - < measure the quality of teaching and the learning environment
  - < identify program strengths and areas needing improvement
  - < recruit staff and families
  - < engage new partners
  - < leverage new sources of public and private funding

High quality early childhood programs use assessment data to inform and enhance all other aspects of the services provided for young children and their families. These programs use data on children, families, and the program for continuous program improvement (both to achieve compliance and to strive towards higher quality), individualized planning for children and their families, demonstrating accountability to the community and funders, and to sustain and leverage funding. High quality programs use nationally recognized tools that have demonstrated reliability and validity with the population served in order to communicate results to the community, compare results with other Head Start providers and early childhood programs, and track the progress of children from early childhood through the elementary years and beyond.

Child assessment must be developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate, as well as being valid and reliable in the language in which they are used. A summary of these tools for Head Start programs is provided by Halle, et al. (June 2011). Diagnostic, formative and summative assessment should be used to identify delays and disabilities, track progress in achieving learning outcomes, and communicate what the child has learned at the end of the program. Assessment is necessary to modify teaching strategies and professional development topics, and communicate about individual children's strengths and needs with parents. Outcomes for children may include progress in each area of development--social, emotional, cognitive, language & literacy, approaches to learning, physical well-being and motor development. To assess school readiness, child assessments must be aligned with kindergarten entry assessment for the school districts in the community. For Ohio, assessment currently relies on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Literacy (KRA-L) tool, which will be enhanced through the Race to the Top/Early Learning Challenge Grant to assess all domains of learning.

Similarly, family assessment is used to plan program activities, identify families' strengths, protective factors and needs, assess families' satisfaction with the program, and demonstrate program outcomes for families. Examples of family outcomes include significant engagement in the program, offering programs and resources to help their children develop and learn, and supporting access to desired services, programs and activities in their community.

Finally, program assessment is used to measure the quality of teaching and the learning environment. Results are used to identify program strengths, areas needing improvement, and improvement over time. Indicators of high quality service provision are used to recruit staff and families, engage new partners, and leverage new sources of public and private funding to sustain and enhance the program. Well-established measures of program quality include the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation Standards (http://www.naeyc.org), the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R; Harms, Clifford & Cryer, 1998), the Arnett Caregiver Interaction Scale (Jaeger and Funk, 2001), and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta, R. C., LaParo, K. M., & Hamre, B. K., 2008).

Ongoing assessment is a vital component of a comprehensive early child education program. High quality, results driven early childhood programs must rely on assessment to provide data. Assessment must be aligned with state standards and the adopted curriculum. All regulations of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) must be implemented for any child on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). In addition, exemplary programs set goals for school readiness. School readiness goals contain progressive benchmarks which must be monitored through assessment data. When assessment is effectively used to monitor progress ultimately student achievement and school readiness is positively impacted.

A list of research-based assessment tools that are widely used in early childhood programs can be found in Appendix E.

Program & Pedagogy

Task Force Recommendations:

> Utilize highly qualified teachers
  < Teachers with Bachelor's degrees in early childhood or equivalent fields as Lead Teachers in each classroom
> Integrate developmentally appropriate practices
> Utilize reflective supervision using the "three building blocks": reflection, regularity and collaboration
> Maintain a reflective teaching/staff practice with a focus on shared goals, commitment to growth, change and reflecting on the work
> Use an interdisciplinary team approach involving all staff and families
> Provide enhanced focus in several areas of the program:
  < Language and literacy
  < Social and emotional development
  < Problem-solving and numeracy
  < Integration of the arts
  < Multicultural literacy
  < Diversity awareness

One of the most important components of a high quality early childhood program is highly qualified teachers. Exemplary programs utilize teachers with Bachelor's degrees in early childhood education or equivalent fields as Lead Teachers in each classroom, supported by Assistant Teachers with Associate's degrees in early childhood or an equivalent field, with the support of Teacher Aides and auxiliary staff (floaters and substitutes). Supervision, mentoring and coaching are provided by Master Teachers who have advanced degrees in early childhood education.

In all aspects of their work with children, early childhood practitioners must consider these three areas of knowledge that make up "developmentally appropriate practice": "(1) ...child development and learning—knowledge of age-related characteristics that permits general predictions about what experiences are likely to best promote children's learning and development, (2) ...each child as an individual—what practitioners learn about each child that has implications for how best to adapt and be responsive to that individual variation, and (3) ...the social and cultural contexts in which children live—the values, expectations, and behavioral and linguistic conventions that shape children's lives at home and in their communities that practitioners must strive to understand in order to ensure that learning experiences in the program or school are meaningful, relevant, and respectful for each child and family (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. 9-10)."

To ensure that teaching and family support staff provides the best possible program for children and families, individual staff participate in reflective supervision. This type of supervision is based on "three building blocks": reflection, regularity and collaboration (Zero to Three, 2011). Programs implement reflective practice with a focus on shared goals, commitment to growth, change and reflecting on the work. An interdisciplinary team approach involving all staff and families provides multiple perspectives and strengthens skills (Educare, 2009).

Research demonstrates that exemplary programs provide an enhanced focus in several areas through assessment, curriculum and lesson plans, program planning, and work with families, supervision and program operations:

> Language and literacy, through adult and peer interaction, assessment, curriculum, program planning and work with families;

> Social and emotional development, through engagement with children and families, careful transition planning, proactive and positive approaches to discipline, assessment, curriculum and work with families;

> Problem-solving and numeracy throughout the program; and

> Integration of the arts (drama, dance, music, story-telling and visual arts) into the program through art experiences, partnership with community artists, and opportunities for parents, families and staff to participate in arts activities.

It is important to note that all mandates of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (PL 108-446), and particularly the preschool education provisions (Part B) must be adhered to. These laws specify policies and procedures for identifying, assessing and providing services to young children who have special needs. All Head Start organizations must adhere to these provisions and are accountable for meeting the needs of all children in a way that is both legal and ethically responsible. School districts serving preschool children with disabilities must maintain an interagency agreement with Head Start programs regarding service coordination in alignment with this agreement.

Curriculum

Task Force Recommendations:

> Make curriculum decisions that have a strong theoretical base
> Select curriculum that is designed to meet the needs of the children it serves
> Choose curriculum that is in alignment with content standards at both the state and national levels
> Choose curriculum that supports the integration of multicultural awareness
> Include the following crucial components in any curriculum choice:
>> < Literacy Knowledge and Skills
>> < English Language Development
>> < Mathematics Knowledge and Skills
>> < Science Knowledge and Skills
>> < Creative Arts Expression
>> < Logic and Reasoning
>> < Social Studies Knowledge and Skills
>> < Social and Emotional Development
>> < Physical Development and Health
>> < Technology

Quality early childhood programs have curricula that reflect best practices in early childhood education (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). The curriculum for any program must have a strong theoretical base, and must meet the needs of the children it is designed to serve. Choosing a curriculum that is best suited for the children in any program can be a daunting task. However, using the guidelines set forth by NAEYC, the Office of Head Start, the Ohio Department of Education, and the Common Core Standards ensures alignment with content standards at both the state and national levels.

The following are crucial components of curriculum for young children that should be included in the chosen curriculum. Each curricular area is followed by resources where appropriate content standards can be found. A resource list follows the references at the end of this report.

> Literacy Knowledge and Skills (NAEYC, International Reading Association)
> English Language Development (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition)
> Mathematics Knowledge and Skills (NAEYC, National Council for Teachers of Mathematics)
> Science Knowledge and Skills (NAEYC, National Science Teachers Association)
> Creative Arts Expression
> Logic and Reasoning
> Social Studies Knowledge and Skills (NAEYC, National Council for the Social Studies)
> Social and Emotional Development (NAEYC, Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning)
> Physical Development and Health (NAEYC, National Standards for Physical Education)
> Technology (NAEYC, International Society for Technology in Education)

Several exemplary curricula are widely used by Head Start programs across the country. Examples of these curricula are: High Scope (http://highscope.org/), The Creative Curriculum (Dodge, Colker, & Heroman, 2010), The Bank Street Model (http://www.trianglejr.com/) and Montessori (http://www.montessoritraining.net/curriculum). Each of these curricula is recognized by experts in early childhood education, and provides support materials to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Teacher Professional Development

Task Force Recommendations:

> Provide staffing (e.g., floaters or permanent substitutes) to support participation in professional development
> Provide support for staff pursuing related degrees
> Utilize a mentor/coaching model: hands-on training and support from Master Teachers
> Use a research-based model for teacher evaluation and effectiveness which includes:
  < Goal Setting: self-assessment and analysis of student assessment data
  < Formal observations of teacher performance
  < Evidence of communication and professionalism
  < Assessment of student growth
  < Summative evaluation of teacher effectiveness
  < Plan for professional growth

In addition to hiring well-qualified staff and providing mentoring and supervision, exemplary programs continue investing and strengthening their staff through intensive professional development. Staff members create individual plans for professional development with the support of their supervisors, and programs provide substitutes to support staff participation in these activities. Programs also provide support for staff who are pursuing degrees in early childhood or related fields. Support for both training and degree completion are important for programs to be able to move up the state's tiered quality rating system, Step Up To Quality (SUTQ). Participation in SUTQ is both a marker of quality for parents searching for programs to foster their children's learning and development, but also a requirement for programs to receive state funding in the near future (as a result of the Early Learning Challenge Grant plan) and a vehicle for programs to receive funds for quality enhancements (Ohio Department of Education, Office of Early Learning).

Many high quality Head Start programs are engaged in the mentor-coaching model of professional development (HHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB, 2002). In this model, specially trained, experienced staff or "Master Teachers" provide hands-on training and support to help teachers translate skills learned in college into best practices in the classroom.

High quality programs use research-based models for teacher evaluation and effectiveness to ensure implementation of best practices. One such model is the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) developed by the Ohio Department of Education. Recognizing that teacher quality and effectiveness is the most important school-based factor for student learning, the model outlines a professional growth plan to support and enhance teacher performance.

The OTES model components that could be adapted for Head Start are: goal setting which includes a self assessment and analysis of student data obtained through assessment aligned with standards; assessment of teacher performance based on formal observations; evidence of communication and professionalism; assessment of student growth; summative evaluation of teacher effectiveness and a plan for professional growth.

A model addressing these components would ensure that teachers are provided with goal-specific professional development reflected in their plan, monitor improved teacher performance, provide both informal and formal feedback, and use data to determine growth.

Parent, Family & Community Engagement

Task Force Recommendations:

> Engage and support parents to:
  < Promote and enhance the parent/child relationship
  < Provide parents with information about their child's growth and development, and
  < Encourage parents' involvement and advocacy in their child's education and school
> Provide family support through:
  < On-site services when access is a barrier
  < Manageable family support caseloads
> Engage in community partnerships
  < Collaboration with education, health and social service providers

High quality early childhood programs support parents in their relationships with their children and in meeting their children's needs. To ensure that parents are able to promote their young child's learning and continue their success throughout school, programs must:

1) Promote and enhance the parent/child relationship
2) Provide parents with information about their child's growth and development, and
3) Encourage parents' involvement and advocacy in their child's education and school (Educare, 2009).

Head Start programs engage parents through classroom activities, home visits, volunteering, participation in Policy Council and committees, father involvement initiatives, and numerous other strategies. Family support should be provided on-site and family support caseloads should be limited to ensure that each family receives adequate support. When all of these components combine in a high quality Head Start program, the results are a healthy child and family, which contribute to a healthy community.

Community engagement is also critical to ensure children and families receive needed services that cannot be provided on-site. As described earlier, collaboration with education, health and social service providers is necessary to provide the comprehensive services required of Head Start programs.

Health & Wellness

Task Force Recommendations:

> Collaborate with community partners to provide services that are:
> < Integrated with research
> < Interdisciplinary
> < Accountable to others
> < Designed to engage with parents
> Ensure each child has medical and dental home
> < Can reinforce program goals such as early literacy
> Provide regular screening and assessment: identify concerns early and make referrals

Although Head Start programs are required to ensure the provision of medical, dental and mental health assessments and services to enrolled children and their families, high quality programs integrate this component with research specifically by tracking health outcomes, program practices (e.g., interdisciplinary teams), cultural competence, accountability (sharing results), and engagement with parents (e.g., health advisory committees) and community collaboration.

High quality programs for young children help ensure they have a medical and dental home for receiving well-child care and treatment. Regular screening and assessment of children's vision, hearing, nutrition and health help identify concerns early and link children to additional evaluation and services.

Governance & Administration

Task Force Recommendations:

> Govern according to the structure specified in federal regulations, 45 CFR 304, Chapter 1304.50
> < Create a Board of Directors (Governing Body) with legal and fiscal responsibility for Head Start.
> < There must be a Policy Council (grantee level) and Policy Committee (delegate/ service provider level)
> Create a Limited Liability Corporation which will:
> < Establish distinct roles for grant administrator and service provider(s)
> < Be accountable for the administrative, legal and financial components of Head Start services
> < Appoint an engaged and diverse board of directors
> < Be responsible for assurance of accessibility to Head Start services and needed community resources.
> < Be responsible for assurance of safe and appropriate facilities for young children and their families

> Create a Board of Directors which will:
  < Be comprised of members with experience in organizational leadership and oversight
  < Serve as the governing body
  < Establish the mission and policies of the Head Start program
  < Hire the executive director
> Create a Policy Council which will:
  < Include parents of children enrolled in Head Start
  < Include community representatives
  < Offer opportunities for community representatives and parents to be part of shared decision making
> Employ an Executive Director who:
  < Has leadership skills
  < Is able to carry out the mission and vision of the Board of Directors
  < Is able to communicate clearly and effectively
> Choose Service Providers who will:
  < Implement exemplary programs
  < Deliver high quality early childhood and family support services
  < Produce significant, positive outcomes for children leading to school readiness
  < Implement developmentally appropriate practices

Governance Structure

The governance structure must necessarily follow federal regulations for Head Start (45 CFR 304, Chapter 1304.50), including at minimum four components: (1) a Policy Council comprised of parents of currently enrolled children and community representatives; (2) Policy Committees for each delegate agency providing Head Start services; (3) Parent Committees for each center in which children are served comprised of parents of children enrolled in those centers; and (4) a governing body with legal and fiscal responsibility for administering the Head Start program.

Limited Liability Corporation (LLC)

After analysis of various exemplary Head Start programs identified as part of the Centers of Excellence program which was established in the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, the Task Force concluded that a common theme among agencies that have achieved exemplary status is that the fiscal/administrative agent maintains independence from the service providers in order to assure objective oversight, assessment, and auditing of the Head Start services delivered to children and families.

For example, Cincinnati Head Start maintains a separation between its fiscal agent and service providers by enabling the fiscal agent (grantee) the capacity to contract out operations and services to delegates. Tulsa Community Action Project uses a model that not only contracts out operations and services, but also has distinct fiscal agents and distinct service providers. And one final example is San Francisco State University, where the university serves as the fiscal agent; however, the operations and programs are delivered by a variety of

other providers. Ultimately, while each of these programs operate differently, they all have one factor in common: each has devised an approach for separating the fiscal/administrative and service delivery functions in an effort to insure accountability for the program operators.

Recognizing that independent oversight and fiscal responsibility are inherent in the governance structures of exemplary Head Start programs across the country, the Task Force recommends a shared governance model for Toledo-Lucas County that will create distinct and separate roles for the Head Start grant administrator/fiscal agent and the Head Start service providers.

That is, the grant administrator/fiscal agent will be responsible for overseeing the administrative, legal, and fiscal aspects of all Head Start services, while the role of all selected service providers will be to implement an exemplary program model, to deliver high quality early childhood and family support services, and to produce significant, positive outcomes for children leading to school readiness.

Each of the exemplary models noted above operates somewhat differently according to the varying needs and assets available to each individual community. Having considered Lucas County's assets, the Task Force recommends a model that features both alignment of our community's assets and encourages community collaboration: a new 501(c)(3) limited liability corporation. This LLC should include multiple managing members.

To avoid conflict of interest, managing members of the LLC would ideally not be Head Start service providers. Managing members could be representatives of a city government, a county government, a university, an educational services center, or any other recognized and credible community-based organization that has the experience, talent and resources to deliver the following essentials. Managing members must have:

> the ability to impel a wide range of partnerships with organizations that have the capacity to deliver high-quality services to children and their families through collaboration with Head Start and other partners;

> the ability to support the application(s) for federal, state, local and private funding;

> the capacity to oversee the administrative, legal, accounting, educational, quality and operational functions;

> both the insight and community relationships to appoint, in cooperation with the community, an engaged and diverse Board of Directors;

> the competencies necessary to understand and respond to the knowledge, skills and dispositions of a culturally diverse population of children and families; and

> a primary mission of making the region successful.

Board of Directors

An engaged and diverse board of directors would be appointed by the LLC. The directors must not be employed by and cannot be governing board members of a Head Start service provider. Furthermore, they must have experience in organizational leadership and oversight. Ideally, each director would have some experience in at least one of the following disciplines: early childhood education, budgeting and finance, strategy and planning, evaluation and assessment, or legal affairs.

Ultimately, the managing members of the LLC will define the board members' credentials explicitly but it is the recommendation of the Task Force that board members bring diverse executive leadership experience to the governance of the Head Start program, rather than just a strong interest and an affiliation with a community organization.

The Board of Directors should anticipate meeting once a month for the first year and a minimum of four times each year thereafter. One reason for selecting managing members for the LLC that can offer talent and resources is so that the LLC itself will require minimal funding to pay for administration, thus preserving a very high percentage of the grant funding for providing services to children and families.

The Board of Directors, by resolution adopted by a majority of its members, may appoint standing or special advisory committees to perform such duties as may be assigned by the Board of Directors. Such other committees may consist of persons who are not members of the Board of Directors. These additional committees, which shall not exercise the authority of the Board of Directors, shall act in an only advisory capacity to the Board of Directors.

The initial expected advisory committees of the Board of Directors should include:
(1) Program Planning and Evaluation, (2) Budget Committee, and (3) Policy Council.

Policy Council

In addition to the Board of Directors, a Policy Council will be appointed according to the federal regulations. It will be a priority of the Board of Directors to involve community members with experience in early childhood education and parents of children receiving Head Start services in the establishment of the Policy Council.

The Policy Council will provide parents of enrolled students and representatives of community organizations the opportunity to participate in shared decision-making regarding the actions of the LLC.

Executive Director

The executive director should be someone who possesses the skills necessary to lead a complex system of service delivery to children and families. This person must also have communication skills that allow him/her to communicate effectively with others, including parents, policy makers and community representatives.

The executive director must embrace and be willing to carry out the mission and vision that is developed by the Board of Directors. He/she should have the knowledge and skills to ensure that children and families receive appropriate services.

Service Providers

According to Head Start regulations, service providers can be single entities. They may also be delegate agencies. Delegate agencies are defined as public or private nonprofit organizations or agencies to which a grantee has delegated all or part of its responsibility for operating a Head Start program (45 CFR 304, Chapter 1301.2). It is anticipated that there may be more than one service provider and/or delegate agency operating in this proposed model.

If the LLC chooses to use delegate agencies, it is recommended that a competitive selection process be used to ensure high-quality services for children and families.

A visual representation of the proposed governance structure can be found in Appendix F.

Accessibility & Facilities

In addition to the governance structure, it is important to note some key roles that administrators must fill in order to ensure a high quality program. Administrators must ensure that all components of a Head Start program are accessible to children and families. The program must have programs and policies in place that help children and families get to school every day and on time, as well as to any community resources available to meet the needs of the family. In addition, the administration must recognize the legal requirements of providing transportation to children who have special needs.

Another area that administration must be careful to address is the issue of facilities. It is important that facilities for young children meet local, state and federal guidelines for safety and healthy development. Facilities management must be an area of focus if the needs of children are to be met efficiently and effectively (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

Accountability

Task Force Recommendations:

> Provide an annual report to community regarding all aspects of the program
> Encourage enhanced communication with community
> Have a strong emphasis on transparency
> Provide for bi-annual, external, local evaluations of all program components

Exemplary Head Start programs demonstrate accountability to the families they serve, community partners, funders and the public through a variety of methods. Accountability is achieved through professionally designed, comprehensive websites that share the program's goals, approaches, outcomes, governance, services, eligibility and other information. Several exemplary programs post their annual reports, charts illustrating key outcomes for children, families and program quality, and other data in prominent places on their websites.

The Task Force identified two possible limitations of the findings of the report:

Sample Size: Due to the six-week time constraint in completing its work, the Task Force reviewed only twenty four Head Start models. Most of these models, however, were those that are nationally recognized as Centers of Excellence. The Task Force was able to conduct interviews and review data and websites to compare and identify key program components of each model.

Contextual Limitations: There could be demographic and other contextual differences such as regional poverty and unemployment rates, family income disparities, race, ethnicity and gender statistics that could cause positive outcomes occurring elsewhere to produce different results or not necessarily be a fit for the Lucas County context.

The Task Force feels that neither of these limitations should materially affect the outcomes of its findings.

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Bank Street Curriculum (http://www.trianglejr.com/)

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/)

Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc)

Early Childhood Outcomes Center (http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~eco/)

High Scope (http://highscope.org/)

International Reading Association (http://reading.org/General/Default.aspx)

International Society for Technology in Education (http://www.iste.org/welcome.aspx)

National Association for the Education of Young Children (http://www.naeyc.org/)

National Association for Sport and Physical Education (http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/)

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/)

National Council for the Social Studies (http://www.socialstudies.org/)

National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (http://www.nctm.org/)

National Science Teachers Association (http://www.nsta.org/)

North American Montessori Center (http://www.montessoritraining.net/curriculum)

Ohio Department of Education (http://www.ode.state.oh.us/)

Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (http://www.ode.state.oh.us/)

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Reverend James C. Williams III	Tabernacle of Faith Worship Center

Head Start Programs Reviewed

HHS Centers of Excellence in Early Childhood

Jefferson County Committee for Economic Opportunity – Birmingham, AL

Clayton Educare Early Head Start – Denver, CO

Audubon Area Community Services, Inc. - Owensboro, KY

YMCA of Central Maryland – Baltimore, MD

Baraga-Houghton-Keweenaw Child Development Board, Inc. - Houghton, MI

The Enola Group – Morganton, NC

Youth Development, Inc. – Albuquerque, NM

Community Action Project of Tulsa County (CAP) – Tulsa, OK

Little Dixie Community Action – Hugo, OK

Diocese of Mayaguez – Mayaguez, PR

City of Chattanooga, Human Services – Chattanooga, TN

HHS Additional Centers of Excellence in Early Childhood

Central California Migrant Head Start – Modesto, CA

Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc. – Marshalltown, IA

Project NOW, Inc. – Rock Island, IL

Pueblo Laguna, Department of Education – Laguna, NM

Board of Regents, obo University of Nevada – Reno, NV

Westchester Community Opportunity Program (WestCOP), Inc. – Elmsford, NY

Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. – Dunkirk, NY

Knox County Head Start – Mount Vernon, OH

Private Industry Council of Westmoreland & Fayette, Inc. – Greensburg, PA

Additional Programs

Cincinnati Head Start – Cincinnati, OH

San Francisco State University – San Francisco, CA

Model Interview Questions

1. What is your organizational structure?

   a. Non-profit, for-profit, government agency, other:
   b. Board role (advisory or governing) & composition:
   c. Will share organizational chart?   Yes   No

2. How is the program funded? What percentage of total funding comes from each source?

   Federal HHS: Federal (other):   State gov: Local (county/city) gov:

   Foundations: Corporations: Other:

3. Who provides and maintains the program's facilities?

4. What tools are used to assess children's developmental progress? How often are the tools used to assess progress?

5. (If the program reports positive outcomes) What do you think accounts for children's progress?

6. How many children are enrolled in your Head Start program?

7. What are the demographic characteristics of the children/families in your program?

8. How many partnerships do you have in total? _____

   In the following categories:

   _____ Public schools

   _____ Childcare centers/homes

   _____ Health care providers (medical, dental, mental health)

   _____ Social service providers

   _____ Other (please list/describe)

9. What are the qualifications of teachers?

10. What percent of teachers have AA degrees?   BA degrees?

11. What is the pay range or starting salary for teachers?

12. Are staff members of unions?

Reviewer comments:

Theoretical Framework

Research-Based Assessment Tools

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING				
Instrument	**Publisher**	**Purpose**	**Age Range**	**Languages**
Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3)	Brookes Publishing Co.	Screen young children for development delays	1-66 months	Eng, Spanish, French, Korean
Ages & Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional (ASQ-SE)	Brookes Publishing Co.	Screen young children for social-emotional delays/behavioral concerns	6-60 months	Eng, Spanish, French, Korean
Battelle Development Inventory Screening Test	Brookes Publishing Co.	Screen young children for development delays	Birth - 8 years	Eng, Spanish
Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS)	PEDSTest.com, LLC	Screen young children for development delays	Birth - 8 years	English, Spanish; forms translated in 13 other languages
Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status - Developmental Milestones (PEDS-DM)	PEDSTest.com, LLC	Screen young children for development milestones	Birth - 8 years	Eng, Spanish
CHILD ASSESSMENT				
The Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming Systems (AEPS), Second Ed.	Brookes Publishing Co.	Identify children's strengths and goals, plan intervention, monitor progress	3-6 years	Eng, Spanish, French, Korean
Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum	Teaching Strategies	Assess child progress and guide curriculum planning	3-5 years	Eng, Spanish
High/Scope Preschool Child Observation Record (COR), Second Ed.	High/Scope Press	Document children's growth over time based on anecdotes and child creations	2.5 - 6 years	Eng, Spanish*
FAMILY ASSESSMENT				
Family Outcomes Survey	Early Childhood Outcomes Center	Measure program outcomes for families whose children have special needs and those with typically developing children	Parents of children birth - 5 years	Eng, Spanish
Routines Based Interview	Siskin Children's Institute, R.A. McWilliams	Assess child's engagement, social relationships and independence within routines, family's satisfaction with home routines, and teacher's perception of fit of classroom routines with child's interests and abilities	Parents of children birth - 5 years	English
PROGRAM ASSESSMENT				
Arnett Caregiver Interaction Scale	None. Copy in Jaeger and Funk (2001)	Assesses quality and content of teachers' interactions with children	Early childhood classrooms	English
Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS Pre-K)	Brookes Publishing Co.	Observation tool that assesses teacher-child interactions that support children's learning and development	Preschool classrooms	English
Early Childhod Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)	Teachers College Press	Assess group programs on 7 environment scales through observation and report	Preschool classrooms (ages 2.5- 5)	English**
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation Standards	NAEYC	Assess program quality for national accreditation through multiple methods	Early childhood classrooms	English

*Family forms available in Spanish with on-line version   ** Contact author for information on official translations

Proposed Governance Structure

Limited Liability Corporation

> Grant administrator/fiscal agent

> Multiple managing members that are not service providers

Board of Directors

> Ideally, are not employed by and are not governing board members of a service provider

> Have experience in an identified subject area

> Have executive leadership experience

Policy Council

> Include parents and community members

> Participate in shared decision making

Executive Director

> Has the knowledge and skills to ensure the provision of high quality services

Service Providers

> Deliver high quality programs

> Produce positive outcomes for children