

KANSAS: EARLY HEAD START INITIATIVE

DECEMBER 2012

SUMMARY

Kansas Early Head Start (KEHS) provides comprehensive services following federal Head Start Program Performance Standards for pregnant women and eligible families with children from birth to age 4. KEHS was implemented in 1998 using Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) quality set-aside dollars augmented by a transfer of federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds. The initiative was designed to improve the availability and quality of child care for infants and toddlers in Kansas. KEHS also works to increase the number of infant/toddler child care slots in communities and partners with existing community-based child care to improve the quality of care available for infants and toddlers. All KEHS child care provider partners must meet both Kansas child care licensing and federal Head Start Program Performance Standards, as specified in a Memorandum of Agreement/Understanding.

KANSAS' APPROACH TO BUILDING ON EHS

- Increase the capacity of existing Head Start and EHS programs to serve additional children and pregnant women.
- Develop partnerships between EHS and community-based child care providers to improve the quality of child care.

STATE PROGRAM

What is the eligibility for children and their families?

- **FAMILY INCOME:** Grantees may serve up to 35 percent of their enrollment with children whose family incomes are between 100-135 percent of the Federal Poverty Level if grantees can demonstrate that children below 100 percent of poverty are already being served.
- **PARENTAL WORK STATUS:** Parent must be employed, attending school, or in job training to access the KEHS child care model. If family work status changes to unemployed, children may be moved to the home-based model.
- **CHILD AGE:** Birth to age 4
- **OTHER RISK FACTORS:** Per the Head Start Program Performance Standards, 10 percent of enrollment must be for children with disabilities. In addition, programs must maintain a priority selection criteria grid (as required of federal Head Start grantees), which is used to determine the children/families with the highest need or risk factors. The selection criteria are based on a community needs assessment completed every three years and updated annually by the grantee. Children are selected for enrollment using this grid. Children who are not identified as having the highest risk factors may be placed on a waiting list if all EHS slots are filled at the time of their application.

- **LENGTH OF ELIGIBILITY:** A child who is eligible for KEHS at enrollment is eligible until he/she exits the program, regardless of changes in parental work activity; if the parent(s) become unemployed, the child is moved to the home-based model. Family needs are always considered in KEHS, and some families move back and forth between home-based and center-based EHS.
- **EXPECTANT MOTHERS SERVED:** Yes

Who are the eligible providers?

- Federal Head Start grantees
- Federal Early Head Start grantees

Is there a co-pay?

- No co-pay required

What are the program standards?

- **FEDERAL HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS REQUIRED?** Yes, for KEHS grantees and child care partners.
- **ARE THERE ADDITIONAL STATE STANDARDS?** State child care licensing. KEHS programs are required to make a monthly home visit with parents and a monthly child observation when a child is in child care.

NUMBER SERVED BY STATE INITIATIVE

1,000 children birth to age 4 and expectant mothers were served in FY 2012

NUMBER SERVED BY FEDERALLY FUNDED EARLY HEAD START

Federally funded EHS served 4,133 children birth to age 3 and expectant mothers (according to federal Program Information Report data for 2011).



Do other children besides those enrolled in the EHS model benefit when services are delivered in child care settings?

Only children enrolled in KEHS or in partnering child care providers receive KEHS services. However, there are approximately 2,000 children in partnering child care centers who are not directly enrolled in KEHS, but benefit because these programs are required to meet Head Start Program Performance Standards.

What is the length of the day/year?

Services are offered year round. The majority of programs operate or collaborate to offer child care services between six and eight hours a day. Home-based services are weekly and offered year round.

FUNDING AND SUPPORTS

What are the funding sources and budget for FY 2012?

Kansas made \$9.9 million available in FY 2012, including: \$9,917,587 from CCDBG quality set-aside and \$61,259 in Children's Initiative Funds from tobacco settlement funding.

What support and technical assistance does the state offer?

The Kansas Early Head Start Manager completes a yearly site visit with every KEHS program and facilitates a meeting with all KEHS directors/administrators 6 times per year.

KEHS works with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Region VII office, which provides technical assistance to the state grantees. Federally funded staff (contracted through ICF) provide technical assistance in-person or over the phone. They help grantees develop a training plan, write agreements with child care agencies, and perform their community needs assessment. Each grantee must have a training and professional development plan, which is submitted to the TA specialist and approved by the Region VII ACF office. The TA varies based on the need of each grantee and includes some professional development.

What incentives are there for child care providers to participate?

Incentives vary from program to program. Some programs have money available to provide mini-grants to child care providers to raise quality within the child care provider environment, enhanced rates for EHS slots in the child care partner setting, or support for training and professional development for partnering providers (including CDA classes and fees). Children who receive care in partnering programs receive the same comprehensive services meeting federal Head Start Program Performance Standards, so there is also the incentive that additional health and family support services will be available for the children and families that child care providers serve. For example, in some child care facilities, all children, not just the EHS children receiving child care from this provider, receive an individualized "portfolio" that could include medical and developmental screenings and observations.

GOVERNANCE AND COORDINATION

What state agency administers the funding for this initiative?

The Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF), formerly known as the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Service (SRS)



How does funding flow to local providers?

Funding flows from the Kansas Department for Children and Families to KEHS agencies through a continuation grant application completed on an annual basis. Local grantees are responsible for developing agreements and/or contracts with community-based child care providers and providing payment to them according to the terms of these agreements/contracts.

Can a child in the state initiatives also have a child care subsidy?

Generally children in KEHS are not eligible for child care subsidies. However, a few years ago, some KEHS grantees reported that families were exiting the program because they needed child care (most of these families had enrolled in the EHS home-based option and then progressed to meet their self-sufficiency goals by obtaining employment). SRS granted an exception to avoid losing families and allowed a subset of families to access child care subsidy.

Does the state coordinate with federally funded Head Start agencies to conduct any of the activities?

The federally funded staff at the ACF Region VII Office provide consultation on which existing federal Head Start programs to fund with new KEHS funds. KEHS works with the ACF Region VII office, which provides technical assistance to the state grantees. All KEHS grantees undergo the federal review process every 3 years. If the KEHS grantee delivers the center-based option with child care partners, these child care partners could be picked for on-site federal review during that process.

Does the state coordinate with the Head Start-State Collaboration Office to conduct activities?

The Head Start-State Collaboration Office is located within the Kansas Department of Children and Families office, and the director helps with selecting new KEHS programs and planning the initiative.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

What state agencies are responsible for monitoring, and how often is on-site monitoring conducted in a year?

The Kansas Department of Children and Families conducts an annual site visit and may visit more often as needed. Programs that are required to be licensed receive an annual visit from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment as well.

Are there specific measurement tools used to monitor services provided?

Partnering child care providers are monitored by KEHS grantees using the appropriate version of the Environmental Rating Scales (ECERS, ITERS, or FDCRS). KEHS grantees use a variety of assessment tools with participating families and children to determine progress, which reflects program success. These include the HOME Inventory, ASQ3, ASQ-SE, the Protective Factors Survey, and other approved assessment tools. Outcomes are reported quarterly to the Kansas Department of Children and Families.

Are programs monitored by federal agencies?

Currently all federally funded Head Start programs are monitored by the Office of Head Start every 3 years using the federal review process. KEHS programs that receive federal technical assistance monies also go through a federal review every 3 years.

Has the state evaluated the effectiveness of the state EHS initiative?

Since 2002, the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (now DCF) has collected a set of outcomes from all KEHS sites on a quarterly basis, including teacher education levels and professional development activities, parent employment and school attendance, HOME Inventory scores, and children's developmental progress. The HOME Inventory is used to assess the impact of KEHS participation on the family environment, as are the Parents as Teachers milestones. An evaluation of one KEHS program by the MDRC was started in 2007.

In 2011, through SRS, the Kansas Head Start Association (KHSa) received an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant to continue the work started in the 2007 KEHS evaluation project.

The KHSa project was a statewide continuous improvement planning process for KEHS programs. The purpose of the grant was to align KEHS outcomes with Head Start and other state and national early learning outcomes. The development of a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan for KEHS was guided and directed by a statewide advisory committee. This committee was designed to represent program directors and teachers from KEHS programs, parents, Kansas universities, SRS, and related statewide associations and early childhood programs.

Are state funded programs required to report data to the state?

The Kansas Department for Children and Families monitors grantees on a quarterly and yearly basis. Each quarter, programs must submit a report that includes numbers of children, families, and pregnant women served in different program options. They also have the opportunity to identify challenges and technical assistance needs. KEHS programs also submit quarterly outcomes reports on expenditures, as well as services provided and measurements of progress in several key areas, including child development, health of pregnant women, quality of early care setting, and teacher education.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Interviewed in 2008 for original profile - [Mary Weathers](mailto:Mary.Weathers@srs.ks.gov) (Mary.Weathers@srs.ks.gov), EHS/HS Program Manager, Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services; May 2007 (updated April 2008)
- Interviewed in 2011 for updated profile - [Carrie Hastings](mailto:Carrie.Hastings@srs.ks.gov) (Carrie.Hastings@srs.ks.gov), EHS/HS Services & Access Program Managers; April 2012

ONLINE INFORMATION

- The Kansas Head Start Association maintains a website with a [map of locations](#).
- The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) has developed a [profile of KEHS](#) as part of a study and report entitled *Starting Off Right: Promoting Child Development from Birth in State Early Care and Education Initiatives* (2006).
- The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) has individual [state profiles](#) analyzing the Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) data from 2010.

AUTHORS: CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY (CLASP) AND ZERO TO THREE

This profile was updated in 2012. An earlier version was written in 2008 as part of the report, *Building on the Promise: State Initiatives to Expand Access to Early Head Start and their Families*.

CLASP develops and advocates for policies at the federal, state, and local levels that improve the lives of low-income people, focusing on policies that strengthen families and create pathways to education and work.

ZERO TO THREE is a national, nonprofit organization that informs, trains, and supports professionals, policymakers, and parents in their efforts to improve the lives of infants and toddlers.



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