



Webinar: Disparate Access - Head Start and CCDBG Data by Race and Ethnicity

Follow-Up Q&A

This document provides answers to questions received during the March 10th webinar on CLASP's Disparate Access Report. Please note that due to a technical error, we were unable to download all of the questions received. If you had a question that is not answered below, or would like additional follow-up, please contact Stephanie Schmit at sschmit@clasp.org or Christina Walker at cwalker@clasp.org.

Q. Have any of the solutions been discussed with the families who are not served?

A. One of our next steps is to engage diverse organizations and communities in discussing the issues raised by the data and possible solutions. We encourage others to do the same in their states and communities.

Q. Were 5 year olds included when determining the number of children eligible for Head Start?

A. Five year olds were not included as we were focused on the age of the child at enrollment – typically children ages 3 and 4 and because Head Start serves a small number of 5 year olds (1.4% of the Head Start preschool population).

Q. Are the US citizen children of undocumented parents eligible for CCDBG services, assuming the parent or parents are both working?

A. Yes. Federal law establishes that eligibility for CCDBG is based on the child's immigration or citizenship status.

Q. How did you calculate race specific to Head Start ages using ACS data?

A. Public use microdata sets (PUMS), available on the Census DataFerrett website, allow users to look at individual level data, which is what we used to calculate specific ages and poverty thresholds by race.

Q. Could you provide clarification on why you selected 175 percent of the federal poverty level, rather than state income eligibility criteria, for the CCDBG analysis?

A. The pool of potentially eligible children for CCDBG was defined as children under age 13 at or below 175 percent of poverty with both parents working (if in a two-parent family) or the only parent working (if in a one-parent family). Federal income eligibility for CCDBG is 85 percent SMI, or approximately 273 percent of poverty for a family of 4, although this varies dramatically across states. In practice, states set income eligibility far below this level. Using federal income parameters would result in a larger pool of eligible children and would mask differences across race/ethnicity because many fewer eligible children would be served across all groups. Alternatively, an analysis using precise state income parameters (which are generally low across the board) would significantly underestimate the share of low-income children with working parents who need help paying for child care but are restricted by states from

getting any help. We chose 175 percent of poverty, which was the median state income eligibility level in 2014, as a midpoint. We anticipate in our next steps doing state-specific analyses that include state and federal income eligibility criteria.

Q. With only 43% of eligible children being served in Head Start preschool, is it primarily a HS funding issue, licensed capacity issue or enrollment issue?

A. While this paper does not address the causes of differences in access, we know that Head Start funding levels do not provide sufficient funds to serve all eligible children. In FY 2015, federal Head Start funding was \$8.6 billion; funded enrollment was 949,263 “slots” for children and pregnant women. This number is a fraction of the country’s total number of poor pregnant women and young children eligible for Head Start.

Q. Is it postulated that the low numbers are due to poor outreach in these communities?

A. This analysis alone cannot determine causation for disparate rates of access. Outreach may be one of the factors, but there are likely many others that contribute to the data findings in this paper. Head Start programs conduct community needs assessments and conduct outreach to eligible children and families. In CCDBG, there is often little outreach due to capped funding and the existence of wait lists. Our early hypothesis suggest that additional state policy decisions beyond outreach also impact disparate rates of access across racial/ethnic groups. Furthermore, federal funding has not kept pace with changing demographics, so fast-growing states with areas with new populations may not have the additional resources needed to serve these additional children.

Q: How did your analysis address the fact that there are two funding streams states receive for child care under the Child Care Development Fund?

A: States receive federal mandatory and discretionary funds for child care assistance; however, they are both commonly referred to as the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) or Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). The administrative data used in the report is state-reported data on children served in CCDBG or CCDF-funded child care, which includes all federal and state funding streams (and transfers to CCDBG from the TANF block grant).

Q: Are programs limiting funding in areas of lower family income or perception that poorer areas aren't working thus no need for child care or early learning programs?

A: Both Head Start and CCDBG’s target populations are poor and low-income families. Head Start funding is based on a needs assessment of where children who are poor live with services targeted to those areas. CCDBG is predominantly voucher-based and funding is not targeted to particular communities.

For more information, go to [Disparate Access: Head Start and CCDBG Data by Race and Ethnicity](#).