

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDU-
CATION: IMPROVEMENT
THROUGH INTEGRATION**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

AND THE WORKFORCE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: IMPROVEMENT THROUGH INTEGRATION

Thursday, April 21, 2005

U.S. House of Representatives

Subcommittee on Education Reform

Committee on Education and the Workforce

Washington, DC

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in room 2175. Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Mike Castle [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Castle, Osborne, Ehlers, Kuhl, Woolsey, Hinojosa, Kind, Kucinich, and Davis of California.

Ex officio present: Representative Boehner.

Also present: Representative Holt.

Staff present: Amanda Farris, Professional Staff Member; Jessica Gross, Legislative Assistant; Kate Houston, Professional Staff Member; Alexa Marrero, Press Secretary; Deborah Emerson Samantar, Committee Clerk/Intern Coordinator, Rich Stombres, Assistant Director of Education and Human Resources Policy; Ruth Friedman, Minority Legislative Associate/Education; Lloyd Horwich, Minority Legislative Associate/Education; Ricardo Martinez, Minority Legislative Associate/Education; Joe Novotny, Minority Legislative Assistant/Education; and Mark Zuckerman, Minority General Counsel.

Chairman CASTLE. The Subcommittee on Education Reform of the Committee of Education and the Workforce will come to order.

We are meeting today to hear testimony on “Early Childhood Education: Improvement through Integration.” Under Committee Rule 12(b), opening statements are limited to the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member of the Subcommittee, Ms. Woolsey. Therefore, if other Members have statements, they may be included in the hearing record. With that, I ask unanimous consent for the hearing record to remain open 14 days to allow Member statements and other extraneous material referenced during the hearing to be submitted in the official hearing record. Without objection, so ordered.

STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE, CHAIRMAN, SUB-COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

Chairman CASTLE. Good morning to our witnesses who are here today and to everybody in the audience, and thank you for joining us today for a hearing on "Early Childhood Education: Improvement through Integration." As Congress prepares to strengthen and reauthorize the Head Start program, one of our chief goals is to remove barriers that may impede the successful integration of Head Start with other programs that serve to prepare disadvantaged children for success.

When Head Start was created in 1965, it represented the first coordinated effort to target early childhood health, developmental, and educational services to disadvantaged children and families. For many years, Head Start was the only opportunity many of these children had to get the head start they needed to succeed in school and in their future.

Head Start is a successful program that has made great strides in preparing disadvantaged three and 4-year-olds for school. Head Start programs provide comprehensive services, such as nutrition, dental screening, parental involvement, and, importantly, the school readiness skills that can help prepare children for kindergarten.

We know that a readiness gap persists between Head Start children and their peers, and that is something we intend to address during the reauthorization. However, the larger goals of the program are sound, and we intend to build upon that foundation to make Head Start stronger.

The topic of today's hearing is how early childhood programs can be improved through integration. I mentioned earlier that when Head Start was created in 1965, it was largely the only early childhood program available. That is not the case today. About 40 states have established some form of early childhood education because states recognize that these services can make a real difference in preparing children for a successful future. Various local initiatives have also been launched and today disadvantaged children and families have access to programs and services from a wide range of sources.

Some of these programs rival or exceed the quality of Head Start, while others fall short. Head Start is no longer the only option for early childhood education and we must ensure that all children are receiving the same quality education. In this new era, Head Start should be working toward integrating services with other school readiness programs and not competing against them.

Last week, we heard from some successful Head Start programs that have found ways to integrate Head Start with other early childhood programs. Today, we are going to look at that concept more closely. We are going to ask what barriers exist that prevent effective coordination and integration among programs, and what steps can be taken at the Federal level to allow Head Start to make the most of other early childhood programs that share the same goals.

In the last Congress, this Committee passed a bill that sought to adjust this need. But many of my colleagues and I acknowledge

that there were concerns about our approach. For this reason, Chairman Boehner and I have pledged to solicit additional input and consider alternative strategies for adjusting the inefficiencies, gaps, and overlap in services and inconsistent quality that often results when bifurcated systems exist.

In short, we remain committed to the goal of improved program coordination but are open to alternate routes to that goal so long as they are effective.

Early childhood education is essential to overcoming the school readiness gap and preparing disadvantaged children for success. We believe Head Start could be made stronger for the children and families it serves if we allow Head Start to work in conjunction with other effective programs. Today, I hope we learn more about how this can become reality.

I thank the witnesses for joining us today, and I look forward to your testimony. I will now yield to the gentlelady from California, the Ranking Minority Member of this Committee, Representative Woolsey.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Castle follows:]

Statement of Hon. Michael N. Castle, Chairman, Subcommittee on Education Reform, Committee on Education and the Workforce

Good morning, and thank you for joining us today for a hearing on "Early Childhood Education: Improvement Through Integration." As Congress prepares to strengthen and reauthorize the Head Start program, one of our chief goals is to remove barriers that may impede the successful integration of Head Start with other programs that serve to prepare disadvantaged children for success.

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About 40 states have established some form of early childhood education, because states recognize that these services can make a real difference in preparing children for a successful future. Various local initiatives have also been launched, and today, disadvantaged children and families have access to programs and services from a wide range of sources. Some of these programs rival or exceed the quality of Head Start, while others fall short. Head Start is no longer the only option for early childhood education, and we must ensure that all children are receiving the same quality education. In this new era, Head Start should be working towards integrating services with other school readiness programs, not competing against them.

Last week, we heard from some successful Head Start programs that have found ways to integrate Head Start with other early childhood programs. Today, we're going to look at that concept more closely. We're going to ask what barriers exist that prevent effective coordination and integration among programs, and what steps can be taken at the federal level to allow Head Start to make the most of other early childhood programs that share the same goals.

In the last Congress, this Committee passed a bill that sought to address this need, but many of my colleagues and I acknowledge that there were concerns about our approach. For this reason, Chairman Boehner and I have pledged to solicit addi-

tional input and consider alternative strategies for addressing the inefficiencies, gaps and overlap in services, and inconsistent quality that often results when bifurcated systems exist. In short, we remain committed to the goal of improved program coordination, but are open to alternate routes to that goal so long as they are effective.

Early childhood education is essential to overcoming the school readiness gap and preparing disadvantaged children for success. We believe Head Start can be made stronger for the children and families it serves if we allow Head Start to work in conjunction with other effective programs. Today, I hope we learn more about how that can become a reality.

I thank the witnesses for joining us today, and I look forward to hearing your testimony. I will now yield to the gentle lady from California, the ranking minority member of this subcommittee, Rep. Woolsey.

**STATEMENT OF HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY, RANKING MEMBER,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE**

Ms. WOOLSEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. In the past, October has always been Head Start Awareness Month, but given that this is the third Head Start hearing we have had in 4 weeks, I think we might be trying to change the month to April.

Chairman CASTLE. Is that a motion?

Ms. WOOLSEY. Well, today's topic is so critical and it is part of what we know to be so important, which is Head Start. And coordination and collaboration among Head Start and other early childhood programs is essential to our children receiving the services they need in order to succeed in school and in life.

Because I strongly support both Head Start and universal preschool, I strongly support Head Start's coordination and collaboration requirements. For example, Head Start grantees must coordinate with their local education agencies to ensure a smooth transition between Head Start and kindergarten. Head Start also funds Head Start state collaboration offices in each state. These offices are successfully facilitating coordination of Head Start services with other Federal and state services to create an early childhood care and education system. They are required to ensure that Head Start services are coordinated with health care, welfare, childcare, education, and community service activities, family literacy services, services for children with disabilities and services for homeless children, not a small task. And I am pleased that a number of our witness will testify today on how well these requirements are being implemented in the field.

I am also interested in hearing from all of you on how we could make coordination and collaboration work even better. But it is critical that we not allow flexibility to coordinate and collaborate to be a proxy for waiving or lowering standards. And because I am as straightforward as I am, we do not need this to lead us into block granting.

Head Start has served for our most vulnerable children and families so well for 40 years because the standards have remained high and they have remained comprehensive. We would do these children and their families a great disservice by moving away from those high standards. And we know that the great majority of Head Start programs are successful now without block granting and would not gain but lose under a block granting environment.

And, it is important to remember that another way that we can improve on our early childhood education system is to increase Federal support for a proven program, such as Head Start. In other words, if we are going to talk it, let's support it and let's make sure that we give the Head Start program what they need because in recent years we have not done a good job of that. We have barely kept up with inflation even though we only serve about half of the eligible 4-year-olds.

At other hearings we have talked about the need for accountability in Head Start. I think we need to hold ourselves accountable as well.

So, again, Mr. Chairman, I hope that we will be able to move forward together to reauthorize Head Start, and I look forward to hearing from our panel of experts. Thank you very much for coming.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Woolsey follows:]

Statement of Hon. Lynn C. Woolsey, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Education Reform, Committee on Education and the Workforce

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing.

In the past, October always has been Head Start Awareness Month, but given that this is the third Head Start hearing we've had in four weeks, I think you might be trying to change that to April.

Today's topic is a critical one.

Coordination and collaboration among Head Start and other early childhood programs is essential to our children receiving the services they need to help them succeed in school and in life.

Because I strongly support both Head Start and universal preschool, I strongly support Head Start's coordination and collaboration requirements.

For example, Head Start grantees must coordinate with their local educational agency to ensure a smooth transition between Head Start and kindergarten.

Head Start also funds Head Start-State Collaboration Offices in each state.

These offices facilitate coordination of Head Start services with other federal and state services to create an early childhood care and education system.

They are required to ensure that Head Start services are coordinated with health care, welfare, child care, education, and community service activities, family literacy services, services for children with disabilities, and services for homeless children.

So, I am very pleased that a number of our witnesses will testify to how well these requirements are being implemented in the field.

I also am interested in hearing how we can make coordination and collaboration work even better.

But, it is critical that we not allow flexibility to coordinate and collaborate to be a proxy for waiving or lowering standards.

Head Start has served our most vulnerable children and families so well for 40 years because its standards have remained both high and comprehensive.

We would do those children and families a great disservice by moving away from those standards.

It also is important to remember that another way that we can improve our early childhood education system is to increase federal support for proven programs such as Head Start.

In recent years, Congress has not done a good job of that. We have barely kept up with inflation, even though we only serve about half of the eligible four-year olds.

At other hearings, we have talked about the need for accountability in Head Start, and I think we need to hold ourselves accountable as well.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I hope that we will be able to move forward together to reauthorize Head Start, and I look forward to hearing from our panel.

Thank you.

Chairman CASTLE. Thank you, Ms. Woolsey. We do have a very distinguished panel of witnesses. And I am going to read the intro-

ductions of each of you and then we will turn to you for your statements. We will start, obviously, and go across the line.

Marsha H. Moore is the commissioner of Georgia's Department of Early Care and Learning, known as Bright Start. Ms. Moore has worked 23 years in state government posts, including positions with the Department of Family and Children Services in the Department of Human Resources. As commissioner, Ms. Moore oversees an annual budget of over \$400 million and manages state programs to improve the quality of Georgia's early care and education system. She has worked closely with Governors' offices and legislators in other states, sharing Georgia's experience in implementing the largest pre-kindergarten program in the country. Ms. Moore received her Master of Public Administration degree from North Carolina College and State University.

Jeffrey Alexander is the assistant head start director for the Big Five Community Services, Inc. located in Durant, Oklahoma and serves as president of the Oklahoma Head Start Association. Mr. Alexander has worked to integrate classrooms for Head Start in Oklahoma's pre-kindergarten program, which is one of the largest voluntary universal school readiness programs in the United States. He is a member of the Durant Literacy Council board of directors and the Durant Jaycees. Mr. Alexander earned his bachelor of science degree in accounting and business administration from Southeastern Oklahoma State University. And has a master's degree in business from the Oklahoma City University.

Dr. W. Steven Barnett is a professor of education and economics policy and director of the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University. He is an authority on the topic of early education. His work includes research on state pre-kindergarten programs, the educational opportunities and experiences of young children in low-income urban areas, the long-term effects of preschool programs on children's learning and development, and benefit cost analysis of preschool programs and their long-term effects. Dr. Barnett earned his Ph.D. in economics at the University of Michigan.

And Dr. Richard M. Clifford is a senior scientist with the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a leading expert in early childhood policy. He is nationally known for his work in assessing the quality of early educational settings, pre-kindergarten program design and functioning, service delivery and program financing and personnel preparation. Dr. Clifford is the co-director of the National Pre-Kindergarten Center and served as principal investigator of a large-scale study of pre-kindergarten programs in six states supported by the U.S. Department of Education.

Helen Blank is the director of Leadership and Public Policy at the National Women's Law Center where she works to expand support for early care and educational experiences for children from low-income families. Previously, Ms. Blank served 24 years as the director of the Childcare and Development Division at the Children's Defense Fund. Ms. Blank has developed and led multiple campaigns to protect and expand public investment in child welfare programs, including Childcare Now, an ongoing initiative to focus attention on early care and education. Ms. Blank has authored and

co-authored numerous articles and studies on child care policies, including Working Together for Children, Head Start, and Childcare Partnerships, Seeds of Success, pre-kindergarten initiatives, and state developments in childcare and early education.

Before the witnesses begin, I would like to remind the Members that we will be asking questions after the entire panel has testified. In addition, Committee Rule 2 imposes a 5-minute limit on all questions.

I think all of you understand the light system, which you have in front of you there. Green for 4 minutes, yellow for a minute, and when you see the red, start winding down or wind down.

And with that, we welcome all of you and we look forward to your testimony. We will just go right down the row, and we will start with Ms. Moore.

Can you turn on your microphone? I think you have to hit a button there in the front and maybe get it a little bit nearer to you, too, so everybody in the room can hear. Thanks so much. It is funny, I have mine off and it is still on. There is something wrong with the system right now.

[Recess.]

Chairman CASTLE. We are back to the beginning, and I apologize. We will not penalize you, you will have your full time. And we do appreciate all of you being here, and with that, we will proceed.

Ms. Moore.

STATEMENT OF MARSHA H. MOORE, COMMISSIONER, GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CARE AND LEARNING, ATLANTA, GA

Ms. MOORE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the Members of the Subcommittee. On behalf of Governor Sonny Perdue and the State of Georgia, I thank the Members of this Committee for allowing me to come to speak to you and to testify and have an opportunity to answer some of your questions.

In 2004, Georgia took a significant step in approving the early care and education system in our state by creating a new state department named Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. The purpose of the department was to streamline funds and resources and to improve the early care and education in our state. We also look at it by putting an emphasis in the system on education and parents involvement. And the goal is of course to prepare our children for school.

Georgia's nationally acclaimed and research-based, lottery-funded universal pre-K program for 4-year-old children is one of the premier parts of our organization. The organization now also licenses all childcare facilities in the state, we administer the Federal food programs, we house the office of the department—the collaboration office for Head Start, we administer funds, the quality funds that come to the state to improve the quality of early care and education in our state, and we fund and provide support and oversight of the resource and referral agencies that are strategically placed throughout the state of Georgia. Another component which we are beginning, we will be starting to do in July will be the Even Start Early Literacy Program.

Georgia has a very long and extensive program and a meaningful relationship with Head Start programs in our state where both programs have benefited mutually. For 11 years, Georgia Pre-K Program has worked closely with Head Start in blending our funds and resources to increase the number of children who have received high-quality pre-k programs in our state. We have also blended our funds to ensure that our staff receive high-quality training and professional development.

Even though we have had a great and wonderful 11 years of this, we do acknowledge that there are some challenges that the state of Georgia will have to face and will face in working with the integration of Head Start programs within our system. I am going to discuss briefly some of these challenges and how we are working toward the successful integration of the programs and will be happy to give some recommendations to Congress after that.

Georgia's Pre-K Program and the Head Start Programs differ in the governance structure. Head Start is governed by a local entity, policy councils, and board of directors whereby parents take a very active role in the governance of the program. Georgia Pre-K Program is governed on the state level, through contractual agreements with our providers of the Pre-K Program. However, parent participation is an important element of both of these programs.

In Georgia, parents have a choice of where they would like to place their pre-K child in a pre-K program. They also have a choice of volunteering, they are able to volunteer, have parent conferences, and work closely with the program. State funding in Georgia follows the child and not the program.

There are also differences in the program's standards in Pre-K and Head Start, both programs recognize the same elements of school readiness. Pre-K also, their curriculum is aligned, the instructional part is aligned with the Head Start standards. However, there are differences in the extent of the comprehensive services that Head Start provides their children and what Pre-K does in our state. There are also differences in the staff/child ratios.

However, when we do blend our funds with Head Start and Pre-K we ensure that the Pre-K guidelines are met and we honor the Head Start performance standards as well and ensure those standards are followed and those programs we are funding is blended.

In Georgia, there is a difference between Head Start and the monitoring system in the Pre-K program. In Pre-K we receive a visit, a site visit two times a year. For Head Start in Georgia, it is one site visit every 3 years with of course self-assessments given every year. The difference is that we have discovered in Georgia that research is telling us that the intensive monitoring system that we have in our Georgia Pre-K Program has a lot of influence on the success of our children, the outcomes of our children, and the strong curriculum part of the program and the environment, the high-quality of environments in our program. That creates an issue because with Pre-K there is this high level of monitoring, in Head Start there hasn't been quite as much. And if there is the integration of these two programs, it is very important that Georgia will be allowed to give an oversight, a comprehensive oversight of the Head Start system so that we can ensure program compliance and the quality of each of the programs that are delivered.

In Georgia, we are serving right now 71,500 pre-K 4-year-old children. And with this high number we realize with the integration of Head Start into our state that there will be an opportunity for Head Start programs to change the focus of serving four- and 3-year-olds to serving more 3 year olds in our state. With that opportunity, we will have more 3-year-olds in Georgia participating in a high-quality program. And that is definitely a benefit. But it will be something that we will have to make adjustments to.

We also must deal with multiple funding streams and how we meet both of those funding stream requirements and there is going to be a challenge of the changing belief systems in both of those programs and there will be some resistance, and we recognize that.

But I would like to leave with a couple of recommendations to the Congress, if I may. First of all is to require the states to work toward a seamless early care and education system that is beneficial to all. And we also recommend that the Congress—that states receiving money for the Head Start and delivering the Head Start programs that we maintain the high comprehensive services and programs that the Head Start programs do and that it is blended into our state. We also require that there is consistent oversight of the programs, and we further believe that legislation needs to clearly define the states authority and responsibilities in maintaining program compliance in all these programs.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Moore follows:]

**Statement of Marsha H. Moore, Commissioner, Georgia Department of
Early Care and Learning, Atlanta, GA**

In 2004 through the visionary leadership of Governor Sonny Perdue and the bipartisan support of the Georgia General Assembly, Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning was created to develop and administer a system of early care and education for Georgia's children from birth to age five. The Department which combines the mandated responsibilities of several state entities administers Georgia's Universal Pre-K Program that this year is providing quality early learning experiences to over 71,500 four year olds; licenses all child care learning centers, group day care homes, and family day care homes; administers the federally funded Child and Adult Care Food Program and the Summer Food Service Program to feed eligible children, adolescents, and adults; administers the federally funded Even Start Family Literacy Program; administers federal quality dollars earmarked for quality improvements through the Child Care and Development Fund; houses the Head Start State Collaboration office; funds and oversees the child care resource and referral system throughout the state; and administers initiatives to improve the quality of care children receive in out-of-home child care. The Department encourages and supports private/public partnerships through which much of its work is accomplished, and encourages and supports parental involvement in their children's educational experiences.

The Department's foundation is the successful, lottery funded Georgia's Pre-K Program, recognized as one of the premier school readiness programs in the country. The program has operated for eleven years and has served over 600,000 children through the use of lottery funds. Research demonstrates that children participating in the Pre-K program gained on national norms for math problem solving skills, letter and word recognition, and receptive vocabulary. Research also tells us that at-risk children who attended Georgia's Pre-K Program were more ready for kindergarten, more academically skilled, communicated better, and behaved better than similar peers who did not attend the program. Support for the program from Governor Zell Miller through our current Governor Sonny Perdue and from the citizens of Georgia who have children in our program have been instrumental in the program's success.

During the past eleven years, Georgia has enjoyed a fruitful relationship with Head Start that, through the blending of funds, has made it possible for us to serve thousands of additional children who otherwise might not have received services

and made it possible to provide joint training to Head Start and Pre-K teachers and Family Service Workers and resource coordinators. Thousands of children have received high quality care and educational opportunities because of the comprehensive Head Start program standards. Because we have on a small scale demonstrated the power and effectiveness of a partnership between Head Start and Georgia's Pre-K Program, we eagerly anticipate and seek the opportunity to administer federal Head Start funds to build on and streamline a more coordinated early care and education system in Georgia. However, we recognize and acknowledge challenges that must be addressed for Georgia to reach its goal of a seamless coordinated system for its youngest citizens.

One challenge Georgia will face has to do with the differences in governance of Head Start programs and Georgia's Pre-K Program. Head Start programs are governed at the local level by policy councils and boards of directors, which include parents who take an active role in program administration. In the early days Head Start programs were much smaller. Today many of these programs operate with multi-million dollar budgets and large numbers of staff. In contrast Georgia's Pre-K Program is administered at the state level. Parents can choose the program where their child will receive services depending on the type of curriculum and supporting services available. State money follows the child to whichever private or public program they choose. Georgia's Pre-K Program recognizes the importance of parent involvement and participation, but the program does not give parents responsibility to help administer the program. Because of these differences in governance between Head Start and Georgia's Pre-K Program, there may initially be mistrust and concerns relating to program administration. This issue can be resolved by developing and supporting parent advisory councils in communities where early care and education services are provided.

Head Start programs are required to meet rigorous program standards. Georgia's Pre-K Program also requires providers to maintain high standards. The math and the language/literacy standards of Georgia's Pre-K Program recently received overall grades of A from the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement. Both programs agree on elements of school readiness, and the instructional portion of Georgia's Pre-K Program is aligned with Head Start standards. However, other portions of the Head Start standards are a challenge for many Pre-K program providers to meet, particularly providers in private child care settings. Currently, there are other standards in Georgia that differ. For example, Georgia's staff to child ratios for three-year-old children is one staff for every 15 children. Head Start requires one staff for every eight (8) three-year-old children. In situations where children from Georgia's Pre-K Program and Head Start program are blended, the Department requires the higher Head Start standards to be met. Requiring the higher standards continues to be an obstacle to developing collaborative partnerships between Head Start and private child care settings in the state. To help overcome this obstacle and thus encourage partnerships between Head Start and private child care providers, the Department provides additional training and technical assistance.

Research indicates that one of the strong components of Georgia's Pre-K Program is consistent monitoring and oversight of the program. Georgia's Pre-K Program providers receive at least two site reviews per year by our Department. In addition to the site reviews, Georgia's Pre-K Program providers receive high quality training and technical assistance on an ongoing basis. With the Pre-K monitoring process and its governance structure, the Department can take appropriate action if monitoring reveals poor performance. Currently, Head Start programs receive a site review by outside consultants every three years with self-assessment reports required on an annual basis. If Georgia is designated to be a demonstration state, such limited oversight of Head Start programs would hinder my Department's ability to identify and resolve issues related to compliance with performance standards.

In fiscal year 05 over fifty percent of Georgia's Pre-K children were considered economically at risk meaning that they might also be eligible for Head Start. A more deliberate blending and redirecting of federal Head Start funds and state Pre-K funds would allow more four year olds to be served and possibly allow Head Start funds to be redirected to serve at-risk three year olds in comprehensive high quality programs. The challenge here is for Head Start to be willing to change its focus from serving three and four year olds to focusing more on three year olds.

Managing multiple funding streams may be a challenge for some states particularly when the state and federal government operate under different standards and require different initiatives. For example, Head Start programs are funded at the beginning of the service year, and periodically additional funding may be sent to programs to focus on special projects such as technical assistance or a male/father involvement project. In Georgia, Pre-K programs are funded on a monthly basis

through a contractual agreement with providers. Pre-K initiatives are determined at the beginning of the year based on need and on money available after monthly payments and projections are made. This means that two programs are operated by the state for basically the same children with different focuses and services provided depending on the funding received by each program. This creates a somewhat confusing system with some children with the same needs being treated differently. Resources and requirements need to be coordinated to ensure consistency and fairness to all of Georgia's children.

Lastly, another challenge will be the differences in the culture and philosophy of the Head Start and Pre-K programs. The programs were created in different historical eras; consequently, each program was based on a different set of beliefs. To successfully blend the two will require both programs to adjust those beliefs. And as we know, changing belief systems is challenging and sometimes met with resistance. Many Head Start employees have worked with the program for years, and typically programs operate in well-established community systems. While Georgia's Pre-K Program may not have the long history that the Head Start program has, many Pre-K providers are loyal to the principles on which the program was based. Both programs will have to be willing to adjust their underlying belief systems in order for the blended model to work successfully. Georgia's extensive collaborations with Head Start will help to relieve some of the mistrust and uncertainties, but it is unrealistic not to expect challenges in cooperation and buy-in to a comprehensive statewide system. It is imperative that Georgia build on its tradition of collaboration and past successes while at the same time provide political support for a smooth transition.

In closing, based on our experience in Georgia, we respectfully recommend that Congress:

1. require states to develop standards that are at least as rigorous as the current Head Start program standards;
2. require states to work toward a seamless early care and education system that includes Head Start in such a way that collaboration is beneficial to all parties;
3. require consistent program monitoring;
4. clearly define the states' authority and responsibilities in obtaining and maintaining program compliance.

On behalf of the state of Georgia and Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, I thank the members of the House Subcommittee on Education Reform for the opportunity to provide testimony for your consideration. Georgia wholeheartedly supports the idea of more effective integration of Head Start and other school readiness programs, and we applaud Congress's efforts to ensure that our nation's children and their families receive the most efficient and effective preschool services possible. We believe that Georgia is well positioned, with the governance structure and experience in blending federal and state funds, to help create and demonstrate a model of an effective system for early care and education.

Chairman CASTLE. Thank you, Ms. Moore, we appreciate it.
Mr. Alexander?

**STATEMENT OF JEFFREY ALEXANDER, ASSISTANT HEAD
START DIRECTOR, BIG FIVE COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC.,
DURANT, OK**

Mr. ALEXANDER. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and to share with this distinguished panel the successes of Oklahoma in its collaborative efforts among Federal, state and local programs offering early childhood services.

My main message to you today is that there is nothing about the current Federal to local Head Start funding structure or the Head Start performance standards that precludes active and effective coordination and collaboration among the organizations and agencies serving young children and their families.

What the Oklahoma experience demonstrates is that it can be done and done well within the existing structure. Today, Oklahoma public schools, Head Start, and childcare programs all collaborate

to meet the needs of our children and working families. The result is that more children and families are receiving quality comprehensive services in full day settings. There are more qualified teachers, more licensed facilities, longer hours and days of service. The system is locally driven. Each program must meet the highest standards of the collaborating partners.

What it takes to make this work are committed and dedicated personnel in each of the programs. Simply changing the funding structure isn't going to make otherwise unengaged state officials more interested in early childhood education and services. And it is clear that the existing funding structure is not an impediment to close coordination and collaboration.

In Oklahoma, state and local leaders are working together to use the Head Start, Pre-K, and childcare funds, both to improve the quality of the programs and to meet the needs of working families. At the same time, these partnerships strengthen programs by putting funds together to bolster quality and support comprehensive services that would otherwise not be available.

The Head Start Program performance standards mandate the comprehensive quality services to be provided to children and families served by these programs. It is because Head Start recognizes that at-risk children need a range of services to become school ready. Therefore, the individualized services provided by Head Start include those related to education and early childhood development, such as age-appropriate instruction in math, literacy, science, art, medical, dental, and mental health services, nutrition, and parental involvement in the development of their children.

In order to provide these services, Head Start programs work with an array of community partners. Let me take you back home, it is November 10, 2002, 7:25 a.m., the Head Start director pulls up at the building to find a homeless family on the door step of the office building, father, mother, and two small children with everything they have in two handbags. After meeting the Head Start director, takes these children and their family to have breakfast. One child is Head Start age-appropriate so therefore that child is enrolled immediately to begin receiving services. The second child is first grade level age so that child is taken to that local public school and enrolled.

The work with the Community Action Agency in that local area to get a home for that family. This is on a short-term basis but for homeless persons. Dad seems to have some type of disability so they reach out to the mental health services, which they partner with in that community, and ask for an evaluation. This is done. Then mom is evaluated and done a OSIB check, then put to work as a substitute, whether it be cook aide or teacher's aide to have some funds coming into that family.

So that is how we partner out there on a daily basis. Otherwise, that family would not have had any services. Now today, after that partnership 2 years later, through Head Start and its collaborative efforts this family is self-sufficient. Dad has his own computer repair business. I must hurriedly move on but that takes you to the local level to see and that is where we have to be is on the local level to see how this works.

It is this existing structure that works. Can it be improved upon and strengthened? Of course it can be. Do we need to change the funding structure to make it work? Absolutely not. Do we need to provide greater flexibility in terms of the performance standards?

No. What we do need is funding to make sure we are serving as many eligible children, such as these in this family, as possible. We stretch our dollars.

In short, Head Start works. It is a collaborative effort within the community, state, the school system, and the providers of Head Start. It gets our poorest children ready to learn and better prepares them to succeed in school and in life. We call it Head Start for a reason. If Congress chooses to dilute the existing performance standards, if we exclude parental involvement in the Head Start experience, if we try too hard to achieve collaboration by experimenting with funding, then we have lost Head Start. This is a program that prepares our poorest children for school and later life. If we disregard the foundation and intent of this program, then Head Start will no longer exist. We cannot allow this to happen.

Thank you for your time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Alexander follows:]

Statement of Jeffrey Alexander, Assistant Head Start Director, Big Five Community Services, Inc., Durant, OK

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, good morning. I am Jeff Alexander, Assistant Head Start Director for Big Five Community Services, Inc., a Community Action Agency in rural, southeastern Oklahoma. I have served in this position for the past three years.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and to share with this distinguished panel Oklahoma's success story in terms of collaborative efforts among federal, state and local programs offering early childhood services. I will detail what we have done and continue to do in Head Start on the local level to maximize benefits, avoid gaps in service, and create quality, comprehensive systems when it comes to early childhood programs. Coordination and collaboration is not a new concept in Oklahoma; my director, Ms. Jackie Watson, has been collaborating in some form with public school districts and others for nearly 20 years. She began in a small, rural school in Yuba, Oklahoma, where, as the Superintendent of Schools likes to say, "the sun kisses the earth every morning." That collaboration has been expanded and today includes 18 school districts and four day care facilities, serving a total of 807 children and families in a five county area.

COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION: A NATIONAL PICTURE

Head Start has a long history of delivering comprehensive and high quality services designed to foster healthy development in low-income children. Head Start programs deliver a range of individualized services in the areas of education and early childhood development; medical, dental, and mental health; nutrition; and parent involvement in the development of their children. In order to provide these services, Head Start programs work with an array of community partners.

All Head Start programs must adhere to the Head Start Program Performance Standards, which define the services to be provided to the children and families they serve. The Performance Standards constitute the expectations and requirements that Head Start grantees must meet. They are designed to ensure that the Head Start goals and objectives are implemented successfully, that the Head Start philosophy continues to thrive, and that all programs maintain the highest possible quality.

The Head Start Program Performance Standards encourage collaboration and coordination by specifying that all programs must:

- "take an active role in community planning to encourage strong communication, cooperation, and the sharing of information among agencies and their community partners and to improve the delivery of community services to children and families."
- take affirmative steps to establish ongoing collaborative relationships with community organizations to promote the access of children and families to commu-

nity services that are responsive to their needs, and to ensure that Early Head Start and Head Start programs respond to community needs.” In addition to local elementary schools, these community organizations include those that provide health care, family, disability, child protective, and child care services.

- “make specific efforts to develop interagency agreements with local education agencies.”
- “establish and maintain procedures to support successful transitions for enrolled children and families from previous child care programs into Early Head Start or Head Start and from Head Start into elementary school, a Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act preschool program, or other child care settings.”

Head Start program administrators understand the importance of coordination among their programs, child care programs and other pre-K and state education programs. Indeed, collaboration with other community agencies is central to Head Start’s mission and service delivery design because it is fundamental to delivering high quality, comprehensive services.

Coordination and collaboration is occurring in many states and at the local level all over this country. In fact, many Head Start programs provide full day, full year services by leveraging child care funds to extend their services. Similarly, pre-kindergarten services often co-locate with Head Start programs to provide extended education and comprehensive health and nutrition services to a larger group of children.

Dr. Wade Horn, Assistant Secretary for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, acknowledged the extent of collaboration taking place in testimony before this Committee:

. . . despite its federal-to-local program structure, Head Start has always recognized that the states play an important role in the formulation and implementation of policies and initiatives that affect low-income children and their families. Partnerships have always been one of Head Start’s highest priorities. These include partnerships with local school districts—nearly 450 of which operate Head Start programs—and local governments. . . .¹

The Head Start Bureau, in a recent 228-page report, *Head Start–State Collaboration Offices*, extensively documents how Head Start programs are collaborating with states, localities, and private organizations. In the report, the Head Start Bureau catalogued the extent of this collaboration by providing summaries of activities for every state in the country. These partnerships and collaborative efforts often are facilitated by Head Start State Collaboration Offices and are intended to:

- Help build early childhood systems and enhance access to comprehensive services and support for all low-income children;
- Encourage widespread collaboration between Head Start and other appropriate programs, services and initiatives, augmenting Head Start’s capacity to be a partner in State initiatives on behalf of children and their families; and
- Facilitate the involvement of Head Start in State policies, plans, processes, and decisions affecting the Head Start target population and other low-income families.

COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION: THE OKLAHOMA EXPERIENCE

Head Start programs in Oklahoma have formed partnerships with community agencies and others to ensure that comprehensive, quality services are provided to the children and families enrolled in our programs. Compliance with the Head Start Performance Standards demands no less of us. For example, Head Start provides family advocates to help families find needed resources, such as a family medical facility. A family in need of electricity or other utility can be assured that we will find a resource in the community to help fulfill this need. In instances where parents have not completed High School, we work with institutions or businesses in the community to find classes offering G.E.D. tutoring. We know a better-educated parent is more likely to create a stronger learning environment at home. Parents in need of employment may be referred to the local Workforce Investment (WIA) office for job training opportunities. These are but a few of the services we are able to provide through collaborative efforts with others in the community.

Although state and local level leaders met regularly to identify and remove barriers to locally-driven partnerships, it was legislation passed by the State Legisla-

¹Horn, W. (March 6, 2003). Testimony on the President’s Plan to Strengthen Head Start before the Subcommittee on Education Reform, Committee on Education and the Workforce, U.S. House of Representatives. Accessed at <http://edworkforce.house.gov/hearings/108th/edr/headstart030603/horn.htm> on April 19, 2005.

ture in 1998 that served as the catalyst for a strong partnership between Head Start and local school districts.

Legislation passed in 1998 authorizes public school districts in Oklahoma to provide pre-kindergarten programs to four-year olds and to receive state funding according to a weighted formula that provides more funding per child for disabled, bilingual and poor children. This expanded pre-K program is run by the public schools on a voluntary basis, through collaborations with Head Start programs and day care centers.

Oklahoma has made a commitment to program quality and requires all pre-K teachers to have a college degree and a certificate in early childhood education. Pre-K teachers must also receive the same compensation and benefits as teachers in public elementary schools. These two requirements distinguish Oklahoma's pre-K program from child care centers in the State. By law, group sizes for Oklahoma's pre-K program are set at 20 and child/staff ratios cannot exceed 10/1. These requirements correspond to Head Start program guidelines. The State does not require use of a specific curriculum but leaves that decision in the hands of local school districts.

Today, Oklahoma public schools, Head Start and child care programs collaborate to meet the needs of working families. The result is that more children and families are receiving quality, comprehensive services on a full-day, year-round basis. There is a more qualified staff, more licensed facilities, and longer hours and days of service. In short, more children are being served with higher quality, more comprehensive programs. The system is locally-driven but facilitated and supported by the State. Each program must meet the highest standards of the collaborating partners. So, for example, Head Start programs delivering the State's pre-K services must have degreed teachers. Highly dedicated people at the state and local level make the system work.

CONCLUSION

The Oklahoma experience demonstrates that it is possible within the existing structure to have a high degree of coordination and collaboration among Head Start programs, state pre-k programs and child care programs. What it takes are committed and dedicated personnel at each program to make it work. Simply changing the funding structure isn't going to make otherwise unengaged state officials more interested in early childhood education and services. And, it is clear that the existing funding structure is not an impediment to close coordination and collaboration.

In Oklahoma, state and local leaders are working together to use Head Start, pre-K and child care funds both to improve the quality of the programs and to meet the needs of working families. At the same time, these partnerships are strengthening programs by putting funds together to bolster program quality and support comprehensive services that otherwise would not be available.

The quality of Oklahoma's delivery system is in great measure due to framing our services based on Head Start's exacting program performance standards. Head Start's Program Performance Standards are the foundation for quality, comprehensive services. They require attention to literacy, math, science, arts, physical, social, emotional and other areas of children development. The Standards are rigorous and programs are regularly monitored for compliance. They help guide good teaching and assessment. They should not be sacrificed in the name of flexibility. The Oklahoma experience is that they work to improve the lives and school readiness of children. Ladies and gentlemen, Head Start works!

Chairman CASTLE. Thank you, Mr. Alexander.
Dr. Barnett?

STATEMENT OF DR. W. STEVEN BARNETT, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EARLY EDUCATION RESEARCH, NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ

Mr. BARNETT. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, distinguished Members, thank you for this opportunity to address you. I am Steve Barnett, I am the director of the National Institute for Early Education Research. We are independent and non-partisan, and we provide research and analysis on early childhood policy.

Over the past 40 years, we have developed a patchwork quilt of Federal, state, local, and private programs to serve children at ages

three and four in the United States. We have made some remarkable progress, 7 in 10 4-year-olds are in some kind of preschool program, 4 in 10 at age three. Yet despite this progress, many children still don't attend a preschool program, including more than half of the three and 4 year olds in poverty. And many of those who do attend do not go to a good, effective preschool program. Now as an economist who studied the returns to high quality programs over the past 20 years, I find that America pays a high price when we fail to provide these programs with high standards and effective education.

Across the Nation we are at a point where public preschool programs really do have serious concerns with respect to integration and coordination. Head Start serves about 900,000 children, mostly at three and four. State pre-K's now serve over 740,000 almost all 4-year-olds. Additional children are in public school programs for children with disabilities. Others attend private programs that are at least partly paid for with child care subsidies. These programs for the most part serve, at least partially and sometimes highly overlapping populations.

In many ways, this is a good situation. Programs rarely have enough money to provide a full day of care and good education. The only way to do that is to combine some of these programs. So there is a potential for cooperation and integration to lead to better services for children. However, this overlapping system we have is also confusing for parents and providers. There are conflicting regulations, highly variable services, and uneven coverage. Our studies make this clear. If you look across the country, for example, you will see that over the past decade great progress has been made in the South and Northeast and the West has simply been left behind in terms of increasing enrollment. Rural kids, and Latino kids in particular, seem to be under served.

So if we look across the country, we see this picture where a few states serve all 4-year-olds. By our count, seven states serve more than half of all of their 4-year-olds between state pre-K, Head Start, and IDEA. And yet 12 states provide no preschool—no state preschool program at all. Their standards vary widely. Some states require a 4-year college degree. Some states require no college education at all. Only 16 had comprehensive learning standards, although that is changing rapidly.

And state funding varies from \$1,000 to \$9,000 per child. Only three states come within \$1,000 of spending what Head Start has. The average state funding is only half the Federal Head Start amount. That is not a basis for cost comparison. And that is because that is only state spending. The reason we can't accurately compare costs, a major impediment to learning how to coordinate and integrate services, is public data systems don't provide accurate information about spending on these programs. Many state programs are partly, and in some cases mostly, funded by local sources where those funds are not tracked.

So it is nearly impossible to find out how much they spend. And one of our recommendations, one of my recommendations is that we develop joint data systems that provide unduplicated counts and track these funds.

Beyond this, I don't have proven solutions to offer you today. Yet, I do believe we need to enable state's Head Start and other Federal programs to jointly develop and test new approaches, particularly where states are already offering high-quality preschool programs. There are many options to do this. I have attached an appendix to my testimony that in fact details many of the ways collaboration and cooperation already happen. At least 21 states use Head Start with your state Pre-K.

In addition, I would offer the following recommendations for limited experiments where we actually gather information on whether they work. Give states increased flexibility to use the Child Care Block Grant, TANF, and other Federal funds for state pre-K. Give states increased authority over Head Start where state pre-K standard are high. Require Head Start programs to maximize participation in state pre-K where they can do this without diluting their services. Let Head Start and state pre-K programs essentially trade the services of each other's eligible populations. Where there are Head Start-eligible children in areas there are so few of them sometimes it is not feasible to have a Head Start Program, yet there is a larger population, make credits available to the families so they can purchase these services themselves. And finally, as an incentive for states to have high pre-K standards, provide supplemental funds to Head Start to meet higher state standards. For example, allowing Head Start to hire teachers with BA degrees or to reduce class size. Now no one can guarantee that any of these recommendations will actually work. That is why we need true experiments, rigorously evaluated. We need to look at how do they affect the literacy, math, social, and moral development, and the health of kids when we do try these kinds of things to see if they work better.

I have some examples of the issues that arise from my own state of New Jersey. I want to point out that my comments do not reflect the views of anyone in state government, particularly my wife who is the director, she is assistant to the commissioner for Early Childhood in New Jersey. We have sought in New Jersey to integrate with a very high-quality program, Head Start, and childcare and other services. It hasn't been easy. We have had difficulties with the requirements for verifying the income of families for childcare subsidies. We have had Head Start agencies turn over and not automatically re-engage with the same arrangements they had to partner in providing services. We have had problems where we seem to have unfilled Head Start slots over here, Head Start-eligible children over here being served in Pre-K, and yet Pre-K-eligible children over here not being served.

There are ways to work that out. And, in fact, the state is currently working with the Head Start regional office to find solutions to these problems. So they are working at it.

In conclusion, I want to thank you for taking up this issue. The nation has been making more headway in expanding access than it has in improving quality. And yet as an economist, I think it is important to point out it is not a good policy to serve goods with public dollars unless you provide a high-quality, effective education with those dollars.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Barnett follows:]

Statement of Dr. W. Steven Barnett, Director, National Institute for Early Education Research, New Brunswick, NJ

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members, thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I am Steven Barnett, Director of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers University. NIEER is an independent, non-partisan organization that conducts and disseminates research on early childhood education policy. I am also a professor of education economics and policy. I wish to express my appreciation to the Subcommittee for investigating the potential for improvement of early childhood education through better integration.

Over the past 40 years a patchwork quilt of federal, state, local, and private programs has evolved to serve children at ages 3 and 4. We have made some remarkable progress: 7 of 10 children now attend a preschool program at age 4 (about the same percentage that attended kindergarten in 1970); 4 of 10 attend a preschool program at age 3. Despite this progress many children still do not attend a preschool program, including more than 1/2 of the 3- and 4-year olds in poverty. And, many who do go to preschool still fail to get an effective education. As an economist who has studied the returns to high quality preschool education for over 20 years, I find that America pays a high price because public programs for young children have low standards and too little funding to reach high standards.

Across the nation, public preschool programs have grown to the point where coordination and integration are important concerns. Head Start provides for about 900,000 children, 800,000 at ages 3 and 4. State preschool programs serve over 700,000 children, nearly all of them at age 4. State pre-K now serves more 4's than Head Start. Additional children are served in public school programs for young children with disabilities. Others attend private programs at least partly paid for with child care subsidies. Most public programs target highly overlapping populations.

This complex arrangement is generally good. Programs rarely have enough money to serve all eligible children. Child care subsidy rates are too low to purchase effective education, and blending programs may be the only way to obtain education and a full day of child care. There is potential for better services through cooperation and integration. However, there is also potential for confusion among parents and providers, conflicting regulations, highly variable services, and uneven coverage. NIEER's annual reports on state pre-k and analyses of national survey data from parents make this clear. There are dramatic differences among the states and within states. Over the past decade, the south and northeast rapidly expanded preschool education, while the west lagged behind. Rural and Latino children appear to have less access to early childhood education than others.

A few states offer preschool education to all children at age 4, and others are moving toward that goal. By our count, in 7 states more than 1/2 of the 4-year-olds were served by state pre-K, Head Start and IDEA combined in 2002. However, 12 states provided no state funding for Pre-K in 2002. State early education standards also vary widely. Many states require teachers to have a BA and specialized training, but others do not even require a 2-year degree. Only 16 had comprehensive learning standards, though that has been changing fast. State funding varied from \$1,000 to nearly \$9,000 per child, but only 3 states came within a \$1,000 of Head Start spending. Average state funding was only 1/2 the federal Head Start amount. However, it is impossible to make accurate cost comparisons today.

The reason costs cannot be accurately compared, and a major difficulty for learning how to better integrate early education programs, is that public data systems don't provide the needed information. For example, many state programs are partly funded by local schools (sometimes with Title I funds), but it is nearly impossible to find out how much they spend. The federal government should remedy this problem by supporting the development of joint data systems that provide unduplicated counts of the children uniquely or jointly served, the services they receive, and the public expenditures that support them. The nation knows how much the federal, state, and local governments spend per child on K-12 education in each state. Similar information should be available on preschool education.

I don't have proven solutions to offer you today. Yet, the situation is only going to become more serious, making it essential to enable states, Head Start, and other federal programs to jointly develop and test new approaches, particularly where states offer good universal preschool education. There are many options to be tested from shifting Head Start resources to younger children to the development of joint programs pooling state and federal program resources. I have attached an appendix to my testimony that details existing collaborative efforts; at least 21 states now use

Head Start to serve 7% of their children in state pre-K. My recommendations for approaches that could be tested in limited experiments are as follows.

- Give states increased flexibility to use Child Care Block Grant, TANF and other federal funds for state pre-K.
- Give states increased authority over Head Start where state pre-K standards are high and coverage extensive.
- Require Head Start programs to maximize participation in state pre-K where this can be done without diluting services and states are willing to provide needed funds.
- Credit Head Start and state pre-K for serving each other's eligible populations when they can meet the requisite standards. This might be more cost-effective while providing greater parental choice and competition.
- Where the Head Start eligible population is too sparse to support a Head Start program, offer families credits to be used to purchase equivalent services from providers that meet Head Start standards.
- As an incentive for high pre-K standards, provide supplemental funds to Head Start to meet higher state standards, for example, enabling Head Start to hire teachers with BA degrees and pay competitive salaries or to reduce class size.

No one can guarantee that these or any other policy changes will succeed. Thus, it is vital that the federal government support true experiments that are rigorously evaluated. This will provide a safeguard so that policy changes do not lead Head Start and other programs to lose their effectiveness, and it will ensure that definitive conclusions can be reached regarding what works. Broad implementation of policy changes should proceed only after positive findings.

I have some examples from New Jersey where I reside. My comments do not represent the views of anyone in state government, including (and particularly) my wife, Dr. Ellen Frede who is Assistant to the Commissioner for Early Childhood. New Jersey is implementing the nation's most ambitious pre-K program for all 3- and 4-year olds in 31 school districts that serve a 1/4 of our children. This program has sought to integrate child care and Head Start with state pre-K. This has not been easy. For example, we have had difficulties with the requirements to verify income for child care subsidies. When Head Start agencies have turned over, agreements have not been automatically continued leaving districts to face gaps in services. We appear to have problems with unfilled Head Start slots in some districts while Head Start eligible children occupy state pre-K slots and other children can not find places. The state is currently working with the Head Start regional office to find solutions to some of these problems.

In conclusion, I want to thank you once again for taking up the cause of improving early childhood education. The nation has been making more headway in expanding access than in improving quality. Yet, increasing the numbers of children served with public money is sound policy only when it also provides an effective education. Whatever you can do to ensure that more children receive a high quality, effective preschool education will pay substantial human and economic dividends far into the future.

APPENDIX: CURRENT STATE/LOCAL COLLABORATIONS WITH HEAD START

DEBRA ACKERMAN AND DR. W. STEVEN BARNETT

Head Start and the States partner in a number of ways already. A basic overview follows.

State Financial Collaborations

Seventeen states supplement federal Head Start funds in order to provide over 28,000 slots, wrap-around services, and quality enhancements. In fiscal year 2003, this supplemental funding totaled over \$177 million.

State	Amount (FY 2003)	Slots
Alaska	\$ 6,276,000	403
Connecticut	4,500,000	332
Delaware	4,456,700	843
Hawaii	390,000	0
Idaho	1,500,000	151
Maine	3,581,018	199
Maryland	3,000,000	26
Massachusetts	6,100,000	400
Minnesota	17,620,000	2,641
New Hampshire	241,337	0
New Mexico	1,650,000	0
Ohio	87,632,156	17,284
Oklahoma	3,300,000	105
Oregon	26,100,000	4,000
Pennsylvania	2,000,000	0
Rhode Island	1,800,000	340
Wisconsin	7,425,000	1,449
TOTAL	\$ 177,572,211	28,173

Source: Barnett, Hustedt, Robin, & Schulman, 2004

State-Head Start Preschool Collaborations

In 2002–2003, just under 740,000 children were enrolled in state-funded preschool initiatives in 38 states. About 7% of the preschoolers enrolled in these state-funded programs were served in Head Start programs. At least 21 states used Head Start programs to serve some state pre–K children (Barnett, Hustedt, Robin, & Schulman, 2004). About 13% of the public schools operating preschool programs reported using Head Start funds according to an NCES report on pre–K in the public schools.

State Administrative Collaborations

Every state—as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico—also receives grants from the Administration for Children and Families to fund state Head Start Collaboration Offices. The intent of these grants was to “create a visible presence for Head Start at the state level and to assist in the development of multi-agency and public-private partnerships among Head Start and other interested stakeholders” (California Head Start State Collaboration Office, 2005). These offices are also responsible for integrating the efforts of various state and community organizations in eight key areas:

- Improve access to health care services
- Improve the availability, accessibility, and quality of child care services
- Improve collaboration with welfare systems
- Expand and improve education opportunities in early childhood programs
- Initiate interactions with AmeriCorps–The National Service Program
- Improve opportunities for children with disabilities
- Improve access to family literacy services
- Improve collaboration for homeless families (Nevada Head Start Collaboration Office, 2005).

In order to reach these goals, states have established various noteworthy partnerships. For example, in Nevada all Head Starts sites have applications for the state’s CheckUp program, a health insurance program for children from low-income families (Nevada Head Start–State Collaboration Project, 2005). Pennsylvania has four Technical Assistance Regional Coordinators. Their background, areas of expertise, and contact information are available on the state’s Collaboration Project web site (Pennsylvania Head Start State Collaboration Project, 2005). Texas has established a statewide online trainer registry. Trainers must be approved based on their educational background and training received in adult education and learning, as well as their experience working with children and teaching adults (Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office, 2005).

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Chairman CASTLE. Thank you, Dr. Barnett.
Dr. Clifford.

STATEMENT OF DR. RICHARD M. CLIFFORD, SENIOR SCIENTIST, FRANK PORTER GRAHAM CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE, CHAPEL HILL, NC

Mr. CLIFFORD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to be here. My name is Dick Clifford, and I am a researcher at the FPG Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

And I will start with my disclaimer. I am representing myself and the work that I do but not the university or any of the agencies that have supported this work. So these are my opinions here.

I will not go into all that I do but I have had two large-scale projects looking at pre-kindergarten in a total of 11 different states in the U.S. and those states together represent about 80 percent of all of the children who are in pre-K, state-funded pre-K in the U.S. So a lot of experience looking at state pre-K efforts.

I also took a leave of absence from the university for a year and worked in state government in North Carolina when we were designing and implementing what is known as Smart Start in North Carolina, a general early childhood initiative. So I had an opportunity there to look particularly at implementing programs at the state level, so real time working with Head Start, Childcare and Early Intervention Services with pre-K programs, trying to bring those programs together and integrate services. So I appreciate very much the difficulty of the task that you are undertaking here and also the importance of it.

In the last decade, we have actually seen pretty dramatic increases in investments in early childhood services, but we still have only what I consider to be minimal formal coordination of efforts across childcare, early intervention of services of children with disabilities, and preschool programs with Head Start.

Let me just give you an example from my own current work relating to Head Start and state pre-K programs. You have heard today some comments about efforts at the state level to do coordination and collaboration. Both Head Start and Pre-K Programs essentially serve the same population. In virtually every state there is either a sole requirement that low-income children be served or

that is one of the major criteria in the program, which of course the same is true for Head Start.

One would expect then that there would be very close cooperation and coordination across Pre-K Programs and Head Start. In fact, one would think that states would have first turned to Head Start providers to actually help implement Pre-K Programs and they may have started that way. But in fact when we look at the state Pre-K Programs that we have examined, only about 15 percent of these classes, pre-K classes in the states we have studied are in Head Start programs. And two of those states, Ohio and Kentucky, account for most of that 15 percent.

If you look at the rest of the states, we are talking about 5 or 6 or 7 percent. So we failed, at least in our initial attempts, to try to integrate Head Start and public Pre-K programs, at least in my opinion.

Then, second, as a state administrator, when I worked in public government in North Carolina, I found that linking the Smart Start initiative with Head Start go back into how these two are coordinated but clearly Head Start is run by the Federal Government. There is a state collaboration office in states, supported by the Federal Government, to help with collaboration between Head Start and other early childhood programs but still all of the decisions are made through the Federal Government. The standards are set at the Federal Government, decisions about which programs to fund, where expansion will take place for Head Start all happen at the Federal Government whereas the decisions for childcare, early intervention, and preschool pretty much are centered at the state level with some of that delegated down to the local level.

I would just add in here one other factor, and that is that schools have become increasingly involved in serving preschool-aged children. We did a study—survey of data sources at the Federal level, trying to identify how many children were served by schools prior to kindergarten entry, and by the turn of the century about a million children in the U.S. were in schools prior to their normal kindergarten entry age. And that number, that million, is about a fourth of the number of 4-year-olds in the U.S. There are about four million 4-year-olds in the U.S., so about one in four children are getting services through schools prior to school entry. So schools have become a major player in recent years in the early childhood field.

Just in passing, I would say we are starting a new initiative at North Carolina that is trying to help look at how the schools and local providers work together to serve young children.

OK, in 2003, the Office of Management and Budget estimated that Federal and state expenditures on preschool and childcare programs totaled about \$24 billion. And I have provided you a table that specifically looks at North Carolina about the same time period. We in North Carolina in that same 2002/2003 were spending about three quarters of a billion dollars a year on early childhood services in North Carolina for children from birth up to 5 years of age. And there is no single dominant provider in that group. Head Start has a large share of that three-quarters of a billion but nowhere near the majority of it. No one provider is dominant. The

legislature in North Carolina came back to the state and told us we want to make sure these funds are being used effectively and efficiently. Both Governors and states are seeking to make the most efficient and effective use of the limited resources and are naturally concerned that the services not be duplicated, that they are used to maximize the impact on children, and that all appropriate resources are directed toward this population. These are goals I know that you share as a Committee.

Now what recommendations? I think I would first say that the problems with integrating services for young children are tied more to organizational and structural features than they are to the specific requirements on the programs, the individual standards and the technical parts of the legislation. The problem is that there is no clear message about who is in charge, what is the relative role, what should be the relative role of Head Start, childcare, and these other services that we have talked about?

There are a few states that are trying to address that. You have heard already from the commissioner of the new department in Georgia that is trying to bring together a variety of services in Georgia under a new department there. Massachusetts is in the process of trying to develop a new department that will cover all of early childhood services. In North Carolina right now we are making steps to try to improve the coordination and collaboration through structural changes at the state.

But this is happening because states recognize this problem. I don't see any reasonable alternative to really collaborating and coordinating than for states to take the initiative and to make sure this happens at the state level.

So you have under reauthorization of Head Start an opportunity to offer a few states the option of managing Head Start program within their state, whether it is called an experiment, a demonstration or whatever. This should be an opportunity for states to fulfill this role of providing true coordination across the different service provider sector.

But there are some dangers in this. The experiments have to be carried out carefully. You have heard here already that there is not a problem with state pre-K programs meeting the Head Start standards so you should maintain the standards. Do not give up on those standards. There may be some minor ways that states are allowed some flexibility but the basic core standards need to be kept in place. States must agree to an evaluation, as Dr. Barnett said, this won't do us any good unless we have a very thorough and careful evaluation of the implementation of this and a major part of that, as he said, is a sound data collection system that let's us know actually how many children are being served, how many are getting which service.

So I applaud your attempts to bring together the various parts of the early childhood system and to integrate Head Start into such a larger system. You can help lead us toward a more rationale system of services for young children.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Clifford follows:]

**Statement of Dr. Richard M. Clifford, Senior Scientist, Frank Porter
Graham Child Development Institute, Chapel Hill, NC**

Good morning, my name is Dick Clifford and I am a researcher at the FPG Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. My testimony represents my own personal views and does not necessarily reflect the positions of my organization or the various public and private agencies that support my work. I study young children and programs to support these children and their families. I am co-director of the National Pre-kindergarten Center at FPG (supported largely by the Foundation for Child Development). I served as Principal Investigator of a large-scale study of pre-kindergarten programs in 6 states, supported by the US Department of Education, and am currently co-director of a follow-up study of pre-kindergarten programs in 5 additional states (with support from the Pew Trusts through the National Institute for Early Education Research). Together these 11 states serve about 80% of the children in state sponsored pre-kindergarten programs in the US. So, I've had extensive opportunities to see how states are working to improve readiness of children coming to school. In the 1990's I took a leave of absence from the University to work in state government in North Carolina to help design and implement Governor Jim Hunt's major early childhood initiative, called Smart Start. In this role I had an opportunity to work first hand at encouraging the various agencies serving young children to work cooperatively to improve services for all children from birth up to school entry.

The task you are addressing is a difficult one. Some time ago I was asked to describe the early childhood services in the US at a conference in central Europe. I entitled my paper, Parallel Play. I did this because at the time, our diverse set of service providers—Head Start, Child Care, Early Intervention for young children with disabilities, and more traditional preschool programs—each mostly went their own way with little cooperative effort, occasionally interacting when there was a problem. That was in the 1990s. Since then governments at all levels in the US have dramatically increased their investments in early childhood services, yet we still have only minimal formal coordination of efforts in most states.

Let me give a single example relating to Head Start and state pre-kindergarten programs. Both of these programs have as a major goal improving the readiness of children for school. In most of the states children who are from low income families, or are otherwise at risk for school failure, are targeted for services in the pre-kindergarten programs, just as in Head Start. One would expect that there would be close cooperation and coordination between these programs. In fact Head Start providers would normally be thought of as major sources of provision of services for the state pre-kindergarten programs since nearly all of these programs use both public school as well as private service providers to deliver the pre-kindergarten services to target families. Yet in our 11 states our data show that only 15% of the classes were in Head Start programs. Only two states had any major involvement of Head Start in the pre-kindergarten program. The remaining states had extremely low participation rates by Head Start providers.

As a state administrator in North Carolina I found linking our Smart Start initiative with Head Start was quite difficult. As you know, Head Start is funded and administered by the federal government through its national and regional Head Start offices in Health and Human Services. While the federal government provides support for states for a small office designed to help foster collaboration, these offices have no authority over the Head Start providers, so all decisions about expansion of Head Start programs, standards, and all formal oversight of Head Start is handled through the regional and national offices. On the other hand, such decisions for child care, early intervention and preschool programs are mostly made at the state and local levels. In fact this system makes it very difficult for states trying to create a more unified system of services for families with young children to truly coordinate these services.

Another factor is becoming increasingly important in this equation. More and more schools are involved in providing services to children prior to the traditional age of entry to kindergarten. In a review we conducted at the end of the 1990's, we estimated that nearly a million children were in school-based programs earlier than kindergarten entrance. Most of these children were starting a year before they would start kindergarten, that is, they were about four years old. There are about 4 million children per age group in the US, so this means about a fourth of all children now are starting school early. So, public schools have become a new major player in this field.

We are starting a new initiative at UNC-CH that we are calling First School. In this program we are developing a joint project with our local school system to establish a model program for children from about ages 3 to 8 years that will provide

a seamless transition from the preschool period to early school for young children without forcing very young children into the more traditional and structured school organization. Building upon this new model of how schools can be organized to serve younger children we will provide assistance to local and state agencies struggling with how to fit the needs of very young children into the traditional school models.

In 2003, the Office of Management and Budget estimated that federal and state expenditures on preschool and child care programs were some \$24 Billion. On the table at the end of my remarks I show the specifics for North Carolina at about the same time period. You can see that just for our state, total expenditures from state and federal sources for early childhood services were in excess of \$ 760 Million in 2002–03. While Head Start is a major source of support of such programs, it is by no means the dominant source at this point in time. As state governors and legislators seek to make the most efficient and effective use of limited resources they are naturally concerned that services not be duplicated, that funds are used in a way that maximizes the impact on children and that all appropriate uses of various sources of support are brought to bear on the issue of helping children come to school ready to succeed.

It appears that the problems in integrating services for young children are more tied to organizational and structural issues than to any one simple set of standards or rules. There is no clear message of who is in charge or whose job is this anyway. A few states are trying to address this situation. Georgia has recently consolidated many of the early childhood services under a new state agency—the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. It is responsible for overseeing child care and educational services for Georgia's children ages birth through four and their families and includes the state's large pre-kindergarten program. Massachusetts is also working to establish a new overarching agency in charge of all early childhood services. North Carolina is also looking at ways to improve the overall coordination and efficiency of service delivery.

The reauthorization of Head Start offers a wonderful opportunity to offer a few states the option of managing the Head Start program within their state as part of this overarching early childhood system. Only states that are far along in the process of developing a true system of services for young children and their families should be chosen to be part of this experiment. This experiment should be carried out carefully and evaluated thoroughly to provide guidance for a long term plan to assist states in providing the best services for their citizens. There are a number of key issues that should be considered in the legislation authorizing such trials. Many of these were covered in the legislation considered last year, but I would highlight a few. States chosen must demonstrate that they have the commitment to long-term system improvement. Formal state plans for implementing the goal of developing a true system of services must be required as part of the application by states to participate in the experiment. States must commit to maintaining or expanding state expenditures. The standards set for Head Start programs at the federal level should be maintained or strengthened under the state oversight, although some modifications of the standards to fit the individual state circumstances should be allowed. These modifications should not be allowed to have the effect of weakening the standards. Current Head Start grantees must be provided with assurances that they will continue to be grantees under the state oversight with only exceptions for clear violation of standards or other breeches of contractual requirements. States should be required to show how they would integrate the Head Start providers into the overall state plan. States should be required to report annually on progress in meeting the state plan and to propose any needed modifications to the plan. States should be required to submit regular reports on child and family services and their impact.

States must agree to participate in a careful evaluation of the effort. Currently there are few formal requirements for submission of data on children and families served or the nature of services. Because each agency currently has its own reporting system it is impossible to get a clear picture of how many children are receiving services or how many services individual children are receiving. As part of the evaluation of the experiment, a comprehensive data system should be established providing information on all services received by children and families under the approved state plan. States in the experiment would be required to implement use of the data system, with the goal of eventually requiring the data system for all states.

I applaud your attempts to bring together the various parts of the early childhood system and to integrate Head Start such a larger system. Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee.

Budgeted Funding Supporting North Carolina's Early Care and Education System Fiscal Year 2002-03				
	Federal	State	Total	0-5 Year Olds
Strategy # 1				
Smart Start - Total	\$ -	\$ 198,554,511	\$ 198,554,511	
This includes all State funds from Smart Start by Core Services				
Strategy # 2				
Child Care Assistance to Families -- Total ^{1 and 2}	\$ 169,542,104	\$ 49,866,160	\$ 219,408,264	
This includes Child Care Development Funds (CCDF), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), and State Funds for Child Care Subsidy				
Strategy # 3				
Head Start -- Total	\$ 130,749,181	\$ -	\$ 130,749,181	
This includes Head Start, Early Head Start, Federal Expansion Funds, Head Start Collaboration Project and Professional Development Funds				
Strategy # 4				
Public School Pre-kindergarten -- Total	\$ 54,756,241	\$ 34,500,000	\$ 89,256,241	
This includes Title I, Basic Grants for Preschool				
Title I Even Start Family Literacy	\$ 39,041,070	\$ -	\$ 39,041,070	
Special Education Preschool Grants	\$ 4,215,171	\$ -	\$ 4,215,171	
IDEA	\$ 11,500,000	\$ -	\$ 11,500,000	
Exceptional Children	\$ -	\$ 34,500,000	\$ 34,500,000	
Strategy # 5				
More at Four-Pre-kindergarten -- Total	\$ -	\$ 35,975,802	\$ 35,975,802	
Other System Support -- Total	\$ 29,350,000	\$ 52,413,795	\$ 81,763,795	
This includes T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship Program				
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship Program - More At Four	\$ 350,000	\$ 2,600,000	\$ 2,950,000	
Early Intervention -- Comprehensive ³	\$ 29,000,000	\$ 49,000,000	\$ 78,000,000	
Total Budgeted Funding Effort for Strategies SFY 02-03	\$ 384,397,506	\$ 371,310,268	\$ 762,602,881	

Chairman CASTLE. Thank you, Dr. Clifford.
Ms. Blank.

**STATEMENT OF HELEN BLANK, DIRECTOR OF LEADERSHIP
AND PUBLIC POLICY, NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER,
WASHINGTON, DC**

Ms. BLANK. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, I am pleased to have the opportunity to testify today. I am going to address three issues, how local communities and states are already effectively collaborating, remaining barriers to collaboration, and how the Head Start reauthorization can address these challenges. Programs must address twin goals embedded in Federal policy, they have to help children enter school ready to succeed, and they have to help parents work. These goals must be achieved by requiring programs to meet the highest standards.

Head Start, pre-K, and childcare programs are already working together in many communities. Their collaborations do not necessarily provide resources to serve additional children but they do help programs respond to the needs of children and families. Most pre-K programs are part day, some operate for only as few as two-and-a-half hours. Many states combine pre-K dollars with Head Start funds for a longer day.

In La Crosse, Wisconsin, a Head Start program in an elementary school enrolls children in the state 4K program for half a day and Head Start for half a day. Teachers have joint planning time, share lunch with the children, and funds are commingled. Other Head Start children in the community are bused to a pre-K site after their Head Start day.

States are layering Head Start and pre-K dollars to strengthen components of each program. A California school district grantee combines Head Start, state pre-K, Title I, and state First Five Early Childhood funds to create a full day with comprehensive services. In New Jersey, Head Start programs use pre-K funds to hire bachelor degree teachers.

In many communities, Head Start is offered in child care settings. This is especially important in rural communities where it is challenging to meet Head Start's enrollment targets. In rural Iowa, Head Start contracts with community childcare centers and public school programs for Head Start slots in their existing classrooms because there simply are not good services in these areas.

Programs are working together to recruit children. States with the will have demonstrated that they can bring funding streams together. Maryland and Oregon have formal agreements that facilitate collaboration. While Illinois includes collaboration as one of six required components for new pre-K programs.

While there are countless examples of programs working together, pre-K, childcare, and Head Start policies, as well as funding constraints, still create barriers that limit the quality and duration of services to children and families. First, state pre-K funding is not stable. Ohio had invested \$100 million in state funds and was reaching every eligible Head Start child. State funds were replaced with TANF dollars, which have now been moved out of Head Start.

This lack of constancy has wreaked havoc on programs. Worst yet, it has left up to 18,000 of Ohio's poorest children without the

benefit of Head Start. While funding for North Carolina More at 4 Program has grown, it has been at the expense of the state's early childhood, much-acclaimed Smart Start program. Most states don't offer children and families Head Start's comprehensive standards.

A third barrier is the quality of state pre-K programs. A recent six state study by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute found that the quality of pre-K programs was lower than the quality of Head Start in childcare classrooms assessed in other studies. It also found that low-income children made only small gains during the pre-K year.

Florida's recently enacted universal pre-K program only includes a child development associate credential, not even the Head Start requirement for AA degrees for teachers, let alone BA degrees. Programs who are collaborating across the country believe that one of the most significant barriers to collaboration is state childcare policies which inhibit us from putting together a seamless early childhood system. State waiting lists for childcare assistance are growing. Florida has over 46,000 children, North Carolina almost 25,000, Texas, over 26,000. Expecting more childcare funds to be used for pre-K given these waiting lists just does not add up, especially when only 13 percent of childcare funds are allocated for 4 year olds.

Eligibility for childcare assistance is based on the parent's work status. If a parent loses their job or makes a small step up the pay ladder, the child is still eligible for Head Start or pre-K but is expelled from child care. This makes programs reluctant to coordinate with childcare funds since the potential that they will lose childcare funding in the middle of the year makes it difficult for them to budget. Childcare reimbursement rates limit collaboration. Some states pay on an hourly basis. Providers serving Head Start or pre-K children for a portion of the day must reserve a full time slot for a child without getting full time reimbursement, yet the program has to cover its staff and other operating costs for all the hours it is opened. Low child care rates undermine efforts to raise the quality of all early childhood programs.

Thirty-seven states currently pay out-of-date rates. Missouri is not unusual. It bases its rates on what it costs to pay for childcare in 1991. These rates make it nearly impossible to hire qualified teachers and in some cases even purchase books and basic supplies.

Overall, state child care licensing policies leave little room for quality. In 36 states a teacher can begin to work in the childcare center with no training in early childhood development. These low standards are why Head Start performance standards are so important.

The Head Start reauthorization can strengthen collaboration. Programs that don't have waiting lists could be given more flexibility around the children they are serving. If some states are investing in high-quality programs and reaching all their 4-year-olds, Head Start programs should be required to serve 3-year-olds if they are not already doing so. When parents have their income increased slightly above the poverty line, Head Start should have the flexibility to serve their children who still need the benefits of Head

Start. This would ensure that programs that have already invested in classrooms do not have several empty slots.

Similar to provisions in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, the reauthorization could include a demonstration that allowed all children living within a low-income census tracked school district to participate in Head Start and child care without individual income eligibility determinations.

While the research is clear on the effectiveness of early Head Start, Head Start programs could also be given the flexibility to move down to serve infants and toddlers. Another way to encourage collaboration is to target a portion of Head Start expansion funds within states with sizable pre-K programs and programs that collaborate with child care and pre-K programs.

The provisions to encourage collaboration included in Title I of last session's House-passed Head Start bill should also be maintained and would help us come a long way. These new incentives and tools for collaboration should be put in place and allowed to demonstrate that it is possible to increase collaboration and coordination while retaining the bedrock principles of Head Start and its ability not only to serve as a national model for excellence in early education but serve as a national model of how we can meet the multiple needs of our lowest income children and families.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Blank follows:]

**Statement of Helen Blank, Director of Leadership and Public Policy,
National Women's Law Center, Washington, DC**

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I am Helen Blank, Director of Leadership and Public Policy at the National Women's Law Center. I am pleased to have the opportunity to testify on collaboration and coordination efforts among early childhood programs.

The reauthorization of Head Start should enhance and strengthen provisions for coordination and collaboration among Head Start, state prekindergarten, and child care programs in order to achieve critical national goals related to children and parents. All children should enter school ready to succeed. Meanwhile, parents should be able to work to support their children and have the resources they need to be their children's first teachers. The elements that are most essential are continued national leadership to ensure that Head Start can stay on its course of continuous improvement to enable our lowest income children to achieve their full potential and new investments to ensure that programs have the resources to do so.

In order to achieve our goals for children, programs must be required to meet the highest standards. These standards should not be sacrificed for the goal of flexibility. Head Start standards have been higher and more comprehensive than other preschool programs. They require attention to literacy, math, science, arts, physical, social, emotional and other areas of children's development. The standards are rigorous. They are regularly monitored for compliance. They guide good teaching and assessment to improve the lives and readiness of children and the quality of programs.

In order to achieve our goals for parents, programs must be able to respond to the needs of those who are working. Part-day, part-year programs are often inaccessible for parents struggling to support their children and become self-sufficient.

Over the past several years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of a high quality early education experience for young children with increased investments in state prekindergarten initiatives in a number of states. Unfortunately, with frozen federal child care funding, many states have simultaneously lowered child care eligibility criteria, raised parents' co-payments, and lowered reimbursement rates to already low-paid child care providers and as a result diminished families' access to early care and education.

Coordination and collaboration are valuable objectives, but also very, very complex to achieve given the numerous goals that early childhood programs are expected to meet simultaneously. Head Start, prekindergarten and child care pro-

grams are already working together in many communities to meet these goals. However, they face numerous barriers, many of them resulting from state-level policies.

Ongoing Collaborative Efforts

Leaders at the state and local level are already collaborating to use their Head Start, prekindergarten and child care dollars creatively both to bolster quality and to meet the needs of working families. Yet, these collaborations do not always stretch resources so that more children receive prekindergarten.

Most state prekindergarten initiatives allow Head Start agencies to be eligible providers. Five state prekindergarten initiatives are identical or nearly identical to Head Start.

Most prekindergarten programs are part day; some operate for as few as two and a half hours a day. State prekindergarten dollars are often combined with Head Start funds to provide a longer day or full year for children. In some cases, child care dollars are still necessary to extend the day until 5 or 6 p.m., when parents get out of work. California, Colorado, Connecticut, Iowa, Illinois, New York, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Maryland, Texas and Wisconsin are among the states where local programs put Head Start and prekindergarten together. The Massachusetts prekindergarten program, Community Partnerships for Children, which is designed to strengthen existing programs serving three- and four-year olds, offers part-day programs funds to extend their day.

In La Crosse, Wisconsin, one Head Start program operates in an elementary school. The majority of children in the state's prekindergarten program (4K) also qualify for Head Start. They are enrolled in the state 4K program for half a day and Head Start for half a day. Teachers have joint planning time, share lunch with the children, and funds are co-mingled. Other Head Start children in the community are simply bused to a prekindergarten site after their Head Start day and the only co-mingling of funds is for transportation.

Iowa's Hawkeye Area Community Action Program adds funds from the state's Shared Visions prekindergarten program in eight classrooms to enable children to have a longer day. In other classrooms, Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds are used to extend the day. A state program that provides funds to local communities for children ages birth to five is used in seven other classrooms.

In Central Los Angeles, the University of Southern California pairs Head Start and state prekindergarten dollars to put together an eight-hour day for children in one location. In another location, responding to the lack of facilities in urban areas and the need for care for parents working long hours or varied schedules, the grantees keep a facility open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. using Head Start and child care dollars throughout the day.

In Brooklyn, New York, Builders for Families and Youth and the East Side House bring together New York State prekindergarten dollars with Head Start funds to support a longer day.

States are also melding Head Start and prekindergarten dollars to strengthen components of each program. In many states, state prekindergarten dollars are insufficient by themselves to ensure a quality program. Head Start dollars help to raise the quality of prekindergarten programs and allow programs to provide comprehensive services.

Iowa's Hawkeye Area Community Action Program adds Head Start dollars to Shared Visions programs to enable these programs to provide Head Start's comprehensive services.

A California school district grantee combines Head Start, state prekindergarten, Title I, and state First Five early childhood funds to create a full day with comprehensive services.

In Tulsa, Oklahoma Head Start dollars are used in state prekindergarten programs to support comprehensive services.

State prekindergarten funds are also enabling Head Start programs to have teachers with a Bachelor's degree in their classrooms, particularly when the state prekindergarten program requires teachers to have this credential. Wisconsin, New Jersey, Texas, Oklahoma, and New York are among states that use this approach. In Oklahoma, the public school generally hires the teachers who then work in Head Start programs. Teachers are school employees, and the school district ensures that the teacher meets all standards and receives the same compensation as teachers working in schools.

In New Jersey, Head Start programs in Abbott districts—the state's 30 highest poverty districts mandated by the New Jersey Supreme Court to provide children a high quality preschool education—are eligible for Abbott prekindergarten funds to enable them to hire teachers with a Bachelor's degrees.

Programs have also developed joint approaches to recruit children or ensure that services are not duplicated. In La Crosse, a Collaboration Committee meets once a month with representatives of Head Start, child care and prekindergarten programs. If Head Start has a waiting list, it directs families to the state's prekindergarten program. Head Start and the public schools also do collective recruitment and give parents information about all available programs.

In many areas of Washington State, one part of the district is served by the state's prekindergarten or ECEAP program (which is similar to Head Start) while the remainder is served by Head Start.

Head Start programs in states such as Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Alabama, Michigan, New York, Texas, Washington State, Maryland, Minnesota, and Iowa have provided children with a full-day experience and brought Head Start's comprehensive supports to children in child care by offering Head Start in child care settings. This model is especially important in rural communities that find it challenging to meet Head Start's enrollment targets.

In rural Iowa, a Head Start program contracts with community child care centers and public school programs for part-day Head Start slots in existing classrooms.

Community Services for Children, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania brings Head Start to child care classrooms accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The agency provides funding to help child care classrooms meet developmentally appropriate requirements, offer comprehensive services to children and families, and training for child care teachers. Brooklyn's Builders for Families and Youth and East Side House also have innovative collaborations with local child care programs.

While most collaboration occurs on the ground at the local level, several states have formal agreements to facilitate collaboration.

Maryland has an overarching Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at the state level between the state Department of Education and the state Head Start Association guiding local MOUs between local Head Start grantees and the LEAS. Its purpose is for programs to work together effectively to improve outcomes and provide opportunities from children birth through five to achieve school success, to promote collaboration among the parties and their local counterparts and to encourage and support the development of local and/or regional agreements between public school systems and Head Start programs. The state MOU involves joint planning, staff development, curriculum, articulation, transition, and recruitment.

Oregon's Department of Education and the Regional Head Start office have a MOU facilitated by the Head Start Collaboration Project to implement a seamless system for the administration of the state prekindergarten and Head Start program that involves joint monitoring, joint guidance and regulation interpretation, coordination and sharing of training, coordination of calendars and events, coordination of funding and service areas, joint planning for federal and state initiatives, and joint problem solving.

Illinois, which recently significantly increased funding for prekindergarten, includes collaboration as one of six required components for new prekindergarten programs.

While there are countless examples of programs working together, there are still barriers inherent in state and federal policies that limit the quality and duration of services to children.

Barriers to Collaboration in State Prekindergarten Policies

Despite an increase in the number of states that offer prekindergarten, the bulk of funding is still concentrated in ten states.¹ Eleven states have no prekindergarten initiative and others have very small programs.²

State funding is not always stable. Ohio once made an impressive commitment to provide Head Start to every eligible child. Its state Head Start funds gradually were replaced with TANF dollars and currently the state, after a series of programmatic changes, moved its TANF dollars out of Head Start. This lack of constancy has wreaked havoc on programs that had expanded to meet the demand for more Head Start slots. Worse yet, it has left thousands of Ohio's poorest children without the benefit of Head Start. While funding for North Carolina's More at Four program has grown, it has been accompanied by a steady decrease in the state's

¹ W. Steven Barnett, Jason Hustedt, Kenneth Robin, and Karen Schulman. *The State of Pre-school: 2004 State Preschool Yearbook 28* (2004). Florida enacted a state prekindergarten program in December, 2004.

² *Id.* at 24.

Smart Start program which provides supports for children ages zero to five and their families.³ In 2003, funding for prekindergarten decreased in 21 states.⁴

Most states do not offer children and families the comprehensive standards that characterize Head Start. Twenty state prekindergarten programs do not require that any meals be served to children.⁵

Although some state prekindergarten is of high quality, there is significant variability and some state prekindergarten programs have considerable room for improvement. A recent six-state study by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute found that the quality of prekindergarten programs was lower than would be anticipated, and quality was lower than the quality of child care and Head Start classrooms assessed in other studies.⁶

Florida, which recently enacted a universal prekindergarten program, only requires teachers to have a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential—no higher education at all. In contrast, Head Start has met the goal that Congress set out in 1998, for half of all Head Start teachers to have an Associate's degree. Last year's House bill raised the goal to Bachelor's degrees. The low teacher standards of many state prekindergarten programs highlight how important it is that, when facilitating increased coordination, all programs be required to meet the highest standards.

Barriers to Coordination in Child Care Policies

The crisis in child care funding and low child care standards create a great danger that coordination will mean lowering standards rather than raising them. State child care policies are one of the most significant barriers to collaboration. Many families do not have access to help in paying for child care because of long waiting lists and/or low eligibility cut-offs for child care assistance. As of early March 2004, Florida had over 46,000 children on their waiting list, North Carolina almost 25,000, Tennessee 23,000, Texas over 26,000, and California over 200,000.⁷

Another barrier to coordination is that, unlike, Head Start and state prekindergarten, eligibility for child care assistance is based on a parent's work, education, or training status, not the developmental needs of their children. If a parent loses their job, is between jobs, or experiences a modest increase in income, their child while still eligible for Head Start or state prekindergarten, may be no longer eligible for child care assistance and programs serving their child can no longer receive those funds. This can make programs reluctant to coordinate Head Start and or state prekindergarten dollars with Child Care and Development Block Grant funds, since the potential they will lose CCDBG funding in the middle of the year, makes it difficult for programs to budget and to ensure children an uninterrupted learning experience. Since early childhood programs operate on very tight margins, they do not have the resources to cover the costs that were previously paid for by child care funds.

California has created another barrier for working parents by precluding programs from using state prekindergarten dollars with child care dollars.

Child care reimbursement rate policies also limit collaboration. Some states pay on an hourly basis, only reimbursing providers for those hours during which care was provided. This can create a problem for providers who are serving Head Start or prekindergarten children for a portion of the day. They must generally reserve a full-time slot for a child without getting full-time reimbursement. Yet, the child care program must cover its full staff and other operating costs for all of the hours it is open.

Low child care reimbursement rates not only limit collaboration but also undermine the efforts to raise the quality of all early childhood programs. Thirty-seven states currently pay rates based on outdated market rate surveys. In some states rates are particularly low Michigan still bases its rates on 1996 prices and Missouri's rates for preschool-age children are based on 1991 levels.⁸ These rates make it nearly impossible to hire qualified teachers and in some cases purchase books and basic supplies.

Overall state child care licensing policies leave little room for quality. In 36 states, a teacher can begin in working in a child care center with no training in early child-

³Id at 50.

⁴Id.

⁵Id at 44.

⁶Donna Bryant, Dick Clifford, Diane Early, and Loyd Little. Early Developments: NCEDL Pre-kindergarten Study. (2005).

⁷See National Women's Law Center, Child Care Assistance Policies 2001–2004: Families Struggling to Move Forward, States Going Backward (2004), available at <http://www.nwlc.org/pdf/childcaresubsidyfinalreport.pdf> (last visited Mar. 29, 2005) [hereinafter Child Care Assistance Policies].

⁸Id.

hood development. Only 10 states meet national experts' recommendations for class size and child-staff ratios.⁹

Barriers to Coordination in Head Start Policies

Head Start's eligibility cut-off at the federal poverty level is lower than all federal and state-funded child care programs as well as many state prekindergarten programs. This makes it challenging to bring together children in the same classroom.

Another barrier is the differences in teacher credential requirements among programs. Half of all Head Start teachers are currently required to have a minimum of an Associate degree in early childhood. If this requirement was changed to a Bachelor's degree in early childhood, it would make it easier for Head Start programs to collaborate with prekindergarten in those states that required similar degrees.

Head Start Reauthorization

There are ways within the Head Start reauthorization that opportunities for collaboration and coordination could be strengthened.

Head Start programs need more flexibility around the population they serve. If Head Start programs have a waiting list, they need funds to serve more eligible children. Programs that do not have waiting lists could be given more flexibility to respond to the needs of children and families in their communities and to collaborate with prekindergarten. Given the research about the importance of reaching children early, if states are committed to investing in high quality programs for four-year olds, Head Start programs should be required to serve three-year olds if they are not already doing so.

If more parents have increased their incomes slightly above the poverty line after they have gone into the workforce, Head Start should have the flexibility to serve their children who still need the benefits of Head Start. This would ensure that programs that have invested considerable resources in establishing quality classrooms would not have several empty slots. Similar to provisions in the Child and Adult Care Food Program related to family child care, the reauthorization could include a demonstration that allowed all children living within a low-income Census tract or school district to participate in Head Start without requirements for individual income eligibility determination.

With the research clear on the effectiveness of Early Head Start, Head Start programs could also be given the flexibility to move down to serve infants and toddlers.

Another way to encourage collaboration is to target a portion of Head Start expansion funds within those states with sizable prekindergarten programs on programs that collaborate with child care and prekindergarten programs.

A number of positive changes around state planning, state training offices that allowed professional development across all sectors of early childhood, state collaboration grants, joint unified planning on school readiness standards, strategic plans for outreach included in Title I of last session's House-passed Head Start bill would also further enhance collaboration and coordination. Increased teacher requirements included in last session's bill would greatly increase collaboration as well. However, this cannot be accomplished without additional investments to address teacher education and compensation in order to attract and retain teachers with higher qualifications.

These new incentives and tools for collaboration should be put in place and allowed to demonstrate that it is possible to increase collaboration while maintaining the core of Head Start and its ability to serve as a national model for excellence in early education.

Chairman CASTLE. Thank you, Ms. Blank. And I thank all the witnesses again. And I will lead us off, and I yield myself 5 minutes. I don't know what to really ask here because I want a solution that could take any one of you 5 minutes to answer. So you are going to have to sort of help me with your answers.

But the history of what we have done here on this reauthorization, the history of this is sort of interesting. Head Start has basi-

⁹National Child Care Information Center. (2004). "Child Care Licensing Regulations (February 2004): Child: Staff Ratios and Maximum Group Size Requirements." Vienna, VA: National Child Care Information Center at <http://nccic.org/pubs/ratios.odf>, compiled from licensing regulations posted on the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care website at <http://www.nrc.hchsc.edu>

cally doubled in its funding in the last 10 years, which is maybe 10 percent a year on average. And it is still to some degree insufficient. It is not block granted and that has not really been suggested per se. There was a suggestion of changing departments and that was rejected.

We wrote a bill last year which I think it is fair to say the first section, which is most of the bill actually, we pretty well agreed upon which had stricter standards and certainly Ms. Woolsey and Mr. Miller and others thought those were all sound ideas. Then we got into the second part, which was allowing eight states on a pilot basis to be able to do what has been actually discussed here, to integrate their programs more than are done now. And that created animosity and opposition from the Head Start Association and unfortunately calls for a very divided House of Representatives, even though we passed it in the House, it never went forward in the Senate and never became law.

We have to deal with that problem again this year. A lot of you are sort, in fact all of you I think in one way or another have touched on the fact that integrating these programs is a sound idea. There may be deficiencies. Ms. Blank pointed out that the state funding is not on a regular stream, for example, and I would agree with that. The quality of state programs maybe not as good or maybe higher in certain instances. There are states, like Georgia, which has really done a superb job I hear, and I believe that in terms of doing this, others perhaps have not. But, clearly, there are more states now providing at these age groups, particularly 4-year-olds, than ever did before.

There seems to be, in my mind, more reason to have some sort of at least coordination in terms of what we are doing. But I am befuddled because I am don't know how to write the legislation that won't upset the Head Start providers who feel that they want their independence and yet will help us go further in terms of what we are doing.

Some of you have sort of hinted at the fact that that can happen anyhow, perhaps it can. But I am interested in whatever it is that we can do in this legislation to further that. I am not interested in anything that is going to be destructive of Head Start. I am a strong provider—a strong supporter of Head Start in every way we possibly can. But to me we are missing an opportunity here and, quite frankly, I am not too sure that the opposition last year, and the young lady on my right was part of this, was completely on target, at least in terms of the purpose of what we are trying to do versus where we are today in Head Start. And I sort of hear all of you hinting at that.

So you may not be familiar with the exact workings because a lot of you work generally in state programs or whatever but the exact workings of this legislation or how we can sort of bridge this gap that exists. But if you have any suggestions along those lines, I would be interested in hearing them. And part of it may be you don't need to do anything more, it is working. I don't know what you want to say, I just would like to hear from how many I can hear from in the next three or 4 minutes.

Ms. MOORE. Thank you. In Georgia, I think the critical piece is to maintain those standards, those comprehensive standards. We

are fortunate because we have a six and a half hour program. Our program has very high standards as far as the instructional part of our program. Also, I think it is important that we have the same maintenance of effort. That should be a part of the law as well, to make sure that less children are not served in high-quality programs but actually at least we maintain the level of children that are going to be receiving these services. Over 50 percent of our children at considered at risk, economically at risk children in our pre-K program.

So in Georgia, as in many other states, we have children receiving different kinds of programs and different kinds of comprehensive services when they are actually the same children.

So I think if legislation can be very clear to make sure we don't compromise those high standards and the number of children we serve that is already being served through Head Start, that is going to be critical to maintaining the sound principles of Head Start and ensuring states comply by that.

Chairman CASTLE. Any other, anybody else want to speak? Dr. Clifford.

Mr. CLIFFORD. I would just like to add, just to reinforce my position that we need to try this in states. We need to have a few states in which we actually try to give the states authority to bring together all programs that serve children of this age. I think we will only have this true collaboration and coordination when the authority is clearly assigned to one level of government and one agency within state government.

So I like the concept of giving the Governor authority to designate the lead agency in the state but you have to insist that that actually happen. You have to follow and evaluate carefully to make sure that these small number of states that you give the opportunity to try this are in fact complying with the intent of the law.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I believe in the state of Oklahoma for example I have proven, and if you read my written testimony, that collaboration does work and it is working without taking away the consistency and quality of reducing the performance standards. The performance standards must be maintained. That is our bottom line.

Then, teacher qualification funds, if we could get that to raise the teacher's salaries, that would work tremendously across the nation. Maybe raise the income guidelines so that we can serve more and have opportunity to serve more in a higher population.

But overall, I believe that these services don't necessarily need to go to a different state level because when you go to a state level or any other level besides Federal to local level, then you may lose funding at some point in there, that may not reach the needs of those children. That is a major concern that I have with it having another level in there.

Chairman CASTLE. My time is—Ms. Blank wants to say something, I think, my time is going to be up. If I had a follow-up question, I may ask it later, it would be are you meeting resistance in terms of the collaborations you are talking about from the Head Start community at large or if you are not, how do you coordinate that collaboration and is it a fact that maybe we don't have to

change anything in order to do this or is that just region by region or whatever.

I think Ms. Blank wanted to say something on my original question, and then I will go to Ms. Woolsey.

Ms. BLANK. I think historically, if we look at early childhood programs at the Federal level, there is an enormous interest in driving down standards when states have access to the funds. We saw that in the discussion 2 years ago. We have certainly seen it in the history of the child care and development block grant. Remember, we serve the same children and we barely—Representative Castle, I remember you were instrumental in saving the minimal standards on CCDBG in 1996. I think the Head Start performance standards are very, very important for poor children. I don't think there are other agencies in communities that provide the kind of support that Mr. Alexander talked about that Head Start does.

I think there are ways within the reauthorization to improve collaboration without changing the governance of Head Start. I don't think the states have yet shown, even the states that have the biggest investment in pre-K, that they are consistent in quality. Florida is going to be investing \$300 million in pre-K with a very, very low quality program. I don't think that we are there yet, but I do think that Head Start programs can be required to collaborate.

I think we could expand and improve the provisions in Title I of the bill that you worked on last year. And I think we ought to look at where children are, who needs the services, and how we can help programs move around to be more flexible in terms of who they are reaching. And I think that can be done without changing governance.

Chairman CASTLE. Thank you, Ms. Blank. Ms. Woolsey is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. I am a total supporter of voluntary universal preschool and preschool in general, but not instead of Head Start. I see Head Start as serving a special population and serving it well, although not everybody who is eligible, as it should. And I see pre-K for kids like my grandchildren.

My grandchildren have been read to since they were 2 or 3 months old. When they enter kindergarten, they are going to know how to read, and they already do. It is amazing to me the opportunities these little children have because of their parents. I see Head Start as bridging that gap. And I know we know that is what it is about, so the needier enter kindergarten ready to learn at the same level as my children and grandchildren.

So what is my concern with block granting to the states? We have experience with child care block granting. We have experience with IDEA. My state of California is good at taking Federal funds and supplanting with those funds instead of supplementing. And that is exactly what will happen to Head Start if we do that. We will take the emphasis, the focus off of Head Start. We will transfer it to the states, and we will lose that focus.

That is my fear. That is why I am fighting block granting and will continue to fight it because I do not trust the states, including my own. So I am not going to ask a question on that but I just needed you to know that is where I am coming from on this.

What we should be doing with Head Start I believe is looking at the level of education for the Head Start teachers, the pay. In Oklahoma, I believe, you told us that your preschool programs pay public school salaries, and for 4 year degrees. OK, how are we going to start that happening for all Head Start programs, for the needier, more challenged kids? And how are we going to expand those programs so that all eligible children can participate? And which would be more important, you are going to say more Federal funding, I know that answer. Which is more important, the 4-year degrees, expanding the program to all children that are eligible, and/or paying salaries that show the value of these children that these instructors are responsible for?

I will start with you, Helen. You don't have to make a choice.

Ms. BLANK. Well, this is a challenging question because the House-passed bill did not include increases in Head Start sufficient to cover cost of living and the President's budget this year doesn't include a cost of living increase for Head Start. So it is hard to have this discussion to make a choice when it is not a real choice. It is hard to make a reform this way.

I think it is important for Head Start to be on a path of improving qualifications for teachers. About half of states don't require B.A. degree teachers in pre-K and only 13 require them to have early childhood specialties. I think it is important but when we increase the—when Congress increased the requirement for teachers in the last reauthorization to A.A. degree, which was critical, they upped the quality set-aside for Head Start from 25 to 50 percent of new funds and they added significant funds. And with that funding Head Start was able to meet the goals of having 50 percent of all teachers.

I think it is very hard because if you want teachers once they have their degrees to stay in Head Start, to do what Oklahoma does, they have to compensate them. Oklahoma is very fortunate because it is a state whose pre-K financing comes through a school finance formula, it is not general revenue. It is very hard to choose between quality and quantity. I think for many years we chose quantity in Head Start and that weakened the program.

So I don't think we can continually increase the number of children being served without paying attention to quality. Maybe states are going to be making this huge investment in pre-K, although I think 21 states cut their investments in 2003. We could urge them to have high quality and improve Head Start at the same time and put the programs together at the local level and serve more children. I don't think you can choose quantity over quality because in the end you won't be able to defend the kind of support children are getting. That is a little round about.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Can I have one more answer? Let's go to the other end of the table, because I want to make sure you know that I am not questioning your dedication. I am from California, we have had quite an experience with IDEA and watching what our Governors, not just the current one, have done on this.

Ms. MOORE. Thank you for the opportunity to address this. In Georgia, we are fortunate. We have spent over \$2.4 billion on Georgia pre-K program because one reason we have the commitment plus we have lottery and it is supported by lottery funds. Again,

we see that we are continuously serving a lot of the Head Start children because of the high numbers of children who qualify for Head Start services. We are finding those children in our pre-K programs.

We have a very similar program to Head Start, which is called a Resource Coordination Program which is like the family service worker. It is not quite as extensive, however we train, we blend our funds together, and we train these two different kind of programs that deliver social services to our at risk population. So we have the benefit received in Head Start and in our pre-K program.

We have also been able to blend funds so that—Head Start pays for a 4-hour program. Georgia's pre-K program is a six and a half hour program. What we have done is blend our funds and Georgia pre-K program has paid for that two and a half extra hours where Head Start is paying for the 4 hours. In this past year, Georgia spent I think it was \$720,000 to serve around 4,000 to 5,000 extra Head Start children and that saved millions of dollars. So that was a benefit of our collaboration where we do believe we are serving more children, and we are serving that same population.

Ms. WOOLSEY. But your funding stream through the lottery is dedicated to—

Ms. MOORE. Yes, it is dedicated to pre-K and Hope.

Ms. WOOLSEY. So what happens if people actually stop playing Lotto?

Ms. MOORE. Well, actually, when times have been hard in the state of Georgia, we found that more people are buying lottery tickets. So I don't know, maybe we are a gambling state. But it has been to the benefit of education in Georgia, the lottery has.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Can the state decide to use those funds in another way?

Ms. MOORE. Well, I think that could happen on the Federal level for Head Start and for states as well. It takes a legislative, a change in legislation in order to be able to do that.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Thank you very much.

Ms. MOORE. Thank you.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman CASTLE. Thank you, Ms. Woolsey. Mr. Osborne is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OSBORNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will try to be very brief and I am going to try to ask each one of you a question and so you will probably have to be brief too to get it in there, your answer in 5 minutes.

First of all, Ms. Moore, you mentioned some differences between Head Start performance standards and Georgia state standards. How does the state resolve those differences?

Ms. MOORE. The way we resolve that whenever we blend our money is that we honor—of course, we expect them to meet the pre-K guidelines and when they are receiving Head Start funds, we honor the Head Start requirements. So a program that blends the funds for pre-K services have to meet those standards and that is how we have addressed that for our at risk population.

Mr. OSBORNE. OK, thank you.

Jeff, this is a little bit of a related question. Evidently, Oklahoma's pre-K program requires teachers to have a BA degree. And

does Head Start require the same in Oklahoma, is it a uniform standard or what?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Specifically in the collaboration with public schools, the teacher must have a 4-year degree, in many cases, in early childhood. Now we are stretching that over into the Head Start specific centers also. And, yes, in I believe 89 percent, if I am not mistaken, the last I checked, of all teachers, whether in public school collaborations or in the Head Start center have their 4 year degree at this point in time. And so we continue to strive to make that 100 percent.

Mr. OSBORNE. That is pretty remarkable. I would imagine that is kind of hard to do.

Mr. ALEXANDER. It is.

Mr. OSBORNE. Dr. Barnett, I note here that many low-income parents are choosing to send their children to the state pre-K program even though they qualify for Head Start in your state. Why are they choosing to do this? Why are they not choosing Head Start? And what effect is this having on Head Start enrollment in New Jersey?

Mr. BARNETT. I should start out by saying I don't have direct data so I haven't interviewed, surveyed parents about that. I can only make inferences from what we see. New Jersey, in large part because of the court order, has a program that entitles three and 4-year-olds in 31 of our districts with the highest levels of poverty to a high-quality free public education. The standards for that program are higher than the standards for any other program in the country, the spending on that program is twice, more than twice, almost three times the state average.

So this is very atypical and it also provides, because it combines services with child care, up to 10 hours a day for a parent's working year, not just 180 day school year. And we have small classes, high standards for teachers, public school levels of pay, which is twice what the average Head Start teacher would get. These are very, very attractive programs for parents. You get a good education, you can have your child care needs met if you work. If you don't, if you don't need the extended day, there is no requirement to use it. And often the program will be closer to your home.

Mr. OSBORNE. Well, I think that answers the question. Obviously, you are spending a lot more money than Head Start and it is a more intensive program. I didn't realize that so I appreciate your answer.

Dr. Clifford, what are some of the child outcomes that you would expect to see from a better coordinated early childhood system. I know that Ms. Blank kind of pointed out some of the ways where there was cooperation and you pointed out there wasn't a whole lot of cooperation. So I am not sure, maybe you are both looking at the same problem from different angles. But what are some of the outcomes that you would expect to see from better coordination?

Mr. CLIFFORD. Thank you, Representative. To start with your question about outcomes we expect, we expect a whole wide range of outcomes, and we have looked at these in our studies, language, acquisition, mathematical skills, social skills, all across the board, all areas of development for young children. Those are the things we expect to see. And we do see those both in Head Start and in

pre-K programs. We have looked at both of those. And Ms. Blank indicated that there were small gains in pre-K but I would just say that they are about the same level of gains in pre-K we see as what the Head Start studies show for Head Start. So we are not talking about vastly different gains in these programs.

In terms of collaboration, there are problems from a Head Start provider's point of view of coming in and operating a pre-K program as part of the state pre-K effort because they are worried about serving two different masters here, the state and Federal regulators, both then are examining them in detail and it just adds another level of risk for them. So if they can be clear about who is in charge of early childhood services in their state, that will simplify and facilitate their willingness to come and be part of a comprehensive pre-K program for the entire state.

If I could take 1 second and respond to comments that Representative Woolsey made, is that appropriate, Chairman?

Chairman CASTLE. Yes, it is.

Mr. CLIFFORD. I think an issue I have is your comments about wanting your grandchildren served in pre-K and wanting also low-income children served in Head Start raises a serious question for me. In our K through 12 system, the Supreme Court has ruled that separate and equal is not a viable option. And I do worry that if we think about Head Start as something other than part of a single system in the state for serving children, as we move toward universal voluntary pre-K programs, the Head Start children will end up not being in those programs and being systematically separated from their peers who have more advantages. And I think that has serious long-term problems as we develop a system of services for all children in our state.

Ms. WOOLSEY. May I respond, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman CASTLE. A brief response is in order, and then we will go on to the next Member.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Well, here is the thing. Head Start is separate because there is a whole menu that goes along with the Head Start child that is necessary to bring that child up to the level of entering kindergarten ready to learn. There are many kids, for example, who go to preschool, go to child care, who need to be taken care of and learn day in and day out but they are starting with a disadvantage.

Head Start bridges that disadvantage. If we lose that, we will be making a huge mistake. I am not trying to separate kids out. I think the Head Start kids need a better education than my preschool grandchildren because they are going to get it at home too.

Chairman CASTLE. Thank you. We will now go to Mr. Kind.

Mr. KIND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks for holding this hearing today. I want to thank each of our witnesses for your testimony and your unique perspectives because conversations like we are having today, hearings that we have been having in regards to Head Start reauthorization is very important because I think the verdict is in, the studies are there, and we know the importance of quality early childhood education programs and what that means and the difference of these kids' lives and their performance level once they start their formal K through 12 education. And yet sometimes we feel like we are pushing this rock uphill in regards

to the real commitment and the investment of the youth of this country. And again, it is reflected in what the President was requesting in his budget in trying to hold Head Start funding level yet again. They claim they can make up in regards to the quantity shortfall but only by cutting back on technical assistance and training program funding, and I don't think that is the area that we should be going in order to address a potential 25,000 student shortfall with level funding that is proposed in the administration's request.

And I agree with you, Ms. Blank, we can't get into this Draconian choice of quantity versus quality because they are both very, very important.

And there are some model programs throughout the country, and I am very proud in representing an area in western Wisconsin that have done a wonderful job in regards to integration and collaboration efforts. And, Ms. Blank, you referenced the one Head Start program in my hometown of La Crosse, Wisconsin, I think is a classic example of how hard they have worked to integrate.

But what has made that as successful as it has been is how comparable the standards have been at the local level with the Head Start programs. And I think what we may see in regards to the future success of further integration and collaboration is the temptation for harmonization of standards at the state or school board level with the Head Start standards. And the question then becomes are we going to be harmonizing upwards or downwards?

And I think that is where the concern lies with many of us on the Committee because if we see this harmonization downwards, as we are starting to see in various states, that is going to be a problem. And I think that has been one of the major stumbling blocks in regards to the reauthorization of this bill.

And I am not sure how we can go about doing it. I have introduced legislation the last few years, and I am hoping to get a little more bipartisan support, that would establish a Federal incentive grant program for states that want to move forward with pre-K education opportunities. There is a vast inconsistency from not just state to state but school district to school district in regards to offering pre-K, the quality of pre-K, the level of funding, and the type of people, the talent, that they are trying to attract into these programs.

And I think if we are going to be successful in enhancing the quality of these programs, it does come down to economic consideration. And that is what type of salary you are willing to pay, what type of training you are willing to provide, what type of message we are going to send as a nation. Therefore, if we are going to value the type of investment we need to make and that is how we are going to best attract the type of talent that we want to see working with these kids at an early age.

And I just throw it open to any of you, if you have any type of perspective or response in regards to the harmonization that we may see continue in regards to the collaboration or the integration of pre-K and Head Start programs throughout the country. In some areas they are doing it very, very well, in some states, and we have heard testimony to that effect today. But, again, the concern that many of us have in this regard is whether we may see a weakening

of the Head Start standards in a race to the bottom just to offer the citizens that they are doing something but maybe it won't ultimately be in the best interest of these children. Does anyone care to respond?

Ms. BLANK. I think that when we talked about it before, I addressed my concern that once you open this up and you have lesser standards in states, there is enormous pressure to allow flexibility that eventually take apart the Head Start standards. And while they look complex, I think they are important. There has been some discussion about we don't need health because children now have access to Medicaid and SCHIP but we know that access to health insurance for poor children may not get them services. We have Head Start programs that drive 100 miles so children can see a dentist or they make sure that children see providers. There are extra steps that are really critical and that is why you need the detail and the performance standards.

And it is difficult in a time of scarce resources not to create a rush to move more to the middle. And that is not where we need to be to make sure our children, our poorest children succeed.

Mr. KIND. And I know you also mentioned the Florida example, for instance, and what is happening there with they stepped up in investment but maybe at the expense of the quality too that is being offered. And we need to work through this. I think it is vitally important because there clearly has been a trend that we have seen for some time, and we have an opportunity with reauthorization of the bill.

So I would encourage you that if you have further thoughts or suggestions that you get in touch with us and see if there is some way that we can work this out before it starts moving along.

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman CASTLE. Thank you, Mr. Kind. Mrs. Davis is recognized.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to all of you for being here. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about evaluation and assessment as you see it and how as we bring, as some programs are brought together in states how you are pulling out or I guess teasing out in terms of the data, how we are having at least, where the base data is and then how we are building on that because part of the problem that we often have is one of really understanding what is going on.

And making, if the states in fact are doing some experimentation with collaboration, whether we know what accountability measures are in place that are working and which in fact are not. Because in reality we don't have a lot of accountability measures, do we, in the Head Start program, certainly not using the leverage of funding. Programs are getting funding whether we know a lot about what they are doing or not. They are setting up their standards but we are not necessarily pulling out funding because they are not meeting those standards.

Am I correct in that? Have you seen programs where that is happening to a greater extent?

Ms. BLANK. Well, Head Start programs that are seriously deficient are de-funded. In the past several years, there have been close to 150 programs who have lost funding, and there was a hear-

ing on this several weeks ago. No one wants a program that is not doing right by children to continue in their communities and they should be replaced as members agree immediately.

There is a significant debate and my colleagues, Dr. Clifford and Dr. Barnett can talk about this as well, around how we should be assessing children. And there is some concern with the national reporting system that it is inappropriate. Head Start programs do assess their children three times a year to improve teaching practices, and we do an extensive monitoring of Head Start programs that need some improvement as has been discussed.

But Head Start has the most exhaustive monitoring of any Federal system. There are some state pre-K programs that only do a desktop review. And as you sort of look into how programs are doing in accountability, I think we need to be very careful in terms of young children. We don't support testing of older children until the third grade.

Florida, again, has a very inappropriate provision in its pre-K program. It starts with very low quality pre-K, does not do any pre-test of children, and ties funding of pre-K programs to children's test results. I think we have to be very cautious, that is something we didn't do in Leave No Child Behind, as we move on. But there are accountability measures in Head Start and in some pre-K programs. And I don't know if Dr. Barnett and Dr. Clifford want to talk more about that.

Mrs. DAVIS. I think more directing that, not just to Head Start, but I am talking about a blended system, whatever it may be, and how that accountability that is in Head Start is you see being utilized in that way? What leverage would we have as a Federal program in those particular states that would be blending those programs? What do you see happening already?

Mr. CLIFFORD. I will take a little stab at that. I want to say that I completely concur with Ms. Blank's concerns about the National Reporting System that Head Start uses and I am on the technical advisory panel for the reporting system. And I have expressed my concerns about the system. The problem is not with individual instruments in the system as much as it is with the way the system is designed so that it actually goes down to the individual site and assesses progress of children at that site. It puts the teachers who are doing the assessment or the other staff members who are doing the assessment in a bind that says if you tell us kids are not doing well, then we are going to take your money away.

So it is going to corrupt the system itself so the system is not going to be an accurate reporter of how well children do. So let's get that out on the table.

On the other side though, I think there are reasonable ways of conducting evaluations that look at child outcomes as part of that, that can be done using a sampling approach to look at children so you are not doing this with every child and with the teacher having to assess their own children. And so I think there are reasonable ways of doing that. Some of the states, a few of the states that have pre-K efforts are conducting evaluations. Georgia has been doing an evaluation for 10 years or more at least I know. North Carolina, we have a very comprehensive evaluation system for doing that. It is possible to put these together and have a single

evaluation of all pre-K services and early childhood services in the state to see how well this system is functioning.

And it is both at the child level but also are we providing the services that families need so that we should be looking at our ability to help people engage in the workforce effectively as well as how well our children are doing. It is possible to do that comprehensively at the state level.

Mrs. DAVIS. And the best example of that that you have are you pointing to Georgia as a state that has a good example of that?

Mr. CLIFFORD. Georgia has done a lot. I think no state is adequately currently doing an entire broad thing where they are looking at the impact on families and the work life of families as well as children. They tend to focus on the children themselves.

Mr. BARNETT. I actually think there is a relatively simple formula for what an evaluation would look like. It would tell you who is served and how that differs under the different policy regimes, how they are served, what services they get, and it would tell you about the impacts on the children and families. How does this impact on children's learning and development. We can assess that very broadly. If we use sampling rather than trying to do every child, which doesn't make sense, sampling you can then take much more care to get much better measures on children and families.

And you want to follow the money. I think it would be useful to the Subcommittee to have the results of the current Head Start outcome study. It would be nice to know what is happening now. It would also be good to know where the money goes now. I don't mean that in the sense of anybody doing anything wrong with it but all of Head Start, it is a Federal to local program. And one of the advantages of that is surely that they tailor things to their communities. But they also make individual decisions about what a director and staff thinks is best. How much variation is there, what could we learn from the variation that they have already got, and how might that help inform states in their work.

One of the things that occurred to me in response to the Chairman's question was would it be possible to set up a system in which—a study in which states essentially made proposals about—rather than the experts from the outside coming up with proposals for how might states work with Head Start better, let states make proposals about what they would do where they have to make the case that this is in fact going to improve services for kids. It is not going to draw money out of the system.

So from the very start the plan would have to justify that and then of course the evaluation tells you whether in fact it actually occurs. There has to be some degrees of freedom for states or states and Head Start jointly making these proposals to make some changes or we are simply assuming that whatever we have now is a perfect mix of services and there aren't any options for fixing that.

Chairman CASTLE. Thank you, Mrs. Davis. Did you want to add something?

Ms. MOORE. I would like to, if I may, briefly.

Chairman CASTLE. Thank you, Ms. Moore.

Ms. MOORE. And just to speak to what Georgia and the importance of I feel like how we are doing it. First of all, we have done

a sample evaluation of the program for about 10 or 11 years. We have done that. But the other piece of it that is even more important that we cannot lose is that assessment is important on an individual child level and for certain reasons. It is important to be able to identify barriers to learning and also to guide instruction so we can ensure the child is receiving the instruction they need to step up to the next level of learning and ability.

But that can be done in a lot of different ways, ways as far as portfolio assessment, just teachers being trained on how to gather information about the child, not for reporting out information but to guide the instruction for the child to make sure the child gets the best services the child can receive.

So I feel like you have to really look at assessment two ways. And sampling can meet that, definitely does meet that need because it drives policy. We have changed a lot of our policies in our state based on the evaluation that has been done. So there are different ways to look at it and be successful at both.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, I appreciate that, and I certainly understand that there are different ways to assess portfolios, et cetera, but I think sometimes we often have a lot more anecdotal than we have in evaluation and assessment. The anecdotal is important but for us to justify, what is frustrating I think is that sometimes we really don't have the tracking that we need and my interest is in looking at good models where there is some accountability and you can demonstrate that people actually act on what they know and what they find out through those evaluations.

Chairman CASTLE. Thank you, Mrs. Davis.

Mr. Hinojosa is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to compliment the panelists because you all have a very good understanding of the programs and the difficulties and the challenges that we have in the reauthorization.

I want to ask my first question to Dr. Richard Clifford, from North Carolina. Could you please describe how your state preschool program, Head Start programs and other child care programs are collaborating to identify and meet the needs of the limited English proficient children and their families? We refer to them as LEP students but that is of great concern to my congressional district, which has a very, very large migrant population. So I would like to see what Dr. Richard, how he would answer that. And, second, would like to hear from Jeff Alexander from Oklahoma to see how you all are handling LEP students.

Mr. CLIFFORD. I can only give you a partial answer to that. North Carolina certainly has this as a major concern. In the last decade, maybe not the most recent, but in the last 10 years, about 3 years ago, we had the greatest increase in the proportion in the population of Latino, Hispanic/Latino children in the country, with about a 450 percent increase in that population over a 10-year period of time.

So it is a major issue. I also have a son-in-law who is Latino, and so it is a big issue for me personally. We have worked hard in the state to try to bring together people across all of these service delivery agencies to begin focusing on this issue.

But it is one that we are struggling with. The huge growth in the population has made it difficult for us to have enough staff who speaks Spanish to adequately serve the population. And so we need many more Spanish-speaking people.

We have addressed this to some degree through our professional development system where we have tried to provide training for people that cuts across the agencies. This is one area that I think we have done a reasonably good job of making sure that training opportunities, in-service training opportunities that are available for one segment of the population of teachers are available to all staff across all of the agencies. That is our best response so far. But we have a long way to go. It is something we have to work on.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you, I will respond to that after I hear from Jeff.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Thank you. In some of our areas where the migrant has come in, we don't have like a migrant program but in some of our areas we serve the Hispanic population or other, Asian, et cetera, by we applied in one area for a specific grant just for that, the Hispanic community because there was a large population in one area. That was before my time of becoming the assistant director in our area, but we continue to serve that population in that area. And it is a growing need and we are collaborating with the Workforce Investment Act Agency in our area to provide a training for our teaching staff specific for daily conversational Spanish because they may have one student in a classroom.

Now we also are serving in the Choctaw Nation. That is another area in which we are working with those Nations to—in fact, the Choctaw Nation is now collaborating with us, they received a grant, if I am not mistaken, to provide the Choctaw language in some of our classrooms because there is that large variety.

So in a variety of ways—we can address it in a variety ways, but we are working toward meeting that need in the state of Oklahoma.

Mr. HINOJOSA. I commend you for the statement you made earlier that 87 percent of your teachers have bachelor's degrees. That is outstanding and extraordinary. I want to say that the area that I represent is 80 percent Hispanic. We have over 100,000 migrant children, that is their home base where I was born and raised in south Texas. And so we have found ways in which to address the lack of what Dr. Clifford answered and that is lack of trained bilingual students—sorry, teachers who can deal with this growing population that you pointed out to us.

The University of Texas at Pan American in Edinburg, Texas has some of these programs and training programs. The Region One Education Service Center, which is part of TEA, Texas Education Agency, located in Edinburg, also has this kind of a program. I recommend that you consider talking to them and seeing if maybe you all can exchange information that would help you.

The time has come for us to go vote, and I am going to try to bring to closure my last question, which is for Ms. Blank, Helen Blank. You recommended that Head Start programs be more flexible. We know that Hispanic families and rural families do not have the same access to quality preschool programs as we have in other states. And I see that in that many of our teachers get paid min-

imum wages or slightly higher than minimum wage, which \$5.25 is the minimum wage, so they get paid \$6.25 an hour and that doesn't compare with some of our much higher level quality programs. So how can we encourage or expand Head Start programs to better serve these populations?

Chairman CASTLE. Ms. Blank, can you please—

Ms. BLANK. Be quick?

Chairman CASTLE. Yes. And Mr. Hinojosa is correct, a vote is—

Ms. BLANK. I think we can talk about this more later. I do think giving Head Start programs the flexibility if you don't have programs in rural areas to do Head Start and they do in other settings if there is a child care program or if there is a school to provide Head Start in those settings because if you give parents certificates, they are not going to find the quality care either. On how much you pay teachers, that is the same issue we talked about with Congresswoman Woolsey, we have to find the resources and it is really essential because you want people to come into programs and you want them to be able to stay there once they get some training. And you need the resources to be able to do that.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman CASTLE. Thank you, Mr. Hinojosa. Obviously, the votes have commenced and we all have to run over to the floor to do that. But I want to thank the panel for being here today. I will say very briefly in closing that I am still concerned about the collaboration issues. We are dealing with two different animals, I am not saying that in the negative sense or a pejorative sense, but obviously you have state programs running a lot of pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, early childhood programs. You have some other independent programs. Head Start, though, is a separate entity and in some cases there is resistance, in other cases there is cooperation.

But the fact that there is not good cooperation concerns me. I actually agree with Ms. Woolsey in that it is a separate program and it is aimed at a particular segment of our population, I think that is very important. But I still think the coordination is also important. And I also agree with those of you who say we need more accountability as well. And that may be different accountability, by the way. There is maybe extraneous accountability going on right now to be candid.

So I am not totally satisfied that we have answered all the questions yet, but it is very helpful to hear what you are saying. And as we get closer with the states doing more along the lines of early education, along with Head Start, to me that collaboration is more important than ever. I just hope we can write legislation that somehow we can all agree on, that we don't get into a fight over that would be helpful ultimately for these children who obviously need that. So that is what we are trying to do and where I am coming from.

And I yield to Ms. Woolsey if she wants to say anything, but she looks like she wants to run and vote. So we will stand adjourned. And, again, we thank all of you for being here today.

[Whereupon, at 12 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]