

Early Head Start for Family Child Care Partnership Week 2012

Introduction

I'm Yvette Sanchez Fuentes, Director of the Office of Head Start.

And I'm Shannon Rudisill, Director of the Office of Child Care. Thank you for taking the time to join us today as we kick off the Early Head Start for Family Child Care Partnership Week. As you might know, this administration in this department have been implementing bold initiatives to raise the level of quality across all our programs. We've taken steps to strengthen program performance and improve our children's outcomes. We've also made it a priority to pursue a comprehensive approach to helping more children in low-income families access high-quality early childhood services. Through the Office of Head Start's Road Map to Excellence and the Office of Child Care's Pathways and Partnerships for Child Care Excellence, we are enacting an agenda that improves educational outcomes among children and promotes their long-term success.

Yvette: We believe that working parents need high-quality child care choices for children of every age and in every setting to raise healthy, happy, and successful children. The Early Head Start for Family Child Care Project was a joint initiative of the Office of Head Start and the Office of Child Care to design, implement, and evaluate a replicable framework that supports a partnership between Early Head Start and family child care. The overall goal of the project was to increase the quality of early care and education for low-income children in family child care homes by coordinating comprehensive health and social services through these partnerships between Early Head Start programs and child care providers. Shannon, can you tell us more about the project?

Shannon: Sure. For this project, the Office of Head Start and the Office of Child Care selected 22 Recovery Act-funded programs nationwide to participate. These selected programs worked at the local and state levels towards higher quality care for low-income children in family child care homes, coordinated comprehensive services for their families, increased capacity for family child care providers, and strong partnerships that support coordinated service delivery in communities. Teams worked at the state level to align policies, and worked to build the understanding that both agencies have a role to play in supporting quality through family child care, and ways to overcome obstacles. Finally, teams worked at the local level to connect family child care providers to resources. They assessed the strengths and quality improvement needs of family child care providers and built partnerships with stakeholders.

Yvette: There are many lessons learned from the project, and valuable resources developed to support the ongoing partnership with Early Head Start and family child care. This week, we'll present a unique opportunity to learn more about the successes of the project and how to access the information from the project in your communities. Join us each day this week at 2 p.m. (ET) as we celebrate Early Head Start for Family Child Care Partnership Week.

Shannon: Also, don't forget to join us this Friday for a live teleconference where you can ask your questions and get more ideas to bring back to your community. We're really excited about this week, and we look forward to seeing you tomorrow.

Yvette: Now, please sit back and enjoy a wonderful video on Early Head Start and family child care partnering from the Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo, Inc. in California.

[Video begins with music] Narrator: The Migrant and Seasonal Early Head Start Family Child Care Project is nationally recognized through a unique partnership between two federal agencies, the Office of Head Start and the Office of Child Care. The purpose of this partnership is to increase the quality of care for all low-income children in licensed family child care homes by supporting a partnership between Early Head Start and family child care providers. The goals of this project are to achieve the following: higher quality care for low-income children in family child care homes; coordinated comprehensive service for families; support to increase the number of family child care providers available to serve migrant and seasonal children and their families; strong partnerships that support coordinated service delivery in communities. At its heart, the project opens up Early Head Start's doors to family child care providers, giving them access to Early Head Start's extensive resources, support, and comprehensive services.

Let's find out more about this program. First, what is quality child care to you? Maybe you're a working migrant parent with young children who is looking for a child care program in your neighborhood. You would be considering a program that you believe is safe; where you're comfortable leaving your children; in a warm, home-like setting that provides loving care; a place where the caregiver speaks your family language; and is open during hours that are convenient to your work schedule. As a parent, you want the best possible child care for your young children -- a place where they have opportunities to grow, develop, and have learning experiences that support a child in reaching his or her fullest potential. A Migrant Seasonal Early Head Start family child care home may be the place for you and your children. New national studies show that a good child care option -- possibly the best child care option -- for infants and toddlers is a high-quality family child care home.

The Migrant and Seasonal Early Head Start Family Child Care program takes children from birth to three years old and has many benefits. Infants and toddlers are cared for in a home-like setting that reinforces the family's culture and promotes primary language retention. Siblings can attend the same program and benefit from small, multi-aged groups. Family child care homes are often conveniently located close to your home, with flexible program hours. And, families can develop relationships with a caregiver who speaks your family's language. Typically, males play an active role in the family child care business, giving children access to a male role model. In addition, the father engagement program actively involves fathers and providers through its family child care programs to ensure fathers are active participants in the care and education of infants and toddlers. And -- a huge, invaluable benefit -- your family gains access to Early Head Start's ongoing support services; services that include: health, nutrition, social, emotional, and cognitive growth and development.

Alma Hernandez: [Speaking in Spanish] The benefits that it has given me are huge. My girl has learned

more things about communicating, sharing.

Daniel Cervantes: [Speaking in Spanish] The caregiver is a teacher because she teaches a lot to my little girl. If she can't learn values from me, she can still learn the values we will give her at home.

Cecilia Salas: [Speaking in Spanish] It is important the girls feel they are part of a family, like they are in a house. It helps them a lot and they love the provider a lot; even the little one calls her mama.

Jose Hernandez: [Speaking in Spanish] The kids in the program are the most safe. I'm very grateful because, also, they provide wipes, clean diapers, food, and they feed them very well thanks to the provider who cares very well.

Jesus Lopez: [Speaking in Spanish] My son is a special boy that needs special care, so the benefits in the center are that they are capable of giving the development that he needs, like thinking and speaking. It fascinates him. I feel very, very happy and proud to be able to give my son a feeling that I am supporting him in his development, that he feels that he isn't alone.

Narrator: Maybe you're a licensed child care provider who wants to more fully serve families in your community. You may be interested in accessing additional education, networking with your peers, having regular access to support and consultation services, and improving the quality and marketability of your program. This program gives you the opportunity to combine the benefits of your friendly home setting with key quality components and the resources of the Migrant Seasonal Early Head Start program. For you as a provider, combining the best of both worlds is good marketing. It creates an additional child care option; maybe a perfect solution for both family child care providers and migrant families.

Let's look at how you, as a family child care provider, would benefit by taking part in this partnership. Through this partnership, providers gain many opportunities. You receive training, assistance, and mentorship from experienced Early Head Start staff to upgrade the standard of care for all of the children you serve. You gain access to professional growth opportunities to further your career and network with other family child care providers. MSEHS recruits and enrolls eligible children for you. The program can provide some materials to benefit children in the program, as well as loan equipment and toys to promote learning. With these valued Early Head Start-based assets, you increase the marketability of your small business and gain a new source of reliable added income.

This child care option has been in existence through the Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County since the early '90s. The project is a very cost-effective way to accomplish our goals to fund and sustain quality care for low-income children through the family child care option; and we want to get the word out so you know about it. It's a win-win for infants and toddlers; for working, low-income families; for family child care providers; for the whole community.

Orquidia Frausto: As a family child care specialist for Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo, I

can assure you that a high-quality, rich environment for children is one where there is a lot of communication between the provider and the child. My job is to assist providers with every aspect of their business. I am there to provide assistance with paperwork; their environments -- outside, inside; appropriate activities for different ages of the children they work with; nutrition; health; safety. We assist them with every single thing that we can.

Josefina Paz: [Speaking in Spanish] It has helped me grow professionally. I have a lot of communication with my specialists.

Ana Maria Gutierrez: [Speaking in Spanish] The comprehensive services help me a lot because the specialists get here and they are going to see what I don't see. It has helped me have a sixth sense to observe, hear, and see that a child is in good health dentally when they put the brush in to brush their teeth, and security because I'm always watching them. And all in all, all of this has helped me a lot, not only with the kids I care for but also with my own family.

Guadalupe Ponce: [Speaking in Spanish] They also help us make sure that the children have everything in order, such as the cubbies; and the parents like all this when it's like a little school.

Josefina: [Speaking in Spanish] And economically, I have helped my children in the universities. I have three kids in universities, and I did it with money from taking care of children.

Narrator: Many will agree that children are our most valuable resource. The Migrant and Seasonal Early Head Start Family Child Care Project gives our providers, our most vulnerable children, and working parents the tools to succeed. That's good for all of us in the community. [Video ends with music]