



Response to the Draft CCDF Plan
January 6, 2016

The Wisconsin Head Start Association (WHSA) commends the Division of Early Care and Education, Department of Children and Families on the 2016-2018 draft CCDF plan. We believe that it lays out both the opportunity and the necessity to involve parents as partners in the learning of their young child. Head Start programs have long believed that effective family engagement must be a key component for successfully preparing children for their demanding future.

The Wisconsin Head Start Association is made up of 42 grantees providing Head Start services and 20 grantees providing Early Head Start services to families in our state over the last 50 years. We serve every one of the 72 counties in our state and interact with 424 school districts that serve the children of our state. We provide comprehensive services for the education of our youngest and most venerable Wisconsin citizens.

Given our 50-year history of working with young children in Wisconsin who struggle with poverty, we know that working with parents as partners is critical to our success as Head Start programs. The low-income parents that we serve learn how to take responsibility and support the learning of their child. Head Start, at its core is a dual-generation program that gives careful attention to our internal family engagement plan and simultaneously integrates a complex child development plan. Through parent education, support groups and daily encouragement from Head Start staff; parents realize the importance of their child's learning and receive materials and ideas that are used at home.

WHSA looks forward to continuing and growing our collaborative efforts with the State of Wisconsin. The following comments are provided for consideration.

Section 2- Family Engagement efforts

On page 25 Early Head Start(EHS) Partnership Grants are noted with 4 grantees. WHSA would like to see wording that allows for expanding the number of these grants in the next few years. Babies are not born with an instruction manual. Many parents are not sure where to begin with making positive gains in early developmental milestones. Engaging at-risk families at the earliest point when young children are most vulnerable, can make a big difference in supporting brain development, leading to gains in later school experiences. EHS programs are comprehensive in nature, supporting families in multiple ways as example- with mental health, parent education, social services and early reading support. **We encourage wording that looks to expand the number of the grants.**

Section 4- Equal Access to Quality Child Care Services

On page 74 under the heading "Improve the quality of child care programs with grants or contracts for:" **we suggest checking the box for working with Head Start programs.** It will be important in the future years that both Head Start programs are seen and included in quality supports to our youngest children. We could begin the dialog on this opportunity within the next year.

Section 6- Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce

On page 117 the CCDBG Act of 2014 includes the idea of working with Head Start programs to support quality activities. **The WHSA thank the State of Wisconsin and DCF** for continuing to include Head Start programs in the dialog on improving high quality child care services throughout our state.

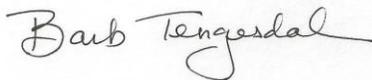
Head Start programs like all child care and education programs find it difficult to recruit staff and teachers. Local programs are caught in the struggle with child care business trying to hire the best people to work with young children. Although the plan describes the importance of recruiting and retaining a Child Care workforce, **WHSA believes new ideas and paradigms must be developed to bring new people into the workforce without too many barriers.** Wages and compensation are components critical to growing the field of ECE. **WHSA suggest a Think Tank of the best minds be gathered to look at research, data and best practices nationwide to help Wisconsin solve this problem.** It does not mean lowering standards to bring unqualified workers into the field, it does mean we must develop a new paradigm for growing the workforce. **This idea could be added under section 6.**

Section 7- Support Continuous Quality Improvement

On page 149 Head Start programs are listed as a collaborative partner. **WHSA commends the past efforts for being included in the work that DCF does to support and encourage family engagement.**

WHSA compliments the thoughtfulness that went into creating the draft CCDF plan. On behalf of the young children and families of Wisconsin, we are pledged to do what we can to drive these actions forward. WHSA believe that for children of our state to succeed in their future, the thoughts, recommendations and requirements that will come from this plan are of absolute critical importance. We know the important dimensions identified in this plan will make a major difference in our delivering upon the promise that Every Student Succeeds in America.

Thank you for your attention to our recommendations.



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Please Note:

Attached is *What Really Makes Head Start Work? You May Be Surprised!* a thoughtful piece written by Dr. Tim Nolan, a long-time Wisconsin Head Start Director and author of numerous works associated with early childhood education and leadership. A number of Head Start agencies have adopted the term "Compassionate Partnering™" as a part of their mission statement-training their staff teachers, parents and managers in how to accomplish it most effectively. It is being used to shape the culture of compassionate partnerships between parents and staff members in Head Start programs from Florida to Alaska.