



Is the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships Opportunity Right for your Program?

The Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) Opportunity can benefit children, families, and child care programs in many ways such as by increasing the quality of child care services, expanding access to child care for low-income families, and acting as a source of revenue for both Head Start grantees and local child care programs. However, as with any new program there are many points to consider when determining if the opportunity is right for your organization. The following information can help you analyze the costs and benefits of applying for the grant and assist you in making a determination whether or not EHS-CCP services are a good fit for your agency.

There are differences in the way that child care programs and Head Start programs operate: The EHS-CCP program requires that you partner with child care providers that will have different perceptions of what constitutes quality, different staffing plans, program structures (ratios/group sizes), and financial management practices. Do you have the capacity to mentor child care programs towards a shared definition of quality, through the implementation of comprehensive services, and can you develop systems to promote increased alignment of program and operational management practices? If, so which staff will work towards these goals? If not, how can you utilize grant funds to increase your capacity in a manner that will also benefit your Head Start program. For example, do you need another level of management or a coordinating team to address these issues?

What can Head Start programs learn from Child Care Providers? In many service areas, as state preschool has expanded, Head Start programs are increasingly struggling to meet enrollment goals. Child Care providers have been operating in a competitive early childhood arena for years and many of them have developed marketing plans, strategies, and recruitment activities that can help Head Start providers revise their practices so they can further showcase the benefits of Head Start in their community. For example, one EHS-CCP program funded in the last round observed how a child care partner provided on-site tours for families as part of their marketing strategy and incorporated this practice into their Head Start recruitment efforts to educate families and showcase how Head Start is different from other programs. Also, frequently child care providers have worked with child care subsidies for much longer than Head Start programs and can often assist Head Start in establishing practices for tracking child care subsidies, resolving billing issues with the state, and in navigating other aspects of the child care subsidy system.

Do you Need to Convert Slots to EHS or Prepare for the Implementation of the new Head Start Performance Standards? Leverage the EHS-CCP Partnership Opportunity: Many programs are seeking to convert slots from Head Start to Early Head Start. In addition, programs will also be required to transition from part-day Head Start programs to full-day services when the revised Head Start Program Performance Standards go into effect this summer/fall. The EHS-CCP is an ideal vehicle for making changes for your program, before you decide to pursue conversion because it provides the opportunity for programs to request start-up funds, which are not available when you convert slots using the current conversion procedure. Examine the EHS-CCP opportunity with an eye towards the future of your program and determine how you can leverage facilities, staff, and new funds provided under the EHS-CCP opportunity to benefit children, families and your community.

If you are thinking about applying for EHS-CCP and need assistance, Heartland is happy to help. Our staff are seasoned and experienced grant writers that can guide you through the full proposal development process from start to finish. Our fees can also be modified to match the budget of most agencies. Please contact us by emailing andrea@heartlandgrants.org for additional information about our services.