Strengthening Families and the Community:

A Formal Collaboration between County of San Diego Child Welfare Services and Neighborhood House Association Head Start
Introductions

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Ralphie

June 2011 – Mother, Janet, completes Early Head Start application for Ralphie, 18 months
July 2011 – Ralphie begins EHS
August 2012 – Ralphie is placed in a CWS emergency shelter
September 2012 – Ralphie is placed in a foster home
April 2013 – Ralphie returns to mother for 60 day trial
By the end of the next 90 minutes, you will be able to . . .

- Cite policy recommendations supporting formal collaborations between child welfare agencies and early childhood programs.

- Understand the steps required to develop and implement a Child Welfare Services/Head Start collaboration

- Describe strategies and tools for implementing Child Welfare Services/Head Start collaboration goals
Head Start and Child Welfare Services: Why Collaborate?

Children from birth to five are the age group most likely to experience abuse and/or neglect.¹

San Diego County Child Welfare Services

- 248,082 – Number of children 0 - 5 in 2012

2012 Data
- 17,122 children had allegations of child abuse¹
- 1,177 children entered foster care (CY 2012)
- 752 children received Family Maintenance²
- 1,338 were in placement²
- 976 children exited¹
- 621 reunified, 281 exited to adoption

¹ January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012
² January 1, 2013
Data Source: UC Berkley
Working Towards a Comprehensive Continuum of Care
Abuse and/or neglect have a negative and sometimes lasting impact on a child’s development, health, and mental health.²

High-quality early care and education has been shown to have strong, positive, and enduring effects for children growing up in high-risk environments.³

Head Start and Child Welfare Services have similar purposes:

- Enhance the safety, permanency, and well-being of children
- Strengthen the community and families through partnerships and engagement
- Support the development of strong, resilient children and families
Important Recommendations for CWS/HS Collaboration

**Head Start and Child Welfare Partnerships:**

**Child Welfare and Child Care Partnerships:**

**Child Welfare and Head Start Partnerships:**

Taking the first steps towards collaboration.

- Determine scope of collaboration
  - What EHS/HS agencies will be included?
  - What CWS agencies will be included?
- Identify individuals from each agency who will be critical decision makers
- Schedule a meeting
Joint planning meetings

- Introductions
- Explanations of each agency’s programs and services
- Discussion of history of collaboration between CWS and HS (if any)
- Discussion of community-specific trends
- Identification of joint goals
- Development of strategies to reach goals
- Development of a work plan and task assignments
San Diego HS/CWS Goals

1: Increase application and enrollment of CWS involved families in EHS/HS
2: Enhance CWS staff’s knowledge of EHS/HS programs and services
3: Enhance EHS/HS staff’s understanding of CWS
4: Enhance comprehensive support services to CWS involved families
Goal #1: Increase application and enrollment of CWS involved families in EHS/HS

- Established a streamlined referral process for CWS-involved families – one point of contact for all families referred by CWS
Goal #1: Increase application and enrollment of CWS involved families in EHS/HS

- Developed a document (04-99) for CWS-involved families which provides information about HS/EHS, including listings of EHS/HS locations, and instructions for accessing the streamlined referral system.
Goal #1: Increase application and enrollment of CWS involved families in EHS/HS

- Updated selection criteria to include prioritization points for CWS families
- Developed a CWS Letter of Support (04-100) to document CWS Referral
Goal #1: Increase application and enrollment of CWS involved families in EHS/HS

- Sent a “Special Notice” to all CWS staff to inform them of collaboration and streamlined referral process
- Trained EHS/HS enrollment staff on streamlined referral process
Goal #1: Increase application and enrollment of CWS involved families in EHS/HS

- Head Start utilizes a “CWS Referral Tracking Log” across entire grantee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact: Date/Name</th>
<th>Child: Name/DOB</th>
<th>Cargiver: Name/Type/Phone</th>
<th>Social Worker: Name/Phone</th>
<th>Requested Site/Program:</th>
<th>Application Completion Date</th>
<th>PROMIS: Date of Data Entry</th>
<th>Enrollment Date/Location</th>
<th>Additional Comments:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Goal #2: Enhance CWS staff’s knowledge of EHS/HS programs and services

- Ongoing training of CWS Managers, Supervisors, and Workers on EHS/HS program, services, and the streamlined referral process

Goal #3: Enhance EHS/HS staff’s understanding of CWS

- Ongoing training of EHS/HS family support staff and home visitors on CWS programs and services
Goal #4: Enhance comprehensive support services to CWS involved families
• Head Start program design supports a trans-disciplinary system of care
Goal #4: Enhance comprehensive support services to CWS involved families

- CWS and HS shares information and documentation (e.g. physicals, dentals, attendance records, IEPs, developmental screenings, etc.)

- CWS and HS work together to make referrals to community agencies/partners (e.g. school district, Regional Center, mental health providers, domestic violence shelters, etc.)
Goal #4: Enhance comprehensive support services to CWS involved families

• HS staff is invited to attend CWS’s Team Decision-Making Meetings (TDMs)

• CWS Emergency Response staff contact HS’s FCP Coordinator during investigations to determine EHS/HS enrollment status
Lessons Learned

Learn each other’s terminology

Be Flexible

Identify ONE dedicated staff person at each agency
Keys to Success

Relationships, relationships, relationships!
The single biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

George Bernard Shaw
Next Steps... 

- Quarterly Meetings between CWS/HS to evaluate collaboration, discuss challenges, and make adjustments as needed
- Expansion of CWS/HS collaboration to other HS grantees in San Diego County
- Ongoing training for EHS/HS staff and CWS staff
- Development of therapeutic classroom
THANK YOU!

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JOINT LETTERS/INFORMATION MEMORANDUMS:

These letters and memorandums were sent directly to Head Start and Early Head Start grantees and delegate agencies, Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) lead agencies, and state and local child welfare agencies as a way to reinforce the commitment that early childhood programs and child welfare agencies have of working together to support some of our country's most vulnerable children and families. The purpose of providing this information is to improve young children's access to comprehensive, high quality early care and education services and to ensure continuity for children in early childhood settings.


RESEARCH BRIEF/REPORTS:

This research brief links current research to partnerships between early childhood and child welfare programs. It outlines the need for and challenges of these partnerships.


These reports were commissioned to summarize and analyze the original work of the Early Head Start/Child Welfare Services Initiative and provide lessons learned and in-depth information about these projects.


PAPERS/ARTICLES:

The following papers and articles have been developed by organizations external to the Federal government and include valuable information about exploring and implementing meaningful partnerships across early childhood and child welfare systems.


TIP SHEET:

This tip sheet has been developed by the Early Childhood-Child Welfare Partnership as a practical resource to be used by multiple audiences; including policymakers, program administrators, and services providers. Additional tip sheets will be posted soon.


WEBSITES:

These websites contain additional information about various agencies and their technical assistance products; including ways to build partnerships.


Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) [http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov)


FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD-CHILD WELFARE PARTNERSHIP: ECCWPartnership@pal-tech.com