



# **A Portrait of Head Start Programs: Findings from FACES 2009**

OPRE Report 2017-72  
September 2017



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**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:**

The authors would like to express their appreciation to our Project Officer Maria Woolverton, to Nina Hetzner, and to other federal staff at OPRE and the Office of Head Start. We thank the Mathematica team, including Annalee Kelly, Barbara Carlson, Anne Bloomenthal, Jennifer McNulty, Lizabeth Malone, Sara Skidmore, Melissa Hepburn, Serge Lukashanets, Marcia Comly Rigby, Brian Takei, John Carsley, Erin Slyne, Ann Ponti, Dan O'Connor, Felicia Hurwitz, Kevin Manbodh, Anca Dumitrescu, Timothy Bruursema, Katherine Burnett, Kristina Rall, Katherine Bencio, Miriam Loewenberg, Cheri Vogel, Amanda Bernhardt, Laura Bernstein, Kimberly Ruffin, Alfreda Holmes, Colleen Fitts as well as Francene Barbour, Joan Gutierrez, Patti Vinci, and Jenny Smith at the Survey Operations Center and all of the Mathematica field and telephone staff who collected the data. The report also benefited from careful editing by Betty Teller. We are also grateful for the contributions of our partners at Juárez and Associates and the Educational Testing Service, as well as members of our Technical Work Group. Most of all, we offer our gratitude to the staff, families and children of the 60 FACES 2009 programs across the country, who once again opened their doors and shared their time with us.

# A Portrait of Head Start Programs: Findings from FACES 2009

**OPRE Report 2017-72**

**September 2017**

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Contract Number: HHSP23320092900YC  
Mathematica Reference Number: 40142.118

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*Suggested citation:*

E. Moiduddin, A. Kopack Klein, L. Tarullo, J. West, and N. Aikens. (2017). *A Portrait of Head Start Programs: Findings from FACES 2009*. OPRE Report 2017-72. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



## ABSTRACT

This report is part of a series of reports describing data from the 2009 cohort of the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES 2009). Other FACES 2009 reports and data tables address the characteristics of Head Start children, their families, classrooms, and programs at program entry (Hulseley et al. 2011), during their first year in the program (Moiduddin et al. 2012), and child outcomes from program entry through program exit (Aikens et al. 2013). Another report focuses on describing aspects of the Head Start family and classroom environment that may support children’s development (Malone et al. 2017), and a brief explores children’s developmental progress and kindergarten environments in more depth (Aikens et al. 2017). The current report provides a portrait of Head Start programs, including characteristics of programs and management staff, supports provided to staff at all levels, and program services. An accompanying table set (Kopack Klein et al. 2017) provides additional detail on the findings in this report.

FACES 2009 is the fifth in a series of nationally representative cohort studies of Head Start children, their families, and the programs they attend (previous cohorts were initiated in 1997, 2000, 2003, and 2006). The FACES 2009 child sample was selected to represent 3- and 4-year-old children as they entered their first year of the program, drawing on participants from 60 selected programs from across the country. FACES includes a battery of child assessments across many developmental domains; surveys with children’s parents, teachers, and program managers; and observations of classroom quality. The study is conducted by Mathematica Policy Research and its partners—Educational Testing Service and Juárez and Associates—under contract to the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a portrait of Head Start programs, including characteristics of programs and management staff, supports provided to staff at all levels, and program services. It is part of a series of reports describing data from the 2009 cohort of the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES 2009). A set of accompanying data tables (Kopack Klein et al. 2017) contains additional information on the study design, instruments, and measures used for this report.

### Methods

**Sample.** In total, 60 programs, 129 centers, 486 classrooms, 439 teachers, and 3,349 children and their parents participated in the study in fall 2009. In a spring 2010 follow-up, we interviewed 86 percent of children's parents and 99 percent of children's lead teachers, and completed observations in 370 Head Start classrooms.

**Data collection.** This report draws on FACES data from interviews with program directors, education coordinators, center directors, and teachers in fall 2009 and/or spring 2010. We also use administrative data from the Head Start Program Information Report (PIR).

**Population estimates.** The statistics we present in this volume are estimates of key characteristics of the population of Head Start programs and/or centers. The data used to report on Head Start program, center, teacher, and classroom characteristics are weighted to represent all Head Start programs and/or centers. All group differences and associations cited are statistically significant at the  $p \leq .05$  level unless otherwise noted.

### Key Findings

**Characteristics of Head Start programs and staff.** Most Head Start programs are community action agencies (42 percent) or private or public nonprofits (35 percent). Eighteen percent of programs are in school systems. The majority of program directors (86 percent), education coordinators (81 percent), and center directors (68 percent) have at least a B.A. degree. Half (50 percent) of the program directors have a graduate or professional degree, as do about a quarter of center directors (28 percent) and education coordinators (25 percent). Program directors have higher average salaries than either

center directors or education coordinators (\$74,544 versus \$45,196 and \$44,413, respectively).

**Support provided to Head Start staff.** Eighty-two percent of teachers in a program were trained on their main curriculum in the last 12 months and nearly all (99 percent) received some type of curriculum support. One-third (33 percent) of teachers in a program are currently enrolled in teacher-related training; 46 percent of them are pursuing a B.A. or graduate degree. Seventy-two percent of teachers in a program have a mentor. More than 90 percent of programs consult with state training and technical assistance (T/TA) specialists, TA content specialists, or other TA providers, and participate in trainings given by TA providers.

**Head Start services.** Programs provide many services beyond child development services to address families' own goals, interests, and needs. The FACES 2009 Program Director Survey asked about a selection of services that may be of interest to families. Of 15 services for families included in the survey, programs provide 12, on average. Of 13 services for children with disabilities, programs provide 11, on average. Programs use a combination of direct provision and contracting for these services.

Ninety-three percent of programs serve children or families who speak a language other than English at home and are considered dual language learners (DLL). Among those programs, 99 percent have bilingual teachers or assistant teachers.



## INTRODUCTION

Head Start is a national program that aims to promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services to enrolled children and families. The Head Start program provides grants to local public and private nonprofit and for-profit agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to economically disadvantaged children and families. The Office of Head Start places special emphasis on helping preschoolers develop the reading and mathematics skills they need to be successful in school, as well as on providing support for social, emotional, and physical development. The program also seeks to engage parents in their children's learning and promote their progress toward their own educational, literacy, and employment goals (Administration for Children and Families [ACF] 2009).

In 2008, the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) in the DHHS Administration for Children and Families (ACF) funded Mathematica Policy Research and its partners—Educational Testing Service and Juárez and Associates—to design and conduct the 2009 cohort of the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES). FACES 2009 is the fifth in a series of nationally representative cohort studies of Head Start children, their families, and the programs they attend (previous cohorts were initiated in 1997, 2000, 2003, and 2006). FACES provides descriptive information on the population served; staff qualifications, credentials, and opinions; Head Start classroom practices and quality measures; and child and family outcomes. FACES includes interviews with program managers, teachers, and parents; observations of classroom quality; and a battery of child assessments across many developmental domains. The FACES 2009 program sample was selected to represent all Head Start programs.<sup>1</sup>

In this report, we present a portrait of Head Start programs based on data from FACES 2009. Previous FACES 2009 reports describe the characteristics of children and their families and classrooms as they entered Head Start in fall 2009 (Hulsey et al. 2011) and during their first year in the program (Moiduddin et al. 2012), and child outcomes from program entry through program exit (Aikens et al. 2013). Another report focuses on describing aspects of the family and classroom environment that may support children's development (Malone et al. 2017), and

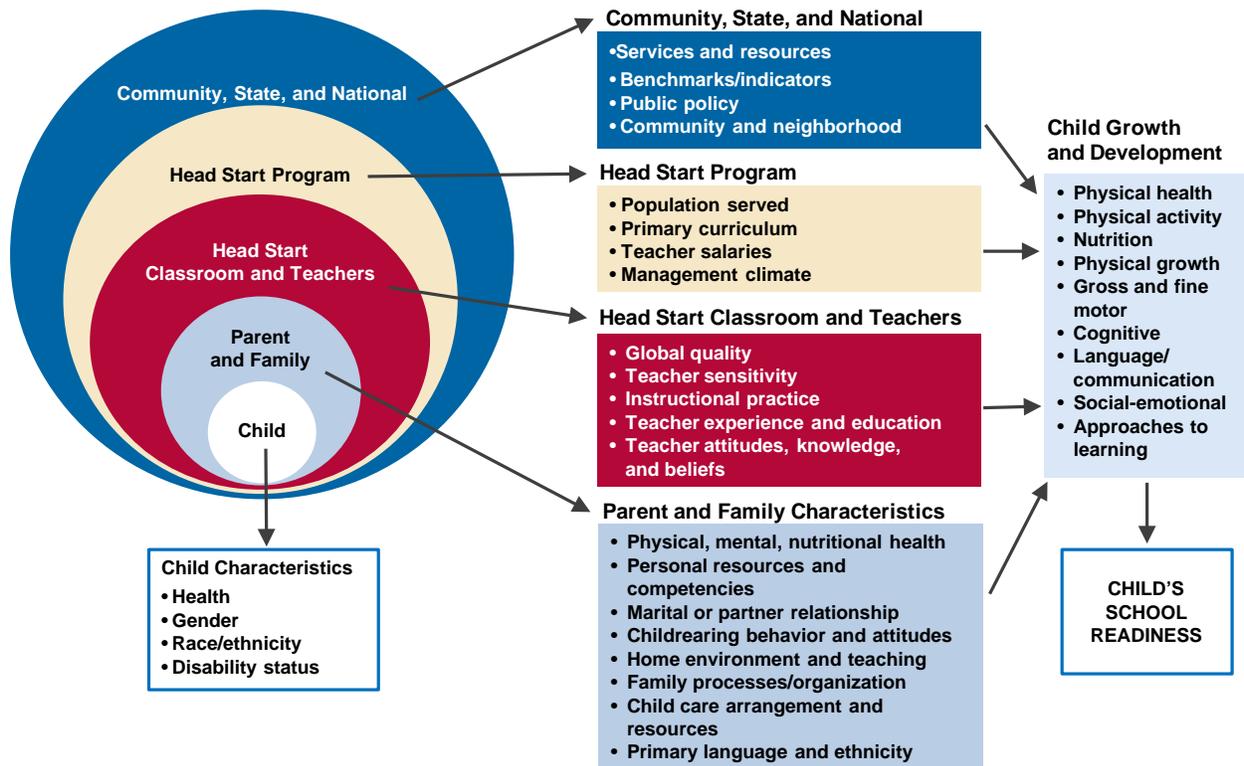
a brief explores children's developmental progress and kindergarten environments in more depth (Aikens et al. 2017).

## Conceptual Model and Framework

The conceptual framework for FACES 2009 illustrates the complex interrelationships that help shape the developmental trajectories of children in Head Start (Figure 1). The child's place is primary and constitutes the central core of the relationships depicted in the figure; fostering his or her progress toward school readiness, broadly construed, is Head Start's ultimate goal. As Figure 1 shows, there are many rings of influences surrounding the child. Important program features that may shape children's experiences in their classrooms or the services they and their families receive include structural factors such as size and who is served, staffing issues such as turnover, professional development supports for staff, and management climate. Membership in the Head Start community is reflected in the child's classroom, teachers, and the wider Head Start program, all of which influence the quality of the early childhood learning experience. Factors affecting the child's development and well-being also include teacher credentials and classroom quality. The family context—which includes health, economic and educational resources, and cultural factors—also affect the life of a Head Start child, as do community, state, and national policy decisions. These multidimensional contexts guide all aspects of the FACES study, from the selection of measures to the multilevel analyses needed to fully address program and policy issues in today's Head Start program.

The Head Start experience is designed to promote short- and long-term goals for children and families; local programs have the responsibility of designing and providing the experience consistent with federal policies and priorities. For children, the experience includes preschool education, health screenings and examinations, nutritionally adequate meals, and opportunities to develop social-emotional skills that support school readiness. For parents, the experience involves opportunities to participate in policy and program decisions. The program provides parents with chances to participate in the classroom and strives to encourage their active involvement in the education and development of their children. Head Start seeks to promote adult literacy and further parent education, where needed and appropriate, and to provide opportunities for careers and training in early

Figure 1. Conceptual Model for FACES 2009



childhood education. The program also seeks to promote family self-sufficiency through providing case management, assessment, referral, and crisis intervention services. Head Start acts as an advocate for necessary family-focused social services through interagency coordination and agreements.

### Research Questions

In 2012, the Advisory Committee on Head Start Research and Evaluation shared a vision for Head Start that placed elevated emphasis on operational characteristics at the program level (Advisory Committee 2012). This report provides a portrait of several operational characteristics of Head Start programs. Key topics include (1) structural characteristics of Head Start programs and characteristics of staff; (2) the supports available to staff in a program, particularly teachers; and (3) the services and classroom experiences provided to children and families.

The report draws on FACES data from interviews with program directors, education coordinators, center directors, and teachers in fall 2009 and/or spring 2010. We also use administrative data from the Head Start Program Information Report (PIR).

The three key topic areas were examined by addressing the following research questions:

#### 1. Characteristics of Head Start Programs and Staff

- What are the structural characteristics of Head Start programs (for example, agency type, location, size)?
- What are the education levels, credentials, benefits, and earnings of the program directors, education coordinators, and center directors?
- Are program directors, education coordinators, and center directors satisfied with their jobs? What do they perceive as the key challenges to their work?
- How many lead and assistant teachers are in Head Start centers and what is the average turnover? How difficult is it to find replacement teachers and replacement bilingual teachers?

- What languages do Head Start children, families, and teachers speak? How do Head Start programs determine the language proficiency of bilingual teachers and assistant teachers?
- What are the beliefs and attitudes of Head Start education coordinators and teachers about developmentally appropriate practice?

## 2. Support Provided to Head Start Staff

- What types of professional development and education supports do Head Start teachers and other staff receive, and who provides this support?
- What are center directors', education coordinators', and teachers' perceptions of management support for teachers? What are the relationships between perceptions of support from management staff and teaching staff?

## 3. Head Start Program Services

- What program services do Head Start programs offer to children and families and to children with disabilities and their families? What is the method of service delivery?
- What services do Head Start programs offer to support children and families in the transition to kindergarten?
- What services and goals do Head Start programs have for children and families who speak a non-English language?
- Do Head Start programs assess the abilities of children who are dual language learners (DLL) in their home language? If so, what strategies are used for assessment?
- What are the primary curricula and assessment tools used by Head Start programs? What is the match between curricula and assessment tools in classrooms?

## METHODS

The FACES 2009 sample provides information at the national level about Head Start programs, centers, and classrooms, and the children and families they serve. A sample of Head Start programs was selected from the 2007–2008 Head Start Program Information Report (PIR). The PIR is an annual report of grantee-level data. Specifically, it provides data on the services, staff, children, and families served by Head Start programs nationwide. All grantees and delegates are required to submit PIRs for Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

The PIR sampling frame included all Head Start programs in the 50 states and the District of Columbia that met the study's eligibility criteria. Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) programs, American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) programs, programs in Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories, and programs not directly providing services to 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds (such as Early Head Start) were considered ineligible for the study and thus were excluded from the frame.<sup>2</sup> The initial sample included 65 programs. Approximately two centers per program and three classrooms per center were selected for participation. Within each classroom, an average of eight newly enrolled 3- and 4-year-old children were randomly selected for the study.

In total, 60 programs, 129 centers, 486 classrooms, 439 teachers, and 3,349 children and their parents participated in the study in fall 2009.<sup>3</sup> Elements of the study included interviews with the directors of the programs and centers in the sample and with education coordinators, classroom observations, a battery of direct child assessments administered to the children, and interviews with children's parents and teachers. Overall, 93 percent of the sampled programs, 99 percent of the sampled centers, and all of the sampled classrooms participated in fall 2009. The parents of 92 percent of the sampled children consented to their children's participation. We obtained parent and teacher interviews for 93 to 97 percent of these children.<sup>4</sup> All program directors and center directors and 97 percent of education coordinators in participating programs completed an interview.<sup>5</sup>

In spring 2010,<sup>6</sup> Mathematica teams collected a second round of data over a five-month period (February–June),<sup>7</sup> as children were completing their first or second year of Head Start.<sup>8</sup> At Head Start centers, the teams interviewed children’s lead teachers and observed their classrooms. Children’s parents were interviewed by telephone.<sup>9</sup> We interviewed 86 percent of children’s parents and 99 percent of children’s lead teachers,<sup>10</sup> and completed observations in 370 Head Start classrooms.<sup>11,12</sup> We did not conduct another round of interviews with directors and education coordinators in this 2010 data collection.

## **OVERVIEW OF INSTRUMENTS**

In this section, we provide a brief overview of the instruments used in FACES 2009 that contribute to the portrait of programs presented in this report.

### **Program Director Interviews**

For FACES 2009, we conducted telephone interviews with program directors in fall 2009. Program directors confirmed information from the most recent version of the PIR and then provided additional information about the training and technical assistance provider in their region, the curriculum or curricula used in their program, program services, partnerships, goals for all families as well as for special groups (for example, children with disabilities, children who are DLLs, children who are homeless), and their program’s methods of child assessment. They also described their educational credentials and experience as well as their satisfaction with their current position.

### **Education Coordinator Interviews**

We conducted in-person interviews with education coordinators in fall 2009. We asked questions concerning details of educational philosophy, curriculum, assessment, and classroom activities. Information from the education coordinator interviews can contribute to an understanding of the services Head Start provides to children and families and the technical assistance and training it provides to its program staff. Education coordinators also reported on program management, specifically the level of administrative and management staff support for teachers. Finally, the interviewer asked for demographic and educational background information, along with the education coordinator’s overall view of the program.

### **Center Director Interviews**

We conducted in-person interviews with center directors in fall 2009. The center director interview collected detailed information on the characteristics of Head Start programs and the challenges they face. We asked questions concerning details of educational philosophy, curriculum, assessment, and classroom activities. Center directors provided additional information about organizational and administrative features of their program, including challenges, parent involvement in program activities, and staff recruitment and retention. Center directors also reported on program management, specifically the level of administrative and management staff support for teachers. Finally, the interviewer inquired about demographic and educational information, along with the center director’s overall view of the center.

### **Teacher Interviews**

To examine classroom characteristics relating to the quality of educational services for children, we conducted computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI) with lead teachers to collect information about their educational background and credentials, professional experience, and instructional practices. These interviews occurred in fall 2009 and spring 2010. In fall 2009, teachers were asked to report on the learning activities scheduled for their classrooms. They were asked to estimate the amount of time they spend on both teacher-directed activities and child-selected activities in a typical day, as well as how often the children participate in various language and literacy development and mathematics activities. Teachers were asked if they have a main curriculum guiding the classroom activities and, if so, whether they received training in how to use it. Teachers were also asked about the number of children who are DLLs in classrooms and the languages used when reading and speaking with the children. In spring 2010, teachers were asked about program management, including their views on program policies and procedures and on the level of management support for teachers. They were also asked about their involvement in training or technical assistance during the year, whether they have a regular mentor, and, if so, their experiences with that mentor.

### **Population Estimates**

The statistics we present in this volume are estimates of key characteristics of the population of Head Start programs and/or centers.<sup>13</sup> The data

used to report on Head Start program, center, and teacher characteristics are weighted to represent all Head Start programs and/or centers. In many instances, we report on programs by aggregating data from the teacher or center level to the program level. In these cases, results refer to teachers or centers in a program. For these analyses, we first calculated within-program weighted means at the teacher or center level, and then took the step of aggregating to the program level, to ensure the mean being used was an accurate representation of the population of teachers or centers in a particular program.<sup>14</sup> Thus, estimates based on aggregated data are representative of all Head Start programs. All group differences and associations cited are statistically significant at the  $p \leq .05$  level unless otherwise noted.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF HEAD START PROGRAMS AND STAFF

In this section, we present information on the structural characteristics of Head Start programs and background characteristics of staff.<sup>15</sup>

#### Agency-Reported Characteristics of Head Start Programs

According to the 2007–2008 PIR, Head Start programs enroll an average of 704 children. Head Start program enrollment varies widely, with a

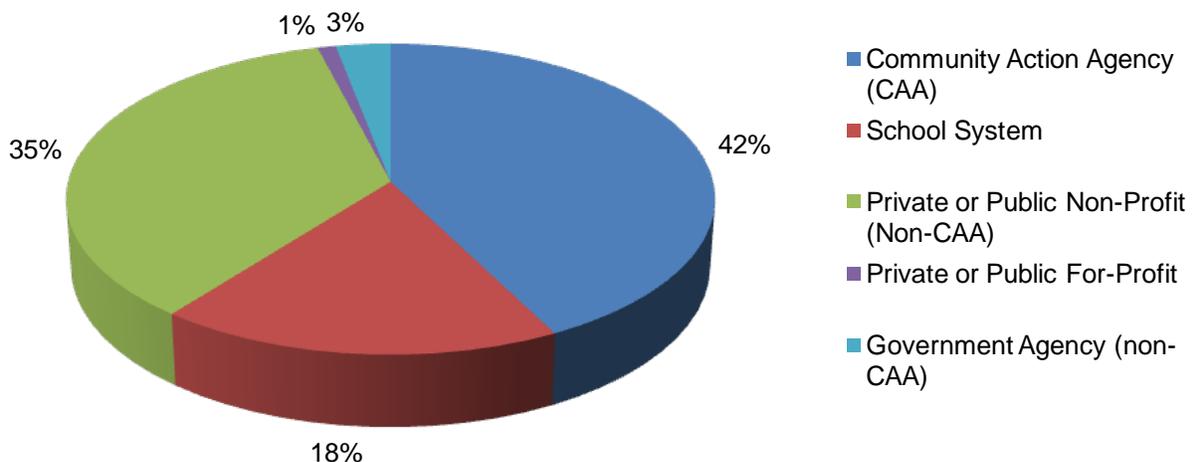
range of less than 150 to more than 5,000 children enrolled.<sup>16</sup> Agency type also varies: 42 percent of programs are community action agencies and 35 percent are private or public nonprofits. The remaining programs are in school systems, are government agencies, or are private or public for-profit agencies<sup>17</sup> (Figure 2).

According to linked census data, the majority of Head Start programs are in urban locations (65 percent), with just over one-third located in rural areas (35 percent).<sup>18</sup> The largest percentage of programs are in the South (35 percent). The percentages located in other regions are relatively similar to one another: Northeast (22 percent), Midwest (23 percent), and West (19 percent).<sup>19</sup>

#### Program Director, Education Coordinator, and Center Director Characteristics

**Education and credentials.** As we show in Figure 3, the majority of program directors (86 percent), education coordinators (81 percent), and center directors (68 percent), report having at least a bachelor’s (B.A.) degree.<sup>20</sup> Half (50 percent) of the program directors have a graduate or professional degree, as do about a quarter of center directors (28 percent) and education coordinators (25 percent).<sup>21</sup> The majority of program directors (82 percent), education coordinators (77 percent), and center directors (75 percent) are members of a professional

Figure 2. FACES 2009 Head Start Program Agency Type



Source: 2007-2008 Program Information Report (PIR), an annual report of grantee-level data.

Note: Statistics are weighted to represent all Head Start programs.

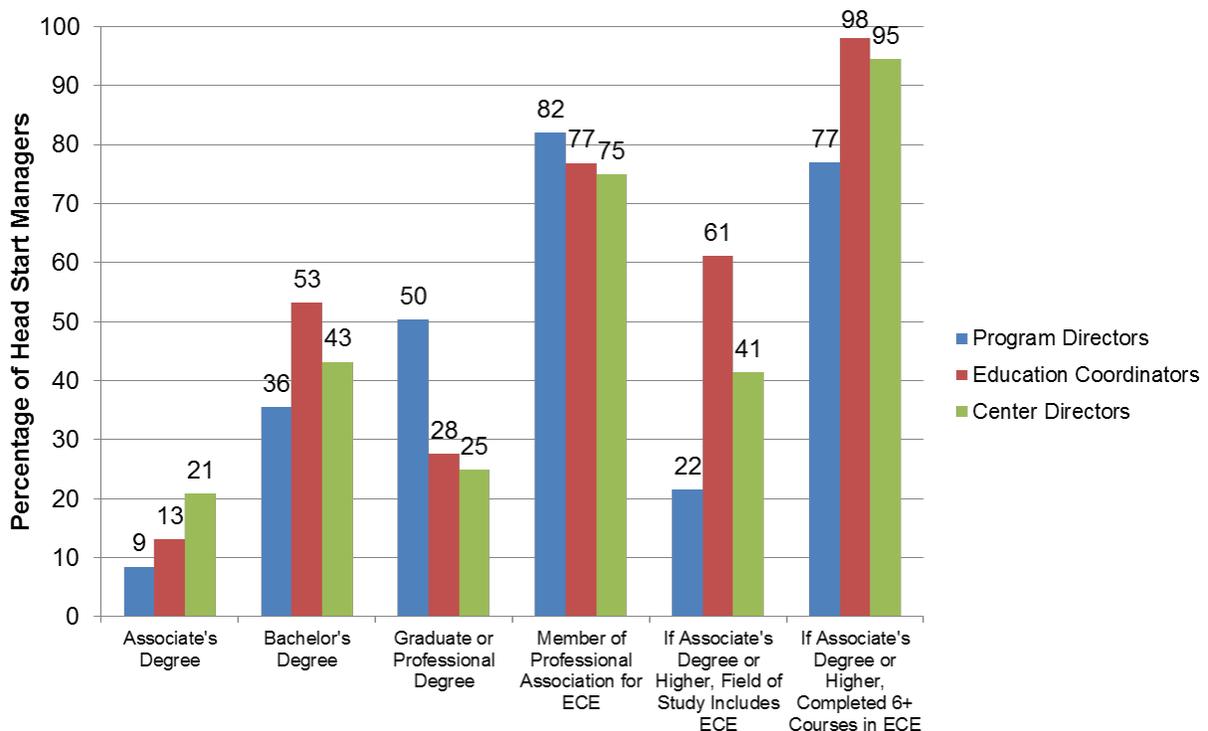
association for early childhood education such as the National Association of the Education for Young Children (NAEYC), National Head Start Association (NHSA), or National Education Association (NEA). Among program management staff with an associate's (A.A.) degree or higher, education coordinators are more likely to have a degree in early childhood education (61 percent) than are program directors (22 percent); 41 percent of center directors have a degree in early childhood education.<sup>22</sup> This pattern is not surprising given education coordinators' primary responsibility for supporting classroom practice. Also among managers with an A.A. or higher, education coordinators (98 percent) and center directors (95 percent) are more likely to have been enrolled in at least six early childhood education courses compared to program directors (77 percent) (Figure 3).

Associate (CDA) credential, a state-awarded certificate, or a teaching certificate or license. Teaching certificates or licenses are most common, and similar percentages of education coordinators and center directors report having one (46 percent and 41 percent, respectively). Thirty-eight percent of center directors and 29 percent of education coordinators report having a CDA. Twenty-seven percent of center directors and 21 percent of education coordinators have a state-awarded preschool certificate. Only education coordinators were asked whether they are currently enrolled in teacher-related training; 11 percent said this is the case.

**Benefits and earnings.** Program directors report higher salaries than either center directors or education coordinators, with an annual average of \$74,544. Center directors and education

Center directors and education coordinators report on whether they have a Child Development

**Figure 3. Program Director, Education Coordinator, and Center Director Education and Credentials: Fall 2009**



Source: Fall 2009 FACES Program Director, Education Coordinator and Center Director Interviews.

Note: Statistics are weighted to represent all Head Start programs (for education coordinators and program directors) and all Head Start centers (for center directors).

ECE = Early Childhood Education

coordinator salaries are comparable to one another, with annual averages of \$45,197 and \$44,413, respectively.

Programs typically offer an array of benefits. Paid vacation time is available to most program directors (96 percent), education coordinators (92 percent), and center directors (84 percent). Both paid sick leave and fully or partially paid health insurance are available to all education coordinators, nearly all (99 percent for each) program directors, and slightly fewer center directors (95 percent and 94 percent, respectively). A retirement plan is available to approximately 90 percent of managers.

Between 81 and 84 percent of both education coordinators and center directors receive fully or partially paid dental insurance, as do 67 percent of program directors. The majority of education coordinators (81 percent), center directors (79 percent), and program directors (68 percent) receive tuition reimbursement.

Managers report having both unpaid and paid maternity leave available to them. Seventy-eight percent of center directors, 82 percent of education coordinators, and 87 percent of program directors receive unpaid maternity/paternity leave. Paid leave is available to 70 percent of education coordinators, 64 percent of center directors, and 56 percent of program directors. In addition, 71 percent of education coordinators, 61 percent of center directors, and 54 percent of program directors receive family leave (which allows for care of family members other than newborn/infant children).

***Job satisfaction and challenges.*** Managers report on whether a number of factors make it more difficult to do their jobs well. The 11 factors queried reflect resource constraints or job demands (for example, time constraints or not enough funds; Figure 4) and characteristics of the staff and population served (for example, staff turnover or a challenging population; Figure 5). Managers could also indicate if “something else” makes it more difficult to do their job well (Figure 5). Managers report whether each factor makes it “not at all,” “somewhat,” or “a great deal” harder to do their jobs well. In Figures 4 and 5, we show the percentage of managers reporting these factors make it “somewhat” or “a great deal” harder.

On average, managers are most likely to report that conflicting demands make it harder to do their jobs well, followed by time constraints (Figure 4).

Sixty percent of education coordinators, 43 percent of center directors, and 39 percent of program directors report that their salary is not high enough relative to the demands of the job. This finding is not surprising given that program directors have the highest annual salaries, on average, among management staff.

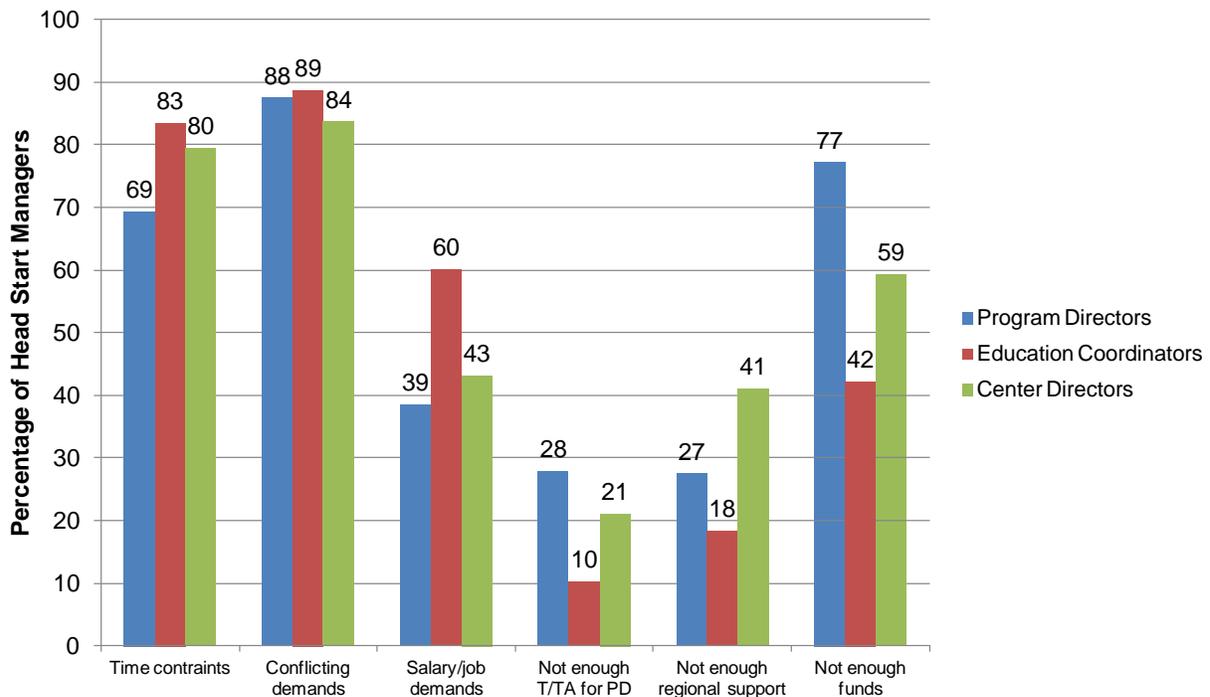
Among management staff, program directors are most likely to report that not enough funds for supplies and activities makes it hard to do their job well, as compared to education coordinators and center directors. Twenty-eight percent of program directors, 21 percent of center directors, and 10 percent of education coordinators report that not enough training and technical assistance for professional development makes it hard to do their job well.<sup>23</sup> A higher percentage of center directors (41 percent) than education coordinators (18 percent) report that not receiving enough support and communication from the regional office makes it hard to do their job well.

Although it appears that characteristics of staff and population served (Figure 5) pose less of a challenge to managers compared to conflicting demands, managers do report that characteristics of staff and the population served can make it somewhat or a great deal harder for them to do their jobs well. Forty-four percent of program directors, 38 percent of center directors, and 31 percent of education coordinators report a lack of staff support as an issue that makes it harder to do their job well. Education coordinators, who work directly with teachers on training and professional development, are more likely than center directors to report a lack of qualified teaching staff as an issue that makes it hard to do their job. Education coordinators are also more likely than center directors to identify staff turnover as problematic.

Managers are equally challenged in their work by a lack of parent support. Program directors are more likely than education coordinators to report a challenging population as an issue that makes it hard for them to do their job well, but there are no differences with center directors.<sup>24</sup>

Eighteen percent of program directors, 9 percent of education coordinators, and 6 percent of center directors report that something else, such as federal regulations, makes it hard to do their job well.

**Figure 4. Resource Constraints and Job Demands that Make it Hard to Do Job Well: Fall 2009**

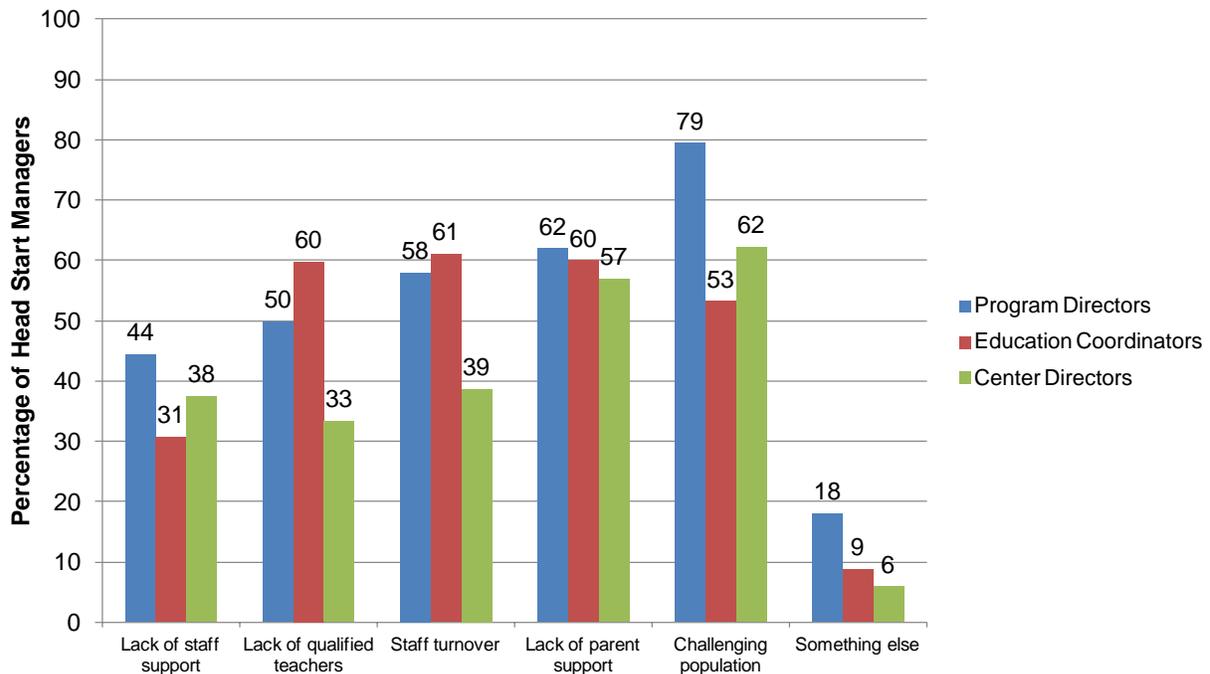


Source: Fall 2009 FACES Program Director, Education Coordinator, and Center Director Interviews.

Note: Statistics are weighted to represent all Head Start programs (for education coordinators and program directors) and all Head Start centers (for center directors).

T/TA = Training and technical assistance, PD = Professional development

**Figure 5. Characteristics of Staff and Population Served that Make It Hard to do Job Well: Fall 2009**



Source: Fall 2009 FACES Program Director, Education Coordinator, and Center Director Interviews.

Note: Statistics are weighted to represent all Head Start programs (for education coordinators and program directors) and all Head Start centers (for center directors).

Based on 11 of the 12 items shown in Figures 4 and 5 (“something else” was excluded), we calculated mean scores with a possible range of 1 (“not at all”) to 3 (“a great deal harder”); the “something else” category is excluded from the scale. Mean scores for program directors (1.8), center directors (1.7), and education coordinators (1.7) indicate that these 11 factors, on average, make it somewhat harder to do their jobs (that is, scores round to a response of 2, equivalent to “somewhat harder”).

Despite the factors that make their jobs challenging, education coordinators and center directors are likely to indicate their jobs are satisfying (program directors did not report their job satisfaction). Nearly all education coordinators and center directors report enjoying their jobs (99 percent and 94 percent, respectively), feeling as though they are making a difference in the lives of children (100 percent and 99 percent, respectively) and that they would choose education again as a career (92 percent and 91 percent, respectively).

### **Staffing and Recruitment in Head Start Programs**

Center directors report on teacher staffing and turnover. Within Head Start programs, centers have an average of five lead teachers and six assistant teachers or paid aides. The average turnover in the last program year is 16 percent for lead teachers and 11 percent for assistant teachers/paid aides. The turnover rate varies widely, ranging from some center directors reporting no turnover to others reporting as much as 109 percent among lead teachers (indicating a lead teacher position could have turned over more than once in a year) and 50 percent among assistant teachers/paid aides.

Managers report whether it is “relatively easy” (1), “fairly easy” (2), “fairly difficult” (3), or “very difficult” (4) to find replacement teachers. On average, center directors report it is fairly difficult to find replacement teachers (mean = 2.5). Program directors report it is fairly difficult to find replacement bilingual teachers (mean = 3.1).

### **SUPPORT PROVIDED TO HEAD START STAFF**

In delineating its vision for Head Start, the Advisory Committee on Head Start Research and

Evaluation identified important roles for local programs. The committee emphasized the importance of integrated systems of assessment and progress monitoring, curriculum, professional development, and organizational development to support high quality implementation and strong outcomes. In this section, we describe the professional development supports programs offer to teachers. In the next section, we share available information on the curricula and assessments in use.

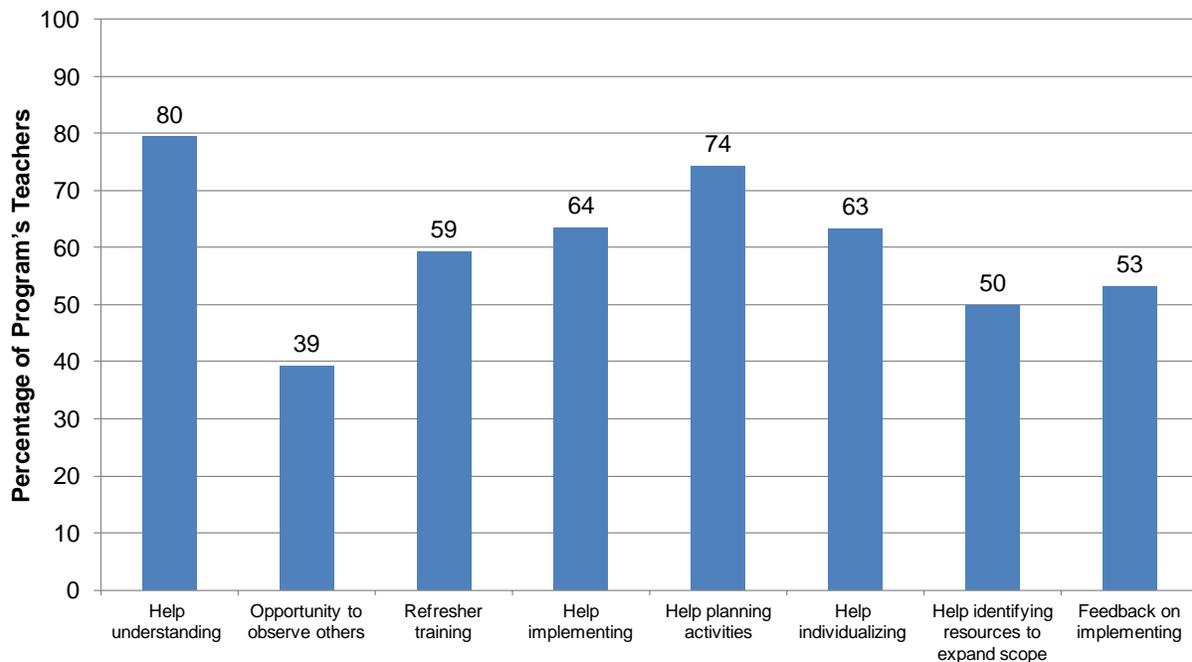
### **Lead Teacher Training**

**Curriculum support.** Teachers report on the different types of curriculum support they receive. On average, 82 percent of teachers in a program were trained on their main curriculum in the last 12 months—spending an average of 14 hours in this training. Ninety-nine percent of teachers in a program received some type of curriculum support. Of those who receive curriculum support, 80 percent receive help understanding the curriculum and 74 percent receive help planning curriculum-based activities (Figure 6). Fifty percent or more of teachers in a program report receiving several other curriculum supports (for example, feedback on implementation, opportunity to observe others), except the opportunity to observe others using the curriculum (39 percent of teachers receive this support).

Of those teachers who receive curriculum support, the majority (82 percent) report they receive support from their supervisor/education coordinator, 34 percent from other Head Start teachers in the program, and 25 percent from staff or consultant(s) from the curriculum developers. Nine percent of teachers who receive support receive it from Head Start Regional Office Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) staff.

**Current training.** Teachers also report on their current enrollment in teacher-related training. On average, 33 percent of teachers in a program are currently enrolled in teacher-related training. Of those teachers, 32 percent are in a B.A. degree program, 22 percent are in an A.A. degree program, 14 percent are in a graduate degree program, and 14 percent are in another type of training program. Teachers are least likely to be enrolled in a CDA program (8 percent), special education teaching program (7 percent), or teaching certificate program (3 percent).

**Figure 6. Curriculum Support Received by a Program's Teachers: Spring 2010**



Source: Spring 2010 FACES Teacher Interviews.

Note: Statistics are weighted to represent all Head Start programs.

### **Mentoring offered to teachers**

Seventy-seven percent of programs have mentor teachers or coaches, according to education coordinators. Of those programs, nearly all have the more-experienced teachers in the program (99 percent) or education coordinators (82 percent) act as mentors or coaches. Only 24 percent of programs use consultants hired by the program as mentors.<sup>25</sup> In programs that have mentor teachers or coaches, education coordinators report that 46 percent of programs have mentors visit once a week or more, 46 percent have them visit one or twice a month, and 8 percent have them visit less often.

### **Staff Education Supports Provided by Programs**

Program directors report that they support staff to pursue more education. Ninety-one percent of programs help staff get their A.A. or B.A. degrees, 80 percent help teachers and assistant teachers attain their CDA, and 67 percent help family service workers earn their family service credentials.

Of those programs that help staff earn their A.A. or B.A. degrees, program directors report that

tuition assistance (95 percent) and assistance for purchasing course books (94 percent) are the most common approaches. Other methods include giving teachers release time (84 percent) and providing courses on site (40 percent). Sixty-three percent of program directors report offering other supports as well, such as working with local community colleges and providing tutors, mentors, and guidance counseling. Program directors report eligibility for these supports varies. Among programs that provide A.A. and B.A. support, teachers are eligible to receive support in 83 percent of programs and assistant teachers are eligible in 72 percent of programs. Family service workers and other staff are eligible to receive support in 45 percent of programs and health staff are eligible in 40 percent of programs.

### **Training and Use of the T/TA System by Programs**

According to program directors, for the majority of programs (80 percent) training and technical assistance is conducted by center or grantee staff, followed by local consultants (61 percent) and other community resources (49 percent). Seven percent of programs use the National Head Start Association for training and technical assistance.

Program directors also report that over 90 percent of programs consult with state T/TA specialists, TA content specialists, or other TA providers. Similar percentages participate in training or TA sessions provided by TA providers.

In the majority of programs, directors report that teachers and assistant teachers (86 percent), family service workers (84 percent), and health staff (74 percent) receive staff training and technical assistance at least monthly.

### **Perceptions of Management Support for Teachers**

Perceived management support is a composite that reflects Head Start teachers' perceptions of support provided by program management to them and other teaching staff. The composite is based on the average of responses to 12 items from the Program Management Inventory (PMI; Lambert et al. 1999). Staff rate the degree to which they agree with a series of statements about the ways in which programs can support teachers (for example, "helps teachers feel good about their jobs" and "ensures that teachers do not feel isolated"). Ratings are made on a 5-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Perceptions of management support are higher among center directors and education coordinators than among teachers. On average, education coordinators and center directors in a program "strongly agree" that there is management support for teachers (4.5 and 4.5 out of 5, respectively), whereas teachers in a program "agree" this is the case (3.7 out of 5).

## **HEAD START PROGRAM SERVICES**

In this section, we present information on Head Start Program services—supports for families, services and supports for special populations (children with disabilities, children who are DLLs and their families), and elements of classroom practice.

### **Program Services and Method of Service Delivery**

***Services offered to families and households.*** The Head Start Act requires that programs work with families to identify and then access services that are responsive to their needs. Examples include emergency or crisis assistance related to food, housing, and transportation; opportunities for education; and services that support physical and mental health, among others. According to the Head Start Program Performance Standards (U.S. DHHS n.d.), such services can be provided directly or through referrals.

FACES 2009 asked program directors about whether they are providing 15 different services that address an array of possible family needs (Table 1). This list of services is intended to reflect a variety of interests and goals families might have. Because Head Start programs are required to help families access services that align with their own interests and goals, not all 15 services are relevant for all Head Start programs, and there are likely many services provided by programs not on this list. It is possible that if a program refers out for these services (even to a community partner), the program director may have responded that they do not provide it; in other words, we may be underestimating the percentage of programs that help families access these services.

Program directors report providing many services beyond child development services to Head Start families, either directly by program staff or by a community partner on-site at the program or off-site. In fact, out of 15 services included in the survey, program directors report providing 12 services, on average. With a range of 5 to 15 services provided across programs, there are no programs that do not provide any of these services to families.

**Table 1. Program Services Offered to Families And Households: Fall 2009**

|                                    | Percentage of Programs |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Mental health care                 | 100.0                  |
| Disability services                | 99.4                   |
| Family literacy services           | 92.6                   |
| Employment assistance              | 92.1                   |
| Emergency assistance               | 89.4                   |
| Dental care                        | 89.0                   |
| Services for families of DLLs      | 87.8                   |
| Education or job training          | 86.0                   |
| Housing assistance                 | 84.4                   |
| Financial counseling               | 83.3                   |
| Services for drug or alcohol abuse | 75.6                   |
| Medical care                       | 71.8                   |
| Legal assistance                   | 70.9                   |
| Transportation assistance          | 64.7                   |
| Child care                         | 63.6                   |

Source: Fall 2009 Program Director Interview.

Note: Statistics are weighted to represent all Head Start programs.

Services may be offered directly by Head Start staff, by a community partner on site at the Head Start program, and/or by a community partner off site (some programs use multiple approaches to providing a single service). According to program directors, only a handful of services are provided to families directly by Head Start staff or on site by a community partner. Instead, programs most commonly offer services off site through a community partner. Among the services offered by programs, only two—child care and transportation assistance—are most likely to be provided directly by Head Start staff. Mental health care and disability services are equally likely to be provided on site or off site by a community partner, whereas family literacy services and services for families of DLLs are equally likely to be provided directly by Head Start staff or off site by a community partner. The remaining eight services addressed are most likely provided off site.

Taking into account each method of service provision a program uses, overall, programs offer nearly nine services via off-site partners, on average, while also offering about five services directly by Head Start staff and four by on-site community partners. Programs offer an average of five services using multiple approaches.

**Services offered to children with disabilities.**

As with services for families, the Head Start Act includes requirements for programs regarding services for children with disabilities. Specifically, programs must provide “special education and related services necessary to foster the maximum development of each child’s potential and to facilitate participation in the regular Head Start program unless the services are being provided by the LEA or other agency.” Examples include rehabilitative services such as speech and language therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, psychological services, and transportation, among others.

FACES 2009 asked program directors about whether they are providing 13 different services that may enhance their efforts to support the development of children with disabilities (Table 2). As in the case of services for families and households, this list of services is intended to reflect a variety of services programs may be providing. Because a program must provide services to meet the needs of the particular children it serves, not all 13 services are relevant for all Head Start programs, and there are likely many services provided by programs not on this list.

**Table 2. Program Services Offered to Children with Disabilities: Fall 2009**

|                                       | Percentage of Programs |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Nutrition services                    | 99.7                   |
| Vision services                       | 99.5                   |
| Special instruction for the child     | 96.4                   |
| Speech/language therapy               | 95.8                   |
| Psychological or psychiatric services | 92.4                   |
| Physical therapy                      | 88.4                   |
| Social work services                  | 88.0                   |
| Service coordination                  | 85.4                   |
| Occupational therapy                  | 84.9                   |
| Medical diagnosis/evaluation          | 83.4                   |
| Transportation and/or related costs   | 80.8                   |
| Nursing services                      | 76.4                   |
| Respite care                          | 28.4                   |

Source: Fall 2009 Program Director Interview.

Note: Statistics are weighted to represent all Head Start programs.

Programs provide many services for children with disabilities, directly and/or through a contract or other arrangement for service. In fact, out of the 13 services included in the survey, programs report providing 11 services on average, with a range across programs of 5 to 13 services provided. All programs provide at least some of these services for children with disabilities.

Nearly all programs offer nutrition services and vision services for children with disabilities. More than three-quarters provide all other services included in the survey, with the exception of respite care: only 28 percent provide this service for families of children with disabilities (Table 2).

These services can be provided directly by Head Start or by another entity on contract; programs may use both approaches for a single service. According to program directors, if programs offer services, they most commonly do so through a contract or other arrangement. Services most commonly provided directly by programs include nutrition services (84 percent) and special instruction for the child (75 percent). Four services are addressed fairly equally by program staff or through a contract: service coordination (62 and 69 percent, respectively), social work services (65 and 64 percent, respectively), transportation and related costs (60 percent for both approaches), and vision services (58 and 72 percent, respectively).<sup>26</sup> The remaining seven services are most likely to be provided through a contract or other arrangement rather than directly by Head Start staff.

Taking into account each method of service provision used, on average, programs directly offer about six services for children with disabilities, and offer eight through a contract. They provide about three services both directly and via contract.

### ***Services to support children's transition to kindergarten.***

The Head Start Act also includes requirements for programs regarding children's transition to kindergarten. Specifically, each program should, "take steps to coordinate with the local education agency serving the community involved and with schools in which children participating in a Head Start program operated by such agency will enroll following such program to promote continuity of services and effective transitions." Examples include reaching out to parents and kindergarten teachers to discuss the needs of individual children; conducting

joint transition training for both Head Start and school staff; and developing a system to transfer Head Start children's records to schools, among others.

FACES 2009 asked center directors about planning for children's transition to kindergarten. Nearly all centers in a program (97 percent) have a formal transition to kindergarten planning process. Among those centers, over 50 percent begin the transition to kindergarten planning process halfway through the child's final Head Start year, an additional 30 percent begin at the start of the year, and 15 percent begin a couple of months before the year ends. Center directors report they work with the schools children will attend in a variety of ways. Ninety-seven percent of centers in a program participate in the development of individual education plans for children with disabilities and over 75 percent help schools identify Head Start children who will enroll in their kindergarten program, provide children's Head Start records to the school, meet with the future kindergarten teachers, and share curriculum information. Additionally, on average, 72 percent of centers in programs serving children and families who are dual language learners connect them with English as a second language services in the school they will attend. Centers also work with families on the transition to kindergarten. At least 92 percent of centers in a program invite parents to attend informational meetings or discussions with Head Start or school staff, send informational letters about the transition to kindergarten to parents, and provide parents with information on the schools their children may attend.

### **Language Environment of Programs**

In 2009, just over a quarter (26 percent) of newly entering Head Start children lived in households where a language other than English is primarily spoken to them. Spanish is by far the most prevalent non-English primary language and is spoken to 24 percent of children in their homes (Hulsey et al. 2011). These children are distributed across Head Start programs. According to program director reports, 93 percent of programs serve children or families that speak a language other than English at home; 97 percent of those programs serve Spanish-speaking children and families. At least 15 percent of programs serve children or families that speak Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, Arabic, Chinese, or other languages (such as African languages) (15, percent, 16 percent, 18 percent, 19 percent, and 23

percent, respectively). Less than 11 percent of programs serve children and families who speak Hmong, French, Cambodian (Khmer), Japanese, or Korean.

According to program directors, 99 percent of programs have bilingual teachers or assistant teachers. Of those programs with bilingual teachers or assistant teachers, all have bilingual staff who speak Spanish, 14 percent have staff who speak other languages (such as African languages or Portuguese), 12 percent have staff who speak Chinese, 10 percent have staff who speak Arabic, and less than 10 percent have staff who speak Hmong, Cambodian (Khmer), Haitian Creole, French, Japanese, Vietnamese, or Korean.

According to program directors, over half (56 percent) of programs use interviews in the non-English language to determine the language proficiency of bilingual teachers and assistant teachers. Thirty-one percent of programs ask for documentation for language courses taken, 21 percent use language proficiency tests, and 23 percent use other means.

### **Services and Goals for Dual Language Learner (DLL) Families**

Of the programs that serve children and families who speak a language other than English, program directors report that 91 percent of them assist children who are DLLs and their families in applying for medical insurance and obtaining information about adult ESL or education and community resources. Close to three-quarters (74 percent) of programs have activities and workshops for DLL parents and nearly half of programs have assessment of English language skills (48 percent) and assessment of basic reading and writing skills (47 percent) for families.

Being responsive to the needs of Head Start families and children of all cultural and linguistic backgrounds is a priority for the OHS. Center directors were asked to report on whether staff

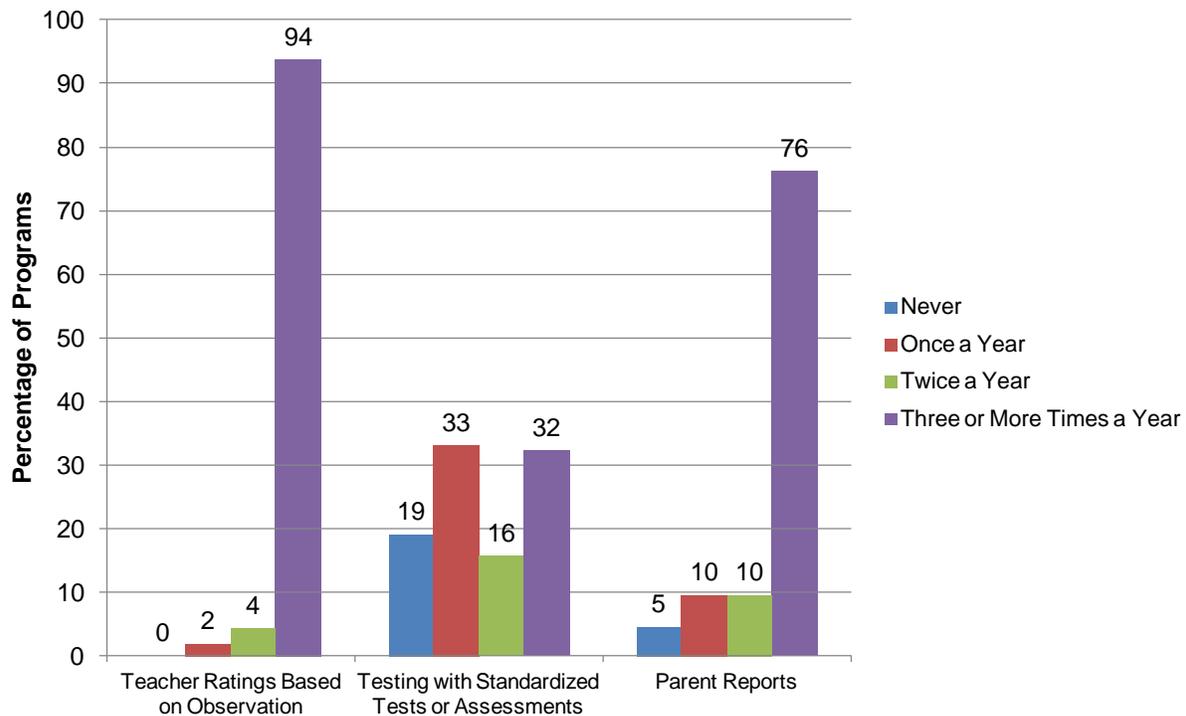
formulated specific goals for DLL families. Within programs serving DLL families and their children, on average, 72 percent of centers have goals specifically for such families. Among the centers that have goals specifically for DLL families, center directors report helping find services within a community as the most common goal (87 percent). Other goals reported by center directors include supporting and honoring the families' first languages (82 percent), helping families learn English (72 percent), helping connect families to DLL resources (for example, ESL classes or organizations focused on providing supports to families of the same culture or ethnic origin; 78 percent), making sure families are involved in the program (77 percent), and serving as a bridge for acculturation (for example, helping families better understand elements of American culture that might differ from their culture of origin; 64 percent).

### **Language Assessments for DLL Children**

The Head Start Program Performance Standards (U.S. DHHS n.d.) indicate that programs' approach to supporting child development and learning should be both developmentally and linguistically appropriate. The Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ACF 2015) recognizes that ongoing development of the home language provides a foundation for English language development. In fact, according to education coordinators, 81 percent of all programs assess DLL children's home language abilities.

Education coordinators also report that programs use a variety of strategies to assess English-language abilities (Figure 7). The strategies that are used most often include teacher ratings based on observation, and parent reports. Standardized tests or assessments are used less often. Nearly a third of programs (32 percent) assess children with standardized tests or assessments three or more times a year, whereas another third (33 percent) do so once a year. Nineteen percent of programs never use such tests or assessments to assess English language abilities.

**Figure 7. Strategies Used for Assessing DLL Children’s English Language Abilities: Fall 2009**



Source: Fall 2009 FACES Education Coordinator Interview.

Note: Statistics are weighted to represent all Head Start programs.

### Curricula and Assessments in Programs

Fifty-one percent of all program directors report their program uses Creative Curriculum as its main curriculum. HighScope is also common, with 21 percent of program directors reporting its use. On average, the majority of teachers within programs (88 percent) report using the same main curriculum cited by their director. Program director and teacher reports of the main curriculum may not align in some cases, because they are using a combination of curricula.

One-third of Head Start program directors (33 percent) report using Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum Assessment Toolkit as their program’s main assessment tool. Smaller percentages report using the HighScope Child Observation Record (COR; 7 percent), Learning Accomplishment Profile Screening (LAP; 8 percent), Galileo (10 percent), and Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP; 6 percent). Another 5 percent report using a locally designed assessment tool. On average, the majority of teachers within programs report using the same main assessment tool cited by their director (65 percent). Program director and teacher reports of the main assessment may not align in some cases,

because they may be using more than one assessment tool.<sup>27</sup>

### Developmentally Appropriate Practice Attitudes in Programs

FACES measured teacher and education coordinator beliefs about developmentally appropriate teaching practices and attitudes toward generally accepted practices in preschool settings using 15 items from the Teacher Beliefs Scale (Burts et al. 1990) that consists of statements reflecting either positive attitudes and knowledge of generally accepted practices in preschool settings or a lack of such attitudes and knowledge. Those scoring higher on developmentally appropriate practices are likely to endorse such items as, “Head Start classroom activities should be responsive to individual differences in development” and to disagree with such items as “Children should work silently and alone on seatwork.”

Scores reflecting education coordinators’ attitudes regarding developmentally appropriate classroom practice are 9.1 out of 10 overall. Scores for teachers are 8.1 out of 10.

## SUMMARY

**Characteristics of Head Start programs and staff.** Most Head Start programs are community action agencies or private or public nonprofits. The majority of program directors, education coordinators, and center directors have at least a B.A. degree. Half of program directors have a graduate or professional degree, as do about a quarter of center directors and education coordinators. Program directors have higher salaries than either center directors or education coordinators.

**Support provided to Head Start staff.** Most teachers in a program were trained on their main curriculum in the last 12 months and nearly all received some type of curriculum support. One-third of teachers in a program are currently enrolled in teacher-related training; almost half of these teachers are pursuing a B.A. or graduate degree. Almost three-quarters of teachers in a program have a mentor. Most programs help staff attain their A.A. or B.A. degrees or CDAs. Almost all programs consult with state T/TA specialists, TA content specialists, or other TA providers, and participate in trainings given by TA providers.

**Head Start services.** Programs provide many services beyond child development services to Head Start children and families, and they use a combination of direct provision and contracting for these services. Almost all programs serve children or families who speak a language other than English at home. Half of all programs use the Creative Curriculum as their main curriculum and one-third use the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum as their primary assessment tool.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For detailed information on the FACES 2009 study design and measures, see West et al. 2011.

<sup>2</sup> The Office of Head Start provided information about any defunded (or soon-to-be defunded) programs before sampling; these programs were then deleted from the sample frame.

<sup>3</sup> Three of the 65 programs originally sampled were determined to be ineligible because we learned they were under provisional management or otherwise were in financial jeopardy. In addition, two eligible programs declined to participate.

<sup>4</sup> These are all weighted response rates. The cumulative weighted response rates, which take into account the response rate for all levels of the sample, are lower. The cumulative weighted response rates for centers and classrooms are both 93 percent. The cumulative teacher response rate is 91 percent. The cumulative weighted response rate for the parent interviews is 79 percent. At the teacher level, among participating classes, the marginal weighted response rate for the teacher interview was

99 percent. At the child level, among children with consent, the parent interview rate was 93 percent.

<sup>5</sup> Sixty-six education coordinators were invited to participate in an interview (one from each of the 60 programs in the sample, with the exception of 6, where two education coordinators were invited). Interviews were completed for all but two of the coordinators, for a response rate of 97 percent; 59 programs have at least one completed education coordinator interview. For four of the five programs where two education coordinator interviews were completed, we determined that both education coordinators operated at the program level and that one of the two was the "primary" education coordinator. Analyses in this report are based on responses of the primary education coordinator (data for the second education coordinators were excluded). For the fifth program with two interviews, we determined that both coordinators operated at the center level, so both interviews were included in the analysis.

<sup>6</sup> Head Start and kindergarten data were also collected in spring 2011, and kindergarten data in spring 2012, but those data are not reported in this volume.

<sup>7</sup> The first visits to Head Start programs were in March of each data collection year; however, we began parent interviews by telephone in February.

<sup>8</sup> Depending on age at entry, children completed the program in spring 2010 or 2011. Those who entered at age 4 completed the program in spring 2010. Those who entered at age 3 exited Head Start in spring 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Parents who did not have telephones, preferred not be called at home, or did not want to use their own cell phone minutes were offered the option of completing the interview by telephone at their child's Head Start center or in a face-to-face interview with a member of the data collection staff. Only 2 percent of parent interviews were completed in person.

<sup>10</sup> The cumulative teacher interview response rate is 92 percent.

<sup>11</sup> A total of 391 of 482 eligible classrooms were sampled for the classroom observations. The cumulative weighted response rate for the observations, which takes into account nonresponse at the program level, was 87 percent. To be eligible for observation, the classroom had to meet three criteria: (1) be in a center-based program (home-based services were not observed), (2) be one of the originally sampled classrooms (classrooms that children moved to in the spring were not eligible), and (3) have at least one sampled, eligible child whose parents gave consent.

<sup>12</sup> Spring 2011 observations only occurred in classrooms with children who entered Head Start as 3-year-olds; these observations are not included in this report.

<sup>13</sup> See Kopack Klein et al. (2013) for the statistics found in this report. That volume includes a set of data tables designed to accompany this report.

<sup>14</sup> Weights are used to compensate for the differential probabilities of selection at each sampling stage (for example, we selected programs, centers, and classrooms with probability proportional to size, and we selected a fixed number of children per classroom out of a variable number of eligible children). Many of the statistics presented in this report draw on data from center director or teacher interviews or classroom observations. For the analyses, we first calculated within-program weighted means using a weight that reflected the appropriate unit of analysis (center, teacher, classroom, or child).

This step ensured that, given differential probabilities of selection, the mean being used to represent a particular program was an accurate representation of the population in that program. We then summarized the within-program weighted means to the program level using the program-level weight.

<sup>15</sup> Head Start programs are the grantees, or their delegate agencies, charged with overseeing the provision of services to children and families through Head Start centers. As defined in the Head Start Act, a grantee is a local public or private non-profit agency designated to operate a Head Start program DHHS. A for-profit agency within a community that wishes to compete for funds can also apply for Head Start funding. A grantee can delegate all or part of the responsibility of operation a Head Start program to a delegate agency. Each program has a director responsible for program-wide leadership and management. Center leadership and management of the planning and day-to-day operations falls to center directors. Education coordinators typically work across centers in a program to design and implement all facets of a program's approach to supporting child development (for example, curriculum) and support ongoing quality improvement.

<sup>16</sup> In this section, we summarize PIR data for the programs in the FACES sample and weight the data to represent all Head Start programs. Head Start's approximately 1,600 grantees serve clientele ranging in size from fewer than 100 to over 20,000 children (with larger programs being super-grantees that have multiple delegate agencies).

<sup>17</sup> The PIR identifies for-profit hospitals as an example of a private/public for-profit agency.

<sup>18</sup> Programs are categorized as urban if their zip code is part of a metropolitan statistical area (MSA) based on census data updated with annual population estimates. An MSA usually includes one city with 50,000 or more inhabitants and the county that the city falls within. Nearby counties can also be included if within commuting distance. All other programs are considered rural.

<sup>19</sup> Enrollment is not necessarily distributed across regions in the same way as programs (that is, the percentage of children enrolled in Head Start could be higher or lower than the percentage of programs).

<sup>20</sup> By 2013, all education coordinators (including those who serve as curriculum

specialists), must have a B.A. or advanced degree in early childhood education or a B.A. or advanced degree in any subject that incorporates relevant coursework and experience (Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, P.L. 110-134).

<sup>21</sup> Program directors are more likely to have a graduate or professional degree as compared to center directors, and comparisons indicate a trend ( $p < .10$ ) toward more program directors than education coordinators having a graduate or professional degree.

<sup>22</sup> Comparisons indicate a trend ( $p < .10$ ) toward more education coordinators than center directors having a degree in early childhood education.

<sup>23</sup> Comparisons indicate a trend ( $p < .10$ ) toward more program directors than education coordinators reporting that not enough training and technical assistance for professional development makes it hard to do their job well.

<sup>24</sup> Comparisons indicate a trend ( $p < .10$ ) toward more program directors than center directors reporting that a challenging population makes it hard to do their job well.

<sup>25</sup> Education coordinators were able to respond yes/no for each category of mentor used by programs.

<sup>26</sup> Comparisons indicate a trend ( $p < .10$ ) toward differences in the likelihood programs directly provide vision services or do so through a contract.

<sup>27</sup> Program directors and teachers were asked to report only their main assessment tool. Many programs (and teachers) may use additional assessment tools. It is possible, for example, that teachers use the main assessment tool identified by their program director, but do not consider it their own main assessment tool.

