



IHSA Advisor:

Reflections & Connections

MARCH 2016

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Updates from IHSA Executive Director, Lauri Morrison-Frichtl

Happy Spring! It was great to see so many of you at the IHSA Annual Conference. Spring brings a time of renewal and growth. We have several new/renewal projects we are rolling out. First, our Wage & Benefit Database service. The Illinois Head Start Association (IHSA) Wage and Benefit Database is a support service that assists programs with conducting their wage and fringe benefits comparability study. Using

the newly developed IHSA Wage and Benefit Database allows individual programs to review wage and benefit data from other Head Start/Early Head Start programs across the state. If interested please email me at lfrichtl@ilheadstart.org.



Also, we are accepting applications for our 2016-17 Parent Ambassador Program. The IHSA Parent Ambassadors Program is a yearlong peer to peer training program

for Head Start and Early Head Start parents. Parent Ambassadors will go through an extensive high-quality advocacy training program. To learn more and access an application visit the IHSA website at www.ilheadstart.org.

We also will continue our Grant Review Panels for all of you thinking about writing for the EHS Expansion, EHS-CC Partnership or the Duration Grants. This is a free service we provide for our members to assist with submitting the best possible grant.

What's new and on the horizon? [CONTINUE READING](#)

Updates from Associate Head Start State Collaboration Director, Shauna Ejeh

MARCH TIDBITS...

The Illinois ECE System

During the Directors' Forum at the Illinois Head Start Association's Annual Conference, representatives from the Illinois State Board of Education and the Governor's Office on Early Childhood Education gave a presentation on More at Four, the state's preschool expansion program. The More at Four program targets services to low income families with many risk factors, similar to Head Start eligibility requirements. The presentation allowed for open discussion on future plans for expansion and the desire for all of the early childhood education sectors to work together through local collaborations to ensure that appropriate quality services are being provided for the most at-risk children and families in Illinois. Here is a link to local collaborations that are recognized by the state: [CLICK HERE](#). If you are interested in taking a look at the enrollment requirements for preschool expansion programs, here is the link to the Preschool Expansion Grant Weighted Eligibility Form: [CLICK HERE](#)



If you have any questions regarding More at Four please contact Bryan Stokes at Bryan.Stokes@illinois.gov. If your program is having any challenges with building a partnership with any of the local school districts in your service area, please feel free to contact Jenny Metcalf at jmetcalf@isbe.net. Please also copy HSSCO on your e-mail so we can be aware of any areas where we can also help facilitate those relationships.

[CONTINUE READING](#)

**Keeping America Great One Child at a Time
by Yasmina Vinci and Rick Noriega**

For exclusive submission to Houston Chronicle
2/28/2016

***Note from IHSA: even though the Texas primary is over, we felt the message in this article was important to share)*

As the presidential primary season rolls across the country and debates escalate about keeping America great, it is important to refute those who believe the 47 million Americans living in poverty are doing so by choice.

On Tuesday, however, Texans have a choice when they cast their votes for the

presidential candidate they believe will restore the promise of economic mobility and reinvigorate the possibilities inherent to the American Dream. Bipartisan national opinion and exit poll research shows that early childhood education and family engagement is the common sense solution to lift families and children out of poverty. Although several "Super Tuesday" states have some of the highest poverty rates in the country- Texas ranks 5th nationwide- discussion surrounding the future of early childhood education for the poorest of the poor has been markedly absent from the conversation.

As candidates, both Democrat and Republican, share how their vision for the country will make the American Dream a reality, they cannot neglect the important issue of early childhood education and how national commitments like Head Start are moving the needle in some of our nation's most vulnerable communities.

More than 50 years ago, President Lyndon B. Johnson understood that the decisive point in continuing America's greatness was investing in families and early childhood education. This is the role Head Start and organizations like AVANCE have played in thousands of impoverished communities since he began the War on Poverty. While the remaining presidential primary candidates are focused on their own windows of opportunity this week, as they stump in Texas, what is their vision to address the least among us?

In the shadow of this much anticipated election year milestone, over 16 million of our nation's children are hungry, cold, tired, and behind-the-curve due to lack of opportunity. In Texas, over 500,000 children under the age of five are living in poverty during the most critical years for growth and brain development, yet only one third of three and four year olds have access to Head Start, a program that provides comprehensive early childhood education to at-risk children and families nationwide.

These staggering numbers are more than cause for concern. While the debate rages on, here in Texas and across the country, about opening windows of opportunity for the most vulnerable among us, policymakers and thought leaders on both sides of the aisle have recognized that eliminating barriers to success in a child's earliest years of life is critical to disrupting the relentless cycle of poverty.

The impact of early childhood education, and Head Start specifically, as a poverty disruptor is backed by decades of research. Head Start students are more likely to graduate high school and attend at least one year of college. Children enrolled in Head Start are more likely to get critical health and wellness screenings. And Head Start benefits parents too. Research shows that Head Start parents invest more time in learning activities with their children, and non-resident fathers spend more time with their children. Head Start parents are also more likely to increase their educational levels during their children's early years than other at-risk parents. Though much has been done, the war is not won.

Many of the vulnerable communities bypassed on the campaign trail this year are the ones that are most in need of the services Head Start provides children and families. Home visits, health screenings, and improved nutrition are just some of the key components of the comprehensive Head Start approach. Laying the foundation for a healthy and positive academic, social and emotional experience in Kindergarten, Head Start is setting the course for an equally positive, productive and engaging lifetime of learning.

The power of quality early childhood education is not only evidenced by abundant research and neuroscience, but also through the inspiring stories of Head Start alumni. Attendees of the Ford Foundation's celebration of 50 years of Head Start in

November- Disrupting Child Poverty- saw a number of Head Start graduates come forward to speak about how important quality early learning was in laying the foundation for their future success. In fact, Texas native and President of the Ford Foundation, Darren Walker, a Head Start and University of Texas graduate, has shared his own story far and wide. Today, at the helm of the second largest charitable foundation in the nation, Darren's life has come full circle as he works to challenge inequality, in part by supporting the program that gave him his "head start" in life.

While many successful Head Start alumni, like Darren, are proud to say they now have a voice, millions of children living in poverty in America still do not. Head Start is a commitment our nation made 50 years ago to ensure that every child, regardless of circumstance at birth, has the opportunity to fulfill the American Dream. So, AVANCE and the Head Start community - teachers, staff, parents, alumni, community partners - would like to pose a question to the presidential candidates on behalf of the Texas voices that may not be heard at the polls on Tuesday: how do you plan to honor and strengthen this national commitment to keep America great?

Short-run Fade-out in Head Start and Implications for Long-run Effectiveness

By Chloe Gibbs, University of Notre Dame; Jens Ludwig, University of Chicago; Douglas L. Miller and Na'ama Shenhav, UC Davis

At the core of debates about Head Start is evidence of its effectiveness, which has been questioned due to the reduction in test score gains, known as test score "fade-out", in the years following participation. However, short-term test score gains may not accurately reflect the impacts of the program. A number of studies suggest that the program yields long-term improvements that include social, cognitive and physical well-being. These findings show that, overall, Head Start produces a positive return on investment.

Annually, almost 900,000 children aged 3-5 participate in Head Start, the mainstay public pre-kindergarten program in the U.S. It serves children who are disproportionately poor, disabled, from racial and ethnic minority groups or living in non-English speaking households with a FY 2014 budget of about \$8.6 billion.

[SEE FULL ARTICLE HERE](#)

Mental Health and Wellness in Head Start

by Cody Kornack

A woman laughs joyously in a café. A man cries at the end of a sad movie. A toddler whines as she looks for her favorite toy. Happiness...sadness...frustration... these are all emotions that are regularly experienced by everyone from infants to the elderly. Emotions are shaped by our biology and environment, and how we think, feel, and act is shaped by mental health. What does mental health mean for a child? A Head Start staff member? A family unit?

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as a "state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community." WHO's definition of mental health aligns with many of the goals of Head Start programs around the country.

[SEE FULL ARTICLE HERE](#)

Head Start Exposes Kids to Positive Role Models

By Christopher Heimerman

With one word, Emiliano Martinez declared Male Interaction Week in the Head Start program at Wallace School a success.

"He felt comfortable," the 5-year-old said about Nero, a German shepherd K-9 officer with the Rock Falls Police Department.

Comfortable is exactly how the federally funded program wants its kids to feel around men who fill positive roles in the community.

"Sometimes, our kids don't have positive role models in their lives," said Carisa Valdez, a family community service worker with the program.

Accompanied by his partner of 6 months, patrolman Scott Allspaugh, Nero responded to a series of German commands, then showed students how he sniffs out drugs. Allspaugh rewarded him with his favorite toy, a tennis ball, then asked the kids if any of them were afraid of dogs.

Da'Marcus Wallace's hand shot up. Minutes later, he was a converted dog-lover.

"He was licking my hand," the 4-year-old shrieked with glee.

It isn't lost on Allspaugh that kids might be intimidated by both him and his partner.

"It's really nice than I can be here and knock two things out at once," he said. "Police officers are good, and not something to be scared of. We're here to help them, and the dog is here to help me and them."

Nero's affable personality allows him to do demonstrations just about anywhere, for a crowd of any ages, Allspaugh said. They even go to nursing homes. But there's nothing quite like kids approaching him and telling them they want to be a police officer when they grow up.

[SEE FULL ARTICLE HERE](#)

Upcoming Training and Events

Training...

APRIL 2016

April 7 & 8, 2016 - Practice-Based Coaching Coach Training

April 13, 2016 - Central Education & Disability QEC

April 14, 2016 - Central Family Services QEC

April 15, 2016 - Central Health, Mental Health and Nutrition QEC

April 19, 2016 - South Education and Disability QEC

April 20, 2016 - South Family Services QEC

April 20 & 21, 2016 - New Directors/Leaders Meeting Series #2

April 21, 2016 - North Health, Mental Health and Nutrition QEC

April 22, 2016 - PITC Module III / Part One

April 26, 2016 - Chicago Education & Disability QEC

April 27, 2016 - Chicago Family Services QEC

April 28, 2016 - Chicago Health, Mental Health and Nutrition QEC

April 29, 2016 - PITC Module III / Part Two
April 29, 2016 - Let's Talk About Transportation Webinar (rescheduled)

MAY 2016

May 5 & 6, 2016 - Heath Institute
May 6, 2016 - PITC Module IV / Part One
May 20, 2016 - PITC Module IV / Part Two
May 30 & June 1, 2016 - New Directors/Leaders Meeting Series #3

JUNE 2016

June 1- 3, 2016 - Directors Institute
June 8 & 9, 2016 - Vanessa Rich Leadership Experience

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON IHSA TRAININGS AND TO REGISTER ONLINE
PLEASE VISIT OUR WEB-SITE AT www.ilheadstart.org**

Current Job Openings

JOB OPENINGS

NEW POSITIONS

[Baby Talk - Executive Director](#)

[BCMW - Child Development & Education Services Manager](#)

[Illinois Valley Economic Development Corporation - Education
Coordinator](#)

[Illinois Valley Economic Development Corporation - Head Start Director](#)

OPEN POSITIONS FROM PREVIOUS MONTH

[*Chicago Department of Family Support and Services - Deputy
Commissioner - Children Services Division*](#)

[*Illinois Action for Children - Head Start Site Director*](#)

[*Heartland Head Start - Operations Director*](#)

Beautiful video we shared last week at our Annual Conference. This was the last project we worked on with our dear friend and passionate Head Start leader, Vanessa Rich. Vanessa put her entire heart

into this parent video, from the music to the pictures.
This video depicts the important and vital role Head
Start plays in lives of our beautiful families.



Congratulations to our 2015 - 2016 Parent Ambassadors! Are you interested in being a 2016 - 2017 Parent Ambassador?

[CLICK HERE!](#)



STRESS

A Strategy a Day Will Keep the Doctor Away!

Here are some daily strategies to reduce stress. You will be surprised by how effective even the smallest change can be!

Create a Consistent Routine

- Eat a well-balanced diet with drinks that are low in calories and caffeine. Plan some healthy snacks and lunches.
- Maintain a regular bedtime, and shut off all "screens" two hours prior to sleeping.

Express Feelings

- Talk with friends and peers; avoid gossip and hurtful conversations.
- Write in a journal.

Establish "Me Time"

- Create time each day to relax.
- Treat yourself to a simple pleasure.
- Pair enjoyable activities or tasks with less enjoyable activities or tasks.

Practice Specific Stress Reduction Techniques

- Focus on what is in your control, and recognize that you can't change what is out of your control.
- Decrease negative self-talk. FOR EXAMPLE: Instead of thinking, "My paperwork will never get turned in," say to yourself, "I may not be keeping up now, but my paperwork will get turned in if I can set aside 15 minutes a day to work on it."

CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATION
Carle Illinois Center for Child and Human Development
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Illinois Head Start Association

<http://www.ilheadstart.org>

3435 Liberty Drive

Springfield, IL 62704



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