

Playing Nice in the Sandbox: Collaboration and Subsidized Early Care and Education Programs

Julie Spielberger, Wladimir Zanoni, and Elizabeth Barisik

Conference on Collaboration Among Government, Market, and Society
Fudan University, Shanghai, China, May 26-27, 2013

ChapinHall at the University of Chicago
Policy research that benefits children, families, and their communities

Overview

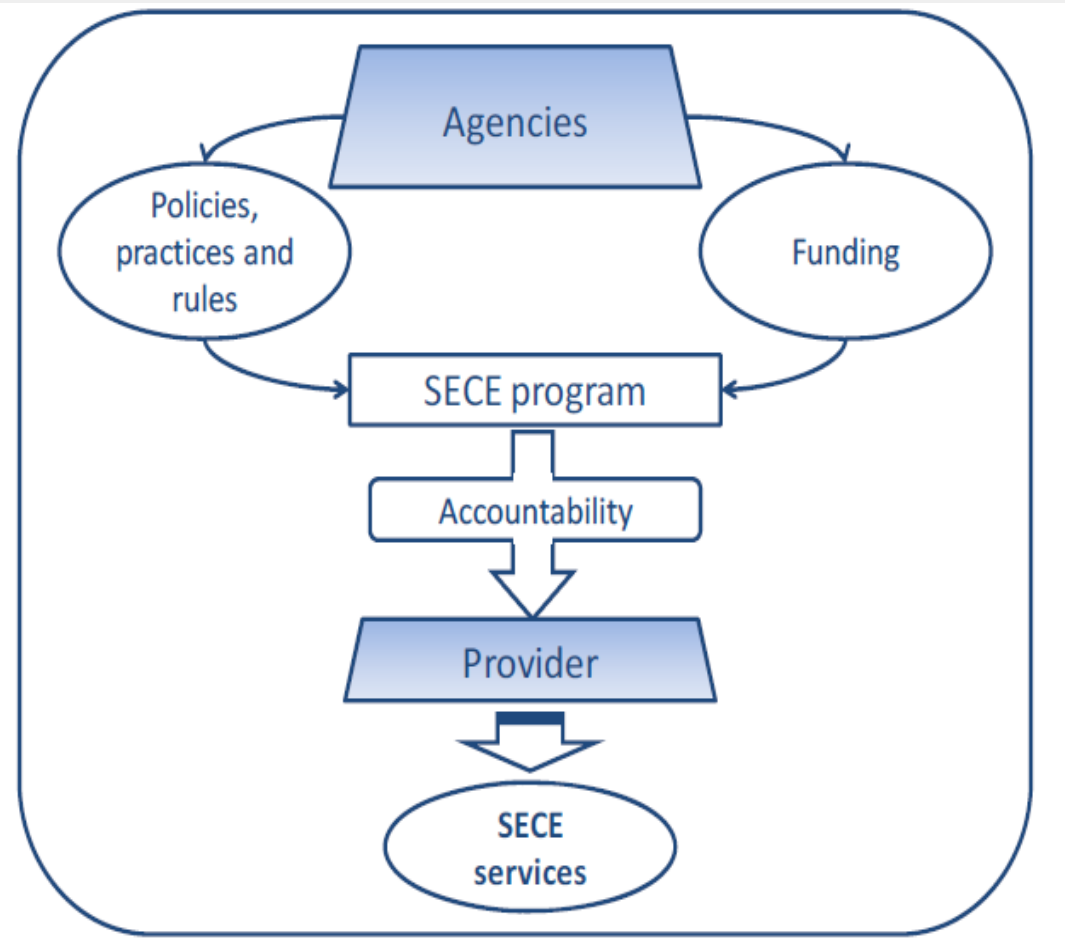
- Conceptual framework
- Case study description of collaboration
- Recommendations for research and policy



Conceptual Framework

Collaboration is the “process by which agencies *formally* commit themselves on a long-term basis to work together to accomplish a common mission.”

~ Illinois Early Childhood Collaboration



Why Collaboration? Growing Public Support

- Federal
 - PRWORA/Welfare Reform (1996)
 - Title I Guidance on serving preschool children (DOE, 2004)
 - Head Start Reauthorizations (2007)
 - HHS Continuity of Care Memo (HHS, 2011)
 - Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (DOE, 2011-12)
- State and Local
 - Legislative policy changes (eligibility, child care payments)
 - Early Learning Council (public-private advisory group)
 - Cross-agency partnerships
 - Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development
 - Mayoral leadership

Recent Federal Support

“[Y]ou can’t climb the ladder of opportunity if the first rung is missing.... It’s our job to take the wide range of programs families depend on and shape them into a seamless, high quality early learning and development system where every family can choose the program that works best for them and no family has to compromise on quality.”

~U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary, Kathleen Sebelius, August 2010

“Education is the one true path out of poverty for disadvantaged children.... One program, one organization, one federal department working alone can never be enough to address the multiple needs of children, families, and communities. We have to work together over a sustained period, from birth to grade 3 and beyond.”

~U.S. Department of Education Secretary, Arne Duncan, August 2010

“...The sooner a child begins learning, the better he or she does down the road... I propose working with states to make high-quality preschool available to every child in America. Every dollar we invest in high-quality early education can save more than seven dollars later on – by boosting graduation rates, reducing teen pregnancy, even reducing violent crime.”

- ~U.S. President Barack Obama, February 2013

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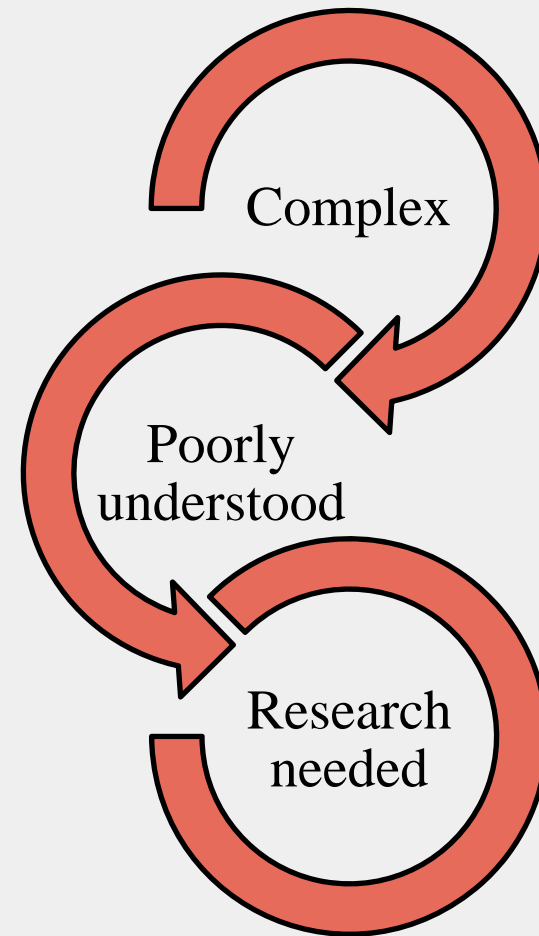
A Focus on Chicago

- Complex system
- History of collaboration
- Variety of models (generalizability)
- A leader for the state and the country



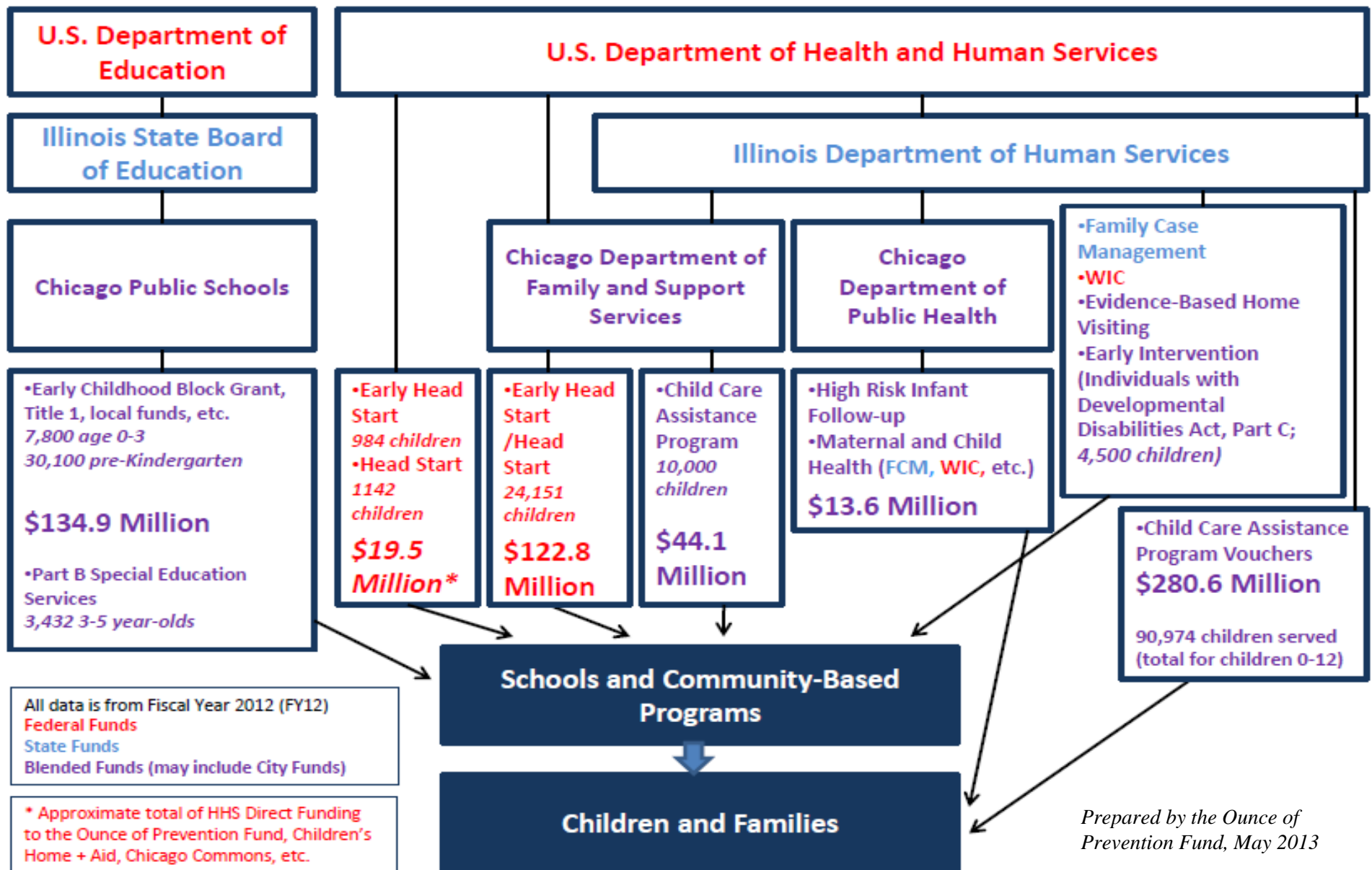
Key Findings

- SECE is a complex system
- SECE collaboration is not well-understood by policy-makers, researchers, and practitioners
- There is a need for additional research to provide clarity and guidance for policy and practice



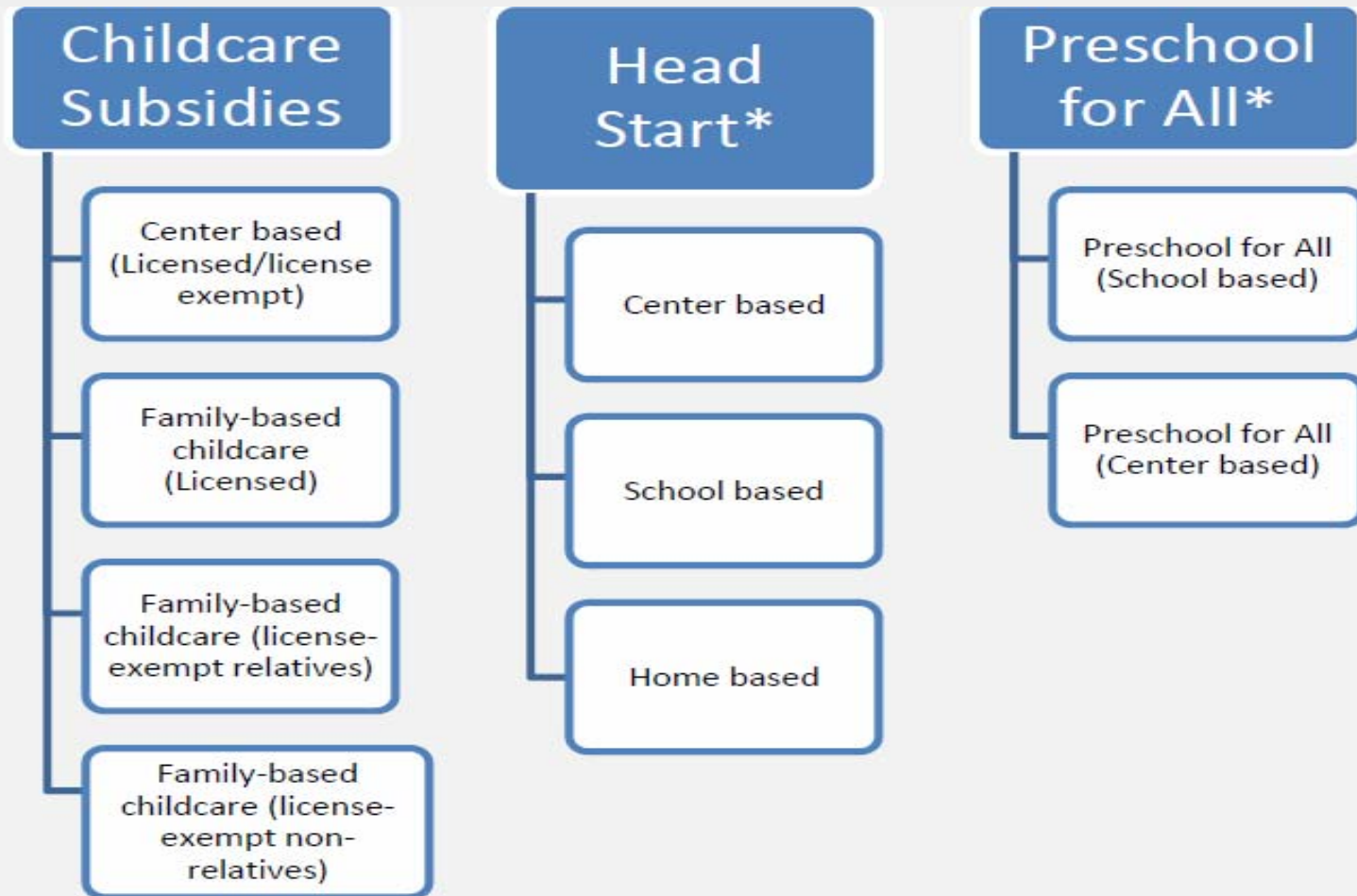
Chicago SECE: A Complex System

Current Early Childhood Funding Streams in the City of Chicago: Funding Drives Services and Programs



Prepared by the Ounce of Prevention Fund, May 2013

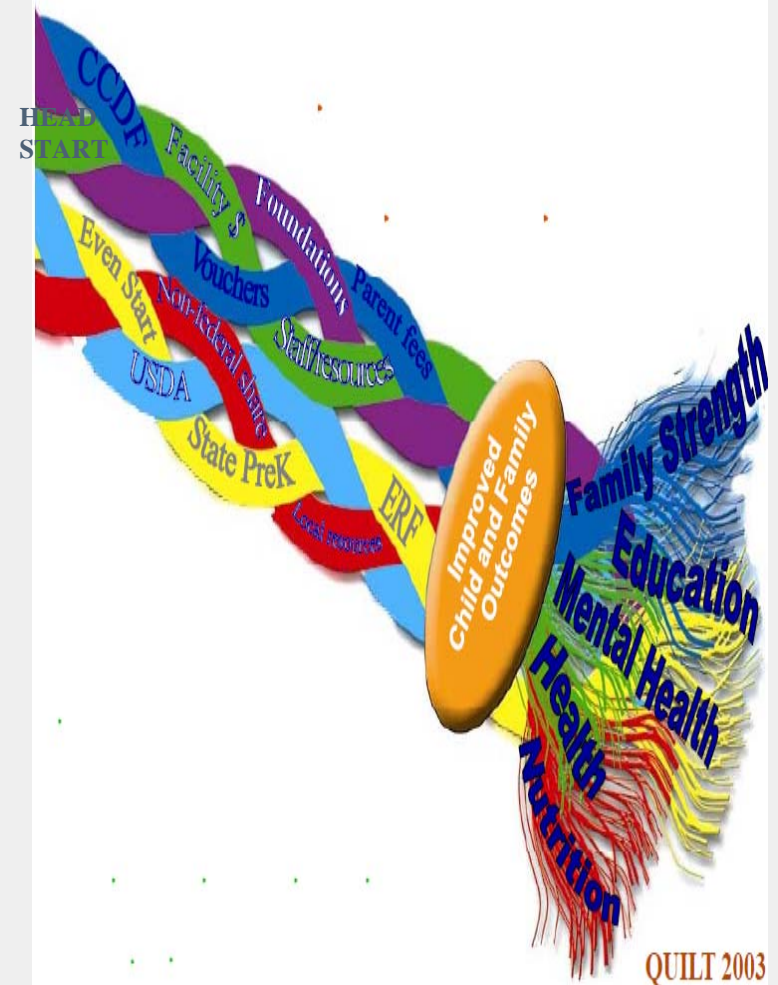
Chicago Subsidized Early Care and Education Programs and Settings



*Programs for children birth to 3, e.g., Early Head Start and Illinois Prevention Initiative programs (funded by the Illinois Early Childhood Block Grant) are not included in the figure.

Many Strategies for Collaborating

- Blending and braiding funding streams
- Aligning program eligibility and verification policies
- Offering cross-sector professional development
- Lowering co-payments for the lowest income families
- Using data to support program and systems improvements
- Implementing cross-sector Quality Rating and Improvement Systems
- Coordinating child and program assessments across programs



Many Models of Collaboration

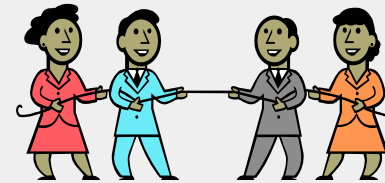
- Contemporaneous
 - One agency, multiple funders (center-based)
 - Two or more agencies partner to share space, programming, and/or funding (center-based)
 - Head Start/Pre-K partners with Family Child Care
- Dynamic



Collaboration Challenges in Practice

- Insufficient resources
- Different definitions of collaboration
- Incompatible goals (e.g., child development vs. family work support)
- Policy and administrative differences (e.g., eligibility, monitoring requirements)
- Difficult budgeting process
- Lack of system-level data on program use and outcomes for decision-making

“Anything at the policy and collaboration level that brings us to a shared understanding of what quality really is a challenge. ...The early childhood field is full of these ideas and tensions between intentional instruction and child-centered and child-directed, co-construction and construction, and content.”



“A child care center [supported through multiple funding streams] is licensed by DCFS, it’s licensed by the city of Chicago, it’s monitored by Head Start, it’s monitored by child care, and by Chicago Public Schools for Preschool for All. So on any day you could have four monitors show up... It’s really not a good situation.”

Implications for...

- Practice
 - Collaboration requires commitment and shared vision; “how-to” knowledge and skills; policies, procedures, and systems; and resources.
- Research
 - Traditional evaluation methods tend not to focus on multiple programs or capture ecological contexts and changes over time
 - SECE can impact multiple levels—child, family, community. Which outcomes do we care about and which can we assess?
- Policy and decision-making
 - We need better descriptive information on actual program use.
 - Data on program effects do not accurately reflect how programs are implemented.

12A CHICAGO SUN-TIMES • SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2013 • NEWS

Obama urges quality preschool options for all

BY LAUREN FITZPATRICK
Education Reporter
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When early childhood education champions in Chicago heard the president lay out a universal preschool proposal this week during the State of the Union address, they thought it rang familiar.

Quality preschool is coming for all 4-year-olds, especially for the poor kids who need extra help, President Barack Obama said last week in his State of the Union address.

Illinois, after all, has had a Preschool For All Program since 2006 that taught 3-year-olds as well as 4-year-olds in the hope of getting ahead of problems later on in life.

The state just never fully funded it, and has been cutting early education money over the last few years, most notably some \$80 million from the Early Childhood Block Grant that pays for preschool.

"For a long time Illinois was way out in front on early childhood education," said Gaylord Giesha, president of Voices for Illinois Children. "The reality is the Obama administration... got a lot of their ideas about early childhood in reality from the state of Illinois."

Obama wants to guarantee that all 4-year-olds in families earning up to 200 percent of the poverty level go to a good preschool by sharing the cost with states. That's about \$47,000 for a family of four; \$63,000 for a family of six.

"Every dollar we put into



President Barack Obama high-fives students while visiting a pre-kindergarten classroom in Georgia this week. (AP/WIDEWORLD)

taxes," Obama said Friday in Chicago. "All this stuff pays back huge dividends if we make the investment."

The White House has not yet said how much the proposals will work or cost, saying the details would be part of the president's upcoming budget.

W. Steven Barnett, the economist and early education expert who heads the National Institute for Early Education Research, figured the plan could cost between \$3 billion and \$20 billion per year nationally, depending on how the details shake out.

That accounts for about 2 million 4-year-olds living within 200 percent of poverty, he said.

Illinois has about 70,000 preschoolers in state programs, down from about 90,000 in 2009, the program's peak. In 2011, it ranked tops in the nation for its attention to 3-year-olds. But in the de-

of the Office of Prevention Fund. Neither she nor the others could estimate how many more total preschool slots Illinois needs, nor how much it'll cost the cash-strapped state.

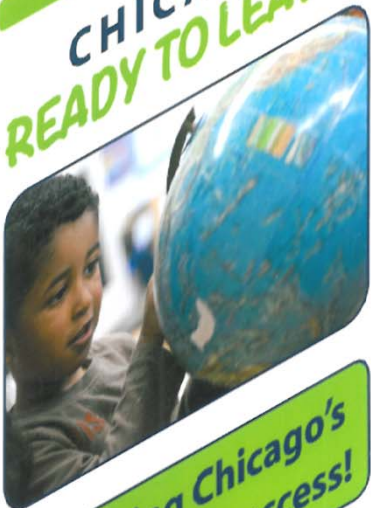
"Can we afford not to?" Rosner wondered. "We know what a strong positive return these programs have."

A shame for a state that's already figured out how to educate small children, said Kris Perry of the First Five Years Fund. State leaders should look at early childhood education as an investment, rather than an entitlement or an expense.


"I think it's important to try really hard to encourage a bipartisan look at it, and let the state not sell itself short of a new infusion for kids," Perry said.

Because the investment pays off while children are still small, too, Giesha said. "The savings begin very


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Study Finds Drastic State Pre-K Funding Cuts Put Nation's Youngest Learners at Risk

Monday, April 29, 2013


Funding Per Child Has Fallen More Than \$1,000 Over the Decade; Programs Lose Quality as Financial Support Declines

CONTACT: Jen Fitzgerald, (848) 932-3138, jfitzgerald@nieer.org

Washington, D.C. — State funding for pre-K decreased by over half a billion dollars in 2011-2012, the largest one-year drop ever, says a new study from the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) which has tracked state pre-K since 2002.

The State of Preschool 2012 yearbook cited two other "firsts": After a decade of growth, enrollment in state pre-K has stalled. And despite stagnant enrollment, state funding per child fell to \$3,841 — well below the \$5,020 (inflation-adjusted) national average in 2001-2002.

"Even though the nation is emerging from the Great Recession, it is clear that the nation's youngest learners are still bearing the brunt of the budget cuts," said NIEER Director Steve Barnett. Reductions were widespread with 27 of 40 states with pre-K programs reporting funding per child declined in 2011-2012.



US Official News
December 10, 2012 Monday

Illinois: Governor Quinn Announces Over \$34 Million in Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Federal Funding to Strengthen Early Learning Programs in Illinois

DATELINE: Springfield

The State of Illinois has issued the following news release:

Governor Pat Quinn today announced Illinois has been awarded a \$34.8 million Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to support quality early childhood education in Illinois.

Illinois was one of only 14 states selected for the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge. The grant funds will help Illinois connect children most at risk of school failure with high-quality early learning programs.

Illinois has been a leader in early learning for decades and we will now be able to further strengthen that leadership through the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge," Governor Quinn said. "The achievement gap begins before a child steps into kindergarten. Empowering our children with a solid education foundation before they begin kindergarten is the most crucial investment we can make in a future workforce that will drive economic growth in Illinois."

APPAM

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Brookings and APPAM Hosting Forum on the Obama Preschool Initiative on May 29, 2013

On May 29, the Center on Children and Families at The Brookings Institution and APPAM will host Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to explore the administration's plan to help states expand and improve their preschool programs. Secretary Duncan will begin by outlining the administration's plan and explain how the administration will work with the states to successfully implement the initiative. Former Congresswoman and former Chairman of the House Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee Nancy Johnson (R-CT) will then discuss some of the challenges that states already face in making full use of federal preschool dollars and discuss how the new



HHS Proposes New Child Care Rules

Early Ed Watch

In an era of Washington gridlock, there's almost nothing quite as gratifying as seeing big policy changes that echo one's recent arguments. Along those lines, Thursday was a great day for advocates of more and higher-quality child care in the United States. Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced a new Obama administration proposal to raise the federal baseline for subsidized child care centers across the country. [\[Full Article\]](#)



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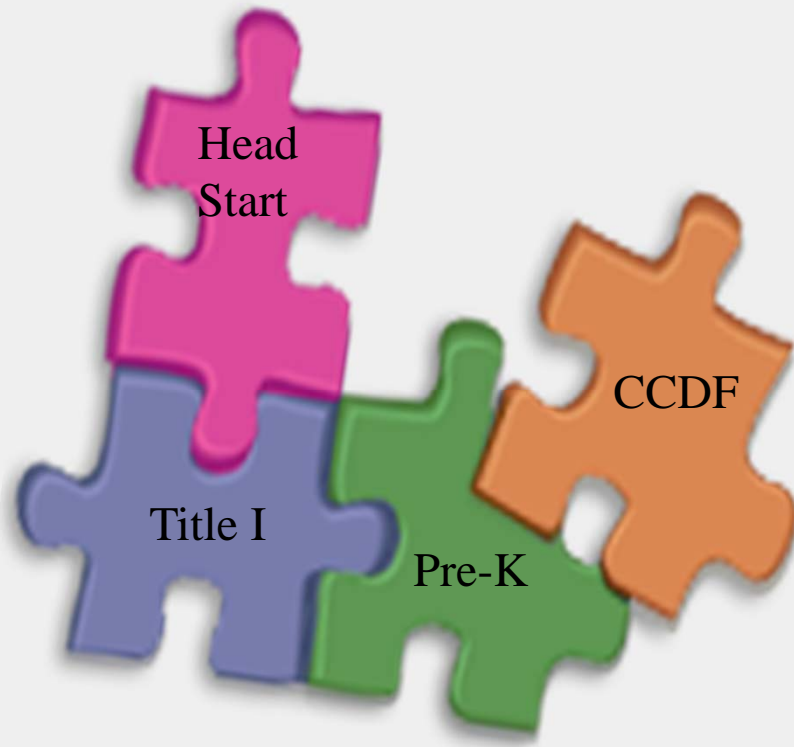
The Budgeting Puzzle

“It’s a complex puzzle because of the restraints in the funding streams. You start with your least restrictive, Preschool for All, and that only pays for the teacher and the aide for half a day and for classroom materials; that’s pretty much all you’re going to get out of them. So you budget all that first. Then you go to your next restrictive, which is Head Start, and they’ll have to fund the other half of the teachers, and they’re going to fund your Family Support Specialist, and they might fund a little bit of your supervision, but you have to be careful when you total that up, it can’t be over 15 percent. Or private money’s your next least restrictive. And all the rest is child care, and you don’t even know if you’re going to get the child care money because it depends on whether your kid is going to be eligible or shows up that day. So you budget it all out like that and try to balance it and make it work.”



[This and following slides will not be included]

A complex system/puzzle



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Components of Successful Partnerships

PEOPLE	SYSTEMS	RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shared vision• Mutual respect• Attitude, beliefs, values• Skills• Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective communication systems• Detailed, comprehensive planning• Service delivery• Policies/Procedures• Ongoing evaluation and improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adequate funding• Resource management• Time• Staffing• Environment: facility, space

Studying System Initiatives: Potential Questions

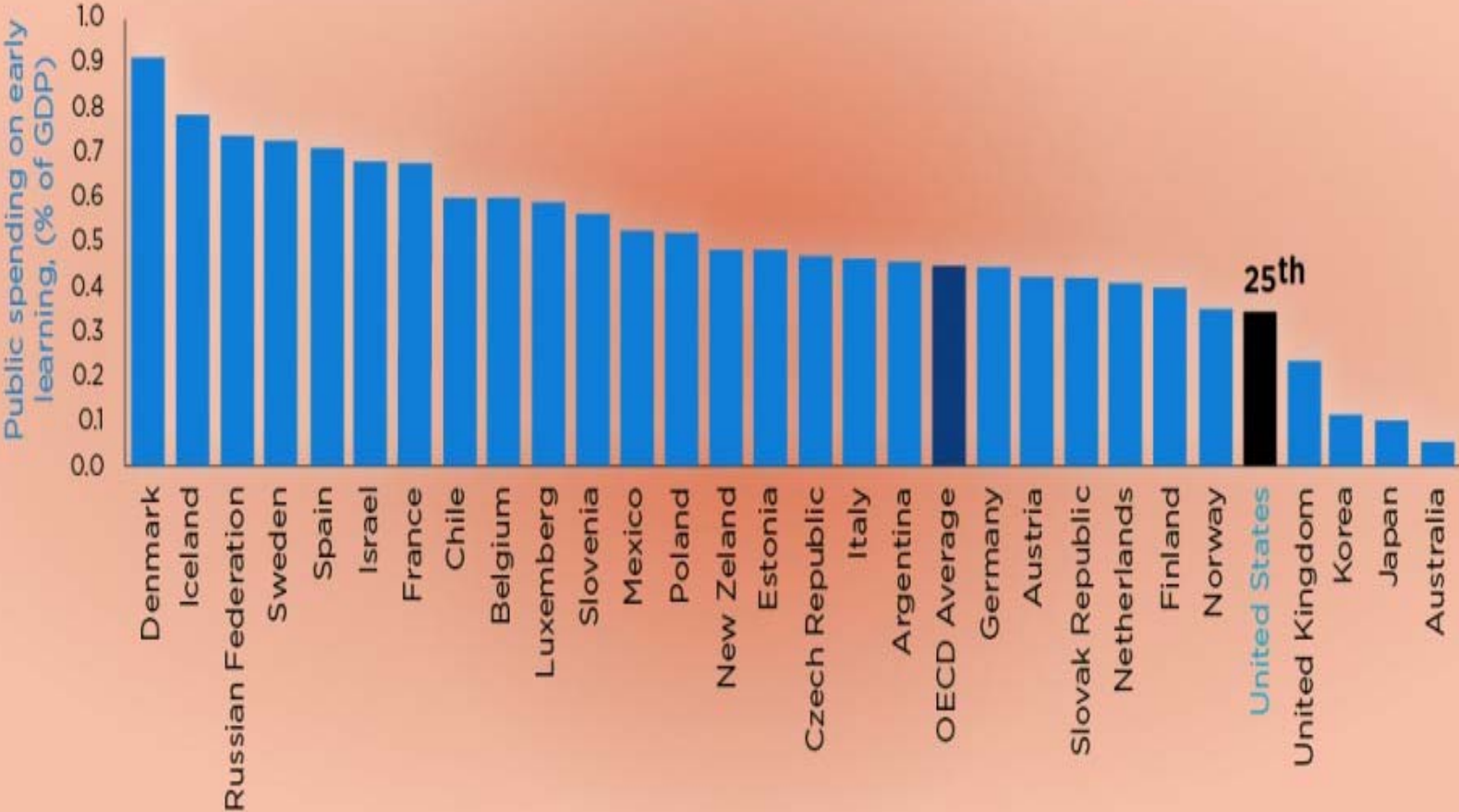
- What is the impact of system change on services and on beneficiaries (children, families, and communities)?
- Did the initiative implement system components, connections, and/or infrastructure as intended?
- How does the system improve the quality and effectiveness of programs and services?
- How do families use the system of services?
- How is the system influenced by political, economic, and other contextual factors?
- How does the system change over time? How could it work better?

Discussion Questions

- Should systems initiatives be accountable for demonstrating individual-level or system-wide impacts for beneficiaries?
 - Under what conditions?
- Can the same evaluation methodologies meet the needs of funders, policy-makers, and practitioners?
- Are experimental or quasi-experimental designs appropriate or possible for systems evaluations?

EARLY LEARNING SPENDING

The United States ranks 25th in public spending on early learning.



Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Build Up to Greater Collaboration

