



**Missouri Head Start State Collaboration Office**  
**Fiscal Year 2018 Needs Assessment:**  
**Themes and Recommendations on Workforce Development**<sup>1,2</sup>

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The *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007* specified a needs assessment process for each Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) to complete. In response, the Missouri Head Start-State Collaboration Office (MHSSCO) designed an abbreviated needs assessment that focused on the Office of Head Start Priority Area of Workforce Development (Supporting the Expansion and Access of High Quality Workforce and Career Development Opportunities for Staff). Thirty-four representatives from 14 Head Start/Early Head Start programs in Missouri participated in a meeting on September 13, 2018 or provided written information. Directors, staff, parents, and community partners responded to qualitative questions focused on early childhood workforce development – both the gravity of challenges and the examples of successful strategies. The following charts display emergent themes and recommendations.

RECRUITING AND HIRING NEW TEACHING STAFF
<b>Obstacles to Recruiting and Hiring New Teaching Staff</b>
<p><b>Limited Availability of Qualified Teaching Staff:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower enrollment in early childhood higher education programs</li> <li>Lower overall unemployment</li> <li>Unrealistic expectations of prospective staff</li> </ul> <p><b>Competition for Teaching Staff:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher salaries offered by school districts</li> <li>Expanded school district programs</li> <li>Other job opportunities requiring less education</li> <li>Urban areas attracting rural workers</li> </ul> <p><b>Interviewing and Hiring Process Difficulties:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicants not keeping appointments or returning for second interview</li> <li>Problems accessing applicants’ references and verifying their credentials</li> </ul> <p><b>Constraints of Prospective Teaching Staff:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicants’ preference for less than full-time employment</li> <li>Younger applicants’ expectations that they will change jobs often</li> </ul>
<b>Distinctions in Recruitment and Hiring of Infant/Toddler Teaching Staff</b>
<p><b>Differences Recruiting Infant/Toddler Teaching Staff, Compared to Preschool Teaching Staff:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easier to compete for applicants</li> <li>Advantage to applicants of smaller class size</li> <li>Advantage to applicants of fewer challenging child behaviors</li> <li>Less prevalent salary concerns among applicants</li> <li>Fewer credentialed applicants</li> <li>Applicants often more uninformed of the actual job descriptions and responsibilities</li> </ul> <p><b>Criteria for Hiring Infant/Toddler Teaching Staff:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interest in caring for very young children</li> <li>Understanding of the stress of caring for infants and toddlers</li> <li>Clear understanding of the duties of the position</li> </ul> <p><b>Supports Needed to Orient and Prepare New Infant/Toddler Teaching Staff:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation for the level of interaction required with infants and toddlers</li> <li>Preparation for the level of documentation and paperwork required</li> <li>Breaks for teaching staff and other supports to manage stress</li> <li>With their passion and with the program’s support, infant/toddler teachers will stay</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Points of view or opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily represent official positions of the Missouri Head Start State Collaboration Office, the Curators of the University of Missouri, U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, or Missouri Department of Health and Human Services.

<sup>2</sup> See the full report for references and resources.

**RECRUITING AND HIRING NEW TEACHING STAFF (CONTINUED)**

**Promising Practices and Partnerships for Recruitment and Hiring of Teaching Staff**

**Collaboration to Address Early Childhood Credentials and Certification:**

- Stackable credentials at a university to move from AA to BA degrees
- Partnerships with community colleges and nonprofit organizations to provide classes, experience, case management, and support while offering a CDA to Head Start/Early Head Start staff and community partners
- Partnership with high school to offer high school students registered apprenticeships and CDA
- Partnership with community colleges to provide field-based experience at Head Start/Early Head Start facilities

**Innovative Strategies to Recruit Teaching Staff:**

- Training programs
- Facebook
- Publicity at cultural festivals

**A Working Interview Process to Assess Applicants:**

- Three-step process of phone interview, in person interview, and working interview in classroom or home with an activity they plan and a time for observation

**Formalized Career Ladder:**

- Prepares in-house staff for more advanced positions
- Inclines new applicants who ask about advancement opportunities to accept a position

**PROVIDING ADEQUATE COMPENSATION FOR TEACHING STAFF**

**Determination of Rates of Compensation for Teaching Staff within Overall Budgets**

**Budgeting Patterns and Constraints:**

- About 85% of budget allocated to salary and benefits of all personnel
- Some younger staff still on their parents' insurance

**Establishing Agency Pay Scales for Teaching Staff:**

- Set pay rate by these factors: years' experience in a licensed facility (added benefit for accredited facility), number of credit hours from a university, and if they have CDA or AA degree
- Assign points in a matrix for these factors: level of education, years of experience, dual language capacity, other special expertise (e.g., regarding trauma, special needs of children, or a particular curriculum)
- Compare Head Start/Early Head Start pay rate to pay rate for other child care providers

**Budgeting Challenges of Staff Retention:**

- With low turnover, difficulties increasing pay to staff who stay, even though they have more education and experience than when they began

**Promising Practices for Providing Adequate Compensation for Teaching Staff**

**Marketing Compensation/Benefits Packages:**

- Free family memberships to family program
- Retirement plan, with agency contributing after 2 years
- Assign a dollar amount to benefits, so the employees know what it is worth
- Balance employee need for salary with need for long-term benefits

**Explore Partnerships to Reduce Non-Personnel Expenses:**

- Partnership with some landlords to adjust pay for rent and utilities on buildings

**Offsetting Training Costs:**

- Invitation to other community-based providers to attend CDA classes and classes on other topics (e.g., CLASS, Coaching, Conscious Discipline) for a modest fee
- Fees help offset cost of intensive orientation and staff training

**RETENTION OF TEACHING STAFF**

**Retention Challenges**

**Most Common Reasons for Turnover in Teaching Staff:**

- School district competition for teaching staff
- Low wages
- Stress at work
- Lack of advancement and other advancement opportunities
- Lack of a formalized career plan

**Other Challenges Associated with Retention of Teaching Staff:**

- Staffing challenges
- Getting substitute teachers
- Burnout

**Promising Practices for Retention of Teaching Staff**

**Onboarding:**

- New teaching staff not immediately active in classroom
- First observing and working with a lead teacher, Child Development Specialist, or mentor
- Extended orientation for up to a full year (one day per week)

**Career Ladder:**

- Formalized career ladder process created to promote career advancement opportunities
- Interested staff get support for long-term planning toward potential positions
- Staff participating above anticipated levels
- Agency able to fill critical staff positions sooner with prepared in-house staff

**New Teacher Community of Practice Meetings:**

- Training Needs Analysis completed by each new teacher with the Education Coordinator
- Data from the analysis used to plan topics of monthly Community of Practice meetings for the year
- Monthly Community of Practice meetings held for all new teachers
- Teachers reporting the Community of Practice meetings to be very beneficial
- Teachers appreciating individualized attention and support
- After one year with seven new teachers participating, no resignations

**Innovations in Work Scheduling:**

- Work week of four 10-hour workdays to improve retention, ease subbing, and reduce burnout
- Utilize staff of half-day sessions as support for full-day classrooms, teacher home visits, and teacher documentation

**Workforce Partnership:**

- Lume Institute Early Childhood Education Apprenticeship Program – ensures that prospective teachers have necessary pre-training, support, and Infant/Toddler CDA Credential to be successful
- Early Head Start – employs the teachers working toward the Infant/Toddler CDA Credential with intent to sustain long-term employment

**Examining Turnover Rates and Patterns:**

- Use of turnover list from agency's annual evaluation to create dis-aggregated data in pivot tables
- Determined higher turnover rates were for support staff (e.g., teacher assistants, cooks), not teachers
- Data helpful in guiding agency decisions

ONGOING DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHING STAFF
<b>Obstacles to Providing Ongoing Staff Development</b>
<p><b>Common Challenges to Providing Ongoing Staff Development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cost of intensive orientation and training of new staff</li> <li>Staff not having all required credentials for their job descriptions</li> <li>Getting substitute teachers</li> </ul>
<b>Promising Practices for Ongoing Development of Teaching Staff</b>
<p><b>In-House Provision of CDA Training:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of CDA Certification in-house</li> <li>Training network of staff and early childhood partners to help them get CDA credentials</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnerships to Promote Staff Cohorts Attaining AA and BA Degrees:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Head Start partnership with a local college, courses offered to a cohort of CDA recipients and college students to attain Associate’s degree: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding available through United Way, T.E.A.C.H.® Missouri, and Pell grants</li> <li>Head Start employee teaches the courses and can familiarize with Head Start</li> </ul> </li> <li>Intent to initiate the same structure with a local university for Bachelor’s degrees, to begin Fall 2019</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnership Practices to Help Agency:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using County Health Registered Nurse for staff training on health and nutrition issues</li> <li>Using First Steps providers for staff training and mentoring related to children with disabilities in classrooms</li> </ul> <p><b>Individual Coaching:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers given individual coaching – none who were coached leaving the program</li> <li>Ongoing curriculum training and coaching</li> </ul> <p><b>Coaching Teams:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established Community Coaching Teams, with each center meeting as a team one day per month: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Half-day meeting to address a team action plan, driven by data</li> <li>Other half-day meeting to provide professional development on topic chosen by the Coaching Team</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Individualized Professional Development Approach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New professional development being implemented – more individualized training in different locations with different topics (instead of all-staff days)</li> <li>Required training supplemented by teacher-generated topics</li> </ul> <p><b>Internal Practices to Benefit Teachers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One monthly training day for teachers</li> <li>Peer mentoring between staff</li> <li>Mental health consultation</li> </ul> <p><b>Use of Technology in Training:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using technology in provision of individualized training of staff</li> <li>Using Child Care Education Institute online training for child care partner staff</li> </ul> <p><b>Focus on Staff and Community Wellness:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pilot initiative from the University of California-Los Angeles and Johnson &amp; Johnson Fellows Program</li> <li>Head Start team of director, human resources director, and health leader</li> <li>Staff completion of a Center for Disease Control online wellness survey about their needs for support, agency activities to address their needs, and the ranking of importance of items</li> <li>Team meeting to review staff responses, what we knew we offered with what staff thought we offered, as well as the ranking of importance – results eye-opening!</li> <li>Goals set for agency wellness, partnerships specified, plans made for communicating available supports and strengthening needed supports</li> </ul>
<b>Promising Practices for Ongoing Development of Teaching Staff</b>
<p><b>Innovative Approaches to Child and Family Services that Promote New Teaching Competencies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership with school district to pilot new approach to children’s transition to kindergarten</li> <li>Family Outcomes Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducted at program entry and later in the year to assess family strengths and areas needing support</li> <li>Data used to identify possible impacts on child learning and potentially useful partnerships</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**PARENT PERSPECTIVES ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT OF  
HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START TEACHING STAFF**

**Parent Observations and Suggestions on Recruiting, Hiring, Retaining, and Supporting Teachers**

**Recruitment of Teachers with Best Motives:**

Teachers really there for the children  
 Teachers full of passion and not focused on salary  
 Just as loving in the community as on the job

**Clear Communication of Job Description:**

Based on turnover in one teacher position, make sure teachers know what the position entails

**Understanding of Multigenerational Approach:**

As a volunteer, observe differences in teachers' welcome to the classroom  
 Important for Head Start to hire people who understand they work with the whole family

**Flexibility in Work Hours:**

Have observed some teachers working 4 days per week, and some working 5 days  
 Have observed teachers working early and late shifts  
 Flexible scheduling advantageous to my children's teacher

**Support for Release Time for Classroom Teachers:**

Director stepping into the classroom, allowing the teacher to do documentation  
 Senior citizens volunteering in classrooms, taking stress off teachers  
 Teachers knowing some weight is lifted from their shoulders

**STATE AND REGIONAL SUPPORTS FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHING STAFF**

**Current Community of Practice and Workforce Development Approaches by Office of Head Start and the MHSSCO/MHSA/Regional Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Network**

**Coaching Curriculum:**

Practice-Based Coaching promoted by the Office of Head Start

**Community of Practice on School Readiness:**

One meeting per month for 9 months  
 Open to all management staff, regardless of position or area  
 Used the Head Start definition of School Readiness: Child Ready, Family Ready, and School Ready

**Telehealth Model Applied to Teacher Development:**

The MHSSCO/MHSA/T&TA Network may work with the University of Missouri ECHO Model of telehealth to develop the first ECHO for Head Start in the nation  
 A Hub team comprised of experts on the topic  
 Didactic approach by topic, building into a case-based conversation, e.g., a focus on challenging child behavior  
 Open to any staff from any Head Start program

**EMERGENT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Convene a MHSSCO Workforce Development Work Group to prioritize and develop action steps that address professional development systems challenges, including challenges in maintaining qualified staff for Missouri Head Start and Early Head Start programs.
2. Collaborate with partners and provide opportunities for program directors and fiscal staff to examine and develop budgets that prioritize the professional development of staff.
3. Develop a one-page informational resource/tip-sheet that provides guidance, recommendations, or strategies on how programs can utilize higher education representatives on governing boards, councils to advance collaboration to ensure staff meet qualification requirements.
4. Co-sponsor opportunities and develop materials as needed to share best practices and approaches to fostering staff career development and promising practices of Head Start and Early Head Start programs.
5. Partner with the MHSA, the T/TA system, and other key professional development providers to offer professional development for Head Start and Early Head Start and staff of partner agencies.
6. Support T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Missouri as a key strategy for expanding professional development opportunities for early childhood professionals, especially Head Start staff.