

## **Head Start Collaboration Offices: Working For You!**

Narrator: Simply stated, collaboration is the goal of the Head Start State Collaboration Office. Head Start State Collaboration directors walk the boundaries between the worlds of Head Start, state governments and agencies, state Head Start Associations, and local communities -- providing the glue, so to speak, that connects the common and sometimes competing interests and goals of these different worlds.

Thomas Rendon: What it really is, is about -- it's about building relationships. It's, it's about what the word says. Collaboration, co-laboring, working together, that's what this is, this really is about.

Linda Zang: What we said is, "What result do you all want for children?" And when we found out it was the same result, then the challenges looked a little easier to meet.

Narrator: The Head Start State Collaboration Offices were first funded in 1990 as a pilot project much like the Head Start program that started as an experiment in 1965. At first, 12 states were funded. The purpose was to create significant, statewide partnerships between Head Start and the states in order to meet the increasingly complex, intertwined, and difficult challenges of improving services for economically disadvantaged children and their families. Funding for ten more states followed two years later. By 1997, all 50 states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico had Collaboration Offices. In 2008, the American Indian/Alaska Native and the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs established Collaboration Offices.

Grace Whitney: And so, we began a systematic process of really bringing communities together to examine the myths that they had about themselves. But over time, really bringing them together to realize that they were all strongly committed to supporting high-risk families, and seeing children do well.

Rick Huhfnagel: By coming together as a group, we're stronger, our voice is stronger, and the support from the state, I believe, has been, been more willing to happen.

Narrator: Head Start State Collaboration directors have a wide range of skills. They know how to lead, to follow, to persuade, to facilitate, and to negotiate. Key to that is their innovation, flexibility, and the ability to adapt to change. Each Collaboration Office reflects the uniqueness of the state in which it's located. Head Start Collaboration directors are required to have knowledge specific to their state and be attuned to the ever changing political climate.

Dell: Each year there's something new, there's something that, I think, is really important to -- that would help children across our, our state.

Paul Sugar: We're a very large state with urban, rural, and very remote communities, but a small population, and a very tight-knit early childhood community.

Mary Lynne Diggs: The South Carolina Head Start Collaboration Office, in partnership with the South Carolina Health Network, has co-sponsored an oral health summit and forum for ten years, and has, kind of, pushed the envelope for dentists and for other oral health professionals in our state to accept the opportunity of Head Start children being seen by their first birthday.

Kay Floyd: When I came into the office, we did not have an advisory board for the Collaboration Office. So, we created an advisory board mainly from all of those state agencies and state organizations.

Margot Chappel: Our office was instrumental in developing a -- an articulation agreement between Great Basin College, which has an early childhood degree that terminates it at the associate level.

Janet Coscarelli: When things started to happen in my state, like the QRIS program, it was real easy to sell it to Head Start because it was a part of their life. They understand that. When we did the dental home initiative, it was easy. It was the idea that whatever they're doing in the classroom, whatever they're doing in the program is a part of their life.

James Scott: The project that I'd like to talk about is a collaboration with the 619-B coordinator at the Ohio Department of Education to work with our Head Start Migrant and Seasonal program. When those children come up, some of them are identified as children with special needs, and then go through the assessment process and the IEP process, and have an IEP. And, some of them are able to receive services before the end of school.

Khari Garvin: The most significant contribution that the Head Start State Collaboration Office has made in North Carolina is significant investments in, in staff development. And we've also been able to really, truly move the needle on, on credentialing.

Guadalupe Cuesta: I think that the most valuable contribution that I've been a part of for the National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Collaboration Office is the facilitation of an interagency agreement between the Health and Human Services Resources Administration and the Office of Head Start Migrant and Seasonal programs.

Eleanor Kirkland: I think what we've tried to portray for you is a glimpse into the lives of Head Start State Collaboration directors from across the country, and the ability that they have to engage in authentic collaboration. Not only are they building systems in early care and education, but they're bridging systems that already exist -- providing strength, resources and energy to move the field forward.

Narrator: Head Start State Collaboration Office directors have influenced long-lasting change in early care and education. Directly or indirectly, their work has impacted positive outcomes for millions of children and families, as well as early childhood professionals and local communities. Together, with

their partners, they have helped shape a more integrated early childhood system in every state, and many tribal, and migrant and seasonal communities. Although the purposes and goals of the Head Start State Collaboration Offices have been articulated in various ways throughout the past 20 years, the essence has remained unchanged. The important and hard work of collaboration goes on, in each state, in unique ways. Head Start State Collaboration Office directors are as unique as the states they serve, but all strive for innovation, positive change, and a better world on behalf of the most vulnerable children and families in America.

[Music and end of video]