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Talking Points

Layering Federal Head Start Grants with State Revenue Sources

- Federal Head Start Grants encourage Head Start programs to partner with local child care centers and family child care providers to provide comprehensive enrichment services to low-income children by layering multiple funding sources, including federal and state funds.
- Enrichment services purchased with additional Head Start grant awards play an important role in providing health and nutrition services, curriculum supports, teacher education, and improved group size and adult-child ratios for early learning programs funded by the state that serve our most at-risk young children.
- Ohio has recently sent clarification to child care programs that it is an “extended day” state rather than a “layering” state, and will prohibit the layering of state and federal dollars used to purchase comprehensive enrichment services, despite the fact that programs have been layering funds for at least a dozen years. (*consistent number needed*)
- Under such partnership agreements, Head Start dollars and state dollars are used for **different purposes** for the children in those classrooms. While some officials have characterized this as “double-dipping,” this is simply not the case. While different funds may serve the same children, they are being utilized to purchase additional services; services that can actually benefit everyone in the program – not just children eligible for Head Start.
- Ohio’s Head Start grantees have already been awarded federal funds for their child care partnerships this program year based on budgets utilizing layered funds. They developed partnership agreements that assume the ability to layer funds to purchase comprehensive enrichment services for high needs children.
- The recommended policy shift would end programs’ ability to layer funds in this way beginning June 26, 2016. This imminent shift jeopardizes existing agreements and the ability of programs to deliver promised services to families and children. Unfortunately, state officials have not yet determined how many children and families are affected by this policy shift so it is impossible to assess its impact.
- The resulting reduction in total funding to the early care and education system will have a significant negative impact on our state’s many communities that have used local resources to build on current state and federal investment. Reductions will force local programs to reduce the number of children enrolled, or compromise on quality of care for the children who most need high quality.
- **RECOMMENDATION:** State officials should, at a minimum, delay the implementation of this policy shift until it has fully examined the impact on low-income children and their families and the local communities that have heavily invested in the child care system. No policy shift should be made if it results in any net reduction in current levels of state support for early education.
- **RECOMMENDATION:** Ohio’s decision to identify as a “layering” state is self-elected. Ohio could continue to allow programs to layer Head Start and state dollars by simply recognizing itself as a “layering” state rather than an “extended day” state. Other states in our region do so, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has approved similar changes when requested by states.