SD Head Start Collaboration
Office Needs Assessment
Survey Results 2021
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Purpose of the South Dakota Head Start Collaboration Office

- Support the development of multi-agency and public and private partnerships at the state and national level.
- Facilitate collaboration among Head Start agencies and other entities that also provide services to economically disadvantaged children from birth to school entry, and their families.
- Build partnerships to leverage common interests around young children and their families.

Methods of Coordination

- Communicate during stakeholder groups with information sharing, planning, partnering, and act as a channel of information between Regional Offices and state and local early childhood systems.
- Facilitate Head Start agencies’ access to and utilization of appropriate entities so Head Start children and families can secure needed services and form critical partnerships.
- Support policy, planning, partnerships, and implementation across state agency systems for early childhood that include and serve the Head Start community.
South Dakota Head Start Service Areas

- Northeast SD Head Start
- Inter-Lakes Head Start
- Sioux Falls Head Start
- USD Head Start
- Oahe Child Development Center
- South Central Child Development
- Tribal Head Starts
- Youth & Family Services
- TRE badlands Head Start
Program Operations

For the purpose of this report, each staff member, depending on their primary role, will fall under one of these subparts. Many staff members are responsible for more than one role.

- Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance: Family Service Specialist
- Education and Child Development Program Services: Teachers, Home Visitors
- Health Program Services: includes health, oral health, child nutrition, child mental health, family support in health, nutrition, mental health, and safety: Health & Safety Specialist, Nutrition Specialist, Mental Health Specialist
- Family and Community Engagement Program Services: Family Service Specialist, EHS Home Visitors
- Additional Services for Children with Disabilities: Disabilities Specialist
- Transition Services: Transition Specialist, 3-5 Education Staff
- Services to Enrolled Pregnant Women: Health & Safety Specialist, EHS Home Visitors
- Human Resources Management: Education Coaches
- Program Management and Quality Improvement: Directors/Assistant Directors, Education Managers/Site Managers
Description of both Surveys

**Head Start Act**
Sec. 642B(a)(4)(A)
Head Start Collaboration shall conduct an assessment that address the needs of the Head Start agencies in the State with respect to collaboration, coordination and alignment of services, and school readiness alignment.

Although the Head Start Act does not require an assessment based on needs of statewide stakeholders representing early childhood, it is the belief of the SD Head Start Collaboration Office that partnerships and connections are a shared process. Encompassing services for children and their families can have positive affects on school readiness and life success.

The 2021 Needs Assessment Survey was administered via email. Each email addressed the appreciation of services provided to children and families in South Dakota, the importance of Grantee and Stakeholder’s feedback as a result, objectives of the survey and a confidentiality statement.

The survey questions were developed by the SD Head Start Collaboration Office Director and were designed to address the Office of Head Start national priorities.

- Child Care Systems
- Data Collection
- Elevating the Workforce
- QRIS
- State School Systems
- SD Regional priorities
Specific to South Dakota, questions in the survey focused on:

- Collaboration between Head Start and local and statewide agencies
- Collaboration between Head Start and SD Head Start Collaboration Office
- Professional Development interests of grantee staff
- Awareness of PD opportunities in SD

Survey focused on local and statewide organizations and agencies who provide services from prenatal to age 5 in one or more of the following:

- Children with disabilities
- Children and families experiencing homelessness
- Early care and early childhood education and development
- Family literacy
- Family services
- Health, Mental Health, Nutrition
- Child welfare

Grantee survey was designed using Survey Monkey ®.
Q.1. Choose the option that best describes your primary role in your program.

Q.2. My primary role is with...

In previous years, grantee directors and program component managers completed the survey sent by the SDHSCO. Given their knowledge of their program, they provided data that represented the needs of the program. This year, the 2021 Needs Assessment included classroom teachers, home visitors, and education coaches. This provided an in-depth perspective of professional development educators felt would enhance the quality of services they provide as a teacher, a home visitor, or as an education coach.

Q.1. Table 1 List of primary roles included on survey: Director or Assistant Director, Education Manager or Site Manager, Disabilities, Transition, Literacy, Mental Health, Family Services, Health & Safety, and Nutrition Specialists. Classroom Teacher and Home-Based Home Visitor (HS and/or EHS). “Other” category gave staff the opportunity to state a different title that was not listed. For this report, those were added to a category that was part of question 1. (i.e. Education Coordinator = Education Manager, Nurse = Health & Safety Specialist, etc.)

Q.2. Respondents could choose Head Start, which is the 3-5 programs, Early Head Start (EHS), which is the prenatal to age 3 programs, or both, which offers prenatal to age 5 services.

54% = Head Start  
18% = EHS  
30% = Both

Q.3. Which Head Start/EHS program?

Q.3. 8 Non-Tribal programs were listed for better direct collaboration in the areas of concern. The following are response rates:

- Youth & Family Services (YFS): 23%
- Inter-lakes Community Action Partnership Head Start (ICAP): 19%
- Oahe Child Development Center (OCDC): 14%
- South Central Child Development (SCCD): 11%
- Northeast SD Head Start (NESD): 10%
- USD Head Start: 10%
- TREC-Badlands Head Start: 7.5%

Q.4. Is your program licensed by the state?

Q.4.

- Yes: 58%
- No: 16%
- Unsure: 27%

- Home-Based Head Starts/Home-Based EHS options do not have to be licensed since service environments are in each individual household of the enrolled child.
- It is common for Head Start staff to be uncertain of programs licensing status.
### Q.1. Table 1 Primary Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEACHER (HS/EHS)</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOME VISITOR (HS/EHS)</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY SERVICE SPECIALIST</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED. MGR/SITE MGR.</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIRECTOR/ASSISTANT (DIR./PROGRAM)</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTH &amp; SAFETY SPECIALIST</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISABILITIES SPECIALIST</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENTAL HEALTH/BEHAVIORAL SPECIALIST</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION COACH</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUTRITION SPECIALIST</td>
<td>2%</td>
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</table>
Collaboration for the survey was considered “working directly with some one, or an agency, in order to provide services for children and families enrolled in the HS programs”. The following six questions given to grantees were based on their position at their HS/EHS program. Respondents were given the opportunity to answer with:

- High to moderate level collaboration
- Low level to no collaboration at all
- Not applicable to my current position
- Would like more collaboration

When analyzing results of the survey, Q.5. through Q.10. are based on collaboration between grantees and statewide or local agencies/entities who deliver similar services for children and families.

The SD Head Start Collaboration Office (SDHSCO) has ongoing communication with the agencies/entities included in these questions. The results of the survey will give the SDHSCO scope for maintaining, improving, or building collaboration levels between grantee agencies and local and statewide community connections.
Q.5. Level of Collaboration with SD DSS

Head Start grantees have collaboration with Department of Social Services. Three divisions of DSS were included in the survey:

- **Childcare Services** (assistance, subsidy, support, childcare listings): enrollments, resources, and referrals for families

- **Child Protection Services** (child protection, foster care): Pre-service training on child abuse and neglect, as needed for reporting, referrals to Foster parent trainings

- **Economic Assistance** (TANF/SNAP/CHIPS): recruitment for program year, referrals for families

Q.6. Level of Collaboration with SD DOE

Three programs within the Department of Education were included in the survey:

- **Part C / Birth to Three**: EHS Educators and Disabilities Specialists collaborate with Part C Early Intervention Providers when serving same families.

- **McKinney-Vento**: EHS and HS grantees collaborate with this program when identifying homeless children. **Grantees indicated a greater need for collaboration with this program.**

- **Child and Adult Nutrition**: Head Starts collaborates with CANS when planning and delivering meals at their programs.
The survey included the following programs from the Department of Health:

- **WIC**: Head Start collects health information in collaboration with the SDWIC program.
- **Prenatal Services**: Early Head Start programs provide services to pregnant women enrolled in the program.
- **Newborn Hearing Screenings (EHDI)**: Hearing screening for every newborn prior to discharge from hospital.
- **Bright Start Home Visiting**: Registered nurse provides prenatal services for first-time pregnant women until the child turns 2 or 3 years. EHS provides services to all pregnant women until the child turns 3. Collaboration occurs as a referral system between the two programs when applicable.
- **Vital Records**: Birth Certificates and Immunization records for enrollments

Grantees identified collaboration with WIC was high, but others would be an opportunity to build on a connection when providing similar services for prenatal and B-5.

Grantees indicated they have high collaboration with their local districts. 58% felt they have regular communication regarding Kindergarten Transitions, Special Education, district preschools, and participating in shared activities such as district trainings and events. As seen in the pie chart on the collaboration with the DOE and McKinney-Vento, grantees stated they would like collaboration with their local district Homeless Liaisons by working together to recruit and enroll children experiencing homelessness.
Rankings showed an opportunity for more collaboration with statewide agencies. Parent Connection (PTAC) and Department of Human Services provide support and resources in special education. The SD Statewide Family Engagement Center provides resources in early childhood and works closely with Parent Connection to provide parenting classes in early childhood topics. Early Learner SD acts as an advocate for childcare and other early childhood agencies. SD Housing for the Homeless Consortium can be used as a referral for those children and families experiencing homelessness.
Grantees indicated a greater collaboration in health and nutrition supports and services in their local communities. Each Head Start program has a Health & Safety Specialist (includes oral health), Mental Health Specialist and Nutrition Specialist. Specialists communicate, collaborate, and make referrals, when necessary, with community health and nutrition providers to provide concrete services to children and families enrolled in HS/EHS.

Grantees collaborate with their local Parent Education Partners who provide parenting classes in South Dakota.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High to Moderate Level Ranking</th>
<th>Low to None Level Ranking</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Medical Providers</td>
<td>1. Substance Misuse Prevention and Treatment Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Mental Health Services-Child and/or Family</td>
<td>2. Community Health Centers (i.e., YMCA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Dental Providers</td>
<td>3. Law Enforcement</td>
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<td>4. Food Pantries/Feeding SD</td>
<td>4. Support for Military Families</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Parenting Classes-Common Sense, Responsive Parenting, other</td>
<td>5. Adult Education for Parents</td>
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Grantees indicated Substance Misuse as the number one opportunity for more collaboration. The results are indicative of preventative services and provide opportunity to reach out for more support for children and families.

Other entities included in the survey not ranked in top 5:
- Libraries or Museums (educational activities)
- Childcare-Private or public childcare centers or family home childcare.
- Employment and/or Training Services for parents
- Domestic Violence Centers
- English Language Learners (ELL) Services.
Using a whole-child approach, Head Start provides comprehensive services in Education, Health & Safety, Nutrition, Mental Health, Disabilities, and Family Services. Family Services includes providing information, resources and/or referrals to help families better meet their needs and reach their goals. To provide these services at the highest degree possible, Head Start staff seek out trainings, webinars, conferences or other professional development opportunities to build on or increase knowledge of their current skills.

The top three interests revolved around the overall mental health well-being of the child and the family. Not only are Head Start grantees seeing an increase of mental health concerns, but COVID-19 has added a further need for mental health education.

Every year, approximately 1300-1500 children enrolled in Non-tribal Head Starts in South Dakota, are projected to attend Kindergarten the following year. Having effective transitions and participating in shared PD between the districts and Head Starts can prove valuable for both.

**TOP 5 TRAINING OPPORTUNITY INTERESTS**

- Effective Kindergarten Transitions (50%)
- Shared PD with local districts (48%)
- Child and Family Trauma (67%)
- Recognizing & Addressing Substance Misuse (64%)
- Mental Health for families (62%)

129 responses
Q.11. (cont.)

Other suggestions of trainings:

Conscious Discipline, effects of screen time and importance of bedtime routines, and anything related to home-based, not just classroom based.

Breakdown of other learning opportunities:

- **Virtual Networking with Stakeholders:** 47%
- **Understanding IFSP’s and IEP’s:** 26%
- **Utilizing the Crosswalk:** 22%
- **Utilizing SDStepAhead website:** 19%
- **Early Childhood prenatal-5 topics:** 46%
- **Utilizing SD Early Learning Guidelines:** 26%

Q.12. How familiar are you with the following online professional development programs?

- Not interested in taking classes
- Not familiar--tell me more
- Familiar but have not taken classes
- Have taken classes

Professional Development Training Opportunities

(SDECE) **SD Early Childhood Enrichment**: Early childhood development, health and safety, and quality practices.

(SDSFEC) **SD Statewide Family Engagement Center**: Family Engagement, literacy, child development, special education topics, trauma, and more.

**SD Parent Connection**: Special education topics, health, behavior, and more.

(ECLKC) **Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Center**: Prenatal to age 5 early childhood topics related to Head Start.

(NAEYC) **National Association for the Education of the Young Child**: Research-based early childhood content aligned with NAEYC standards.
In order to provide the greatest support to meet the needs of enrolled children and families, participants were asked to choose which level of collaboration they would like with the SD Head Start Collaboration Office.
The Needs Assessment survey provided results from which to measure and guide the work of the SD Collaboration Office to support the priorities of the Office of Head Start. High quality EHS/HS programs need significant resources and connections to be successful. Critical to this success are strong working relationships with partners in South Dakota.

Collaboration Strengths
Working collectively with the following State agencies, Head Starts continues to provide high quality services for enrolled children and their families.

- DSS: Continuing interaction around Childcare Services, Child Protective Services, and recruitment of eligible children using TANF lists
- DOE: Ongoing communication Part C Birth-3 Services and Child and Adult Nutrition Services
- DOH: Information sharing with WIC Services and Vital Records (Birth Certificates)

Head Start programs have identified assets as having connections with their local community agencies to provide consistency of services to children and families enrolled in the program.

- Participation in local school districts Transition Services, District Pre-K communications and having blended classrooms (HS & district), and Special Education Services (Part C and Part B)
- Communication and information sharing with Medical and Dental Providers
- Working with Mental Health Providers to provide on-site services for enrolled children
- Connecting families to other Nutrition Services such as food pantries or Feeding South Dakota
- Confidentially referring families to Domestic Violence Centers
- Communication with Childcare centers
- Connecting families to parenting classes

One of the responsibilities for Head Start Collaboration Offices (HSCO) includes assisting Head Start agencies to collaborate with public and private entities. Continuing communication between SDHSCO and SD Head Start Directors occurs via meetings, networking, and emails. The annual survey gives the SDHSCO the awareness of needs each program may have for improving services to children and families.
Collaboration Opportunities
Head Start considers the full range of strengths, interests and needs of each child and family. Connecting families with all available services and resources they need to achieve their goals. Grantees identified a need for increasing collaboration with statewide and local agencies providing similar and/or additional services for children and families.

Statewide
- DSS: Adoption/Foster Care Services and utilizing the online Childcare listings for families to identify childcare options
- DOE: McKinney-Vento Services related to Head Start
- DOH: Linking pregnant women to prenatal services, assist with awareness of Newborn Screenings (EHDI) to pregnant women, and ongoing referral systems between EHS and Bright Start Home Visiting
- Increase and/or continue a partnership with Parent Connection, SD Family Engagement Center, Department of Human Services, Early Learners SD, and SD Housing Development Authority for information, resources, referrals and parent trainings

Local
- Create a partnership with local district Homeless Liaison to assist HS in identifying, recruiting and enrolling pregnant women and B-5 children experiencing homelessness
- Increase shared educational activities with local school districts
- Increase shared professional development opportunities with local school districts
- Increased knowledge and more information around Substance Misuse Prevention, Treatment, and Statewide Services available
- Partnerships with Community Health Centers (i.e., YMCA), Libraries and Museums to support positive child and family outcomes
- Build on collaboration with those that provides services for families looking for employment, training, education, and English Language Learning
- Increase partnerships in the areas of law enforcement, support for Military families, and access to domestic violence centers

Professional Development Opportunities
Understanding definitions and impacts of trauma and substance misuse can help prepare educators as they interact with children and their families. Grantees expressed that knowing how to support mental health and the well-being of children and learning how to have sensitive conversations with families can have positive outcomes.
Grantees identified working collaboratively with school districts on shared professional development opportunities as a need. Working together also included Kindergarten transitions.
Stakeholder Survey Responses

South Dakota Department of Education

SDPB
South Dakota Public Broadcasting

SDAP
South Dakota Department of Public Safety
Victims’ Services Shelters

South Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children

Early Childhood Connections

Children’s Museum of South Dakota

Sanford Health

GROW South Dakota

Health Connect

South Dakota Dental Association

ADA

Southeast Technical College

South Dakota Department of Social Services
Strong Families - South Dakota’s Foundation and Our Future

South Dakota ParentConnection

United Ways in South Dakota

South Dakota United Way

South Dakota State University

Family Resource Network

Washington Pavilion

South Dakota State Library

SASD
School Administrators of South Dakota

John T. Vucurevich Foundation
...to make a piece of the world a brighter place.

South Dakota State Library
Description of Stakeholder Survey

-- 116 surveys distributed
-- 82 surveys returned for a 71% return rate
-- 5 surveys incomplete, not included in data
-- survey consisted of 11 questions

The SD Head Start Collaboration Director utilized the 2019-2020 Needs Assessment distribution list. With some changes and additions, targeted stakeholders were those that provided similar services to pregnant women, children birth to age 5 and their families.

Stakeholder survey was designed using Survey Monkey ®.

Agencies, Programs, Organizations specializing in: (*new stakeholder)

- Children with disabilities
- Children and families experiencing Homelessness
- Children in Foster care
- Child Education/Development
- *Nutrition & Physical Activities
- Family Service and Family Literacy
- Prenatal to young child Health (medical and dental)
- Mental Health for children and families
- Professional Development for Head Start staff
- Higher Education including *DOE Learning and Instruction Division
- Early Care (childcare licensing/assistance)
- *Economic Assistance
- Prevention of child abuse or *domestic violence
- Educational programs (SD State Library, *Museums, *Science Centers
- *United Ways of SD
- Quality Improvement: childcare/centers
Q.1. Stakeholder names are not included in this report.

Q.2. Page 19 symbolizes agencies and programs included in the survey data. Page 20 represents the specialty of services agencies provide that parallel with Head Start services.

Q.3. Where do you provide services in South Dakota?

79% of stakeholders denoted they provide services statewide or by region. Region areas cover portions of South Dakota by counties, but regions will include ALL counties in total. 16% stated they deliver services locally only. It is not specific if it is local by county or by town. 3% provided services on Tribal Reservations. 3% answered Other:

- “Do not provide direct services”
- “Some counties (not all) and some tribal communities”
Q.4. Rate your current collaboration with each Head Start

Results indicate stakeholders also responded the need for more collaboration between their agency and Head Start. Although Head Starts have good partnerships within their communities they serve, enhancing relationships with statewide stakeholders will further provide support for children and families. 30% of statewide stakeholders identified they would like more collaboration with one or more of the Head Starts.
Q.5. If you checked the box to have more collaboration with HS agencies, what services could your agency provide that would align with Head Start services? Please summarize what services...

36 stakeholders gave a small summarization of the services they offer in their agency. Although some of these agencies currently work with individual Head Start programs based on their location, every stakeholder would like more collaboration with all grantees.

Health and Safety
- Oral Health
- Mental Health
- Nutrition

Parent and Family
- Child Welfare
- Homelessness
- WIC

Child Development
- Literacy
- Non-Profits
- Data Collection

B-3 Home Visiting
B-3 Intervention
Newborn Screening
3-5 Special Education

Agencies specified collaboration in the areas of information-sharing about their program, providing related online links and sharing resources for staff to utilize for their programs.

Stakeholders indicated professional development opportunities for Head Start staff. Examples would be special education and early childhood topics, early literacy, family engagement, research and grant writing, child assessments, ACE trainings, and Positive Behavioral Interventions.

Higher Education Institutes are interested in collaborating regarding Head Start workforce for graduates.
Q.6. Would you like the SD Head Start Collaboration Office Director to contact you for more information about connecting to the Head Starts?

41% of stakeholders provided their contact information for the SDHSCO to help support collaboration with Head Starts. Some of these respondents have prior connections with one or more Head Starts but they expressed the need for more collaboration, especially with those they have yet to work with.

59% of stakeholder respondents chose not to provide contact information within the survey. Majority of stakeholders have an existing connection with the SDHSCO and/or an existing collaboration with their local Head Start.

4 respondents skipped this question.
Q.7. Does your agency offer any of the following topics for Early Childhood educators in South Dakota? Check all that apply.

- Early Childhood Topics (27 responses)
- Utilizing SD ELG (17 responses)
- Child and/or Family Trauma (16 responses)
- Mental Health for families (15 responses)
- Understanding IFSP/IEP/SPED (14 responses)
- Virtual networking (13 responses)
- Recognizing Substance Misuse (6 responses)
- Effective Transitions (6 responses)
- Other (20 responses)

Most stakeholders offer trainings in Early Childhood. Utilizing the SD Early Learning Guidelines, Child and/or Family Trauma, Mental Health for families, Understanding IFSP’s, IEP’s, and Special Education and Providing Virtual Networking were also topics offered from various stakeholders across the state.

Stakeholders had the opportunity to check “Other”. The following topics were included in their responses:

- Hands-On EC Materials
- Advocacy/Professionalism/Support
- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Parenting Classes
- Literacy
- Licensing/Quality Programs
- Health
- Behavior
- Secondary Education
- Funding info on Behavioral Health
Q.8. Does your agency collect B-5 data?

56% of agencies collect data for children birth to age 5. Seven respondents skipped this question. Stakeholders were not asked specific data collected; however, the YES-NO results give the SD HSCO an opportunity to connect with agencies and collaborate on relevant early childhood data.

Q.9. Does your agency report this data to the public?

43% of stakeholders share their data with the public. These represent:
- State agencies such as DOE, DOH, and DSS
- South Dakota United Ways
- Post-secondary institutions and early childhood education centers
- Local agencies
Q.10. Do you currently collaborate with other early childhood entities regarding data you collect? If yes, check all that apply.

- 22% of respondents did not collect data for their agency.
- 4% of agencies share data via email.
- 28% of stakeholders share their data at Interagency or Advisory meetings.
- 9% share their data with other early childhood entities to compare and use for effective decision-making.
- 24% utilize their data in other ways:
  - Research for Higher Education publications
  - Collaborate with certain agencies
  - Different age-range of data
  - Data used for reporting and funding
  - Shared internally

Q.11. Do you utilize SD Head Start data in your agency?

74% of stakeholders do not utilize Head Start data in their agency.

Working collaboratively on data sharing would improve services for children and families.

Head Start Data Collection Points

- Enrollment
- Staff Qualifications
- Dental, Health and Disability Services
- Family Information
- Education Services including Curricula, Assessment, Screening Tools, and Staff Observation Tools
Collaboration with Grantees
Stakeholders provide tangible supports and resources for staff and families. As Head Start staff, families and stakeholders work together, parents become valued members of their community and can progress toward their goals for themselves and their children. The results of the survey displayed SD agencies can provide similar or additional services in health, mental health, nutrition, child development, disabilities, and services to help parents reach their goals. Collaboration between Head Start and local agencies can help toward parents’ educational advancement, economic mobility, and child welfare services.

Collaboration with SDHSCO
The HSCO has existing valuable connections with many stakeholders in South Dakota. The outcomes of the survey offers greater opportunities for new collaborations between agencies and HSCO director.

Professional Development
Stakeholders identified comparable professional development opportunities that grantees stated were of importance.

- Child and Family Trauma
- Mental Health
- Substance Misuse
- Effective Transition

Data
Data is used to continually improve support for children and families and is used in program planning and goal-setting. Sharing similar data between Early Childhood entities and Head Start is an opportunity working together to enhance services to mutual children and families.

Results of the 2021 Needs Assessment will be used in determining collaboration, goal-setting, and strategic planning of the 2021 SDHSCO Continuation Grant.