

SD HEAD START COLLABORATION OFFICE NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS 2024



south dakota
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Learning. Leadership. Service.

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PURPOSE OF THE SD HEAD START COLLABORATION OFFICE

**SD Head Start
Collaboration
Office**

Assist Head Start Grantees in enhancing school readiness including promoting alignment of child outcomes, birth to Kindergarten.

Enable Head Start Grantees to better access Professional Development opportunities in South Dakota.

Build partnerships with local and statewide stakeholders to better meet the needs of low-income children, birth to school entry, and their families.

Promote better linkages between Head Start Grantees and other child and family agencies.

**SD Head Start
Grantees**

**SD Local and
Statewide
Stakeholders**

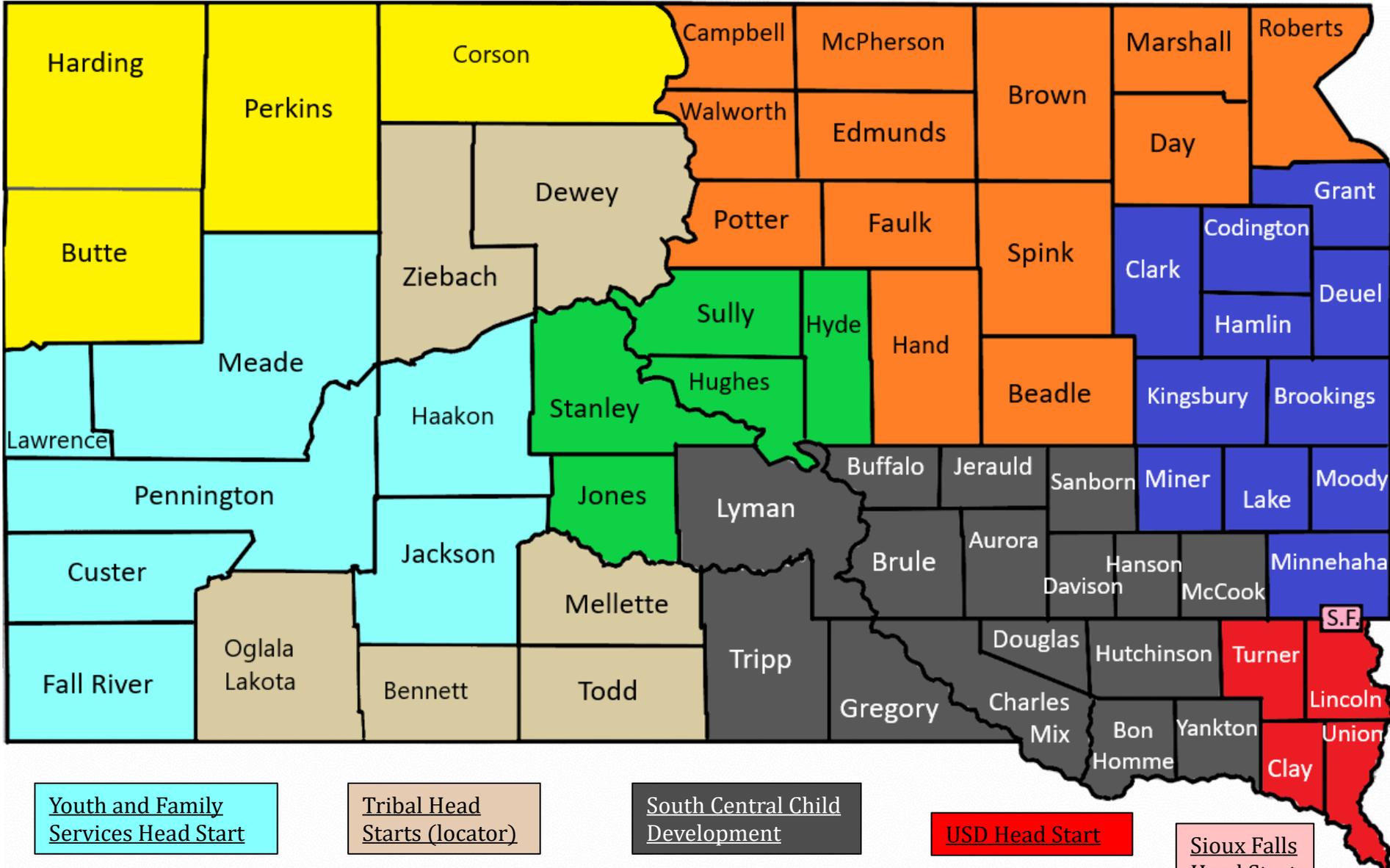
Establish collaborative relationships and partnerships with agencies that provide services to children and families of low income in health, mental health, disabilities, child welfare and family services.

TREC-Badlands
Head Start

Oahe Child
Development Center

Northeast SD
Head Start

Inter-Lakes
Head Start



Youth and Family
Services Head Start

Tribal Head
Starts (locator)

South Central Child
Development

USD Head Start

Sioux Falls
Head Start

Region VIII SD Head Start Grantees

- Executive Directors/Assistant Directors/Program Directors
- Site Area Managers
- Education Managers or Coordinators
- Coaches
- Disabilities Manager/Specialists
- Mental Health/Behavioral Health Managers/Specialists
- Family Service Managers, Specialists, Coordinator, Workers
- Health & Safety Manager/Specialists/Assistants (including Oral Health)
- Nutrition Manager/Specialists



- Focus on collaboration between Head Start grantees and statewide agencies or programs offering services to children and families
- Focus on Professional Development
- Focus on the role of the SD Collaboration Office

MEET FEDERAL REGULATIONS

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.

MAXIMIZE PARTNERSHIPS

SD Head Start Collaboration Office knows 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.

EFFECTIVELY OVERSEE PROGRESS TOWARD GOALS

- Expand collaboration between grantees and other early childhood agencies.
- Develop longitudinal data reports using the DOE data systems.
- Support access to professional development and high-quality workforce.
- Collaborate with agencies utilizing a quality rating improvement system.
- Ensure transition continuity from Head Start to kindergarten.
- Raise awareness about substance misuse in Head Start programs.

WHY CONDUCT A NEEDS ASSESSMENT?

USE DATA FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Obtain input from grantees and stakeholders to assist in identifying strengths and needs of collaboration efforts.

Acquire new connections between grantees and stakeholders to better serve pregnant women and children enrolled in the program and their families.



Head Start programs prepare America's most vulnerable young children to succeed in school and in life beyond school. Focusing on the whole child, programs deliver services to pregnant women to children birth to age 5 **AND** their families in education & child development, health, mental health, nutrition, family well-being, family engagement & partnerships, community partnerships, services for children with disabilities, and transition services.

Description of Services

All Grantees follow Head Start Performance Standards that are for each "component area". For example, the Director will work more with policies and program governance, Health & Safety Specialist's duties will focus on health status and care and oral practices, Family Service Specialists focus on family and community partnerships, etc.

Since most program staff will include those who do *not* necessarily work directly with children, they will have connections to other agencies within their community and/or statewide in order to help meet the needs of the child and their families.

This year's needs assessment was distributed to directors, specialists/managers, and coaches of each non-tribal Head Start programs (percentage of responses by position can be found on page 9 of this document).

Grantee Survey Results

South Central
Child
Development
6%

Inter-Lakes
18%

Oahe Child
Development
Center
11%

Q1. To better support local and/or statewide collaboration, please check which program you provide services at.
(Survey return rate)

Northeast Head
Start
8%

Badlands
3%

USD Head
Start
19%

Youth & Family
Services
26%

Sioux Falls
Head Start
8%

Q2. What position/title best describes you?

Family Services Staff – 32%
Health & Safety Staff (includes Nurse, Health Assistants) – 16%
Executive, Program, or Assistant Directors – 13%
Education Managers/Coordinators – 13%

Coaches – 8%
Nutrition Manager/Specialists – 6%
Site Area Manager/Coordinators – 5%

Disabilities Managers/Specialists – 3%
Mental Health/Behavioral Health Managers/Specialists – 3%

Collaboration between Head Start Grantees and statewide and/or local programs

To ensure high-quality service delivery in accordance with Head Start Performance Standards, Grantees must have a Director, Family Service staff, Education Management, Coaches, Disabilities Management, Health, Mental Health, Nutrition Management, and Coaches.

Programs can vary; some have individual positions while others may have more than one title – Education Managers may also be Disabilities Specialists or Health Managers may also be Nutrition Specialists and/or Mental Health Specialists.

Depending on the position or role of staff, collaboration may be higher at one agency, but no collaboration with another agency.

Grantees were asked about their collaboration with 23 statewide and/or local programs. Some programs may be a State agency but will have offices in several counties that Grantees can then collaborate with at a local level.

For example, Department of Social Services has local offices in several counties with Child Protection services or SNAP/TANF services. Department of Health offers WIC and other Health services locally as well.

Collaboration is the key to providing referrals, resources, and connections for enrolled children and their families so they can get their needs met and become self-sufficient.

The next two slides display the overall top eleven (2 were tied) programs with 70% or higher of collaboration among the Grantees as well as the percentage of those wanting to learn more about that agency/program.

When broken down by position the following had 100% with an agency/program that **did not** fall in the top ten with *overall* staff:

Directors: DOE Part B Preschool

Education: Other health programs, Newborn Hearing Detection, and Pre- and Postnatal services

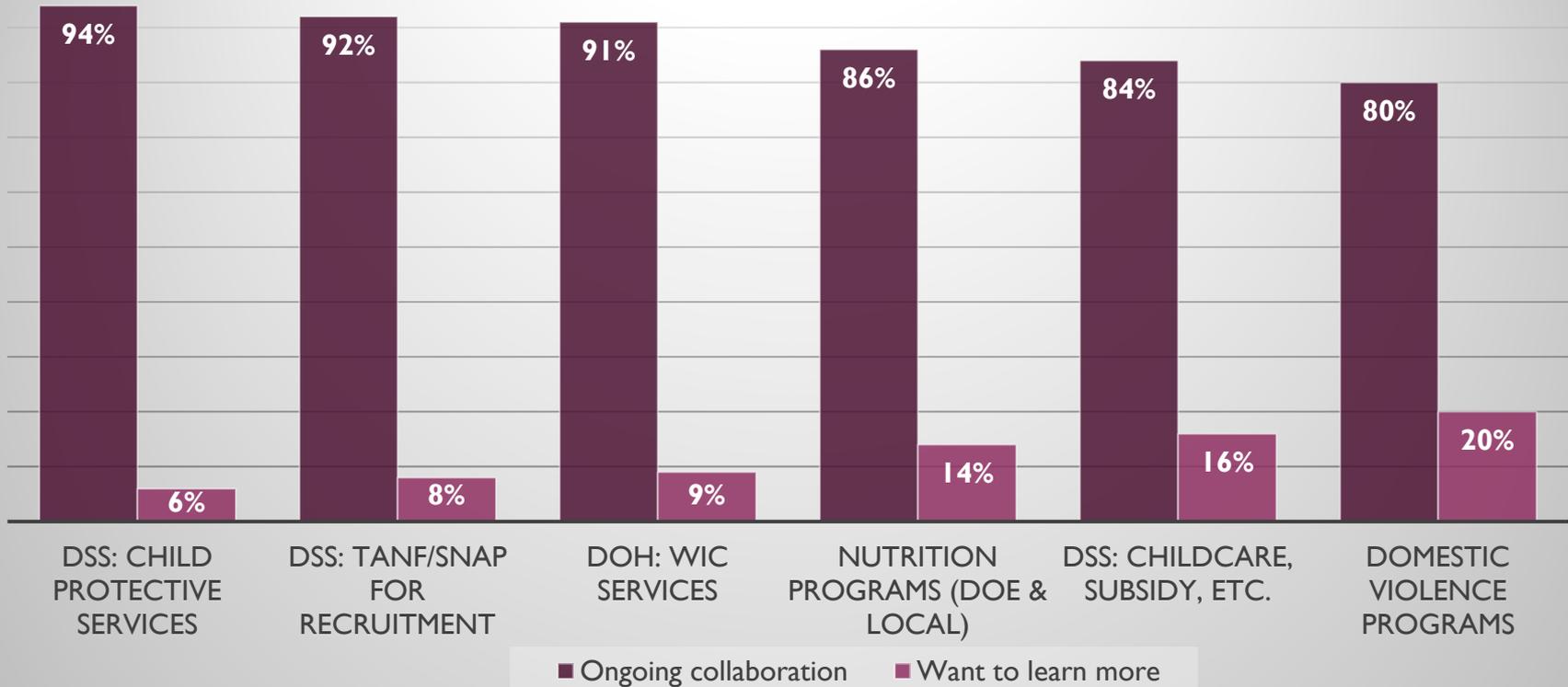
Disabilities: Mental Health Programs for children and families, DOE Part B Preschool, other disabilities services, and Behavioral Health

Mental/Behavioral Health: Mental Health Programs for children and families, Adult Education, programs that offer job/career skills, and programs offering Financial Literacy

Health & Safety: Adult Education (GED, etc)

Nutrition: DOE Part B Preschool

Q3. Overall collaboration with statewide and/or local agencies providing similar



When broken down, these roles/positions of staff had 100% collaboration with the above six agencies:

Family Service staff - DSS CPS and TANF/SNAP.

Nutrition Specialists - nutrition programs and DSS Office of Child Care.

Health & Safety Specialists (including Nurse/Health Assistants) - DSS Child Care and TANF/SNAP.

Mental/Behavioral Health Specialists - DSS Child Care, TANF/SNAP, DOH WIC, and nutrition programs.

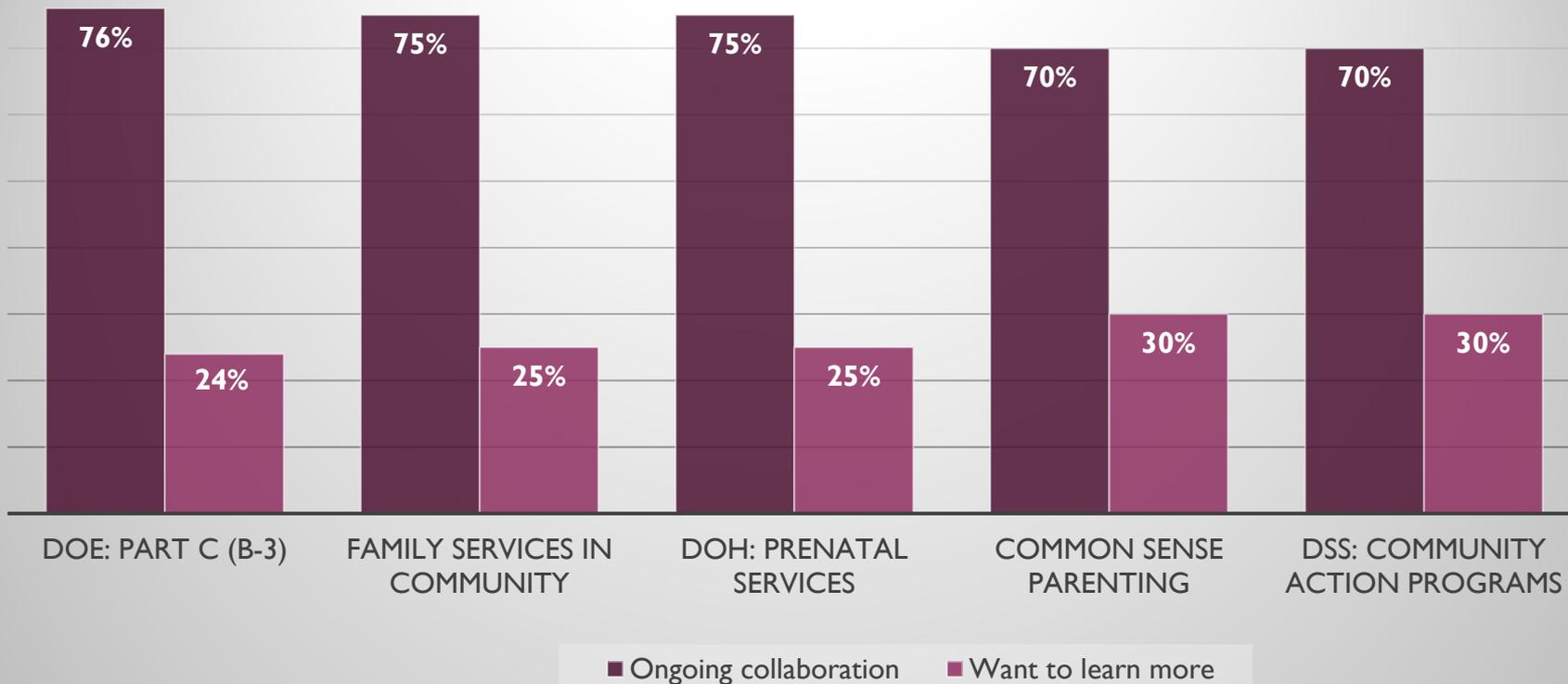
Education Managers/Coordinators - DSS CPS, domestic violence, DOH WIC, and DSS Child Care.

Directors - DSS CPS.

Disabilities Specialists – DSS CPS

Coaches – DSS CPS and Child Care

Overall collaboration with statewide and/or local agencies providing similar services.



When broken down, these roles/positions of staff had 100% collaboration with the above five agencies:

Directors – DOE Part C B-3 Services

Nutrition Specialists - DOE Part B SPED Preschool Services.

Mental/Behavioral Health Specialists - family services in the community.

Education Managers/Coordinators - DOH prenatal services.

Disabilities Specialists – DOE Part C B-3 Services

Coaches – DSS Community Action Programs.

Collaboration between Head Start Grantees and statewide and/or local programs

Findings of High Collaboration

South Dakota Head Starts continue to have high collaboration and relationships with State agencies. Collaboration is done during recruitment, enrollment, and for ongoing services.

Head Start programs work closely with several SD State Departments in making referrals, connecting families, and supporting the needs of children and families.

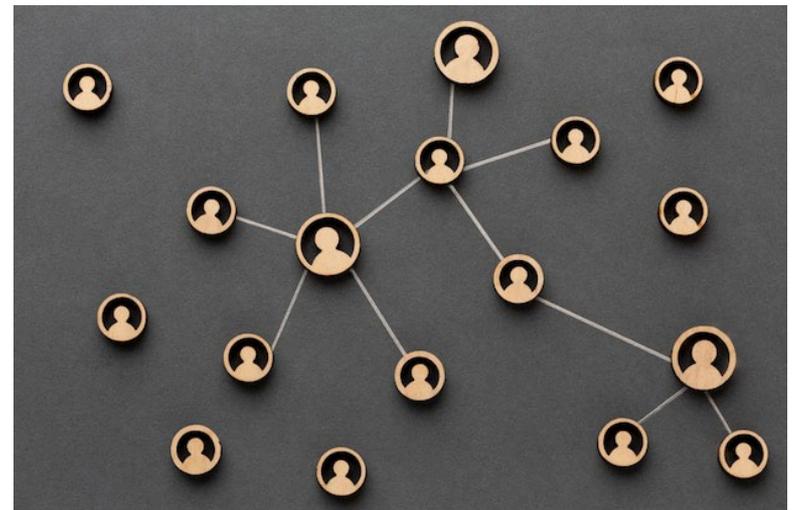
- Department of Social Services: Child Protection Services, Child Care Services, and Economic Assistance Programs such as TANF/SNAP and Statewide Community Action Programs.
- Department of Health: WIC Services and prenatal services
- Department of Education: Office of Early Childhood Services including Special Education and Early Intervention, as well as the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Grantees have also sustained connections with valuable programs within their service areas that can support children and families enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start.

Local programs that resulted in high collaborations:

- ❖ Domestic shelters or centers
- ❖ Nutrition services such as food pantries
- ❖ Family services such as Salvation Army, Lutheran Social Services, etc...

Program specialists and managers will cultivate distinct connections with local organizations based on their specific roles and responsibilities within the Head Start program. These connections are tailored to the needs and objectives of their respective roles, allowing them to effectively collaborate with community partners, agencies, and stakeholders. This enables specialists and managers to leverage their expertise and networks to support program initiatives, facilitate resource sharing, and promote comprehensive services for children and families.



Statewide/Local Collaboration Findings and Actions

Findings of Lower Collaboration

Given that not all staff members engage directly with every local and statewide agency in South Dakota, they were asked to identify which programs they would like to learn more about. This allows staff to focus on areas of interest and relevance to their roles, fostering targeted learning and professional development opportunities within the context of their work. By prioritizing specific programs for deeper understanding, staff can enhance their knowledge and effectiveness in collaborating with key agencies and partners.

Sixty-two staff responded they would like more information about the services of the following programs (those over 40%):

- 77% - Support for families of incarcerated loved ones such as Family Connections (based out of Sioux Falls) and Re-Entry Programs offered in the state
- 49% - Programs that offer Financial Literacy for families such as basic money management, family finances, etc.
- 44% - Mental Health programs that offer services for children such as Play Therapy or Sand Therapy.
- 44% - Mental Health programs that offer services for families.
- 44% - Programs that offer Job and Career Skills for families such as resume writing, interviewing, job search, etc.
- 43% - Behavioral Health such as substance prevention & treatment
- 43% - Newborn Hearing: Early Hearing & Detection Intervention
- 43% - Pre- and Postnatal services (resources, maternity/baby items, assistance, etc.)

Actions

The 2024 Needs Assessment survey results play a crucial role in measuring and guiding the work of the SD Collaboration Office to align with the priorities/goals of the Office of Head Start. By strengthening collaborative relationships between Head Start and local as well as statewide agencies, programs receive enhanced support. Connecting with similar entities statewide contributes to ensuring that children are ready for school and families can access the resources needed to achieve their goals.

Through collaboration between the Head Start Collaboration Office and the SD Head Start Association, bi-monthly Stakeholder/Grantee meetings are scheduled to engage statewide and local stakeholders. These meetings provide a platform for stakeholders to share valuable information about their programs, resources that benefit families, and professional development opportunities for Head Start grantees. This collaborative effort aims to foster information sharing, networking, and capacity building among stakeholders to enhance the support and services available to children and families in Head Start programs.



Q4. How do you participate in the following activities/events?

	EHS transition: Head Start classroom visits, transition parent meetings, provide resources.		Kindergarten Transitions: classroom visits, meetings with school district staff, shared parent engagement events.		Kindergarten Screenings: Health or Developmental		Child Find Screenings (not including Kindergarten screenings)		Attending an IFSP or IEP meeting when invited		Communication with the district McKinney-Vento Liaison (homeless children and families). (Question added this year)
Assessment Year	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2024
I am an active participant	72%	57%	68%	53%	54%	45%	66%	50%	66%	50%	25%
I participate, but not consistently	22%	36%	25%	42%	36%	52%	23%	44%	22%	43%	41%
I would like to be more involved	6%	7%	7%	5%	10%	3%	11%	6%	12%	7%	34%
Position or Role who participate at 100%			Disabilities Specialist, Coach		Disabilities Specialist		Health & Safety Specialist		Disabilities Specialist, Coach		Education Mgr, Mental & Behavioral Health Spec.

School District Collaboration Findings

Findings for Transition, Screenings, and Spec. Ed.

When analyzing the data to demonstrate 100% participation among Disabilities Specialists, Health and Safety Specialists, Education Managers, Coaches, and Mental Health/Behavioral Health Specialists, there was a noted decrease in overall participation in transition activities, screenings, and attendance of special education services compared to the previous year (2023).

This decline in participation could potentially be attributed to the survey distribution primarily targeting directors, managers, and specialists. The 2023 survey, which included teachers and home visitors, likely resulted in higher participation rates due to their pivotal role as educators directly involved in these activities and services. While acknowledging the importance of addressing the needs of education staff within Head Start programs, it's essential to recognize that providing direct support at the service delivery level is typically beyond the scope of the Head Start Collaboration Director's role.

It appears that while there is participation among staff in certain activities, consistency may vary based on the data trends observed. There has been an increase ranging from 14% to 21% compared to 2023 in terms of staff engagement in these activities.



Actions for Transition, Screenings, and Spec. Ed.

As previously mentioned in this report, Head Start specialists and managers often hold dual or multiple roles. One of the most commonly linked position is the Education and Disabilities Specialist role. It's notable that more than 80% of Education Managers in non-Tribal Head Starts in South Dakota also serve as Disabilities Specialists. This dual role emphasizes the importance of integrating education and disability services within Head Start programs to provide comprehensive support for children with diverse needs.

The Head Start Act (Sec. 642A) requires Head Start and Early Head Start programs to promote continuity of services and effective transitions. Currently, programs use strategies to make these transitions, regardless of age, a positive experience for schools, children, and parents.

The role of the Head Start Collaboration Director around transitions is to promote alignment of Head Start Child Outcomes Framework and the State early learning standards (SD Early Learning Guidelines). In 2021, the SDELG – HSELOF – SD Kindergarten Standards Crosswalk was created and distributed to Head Start educators. This continues to occur as new education staff are hired. Staff and parents also have access to the Transition Calendar which consists of activities aligned with the Crosswalk.

School District Collaboration Actions

Findings for McKinney-Vento

The 2024 Needs Assessment included a question revolving around the communication staff have with the McKinney-Vento Liaisons in school districts.

According to the Head Start Performance Standards all families who meet the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless are "categorically eligible" for Head Start programs. LEAs (local education agency) designate a McKinney-Vento homeless liaison to act as a central point of contact, coordinate identification and service, and collect and report data. This is one of many connections Head Start grantees can and should make when identifying homeless families (and children) in their service areas.

Even though data can be analyzed by each position, supporting children and families experiencing homelessness requires a collaborative team effort. It is crucial for staff, programs, school districts, and communities to work together to foster collaboration and provide essential services to address the needs of homeless families effectively.

Actions for McKinney-Vento

As professionals, we have the chance to strengthen relationships with families through program areas that include environments, family partnerships, and teaching and learning. Head Start serves as an important environment that can provide support and collaborate with families to mitigate the daily stress and uncertainty that may arise from homelessness.

Collaborating with McKinney-Vento liaisons enhances the impact of early childhood programs and strengthens the continuum of care for homeless students across educational settings.

Currently, the SD Head Start Collaboration Director and the Title IX McKinney-Vento Program Specialist are initiating efforts to establish a system that facilitates connections between Head Start programs and district McKinney-Vento liaisons. This collaborative endeavor aims to enhance the identification of homeless students, assist families in accessing resources, coordinate comprehensive services, promote stability for children experiencing housing instability, and contribute to advocacy and awareness efforts.

The partnership between the Collaboration Director and the McKinney-Vento Program Specialist represents a critical step toward addressing the needs of homeless students and promoting equitable access to education and support services for all children.

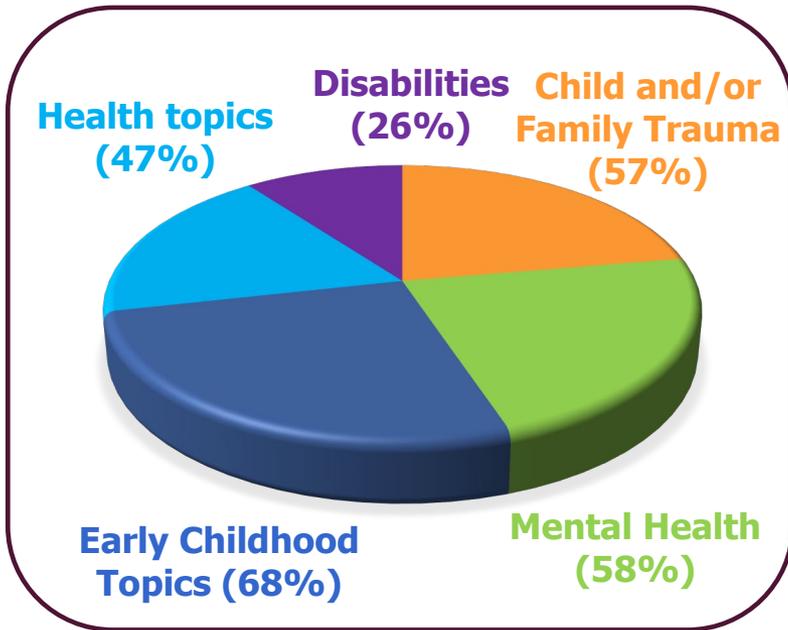
I participate, but not consistently:

Directors:	40%
Disabilities:	100%
Family Services:	44%
Health & Safety:	50%

Would like to be more involved:

Directors:	40%
Family Services:	33%
Health & Safety:	50%
Nutrition Specialist:	100%
Coaches:	100%

Top 5 PD staff attended prior to March 2023



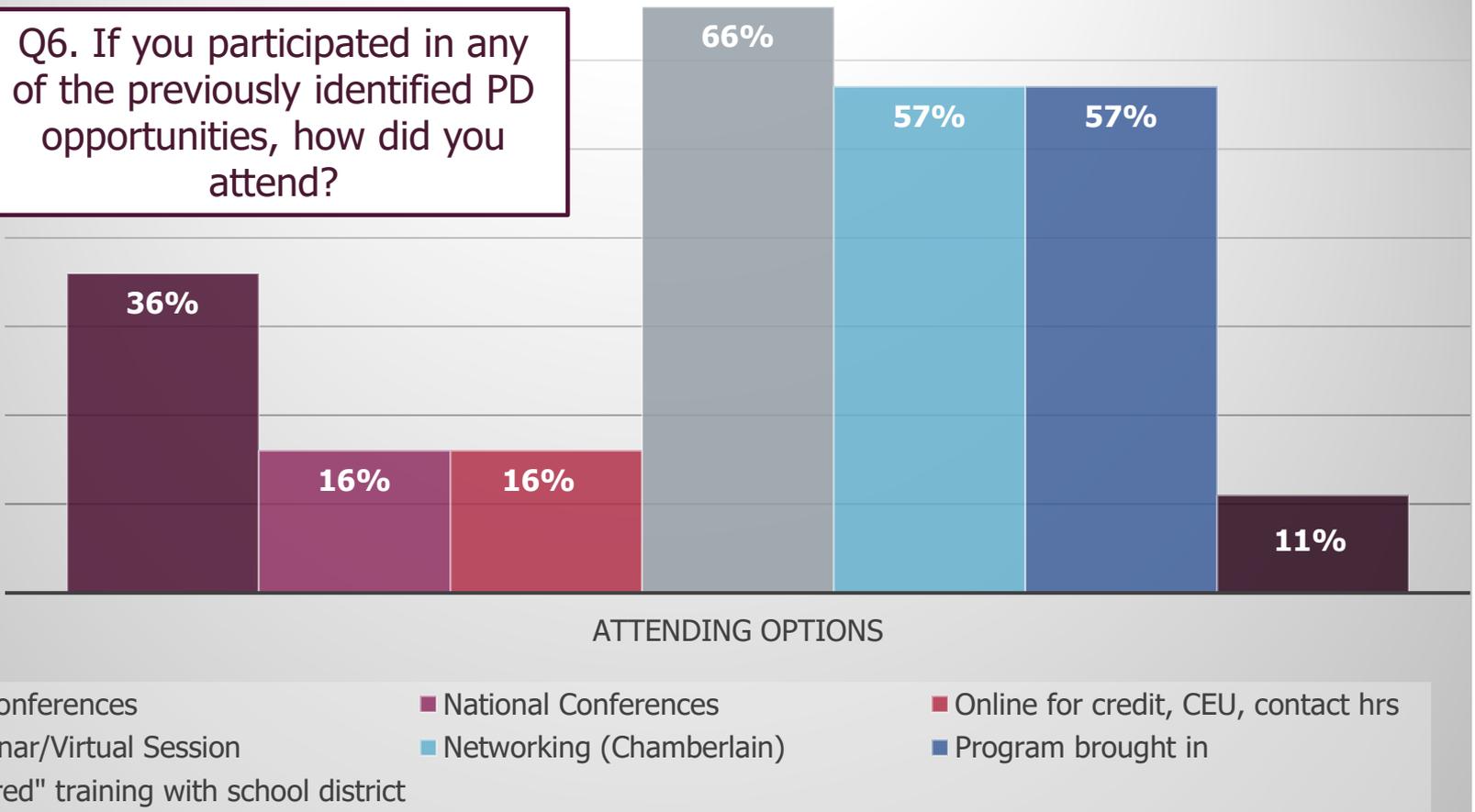
PD staff attended prior to March 2024	
Mental Health: self, children, families (staff wellness, Pyramid Model, etc.)	71%
Early Childhood Topics	66%
Child and/or Family Trauma	48%
Health topics: prenatal, oral health, nutrition, safety, etc.	45%
Disabilities: inclusion, intervention, Part C, Part B, IFSP/IEP	37%
Substance Misuse: informative, prevention, treatment, SCOPE/ECHO	27%
Did not attend any PD this past year	8%
Others to include Parent Engagement, Poverty training	3%

Q5. Please specify if you have attended the following PD activities within the last year.

Data broken down by position:

- Directors:** 75% for each topic
- Ed. Mgrs:** Ranged from 25% (substance misuse) to 100% Early Childhood Topics
- Disabilities:** Had 50% (EC topics) and 100% Mental Health and Disabilities
- MH/BH Specialists:** Showed 50% for EC topics and 100% in both MH and Trauma
- Family Service:** Ranged from 10% (Disabilities) to 60% of Mental Health
- Health/Safety:** Ranged from 10% (didn't attend any) to 70% in Health topics
- Nutrition:** 50% (trauma) to 100% for Health topics
- Coaches:** Had 100% in Mental Health and Early Childhood topics

Q6. If you participated in any of the previously identified PD opportunities, how did you attend?



As a requirement of the Head Start Performance Standards for training and professional development, staff must complete 15 clock hours per year. These can be done in various ways as seen in the chart above. Webinars or Virtual Sessions showed a high percentage of 66, followed by the Grantee/Stakeholder meetings (Networking) held every other month for directors and specialists (managers) tied with programs bringing in trainings for specific or all staff. Although South Dakota may offer annual early childhood conferences (including SPED), directors and specialists may not attend these as often as education staff (teachers, assistants, home visitors) do.

Note: only directors/managers/specialists completed survey for 2024.

Q7. What other trainings, webinars, presentations, networking, etc. would you like to attend?

- Since I am new to the position, I would like to attend those that will focus on Family Services.
- With a few new directors in the state – I think our director networking can be more focused to help the new directors.
- If the trainings or network could be held by Zoom meetings that would be ideal.
- ServSafe (food safety), Special Diets, Safe Food for toddlers, choking prevention.
- Motivational interviewing
- Mental Health trainings for teachers dealing with burnout.
- National Family Engagement Conference
- Conscious Discipline Advance Institute – Elevate Conscious Discipline, Conscious Discipline Supporting Students with Disabilities.
- Drug Training
- How to better support families – Educating families about Screen Time
- How to better support families – Importance of Sleep
- I feel like I have a good variety.
- Recruitment strategies, tips, etc.
- Disability trainings that showcase differentiation
- Mental Health for kids and adults.
- Behavioral Trainings – what to do with combative behavior, ADHD and ADD.

Only 22% of respondents answered this question. When categorizing the topics of the training based on who would benefit from the suggested trainings, the breakdown is as follows: 38% for staff benefit (which benefits children & families), 31% for family benefit, and 31% for child benefit. Mental health, behaviors and supporting staff and families shows to be a high interest.

Professional Development Findings and Actions

Findings

As evident on question 5 of the survey, the professional development activities encompass a range of critical topics aimed at supporting staff, children, and families in early childhood settings.

Early childhood topics encompass various aspects crucial to a child's development and education. These include mental health, child development, effective teaching practices, learning environment, curriculum, child behavior, trauma, and family dynamics. Given their importance, it's no surprise that mental health and learning about child and family trauma have been consistently highlighted as key opportunities for professional development among grantee staff.

Health topics in early childhood education can cover a wide range of essential areas, including prenatal and postnatal care, child health and wellness, safety, oral health, and nutrition. Although health topics did not rank as high as other topics, it is crucial that children are physically healthy, receive comprehensive services in medical and dental, be provided with nutritious opportunities, and feel safe.



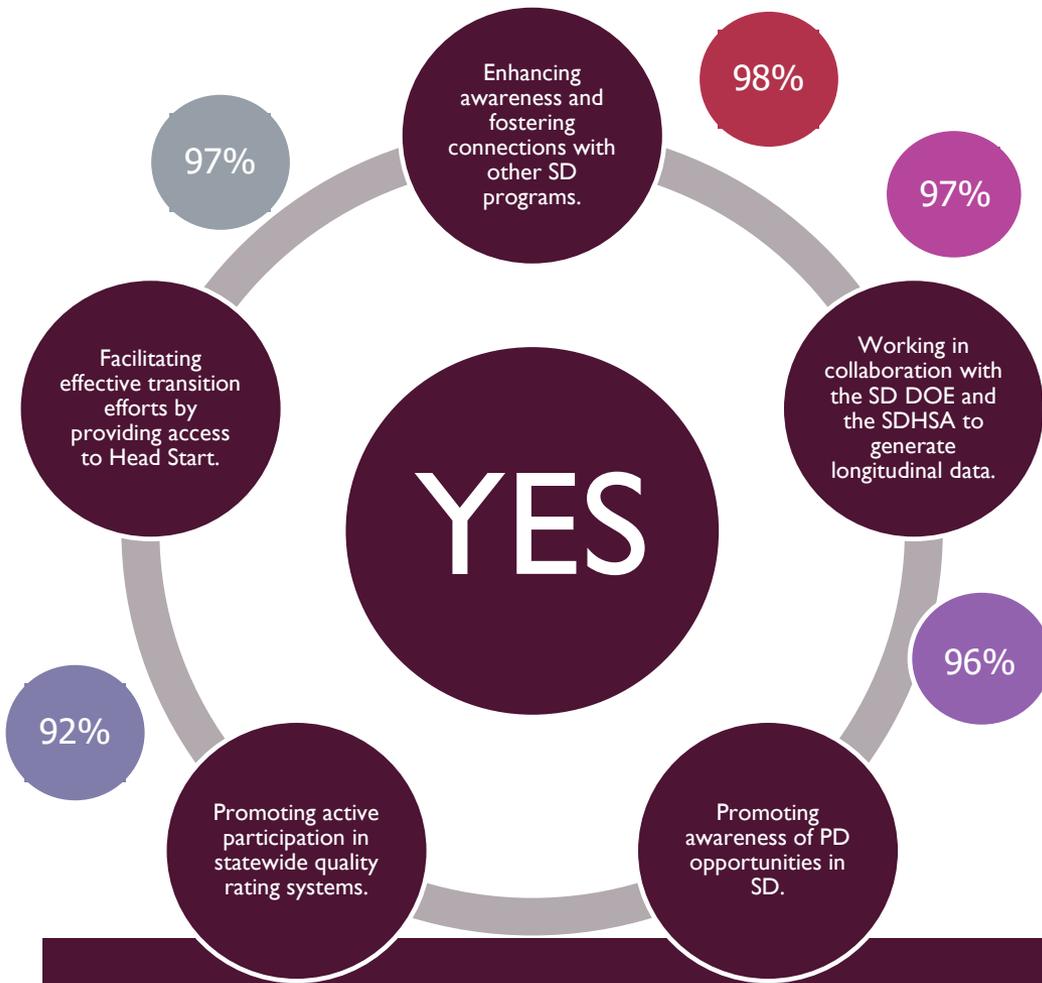
Actions

By prioritizing these topics in training and development initiatives, programs can promote inclusive practices, improve outcomes for children with disabilities, and foster a supportive environment that highlights mental health and well-being.

The SD Head Start Collaboration Office has no authority over the professional development of grantees. However, through collaboration with the SD Head Start Association, topics of trainings and sessions can be chosen for the SD Early Childhood Conference based on the interest of grantees.

This also applies to topics at Stakeholder/Grantee meetings held throughout the year for directors, specialists, and managers. Question seven (of this document) will be taken into consideration when scheduling stakeholders who can provide information, resources, and/or professional development opportunities for grantees.

The Head Start Collaboration Director provides grantees with an interactive document that includes early childhood opportunities in South Dakota. This document is updated and distributed at the beginning of each program year.



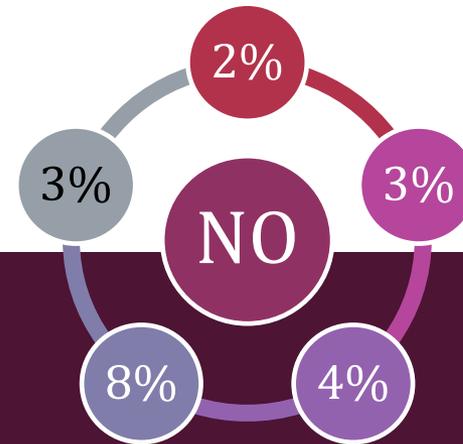
Q8. As far as I know, the Director of the SD Head Start Collaboration, located at the Department of Education, has provided assistance or support to either me or my program.

When comparing percentages from the 2023 Needs Assessment, there were significant increases in all areas for 2024.

YES

- Enhancing awareness and fostering connections...
 - 2023 = 60% 2024 = 98%
- Working in collaboration with DOE... data...
 - 2023 = 38% 2024 = 97%
- Promoting awareness of PD opportunities...
 - 2023 = 58% 2024 = 96%
- Promoting active participation...quality rating...
 - 2023 = 37% 2024 = 92%
- Facilitating effective transition efforts...
 - 2023 = 44% 2024 = 97%

Participants that responded with "NO" decreased an average of 3.4% from the 2023 Needs Assessment.



Q9. Is there anything else you feel the SD Head Start Collaboration Director does that helps support you or your program?

Response Percentages

(39%) Provides awareness of PD opportunities related to my position.

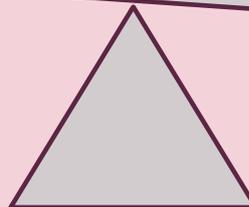
(45%) Keeps me informed of Head Start/DOE updates.

(53%) Provides resources related to my position.

(66%) Works with SD Head Start Association for Grantee/Stakeholder meetings

Other

(8%) Unsure at this time/not involved



Please share your thoughts on how the SD Head Start Collaboration Director could further enhance collaboration between your program and other agencies.

I appreciate the information I receive from her.

I learn so much from the networking opportunities!

I am looking for resources for Latino families to get their GEDs.

If State meetings could be held via Zoom that would be more ideal.

No suggestion on that – my only suggestion is to limit the amount of time/or number of speakers at networking sessions so that staff actually have time to network – some groups have had multiple speakers who went over their allotted time.

56 staff members left this question blank, leaving only 10% of responses.

Collaboration Office Findings and Actions

The SD Head Start Collaboration Office (SDHSCO) regularly connects with the SD Head Start Association (SDHSA) Executive Director to plan opportunities that can enhance professional development, ensure grantees are aware of state-level entities offering services for children and families, and provide updates on Head Start regional and national levels.

Over 50% of grantees reported they are receiving the necessary support from the SD Head Start Collaboration Office (SDHSCO) during Grantee/Stakeholder meetings and when they receive information related to their roles. However, less than 50% specified that they are adequately informed about Head Start or Department of Education (DOE) updates, and fewer than 40% indicated awareness of the professional development (PD) opportunities provided by the SDHSCO.

As a result of the 2024 Needs Assessment and through collaboration with the SD Head Start Association, the following actions will be considered for the new program year 2024-2025:

1. Continue to schedule *relevant* stakeholders for Grantee/Stakeholder meetings;
2. Take into thought the number of stakeholders and the length of the presentations at each Grantee/Stakeholder meeting;
3. Provide pertinent information and encourage distribution to appropriate staff.

