The Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships is a key component of the President’s Plan for Early Education for All Americans. These partnerships will increase the number of infants and toddlers in Early Head Start programs by over 100,000 children. This will greatly expand access to high quality early learning development opportunities to meet the needs of low-income families. This new partnership will build on existing Early Head Start (EHS) and Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) programs to serve families in a more cohesive and comprehensive manner. To provide some context, below is background information on how EHS and CCDF are currently serving children ages 0 through 3 years old.

HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START

Head Start/Early Head Start is a federal program that promotes the school readiness of children ages birth to 5 from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social and emotional development. HS/EHS programs provide comprehensive services to enrolled children and their families, which include health, nutrition, social services and other services determined to be necessary by family needs assessments, in addition to education and cognitive development services.

Research has shown that low-income children and families who attend high quality Early Head Start programs often fare better than their peers in various developmental domains. Despite this, we know that at its current capacity, EHS only serves about 4% of eligible children. That means that most of our lowest income children may not be getting the support they need to excel in school and beyond.

HS/EHS serves approximately 1.1 million children. Almost half of those are children ages 0 through 3 years old. These children receive comprehensive services, including:

- Health, developmental and behavioral screenings for all eligible children served
- Increased health, safety, and nutrition standards
- Increased professional development opportunities for providers
- Increased parent engagement opportunities

There are approximately 1,600 HS/EHS grantees.  41% of these operated Head Start preschool services only, 13% operated EHS services only, and 44% operated both EHS and HS.

In Early Head Start settings, 41% of services are through home-based programs, 2% are in Family Child Care, and 46% are in center-based programs.

Figure 1: Head Start - Early Head Start Programs.
HS-EHS both 44%, HS only 41%, EHS only 14%
CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND

CCDF supports low-income working families by providing access to affordable, high-quality early care and afterschool programs. The Office of Child Care works with state, territory and tribal governments to provide support for children and their families juggling work schedules and struggling to find child care programs that will fit their needs and that will prepare children to succeed in school. CCDF also improves the quality of care to support children’s healthy development and learning by supporting child care licensing, quality improvements systems to help programs meet higher standards and support for child care workers to attain more training and education.

CCDF currently serves over 1.6 million children per month, approximately 40%, or over 700,000 of whom are children 3 years old or younger. However, despite significant investments in quality, there is still a substantial need to increase the supply of high-quality infant and toddler care.

There are an estimated 4.2 million children ages 0 through 3 eligible to receive a child care subsidy under federal parameters. Only an estimated 17% of these children will receive a subsidy from CCDF. About a quarter of these children receive a subsidy when considering both CCDF and other sources (TANF-Direct, SSBG).

CCDF children are overwhelmingly the lowest-income children. Of the children ages 0 through 3 receiving CCDF, almost 60% are living below the poverty level and over 80% are below 150% of the federal poverty level (FPL).

Infants and toddlers are receiving an average of almost 160 hours in subsidized care per month or about 40 hours per week.

There are over 500,000 child care providers serving CCDF children. This includes over 90,000 centers and over 300,000 family child care homes. Over 25% of CCDF children are currently served by family child care providers. Over 65% receive center-based care. With this broad range of providers, there will be ample opportunity for EHS-CC partnerships to increase services available to infants and toddlers.

Figure 2: Income-levels of CCDF Families with Children 0 through 3

- Under Poverty
- 100-150% FPL
- Other

Figure 2: Income-levels of CCDF Families with Children 0 - 3. Under poverty 60%, 100-150% FPL 20%, Other 20%