

From the Director

—Jesse Rodriguez

The 2005 school year is well underway; staffs are working diligently on many projects such as the NRS (National Reporting System), 45-90 day mandates, recruitment and enrollment, and other issues that continually arise. Our priorities for this year are enrollment of 100% and identifying a permanent home for our Show Low program.

The Head Start Re-Authorization has not been finalized but the stage for major change is inevitable. A Re-Authorization Bill was recently passed in the House of Representatives. If the Senate approves it, there will be many changes that will have a major impact on the traditional Head Start core services. Our program has been working closely with parents, community advocates and political representatives to provide them with key educational information. This information will help our Congressional delegation make the best decision regarding the future of Head Start.

One of our newest and most exciting programs is the National Health Care Initiative project that we are taking part in with Johnson & Johnson and UCLA. This program was developed to help parents identify illnesses and provide appropriate follow up treatment to their children. The success of this project is measured by the number of times a parent uses the reference manual as opposed to taking their child to the emergency room for an illness. During the months of September and October over a hundred parents were trained in Show Low and Camp Verde in the use of the guide.

There are many positive issues that are a constant part of this program. With the help of support parents, staff and community partners we look forward to the challenges that this new school year will bring.

Thank you for you continued support.

Relationships in Early Head Start

—Jennifer Brown

Since NACOG EHS began serving children in 1997, the number of children served and the resources available to serve them have increased steadily. This is a testament to the state's-as well as the nation's - demand for high-quality infant-toddler services. Most importantly, research shows that EHS works: It produces important benefits for participating families. EHS staff and parents are

changing lives.

Research shows that pregnant mothers, their partners, and new parents need to be part of relationships that support their emotional well being and prepare them for the joys and challenges of parenthood. All infants and toddlers need to be part of stable, caring, loving relationships with their parents and other primary caregivers so that their cues can be understood and addressed in ways that support and nurture their emotional development. Infants, toddlers, and the adults who care for them—parents, non-parental caregivers, and other community providers—need relationships that are:



Individualized: Attention must be given to the individual needs of the infants and toddlers and the parents. Responsive caregiving of the infant and toddler that acknowledges and addresses their needs and behavioral temperament will convey the respect and security essential for

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early emotional development. Responsivity to parents' individual circumstances and life histories can enable parents to more comfortably engage in a beneficial relationship with their infant or toddler.

Strength based: Early relationships must emphasize the strengths and resources of each participant. Everyone has strengths, even the newborn. Helping parents understand the strengths of their child, and the strengths that they bring to their caregiving, builds confidence within parents and supports positive interactions between parents and their babies. A strength based approach does not ignore the significant challenges many families confront. Rather, this approach suggests that by understanding the profile of strengths and weaknesses of the child and family, programs are better able to provide individualized services that focus on promotion of emotional health, and prevention and intervention when risks and problems are identified.

Continuous and stable: For the child, continuous and stable caregiving builds confidence that their needs will be met. Especially in the earliest years, it is important for infants who are cared for out of the home to have a long-term relationship with a primary caregiver. For the parent, knowing that there are consistent people they can turn to—the child's caregiver, a home-visitor, extended family, network of formal and informal support—is equally important. Not only do specific child/caregiver and parent/staff relationships need to be continuous and stable, but the supports and services provided need to be continuous and stable as well. The more complex the needs of the family and young child, the more intense and extensive the services required. Only a well-coordinated continuum of community-based services and supports is likely to be able to offer families the specific help they need at any particular point in time.

Accessible: Relationships need to be accessible and responsive to when and how the child and parent need attention and support. To achieve this for the child, parents need to understand the child's rhythm, being mindful of the cues the infant sends when seeking attention as well as those cues the infant sends when he or she is over-stimulated. Parents and caregivers also need to be participants in supportive relationships. When program and administrative staff are available and able to meet parents' and caregivers' needs, families and frontline providers are likely to be more able to engage in responsive relationships with babies and toddlers.

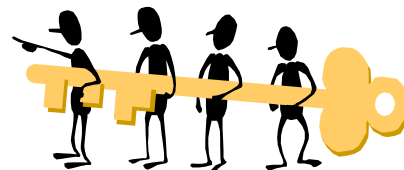
This year NACOG Early Head Start will be focusing on building and maintaining strong relationships in each community in order to provide the highest quality programs to the children and families we serve.



Families and providing the highest quality services to them, are the focus of the Social Services area this year. In 2005 families will find:

- 26 Head Start/Early Head Start programs to meet families enrollment needs
- 160+ school days a year to help families with their busy work and school schedules
- Welcoming smiles from staff who care and respect the parents, grandparents, foster parents and everyone involved in raising Head Start kids
- New programs for families, such as Padres Con Poder (Parent Advocacy Program), Hablando Ingles (English Language Self-Study Program) for English Language Learners, and the Health Care Initiative (HCI) through UCLA/Johnson & Johnson
- Home Visits to help children and families build relationships with their teaching and family services staff, and planning for goals and family needs
- Family Advocate and Family Advocate Aides to be the families link to the community and the program

Children's learning starts at home with the very best teachers in the world – their families. Head Start/Early Head Start staff are here to support them in that role to meet the goals and needs they have for themselves, and for their children.



NAEYC Accreditation Update



Chino Valley, Holbrook and Williams Head Start Centers recently completed their validation visits by NAEYC. As expected, all three centers did very, very well. The NAEYC Validator's role, during these visits, is to verify the accuracy of the Program Description submitted by each program. These findings are then submitted to the NAEYC Commission that meets at the end of each month. All three centers were awarded their accreditation certificates.

At this time we would like to offer a *Thank You* to the Center Directors, Toni Flournoy, Cindy Tafoya and Julie Fitzgerald, and all of their dedicated staff, for the tremendous amount of effort and patience displayed throughout this entire process. You all have done an outstanding job!

The next group of centers to eagerly tackle the accreditation process; Sedona, Fredonia, Prescott and Flagstaff Early Head Start's two locations, have completed their self-studies and are currently awaiting their validation visits.

NACOG's other accredited centers are Springerville, Yavapai, Pinetop, Prescott Valley, Federated, Ponderosa, St. Johns, and Cottonwood.

From the Nutrition Manager

—Susan Hunter

Many thanks to all the Center Directors, Central Office Secretaries and Mark Edie for making it possible to meet The Child and Adult Care Food Program renewal application deadline. In the midst of enrolling, screening and testing children, we were still able to complete a detailed application in its entirety by October 1, 2005 regardless of the new mandates that were included. NACOG Head Start received approximately \$600,000 last year alone from participating in the CACFP program.

To join the fight for the 9 million children that will be affected by childhood obesity, NACOG Head

Start is currently participating in the ADHS Obesity Prevention Program in Arizona— Project MUNCH. Project MUNCH (Model for Understanding Childcare Health) is designed to empower childcare centers to promote healthy eating and physical activity for children.

Toni Flournoy, the staff and families from the Chino Valley Head Start Center, is one of the six sites in the state of Arizona that has been selected to participate in the project.

Maureen Christensen and staff



from the Federated Head Start Center will participate in a pilot project using P.E. CENTRAL to design a preschool movement program that will promote physical development of preschoolers.

Kylene Goforth, a NAU intern student from the Health Promotion Class will help with the developing, planning, implementing, and assessing of the project. If proven successful, the PE CENTRAL's preschool movement program can be applied to all NACOG Head Start preschool programs.

New Expectations and Mandates in Education

—Catherine Mulligan



This is an exciting time in the field of infant/toddler and preschool education. Early Childhood Education grows and evolves year after year. Continued research and studies have confirmed the importance of early learning and the significant impact it has on a child's future

success in school and in life. Effective instruction in the early years can make all the difference. More people are entering the ECE field and current staff has continued their education earning Associate, Bachelor and Masters Degrees in the field of Early Childhood Education.

Diane Trister Dodge, founder and president of Teaching Strategies, Inc. states:

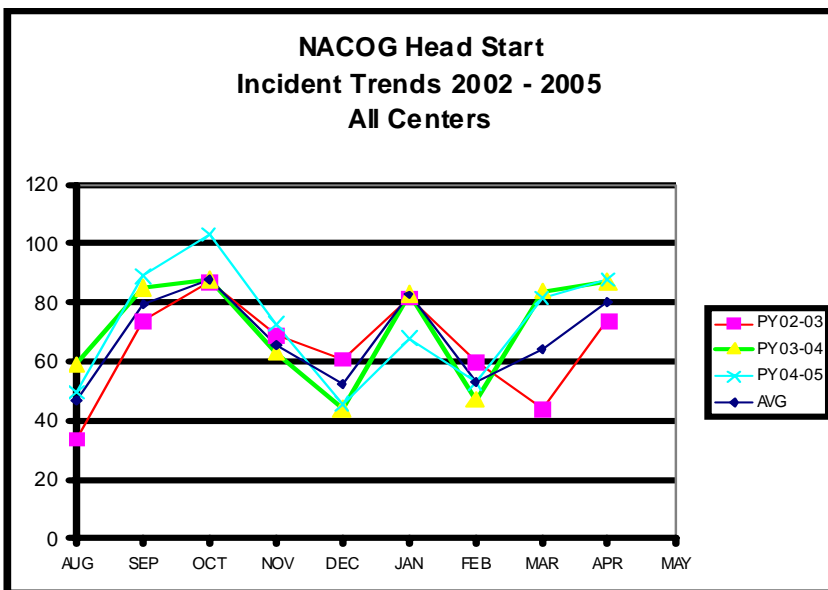
"The bar for literacy learning has been raised for preschool children and their teachers. While the early childhood years - birth through 8 - are a critical period for developing language and literacy skills, early childhood educators know that normal

development is very individualized and uneven. Despite this knowledge about developmental variations, expectations about what every child should know and be able to do before kindergarten have changed. The Head Start Outcomes Framework outlines what 4 year olds should know and be able to do before entering kindergarten. Today, every state has developed or is in the process of developing early learning standards, and every one includes specific literacy skills and knowledge. Wherever children are served - in child care, Head Start, pre-k, preschool, and family child care - teachers are accountable for ensuring that children develop these skills."

Along with changing expectations for children and mandates for programs, there is an expanding body of research on literacy and school readiness. For this reason, NACOG Head Start continues to be aware of the ever changing trends and expectations for teachers and is committed to assisting staff in presenting children with the kinds of activities and experiences that will help them acquire critically important attitudes and skills.

Health & Safety Gets More Emphasis

—David Leard



During the 2005-2006 program year NACOG Head Start is making a focused effort on improving Center & Playground Safety. This focus was kicked off during the Pre-Service training attended by Center Directors and education staff. Not only has the issue of Center and Playground safety become a focus of our program, but it has also become a highlighted issue at the Federal level during the PRISM reviews.

For the last 4 years, October of each year has consistently had the highest number of incidents of any month in the year. The agency has placed particular emphasis on the number of incidents reported during this particular month. During the training many participants gave input regarding why they think

October has the highest occurrences – the responses ranged from Halloween and all the candy consumed by the children, to being fully enrolled, to children getting comfortable and expanding their boundaries. While we don't have a definitive rationale – all of these are possibilities and we need to heighten our awareness.

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Health & Safety Gets More Emphasis

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One new initiative that is being implemented is monthly feedback reports. After the incident reports are keyed into the database at central office, a cumulative trend report will be provided to each Zone Manager, Field Specialist, and Center Director so that centers can see the monthly data routinely.

The second part of the initiative was the implementation of a revised Center & Playground Safety Checklist. This new checklist should provide each center with a consistent and standardized method to ensure both the center (classrooms) and playground's conditions are safe for children before the start of each session.



With these new initiatives,

NACOG Head Start hopes to see a reduction in the number of incidents reported each month.

Head Start Staff Exceed Mandate

—Beate Hoyt

NACOG Head Start prides itself in supporting Career Development among its staff. During the 2004-2005 school year, 147 staff were enrolled in college. Of those, 17 received their CDA or equivalent certificate and 13 received their degree:



9 Associate Degrees
1 Bachelor's Degree
3 Master's Degrees

In adherence with the 2003 mandate requiring 50% of teachers to hold an AA degree or higher, NACOG exceeds this mandate by 24% with a total of 74% of teaching staff having a degree.

A sincere congratulations to all these staff from the Head Start Administration.

Parent Involvement in 2005

—Shirley Campas

It is a critical year for all of us to encourage strong parent participation from all of our parents. We must continue to assure that our families and children are getting the best quality services from us that they can. In order to have another successful year, these are the areas that we will focus on in the Parent Involvement Component:

- We must continue to build good, strong and hard-working NACDAB Board and local Parent Committees.
- Concentrate on developing better communication systems with PC and NACDAB officers early in order to provide them with more training in those areas most important to the development of strong leadership.
- We need to continue to focus on the development of strong community partnership agreements.
- Use the new Male Involvement Curriculum to strengthen the men's groups we currently operate and to

"Kick Off" new Male Involvement efforts.

- Monitor your Parent Corners consistently to ensure they provide current and useable information. Keep them interesting and attractive.
- Stay on top of "In-Kind." These contributions are vital to the program and are a tribute to your center.
- Get your parents and your local Parent Committees involved in the RIF distribution events. Ask them to participate in the planning and make sure they are a part of the actual events.
- Provide trainings that are important to your site's parents. Find out what they are interested in learning more about and get creative in finding ways to provide training that addresses those areas.
- Continue to strengthen the program's effort to reach out to the monolingual Spanish-speaking parents by offering quality parent trainings using the training tools we have provided for you such as Padres Con Poder and Hablando Ingles.





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Success from Within: Looking Into Our Own Window

—Sylvia Gill, Center Director, Cogdill Head Start

Carolyn Cottrell, a current teacher with our Program, would never write anything about herself and her triumphs; however, I will.

I first met Carolyn when her eldest son was enrolled at Codgill Head Start. To be honest, I don't recall if I was Michole's teacher or teacher assistant. Now you know how long I've been in the Program. Michole was four. His mother was and is devoted to her child and family. As we often do, we asked for assistance in all areas, and needless to say, who said, "I'll be there," Carolyn. She eventually got on as our lunch aide, then as all good employees do, moved up in rank. She currently is a teacher.

Carolyn found in her Head Start experiences challenges that would portray her love of the Program. As a lot of us did, she began with her CDA, went on to school at nights to pursue the mandated AA in ECE. Like many of us, she worked full time, attended classes as were mandated and took care of her family with the love and support of her husband. This proved to be the biggest challenge of her life. As all good and involved parents are, she was not at home to monitor her children and work on homework. She wasn't available for her boys, field trips, school programs, schoolwork and extra curricular activities. She wanted to be supportive of all the Program's requests of her, but felt that it meant she would be further away from her family. It came to deciding to be a mother or Head Start employee. NACOG Head Start lost a wonderful employee. Carolyn resigned her teaching position to pursue a more 'normal' lifestyle.

Little did Carolyn know when Head Start truly is in your system it will not leave you, even if you are no longer employed. NACOG Head Start runs in your blood, in your mind and most of all in your heart. It isn't easy to leave when the bonds are this strong. As Carolyn would soon find out, she was unhappier gone, then struggling with time, family and the mandates imposed on our Program and our staff. Carolyn returned within a couple of months. Thankfully, her position was not filled; it's hard to replace a 'Carolyn Cottrell'.

She had not missed a heartbeat, picked up where she left off. Reenrolling in classes, sometimes two per semester to make up for lost time. She supported her sons in all their endeavors and her husband continues to be her anchor. Her children grew up during all of this, as children often do. Michole graduated this year from Flagstaff High School and received an Academic Scholarship to NAU. Her son Robert is a sophomore and following in his father and brother's footsteps, the Cottrell legacy of outstanding, record-breaking football athletes. And Carolyn, you ask? Mrs. Cottrell received her AA this year, just before her son's graduation.

I am sure all of you know a Carolyn story, for our Program is made up of extraordinary people with the biggest hearts, determination, love and conviction for the Head Start Program we know as NACOG Head Start. I am just grateful that I have had the privilege of working with this particular employee.

