

**Analysis of the Effects of Head Start on the Long-Term Educational  
Achievements of Participants:  
Elements of Agreement, Conflict, and Gaps**

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MPP Essay Submitted to  
Oregon State University

In partial fulfillment of the  
requirement for the degree of  
Master of Public Policy

Presented June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Commencement June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I present this public policy paper with great thanks to those who supported me and encouraged me through every step of the process. To the committee chair Rob Sahr, thank you for sharing your time and effort with me every week throughout this journey. You really went above and beyond to help me through this process. Michelle Inderbitzin, thank you for opening my eyes to the justice system and giving me the opportunity to understand that we are all interconnected no matter where our life journey has taken us. Bob McDermott, you have been a wonderful person to bounce ideas and emotions off of, thank you. I have become a better student, writer and scholar of public policy because of the guidance of my committee members. Brent Steel, you have opened my eyes to the real world of the policy process, and for that I am eternally grateful. Danny Santos, Governor's Office for the State of Oregon, thank you for serving as a mentor and friend. Dell Ford, State of Oregon Head Start Collaboration Office, thank you for allowing me to learn about the important work that this program does all over this state and beyond.

To my friends and family for telling me that I was capable even when I was not so confident. Amy Ewing and Natasha Lewin, you are great friends and supporters. To my parents, Lisa and Peter Kelleher, thank you for telling me every day of my life that I am a talented women with independent thoughts and ideas that must be shared with the world. Molly and Jeremy Dutton, thank you for your encouragement, rationality, and editing skills. Megan and Tara, thanks for letting me be your big sister and pushing me to be a good example. There is nothing more I can say than I love you. Every person in my life inspires me to be a better student and individual every day. Thank you and enjoy.

*“The relative decline of American education is untenable for our economy, unsustainable for our democracy, and unacceptable for our children - and we cannot afford to let it continue.”*

– President Barack Obama, March 10, 2009

*“Life for young children isn’t separated into education and care times and places, play times or learning times. It is a seamless whole, whether they are in their homes or in early years provision and the importance of this continuity should be reflected in the settings.”*

– Helen Wheeler and Joyce Connor, Parents, Early Years and Learning, (PEAL), September 2008

*“We need to ensure that no child...is prevented from realizing his or her full potential. For this to happen, children need the active involvement and support of their parents throughout the pre-school years and while they are at school.”*

– Prime Minister Tony Blair, June 2003

*“As we move deeper into the 21st Century, the need for a quality public school system will become more of an economic issue and more of a civil rights issue. Because, as our economy relies more on brains and less on brawn, the only way everyone can secure all the blessings of liberty is to receive a quality education.”*

– Sec. Janet Napolitano, Obama Sec. of Homeland Security, May 1, 2004 (Gov. of Arizona when quoted)

**OVERVIEW**

This Master of Public Policy graduate essay will:

- Provide the reader with a historical overview of the United States government funded preschool program Head Start and summarize considerations for long term effectiveness on academic achievements of participants.
- Summarize three important studies of the long-term effectiveness of pre-school education.
- Analyze six important studies of the long-term effectiveness of the Head Start program.
- Suggest elements of consensus among researchers and experts about the effectiveness of Head Start.
- Identify remaining gaps in evaluations of the long-term effectiveness of Head Start.
- Discuss policy implications of these elements of consensus and non-consensus for public policymakers.
- Suggest important considerations for the Obama administration in considering changes in Federal Head Start Policy and funding.

**SECTION I – Introduction of a Problem****A Historical Overview of Head Start Program**

Head Start is a complex social and educational program designed to assist children and their families living below the poverty line. The program formed a crucial part of the education section of Lyndon B. Johnson’s “War on Poverty.” According to the U.S. Department of Education and the National Office of Head Start website, Head Start’s mission is to “serve as a national program that promotes school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to enroll children and families.” Today, this program aims to bring preschool, health, and social services to eligible children from age three until elementary school age. A separate program is Early Head Start, which was developed in 1995 around the Head Start model to assist infants and toddlers (Schaub 606). This essay will focus solely on Head Start.

The Head Start program was founded in 1964; the Head Start program has retained public popularity although funding is dependent on the condition of the U.S. economy, budget, and the ideological views of those in power. During President Lyndon B. Johnson’s administration in the mid 1960s, the “War on Poverty” envisioned an education program to provide intervention in the lives of impoverished children and their families. The Head Start Act focuses on education development as a support system for program participants. With the inception of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 allowing for the development of a federally sponsored social welfare program, Head Start pushed for equality in child preparedness for school by implementing free preschool for families below the poverty line. This program pushed for a break from the traditional

idea of class systems in education. The National Office of Head Start and Department of Health and Human Services provide this welfare service for the impoverished class.

As a social welfare program, there has been a funding battle between political parties over the necessity for Head Start to be funded with taxpayer dollars. In 1968, *Time* magazine identified the anti-poverty movement as “fighting a losing battle on Capitol Hill,” because of the Office of Economic Opportunity’s lack of a successful implementation plan of any program of the 1960s, including Head Start (*War on the War on Poverty*). Though during the first three years, the War on Poverty did have a success of “3 million pulled out of poverty,” the article argued that the federal government’s implementation structure for social programs overtook the rights of states to help constituents (*War on the War on Poverty*). Republican and southern Democratic U.S. senators pushed for a restructuring of the administration at the state level to better serve the needs of those enrolled. The conservative approach was that the states should hold the power of education. It was important to uphold the traditional family influence on children rather than a national government program influencing child development. Southern Democrats agreed with this focus on traditional family values on educating a child. By establishing the Office of Head Start in the Department of Health and Human Services rather than the Department of Education, policymakers established the responsibility of educating a child within the home (*War on the War on Poverty*). This recognized Head Start as a primary welfare program, and not an educational program.

Since implementation in the Department of Health and Human Services both conservatives and liberals have supported the Head Start concept of poverty intervention rhetorically. However, political debate about its administration, standards of success, and

effectiveness has grown. The debate has historically focused on whether the program's ability to enhance the academic achievement of participants outweighs the cost to American taxpayers. Further debate has been sparked by questions of the program's capability to provide equal education opportunities to poor families and their children. Broad debate continues today from both sides of the political aisle despite public support.

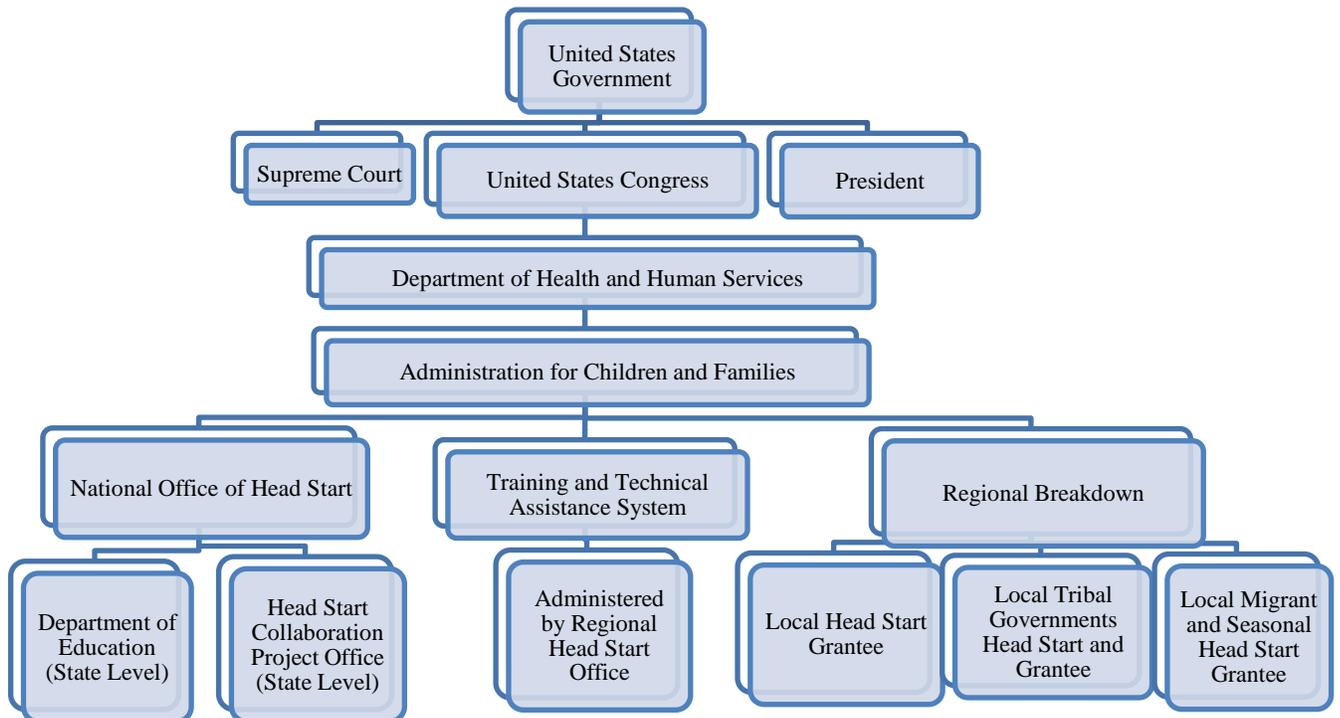
Two main issues have dominated the discourse on Head Start. Research and policy debates from the 1970s through 1990s focused on preschool as a poverty intervention tool. Not until the early 1990s did researchers begin to look at the long-term effectiveness of the program. Defining long-term effectiveness as measured impacts four or more years after participation, Head Start research was motivated by recurrent "large disparities in cognitive and non-cognitive skills along race and class lines observed well before children start school" (Ludwig and Miller 2007: 160). Head Start focuses on poverty and attempts to reduce the poverty gap by providing educational, social, health, and nutritional services to children and families designated as at or below the poverty line (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 16). Overall, Head Start has continually looked to provide support and development to children among the poorest of the poor.

The funding and authority structure of the federal Head Start program is vital information to know when looking at the regulatory implications of this social welfare program. Figure 1, below, illustrates Head Start and the current responsibility structure. The U.S. government is organized into three separate, but equal branches: the Supreme Court, the Office of the President and the U.S. Congress. As identified above, the power of creating, legislating, and funding of Head Start stems from the Congress. This legislative branch enacts the power of program administration with the Department of

Health and Human Services as a welfare program rather than an educational program. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is tasked with the organization of federal offices and regulatory commissions. ACF arranges the National Office of Head Start, Training and Technical Assistance Systems, and Regional Office breakdowns to better serve the needs of states. In order to receive federal funding, each state is responsible to maintain a central Head Start office and a State Collaboration Office to best serve individual community needs. Each Regional Office assists grantees in obtaining funding, complying with Head Start standards, and self-evaluation and federal evaluations. According to information obtained on the ACF website:

“Grants are awarded directly to local public agencies, private non-profit and for-profit organizations, Indian Tribes and school systems by ACF Regional Offices, the Office of Head Start’s American Indian-Alaska Native, and Migrant and Seasonal Program Branches for operating programs at the community level.”

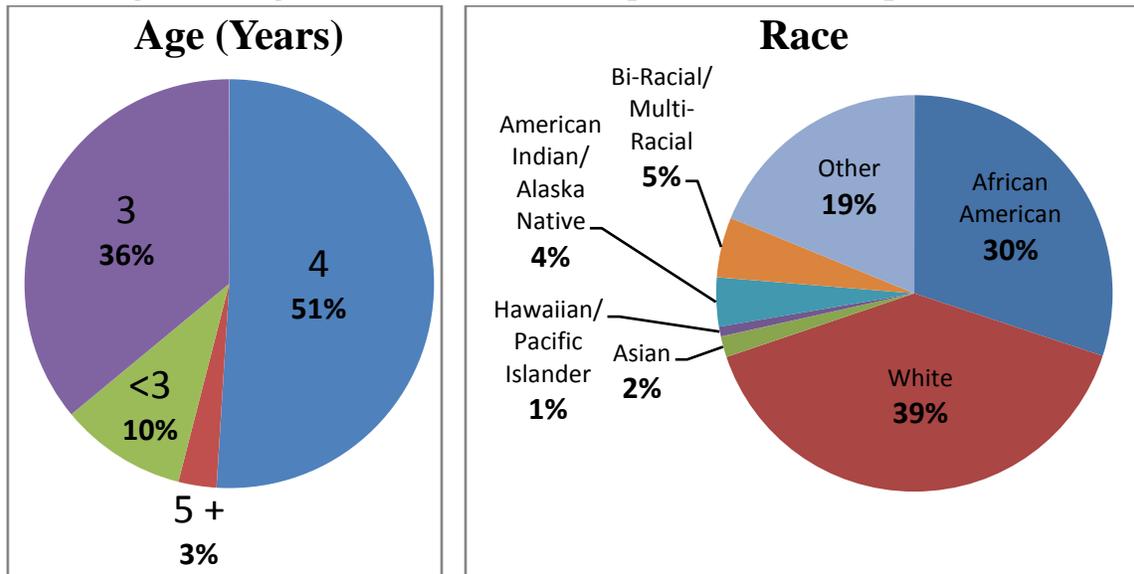
**Figure 1 – Regulatory Structure of Head Start (Federal and State Level)**



Source: U.S. Administration for Children and Families

This regulatory model works in conjunction with two other pillars of early childhood development, “Childcare/Development Block Grants and the Child Development Care Tax Credit are the federal government’s solution to the question of early childhood education initiatives” (Schaub 2006: 606). These programs together encourage early childhood development for all income levels, ages and racial/ethnic compositions. However, Head Start has a special commitment to the development of children and families that are identified as at or below the poverty line. Figure 2 shows the demographic breakdown of participants; it is important to note the high percentage of Black/African American children and Hispanic/Latino (identified as Other) children. Combined, these two minority groups make up a majority of children served by Head Start. Children aged three to five are eligible; there is an increase in attendance by four-year-olds in preparation for kindergarten.

**Figure 2 – Age and Racial/Ethnic Composition for Participants (2008)**



Source: U.S. Administration for Children and Families

**Current Administrative Policy Components**

Head Start is a “federal grant program that aims to improve the learning skills, social skills, and health status of poor children so they can begin schooling on an equal footing with their more advantaged peers” (Currie and Thomas 1995: 341).

Head Start’s administrative scope allows for teaching styles and administration to be tailored to individual communities. Classroom routine and curriculum standards enhance long-term educational achievements of participants. Head Start aims to provide a comprehensive care package to children and families in low-income situations through providing various health and education services. The focus is not only the preschool education of children. The goal of this early childhood development program is to provide for school readiness and development through nutritional services, health education, parental involvement, and attainment of learning outcomes. Box 1 outlines the four main components.

Local Head Start preschools are funded by federal government grants. The US Department of Health and Human Services, specifically the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), is the national government unit that administers the Head Start program. The ACF grants these funds to local public and private not for profit agencies for the administration of Head Start across the country; these administrations are referred to as grantees. According to the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPIUSA), these federal resources make up approximately 80% of the program costs; community contributions make up the remaining 20%. Some large-scale block grant funding allotments exist to assist with training and program development to help meet the Performance Standards mandated by Congress.

**Box 1 – Head Start Elements**

**Four Main Components of Head Start:**

Education: Providing a comprehensive approach to meet the needs of children and support intellectual development, social advancement, and emotional growth.

Health: Providing specific health services including immunizations, dental, medical and mental health, and nutritional services; stresses the importance of early identification of health problems.

Parent Involvement: Providing parents with a vital role in the learning process involving planning and implementation of activities and serving as a valued member of the administrative process by instilling an emotional investment.

Social Services: Being a resource guide for families in need and helping to determine what services they need; these include community outreach, emergency services, crisis intervention, family referrals, etc.

Source: Community Services Consortium 2009

To better understand the Head Start administration, Table 1 provides illustrative numbers about the people involved in this complex social program. Each grantee is responsible for the logistics of coordinating volunteers and staff onsite. They are required to perform the task of operating the center and caring for enrolled children.

**Table 1 – Statistical Head Start Administrative Information (2007)**

<b>Number of Grantees</b>	1,604	<b>Average Cost per Child</b>	\$7,326
<b>Number of Classrooms</b>	49,400	<b>Paid Staff</b>	220,000
<b>Number of Centers</b>	18,275	<b>Volunteers</b>	1,384,000

Source: U.S. Administration for Children and Families

**Regulatory Performance Standards of Head Start**

Core to the operation of the Head Start program are its Performance Standards. The document *Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations* has remained essentially the same since its development in the 1970s. This document is intended to maintain the quality of the program to grantees, and to provide guidance and established standards. Appendices A, B, and C serve as detailed examples of the topics and information included in the Performance Standards that are provided to all grantees of Head Start. The Performance Standards Table of Contents, Introduction, and Definitions are provided for reference in Appendices A and B. Appendix C is an example of five specific Performance Standards required by the regulation handbook. These regulations specify, among other topics, definitions of health standards, classroom organization, teaching curricula, and general oversight for the day to day logistical tasks of providing Head Start services to the intended population.

Changes made to Head Start administration come from initiatives rather than deregulation and amending the Performance Standards. All 50 states receive federal funding, have individual Head Start offices, and are required to have program Performance Standards that match federal guidelines. By federal law, Head Start grantees are required to submit a yearly plan to document the ways in which the program administrators comply with standards. The Performance Standards identify eight domains of compliance and 13 indicators of fulfillment of these standards. Box 2 outlines these domains and indicators that designate standards grantees must uphold in order to retain funding.

**Box 2 –Domains and Indicators of Performance Compliance**

**8 DOMAINS**

1. Language Development
2. Literacy
3. Mathematics
4. Science
5. Creative Arts
6. Social and Emotional Development
7. Approaches to Learning
8. Physical Health and Development

**13 INDICATORS OF COMPLIANCE**

1. Understanding vocabulary
2. Understanding in English
3. Ability to communicate ideas, feelings, experiences, understanding, opinions, needs, questions, and other information
4. Using increasingly difficult vocabulary
5. Progress in speaking English
6. Word and sound association
7. Recognition of printed words
8. Identify letters different than pictures
9. Phonological awareness
10. Book knowledge and appreciation
11. Print awareness and concepts
12. Numbers and operations
13. Identification of ten letters of the alphabet

Source: Head Start Act (revised) enacted by the U.S. Congress

**Presidential Orientations towards Head Start Development**

Since 1964, Presidential administrations have established various levels of policy regarding Head Start. Each administration has stood on either side of the ideological political line: Republican presidents tend to favor reduced funding of social programs like Head Start, whereas Democratic presidents tend to push to expand Head Start and provide greater funding.

Lyndon B. Johnson (Democrat, 1963-1969) designed Head Start as a critical piece of his War on Poverty campaign during his presidency and strongly supported it during its initial year (Project Head Start 2009). During Richard Nixon's administration (Republican, 1969-1974), the National Head Start Association was created. However, his administration had little to do with its formation (Haxton 2008). The main change was to shift the Head Start administration office to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, a department with little support from his administration. The Gerald Ford (Republican, 1974-1977) administration saw the first publication of the Performance Standards, but he did not make Head Start a priority during his short term in office (Haxton 2008).

Jimmy Carter (Democrat, 1977-1981) provided the first fiscal expansion of Head Start and established the Performance Standards as an evaluation (Project Head Start 2009). Ronald Reagan (Republican, 1981-1989) judged the War on Poverty to be a mistaken policy without enough benefits to outweigh the cost to the taxpayer. George H. W. Bush's administration (Republican, 1989-1993) emphasized transparency and program improvement. During his term, Bush Sr. strayed from the Republican Party platform, enacting the Head Start Expansion and Quality Improvement Act of 1990

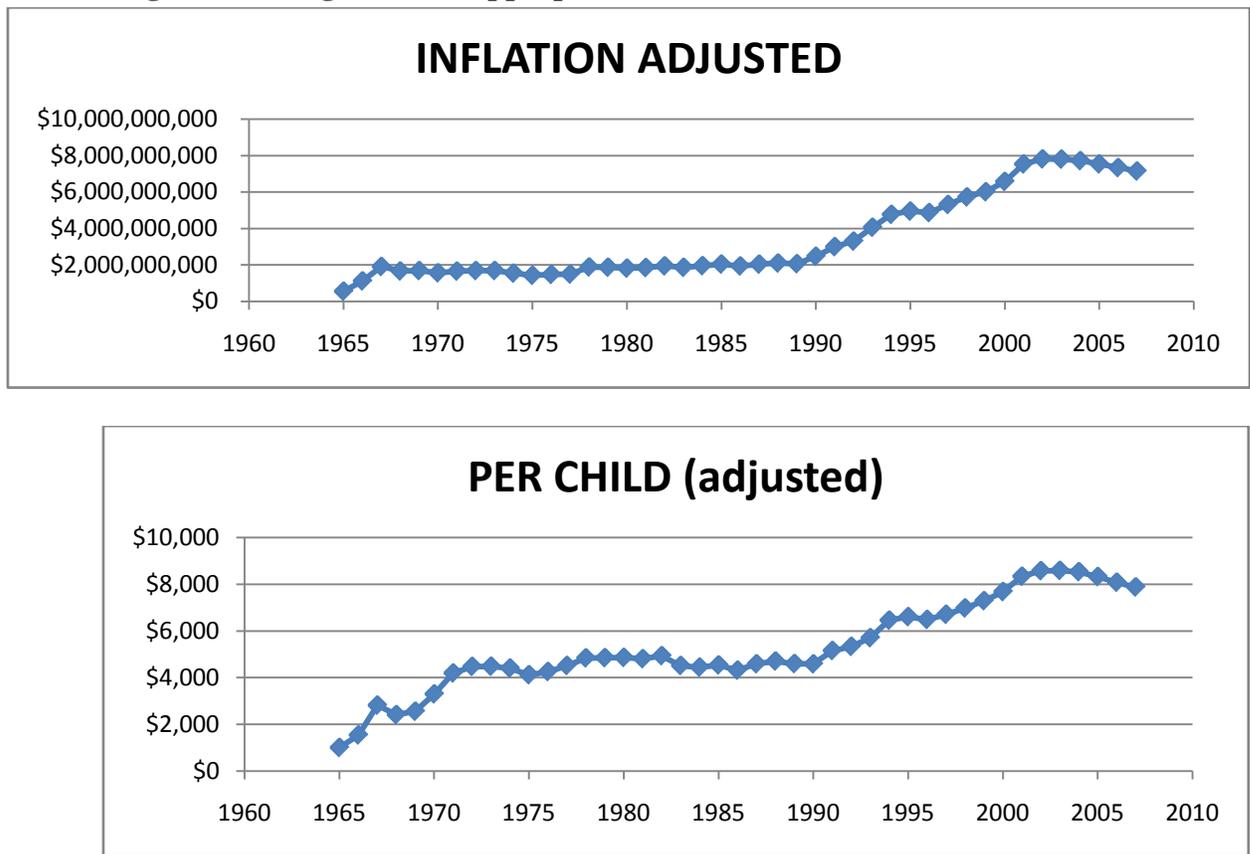
expanded Head Start (Haxton 2008). Bill Clinton's presidency (Democrat, 1993-2001) saw some of the largest changes to Head Start to date. Clinton was in office during the 1994 Head Start Reauthorization, the development and establishment of Early Head Start, and the only major revision to the Performance Standards (Project Head Start 2009). George W. Bush (Republican, 2001-2009) cut \$45 million in fiscal year 2006 from funding for Head Start programs as a compromise deal between the Bush administration and congressional leadership, resulting in 25,000 individuals being denied enrollment (National Head Start Office website).

Table 2, below, illustrates the child enrollment numbers as reported by Head Start administrators and the congressional appropriation for the corresponding year. This funding amount has been adjusted for inflation and converted to 2008 dollars using the Consumer Price Index Urban Research Series (CPI-U-RS), an experimental Consumer Price Index measure used by the Census Bureau to adjust dollar figures over time for inflation. The conversion factors were accessed from [oregonstate.edu/cla/polisci/faculty-research/sahr/sahr.htm](http://oregonstate.edu/cla/polisci/faculty-research/sahr/sahr.htm). Funding was also calculated on a per-child basis with the adjusted appropriation. All numbers have also been rounded to the nearest dollar for the reader's clarity and understanding.

Figure 3 shows some interesting trends over the course of Head Start implementation detailing Congressional appropriations adjusted for inflation and appropriation on a per-child basis. During the first year of the Nixon administration (1969-1970) there was a significant drop in participant enrollments numbers and an \$8 million dollar reduction in funding appropriation. This drop in funding ran concurrently with a 1969 Westinghouse Study report stating that Head Start had minimal sustained

effects in the long-term (Bracey and Stellar 2003: 17). A partisanship trend is evident in the per-child allocation of funds. In most instances, Democrats increased funding per-child over the length of their term and Republicans sustained or decreased the per-child allocation. An exception to this trend is during George H. W. Bush’s administration (1989-1992).

Figure 3 – Congressional Appropriation for Head Start (1965-2007)



These years sustained an increase in enrollment, appropriation and per-child appropriation. In sharp contrast, the following Republican administration, G. W. Bush (2001-2009), consistently decreased appropriations for Head Start during the entire term in office. This list is not exhaustive and further analysis of Table 2 could provide more insight into presidential policies on Head Start.

**Table 2 – Enrollment for Head Start (1965-2007)**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>ENROLLMENT</b>	<b>APPROPRIATION</b>	<b>INFLATION ADJUSTED</b>	<b>PER CHILD (adjusted)</b>
1965 (summer) - <b>Johnson</b>	561,000	\$96,400,000	\$563,742,690	\$1,005
1966	733,000	\$198,900,000	\$1,130,113,636	\$1,542
1967	681,400	\$349,200,000	\$1,918,681,319	\$2,816
1968	693,900	\$316,200,000	\$1,673,015,873	\$2,411
1969 – <b>Nixon</b>	663,600	\$333,900,000	\$1,694,923,858	\$2,554
1970	477,400	\$325,700,000	\$1,573,429,952	\$3,296
1971	397,500	\$360,000,000	\$1,666,666,667	\$4,193
1972	379,000	\$376,300,000	\$1,695,045,045	\$4,472
1973	379,000	\$400,700,000	\$1,697,881,356	\$4,480
1974 – <b>Ford</b>	352,800	\$403,900,000	\$1,553,461,538	\$4,403
1975	349,000	\$403,900,000	\$1,437,366,548	\$4,119
1976	349,000	\$441,000,000	\$1,484,848,485	\$4,255
1977 – <b>Carter</b>	333,000	\$475,000,000	\$1,503,164,557	\$4,514
1978	391,400	\$625,000,000	\$1,893,939,394	\$4,839
1979	387,500	\$680,000,000	\$1,878,453,039	\$4,848
1980	376,300	\$735,000,000	\$1,828,358,209	\$4,859
1981 – <b>Reagan</b>	387,300	\$818,700,000	\$1,860,681,818	\$4,804
1982	395,800	\$911,700,000	\$1,952,248,394	\$4,932
1983	414,950	\$912,000,000	\$1,872,689,938	\$4,513
1984	442,140	\$995,750,000	\$1,964,003,945	\$4,442
1985	452,080	\$1,075,059,000	\$2,051,639,313	\$4,538
1986	451,732	\$1,040,315,000	\$1,948,155,431	\$4,313

**Head Start Effectiveness in the Long Term**

**B.E. Kelleher**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>ENROLLMENT</b>	<b>APPROPRIATION</b>	<b>INFLATION ADJUSTED</b>	<b>PER CHILD (adjusted)</b>
1987	446,523	\$1,130,542,000	\$2,048,083,333	\$4,587
1988	448,464	\$1,206,324,000	\$2,108,958,042	\$4,703
<b>1989 – G. H. W. Bush</b>	450,970	\$1,235,000,000	\$2,072,147,651	\$4,595
1990	540,930	\$1,552,000,000	\$2,479,233,227	\$4,583
1991	583,471	\$1,951,800,000	\$3,007,395,994	\$5,154
1992	621,078	\$2,201,800,000	\$3,310,977,444	\$5,331
<b>1993 – Clinton</b>	713,903	\$2,776,286,000	\$4,070,800,587	\$5,702
1994	740,493	\$3,325,728,000	\$4,778,344,828	\$6,453
1995	750,696	\$3,534,128,000	\$4,956,701,262	\$6,603
1996	752,077	\$3,569,329,000	\$4,876,132,514	\$6,484
1997	793,809	\$3,980,546,000	\$5,321,585,561	\$6,704
1998	822,316	\$4,347,433,000	\$5,735,399,736	\$6,975
1999	826,016	\$4,658,151,448	\$6,018,283,525	\$7,286
2000	857,664	\$5,267,000,000	\$6,583,750,000	\$7,676
<b>2001 – G.W. Bush</b>	905,235	\$6,200,000,000	\$7,542,579,075	\$8,332
2002	912,345	\$6,536,570,000	\$7,818,863,636	\$8,570
2003	909,608	\$6,667,533,000	\$7,807,415,691	\$8,583
2004	905,851	\$6,774,848,000	\$7,725,026,226	\$8,528
2005	906,993	\$6,843,114,000	\$7,544,778,390	\$8,318
2006	909,201	\$6,872,062,000	\$7,341,946,581	\$8,075
2007	908,412	6,887,896,000	\$7,152,539,979	\$7,874

Source: U.S. Administration for Children and Families; converted to 2008 dollars using the CPI-U-RS, an experimental CPI measure often used by the Census Bureau to adjust dollar figures over time for inflation. The conversion factors were accessed from <http://oregonstate.edu/cla/polisci/faculty-research/sahr/sahr.htm>

Throughout these presidencies the mission and specific administration of Head Start was held by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). The management of Head Start is rooted in a general preschool education system, and encompasses early child development from womb, with prenatal care information for the family, to school entrance. Based in its goals and performance standards, the Head Start program emphasizes parenting, supports bonding and attachment between mother and child, teaches early nurturing and draws in new science understanding about the needs of children from infancy to age five. Head Start builds on the assumption that a child's development has myriad influences. If Head Start is going to work to fight the culture of poverty, administrators need to understand that children do not live in a vacuum, but rather as part of a complex family and community dynamic. Head Start Performance Standards specify required inclusion of home visits from the teacher to the families in order to link classroom teaching to practical application of learned ideas. Furthermore, the Performance Standards detail that dental and internal medical exams must be provided for each child participant, in order to emphasize the nutrition and health standards part of the Head Start mission.

The application for participation and providers of Head Start are outlined in the Performance Standards. Participant applicants are ranked and evaluated based on need. Each Head Start grantee is given latitude in methods while being required to respond to their community to include participants on a need basis. Within each classroom certain standards must be maintained to provide equal opportunity for every child. Dental and nutritional education, gross motor skill enhancement, small group work, free time, large group work, art, patterns, and literacy are the kinds of play and learning activities that are

encouraged through Head Start Performance Standards. Children are also required to get at least one nutritious meal every day as well as a snack that follows USDA guidelines.

The role of the Performance Standards is to specify interaction between teachers and child participants. Each teacher must have conversations with children, asking open-ended questions to extend their thinking beyond what they know, in order to expand critical thinking abilities and to engage children in the learning process. Additional roles of the Performance Standards outline the combination of playing and learning with real life cognitive development ideas helping children enter school on equal footing to their middle-class counterparts. Creating a positive social and emotional climate for children tailored to their individual community is the basic core value of Head Start. Daily schedule and administration approaches are specified in federal guidelines. These regulations are a rule book that outlines daily tasks, required learning outcomes, and evaluation methods to ensure compliance and these Performance Standards provide a framework of regulations for each Head Start classroom.

**SECTION II – Literature Review****Three Influential Studies of the Effectiveness of Preschool Education**

Since its inception in the 1960s there have been multiple design models and research efforts to attempt to evaluate how much and how well Head Start improves learning and social skills of participants, as well as the program’s ability to reduce the poverty gap and enhance the ability of poor children to succeed academically in public school (Currie and Thomas 1995: 341). In order to provide better understanding of the research elements that are available for policy evaluation, this essay examines six major categories of research that have enhanced the academic and policy analysis of Head Start. Box 3 lists research topics that examine various components of Head Start policy changes identified as questions for policy makers.

**Box 3 – Head Start Topics of Research****Measures of Long-Term Effectiveness of Preschool (Head Start) Intervention:**

- School quality, post-Head Start attendance
- The “fade out” effect in post-elementary education
- Assessment of a child’s environment, family, and income on education
- A cost benefit analysis of preschool intervention, the dollars and cents
- Effect in short term, 0-3 years after participation, on long term retention
- Program effectiveness in the long term, 4+ years after participation

This essay will focus on research that has examined the long-term effectiveness of Head Start. Throughout forty years of research, “policymakers and the general public believe the benefits of Head Start are well known and well documented” in peer reviewed quantitative research models that account for limits in previous research (Currie and Thomas 1995: 341). Evaluations have examined long-term effectiveness, cost benefit and school quality assessments, and other topics. Several influential academic researchers have noted “several studies with strong research designs have demonstrated that Head Start has a short-term cognitive, affective, and social benefit for poor children” (Lee and Loeb 1995: 62). However, the same researchers identify gaps and suggest future directions for research of Head Start participants. In addition, “research results show that high-quality Head Start intervention” can also have a lasting impact on the long-term academic performance of participants (Schaub 2006: 606). As is standard in all quantitative analyses, researchers identify needed improvements in future research. The purpose of this essay is to look to these experts and discuss their suggestions for future research and policy implementation. The following paragraphs look at the progression of research in early childhood intervention tactics.

Three important studies provided researchers and policy makers with evidence of the long-term benefits of early child education intervention; they provided a framework for Head Start research and program development. Although some of these studies examine programs that used administration structures and performance standards that differ from Head Start, they serve as important starting points to understand how intervention services can influence educational and social achievements of Head Start participants.

During the mid-1960s, the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project served as the “grandfather” of studies on the long-term effectiveness of preschool intervention. In the 1970s, the Carolina Abecedarian Project was a well developed and executed study on preschool effect in a participant’s life. During the 1980s, a third important preschool intervention research project was the Chicago Child Parent Center study, conducted by the Chicago Board of Education to see if preschool and/or prekindergarten programs were effective in creating long term changes in the lives of children.

Researchers consistently identify these three studies as the founding framework for preschool research and development which serve as precursors to the Head Start research that this essay examines later. The three are examined in chronological order to emphasize each one’s influence on its successor. These studies are important because they introduced models of study, such as comparison groups and administration styles, which directly influenced the Head Start academic research and policies of the last 20 years.

**High/Scope Perry Preschool Project (1962)**

Known as the first major study on early childhood intervention services, the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project created a study model that assessed the long-term effects of preschool on the cognitive development of participants. The project was funded and administered by High/Scope Educational Research Foundation by lead researcher David Weikart. The foundation is a nonprofit organization that funds research promoting learning and child development (Parks 2000; 1). The Perry Project was formed specifically to study preschool intervention in a specific group of participants and is a commonly cited study identified as the best quantitative example of “how high-

quality preschool services can change the lives of low-income children” (Jacob and Ludwig 2008: 6). According to the U.S. Department of Justice *Juvenile Justice Bulletin* in October 2000, the Perry Project is an ongoing longitudinal study, collecting follow-up data about a population of children of low socioeconomic status that measured academic and social achievements in the long term after participating in a structured academic preschool environment in 1962 (Parks 2000; 1).

During the experiment phase in 1962, participants were viewed as active members of the learning process and were taught the curriculum through a variety of small and large group activities, class discussion, cognitive development approaches, and student teacher interactions (Bracey and Stellar 2003: 781). This approach was preferred to specific testing of knowledge components or an emphasis on intellectual development. The case is important because it included follow-up studies with data collection at ages 19, 21, and 27 (Schweinhart and Weikart et al. 1985, 1993, 1995). At age 19, participants in the Perry Project were found to have higher rates of grade completion and to be less likely to have been placed in classroom environments deemed as “special education” (Bracey and Stellar 2003:781). At age 21, previous findings, data, and conclusions were confirmed. At age 27, 71% of the preschool group had earned high school diplomas or GED as compared to 54% of the control group (Bracey and Stellar 2003:781). The study also identified such positive outcomes as the higher likelihood of participants owning their own homes, and longer marriages (Parks 2000; 1). In a cost-benefit assessment of the social outcomes, the high costs of the program did not exceed the total benefit provided to disadvantaged children in this intervention study (Jacob and

Ludwig 2008: 6). This research provided the first solid evidence that preschool can have a positive influence in the lives of children.

**The Carolina Abecedarian Project (1972)**

*The Carolina Abecedarian Project: a Longitudinal and Multidisciplinary Approach to the Prevention of Developmental Retardation* was a study established in 1972 that has been frequently cited as a highly-regarded study of the effects of preschool intervention services on the lives of children in poverty. The experiment was developed, funded, and administered at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Ramey 1974; 4). The study examined a model program intended to provide a high intensity and quality education in the early years of a child's development (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 18). In nearly every study used in this essay, the authors draw or cite the model as a success in intervention.

In 1972 at UNC, researchers identified a sample of infants categorized in a high poverty socioeconomic status with risk factors that could affect cognitive development (Ramey 1974: 1). According to the original published study by Ramey et al. 1974, the experiment identified children at birth, and assigned a sample (N=111) of mostly African-American children to either an experimental group that received full day care or a control group that received no active intervention services. Participants in the experimental group were in a structured curriculum of learning activities and received nutritional supplements, medical care and payment for participation (Ramey 1974: 1). The experimental group received intervention service based on a teaching philosophy that provided high levels of adult-child interaction and support services that emphasized skill oriented learning until age five (Bracey and Stellar 2003: 781).

The Carolina Abecedarian Project was administered only in 1972, however, subjects were studied and data gathered at various points during their development. Treatment was relatively brief, but intense for participants and effects were measured in the long-term. At age five the study performed a re-randomization of the total population, in which approximately half of the members of each group received additional intervention services for three years after kindergarten (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 19). Re-randomization of participants provided a range from zero to eight years of early childhood education intervention (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 19). Analysis showed that the project produced large academic effects in the long term, including a follow-up analysis with participants at age 21. The effects of the program included completion of more years of school (experimental 12.2 versus the control 11.0), a higher percentage of enrollment in college, a higher rate of matriculation in four year colleges (experimental 47% to the control 27%), and higher likelihood of procuring employment (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 19; Bracey and Stellar 2003:782).

**Chicago Child Parent Center (1983)**

The Chicago Child Parent Center program was instituted in the mid-1980s as a much larger scale intervention study than its predecessors the Perry Preschool Project and The Abecedarian Project. Also unlike its predecessors, this research focused on an already established preschool intervention program administered by the Chicago public school system. The Child Parent Centers were classroom based and managed as any other primary school, operating five days a week for approximately 6 hours per day (Fuerst 1993: 239). *Chicago: an early childhood programme* was published in 1993 by Loyola University of Chicago as an analysis of the experiment, with concurrent reports

produced by Chicago Board of Education. The large-scale study involved 20 centers of learning, called Child Parent Centers (CPC), in contrast with smaller single-center assessments of earlier studies. CPC curriculum was established in 1967 and was rooted in learning theories that emphasized body image and gross motor skill development, including “perceptual motor and arithmetic skills and language” (Bracey and Stellar 2003: 782). The longitudinal experimental analysis study of participants identified in this essay was conducted in 1983 by the Department of Research and Evaluation of the Chicago Board of Education (Fuerst 1993: 243).

The study was introduced in 1983 and focused on the public school system and participants in high poverty. Classroom structure included children from ages three to five participating in class sessions five days a week during the school year as well as a six-week summer session (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 19). After the age of five, the intervention services became more sporadic and less learning intensive. The analysis included a follow-up with participants at age 21 (N=989) and a comparison group (N=550). In analysis across a range of benchmarks, the researchers reported the participants had positive outcomes including academic achievement marked by reading test scores, a reduction in grade retention and rate of special education identification, and higher high school completion rates (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 19; Bracey and Stellar 2003:782). In a cost benefit analysis of the center’s progress and intervention, it was found that the program yields economic return far exceeding costs (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 19). Box 4, below, lists the conclusions identified in each of the aforementioned studies.

**Box 4 –Participant Academic Achievements Compared to Control Group**

***High/Scope Perry Preschool Project (1962)***

- Higher rates of grade completion
- Lower likelihood of “special education”
- Increased likelihood of earning high school diploma/GED

***Carolina Abecedarian Project (1972)***

- Completion of more years of school
- Higher percentage of enrolment in college
- Higher rate of matriculation in four-year colleges
- Increased likelihood of gaining employment

***Chicago Child Parent Center Study (1983)***

- Higher average reading test scores
- Reduction in grade retention
- Lower likelihood of “special education” identification
- Higher rate of high school completion

These three studies provided a sphere of influence developing a standard of excellence in design models and the creation of control groups. These studies revolutionized the academic world by identifying the proper cohorts of participants that needed to be included in studies to fully represent the average qualifying families.

**SECTION III–Methods****Six Important Studies of Long-Term Effectiveness of Head Start**

Many reports since 1964 have explored the long-term effectiveness on the academic achievements of Head Start participants. This essay summarizes the literature and evaluates best practices. It explores the most important quantitative and qualitative studies that examine the ability of Head Start pre-elementary education to foster long-term academic achievements. Emphasis is placed on those studies focused on achievements such as graduation rates, K-12 matriculation and grade repetition, and rate of attendance in post-secondary education. Because Head Start is a complex social public policy issue as well as an education issue, this essay also identifies environmental circumstances that may affect long-term achievement.

Three major questions emerge from analysis of Head Start studies. Empirical studies have examined the following: Does Head Start work? For whom does it work? For how long does it work? This essay examines six of the most influential studies during this period that have examined whether and how Head Start is effective for its participants in the long term. This essay also examines disadvantages that participants may face after their exit from the program. These six studies were influenced by the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, the Carolina Abecedarian Project, and the Chicago Child Parent Center Study in design and execution. Box 5 identifies the research studies of Long-Term Effectiveness of Head Start examined here.

**Box 5 – Influential Research on Head Start in the Long Term**

**1969 – The Westinghouse Study**

– *Impact of Head Start: An evaluation of the effects of Head Start on children’s cognitive and active development*

**1995 – Currie and Thomas**

– *Does Head Start Make a Difference?*

**1995 – Lee and Loeb**

– *Where Do Head Start Attendees End Up? One Reason Why Preschool Effects Fade out*

**2000 – Currie and Thomas**

– *School Quality and the Longer-Term Effects of Head Start*

**2002 – Garces, Thomas, Currie**

– *Longer-Term Effects of Head Start*

**2005 – US Administration for Children and Families**

– *Head Start Impact Study, First-Year Findings*

Inclusion of these specified studies was based on analysis of academic studies focused on Head Start. These six studies were those most often referenced in relation to Head Start development, general knowledge, and accepted practices of research. The choice to identify and explore these studies was based on an in-depth review of at least 25 important studies on general Head Start practices.

Other contenders for inclusion in analysis included: Fagan and Fantuzzo 1999 *Multilateral Congruence on the Social Skills Rating System: Mother, Father, and Teacher Assessments of Urban Head Start Children's Social Competencies*, Finn and Gerber 2005 *Small Classes in the Early Grades, Academic Achievement, and Graduating*

*From High School*, Gunn et al. 2006 *Promoting School Success: Developing Social Skills and Early Literacy in Head Start Classrooms*, and Spernak et al. 2006 *Child Health and Academic Achievement among Former Head Start Children*. These articles were not included because they did not provide novel information or address long-term effectiveness directly. From a general field of research interests (see Box 3), discussion with faculty advisors and close review of articles led to narrowing this analysis to six of the most important and influential studies (see Box 5).

The Westinghouse Study, conducted in 1969, pioneered large-scale academic assessment of Head Start effectiveness over time. It was limited to data from the few years since Head Start had been implemented, and therefore it could not address long-term effectiveness. In the following decades the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, the Carolina Abecedarian Project, and the Chicago Child Parent Center study provided information on early childhood development in a preschool environment. There is a 26-year gap in the research specific to Head Start among the six examined in this essay. Not until 1995, despite continued funding and administration, did research based on 30 years of data emerge with findings on long-term effectiveness. Currie and Thomas (1995) first broke the gap, finding that Head Start can have a positive effect on white impoverished children. Lee and Loeb (1995) studied the role of post-Head Start academic environment and school quality in the fade-out effect. Currie and Thomas (2000) expanded Lee and Loeb's research model to assess differences in schooling environments by race. Garces, Thomas, and Currie (2002) further expanded the model with the inclusion of an economic component. The first federally administered and mandated study, *Head Start Impact Study, First Year Findings*, was issued in 2005. Each studied is described in detail below

and then summarized in Table 3. This analysis examines elements of consensus, disagreements, and remaining gaps in understanding the long-term effectiveness of Head Start on academic achievements of participants. In doing this, this essay intends to aid policymakers in understanding questions of effectiveness. The analysis section below provides an assessment of this research.

**Major Studies on Long-Term Effectiveness of Head Start**

**The Westinghouse Study (1969)**

*– Impact of Head Start: An evaluation of the effects of Head Start on children’s cognitive and active development*

**Data** – Noted as the “first prominent effort to investigate Head Start impacts over time,” this study identified former Head Start participants in the first, second and third grades (experiment group) and compared them to schoolmates who had not participated (control group) in the intervention program (Bracey and Stellar 2003: 17).

**Methods** – The study was administered by Westinghouse Learning Corporation and Ohio University in 1969 (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 17). The experiment group and control groups children were matched within grade level based on ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic standing and attendance in a kindergarten classroom, benchmarking success on cognitive, social, and emotional development (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 17).

**Findings** – The study concluded that Head Start participants had only a few sustained effects. However, the study has been widely criticized on methodological grounds because of the biases created from comparing groups of children. Other researchers pointed to the fact that comparison groups “did not account for grade retention and special education placements within the samples,” thus “eliminating the higher percentage of lower performing children from comparison group” (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 17).

**Limits** – The greatest evidence of bias among research was that the comparison groups were not fully representative of the cohorts of participation in the finding that “the control

group, children in the third grade, evaluated against the comparison group, was significantly older than the third-grade Head Start children” (Bracey and Stellar 2003: 17). Even after this methodological critique, this study is still cited in debate among policymakers falsely stating that “Head Start does not produce gains in educational benefits for children in poverty,” (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 17). Finally, the few years of data available for analysis in The Westinghouse Study limit its ability to describe long-term effectiveness.

**Currie and Thomas (1995)*****– Does Head Start Make a Difference?***

Janet Currie and Duncan Thomas are both professors of economics at the University of California Los Angeles. They spent years studying Head Start and its long-term effects based on school quality and socioeconomic demographics.

**Data** – In 1995, using a national sample of data, they reexamined Head Start to evaluate the impact of Head Start on school performance, cognitive attainment, preventative medical care, and health and nutritional status. This study has been widely referenced in most Head Start research since its publication. Currie and Thomas examined the impact of Head Start on a child’s well-being, using siblings of Head Start children as the control group. They used data from a National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) in 1979 where 6,283 young women surveyed annually over a span of time and produced 8,500 children. These women were surveyed about whether their children had participated in Head Start. The survey respondents providing data for analysis were not the Head Start participants, but their mothers who identified program involvement. This process yielded a sample of nearly 5000 children aged three and older who had attended Head Start (Currie and Thomas 1995: 343).

**Methods** – Using regression analysis, the authors compared “fixed effects estimate of the effects of participation in Head Start and fixed effects estimates of the effects of enrollment in other preschools” (Currie and Thomas 1995: 344). Currie and Thomas categorized children as participants in Head Start, participants in some form of preschool, and no preschool participation. These groups were compared on variable of grade repetition, special education assignment, and racial and socioeconomic demographics.

**Findings** – The authors concluded that Head Start participation was associated with an increase in standardized testing scores of white children. White participants are 47% less likely to have repeated a grade than children who were not in Head Start, and a 16% overall probability reduction in repeating a grade, as compared to white students who did not attend any pre-schooling (Currie and Thomas 1995: 360). These conclusions and new approaches to data collection became a launching pad for additional research looking at the academic achieve in the long run for Head Start participants.

Often cited by academics and policy makers alike, this study was widely claimed to be the start of a ‘new wave’ of research advancing studies since 1995. Currie and Thomas “employed creative statistical approaches to estimate the long-term effects of Head Start from national data set with self-reported Head Start participation” (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 20). Their estimation of Head Start difference based on siblings was an inspired way to control for socioeconomic biases. The strength of the study methodology lay within their implementation of a national data set.

**Limits** – There were limitations within self-reported participation and assumptions about why participant children are enrolled in Head Start compared to their siblings. Barnett and Hustedt identified these limitations that resulted in an underestimation of long-term benefits (2005: 20). Conclusions of long-term effects for participants overall were positive in higher vocabulary test scores, lower rate of grade repetition, higher rates of high school graduation, higher rates of college attendance for whites, and fewer criminal charges and convictions for African-Americans. Currie and Thomas concluded Head Start was successful in serving as an intervention program for children in poverty.

The major question of the study was to re-examine Head Start's impact on "school performance, cognitive attainment, preventative medical care, and health and nutritional status" (Currie and Thomas 1995: 341). Furthermore, the authors compared and contrasted findings with a racial breakdown, unlike anything that had been seen before in Head Start research. This study served as a catalyst and benchmark for future studies of long-term effectiveness of early education intervention programs. Even with praise and respect from the academic community based on the Currie and Thomas 1995 study, the authors themselves concluded that "despite literally hundreds of studies, the jury is still out on the question of whether participation in Head Start has lasting beneficial effects," (Currie and Thomas 1995: 343).

**Lee and Loeb (1995)*****– Where Do Head Start Attendees End Up? One Reason Why Preschool Effects Fade Out***

Valerie E. Lee and Susanna Loeb of the University of Michigan expanded research on educational evaluation and policy analysis using OLS regressions. Their main research question focused on identifying the types of schools that Head Start participants attend after the program by assessing eighth grade achievement standards of education. They compared groups of children and identified their educational experience beyond the preschool years and into matriculation levels of middle school. Lee and Loeb conducted their study under the assumption that Head Start children are under a considerable disadvantage and are at greater risks for inconsistency in educational experiences after participating in Head Start.

**Data** – Using a sample from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, they looked at the progress of approximately 25,000 eighth-graders in 1,035 American middle schools (Lee and Loeb 1995: 64). Data were collected from varying sources including student surveys, achievement test scores, parent surveys, and from at least two of each child's other teachers in order to gain information about the school. Lee and Loeb used filters that excluded students and parents with unfilled surveys and students missing test scores. Based on the above filters and subsections of students the resulting sample was random and included 14,837 students in 975 schools, both public and private. This total sample represented participants in Head Start (N = 2111), children who did not attend preschool (N = 6240), and children who attended preschools other than Head Start (N = 6486) (Lee and Loeb 1995: 64).

**Methods** – The Lee and Loeb study identified six dependent measures of school quality to define schools: average school socioeconomic status, average achievement, unsafe school factor, positive teacher-student relations, school academic climate, and composite school quality factor (1995: 69-71). These were measured on independent variables of the following two types: the student preschool experience and the demographic characteristics of students in family composition. Lee and Loeb recognized that study methodology, variables controlled and excluded measures were entrenched in Currie and Thomas 1995 study, looking at previous data to better include what measures should be considered (1995: 65).

**Findings** – The results of the study identified background differences where “virtually every measure considered showed that eighth-graders who attended Head Start were demographically disadvantaged compared to their other preschool counterparts” in the economic differences in family income level and in the needs ratio (Lee and Loeb 1995: 67). The income level of Head Start children was nearly half (\$22,461) as compared to children who attended other kinds of preschools (\$53,153) and was still less than children who attended no preschool (\$33,018). There was also a discrepancy among racial and ethnic differences, where nearly 41% of Head Start children are black compared to 7% and 8% in other preschool and no preschool groups, respectively (Lee and Loeb 1995: 66). Family education is also a factor; Head Start parents have less education than non-Head Start participants (Lee and Loeb 1995: 67).

Lee and Loeb also utilized another approach to better understand long-term effects on Head Start attendees by using a multivariate regression model structure. Lee

and Loeb determined there were unique relationships between preschool and the quality of schools attended after participation in Head Start.

Taking into account sampling differences, the authors evaluated the differential effects of preschool experiences on primary school experiences and found statistically significant results. The fade out effect was discussed as a concept that the educational effects of Head Start deteriorate over time. The fade out effect was exemplified in the study by the finding that the non-preschool attendee cohort showed a higher average achievement than did Head Start participants by eighth grade, suggesting school failure in upholding the competencies of Head Start (Lee and Loeb 1995: 69). Compared to the schools attended by both other preschool and non-preschool counterparts, the schools of Head Start participants were more often described by their parents and school systems as being unsafe. This is indicative of a systematic disadvantage (Lee and Loeb 1995: 70). The Lee and Loeb study also showed that students with Head Start experience were being placed in schools that have low positive relationships between teachers and their students, and minority students were particularly susceptible to a low level of relations between teachers and students; the academic climate of schools for students who attended other preschools is significantly better than Head Start students (71). In conclusion, Lee and Loeb found the schools attended by Head Start students were of lower quality than those attended by other students, especially as compared with those who attended a different form of preschool (Lee and Loeb 1995: 72).

**Limits** – The Lee and Loeb study determined the criteria of school attendance that accounted for Head Start effectiveness to fade out over time. This study did not attempt to understand or explain cognitive and social competency benefits from Head Start

participation, but rather looked to see where public policy can intervene to allow for the poorest of children to maintain competencies gained through Head Start. Lee and Loeb concluded a child's social disadvantage has great influence on the quality of schools they attend after participation in a Head Start program, which has large influence on the long-term effects of Head Start.

The authors identified the social policy issues implied by their study to determine policy intervention. They argued that "the strong association between a child's social disadvantage and the quality of the schools they attend suggesting that our nation's policies allowing disadvantaged children to be concentrated in low-quality schools promotes an increase in learning differences" (1995: 75). It was an important political reality that the federal government acknowledged that school matriculation after attendance in Head Start could have an effect on long-term child development. This study was important because it was the first prominent study to statistically show the influence elementary school quality has on the long-term effectiveness of Head Start participation. Poor academic performance developed because of the low quality of schools entered by participants after completing Head Start. Head Start learning could not be expected to continue through elementary school without reinforcement of learned concepts.

**Currie and Thomas (2000)*****– School Quality and the Longer-Term Effects of Head Start***

Currie and Thomas once again argued that children who are disadvantaged from early childhood fall further behind than their counterparts as measured by grade repetition and dropout rates. Inconsistency in participation in a preschool program was pointed to as the main gap in the development of children (Currie and Thomas 2000: 756). Head Start is a program aimed at closing the gap in economic disparity between children in poverty and their lower and middle-class counterparts. The conceptual framework used by Currie and Thomas was identification in variables that invest in a child's human capital and the quality of the child's school (2000: 758). The main purpose of this study was to look at whether children who participated in Head Start were demographically disadvantaged compared to other children with particular emphasis on the greatest differences.

The authors specifically identified Lee and Loeb as a predecessor to their analysis; with this study identified as a more comprehensive measure of school quality. By assuming the eighth-grade as a universal quantifier of education for grades 1-8, the authors drew comparisons between Head Start children and other children within the same school (Currie and Thomas 2000: 759).

**Data** – The Currie and Thomas study used data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 because it is one of the few datasets that combine information about Head Start, school quality, and demographic information.

For data collection, 1,734 schools were selected, with 26,435 students from the schools (Currie and Thomas 2000: 759). After excluding students who did return all

sections of surveys and questionnaires, students with missing test scores, and students deemed to have special needs, the sample size was (N=2531) black students and (N=14,343) white students (Currie and Thomas 2000: 759). Examining the sample size and demographic differences, the data shows that children who attended some kind of preschool other than Head Start typically were more advantaged. The advantages included that their mothers were more likely to be high school graduates, their mothers were more likely to have attended college, and their family incomes were higher (Currie and Thomas 2000: 760). The authors made an interesting note, pointing out that these differences were more pronounced among whites, noting that they had a higher starting disadvantage in Head Start than black children.

**Methods** – Using linear probability models in identifying Head Start as the dummy variable, the authors looked for correlation in backgrounds between the control group and Head Start participants. The regression suggested that black Head Start children had a higher concentration in poorer schools compared to black non-participants. The authors suggested that multiple factors contributed to the results. “Head Start children were more likely to be in poor families, and to have less educated parents, indeed coefficients on income and education were greater for blacks than for whites” (Currie and Thomas 2000: 762).

**Findings** – Currie and Thomas concluded that African American Head Start participants attended schools with lower testing scores overall, implicating that participants and non-participant children were placed within the same poor performing school were all at a disadvantage (2000: 765). The underprivileged nature of these children’s backgrounds and family influence showed black children who attended Head Start as worse off than

their non-participant black counterparts in relation to similar family backgrounds (2000: 770). The Currie and Thomas regression analysis differed from previous studies by using academic achievement tests, reading levels scores, and math scores rather than IQ levels. In analysis, the coefficients show that African American “Head Start children who attended poorer schools had large difference in lower reading scores and that white Head Start children who attended poor schools” had a smaller difference in low reading scores than their counterparts at a statistically significant level (Currie and Thomas 2000: 770).

**Limits** – As an expansion of the Lee and Loeb (1995), Currie and Thomas (2000) used various methods and regression analysis to show that black children who attended Head Start were subsequently placed in school systems that are of lower quality than white Head Start participants. Therefore, the authors argued that attendance at these schools further perpetuated low test scores and an increase in fade out of academic benefits achieved through Head Start participation (Currie and Thomas 2000: 772). The long-term effects of Head Start did not exist because of the generally lower quality of school participants subsequently attended.

**Garces, Thomas, Currie (2002)*****– Longer-Term Effects of Head Start***

In the third study in the Currie and Thomas series analysis on long-term effectiveness Head Start, researchers included economist Eliana Garces for an additional evaluation method in sibling comparison in Head Start participation. The major question of the study assessed the long-term benefits of participation and asked the question of whether Head Start students had a greater socioeconomic success in adulthood as compared to their sibling counterparts (Garces et al. 2002: 1005).

**Data** – Their design model was noted as drastically improved from the Currie and Thomas 1995 study, though they were using the same sample group from the National Longitudinal Survey previously identified (Ludwig and Phillips 2008: 259). The sample for this study came from a 1995 data collection where specific questions were added to the national survey study to specifically identify 18- to 30-year-olds who had previously participated in school-year Head Start programs across the country (N=3255) (Garces et al. 2002: 999).

**Methods** – The research methodology was congruent with the first study in 1995. The authors controlled for background characteristics of participation by using non-participating siblings as the comparison group for data analysis. The study was judged by other researchers as a substantially improved research design to examine the linkage between family background, education upbringing and socioeconomic output in the long term (Garces et al. 2002: 1002-1003). To that point, there had been no analysis of children in Head Start from the age of participation to 30 years post-participation that

measured long term effectiveness in relation to benchmarks and measures outlined in the 2002 Garces et al. research model (1000).

**Findings** – The authors found as their main conclusions that:

“Whites who attended Head Start are, relative to their siblings who did not, significantly more likely to complete high school, attend college, and possibly have higher earnings in their early 20s. African-Americans who participated in Head Start are less likely to have been booked or charged with a crime. There is some evidence of positive spillovers” (Garces et al. 2002: 999).

Upon further analysis of regression tables by other Head Start experts, it was estimated that white Head Start children were about 22% more likely than their siblings, who attended another form of preschool, to complete high school, and 19% more likely to attend college (Ludwig and Phillips 2008: 260) (Ludwig and Phillips 2008: 260)

**Limits** – In assessment of these findings, the research team paid special attention to the administration guidelines that specified that Head Start provide a wide range of services to participants and their families. In determining long-term effectiveness, the design model had few marked limits. The spillover effect, Head Start children sharing learned information with their siblings, was a limit. The possible spillover created an imperfect control group for comparison. If Head Start participants shared knowledge and skills with their siblings, then there was not as clear of a picture of difference between the groups. However, this limit was projected to underestimate effects. Positive spillover effects of participating in the program gained benefits to other members of the family, but the study still estimated difference in the groups (Ludwig and Phillips 2008: 259). This study concludes, controlling for socioeconomic factors, Head Start has positive long-term impacts for participants compared to their non-participating siblings.

**U.S. Administration for Children and Families (2005)****– *Head Start Impact Study, First Year Findings (FACES)***

The Head Start Impact Study, also known as the Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES), was a large-scale longitudinal study mandated by Congress during the 1998 Head Start reauthorization process. Congress mandated that Head Start administration include aspects of school readiness and information on intervention services. Assignment to the evaluation study was done on at risk child participants that randomly assigned them to either a control group or an experimental group (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 21).

**Data** – The first federally administered evaluation of Head Start’s long-term impacts was focused on a “renewed emphasis on large-scale scientific evaluations, national longitudinal studies, administration on children, youth, and family” (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 20). Congress pushed for this study that would provide specific quantitative data that analyzed the services and education provided by Head Start across the nation. Using a nationally representative sample of new program applicants ages three and four, the researchers randomly assigned participants to a treatment group with access to Head Start or to a control group with access to non-Head Start services (Westat 2005: iv). The sample included 23 different states, consisting of 84 grantees with 383 Head Start sites (N=4667 applicants total) with 2,559 three-year-olds and 2,108 four-year-olds participating in the study (Westat 2005; iv). According to Head Start experts Ludwig and Philips, this FACES study was the most recent legitimate evaluation and provided the “best evidence currently available on Head Start as it operates today” (2008: 258). Also,

it had been additionally pointed to as “the most promising evaluation of Head Start benefits to date” (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 21).

**Methods** – FACES was conducted in three phases. Data resulted from “randomized experimental evaluation of Head Start participants measured within one year of random assignment” in an analysis conducted by Westat, a peer recognized research organization (Ludwig and Phillips 2008: 258). Collecting comparable data for treatment and control groups, researchers conducted interviews, collected test scores, and conducted child assessments (Westat 2005; v).

In 1998, Phase 1 studied the impact of Head Start on child development and academic and social readiness for entrance into elementary school (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 21). Other sections of this phase included emphasis on looking at nutrition and health services and their impact on the family. Phase 2 was identically designed; however, it included Early Head Start research and evaluation. Phase 3 looked at long-term effectiveness one year after participation in Head Start. The initial data for Phase 3 was collected in 2002 with annual follow-ups until 2006 (Westat 2005; v). Estimates and analysis were based on statistical models controlling for background differences between comparison groups (Westat 2005; vi).

**Findings** – The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, with the assistance of Westat, compiled a 300-page document detailing all the findings of the analysis. Participating in Head Start positively impacted pre-reading skills and pre-writing skills (Westat 2005; x). Estimates showed that pre-reading skills were below U.S. averages for children, but the gap in skill level shrunk after 12 months within the experiment group.

Vocabulary knowledge was impacted at a statistically significant level for three-year-olds, but not four-year-olds (Westat 2005; xii).

Phase 3 analyzed the data separately for participants ages three and four. If the age groups were analyzed together, there were no short-term outcomes that were statistically significant in data analysis (Ludwig and Phillips 2008: 258). However, when assessed separately by age group, reading, and writing skills the statistics implied that there were some assessed impacts on academic achievement. These facts implied the study of program participants separated by age group was large enough to imply a program success (Ludwig and Phillips 2008: 258-259).

**Limits** – A limit in the Phase 1 and 2 study design was a lack of allowance for control groups between the Head Start participants and children who would be termed as demographically similar. This limited scope provided by each of these phases was furthermore not resolved in Phase 3; there was no methodological change and no demographically similar comparison group in analysis (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 21). In a greater review, the FACES report showed that assessment gains were small and the length of the study was not sufficient to determine long-term effectiveness. By the report defining long-term effects as one to three years after participation, the scope of the data is assessing short-term effects. The model provided by FACES was a comprehensive step toward the future of Head Start research. However, a longer span of time is necessary to better understand the effect participation has on the academic achievements of participants. The authors concluded that more research and development of this federal assessment should be projected (Ludwig and Phillips 2008: 258).

**Table 3 – Influential Research on Head Start in the Long Term (1969 – 2007)**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Distinctiveness</b>	<b>Data</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Core Findings</b>	<b>Limits</b>
<p><b>1969</b> <i>Impact of Head Start: An evaluation of the effects of Head Start on children’s cognitive and active development</i></p> <p>Westinghouse Learning Corporation and Ohio University</p>	<p>Comprehensive study investigating Head Start impacts over a period of time</p>	<p>First study of Head Start effectiveness after participation</p>	<p>Former Head Start participants in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades (experimental group) and non-participating classmates (control group)</p>	<p>Compared experimental and control based on benchmarks of achievement successes</p>	<p>Head Start participants had few sustained effects; involvement did not produce education benefits for children in poverty</p>	<p>Control group not representative of Head Start participants demographically; study did not account for grade retention and special education placement</p>
<p><b>1995</b> <i>Does Head Start Make a Difference?</i></p> <p>Janet Currie and Duncan Thomas, Univ. of California, Los Angeles</p>	<p>Analyze Head Start long-term effectiveness in relation to school quality and participant demographic</p>	<p>Recognized as the first comprehensive study to analyze race as a factor in Head Start long-term effectiveness</p>	<p>National sample of Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 of families that had at least one child of preschool age; Three comparison groups: Head Start (N=5000)</p>	<p>Compared Head Start participants against each other, breaking up groups based on racial demographics</p>	<p>White participants saw an increase in standard test scores, 47% less likely to repeat a grade; no marked academic impacts for African American participants</p>	<p>Self-reported error in participation; assumptions about why a family would place one sibling in Head Start and not the other; spillover of learned skills from one child to their sibling</p>
<p><b>1995</b> <i>Where Do Head Start Attendees End Up? One Reason Why Preschool Effects Fade out</i></p> <p>Valerie Lee and Susanna Loeb, University of Michigan</p>	<p>Determine if school quality after Head Start participation determines long-term effectiveness</p>	<p>Using parent surveys, identified quality of schools that Head Start participants attended after program involvement</p>	<p>National sample from Educational Longitudinal Study 1988; Head Start (N=2111) No preschool (N=6240) Other preschool (N=6486)</p>	<p>Regressed 6 measures of school quality on preschool experience and socioeconomic demographic</p>	<p>School quality determined participants demographically disadvantaged; Head Start children earn half the income of their preschool counterparts; Teacher-student relationships effective participant attendance at lower quality schools</p>	<p>Study did not address cognitive or social benefits of Head Start participation; no aim to measure effectiveness for each individual child, but rather concluded a picture of long-term effectiveness in general terms</p>

## Head Start Effectiveness in the Long Term

B.E. Kelleher

Study	Goal	Distinctiveness	Data	Methods	Core Findings	Limits
<p><b>2000</b> <i>School Quality and the Longer-Term Effects of Head Start</i></p> <p>Janet Currie and Duncan Thomas, Univ. of California, Los Angeles</p>	<p>Determine if Head Start children are demographically disadvantaged when compared to their school peers</p>	<p>Compare eighth-grade Head Start children with non-participating children in their school; looking at academic achievement based on reading and math test scores; included racial breakdowns</p>	<p>National sample from Educational Longitudinal Study 1988; Questions of Head Start participation, school quality and racial demographics; Black (N=2,531) White (N=14,343)</p>	<p>Liner probability model comparing backgrounds of participants and non-participants; defining how one variable affects other variables</p>	<p>Black participants attended schools with perpetually lower than average test scores; Black Head Start children were demographically worse off than their non-participating black counterparts</p>	<p>Long-term effects of Head Start are hard to predict because of the influence schools have on test scores after program participation</p>
<p><b>2002</b> <i>Longer-Term Effects of Head Start</i></p> <p>Eliana Garces, Economic Analysis LLC; Duncan Thomas, and Janet Currie, Univ. of California, Los Angeles</p>	<p>Assess the long-term benefits of Head Start participation compared to non-participating siblings</p>	<p>Determine if Head Start students have a greater socioeconomic success in the long-term compared to their siblings; first use of siblings as a control group</p>	<p>National sample from Educational Longitudinal Study 1995; including follow-up questions identifying former Head Start participants ages 18 to 30</p>	<p>Compared participants, controlling for siblings, based on socioeconomic racial backgrounds, education, and income; sample selection created a 30 year study</p>	<p>White participants were more likely to complete high school, attend college, and have higher earnings compared to their white non-participants; Black participants were less likely to have been booked or charged with a crime compared to their black non-participants</p>	<p>Spillover effect created an imperfect control group; Head Start participants shared knowledge and skills with their siblings; underestimation of effects</p>
<p><b>2005</b> <i>Head Start Impact Study,</i></p> <p>US Administration for Children and Families</p>	<p>Assess school readiness of Head Start participants compared to non-participants</p>	<p>First federal government administered large scale evaluation of Head Start; served as a tool of transparency and self-evaluation</p>	<p>Included 23 states, 84 grantees with 383 Head Start sites; Head Start Applicants (N=4667) Three-year-olds (N=2,559) Four-year-olds (N=2,108)</p>	<p>Comparison of long-term effectiveness one year after participation; analysis based on statistical models controlling for background differences</p>	<p>Pre-reading skills positively impacted, pre-writing skills impacted less; estimates showed that participants academic skills below U.S. averages, but shrinking gap after 12 months in experiment group</p>	<p>No comparison between the Head Start participants and demographically similar; conclusions small and not done over a long enough time span; defined long-term effects as one to three years after participation</p>

**SECTION IV – Discussion**

In discussion of research of Head Start long-term effectiveness, this section will:

- Discuss elements of agreement in research
- Identify the gaps in current research models
- Outline where agreements and gaps intersect to form future research

**Elements of Agreement among Researchers about Long-Term Effectiveness**

The six studies on Head Start intervention in the lives of impoverished children are linked in their attempts to assess the long-term benefits of Head Start. These studies include not only conclusions on effectiveness measures but also suggestions for future research. The promising thing about the world of research for public policy purposes is that there is always room for improved methods and approaches. As identified in the literature review section, research on preschool effects in the long-term has been well developed. However, “the long-term benefits of Head Start rarely have been studied, and never with sufficiently strong research designs” (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 21). Head Start research was influenced by the preschool study models, however, because of the specific standards of evaluation, there has not yet been a model developed that can accurately ascertain the long term effectiveness taking into account all the variables, and there may never be.

Critics of Head Start identified that children end up in poverty because of a wide range of issues, most prominently identified as enrollment in poor performing schools with limited resources, a lack of a stable learning environment, schools operating in environments with little to no positive community involvement (Jacob and Ludwig 2008: 1-2). These challenges are details that must be taken into account in future research for validity reasons. If Head Start research does not grow and expand to include new

variables, then evaluation methods are not reaching their full potential. Some clearly identified limits in overall research designs are identified by our experts as models that make judgments on Head Start effectiveness under the assumptions that “subsequent schooling of program participants is equivalent to that of their comparison group” (Lee and Loeb 1995: 63). As looked at in the above sections, the first published study addressing Head Start’s probability to create beneficial opportunity to children was in 1969 (Ludwig and Phillips 2008: 257). Since this time, each study has adapted methodology to try to address the gaps, but one major limit is still plaguing the research community.

Any long-term effects of Head Start are best captured for people who participated in the program long ago (Ludwig and Phillips 2008: 258). Understanding gaps in research designs is ineffective unless the research community develops new research models to address these gaps. Investigating proposals for future research leads to identification of new innovations and techniques in data collection. Suggestions of useful strategies of study and development of new tactics are the most important goals of this essay.

### **Gaps in Research and Analysis of Disagreements**

In the forty years of study and design models of evaluation, it has only been in the last decade that social scientists have made major strides in identifying the causal effects of Head Start on its participants in the long term (Ludwig and Phillips 2008: 259). Gaps in research are defined as elements of uncertainty or a lack of agreement among experts.

A gap in research on long-term effectiveness exists for the “fade out effect.” It is a phenomena researched by academics attempting to study the long-term effect of Head

Start on a child's academic development and achievements in post-elementary education. Since its identification in studies tracing back to the 1970s, fade out was a major criticism of the program's ability to succeed in making impacts in the lives of its participants (Schaub 2006: 606). The phrase refers to a possibility that by the time Head Start children reach middle-school age, the benefits of Head Start have faded away so that participants no longer have any advantage relative to their non-Head Start counterparts. There have been different explanations why learning competencies fade out over time: "variation in program quality across sites, lack of follow through compensatory education, and subsequent weakness in educational environments in which poor students are exposed" (Lee and Loeb 1995: 63). Another argument is that positive academic impacts on children may decline with age if there is not long-term intervention in the lives of participants (Ludwig and Miller 2007: 160). Research analysis can serve as a valuable weapon to political parties and policymakers looking to cut funding from a budget or argue against government intervention.

The linked conclusions in the research are that Head Start's effect on children is dependent on differences in the "developmental quality of the program versus the quality of the environments that low-income children would have experienced otherwise" (Ludwig and Phillips 2008: 260). These estimated effects "may be changing over time in ways that are difficult to predict"; and the cohorts of children estimated in studies are not a perfect representation of effectiveness in the long term (Ludwig and Phillips 2008: 260).

A large problem in research is use of IQ scores as a measurement of Head Start effectiveness in the long term. These kinds of measures "are not necessarily a reliable

predictor of long-term impacts,” but are rather a significant design limit (Ludwig and Miller 2007: 199).

### **Future Research**

It is paramount that future research seeks to fill in the gaps in studies on long-term effectiveness. Head Start is a complex social program with a variety of costs, benefits, and outcomes. A researcher’s job is to assess the data and make conclusions. A policymaker’s charge is to gather conclusions, make decisions, and ask questions using information and move forward. Researchers address questions on best approaches to increase the long-term effectiveness of this social program. The future of presidential policies on Head Start needs to be outlined by the future of research development.

Identification of future research is a constant challenge; learning and developing plans to increase and sustain positive long-term effects of Head Start on children is going to remain the most important topic (Ludwig and Miller 2007: 198). Interpretation of academic research over the past four decades has perpetuated the idea that intervention can be irrelevant for the most disadvantaged children entering a poor and overstretched public school system (Jacob and Ludwig 2008: 2). Head Start has been widely identified as a unique opportunity for the poorest of the poor children in America to bring them to standard knowledge levels and give them a chance to compete when entering primary school. It is also a reasonable assumption, based on the research, that there are some positive benefits for school readiness. It is the magnitude of these benefits that are still in question. Sustainability over time and the indicators and variables that determine long-term effects are where research needs to focus. Looking to the magnitude of these benefits, both in the positive or negative, and comparing the cognitive and non-cognitive

development of participants in Head Start is vitally important (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 21).

This essay suggests important components of future research, drawing on the above information gathered from studies on early childhood development and Head Start effects on long-term achievements of participants. Head Start is geared to be an intervention program for a specific community of people. Participants are from a low socioeconomic class and are often overlooked in school preparedness. This essay proposes a nationwide quantitative study of participants, using survey participants who are economically eligible for Head Start. This proposed survey should use a national data set, like the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), with Head Start specific questions. This cost should be at the expense of the federal government and built into the ACF annual budget. The study should focus on long-term effectiveness for children eligible for Head Start, not on all children because the program is aimed at a specific population. Such elements to be measured are racial demographics, parental educational achievements, and school quality after Head Start participation using sibling non-participants as a control group. Assessment of rural and urban Head Start as well as individual state assessment should be measured. Research on long-term effectiveness is a continuing commitment. If studies are to understand how Head Start affects academic achievements throughout school matriculation, then the study must span at least 15 years (age three to 18), preferably longer.

As was pointed out, strength in The Carolina Abecedarian Study was that study participants need to be identified from entrance into Head Start and followed throughout their school matriculation. This creates an experimental group that can be followed up on

annually rather than an after the fact study. This is useful because researchers could identify participants individually and ask additional questions as research deems to be important.

Past research has provided great insight and development procedures for Head Start. A comprehensive federal study focused on transparency in government operations can encourage accountability to the public overcoming political and funding biases. A continuation and systematic annual self-evaluation could be a step in the right direction to a wider data set for Head Start long-term effectiveness models of assessment. The reason for some of the disagreement among researchers on Head Start effectiveness could be ideological, based in political party affiliations. Also, the academic discipline of researchers affects the approach and probably the conclusions drawn about Head Start. Economists, political scientists, psychologists, sociologists, educators and early childhood experts all have different approaches, theories, ideas and assumptions about the impact of Head Start. Taking all of these factors into account, it is understandable that research designs, results and conclusions could emphasize different aspects of effectiveness, even conflicting ideas.

Federal government evaluation of Head Start long-term effectiveness encourages transparency, organization, accountability, and politically unbiased data sets. Government agencies should be focused on transparency and accountability. Self-evaluation of Head Start promotes the responsibility of the ACF to lead research and development. It is a fundamental part of transparency. It can motivate internal policy changes and comprehensive research to stimulate internal and external policy choices. Allocating federal dollars for government sponsored research could make a difference in

understanding long-term effectiveness. However, more money is not necessarily a complete solution to gaps. According to experts on education research, this federal evaluation must contain elements measuring “substantial long-term benefits in educational achievement and attainments, employment, and social behavior” (Barnett and Hustedt 2005: 21). According to this research and essay, the only major consensus on the “Head Start Debate” is the need for a research model that is focused on effects in the long term. A systematic federally funded large-scale assessment program that follows participants from entrance into adulthood accounting for and documenting family dynamic, socioeconomic background, quality of schooling entered, academic achievements at various grade levels, employment after schooling, and criminal background is required. Future research must look at the costs, benefits, and the federally mandated requirements of Head Start as a complex social program.

**SECTION V – Conclusion**

**Implications of Research: Consensus and Gaps for Head Start Administrators**

In assessing implications of research gaps in the long run, it is important to look at the key questions plaguing policy makers and implementers. In this essay's analysis of literature and research several questions repeatedly arose:

- How can Head Start administration be reshaped to better address participant needs?
- Is it necessary to increase funding and other support to achieve the mandated Performance Standards compliance?
- Is it useful, even necessary, to re-examine or rewrite the federal administration structure, four main components, and the mission of Head Start to clarify goals for participants in the long-term?
- What are the best design models for Head Start research on long-term effectiveness and who should be responsible for conducting such studies?

Experts consistently identify these questions as unanswered. As long as they remain unanswered, Head Start will still be marked with limits and gaps. Considering these questions, evaluation methods must be improved to enhance the benefits of this public policy. Traditional preschool programs deemed of the highest quality in research included models with low student to teacher ratio, highly qualified teachers that are adequately paid for their services, a clear curricular founded in early learning principles, involved families, and early intervention (Bracey and Stellar 2003: 783). In order to maximize the quality and effectiveness of Head Start, administrators need to strive for conditions that are proven to provide for long-term effects in participants. This includes

adding new elements to the administration, like higher qualified teachers, and assessing current practices.

Increasingly sophisticated technologies and research designs allow us to better understand why “children’s outcomes vary so dramatically along race and class lines in America” and this concept is pivotal to the formulation of effective education policy (Jacob and Ludwig 2008: 1). Researchers are obligated to take advantage of new technology and data available to provide the most accurate and current data to policymakers. The future of research should include better models accounting for variables that are most likely to capture the long-term effectiveness of Head Start for participants in the future. The most important thing is to provide cost-effective quality care. Implications of research are not only of academic interest, but administrators of Head Start can use information to make useful choices in policy practices.

**Implications of Research: Consensus and Gaps for Obama Administration Officials**

Research can be useful to presidential administrations in deciding executive policies on programs like Head Start. President Barack Obama (Democrat, 2009-current) has been clear that early child care intervention and Head Start are top priorities of his administration. Throughout his campaign and in his first 100 days, Obama identified the importance of a preschool experience in a child’s life. With the release of the Fiscal Year 2010 budget, Obama has specified how he hopes to invest in the future of America’s children. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act I developed by the Obama administration and passed through Congress invested \$5 billion in growing Early Head Start and Head Start. On March 10, 2009, President Obama publicly identified this piece of legislation as expanding access “to quality child care for 150,000 more children from

working families, and doing more for children with special needs (Stout).” Table 4, below, outlines the Congressional appropriation and spending from the George W. Bush administration’s final fiscal budget on Head Start. These serve as the baseline to understand the magnitude of the new investments made by the Obama administration in relation to Head Start.

**Table 4 – Congressional Spending and Appropriation (Fiscal Year 2008)**

	<b>FY 2007 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2008 Appropriation</b>
<b><i>Local Head Start Projects:</i></b>		
Projects in States and Territories	\$6,178,848,856	\$6,169,256,494
American Indian-Alaska Native, and Migrant and Seasonal Programs	\$475,919,869	\$475,179,106
Subtotal	\$6,654,766,725	\$6,644,435,600
<b><i>Support Activities:</i></b>		
Training and Technical Assistance	\$175,214,000	\$174,949,400
Research, Demonstration and Evaluation	\$19,793,000	\$20,000,000
Monitoring/Program Review	\$38,590,000	\$38,590,000
Subtotal	\$233,597,000	\$233,539,400
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,888,363,725</b>	<b>\$6,877,975,000</b>

Source: U.S. Administration for Children and Families

President Obama’s 2010 Budget attempts to respond more fully to the problem of education equality in welfare intervention services in the U.S. It is important that the Obama administration develop a comprehensive strategy to establish federal Head Start research and make an investment in the quality of government programs. As shown in Appendix D, the President has issued statements outlining how the government can “make new investments in early childhood education” through fiscal discipline and

investing in programs deemed worthy (Office of Management and Budget 2009). Based on the assumption that early education programs broaden the reach of participants, fiscal investment in these programs can boost quality and delivery of services (Office of Management and Budget 2009). President Obama needs to consider the research on long-term effectiveness when investing the taxpayer dollars in a complex social program like Head Start. Also, if the administration's goal with regard to Head Start is creating a foundation of fiscal responsibility, than it is advantageous to base investments on federally funded research. Self-evaluation promotes accountability and transparency.

The 2010 Budget allocates a "\$122 million increase in Head Start funding, allowing the program to reach nearly 1 million children and continue to improve program quality" (Office of Management and Budget 2009). The research here supports the budget specification that a portion of the funding be marked for federal research on long-term effectiveness. Furthermore, if the administration claims that Head Start has been "proven to be successful with younger children," then funding should be specifically allocated for the development of research models sponsored by the federal government. Student achievement is a driving force behind the mission of Head Start. If the Obama administration seeks to "support innovation and effective strategies for improving" the educational achievement of students, than the budget must invest in continuing research to identify techniques in Head Start that have the greatest impact (Office of Management and Budget 2009). Through budget investment in "organizations with demonstrated track records of success in raising student achievement" the President can shape policy and emphasis on research development of innovative approaches to improve academic achievement for high-poverty families (Office of Management and Budget 2009).

The researchers cited in this essay agreed that it is appropriate for Head Start research to develop on the federal level. Through an increase in funding and investing in developing comprehensive evaluation methods, this complex social program can build a foundation of success. The purpose of this essay is to identify strengths in past research for the development of stronger future research. Developing a perfect model is not the goal, but rather creating a more complete data set that will enable more complete analysis in the long-term effectiveness of Head Start. Identifying participants at initial enrollment in Head Start and following their achievement through their life course can provide the basis for analysis in the long-term effectiveness of the program. Funding a federal national assessment of Head Start would be an effective medium for measuring the long-term effectiveness of this complex social program.

**Personal Policy Conclusions from a Public Policy Student Perspective**

This public policy essay was inspired by an internship with the Head Start Collaboration Office in Salem, Oregon. The final product of the essay comes after months of gathering background information, reading journal articles, and getting virtually buried with data and policy briefs on Head Start. One should not consider this public policy essay complete without a brief personal conclusion based on my efforts to better understand Head Start as a public policy and to assess ways to increase its long-term effectiveness. Drawing on my assessments and information detailed in the essay, I judge Head Start to have a positive impact on participants. However, the program can be more effective if the Administration for Children and Families takes a more creative and systematic role in providing comprehensive long-term follow-up for participants after they enter elementary education. I would advise the Obama administration to amend the

Performance Standards to require a more fully developed liaison system between Head Start and local school systems.

A major weakness in relation to Head Start's long-term effectiveness is the limited ability of elementary education to reinforce the gains provided by Head Start. Many Head Start children enter school systems that are ill prepared for their specific special needs as an impoverished population. A specific proposed goal is to create a formal mechanism of elementary school to encourage the continued success of Head Start participants. Children do not exist in isolation, but their development is highly influenced by the environment around them. Embracing this concept, I would advise that the federal government foster more effective and systematic connections between Head Start and local school districts. Rather than mandating that individual states or school districts comply with a set of rules to transition children, it would be most effective if the responsibility rests with each Head Start grantee to provide transitional assistance and follow-up to participants. It is premature to suggest in-depth structural details and funding implications. A starting point resides with the need to integrate more fully and systematically Head Start with public schools so that the benefits of the program can persist among its participants.

As was indicated in Box 2, Head Start grantees currently are required to uphold a set of domains and indicators of performance compliance. Federal grantee funding is based on upholding standards required for administration of Head Start programs, as these standards are detailed in the Performance Standards. By adding a third area of compliance, possibly called Transition and Follow-up, the program can begin to hold grantees more fully accountable for creating connections between Head Start and

elementary schools. This proposed program addition does not suggest full entrenchment of the Head Start school system, but rather provides a linking system between the two vitally important education components in the lives of Head Start children. This liaison is based on the recognition that Head Start administrations have a unique knowledge and perspective of the critical needs of program participants. Possible examples of Transition and Follow-up are: creating a mentor program for grade K-5, requiring home visits with parents including the elementary school teacher, after school/before school homework sessions, weekly visits with school nurse, etc. It is the job of school systems to provide a comprehensive education, and it is the job of Head Start grantees to be sure that participants maintain the gains to achieve an equal footing with their school peers.

This policy needs to systematically link school systems and Head Start programs. Drawing on all the Head Start research, there is a belief in education as a tool to break the cycle of poverty. Children are eligible for Head Start participation based on their family incomes in order to help overcome their disadvantage in relation to other children their age. These children, of course, had no control over the environment into which they were born. Head Start assumes that each participant deserves an equal opportunity in their preschool years and throughout their educational career. A core conclusion of the research is that Head Start is incomplete and its long-term effectiveness is vulnerable without more fully developed transitional programs between Head Start and elementary schools.

APPENDIX

Appendix A – Head Start Performance Standards (Table of Contents)

HEAD START PROGRAM REGULATIONS AND PROGRAM GUIDANCE FOR PARTS 1304 AND 1308

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**HEAD START PROGRAM REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE  
FOR PARTS 1304 AND 1308**

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**Appendix B – Head Start Performance Standards (Introduction)****INTRODUCTION**

Head Start and Early Head Start<sup>1</sup> are comprehensive child development programs which serve children from birth to age 5, pregnant women, and their families. They are child-focused programs, and have the overall goal of increasing the social competence of young children in low-income families. By “social competence” is meant the child’s everyday effectiveness in dealing with both his or her present environment and later responsibilities in school and life. Social competence takes into account the interrelatedness of social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development.

Head Start services are also family-centered, following the tenets that children develop in the context of their family and culture and that parents are respected as the primary educators and nurturers of their children. Head Start offers family members with opportunities and support for growth and change, believing that people can identify their own strengths, needs, and interests and are capable of finding solutions.

To support the overall goal of improving social competence, Head Start embraces a core set of values, including commitments to:

- Establish a supportive learning environment for children, parents, and staff, in which the processes of enhancing awareness, refining skills, and increasing understanding are valued and promoted;
- Recognize that the members of the Head Start community — children, families, and staff — have roots in many cultures. Head Start families and staff, working together as a team, can effectively promote respectful, sensitive, and proactive approaches to diversity issues;
- Understand that the empowerment of families occurs when program governance is a responsibility shared by families, governing bodies, and staff, and when the ideas and opinions of families are heard and respected;
- Embrace a comprehensive vision of health for children, families, and staff, which assures that basic health needs are met, encourages practices that prevent future illnesses and injuries, and promotes positive, culturally relevant health behaviors that enhance life-long well-being;
- Respect the importance of all aspects of an individual’s development, including social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth;
- Build a community in which each child and adult is treated as an individual while, at the same time, a sense of belonging to the group is reinforced;
- Foster relationships with the larger community, so that families and staff are respected and served by a network of community agencies in partnership with one another; and
- Develop a continuum of care, education, and services that allow stable, uninterrupted support to families and children during and after their Head Start experience.

The Head Start program has a long tradition of delivering comprehensive and high quality services designed to foster healthy development in low-income children. Head Start grantee and delegate agencies provide a range of individualized services in the areas of education and early childhood development, medical, dental, and mental health, nutrition, and parent involvement. In addition, the entire range of Head Start services is responsive and appropriate to each child and family’s developmental, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage and experience.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the Guidance, “Head Start” is used to include both the Early Head Start and Head Start programs.

Head Start fosters the role of parents as the primary educators and nurturers, of and advocates for, their children. Therefore, local Head Start programs work in close partnership with parents to assist them in developing and utilizing individual and family strengths in order to successfully meet personal and family objectives. Parents are encouraged to become involved in all aspects of the program, from participation in children's activities to direct involvement in policy and program decisions.

Head Start is committed to cultivating partnerships within the community. Through the establishment of meaningful links with community organizations and programs focused upon early childhood development, family support, health, and education, each Head Start agency ensures that children and families receive an array of individualized services, and that community resources are used in an efficient and effective manner.

Head Start strives for excellence in program management that supports the provision of quality services for children and families. Policy groups, representative of Head Start parents and the larger community, and strong governing bodies play a critical role in overseeing the implementation of Head Start legislation, regulations, and policies. To achieve national excellence, local agencies are required to establish effective systems and procedures for program, financial, and human resources management. Additionally, a strong focus on staff training and development helps to ensure that children and families are served by individuals with the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to provide high quality, comprehensive services.

The *Head Start Program Performance Standards* are designed to ensure that the Head Start goals and objectives are implemented successfully, that the Head Start philosophy continues to thrive, and that all grantee and delegate agencies maintain the highest possible quality in the provision of Head Start services. To assist agencies in their implementation of the standards, the Head Start Program Performance Standards (45 CFR Part 1304) are presented in this document, along with Guidance materials that illustrate some of the ways the standards could be implemented. Because Head Start services for children with disabilities are fully integrated into all areas of program services, the Head Start Program Performance Standards for Children with Disabilities (45 CFR Part 1308) are reissued in this document. To assist the reader in understanding all aspects of this comprehensive services program, this document also includes other applicable Head Start regulations (45 CFR Parts 1301, 1302, 1303, 1305, and 1306), a selected reference list, and an index.

### ***How to Use This Publication***

Those sections of the regulations with Guidance materials (Subparts B-D of Part 1304 and Subparts B-G of Part 1308) are presented in a two-column format. The standards represented in the left-hand column constitute Head Start regulations regarding program operations and activities with which all grantee and delegate agencies are required to comply. They were first published in the *Federal Register* on November 5, 1996 (Part 1304) and January 21, 1993 (Part 1308).

**Standards:** The *Head Start Program Performance Standards* are the mandatory regulations that grantees and delegate agencies must implement in order to operate a Head Start program. The standards define the objectives and features of a quality Head Start program in concrete terms; they articulate a vision of service delivery to young children and families; and they provide a regulatory structure for the monitoring and enforcement of quality standards.

Because of the critical nature and comprehensive scope of the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*, it is important for grantee and delegate agencies to provide staff members and parents with ongoing training on the standards and on ways to implement them locally. Staff and parents may, for example, be provided with an orientation to this publication, as well as training related to each section. In addition to training staff, agencies are to provide appropriate training to members

of Policy Committees and Policy Councils, as well as to other parents, members of governing bodies, and community partners.

The right-hand column of the section of the regulations with Guidance for Part 1304 contains four parts: an Introduction, a Rationale, Related Information, and Guidance.

**Introduction:** Each of the eleven sections of the *Head Start Program Performance Standards* in Part 1304 begins with an introductory statement summarizing the philosophy behind the section and the contents of the standards.

**Rationale:** The rationale statements explain *why* a Program Performance Standard is important.

**Related Information:** Related information provides cross-references to other standards and Guidance materials critical to implementing the standard represented in the left-hand column. References to other Head Start regulations and policy requirements outside the Program Performance Standards, as well as information about other Federal laws, also are listed under this heading. *In looking at related information, one needs to look at both the standard and the accompanying guidance.*

The number of cross-references highlights the way in which the *Head Start Program Performance Standards* are restructured to support an integrated approach to service delivery. No section of the Performance Standards and Guidance can be understood or implemented in isolation from the other sections.

**Guidance:** The Guidance provides examples or illustrations of *how* the standards could be implemented. Just as local Head Start programs are expected to honor the background and experience of all of the children and families served, the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF) recognizes the uniqueness of each local program and the community within which it operates. Therefore, local programs are encouraged to develop approaches appropriate to their own communities — approaches that best meet the needs of the children and families served. These approaches may build upon the Guidance or differ from it.

Rather than being mandatory, as the standards are, the guidance represents *illustrations* of ways agencies *may* operationalize the standards. These illustrations are not the only ways to implement the standards, but are meant to stimulate the thinking of staff and parents about how the standards might be operationalized in their own program.

## Appendix C – Head Start Performance Standards (Examples)

## Education and Early Childhood Development

## Performance Standard

## 1304.21(a)(1)(i)

(a) Child development and education approach for all children.

(1) In order to help children gain the skills and confidence necessary to be prepared to succeed in their present environment and with later responsibilities in school and life, grantee and delegate agencies' approach to child development and education must:

(i) Be developmentally and linguistically appropriate, recognizing that children have individual rates of development as well as individual interests, temperaments, languages, cultural backgrounds, and learning styles;

**Rationale:** Abilities, interests, temperaments, developmental rates, and learning styles vary among children. The program environment, therefore, is arranged to accommodate a variety of children's needs and strengths, and to stimulate learning across all domains of development: social, emotional, cognitive, and physical.

**Related Information:** See 45 CFR 1304.3(a)(7) for a definition of "developmentally appropriate"; for information on providing an environment of acceptance, see 45 CFR 1304.21(a)(1)(iii); and for information related to equipment, toys, materials, and furniture, see 45 CFR 1304.53(b). For further home-based guidance, see the *Head Start Home Visitors Handbook*. See 45 CFR 1304.40(e) for a description of parent involvement in child development and education.

**Guidance:** Program responsiveness to individual children is accomplished through comprehensive curriculum and by providing various materials, activities, and experiences that support a broad range of children's prior experiences, maturation rates, styles of learning, needs, cultures, and interests. Adults respect diversity among children by being responsive to children's cues — being especially sensitive to the development of growing infants and toddlers, and the need to design activities reflective of the observed stages and interests of children. Toward that end, the following strategies are useful:

- Supply a variety of materials and planned activities designed to encourage individual and group play;
- Provide continuous opportunities for children of all ages and abilities to experience success;
- Increase the complexity and challenge of activities, as children develop;
- Use a variety of materials found in the home when conducting home visits; and
- Observe children carefully to identify their preferred ways of interacting with the environment, taking into account their
  - skills in handling objects and materials,
  - frequency of conversation,
  - interest in listening to stories and songs, and
  - choices to work alone or with others.

### Child Health and Safety

#### Performance Standard 1304.22(b)(3)

(3) Grantee and delegate agencies must request that parents inform them of any health or safety needs of the child that the program may be required to address. Programs must share information, as necessary, with appropriate staff regarding accommodations needed in accordance with the program's confidentiality policy.

Providing the support necessary to promote, improve, and deliver the above services means collaborating with agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the State Children with Special Health Needs (CSHN) agency, and State, Tribal, and local health departments.

**Rationale:** This requirement will prepare the staff to provide better care for the child and to help protect the health of other children and staff, and it will facilitate the appropriate and prompt reporting of diseases.

**Related Information:** See 45 CFR 1304.40(f)(2)(iii) for information on providing parents with the opportunity to learn principles of preventive medical and dental health. Also, see 45 CFR 1304.52(h)(1)(ii) for information on following the program's confidentiality policy.

**Guidance:** Staff and parents share responsibility for the health of all children. Agencies implement an ongoing process to ensure that parents have opportunities to inform staff of accommodations their child may require, such as those due to a child's chronic illness or condition. Staff offer such opportunities during enrollment and throughout the year as a child's health needs arise. Plans to accommodate a child's health or safety needs are in place before services to a child begin or as soon as possible after the need is identified.

Parents are reassured that disclosing such information is voluntary and that parents only need to share sufficient information to accommodate the child. Agencies ensure that there is a process to share information among staff on a need-to-know basis and that all staff and parents understand the agency's confidentiality policy.

#### Performance Standard 1304.22(c)

##### (c) Medication administration.

Grantee and delegate agencies must establish and maintain written procedures regarding the administration, handling, and storage of medication for every child. Grantee and delegate agencies may modify these procedures as necessary to satisfy State or Tribal laws, but only where such laws are consistent with Federal laws. The procedures must include:

**Rationale:** The proper storage of medication and its administration by designated staff, following the written authorization of the child's physician and parents, safeguard the health of children, staff, and families. *This rationale serves 45 CFR 1304.22(1)-(3).*

**Guidance:** The Health Services Advisory Committee assists in developing procedures for the administration, handling, and storage of medication. In developing such procedures, it is important to encourage communication with parents, to be aware of any individual or community health considerations, and to be cognizant of State policies. For example, if applicable, medication administration procedures should be outlined in an individualized plan for the child. In the home-based option, parents administer medications to their children.

**Child Mental Health**

- encouraging respect for the feelings and rights of others.

Positive techniques are more effective than competition, comparison, or criticism. Rather than attempting to “stop” a child’s negative behavior, positive techniques help him or her to find and practice skills that will help now and in the future. It is for that reason that Head Start programs never use corporal punishment. Staff work with parents to help them understand the negative effects of corporal punishment on self-esteem, and to find alternatives in the home.

There are many differences of opinion about parenting, and there is no single “best way” to parent. It is important, however, that children receive consistent messages that are respectful of the child and of family values, customs, and traditions.

**Performance Standard****1304.24(a)(1)(iv)**

(iv) Discussing how to strengthen nurturing, supportive environments and relationships in the home and at the program;

**Related Information:** See 45 CFR 1304.21, Education and Early Child Development, and, in particular, standards (a)(1)(iii), (a)(3)(i)(A), (a)(3)(i)(D), (b)(1)(ii), (b)(2)(i), (c)(1)(iv), and (c)(1)(v), for additional information on supportive environments and nurturing relationships.

**Guidance:** When interacting with children, adults support the development of trust, self-esteem, and identity by expressing respect and affection toward the child and by demonstrating responsiveness to his or her experiences, ideas, and feelings. Examples of respectful and responsive behaviors, which depend upon the developmental level of the child, include:

- Smiling at the child;
- Quickly comforting an infant in distress; and
- Nodding at a toddler in need of reassurance.

Establishing a supportive environment also involves assisting children to become comfortable, relaxed, happy, and involved in play and other activities. Staff and parents help children deal with anger, sadness, and frustration by comforting them, identifying and reflecting on their feelings, and helping them to use words, instead of acts of anger, to solve problems and disputes.

Positive social behavior among children, such as cooperation, is fostered by adults through modeling, coaching, and encouraging, rather than through lecturing, criticism, and punishment.

**Management Systems and Procedures**

**1304.51**

**Management Systems and Procedures**

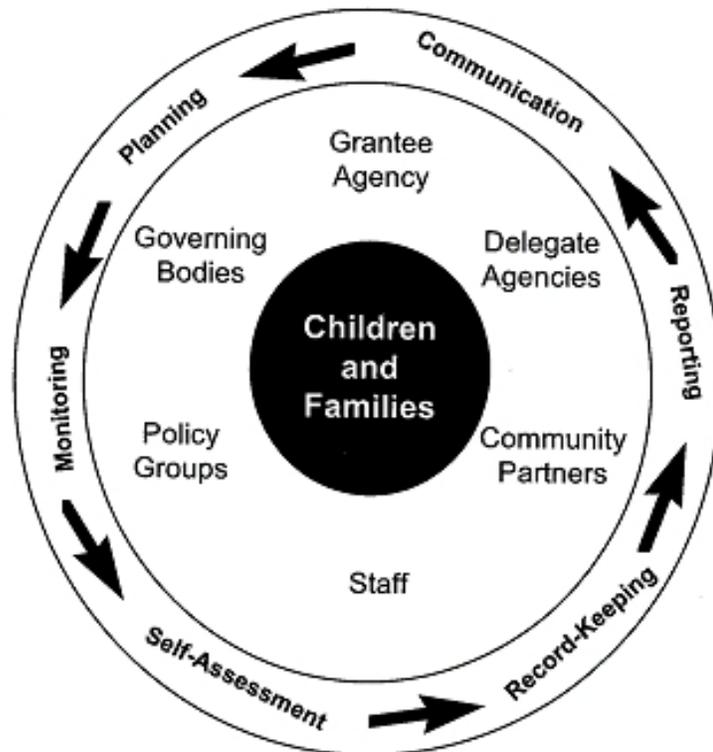
- (a) Program Planning
- (b) Communications - General
- (c) Communication with Families
- (d) Communication with Governing Bodies and Policy Groups
- (e) Communication Among Staff
- (f) Communication with Delegate Agencies
- (g) Record-keeping Systems
- (h) Reporting Systems
- (i) Program Self-Assessment and Monitoring

**INTRODUCTION TO 1304.51**

The objective of 45 CFR 1304.51 is to establish dynamic and cohesive management systems that support continuous improvement and foster commitment to providing the highest level of services to children and families in accordance with legislation, regulations, and policies.

Management systems and procedures are part of each program's on-going and organized approach to managing Head Start services. They are all connected and inter-related with each impacted by the others and all influencing and influenced by program services. The graphic below is intended to convey this message. With all of these systems, the emphasis is as much on the process involved in their implementation as it is on the product that may come from implementation.

The standards in this section are written to allow grantees great flexibility in designing the approach that will work best in their program and community. Through designing and implementing effective systems for program planning, communication, record-keeping, reporting, and program self-assessment and monitoring, each Head Start program has greater ability to integrate the various functions of Head Start and provide high quality services to children and families.



## Facilities, Materials, and Equipment

## 1304.53

## Facilities, Materials, and Equipment

## (a) Head Start Physical Environment and Facilities

## (b) Head Start Equipment, Toys, Materials, and Furniture

Performance Standard  
1304.53(a)(1)

## (a) Head Start physical environment and facilities.

(1) Grantee and delegate agencies must provide a physical environment and facilities conducive to learning and reflective of the different stages of development of each child.

## INTRODUCTION TO 1304.53

The objective of 45 CFR 1304.53 is to ensure that Head Start's physical environment supports the delivery of high quality services to all children and families. Facilities, materials, and equipment are selected and maintained to create a learning environment that is safe, accessible, welcoming, comfortable, age-appropriate, culturally sensitive, and in keeping with the individual needs of children and families and the particular features of local programs and communities. Thus, the requirements in this section are closely allied with those in 1304.21, Education and Early Childhood Development.

These standards are the requirements for the Head Start physical environment and the equipment, toys, materials, and furniture that support programming for the ages and individual needs of children served. Many of the requirements in this section also are cited in State, Tribal, or local regulations. It is expected that whichever regulations are more stringent will be met.

**Rationale:** A well-designed environment within appropriate facilities supports each child's physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development. Proper attention paid to the issues of safety and sanitation protects children's health and keeps them free from injury. Proper organization of the space ensures that the full range of program activities can take place with high quality interactions between children and staff. Making facilities welcoming, accessible, comfortable and safe for children, families, and staff, including those with disabilities, ensures their full participation in Head Start. *This rationale serves 45 CFR 1304.53(a)(1)-(10)*

**Related Information:** See the *Head Start Facilities Manual* for suggestions about designing a well-organized indoor and outdoor environment. Also see 45 CFR 1304.21(a)(5) for a description of the facility and equipment requirements that support the child development and education program.

**Guidance:** Developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor environments are safe, clean, attractive, and spacious. Appropriate indoor environments for children include:

- floor coverings and soft elements, such as rugs and cushions,
- an open area on the floor for the safe movement of infants and toddlers,
- identifiable areas for different activities and materials, such as blocks, art, books, and dramatic play. These areas allow children to be alone, although supervised, and to engage in individual or group activities, and
- low, open shelves to allow children to see and to select their own materials.

## Appendix D – Policy Implications from Obama Administration

OFFICE OF  
MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET**President Obama's Fiscal 2010 Budget****Giving Every Child A World-Class Education**

The President's 2010 Budget seeks to usher in a new era of responsibility – an era in which we not only do what we must to save and create new jobs and lift our economy out of recession, but in which we also lay a new foundation for long-term growth and prosperity. To do this, the Nation must address some of the deep, systemic problems that have been ignored for too long by making critical investments in: education so that every child can compete in the global economy, health care reform so that we can control costs while boosting coverage and quality, and renewable sources of energy so that we can reduce our dependence on foreign oil and become the world leader in the new clean energy economy.

At the same time, we also must restore fiscal discipline, making sure that we invest in what works and do not waste taxpayer dollars on programs that do not work or are duplicative. Taken together – education, health care, clean energy, and fiscal discipline – are the pillars upon which we can build a new foundation for our economy, a foundation that bring opportunity and growth to all Americans for decades to come. The budget will:

**Make a new investment in early childhood education.** We know that a dollar invested in early education will pay off handsomely as these children grow older. That is why the Administration is proposing to help states strengthen their early education programs by broadening the reach of these programs and boosting their quality; and encouraging new investment, a seamless delivery of services, and better information for parents about program options and quality. In keeping with the commitment, the budget provides a \$122 million increase in Head Start funding, allowing the program to reach nearly 1 million children and continue to improve program quality. In addition, through funds from the Recovery Act and this budget, the President will provide funding nearly to double the number of children served by Early Head Start and to expand Head Start, both of which have proven to be successful with younger children. The budget also includes \$300 million for an Early Learning Challenge Fund to provide a bridge between the Recovery Act's historic increases for early childhood education programs and the significant federal investment planned for future years. The new fund will help states create comprehensive zero-to-five systems that prepare children for kindergarten and beyond.

**Help new parents and newborns with a home visitation program.** The President's budget proposes \$8.5 billion in mandatory funds over 10 years for a new home visitation

program that provides funds to states for evidence-based home visitation programs for low-income families. The program will provide states with funding primarily to support home visitation models that have been rigorously evaluated and shown to have positive effects on critical outcomes for children and families. Additional funds will be available for promising programs based on models with experimental or quasi-experimental research evidence of effectiveness that will be rigorously tested to assess their impact. Home visitation is an investment that can yield substantial improvements in child health and development, readiness for school, and parenting abilities to support children's optimal cognitive, language, social-emotional, and physical development and reductions in child abuse and neglect.

**Support high standards and rigorous assessments aligned with the demands of the global economy.** Students need to meet high standards, and tests need to measure the full range of skills that children must learn. Building on investments made through the Recovery Act, the Administration will help states strengthen their standards so they are rigorous and reflect readiness for success in college and a career. Resources will also be available to improve the quality of assessments, including assessments for students with disabilities and English language learners.

**Prepare and reward effective teachers and principals.** Almost all successful students can remember a teacher who had an outsized impact on their education. The budget builds on the investments funded under the Recovery Act designed to significantly upgrade the skills and effectiveness of the education workforce. The Administration will invest in efforts to strengthen and increase transparency around results for teacher and principal preparation programs, including programs in schools of education, alternative certification programs, and teacher and principal residency programs. By quintupling the Teacher Incentive Fund, the budget provides a \$487 million investment in state and local efforts, developed in consultation with teachers and other stakeholders, to implement systems that reward strong teacher performance and help less effective teachers improve or, if they do not, exit the classroom. The budget also provides a \$10 million increase to the School Leadership program, to expand efforts to recruit, train, and retain principals and assistant principals in high-need school districts.

**Increase support for effective charter schools.** The President's budget will promote successful models of school reform by taking the first major step to fulfilling its commitment to double support for charter schools. The budget increases funding by nearly 25 percent or \$52 million from 2009. This expanded support will enable the Department of Education to help create new, high-quality charter schools, ensure that states properly monitor and support these schools, and, in the case of chronic underperformance, close existing charter schools.

**Support innovative and effective strategies to improve student achievement.** The budget invests in school systems and non-profit organizations with demonstrated track records of success in raising student achievement to expand their work or implement new innovative approaches through the What Works and Innovation Fund. The President's plan supports "Promise Neighborhoods," a new effort to test innovative strategies to

improve academic achievement and life outcomes in high-poverty areas modeled after the Harlem Children's Zone. The budget provides \$10 million for competitive grants to nonprofit, community-based organizations for the development of comprehensive neighborhood programs designed to combat the effects of poverty and improve educational and life outcomes for children.

**Expand service-learning in the nation's schools.** Service learning is an approach that connects classroom lessons with meaningful community service opportunities. The budget includes additional resources for Learn and Serve America, which supports programs in schools, higher education institutions and community-based organizations that engage students, their teachers, and others in service-learning.

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