PLAYING NICE IN THE SANDBOX:
Collaboration and Subsidized Early Care and Education Programs

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Abstract

Given the current policy goals of providing high quality care for low-income working families, and the costs associated with that, agency collaboration has become an increasingly salient feature of the SECE system. In this paper we examine how the three major subsidized early care and education programs (SECE) in Chicago collaborate to meet the diverse needs of low-income children and families. Based on an in-depth literature review and semi-structured interviews with state and local stakeholders, we find that collaboration in the SECE system happens often, despite different program eligibility criteria, guidelines, performance expectations, perspectives on quality measures, and mechanisms for monitoring. However, the extent to which collaboration occurs is not well understood. This lack of understanding has implications for how we interpret the impacts of the early care and education programs supported by public funding. For the most part, research treats programs as individual funding streams without reference to the fact that the agencies governing the supply of those programs often collaborate. The lack of attention to the existence of collaborations of SECE programs renders neither an accurate picture of the universe of children's early care and education experiences nor an accurate picture of these experiences on their development.

1. Introduction

"[Y]ou can't climb the ladder of opportunity if the first rung is missing…. It's our job to take the wide range of programs that families depend on and shape them into a seamless, high quality early learning and development system where every family can choose the program that works best for them and no family has to compromise on quality."

~U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary, Kathleen Sebelius,
EC 2010: Innovation for the Next Generation Conference, August 2010

"Education is the one true path out of poverty for disadvantaged children…. One program, one organization, one federal department working alone can never be enough to address the multiple needs of children, families, and communities. We have to work together over a sustained period, from birth to grade 3 and beyond."

~U.S. Department of Education Secretary, Arne Duncan
EC 2010: Innovation for the Next Generation Conference, August 2010

Low-income children in the United States currently have available a wide range of early care and education programs during the first 5 years of their lives, ranging from child care homes to center or school based care. In 2011 62 percent of children less than 5 years old from families with incomes below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level were enrolled in some form of non-parental, subsidized early care and education (SECE) program (Laughlin, 2010). There is a long-standing concern among policy-makers about the variations in quality of children's early childhood experiences, especially among low-income children. A large body of research suggests a link between the quality of non-parental care and children's developmental outcomes. We are also increasing our knowledge of the critical components of quality—both structural (e.g., staff education and adult-child ratios) and dynamic (e.g., teacher-child interactions). Participation of low-income children in high quality SECE programs has been found to be associated with better cognitive and socio-emotional skills, increased parental engagement and, in the long term, has also been linked to higher scores in achievement test, higher rates of high school graduation, and reduced involvement in the welfare and criminal justice systems (Barnett, Lamy, & Jung, 2005; Burchinal, Roberts, Riggins, et al., 2000; Gormley, 2007; Gormley, Gayer, Phillips, & Dawson, 2005; Heckman, 2006; Reynolds, Ou & Topitzes, 2004; Schweinhardt, Martie, Xiang, Barnett, Belfield & Nores, 2005). However, it is also evident that low-income children are more likely to experience less than optimal early care and education than their middle-class peers (Gormley, 2007).[1]

Involvement of public agencies in the domain of SECE has been growing at federal, state and local levels since the 1960s when Head Start was created. The passage of the Personal

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[1] Despite the increase in the availability of publicly-supported early childhood programs over the past decade, especially at the state level, there is general concern that the amount of funding allocated to these programs is not sufficient to provide the quality or quality of early education that children need. Low wages and lack of benefits continue to make it difficult for providers to retain qualified staff; typical qualifications of early childhood staff in community-based child-care centers (as opposed to public schools) (Herzenberg, Price, & Bradley, 2005). A recent NIEER report (Barnett, Carolan, Fitzgerald & Squires, 2012) indicates cut-backs in the availability of state funded pre-K programs in Illinois and many other states during the past 2 years and further notes that after a decade of growth, not only has enrollment in state pre-K stagnated but state funding per child fell on average to $3,841 — well below the $5,020 (inflation-adjusted) national average in 2001-2002—and even lower, to $3210, in Illinois.

Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 (PRWORA; also known as 'welfare reform') was a turning point in public involvement in early care and education in that it substantially modified the landscape of SECE programs available to low-income families. Welfare reform was followed by an increase in the number and types of SECE programs, and a reorientation of objectives towards providing support for the employment efforts of parents and ensuring high quality care and learning experiences for children. The current scope and complexity of those objectives, coupled with the limited resources of agencies and providers, has resulted in multiple forms of collaboration, most prominently the combination of funding streams by providers of early care and education services.

These patterns of collaboration have increased the heterogeneity of SECE programs. On the one hand, this heterogeneity is considered by many to be a positive feature of the early care and education system because it offers more provider-level options for families with different needs, values, and preferences (e.g., Halpern 2013). At the same time, programs supported by different funding streams come with different policies, rules, and eligibility criteria, different expectations for program quality, and different goals for child development. Thus, in the view of other observers, the early childhood system remains a "patchwork" of discrete, not well-coordinated programs (e.g., Barnett, Belfield, Murdock, Cline, & Zey 2012; Raden & McCabe 2004).

This paper presents preliminary findings from an exploratory study of how agencies and providers currently collaborate and ultimately shape the landscape of programs that characterize SECE services for low-income children. Our goal is to describe how interactions across agencies that govern the supply of SECE programs shape and define collaborative forms of care in the current provision of SECE services. Understanding collaboration in the SECE system is important because the way providers select programs and are, in turn, accountable to the governing agencies associated with each program has changed dramatically since welfare reform. Today, low-income children have available multiple programs, both contemporaneously and at different stages throughout early childhood. These combinations of programs imply experiences that are characterized by a multiplicity of rules, practices and policies that providers implement as the result of utilizing multiple funding streams. These combinations, we will demonstrate, are far more complex than currently reflected in academic efforts to characterize SECE services to which low-income children are exposed.[2] Multiple forms of collaboration across agencies have resulted in SECE programs that are currently not appropriately defined, relationships between the organizations that are poorly understood and a SECE system that is often mischaracterized. We maintain that this lack of knowledge perpetuates a "black box" of operational practice that must be better understood in order to design better policies that affect the lives of low-income children and their families. [3]

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[2] Thomas, Fowler, Cesarone & Rothenberg (2011) report that while "some preschool-age children may be enrolled in both of these programs…[it is] a small percentage of 3-and 4-year-olds [who] may participate in Head Start programs that receive PFA funding and embed the PFA program with certified teachers into part of the day. Other children may attend a PFA-funded program in the morning and a Head Start program in the afternoon". These authors recognize that "data are not readily available on the percentage of children who attend both programs".

[3] Since we know little about how collaboration across SECE programs occurs in practice (i.e. how funding streams are combined and how that affects the provision of early care and education services), we often risk incurring in misclassification errors when identifying the type of SECE programs in which children are enrolled.

In order to fulfill the aforementioned goal, we first develop a conceptual framework that defines analytical constructs and later propose a unified model from which we will study the institutional infrastructure that governs the SECE system. This framework, we claim, allows for better understanding of the nature of SECE programs as they result from collaborative efforts across agencies and stakeholders. This conceptual model will shape our analysis of the history and evolution of collaborative interactions across agencies and providers resulting from policy changes, which characterize the way SECE programs presently collaborate.

Our analysis will focus on collaborations across SECE agencies and providers in Illinois, with particular attention to the city of Chicago as a case study. We will summarize the key policy changes underlying the evolution of the SECE system in this city during the last 20 years, focusing on describing the main patterns of collaboration that, during that period of time, have emerged across the three main publicly-funded SECE programs in the United States—Head Start, the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)[4], and state-funded pre-Kindergarten (pre-K). We will also provide an in-depth analysis of current examples of SECE collaboration—and challenges to collaboration—across SECE providers in the city of Chicago. The latter description will be based on analysis of content from qualitative interviews held by the research team with key stakeholders.

We recognize that Chicago's SECE system differs from that of many large urban areas. We take note that Chicago's SECE system is extremely complex as it is characterized by numerous interactions across multiple public and private agencies with objectives that both overlap and conflict. Second, we understand that the variety of SECE programs in the city of Chicago nearly exhausts the range of potential forms for collaboration across agencies. We suggest, however, that understanding the unique features of this SECE system will provide insights that generalize to a variety of contexts. Understanding the salient features of the interactions that occur in Chicago, for example, illustrates larger patterns of how all the SECE systems work and can be generalized to highlight processes that occur in other SECE systems, even in cases where the nature of transactions across agencies is less complex. The final reason that we have selected a city and state, with a long history of collaboration (Spielberger, Gitlow, Winje, Harden & Banman, 2012), is that longitudinal, administrative data on the school outcomes of Chicago children who experience different SECE programs during their preschool years is already available from and has formed the basis of previous analysis of the effects of SECE collaboration on child outcomes (Zanoni, 2012). However, the extent to which low-income children are supported by a combination of the state's Preschool for All (PFA), Head Start, and/or Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) funds in order to be in full-day services is largely unknown (Thomas et al., 2011).

Our contribution to the literature on SECE programs is twofold. First, we offer a conceptual framework. Second, we present a thorough description of a very relevant case-study. By combining the analytical insights that our model proposes and the richness in empirical validity of our case study, researchers can be better positioned to understand and analyze how interactions across agencies that govern the supply of SECE programs shape and define collaborations that distinguish the current provision of SECE services**.**

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[4] CCDF was formally the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and is sometimes still referenced by this name.

This paper proceeds as follows: We begin in the next section with a description of a conceptual framework for looking at collaborations in the SECE system and then describe the methods of inquiry for the study. Next we present findings, based largely on a literature review, of the current landscape and recent history of the three primary SECE programs as they exist at the federal and state levels. We then examine the models and types of collaboration that are found in Chicago's SECE system relying heavily on in semi-structured interviews with state and local level early childhood administrators and advocates. In the section that follows, we discuss emerging findings related to the complexity of the SECE system, challenges to be addressed, and the need for innovative and strategic thinking. In the final section, we offer conclusions and discuss the implications of our findings for research and policy.

2. Methods and Conceptual Framework

2.1 A Conceptual Approach to Understanding SECE Programs

As a general definition, a system is "a group of interacting, interrelated, and interdependent components that form a complex and unified whole" (Coffman, 2007). Our review and analysis of the literature and key informant interviews challenged some of our original conceptualizations of the SECE system. Indeed, our research led us to conclude that current definitions and use by researchers and policy makers of the terms *programs, providers and agencies* are often confused and do not clearly differentiate appropriate units of analysis or capture the nature of SECE systems as they exist in practice. This led us to develop a conceptual framework, described below. We examine the various elements that make up the SECE system —governance, funding, standards and assessment, workforce development, monitoring and communications structures— through the lens of this framework. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model that we will use to study the SECE system.

The figure includes at the top a trapezoid labeled *"Agencies,"* which represents all organizations that define, fund and govern SECE programs. The term agency implies the existence of governance structures, created by policy, that define the system of incentives in which interactions both within individual organizations as well as across multiple organizations take place. Agencies are organizations that exist at different levels of government (i.e., federal, state, and local). Borrowing concepts from industrial organization and contracts theory, our agencies can be understood as "agents" that are bound to act in the best interest of one or multiple "principals" (e.g., policy makers and/or shareholders, if private).[5] Agencies, following these theories, are rewarded on the basis of how well they fulfill the demands of their stakeholders. Agencies can, however, deviate from the principal's objective when they have more information about what constitutes an optimal level of performance, consequently shaping the characteristics of the SECE programs.

The priorities set by distinct agencies are often disparate in nature. Collaboration across multiple agencies (or lack of it) can only occur when objectives across agencies overlap significantly (or do not) Policies can induce coordination of objectives across agencies (at the same or different levels of government) making the goals overlap. Interactions within and across

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[5] The principal-agent theory is widely used in economics, industrial organization and political science. The basic feature it highlights is that of asymmetric information between an agent (who performs a task under contract) and a principal (who contracts the principal to conduct a task on her behalf). Usually agents have more information about what constitutes an optimal level of effort, leading to adverse selection and moral hazard problems. Foundations of this literature are in Akerlof (1970) and Spence (1973).

agencies define a set of rules, practices and accountability mechanisms, which, along with funding, delineate the specific attributes of SECE programs.

The two rounded figures in the graph indicate that SECE programs are defined by funding and rules. More explicitly, in our framework, SECE programs are a set of rules of operation and accountability mechanisms that are imposed upon SECE providers and condition funding. [6] *Funding is available to providers but is conditional on following the programmatic rules that characterize a SECE program.* With low-income parents balancing their need to work and their preferences for childcare quality, agencies implement programs to emphasize one or both aspects of this dual purpose. Consequently, all SECE programs affect the costs associated with both parental employment and investment in human capital of children. This duality condition is an intrinsic feature of all SECE programs, which, as we will document later in the document, can lead to tensions in collaborations.

SECE providers are represented by another trapezoid at the bottom of the figure. Like the agencies we just described, providers are also conceived as organizations. In the relationship between providers and agencies there are also inherent principal-agent problems, as agencies incur "agency costs" that result from costly monitoring and enforcement of the provider's adherence to rules, standards and practices as delineated by the conditions of funding (e.g., adherence to program content, participation in a Quality Rating and Improvement System [QRIS], performance and licensing rules). One key aspect of the relationship between SECE providers and agencies is observed in agencies' efforts to brand the services that providers offer to families (i.e. assigning identifiable labels such as Head Start, Pre-K, etc.) or in agencies' efforts to recruit providers into "voluntary" QRIS systems that rank them according to a quality of care scale. Both actions aim at reducing information costs that parents face in evaluating the quality of the services that SECE providers render.[7] Accountability systems, defined here as operational rules within a SECE program and their corresponding enforcement mechanisms, impose alternative costs structures on the providers. These cost structures shape the practices that providers engage in as well as the quality of the care provided.

In order to illustrate the use of concepts in this framework, we use the following example. At the federal level, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is an agency in charge of two programs: Head Start and the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). Each program is managed by different offices, or agencies as defined by our framework. The Head Start and CCDF programs have historically differed in objectives, as Head Start was conceived as an anti-poverty and comprehensive child-development program, and CCDF as an employment support program for parents. Public officials in the Head Start and CCDF offices are accountable to their main objectives. ACF faces an implicit political economy problem in how to make compatible apparently disparate objective functions, most prominently, how to align objectives across agencies in the provision of a unified service. Over time, different administrations have emphasized different approaches in aligning those objectives to enable collaboration across the agencies in order to provide comprehensive programs that unify funding. Although Head Start has little influence on states in shaping policy, CCDF funds are designed to be managed by

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[6] For instance, Head Start programs in Illinois set rules and enforcement mechanisms to regulate Program Design and Management, Early Childhood Development, Health, and Family and Community Partnerships.
[7] Parental choice of SECE providers is often made with limited information about quality. For instance, Mocan (2007) highlights that parental evaluation of the quality attributes of childcare centers are often misguided when compared to objective measures that asses such quality.

offices in the states and administered at the local level by resource and referral agencies. States have the flexibility to extend funding and tailor the CCDF program rules to fit the needs of their populations.

In Illinois, the relationship between the Head Start and CCDF programs is mediated by intermediate offices and advisory boards, such as the Early Leaning Council, the Head Start State Collaboration Office, Illinois Department of Human Services Bureau of Child Care and Development, and the Region V ACF Office. Thus, a hypothetical provider utilizing Head Start and CCDF funding is bound by the rules of multiple agencies at different levels of government that ultimately condition its operation. The nature and characteristics of such rules result from the interactions across the aforementioned agencies and shape the characteristics of the "program."
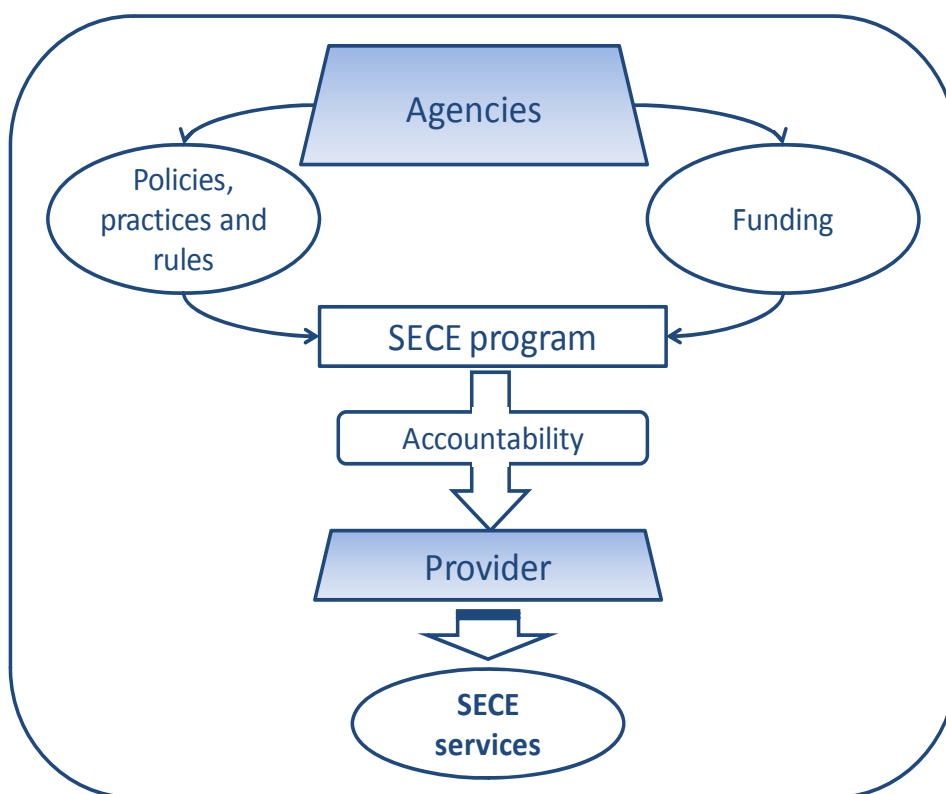

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the SECE System

What do we call Collaboration?

Collaboration, as defined by the Illinois Early Childhood Collaboration, is the "process by which agencies **formally** commit themselves on a long-term basis to work together to accomplish a common mission".[8] Broadly defined, formality is expressed in both the rules and enforcement mechanisms that govern the interaction across and between agencies and providers. When

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[8] Source: www.ilearlychildhoodcollab.org

referring to collaboration across agencies, not all rules governing SECE programs have to be formal (coded in statutes, laws, etc.), nor do enforcement mechanisms. Structures established to monitor compliance can include norms of behavior, conventions, and self-imposed codes of conduct.[9] Most of the collaborations across SECE agencies and providers result from hybrid forms of formal and informal agreements, along with formal and informal enforcement mechanisms. This collection of informal and formal agreements ultimately defines SECE programs.

Collaboration across agencies is conceived as the design and implementation of coordinated strategies in order to provide better quality early care and education services than what can be provided by programs operating independently. Frequently, collaboration across agencies is pursued for the purpose of providing full-day SECE services to low-income families. Although collaboration can refer to a range of activities, it was most often discussed by our informants in terms of the braiding and/or blending of funding across SECE programs. Collaborative strategies and actions are thought to be sustainable to the extent that they are both compatible with each of the related programs' objectives and consistent with the set of eligibility requirements and accountability mechanisms associated with each program. Some of the activities that have been undertaken in the name of collaboration include: work across agencies to enact legislation and set policy goals (e.g. administrative rules), efforts to promote common understandings of the purpose of early childhood programs, discussion to endorse common definitions of the structural and or procedural aspects of quality in SECE programs and the development and application of common assessments and quality rating systems to reduce the burden of multiple monitoring and assessment processes on providers. These actions are seen as facilitating collaboration across agencies, making it more likely that braiding/blending of funding occurs across agencies in defining SECE programs.

In our model, SECE programs are the result of interactions across agencies that are framed in incentive structures delineated by public policies. Collaboration across agencies that govern SECE programs can be distinguished along several domains. First, collaborative efforts to implement SECE programs can be formal, codified in administrative or program regulation and enforced through various mechanisms, as well as informal. Second, collaborations can give rise to SECE program variations that affect children of a specific age, or that facilitate children's exposure to multiple programs longitudinally during early childhood.

Collaboration across SECE agencies can affect programmatic aspects of the care and learning experiences children receive from providers. Collaboration across agencies might delineate, for instance, the optimal number of transitions across multiple providers to which children of a specific age range can experience in a single day. The design of those aspects might be associated with the need to enrich the childcare experiences of children from a "cross sectional" perspective, or more explicitly, with reference to a specific age of children. Collaboration across agencies can also give rise to a design that extends across multiple developmental stages during early childhood. For instance, agencies often collaborate to provide educationally enriched family childcare services to low-income children from birth to age three, before they enter pre-k and or Head Start programs. Collaboration across agencies delineates non-parental care experiences to which children can be exposed. We claim that a more

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[9] The distinction between formal and informal constraints and enforcement mechanisms in shaping organizational performance is well developed in the New Institutional Economics literature. For a major reference see Wallis and North (1986).

comprehensive acknowledgement of SECE programs as part of an integrated system, allows a more accurate picture of the nature of experiences to which children are exposed during early childhood, and consequently a better assessment of the impact of those experiences on child development.

Implications of the Model

Sampling of SECE programs. Researchers and policy makers have strived to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the typical non-parental childcare arrangements that young children experience. In order to do that, surveys have been used as a fundamental research tool. Surveys that attempt to portray a representative sample of the experiences to which children are exposed, including those related to SECE programs, however, must acknowledge the diversity and complexity of those programs. Sampling based on conceptualizing SECE programs as Head Start, pre-K, and childcare without reference to the fact that the agencies governing the supply of those programs often collaborate fails to render a representative picture of the universe of experiences to which children are exposed.

Parental survey responses of participation in SECE programs. Given the heterogeneity in characteristics of SECE programs (i.e. the diversity in rules, enforcement and funding mechanisms) survey questions designed to assess participation are likely to impose a cognitive burden on survey respondents. While parents are likely to properly reference the name and location of their childcare providers, it is unlikely that they will be able to identify the rules that govern those and the funding streams associated to them (Zanoni, 2010). In other words, parents are unable to properly identify the constructs that characterize the SECE programs in which their children are enrolled. In SECE systems where collaboration across agencies is infrequent, parental lack of information about the specific attributes of programs might not be a problem, to the extent that SECE programs are "branded" and this branding refers to homogeneous components of a specific program. In settings where collaboration across SECE systems is the norm, there is an analytical separation between the notion of an agency as supplier of a program and the programs that are ultimately offered to low-income families

Program evaluation of the effects of SECE programs on child development. One of the most important implications from this conceptual approach concerns the way researchers estimate the effects of SECE programs on child development. As defined in this section, collaboration across agencies can shape the context in which SECE programs are extended throughout early childhood. The conventional idea of SECE programs as treatments with homogeneous components is challenged by the dynamic nature of the experiences to which children can be exposed. In SECE systems characterized by substantial collaboration, evaluators that attempt to isolate the "pure" effect of a conventionally defined SECE program on child outcomes (say estimate the effects of Head Start on cognitive development) face an ex-ante heterogeneity problem that requires critical analysis in order to generate a coherent interpretation of the components that define the treatment effects.

2.2 Methods

Review of Literature and Documents

This exploratory, descriptive study was based on secondary data (available research and policy documents) and qualitative interviews with 16 key stakeholders in the publicly funded early childhood system in Chicago and Illinois. Relevant secondary sources included small body of

literature produced by university-based researchers who focus on early childhood policy that address the opportunity for (and barriers to) collaboration among these funding streams (e.g., Gilliam, 2008; Henry & Gordon, 2006; Selden et al., 2006 ; Wrobel, 2012); literature on general trends in organizational collaboration and collaboration in other policy domains; and the large body of research literature that focuses on the three individual funding streams for SECE programs—Head Start, CCDF, and state funded preschools. We also referred to legislation (e.g., reauthorizations) that affects the operation of these programs (including eligibility criteria and quality standards) and recent public statements at the federal and state levels that emphasis interest in or ongoing efforts to foster more collaboration among the education and human service sectors that support preschool children and their families.

Although Head Start is approaching 50 years and child care and state-funded preschool in Illinois has been in existence since 1985, we focus here on address the policies that provided incentives for collaboration since the implementation of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), known informally as the welfare reform act.[10]

Key Informant Interviews

As an initial inquiry into the topic of collaboration, we selected our sample intentionally in an effort to obtain the perspectives of senior administrators and policymakers at both the state and city levels who are responsible for program implementation or coordinating and oversight of the SECE system in the state or city. Our sample included representatives from a number of city agencies, including but not limited to the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the Chicago Department of Family and Social Services (DFSS), as well as a number of state agencies and advocacy organizations, including Illinois Action for Children, the Ounce of Prevention Fund, Illinois DHS Child Care Division, Head Start State Collaboration Office, and the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development.[11]

We developed a semi-structured, flexible interview guide (see Appendix E), which allowed our informants to respond according to their roles, responsibilities, and knowledge. For example, some were more knowledgeable about the system at the state level and knew less about Chicago, and vice versa. Respondents were informed that their comments would be confidential and that no individuals would be identified in written reports.[12] Thus, we do not identify our informants by name or institution in this paper. We do, however, indicate whether an informant represents the state level versus the city level. All sixteen informants had knowledge of both the state and city systems; about half of the sample specifically represented the city or were more knowledgeable about the city system, while the other half were more knowledgeable about the state system

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[10] PRWORA represented a fundamental shift in the purpose and method of federal cash assistance to the poor. The welfare legislation included a workforce development component, encouraging employment among the poor. PRWORA instituted Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which became effective July 1, 1997. TANF replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, which had been in effect since 1935 and supplanted the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training program (JOBS) of 1988. TANF was reauthorized in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

[11] Interview data were augmented by additional documents provided by our informants subsequent to our interviews.

[12] All of our informants agreed to have their interviews recorded and only in two instances did they indicate that they were speaking "off the record."

Of the sixteen, twelve informants were interviewed in person and four by telephone. The interview guide was developed to identify key issues that state and local program administrators and policymakers encounter in implementing SECE programs with particular attention to collaboration, funding, program quality, and assessment and monitoring. Although there were very few instances in which our informants indicated that they were speaking "off the record," we chose not to identify them by their agency for reasons of confidentiality. Each interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, and then coded in terms of major categories and themes using both deductive and inductive qualitative methods; in other words, coding was guided by the interview protocol but we also were open to new topics and themes that emerged in the conversation.

The critical findings and emerging themes highlighted in this report is the result of a qualitative content analysis of the transcribed interview notes. Although the semi-structured interviews resulted in rich, textured feedback, in the analysis, it was not always possible to reliably quantify answers to individual questions. Interviews were tailored to the background and expertise of our informants, who varied in their roles and responsibilities in the SECE system and, thus, in the topics and themes they emphasized in their comments. Throughout the report, however, we have attempted to be precise in our reporting of the findings. When language is used that indicates analysis or comparison across the interviews (e.g. "the majority of respondents expressed the view that…"), the statements are based on close scrutiny of the transcriptions and internal discussions of meanings and interpretations among the researchers.

3. Current Landscape and History of SECE Programs: The Federal and State Context

Dynamic processes resulting from policy change have shaped the system of SECE as it exists today. In order to understand the nature of SECE programs, we must first characterize the funding streams and conditional rules associated with each as well as the interactions that result at an agency-level from the supply of specific programs. The evolution of the funding streams associated with discreet programs, mainly Head Start, CCDF and, in Illinois, the state's Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG), we will demonstrate, has catalyzed collaborative interactions at the agency and provider levels in the supply of SECE programs. In this section, we provide an analytic narrative of the evolution of federal and state policies that have had implications for the funding and, more broadly, the collaboration of agencies and providers, in order to describe the SECE system in the city of Chicago. Our description of Head Start is more extensive than the discussion of the other two funding streams, given its long and complex history.

The figure in Appendix A details the governing agencies involved in the supply of SECE programs in Chicago and funding amounts current for the 2013 state fiscal year. The conditions to which individual school- and community-based providers must adhere are detailed in a table in Appendix B. While there are two primary state agencies from which SECE funding and regulations are centralized, agencies across levels of government are involved in the supply of SECE programs. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) are the two state level agencies that receive the federal and state funds available for locally implemented programs. These state agencies receive federal Head Start and CCDF funds from the Office of Head Start and Office of Child Care—both located within the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (ACF)—as well a state funding to supply SECE programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds, state appropriations (e.g., CCDF matching funds), and the ECBG.
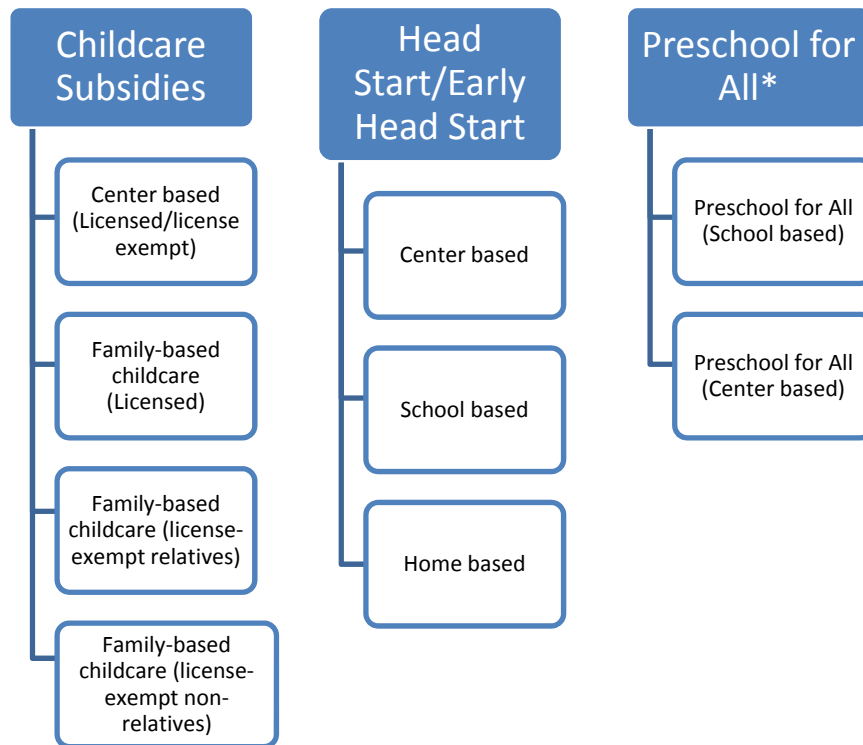
The U.S. Department of Education delegates authority for administering the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I (Title I) and other federal education money[13] to ISBE. While not pictured, ISBE is also the state agency that coordinates the administration of the state appropriated ECBG, the primary funding stream for the state's funded pre-K program: Preschool for All (PFA). While Head Start and PFA funds are typically awarded directly from Office of Head Start and ISBE, respectively, through a competitive grant process, city-level agencies in the city of Chicago serve as super grantees for both programs. The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is the super grantee of PFA and the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) for Head Start[14]. Head Start and PFA providers are sub-grantees[15] of DFSS and CPS and their compliance is monitored by these city-level super grantees. IDHS manages federal CCDF and state matching funds that finance the state's childcare subsidies program: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Action for Children is the city's resource and referral agency that administers parent vouchers for CCAP on behalf of IDHS.

The settings in which SECE providers operate are variable. SECE programs can be located within community-based organizations, school buildings, or in homes. Those settings in which SECE providers can offer services are pictured in Figure 2 below. Child care vouchers may be used to subsidize care received in a licensed child care centers (or license-exempt facilities that include faith-based organizations and schools) as well as through licensed and license-exempt Family Child Care and informal family, friends and neighbor care. Head Start grantees administer services in two ways. Head Start certified teachers can be sent to family or child-care homes but more commonly the program is administered by non-profit organizations, school districts, or other social service agencies. In the city of Chicago, PFA is offered to eligible children in school and community based settings.

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[13] U.S. General Accounting Office, 2010.

[14] Chicago is one of only three cities in the country that serve as "super grantees" for Head Start funds.

[15] Some Early Head Start money is administered directly to school and community-based providers by the federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS),

Childcare Subsidies	Head Start/Early Head Start	Preschool for All*
Center based (Licensed/license exempt)	Center based	Preschool for All (School based)
Family-based childcare (Licensed)	School based	Preschool for All (Center based)
Family-based childcare (license-exempt relatives)	Home based	
Family-based childcare (license-exempt non-relatives)		

* The Prevention Initiative program, which provides coordinated services in center- and home-based settings to children birth to three years of age and their families, is also financed by the ECBG that funds Preschool for All, but is not included in the figure because it is not primary to our analysis.

Figure 2. Illinois SECE Programs and Settings

3.1 Head Start

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) administers the Head Start program through the Office of Head Start (OHS) and ACF's regional offices nationwide. While the OHS develops program policy, goals and objectives for the program and compiles reports on the program for Congress, ACF offices are charged with implementing OHS's policies and overseeing local Head Start agencies (GAO/HEHS-98-186). As previously stated, Chicago's DFSS receives money directly from ACF and delegates it out to agencies in Chicago, one of which is CPS. DFSS is one of the major super grantees nationwide and it administers competitive grants to local providers of Head Start—CPS and community-based organizations— that are in turn accountable directly to DFSS. Head Start providers must adhere to national program performance standards and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework (ACF OHS, 2011) as well as relevant state and local licensing standards, early learning guidelines and, in some cases, quality improvement systems.

While the structure for funding the Head Start program has changed relatively little since the program's inception, the programmatic rules and regulations and, consequently, conditions for receiving funding, have changed dramatically over time. Collaboration, according to some of our informants, was implicit in the original design of Head Start as the program requires providers to engage volunteers and form partnerships with community agencies in order to

connect children and families to services. Prior to 1996, federal legislation[16], including Head Start reauthorizations,[17] had also encouraged collaboration between Head Start and child care providers[18], A marked increase in the OHS' emphasis on collaborative relationships between Head Start and other SECE agencies and providers to increase the supply of Head Start programs, however, followed welfare reform[19]. State informants remarked that at the time that the CCDF was created, Head Start by and large did not offer full-day programming. Welfare reform truly catalyzed the Office of Head Start's restructuring around the provision of full day care for its participants and introduced changes that would come to affect the nature of and extent to which agencies would collaborate in the supply of SECE programs.

Appendix C shows the evolution of enrollment and funding for Head Start for the 1997-2007 period for all the US. The Head Start amendments introduced in 1998 launched a new set of important conceptual, cultural and structural changes to the program, including requirements around quality improvement, mandated additional impact studies, school readiness, and staff and teacher certification[20] (Gish, 2005). They also mandated that some programs coordinate with one another to deliver services to low-income families. Reauthorization in 1998 sought to promote collaboration between SECE agencies as new mandates[21] required Head Start State Collaboration Offices (HSSCO) receiving expansion grants to coordinate with State Child Care offices and resource and referral agencies and gave priority to funding Head Start providers that coordinated with other funding sources to increase the number of hours that children receive early education and care (www.ilearlychildhoodcollab.org). Supplemental collaboration funds

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[16] The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993, which created federal performance management standards by mandating data collection, reporting and strategic planning (McCartney & Weiss, 2007), required all programs receiving public, non-profit and philanthropic funds to specify intended outcomes and report program progress toward such outcomes to funders set in motions dramatic changes for programs such as Head Start (PL 103-62).

[17] As the result of more stringent accountability requirements, the Head Start Act amendments of 1994 required that all Head Start grantees collect and report on newly established performance measures and added a regulatory enforcement mechanism that directly linked compliance with the new regulations to funding for the program (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1998). This reformulation of oversight and accountability to emphasize measuring impact through outcome data represented a fundamental shift in monitoring and the conditionality of funds (GAO, 1998).

[18] In response to the 1994 Amendment, the Head Start Bureau (now known as the OHS) created five primary program objectives and 24 related performance measures, to hold grantees accountable for demonstrating intended outcomes. Of these objectives and measurement, the Bureau explicitly required grantees to demonstrate that they could "link children and families to needed community services" such as "secur[ing] child care in order to work, go to school, or gain job training" (P.L. 103-252). These new performance management standards effectively mandated collaboration as a condition of funding for the first time in the program's history.

[19] Prior to PWORA, the Head Start Expansion and Quality Improvement Act of 1990 set the stage for what was soon to become a central focus of programming across SECE agencies. This reauthorization of Head Start provided ACF funding for Head Start expansion grants with the explicit purpose of creating new state level agencies that would design integrated service delivery systems and encourage collaboration between Head Start and other programs that fund early childhood services. Head Start State Collaboration Offices (HSSCO) emerged from this legislation, centralizing planning for collaboration activities in one office led by newly state appointed collaboration directors (GAO, 2003).

[20] The legislation also required that, by September 30, 2003, half of all Head Start teachers nationwide must have at least an associate, bachelors, or graduate degree in early childhood education or development, or in a related field with experience teaching preschool children (Gish, 2005).

[21] The requirements for receiving expansion funds were modified to include the applicant's "ability to coordinate with other community child care providers and preschool programs to provide full-day, full-year services" as a factor in receiving such funds[21] (GAO, 1999)

were also made available to states to support unified planning and other collaborative initiatives. According to our local informants, reauthorization also coincided with the decision of Head Start to discourage funding for full-day programming with the understanding that a full-day program could be provided in collaboration with child care.[22]

As political momentum around funding SECE programs was building across the country, in the year 2000 Head Start experienced the largest increase ever in its funding from Congress. In 2002, Head Start provided $8 million to state to support collaboration activities and by 2003, Head Start "programs" were required by law to coordinate and collaborate with "programs serving the same children and families, including CCDF, Even Start, IDEA, and other early childhood programs" (GAO, 2003). Head Start, however, was about to experience roadblocks to expansion. Reauthorization that was due in 2003 did not pass as scheduled and by 2006, the program experienced the first budget cut in its history. The next reauthorization of Head Start, in 2007, was passed into law after nearly 4 years of debate with flat funding for the program (ACF OHS, 2007).

The next reauthorization of Head Start joined a new landscape of education accountability created by No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Reauthorization in 2007 would introduce more stringent student outcome, program accountability and learning standards to the program and highlight collaboration between Head Start and state and local SECE agencies as the central mechanism for increasing access to and quality of Head Start programs. The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 called for grantees to receive collaboration grants to "assist Head Start agencies to collaborate [with other agencies in order to facilitate]…planning processes, administering CCDBG and aligning programmatic content and standards with state early learning standards" in order to expand access to "full working-day, full calendar year" Head Start programs[23],[24] (PL 110-134). Reauthorization also called for the creation of new, state level agencies, deemed "State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care for children from birth to school entry" (PL 110-134) to, among other responsibilities, "identify opportunities for and barriers to collaboration and coordination among… [SECE] programs and services". This policy had implications at multiple levels of the SECE system as it simultaneously created a new agency (new player) and modified the Head Start program (new rules, constraints).

Although the Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 is the most recent authorization of Head Start, incentives for agencies and providers to interact and/or collaborate with other agencies and providers across sectors have emerged from state and federal policy

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[22] Head Start Bureau, ACYF-IM-HS-01-06 (2001) states: *"Over the past several years, Head Start grantees have been encouraged to explore new and innovative ways to collaborate with child care providers to provide full-day, full-year services to Head Start and Early Head Start families who need such services." This memo also states that Head Start CAN offer full day services "if necessary" but there are other sources of funding for child care. It is possible that Claire and others would interpret this as discouraging full-day care even if it wasn't officially stated by the HS Bureau because it would mean that they could not serve as many children with Head Start money.*

[23] 35%of children served by a grantee may have a family income between 100 and 130% FPL if the grantee can demonstrate that children with incomes below 100%FPL are being fully served.

[24] Reauthorization required state to create State Advisory Councils on Early Education and Care in order to determine needs across programs serving children 0-6 and to develop recommendations for collaboration between early childhood programs, data collection, early learning standards and professional development between programs (Illinois Action for Children, 2008).

changes. Later analysis will describe the agency level collaboration that has occurred between the Office of Head Start and Office of Child Care to jointly administer programs (e.g. the Early Learning Challenge (ELC)) as well as create organizational structures that influence the provision of SECE services to low-income children. Currently, Illinois is one of the few states that serves more than 50 percent of its children who are eligible for Head Start (Thomas et al., 2011). As the table in Appendix C documents, funding for Head Start was on the rise in 2010 following the influx of funds from the ARRA of 2009 but has recently experienced flat funding.

3.2 Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)

Nationwide, ACF coordinates the CCDF program through the Office of Child Care (OCC) which in turn, delegates to the states the administration and management of childcare subsidies funded by CCDF to a stage agency. In Illinois, IDHS is the central agency for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), which is funded by the CCDF block grant, state matching funds, and some money from other programs, including TANF. This program provides child care subsidies which are primarily issued in the form of vouchers paid to providers on behalf of families. CCAP also issues grants to delegate agencies, such as the Chicago DFSS office which will in turn administer funding for the program[25]. In the city of Chicago, Illinois Action for Children (a resource and referral agency) is charged with implementing OCC's/DHS policies and overseeing local child care providers.

To be eligible for CCAP subsidy receipt and license renewal, providers—both licensed and unlicensed—continue to be subject to licensing rules and/or minimum standards. Child care centers must follow licensing standards set by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) and are given the opportunity to participate in the Quality Counts Quality Rating System.[26] CCAP-licensed centers and home are in practice extensively regulated (Zanoni, 2012). Licensed child care facilities receive a three years license and are monitored within the redetermination period. Unlicensed child care providers (e.g., family and friends) are less extensively regulated but staffs are subject to background checks to be sure they meet education, age, and health requirements, and do not have records of being criminal sex offenders or abusing/neglecting children.

A fundamental shift in federal child care policy occurred with the passage of PRWORA in 1996[27]. Welfare reform not only consolidated all previously established child care programs

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[25] A small number of programs receive directly grants to provide CCAP subsidized care. (Stohr, Lee & Nyman, 2002)

[26] Our informants describe Quality Counts as a "voluntary" system, so it is not clear to what extent participation in Quality Counts is enforced as part of licensing. As discussed later, a new Quality Rating and Improvement System, developed under Illinois' Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant will be implemented during the second half of 2013.

[27] Prior to the restructuring of federal entitlements, including child care and welfare, four separate federal programs provided child care subsidies to three separate target populations. Child care programs prior to 1996 were funded by mandatory and discretionary appropriations. Prior to 1990 states could finance child care assistance through the Title XX Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) and welfare funds (Stohr et al., 2002). Three of the four programs were funded with mandatory money via the AFDC; these were open-ended federal entitlements associated with the welfare system. The only non-welfare child care subsidy program was established in 1990 with the explicit purpose of supporting child care for low-income working families. Funds created through the CCDBG of 1990 were discretionary appropriations jointly authorized by the Education and Labor Committee in the House and the Labor and Human Resources Committee[27] in the Senate (Lynch, 2010).The Child Care and Development Block Grant of 1990 created the funding stream and program template for what would become the reformed federal child care subsidy program in 1996 and serve both families receiving welfare through the newly created Temporary Assistance

but also created a new block of funding, called the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG), under Section 418 of the Social Security Act. The creation of the CCDBG was accompanied by an increase in federal child care funding for low-income families (Gish, 2002). This additional funding, allocated by the CCDF program, was financed by both discretionary and mandatory funding streams.[28] While program rules and eligibility requirements were modified slightly from the original CCDBG, governance shifted significantly as the new iteration of federal child care policy would transfer federal management of the program to a lead state agency. This consolidation of funding and administration was designed to simultaneously promote the goals of larger welfare reform, mainly self-sufficiency and reduced dependence on government aid, as well as increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the child care system through streamlined governance and a greater state role in administration (Lynch, 2010).

After 1996, mandatory child care funds were pre-appropriated in PRWORA to extend from 1997 to 2002, channeling funding to the reformed child care subsidies program that will be known as the Childcare and Development Fund. Temporary extensions increased initial funding levels through 2006, even as Congress failed to reauthorize the legislation. While the CCDBG Act has expired, the CCDF program has continued to receive funding via annual appropriations since the original authorization ended in 2002. In 2006, P.L. 109-171 approved an increase in mandatory child care funding by $1 billion over five years (Lynch, 2010). Extensions maintained the funding levels established in 2006 through early 2013. While there has been movement that indicates congressional interest in reauthorizing CCDBG, talks of reauthorization have not progressed past Senate hearings on the topic. Rules governing CCDF requires that states set aside 4% of its funding for quality improvement. The state of Illinois allocates 8%.

Just as welfare reformed fostered a greater interest at the Office of Head Start in fostering collaboration between Head Start and child care providers, the Child Care Bureau was also moved to encourage collaboration with Head Start and other child-serving agencies. As stated in the Federal Register (1998),

> We also strongly encourage coordination with other agencies with potential impact on child care, including: Head Start collaborative offices, child support, child protective services (especially when the Lead Agency chooses to include children receiving protective services among the families eligible for CCDF subsidies), transportation, National Service, and housing…The Head Start comprehensive model of health, parent involvement, family support and education, when linked with child care, can provide parents and children with quality comprehensive full day/full year services. Promising models that fund Head Start-eligible children in community-based child care provided in child care centers and homes are emerging across the country. We encourage Lead Agencies to explore and support such efforts.

Since this statement, however, there does not appear to have been much formal support at the federal level from the Child Care Bureau for collaboration to parallel the efforts, although

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for Needy Families (TANF) and working families whose incomes fell under the designated State Median Income (SMI) determined by each state.

[28] The CCDBG program which was created under the original CCDBG Act is a discretionary fund program. PRWORA also reauthorized the CCDBG Act. As PRWORA requires that these child care funds be administered as a unified program, the Administration for Children and Families has named the combined funds the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). Parts 98 and 99 are the official regulations for the Child Care and Development Fund (Child Care and Development Fund, Rules and Regulations, 1998).

modest, of the Head Start State Collaboration Offices. This is not surprising given that the implementation of the CCDF grant is determined by state policy.

3.3 Preschool for All (PFA)

The ISBE governs PFA through local school districts. School and community-based providers[29] apply for PFA funding through ISBE, with the exception of programs in the city of Chicago, which apply through the Chicago Public Schools, and are awarded funding through a competitive grant process. ISBE also receives federal education money—for example, Title I—that can also be used to subsidize prekindergarten services[30]. The figure in Appendix A illustrates that the state's largest funding stream for subsidized preschool, ECBG, is channeled by the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to providers in order to serve eligible children[31]. Providers receiving ISBE funds for PFA must adhere to the Illinois Early Learning and Development standards, the Illinois Birth to Five program standards, Illinois school code (105 ILCS 5/2-3.71), Title I and state administrative code.

The history of state subsidized prekindergarten funding in Illinois extends back to the mid-1980s. Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) secured state legislature backing to administer block grants targeted to early childhood education programs for at-risk children in 1985 (ISBE, 2003), effectively creating the state's first subsidized preschool program. The Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) was established in 1997 prior to PFA's existence. The ECBG allowed newly earmarked birth-to-three money to be coupled with existing state preschool funds[32] for the creation of a birth-to-five funding stream (Ounce of Prevention Fund, 2009). The Early Childhood Block Grant now provides financing for three early childhood education programs: Pre-Kindergarten program for children at-risk of school failure (Pre-K)/Preschool for All (PFA), Parental Training, and the Prevention Initiative[33].

The budget for the ECBG program increased throughout the early 2000s (ISBE, 2003) and reports show that enrollment in three- and four-year old preschool programs grew accordingly (ISBE, 2003). In proposing his first budget as in office, Governor Blagojevich continued to support the ECBG as he successfully increased Early Childhood Block Grant funding by $29.9 million in the midst of a $5 billion state budget deficit (Kovach, 2009). With the Governor's support, the period of 2002 to 2006 saw a 73 percent increase in its funding of ECBGs, allowing the state to provide services to an additional 12,000 at-risk children (Ounce of Prevention Fund, 2009). Expanding ISBE's state preschool program to one that had the capacity to universally serve the state's three- and four-year olds, would not take effect until Preschool for All legislation passed in 2006 (Bushouse, 2009). Preschool for All was passed into law in 2006 after a decade long campaign for universal prekindergarten (Ounce of Prevention, 2009). PFA's

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[29] CPS collaborates with community-based child care centers to provide early childhood services to children living in areas where CPS schools are not accessible (http://www.cps.edu/schools/earlychildhood; Zanoni, 2012)

[30] DCFS Child Care, ISBE EC Special Ed, DHS Early Intervention (IDEA Part B) also fund SECE services that will not be analyzed

[31] In 2011, the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) reported that families at 185% FPL or below were eligible to be served in PFA classrooms.

[32] The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) secured Congressional approval to administer block grants to school districts to "operate prekindergarten programs for children three to five years of age…that were at-risk of academic failure" in 1985 (ISBE, 2003).

[33] Parenting education and parent-child interaction activities related to development and nurturing of infants and toddlers (http://www.cps.edu/schools/earlychildhood)

authorization was coupled with a $45 million increase in appropriations for the ECBG. Eleven percent of the total block grant is required to support programs for children ages birth to three[34], facilitating the creation and expansion of 15 local programs for at-risk infants, toddlers and families (Hawley, 2005). The passage of PFA did not establish a new funding stream for the program, despite advocates' interest in establishing a flexible funding formula across the birth-to-five continuum. Thus, while not radically different from the policy action that had occurred to support early childhood over the previous twenty years, universal preschool for Illinois' three- and four-year olds did represent an expansion of the state's position toward viewing early childhood as a benefit available to all children, regardless of family income.

Programmatic regulations of PFA state that any provider receiving PFA funding (school or community-based) must provide a minimum of 2½ hours of preschool education by a certified teacher (Regenstein, Stermer & Wallen, 2007). More details of PFA eligibility conditions are included in the table in Appendix B among which the most salient ones are that providers must give first priority given to children who are most at-risk, based on screening criteria. Various accountability and evaluation measures were included in the legislation, including a stipulation that ISBE annually report a breakdown of recipients by income level and evaluate progress in school readiness every three years (Regenstein et al., 2007).

The PFA program was scheduled to expand gradually, allocating increased funding to create a universal system over a five-year period of time, designed to allow the state to gain enhanced financial footing before launching the program state-wide (Regenstein et al., 2007). However, a statewide recession and budget deficits have prevented the program from ever expanding to serve all children. Illinois' investment in PFA peaked in 2009 (IECAM). The state budget crisis experienced since then has had implications for the funding of PFA, including reductions in 2010, 2011 and 2012 budgets for the program (ISBE, 2012; Barnett, Carolan, Fitzgerald & Squires, 2012). In combination with the flat funding recently experienced by the Head Start program (excluding the funds made available through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) these cuts have had consequences for providers[35].

In the next section, we turn to Chicago as a case study for a closer look at how a large, urban area implements and manages its system of SECE programs. Again, as mentioned in the introduction and as discussed below, Chicago has a long history of collaborating public funding for each childhood services and has enjoyed some flexibility in how it administers its fund, characteristics that distinguish the city from a majority of cities and regions around the country. According to a state informant, "collaboration was invented by CPS in Chicago in 1990." "Collaboration happens in Chicago but is much less likely in other parts of the state," another state administrator maintained, "In some respects, the collaboration in Chicago is a well-kept secret, and unless you're Chicago and involved in it, you don't really know what's going on." Chicago is also an interesting case study because of the range/variation of public-funded early care and education programs in the system that have grown up over time but because of a recent

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[34] In 2009, legislation passed to increase the birth-to-three set aside in the block grant from 11% to 20% by 2015 (http://www.cps.edu).
[35] The combination of funding reductions and late payments by the State, according to Thomas et al. (2011), resulted in the closure of some "programs" prior to the end of the 2010 school year, with some closures continuing through 2011 (Barnett et al., 2012; Zumwalt & Clark, 2013).

initiative to promote collaboration in the area of child and program assessments in the city's SECE system.

4. The Chicago Experience

As discussed above, policy changes motivated by welfare reform both encouraged and complicated collaboration among different SECE providers. The sweeping changes that were catalyzed by PRWORA resulted in historically siloed SECE agencies becoming more unified in their objectives. Head Start, child care subsidies and state pre-k program, for example, newly focused on providing full day programming to meet the needs of working families after welfare reform. Policy changes motivated by PROWRA have shifted how individual providers and agencies structurally, conceptually and culturally organize around these new objectives in order to provide SECE services. The newly aligned objectives of SECE programs also resulted in increasing overlap in the funding streams that providers drew upon to offer full day services. In order to fully understand how agencies and providers in Chicago have responded to welfare reform, we will provide a detailed description of the ways in which organizations have interacted in the supply of SECE programs both in the state and city.

4.1 Incentives for Collaboration in Illinois

In Illinois, discussions of early childhood education historically have been collaborative in nature. State bureaucrats from the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Human Services, for example, met regularly in the early 1980s to discuss needed policy changes and strategies for collaboration at the state level around state subsidized preschool (Bushouse, 2009). By 1996, an array of early childhood programs and services already existed across the state. Head Start programs operated in school and community based centers. State subsidized prekindergarten and comprehensive child development centers (Chicago Parent Child Centers), similarly offered early education programming in school settings. The newly restructured child care system would join the state's landscape of subsidized early childhood programs and offer another funding stream from which these programs could draw to cover the cost of full day, full year care.

As state administrators interviewed for this study remarked, "Collaboration was the obvious remedy … teaming up [between Head Start], Pre-K and/or child care to see where families were taking their kids as they went back to work." At the local level, agencies from different sectors reported "coming together to link discrete services and resources into multifaceted delivery systems that, in theory, will decrease fragmentation and redundancy and increase access" as well as providers to coordinate "actual service delivery" (Selden et al., 2006). Collaboration to achieve administrative alignment (e.g. coordinated RFP administration) in order to facilitate coordinated service delivery was often considered by our informants, and also reflected in the literature, to provide important benefits to "organizations as a whole, to the management systems within these organizations, and to the clients served through particular programs that are affected by collaboration" (Selden et al., 2006). As early as 1998 governmental administrative and non-profit agencies in the city of Chicago began to form interdepartmental task forces and public private partnerships to coordinate SECE agencies' planning, program, and policy development.

State administrators and advocates soon recognized the need for coordination among early childhood programs to effectively braid funding streams and soon he Birth to Three project

was born. Created as a result of public-private partnership in 1998, Birth to Three was intended to "maximize investments in early childhood by developing a statewide prevention system" (Spielberger et al., 2012). Other efforts to promote collaboration in the field of early childhood education and care were quick to follow[36]. The Birth to Three project adapted to the presence of other similar organizations by restructuring, shifting its focus to "coordinate work among these existing groups and provide new forums for discussing new or emerging issues" (Spielberger, et al., 2012), and transformed into the Birth to Five project. Collaboration rose as an explicit priority for the Birth to Five project[37], encompassed in the newly reformed work group's vision statement, which stated its hope for "Illinois [to] have a coordinated early childhood learning system of programs, policies and services … effective in preparing our youngest children for a successful future." (http://earlysuccess.org/).

State legislation created a formal governing structure for collaborative efforts in early childhood in 2003 with the passage of the Illinois Early Learning Council Act (Public Act 93-0380). Created with the intention of serving in an advisory capacity to coordinate and guide a comprehensive early learning system through a politically appointed public-private partnership, the newly formed Early Learning Council (ELC) soon took the lead in statewide efforts to achieve a comprehensive early learning system. Although the primary objective of the ELC quickly became passing universal preschool legislation, the group also assumed many of the functions that previous coordinating initiatives had possessed.

State policies soon followed that would create legislation that would direct more resources toward increasing the collaboration within the field of early childhood, including the establishment of organizational structures designed to promote collaboration in early childhood that have continued to evolve through present day. The difficulty experienced while working to create a unified early childhood framework for Head Start, CCDF and Preschool for All programs has resulted in a growing recognition that systems reform is necessary to unify the field. Conceptual and structural changes have followed as the ELC and state administrators continue to work toward aligning systems to promote collaboration. Strategic planning from within the ELC has streamlined the group's internal processes. Committee restructuring created a System Integration workgroup, and its affiliated subcommittee, the Revised Blending, Braiding, and Sustainable Funding Subcommittee. These workgroups are charged with examining how to remove barriers to and make recommendations for blended and braided funding to sustain quality early childhood development programs.

In 2009 the state's P-20 Council, authorized by Public Act 95-0626, was created "to foster collaboration among state agencies, education institutions, local schools, community groups, employers, taxpayers, and families, and to collectively identify needed reforms to develop a seamless and sustainable statewide system of quality education and support" (http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/P20). Also in 2009, the Governor created the Office of Early

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[36] For example, the Birth to Three Project, Early Learning Illinois, the IDHS Child Care Advisory Committee, the Children's Mental Health Task Force, and Governor Ryan's Task Force on Universal Preschool (Spielberger, et al., 2012).

[37] By January 2003, the Birth to Five Project was structured to include a Steering Committee, the Government Interagency Team, a Systems Coordination Committee, a Training and Workforce Development Committee, a Child Health and Development Committee, a Social and Emotional Health Committee, and the All Our Kids (AOK) Early Childhood Networks (Spielberger, et al., 2012).

Childhood Development (OECD) to provide support and leadership for an integrated system of early childhood services.

Opportunities for federal funding, such as the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC), catalyzed collaboration between state administrations. The OECD, the Council, ISBE, IDHS, and DCFS used the RTT-ELC application process as an opportunity to increase their system integration to support English Language Development programs[38]. The OECD convenes the Inter Agency Team (IAT), comprised of senior managers from ISBE, IDHS, and IDCFS, to meet monthly to review and create state structures, contracts, intergovernmental agreements, and benchmarks related to eligibility for RTT/ELC. Particularly noteworthy in Illinois' RTT-ELC plan is the implementation of a new Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) designed to bring all three SECE programs in the state under the same quality umbrella.

Coinciding with the development of the QRIS on the state level was a new effort in Chicago to coordinate and align child and program quality assessments used in Head Start, Preschool for All, and other programs administered by the CPS and DFSS. Immediately upon taking office in May 2011, Mayor Emanuel created the Early Learning Task Force, a large coalition of early learning advocates, researches, providers and funders to produce goals and policy recommendations for improving early childhood education in the city. The Mayor's office works with early learning providers, CPS and DFSS to align the full spectrum of education in Chicago –from birth through college. He has announced the Ready to Learn initiative, a new investment over three years –beginning with $10 million in the first school year–from the city's budget to increase access to early learning programs and raise the quality of existing programs. The initiative will create 5,000 new early childhood slots (Preschool for All, Prevention Initiative, Head Start) and add wraparound services to support 6,000 currently enrolled children.

In Chicago, to support the implementation of the competitive RFP process that requires Head Start, Early Head Start, and CPS programs to reapply for funding based on their level of need and quality, the Mayor's ELEC created two technical workgroups-–the Needs Assessment Workgroup and the Coordinated Assessment and Evaluation Workgroup. The Needs Assessment Workgroup was charged with undertaking a comprehensive analysis of indicators of need and access to services to inform the development of a framework to prioritize investments. The Coordinated Assessment and Evaluation Workgroup, led by Senior Vice President at the Ounce of Prevention Fund and the Director of Early Childhood Services at CPS, was focused on selecting a set of common assessments and screenings for use across funding streams and programmatic systems.

4.2 Models and Types of Collaboration in Chicago

In this section we describe the main characteristics of collaboration as it presently occurs in Illinois and in the city of Chicago by providing examples of SECE collaborations. We highlight inter-organizational relationships that have emerged as the result of policy and discuss the implications that this has had on the SECE system. Informational interviews with state and local SECE administrators and advocates, along with our review of the literature that addresses collaboration in funding streams (Flynn & Hayes, 2003) and other domains of the SECE system,

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[38] Illinois' Early Learning Challenge Intergovernmental Agreement includes commitments by ISBE, IDHS, IDCFS, the Council, and the OECD to implement the RTT-ELC plan, which includes154 action items. (Spielberger et al., 2012).

make clear there are many combinations of programs as a result of collaboration between agencies and providers.

Collaboration, our informants asserted, augments what a Head Start or PFA program can provide by making it possible for working families to have full-day or "wrap-around" care for their children. The blending or braiding of funding streams is now necessary to improve the quality of what children experience in early care and education programs, although establishing and enforcing common understandings of quality remains elusive. The extent of the complexity of the SECE system is most evident in the myriad ways that providers, and occasionally agencies, report to combining funds from multiple programs in order to make "wrap around" care possible. Blending and braiding strategies, however, are associated with substantial costs. Systems that try to coordinate or combine categorical funding streams with different eligibility requirements, program goals, and administration structures, for example, face substantial transaction costs.

As one state administrator remarked, "Almost anything you could imagine in terms of putting these groups together either is going on or has gone on because we [state of Illinois], when we set up models for collaboration, offer best practice and guidelines to providers but we don't have one model, or only one way that providers should collaborate". Our sources addressed both contemporaneous models of collaboration, or those that represent some kind of collaborative support for a child or provider at a given point in time, as well as dynamic models, in which children experience changes in the public support for which they are eligible over time. Four contemporaneous, and two dynamic, models of collaboration were reported during data collection and will be described below.

Contemporaneous Collaboration Models

Contemporaneous forms of collaboration are characterized as collaborations between home and center-based providers or between two center-based providers. For example, Head Start providers may either partner with another provider of state pre-kindergarten to offer wrap around services or choose to itself operate a PFA funded component, essentially becoming both a Head Start and a PFA provider by blending Head Start and PFA funds to provide a full-day experience for children. Other Head Start providers have reported partnering with home-based child care providers, directly receiving child care subsidies and the use of private funding to offer full-day, full-year programming (Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, 2009). These collaborations are usually secured through a contract or memorandum of understanding.

The way that providers engage in partnership in the city of Chicago, we have evidenced, is far from uniform. In Chicago, according to our informants, there are numerous examples of a lack of uniformity in early childhood care partnerships. Chicago Public Schools, a Head Start grantee, for example, can delegate Head Start funds to programs that operate both within its school buildings and to center-based agencies. Chicago Public School also receives funding from the state's ECBG to provide PFA services. CPS also administers Prevention Initiative money to engage home and community based organizations in providing birth to three services. Lastly, CPS' Community Partnership program[39] funds organizations throughout the city to provide

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[39] One of the goals of the Community Partnership program is to offer services through a seamless and unduplicated system of collaboration and coordination of different agencies. These collaborative partnerships are designed to be sensitive to local needs and resources. In addition to providing social services, each partnership participates in a referral system to place three-year-old children in other early childhood education programs after leaving the Illinois

needed quality full day early childhood services to children when they turn three and are no longer eligible for the Prevention Initiative program.

According to a 2007 report issued by the HSSCO, Illinois early care and education providers are using every conceivable, legal, and allowable model for collaboration of their programs. In general, the HSSCO's Child Care Collaboration Program supports the following partnership models[40] [41], which can occur in either centers or homes: (1) child care collaboration with Early Head Start or Head Start; (2) child care collaboration with PFA (3) child care collaboration with Birth to Three programs funded by the state's ECBG, (4) Head Start collaboration with PFA and (5) a collaboration between child care, Head Start, and Preschool for All. As shown in the table in Appendix D, within each of these categories, there are variations in how these models may be implemented. For example, one provider can blend or braid funds from multiple sources at a single location or two or more providers (separate legal entities) can partner to serve children at a single site. Within these types, there are variations with respect to whether they only share space or share funding and/or programming as well and how costs of collaboration are handled (e.g., through sub contracts, purchase of services, or other interagency agreements).

Our informants also provided a number of examples of what collaboration looks like in practice. A state agency administrator, in describing some of the variations in collaborations, provided examples that ranged from shared funding to non-monetary exchange of space and staff:

We've had Collaborations with child care partners where the Head Start entity would pay a stipend to the child care partner and then Head Start provides the Family Support Services, Head Start support, the Case Management. [We've also had] shared classroom space, shared teaching, [where] there was actually no big money exchanged. And then of course there [are other] collaboration models, in which one agency gets all the funding itself and streams are blended.

Several informants stressed the fact that in Illinois, homes or Family Child Care are permitted to partner with Head Start or Preschool for All programs:

Even in the homes, you can do collaboration. The provider will designate what time of day is for what program, so that there is some program oversight that's directly tied to the funding stream. So it may be the beginning that they're classifying as their Head Start day or their Early Head Start day, or vice versa. So, but it's allowed in the policies. Same thing [with Early Head Start]; it's a collaborative model. All of the Early Head Start programs funded by the City of Chicago are collaborated, because our dollar that we get from the Feds for Early is very low.

Most of our informants also emphasized that although there are a number of acceptable variations within collaboration models, there is a preference for ones that

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Early Childhood Prevention Initiative Program to ensure the continuation of support needed for families and children. For transition to early childhood education, most providers also collaborate with public school districts, Even Start, Head Start, and Early Intervention Systems for special needs children (ISBE, 2008; 2012).

[40] Many of these models were originally designed by the now defunct QUILT agency. QUILT stands for Quality in Linking Together, a national training and technical assistance organization jointly funded in the late 1990's and early 2000's by the ACF Head Start and Child Care Bureaus (IDHS Collaboration Report, 2007).

[41] These approved models also meet the criteria put forth in a September 2011 Memorandum from the Office of Child Care stressing the importance of continuity of services, that is, minimizing transitions in early childhood programs—particularly those for infants and toddlers.

[Many agencies] include homes in [their] list of models out of respect for the Collaborations that are not exchanging any money... With homes, they're [often] pulling kids out of the home and taking them to a Pre-K. One of the [Head Start State Collaboration Office's] home/Pre-K Collaboration models... sends an itinerate teacher out to the homes to – and for me that's the – that's the higher-level Collaboration, if you will, just because you're not only affecting those children with the teaching of a certified teacher but you are affecting those providers.

Providers that braid and blend all three funding streams—Head Start, CCDF, and Preschool for All—are also prevalent in Chicago. The Ounce of Prevention run Educare model exemplifies the blending of all three programs. As one city informant explained,

The development of the funding streams and then the combining of them together was something that forms one of the core elements of the Educare model... There are many centers in Chicago that braid funding just like Educare. They have very different philosophies and approach to it but they blend so they can have a Type 04 [certified] teacher, so they could have three teachers in the classroom on a full-day, so they can have more family engagement staff.

The models and types of collaboration found in different communities or neighborhoods may also differ, depending on family characteristics and needs. In communities where a large percentage of mothers do not work, and consequently do not qualify for child care subsidies, collaboration may look different than in those with a large percentage of working parents. In a largely immigrant community, this was observed by one of our informants to be the case.

We want to get these kids—English-language learning kids, monolingual families at home, Spanish-speaking—into a preschool experience here. So that's a Head Start Preschool [for All] collaboration where you would have a Head Start experience in the morning and a preschool teacher in the afternoon. Parents love this because they get about a 6-hour school day for their preschool-age children; I think it's too many transitions for kids. We're doing it is because the funding is making us do it ... It highlights the fact that there's a variety of different ways to do these collaborations, and we're trying to be creative.

As just described, most collaborations that exist in the state are done on the basis of shared funding—either a blending of funds or, more frequently, braiding in which funds from one stream are designated for particular purposes (e.g., a certified teacher) while funds from another stream are allocated to another purpose (e.g., rent, or a family support specialist). Although some informants provided examples in which teachers or curricula are shared, these examples were infrequently discussed, leading us to conclude that such collaboration is rare.

Although the HSSCO tracks which communities engage in collaboration programs facilitated by the HSSCO, there is no current information on the relative frequencies that models are used. A number of state level informants familiar with collaboration models acknowledged that a range of formal and informal collaborations exist but most are not formally tracked. One described it this way:

When [the HSSCO] sets up models for collaboration [there isn't just] one model. We've given lots of best practice, lots of examples, lots of guidelines but [not] in terms of an actual this-is-how-you-should-do-it. Head Start [usually] wants to extend the day. There are lots of Pre-K/Child Care or Preschool For All/Child Care Collabs, too... We've had a number of [collaborations between Head Start and Preschool For All] over the years from Head Start agencies that actually got Preschool For All or Pre-K money, and I don't think this one exists anymore but we had for a while a Head Start

agency and a school district where they actually were team teaching, too … So it's hard for me to say what models we're using because almost anything you can think of is either going on now or has gone on.

Another state administrator similarly noted the variety of collaborative arrangements around the state as well as the state's preference for those that provide continuity of care, but also the lack of systematic data on their prevalence:

[The HSSCO] only approves collaborations…consider[ed] to be the highest quality partnerships which is what is good for kids, which minimizes the transition. There's a whole lot of collaborations that go on when children are moved to a different setting. And so we know that those go on, but they are not part of what she would consider to be her approved collaborations. [We] know a lot about what goes on in collaborations with Head Start. We don't know so much about the collaborations with pre-K other than what we pick up by working with our childcare providers.

The desire and plan for collaboration may lead to roles and responsibilities that might not have been intended at the outset. An example provided by one of our informants was "a particularly unusual variation in the city" was a partnership between the Chicago Public Schools and child care centers, which included for profit as well as not-for-profit centers. Developed more than 15 years ago, the Community Partners Program:

took Preschool for All money and Prevention Initiative Birth to 3 money and put it into these child care centers. They built contracts with these folks and, over time, progressively raised the bar to get them to these requirements. You must have a [certified] teacher for preschool; you must have an Infant/Toddler Specialist for your infant classrooms; you have to have family engagement practices, and so on.

As our informant explained, the goal of the program was to provide early childhood services to children where they were. However, in the view of this informant, "the jury's probably still out" on whether this was an appropriate role for the school district and its partners:

What this does is then put the Chicago Public Schools essentially in the business of capacity-building for local agencies. And they did a lot. They funded cohorts of staff from these child care centers to get higher education…to get their AAs, their BAs, their Type 04s, to pass the Basic Skills test that you have to get before the Type 04. They supported people going through Infant/Toddler certification. They bought equipment and did a lot of work trying to get the environments set up and structured. This is really hard work because child care centers are for working parents and many of the owners of these facilities are in it for profit, and of course they can't make any profit off these public funds. To a great deal it puts them at odds with their own desires.

Dynamic Collaboration Models

Thus far, this paper has been primarily concerned with describing and analyzing collaborations across agencies that allow children to contemporaneously participate in multiple SECE programs. However, as described in the conceptual section, we recognize that another important type of collaboration occurs across SECE programs over time (Zanoni, 2012). Most of this collaboration implies transitioning across SECE programs as children age, especially when children turn t3 years of age.

In Chicago, the supply of SECE programs changes dramatically as children turn 3 years old, which is when children become eligible for most of the Head Start and CPS-administered Pre-K programs Given CCAP funding and eligibility rules, most children who have been exposed to SECE programs in Chicago during ages birth to three would have done so under the CCAP program. As a consequence, most of the transitions at age three would occur from CCAP funded childcare programs to those two other programs.

Some of the transitions of children across programs would imply changes in program choice with parents exiting one program to enter utilize another (e.g., stop using relatives paid with CCAP money to enroll a child in Pre-K). Interestingly, although the supply of SECE programs and the developmental needs of children change discontinuously at age three (most notably because children develop spoken language) parental preferences for their given levels of work efforts do not have to change. As a consequence, the transitions that better fulfill the dual objective of parental employment and child development are those that accommodate to that reality.

Some collaboration models were highlighted by our informant as better than others in accommodating these dual objectives. Provision of family childcare funded by CCAP does not have to be interrupted by the onset of age-eligibility for Head Start and or Pre-K. IDHS has ruled that transitions from family childcare to early childhood development programs would not reduce CCAP reimbursement rates for the hours that children are attending cognitively enriched settings. This model generates incentives for enrollment in SECE programs that have strong developmental components, without disrupting the continuity of care that is needed to sustain parental working efforts.

Transitions from Early Head Start to Head Start programs and from Prevention Initiative/Birth to Three to PFA are also common forms of collaboration program models. Those models attempt to provide children with enriched experiences throughout early childhood. Some of the transitions are designed to accommodate developmental needs of children, but they do not necessarily result of collaboration across agencies, as they are driven by parental choices that accommodate their own needs.

4.3 Current Issues in Collaboration and Strategies for Collaboration

In this section we present themes that emerged in the analysis of key informant interviews on the current state of collaboration in Chicago. Our informants' remarks offered contextualized examples of interagency collaboration as it plays out in Chicago, adding empirical evidence of the local SECE system to our findings from a review of the literature. Three main themes emerged during the course of our analysis: 1) programs are complex both in and of themselves and in the way in which they interact with one another; 2) there are barriers to collaboration that stem from disparate program objectives, eligibility rules, and monitoring requirements; and 3) there is a need for strategic thinking in addressing these barriers.

A Complex System

The SECE system in Chicago is both heterogeneous and complex. As discussed above, our informants painted a picture of collaboration that looks very different from agency to agency across the state. As one administrator commented, "it's hard for me to say what models we're

using because almost anything you can think of is either going on now or has gone on [in the past]". Welfare reform, administrators reflected, was a turning point in that agencies looked to "collaboration [as] the obvious remedy" to support the teaming up between SECE agencies and providers to fund full-day services. Collaborative models of service provision now range from those that involve monetary exchanges in fee for service arrangements to non-monetary partnerships to share administrative, staff and/or facility costs.

There are at least two collaborative SECE models in Illinois, which distinguish this SECE system from those in many other states and highlight the complexity of the system. In one of those models, licensed Family Child Care providers (some of which also participate in the CCAP subsidy program) pair with providers in the Preschool for All program. According to one of our informants, one model supported by the Community Connections program (Illinois Action for Children, 2009) is one in which children are transported from Family Child Care "to a part-day preschool session at a center 4 days a week, and the 5th day, the teaching staff go out and visit the providers and share curriculum materials and ideas." The intent of that 5th day is to extend the developmental component of the PFA curriculum into the family day care hours. Several informants indicated that the ability of this model to fulfill the developmental needs of children at risk is questioned by overall level of quality that family childcare providers offer, as well as because the model introduces transitions out of the home to the center and back across providers. With regards to an objective assessment of the quality of family child care providers, a city administrator commented that "The child care homes are a different issue altogether. It's going to take a lot of work to have some deep understanding of [their quality]."

In the second of the abovementioned models, child care subsidies can be used for what is informally called family, friend, and neighbor care (FFN). Recognizing "parents' needs for different types of care," Illinois has made a strong commitment to supporting this kind of care, especially in Chicago. As explained by a state informant, "[We've collected] data on family work patterns and how many families are working unusual hours. So we're doing a lot of work with traditional hour child care, but if families are working nights and weekends and changing shifts, we're not reaching those kids." Simultaneously, low-income families can utilize multiple combinations of subsidized FFN providers, along with multiple forms of center-based childcare programs (Head Start, PFA, Community-based childcare, or combinations across those). By increasing the supply of hours-flexible care available to low-income families, the availability of subsidies for FFNs providers contributes to the sheer number of different SECE programs. Increasing availability and enrollment in those programs fits an objective that is clearly consistent with the CCDF objectives of promoting parental employment, but for some stakeholders, it raises concerns about how to assure that children are receiving the quality of care they need.

In brief, the fact that there is no single model of collaboration and that different types of collaboration have evolved in different communities makes for a very complex SECE system.

Collaboration Barriers and Challenges

Complexity is expressed not only in the number of different types of collaboration but also in the ways in which the regulations of each program interact and the difference in the infrastructure (i.e., governance, professional development, monitoring, communication, etc.) that supports each of the funding streams. Some of the elements of this complexity, according to our informants,

continue to pose challenges or create barriers to collaboration. These barriers, as our informants reflected, are "real and very difficult."

Incompatible Program Goals and Implementation

Underlying tensions in the philosophies and objectives of SECE programs were highlighted in our discussions. As previously stated, the Head Start and CCDF programs have historically different objectives, as Head Start was conceived as an anti-poverty and comprehensive child-development program, and CCDF subsidies as an employment support program. In Illinois, PFA emerged as an education reform strategy with the primary objectives of increasing school readiness and later academic achievement. Particularly concerning providers that receive child care subsidies, our informants stressed that there is "an important distinction [to be made as] child care funding is a work support for parents, not a child development program". One state administrator elaborated that this distinction "matters deeply because parents' eligibility is driven by their participation in the workforce or being in school [resulting in] extensive difficulties [when] aligning these programs[42]".

Our informants helped to contextualize how the tensions that flow from the programs' inherently disparate objectives play out in Chicago. Nearly all of informants made reference to how different program goals impact collaboration, with particular emphasis on the "mismatch" between child care subsidies, Head Start and Preschool for All. "Because Head Start and pre-K developed as part-day programs, historically those have been operated in different settings. So those are the difficulties in trying to work through things as a childcare provider," one informant stated. Another reflected, "The relationship between child care and Preschool for All, Prevention Initiatives—even there it's pretty hard [with] totally different worldviews and totally different ways those programs have come into being, and different constituencies, different purposes." These differences play out in another tension between access and quality: "child care is about access because it's a workforce support for parent, [but] access and quality need to be linked together."

A further complication are the administrative and structural differences that can occur within each of the three SECE programs, for example, the fact that some child care settings are for-profit as opposed to not for profit:

> *Collaborations are hard because core goals are not the same…Parts of the … struggle is financial incentives for for-profit child care centers. The family child care homes that are getting child care money and Head Start money, these are a* business *for women so a lot of agencies got into it to create a pipeline of workforce entry for their clients.[and sometimes collaboration can mean]that you're really working in opposition to these goals.*

Collaboration among funding streams is necessary today, our informants remarked, in order to improve the quality of children's learning experiences across programs. Establishing and enforcing a common definition of quality, however, has been challenging as the three programs differ in the incentives for program quality and improvement. The level of quality required by

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[42] This is consistent with Adams & Rohacek (2002) who note that although many child care policymakers and practitioners prioritize child development and improving program quality, the underlying realities of the subsidy system and how subsidies are implemented constrain efforts to incorporate more emphasis on child development into the system.

CCDF is minimal in that only a 4 percent set aside must be earmarked for quality improvement activities[43], and differs largely from Head Start and PFA. Licensing, one administrator commented, "may set the stage for quality, [but] it is not ultimately about quality. Its purpose is to protect children."

> *So you have programs that are already getting Head Start and/or Preschool for All money which are allowing them to have a much higher quality of program, and then they get extra child care money, too. That's not a system. That's silos.*

A related challenge discussed by some of our informants is generating common understandings between programs of quality and developmentally appropriate learning experiences for young children given the historically different goals of each program:

> *[Improving quality] is a challenge [and] anything at the policy and collaboration level ... that brings us to a shared understanding of what quality really is a challenge. It's a really difficult conversation to have with somebody to say 'this is how I define quality,' and [the other person] is saying, 'I don't do that...I don't see any way I could do that.' ... these exchanges [can be] destructive. ...The early childhood field is full of these ideas and tensions between intentional instruction and child-centered and child-directed, co-construction and construction, and content.*

Many informants viewed a consistent vision or model of quality—one that could be agreed upon by all partners—as critical to successful collaboration. The importance of consistency is highlighted by the remarks of one administrator: "We don't really have a common understanding necessarily or language around what is the framework [for quality improvement], [but] we expect teachers to help children learn and be prepared for [school]… You have to take the essence of what early childhood programs are about [and create] a framework … [that defines these] expectations.

Policy and Administrative Differences

The most consistently cited challenges to agencies and providers that reportedly engaged in collaboration were the result of the differing funding requirements, administrative structures, delivery mechanisms, and governance models between the three SECE programs. Collaboration was viewed as a "complex puzzle that you're asking people to put together," one that requires a very strategic approach. Programmatic regulations quickly become onerous, informants reported, creating disincentives for providers to participate in collaborative models. Providers who run these programs, our sources remarked, are forced to "meet various administrative requirements that often hinder each other…and take an amazing amount of administration and financial time."

For example, child care-Head Start collaborations are made difficult by differing eligibility determination periods, family eligibility criteria and payment policies. Our informants provided numerous examples of how these differences in programs are experienced by providers. In some cases, providers have to engage in practices that, in the words of one informant, "run counter to what you'd think would be best practice." For example, several informants expressed concern about children having to make too many transitions during a day: "And so you have these crazy things where a child is going to a child care center, he spends an hour and a half in

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[43] In Illinois, an 8% set aside is required.

the morning in this classroom, then he walks down the hall to the Preschool for All classroom, and that takes 2½ hours, and then he comes back to child care for the rest of the day.

Child Care eligibility is 5 hours so if a kid is going to Head Start or a Pre-K and they come at 7:30 and they leave and go to Head Start or Pre-K at 8:30 and then they come back from Head Start or Pre-K at 11:30 and their mom picks 'em up at 3:00, how many hours of Child Care did they have?

One of the things of course we heard from directors was eligibility periods don't coincide. They're really, really difficult to bridge between Head Start/Pre-K, which come at eligibility or in the same manner and then Child Care, which comes at it differently and it has a much tighter timeline [of 6 months unless you're an approved Collaboration model].

The administrative complexity that arises from collaborations where individual children are supported by different funding streams is described below. As the administrator in a city agency explained,

Most [Head Start] delegate agencies in the city, community-based organizations, receive child care and/or Preschool for All money. But their formulas are by individual child. So in an agency that has several classrooms, only a percentage of their children are receiving these additional pieces; not every child. And so all those agencies have to deal with the multiple funders but they're not getting for the 500 children enrolled 500 PFA or 500 child care matches. They may be getting a 100 or a classroom here or a classroom there. So that's why we have the illusion of [more blending or braiding than there really is]. When you look at each individual child, a child might have one of these or one of these but not all three. And some may have all three [funding streams].

Another informant characterized the budgeting process for a program supported by all three of the SECE funding streams as a "complex puzzle that you're asking people to put together…because of the restraints, the barriers [posed by] these funding streams." Putting the puzzle together depended on "knowing your funder and what they like to fund."

And then you start with the least restrictive, which is Preschool for All, and they really want to pay for the teacher and the aide for 2½ hours a day, or half a day, and for classroom materials; and that's pretty much all you're going to get out of them. So you budget all that first. Then you go to your next restrictive, which is Head Start, and…and they're going to have to fund the other half of the teachers 'cause you can only do half day with Preschool for All, and they're going to fund your Family Support Specialist, and they might fund a little bit of your supervision, but you have to be careful when you total that up, it can't be over 15 percent. Or private money's your next least restrictive. And all the rest is child care, and you don't even know if you're going to get the child care money because it depends on whether your kid is going to be eligible or shows up that day. So you budget it all out like that and try to balance it out and make it work.

Along with budgeting and administrative challenges, agencies that rely on multiple funding sources are bound by multiple monitoring processes, which create another set of administrative pressures for SECE providers. The remarks of another informant aptly reflect the difficulties that policies impose:

A child care center [supported through multiple funding streams] is licensed by DCFS, it's licensed by the city of Chicago, it's monitored by Head Start, it's monitored by child care,

and by Chicago Public Schools for Preschool for All. So on any day you could have four monitors show up… It's really not a good situation.

Lack of System-Level Data

Several informants also pointed to the lack of accurate data on how many children are served by more than one funding stream—both concurrently and over time—to inform decisions on resource allocations, program planning, and system-building. As expressed by an informant representing a city organization, "We have to be smart about where we put our funding… Certainly multiple funding sources to an agency is preferred but only when you really can demonstrate that those dollars are actually adding the benefit that they're intending to do." Another city informant elaborated,

> *[Head Start has] a wide range of program options, plus they had for many years a wide range of what they called 'the local design options [but] that's part of the dilemma. So when [a researcher] does the wonderful needs assessment of children in the state and we see utilization data, service need and use data, it's [meaningless]. The data is not able to capture how one slot helped 3 funding sources go for one child, or 3 kids, 3 different kids. So it looks at times like the state is completely flooded and other times like there's huge need, and it's very difficult to unpack it.*

Although state and city agencies collect and track data on their children and activities, the data vary from one funding stream to another and are not necessarily linked in a way that indicates when agencies collaborate to implement their programs. The lack of accurate data, a number of informants recognized, means that the state "[does] not have a good estimate of the number/percentage of children who are touched by more than one funding stream or the number/percentage of programs that have more than one funding source." In addition, there are no data to confirm whether coordinated or blending funding actually raise the level of quality or help promote children's development and/or readiness for kindergarten, as those who promote collaboration maintain. According to one informant, "Our instinct is that even if you blend all the funding streams together it's still not enough to really do what you would want to do in an ideal world," one of our informants stated, "So we want some data to prove that."

Strategies to Support Collaboration

Despite the complexity of the system and the aforementioned challenges, there was consensus among our informants that the benefits of collaboration in the current SECE system far outweighed its drawbacks. There was little mention of competition among programs or difficulties in adhering to differential quality standards or monitoring requirements, except for an occasional comment such as providers "have to tolerate washing their hands all day long" to satisfy the requirements of the Environmental Rating System, for example, and miss the more important domain of teacher-child interaction.

Given the high demand for SECE services in the city of Chicago, the need for strategic thinking about the interactions that occur within the SECE system and the effect that this has on the services rendered to low-income children is clear. The complications that are inherent when providers are accountable to multiple agencies drive the need for strategic thinking about such barriers to collaboration. Our informants gave insight into the number of strategies and factors have been developed to facilitate collaboration. According to several informants, collaborative

partners need to communicate well and understand and address differences in organizational cultures. Flexibility in policies and rules from governing agencies, as well as the communication and relationships between people involved in the formal commitments between agencies, has been a crucial element of successful collaboration.

Beyond these factors, having a strategy or method for the merging of funds and an overarching framework (e.g., the goals of school readiness or continuity of care), purpose, and/or outcome orientation were all seen as important factors in the success of a collaboration. According to one informant,

> Collaboration] works because people are deeply committed to doing this. The agencies that do it best care about everybody. You have to care about it, or you can't do it. You believe in it and want to do it for the community. It's part of the organization's mission. We're pretty beaten down at this point, but part of the combining of the funding was a policy decision that was really a victory and breakthrough in Illinois

A number of informants also pointed to the role of specific structures at the state and city levels in facilitating communication and relationships among state and local agencies. State structures[44] , as well as national initiatives[45] were seen by our informants as creating opportunities for cross-agency communication and collaboration. For example, the state OECD, because it does not administer funds, plays a role in thinking about early care and education in the state as a system and creating a "big picture" for that state. Some of the structures and processes referenced facilitate the creation of a "big picture," in the words of one informant, or overarching model to guide implementation and communication.

> If you are the Office of Child Care [or ISBE or CPS], you are responsible for making sure that [your] funds are administered in accordance with the rules of the grant ... But really at the end of the day ...[it] is important, to think about the big picture, the policy across all that [and thinking about] What is it that we're doing that is or isn't advancing the cause of having kids get the services that they need so they're ready for kindergarten.

At the city level, several informants noted the role of the Mayor of Chicago's Ready to Learn initiative, which grew out of an intentional focus by the Mayor's Office to improve the accessibility and quality of the city's early care and education programs. Recognizing the value of a coordinating the instruments used by the agencies that oversee Head Start and Preschool for All to asses program quality and screen and assess children's development, a work group of agency administrators, policy-makers, and researchers was convened to develop recommendations for the selection of a set of common assessment and screening tools to use across funding streams and programmatic systems. Coordination of these tools was seen as a way for the city monitor children's progress in these programs and inform quality improvement efforts. In addition, the city conducted a comprehensive needs assessment to make sure funding allocations and program locations would meet the needs of communities. As a city informant told us, "[The Ready to Learn process] forced us to have those [cross-agency] conversations

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[44] For example, the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, its Intergovernmental Agency Team, the state's Great Start Grow Smart Team (a product of an initiative started during the first term of the second Bush administration), and the Head Start Collaboration Office.

[45] For example, the Build Initiative and the recent Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge.

about community needs and quality assessments, and make sure we are on the same page." A state level informant familiar with Ready to Learn observed that Chicago is in a better position to implement such a system than other areas of the state: "They're aligning [assessments] because it's the city."[46]

Many of our informants remarked on the timeliness of this inquiry, noting that the state's early childhood advisory body, the Early Learning Council, is also embarking on a new study of blending and braiding funding strategies that will involve roundtable discussions with groups of providers around the state. Many additionally considered the topic relevant to the development and implementation of the new Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) that has been developed as part of the state's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, which will be implemented later this year. Developing the new QRIS and planning its roll-out has been a year-long collaborative effort of all of the state agencies that oversee one of the SECE programs in the state—ISBE, IDHS, DCFS, and Illinois Action for Children—as well as representatives from the Chicago Public Schools and the Department of Family and Support Services. According to our informants—many of whom took part in developing the QRIS—participants in the process have been very mindful of the many monitoring and assessment processes that different programs are subject to and sought ways to coordinate or incorporate them in the QRIS.

Administrators charged with developing and implementing the QRIS also acknowledge that it remains to be seen how easy it will be to bring several different SECE providers, with varying purposes, rules and funding structures, quality, and staff qualifications, into a single quality improvement system. Some of informants expressed concern about low morale among child care providers if they are compared with Head Start or Preschool for All and how easy it will be to get all providers "to buy into" the idea of continuous quality improvement. One of the underlying premises of the new QRIS system is that, in the words of one informant, "parents are empowered with information about quality programming" and the new QRIS will create a demand for quality on the part of parents.

Several of our informants questioned this assumption. "They're going to market it," a state level informant reported. "[They think] that market demand is going to drive changes, make programs feel like they should improve, that there will be a market demand because you will know to shop around. But I've heard mixed reviews as to whether [that's true]." Other informants said they did not think the families that use publicly funded child care programs are the ones that are likely to have the time or knowledge to look for quality care—assuming it exists in their communities. As expressed by a state administrator,

> *The leadership in the state is thinking that this public education campaign is going to be market-driven—everybody's going to have to be encouraged because families are going to demand it. I think that's very much speaking from a middle-class perspective. Most poor families I've worked with over the years were pretty embroiled in the immediate needs of their life. Particularly people at a little lower than 100 percent of poverty who also [have] somewhere in the family, domestic violence,*

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[46] This effort, although rare, is not unique to Chicago. Largely driven by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (PL 110-134), other cities have also chosen to take this requirement beyond Head Start programs to coordinate assessments across all publicly funded early childhood programs. Coordination can include alignment of assessment tools, collaborative professional development, centrally organized data collection, and protocols for using assessment data into one coordinated and data-driven system for program improvement (Bosland, Ricker, Cohen, Fischer, & Rogers, 2012).

substance abuse, homelessness, some other factor that is huge, huge, so when you're embroiled in that type of life, you generally are not out campaigning to go to a 3-Star or 4-Star center.

This view was echoed by a city administrator:

There's this philosophy that if you educate parents about quality childcare that parents will demand it and the providers will have to comply because parents are demanding higher-quality care. I think that's a flaw because the very children that we want to get into higher quality settings are the most at-risk children. And those are generally the parents that are not advocates.

5. Conclusions and Implications

As we have developed throughout this study, the SECE system is characterized by substantial complexity. Collaboration is expressed in the multiplicity of early care and education program options to accommodate the different needs, values, and preferences of low-income families for child care. Given the current policy goals of providing high quality care for low-income working families, and the costs associated with that, collaboration across agencies has become an increasingly salient feature of the SECE system through which agencies and providers can achieve those goals. Our compiled evidence suggests that collaboration in the SECE system happens often, despite different program eligibility criteria, guidelines, performance expectations, perspectives on quality measures and mechanisms for monitoring. Collaboration occurs even though agencies place relatively different weights on the dual objectives of sustaining parental employment and providing children with high quality care.

Although collaboration can involve a range of collaboration activities, it was most often discussed by our informants in terms of the braiding and/or blending of funding across SECE programs. Some of the other activities that have been undertaken in the name of collaboration include: work across agencies to enact legislation and set policy goals (e.g. administrative rules efforts to promote common understandings of the purpose of early childhood programs, discussion to endorse common definitions of the structural and or procedural aspects of quality in SECE programs and the development and application of common assessments and quality rating systems to reduce the burden of multiple monitoring and assessment processes on providers. All those actions are seen as facilitating collaboration across agencies, making it more likely that braiding/blending of funding occurs across agencies in defining SECE programs,

Many of our informants commented on the "timeliness" of our inquiry, noting recent efforts to develop and implement a new system-wide QRIS in the state and to develop a coordinated screening and assessment system for early care and education programs in Chicago. They pointed to the need for data on (1) the types of individual and collaborative programs children currently experience and (2) the costs of these programs (including the costs of coordination activities), and (3) benefits of these programs for families and impacts of different programs on child development.

They also referenced President Obama's State of the Union address and FY2014 budget proposal of $77 billion to create a universal pre-kindergarten program—similar to the PFA in Illinois—for all 4 year olds through federal-state partnerships. Financed largely by significantly increasing the federal tobacco tax, the plan also calls for additional investments in home visiting and CCDF programs to improve access and quality, as well as encouraged partnerships between Early Head Start and child care programs for infants and toddlers (through competitive funding)

(e.g., NIEER 2013). If the plan is realized, it will be "a big shift," according to our informants. Although they welcomed the concept and potential new funding source for high quality early care and education, our informants also recognized that if the plan is realized, it will mean "a big shift" for the state and add yet another layer of complexity to an already complex system. "I'm very excited about the [President's] commitment to [preschool] and the idea and the increase at the policy and macro level," a state informant told us. "But then from an administrative perspective I'm thinking, 'what new [problems] will this bring?'"

The supply of SECE programs has changed (and will continue changing) dramatically in recent years, and the current relationships among the three most heavily funded SECE programs, namely CCDF, Head Start, and state pre-K programs are not well understood. Under the light of this new policy initiative, which could substantially increase funding for SECE programs across the nation, the need to understand the critical elements that constitute the SECE system and lead to collaborations across agencies to supply SECE programs has never been more important. An informed policy debate must occur in order to both understand the potential effects that this proposed increase in funding for SECE programs would have on children and families as well as to promote policy that evokes a deeper understanding about how and why SECE agencies cooperate (and/or compete) towards the common objective of providing high quality of care and supporting parental employment. The present paper is offered as an initial attempt to address those questions.

There have undoubtedly been positive outcomes that have emerged from early education and care program collaboration. For example, Head Start testimony provided to the General Accounting Office (GAO, 2002) highlighted that mandated collaboration has enabled some states to expand options for low-income families with children by pooling resources to offer full-day care options to parents. Tensions resulting from differing eligibility requirements, programs standards, geographical locations of program and monitoring and reporting requirements, however, have highlighted the remaining deficiencies in the current system of collaboration (GAO, 2003). The distinct demands created by the conditions associated with each funding stream, such as differing eligibility requirements, have long been recognized as creating more administrative burden for SECE providers that blend or braid funding (GAO, 2003). Similarly, the GAO also noted that interagency arrangements to provide full day programming to children can create cross-pressures on agencies that find themselves accountable to the standards of their partner agencies, potentially increasing the costs to individual participants in terms of funding, resources, personnel, or attention. This not only can increase the complexity of audits but also complicate the evaluation of the individual programs' effectiveness and quality. These findings of the GAO are consistent with those of our state and local informants. But noteworthy in our study was the strong commitment among informants to collaboration as a means to improve the quality of children's early care and learning experiences.

Researchers and policy makers have long sought to understand the impacts of the early care and education programs supported by public funding, as evidenced in the large body of research on Head Start impacts and the NICHD study of child care, among others. For the most part, these studies treat programs as individual funding streams without reference to the fact that the agencies governing the supply of those programs often collaborate. Yet, as this paper makes clear, the lack of attention to combinations and collaborations of SECE programs does not render an accurate picture of the universe of children's early care and education experiences. Similarly,

data on participation in early care and education programs drawn from surveys of parents may not yield accurate information when children are supported by multiple funding streams.

Our preliminary findings on the nature of collaboration in the SECE system and the wide range of program experiences resulting from collaboration, it is very misleading to talk about a "Head Start" or "Pre-K" child or a typical "child care" experience. The extent to which low-income children are supported by a combination of PFA, Head Start, and/or CCAP funds in order to be in full-day services is largely unknown. In order to understand the impacts of different programs on child development, we must first acknowledge and then understand the diversity and complexity of those programs. The conventional idea of SECE programs as treatments with homogeneous components is challenged by the dynamic nature of the experiences to which children can be exposed. In SECE systems characterized by substantial collaboration, evaluators that attempt to isolate the "pure" effect of a conventionally defined SECE program on child outcomes (say estimate the effects of Head Start on cognitive development) face an ex-ante heterogeneity problem that requires critical analysis in order to generate a coherent interpretation of the components that define the treatment effects.

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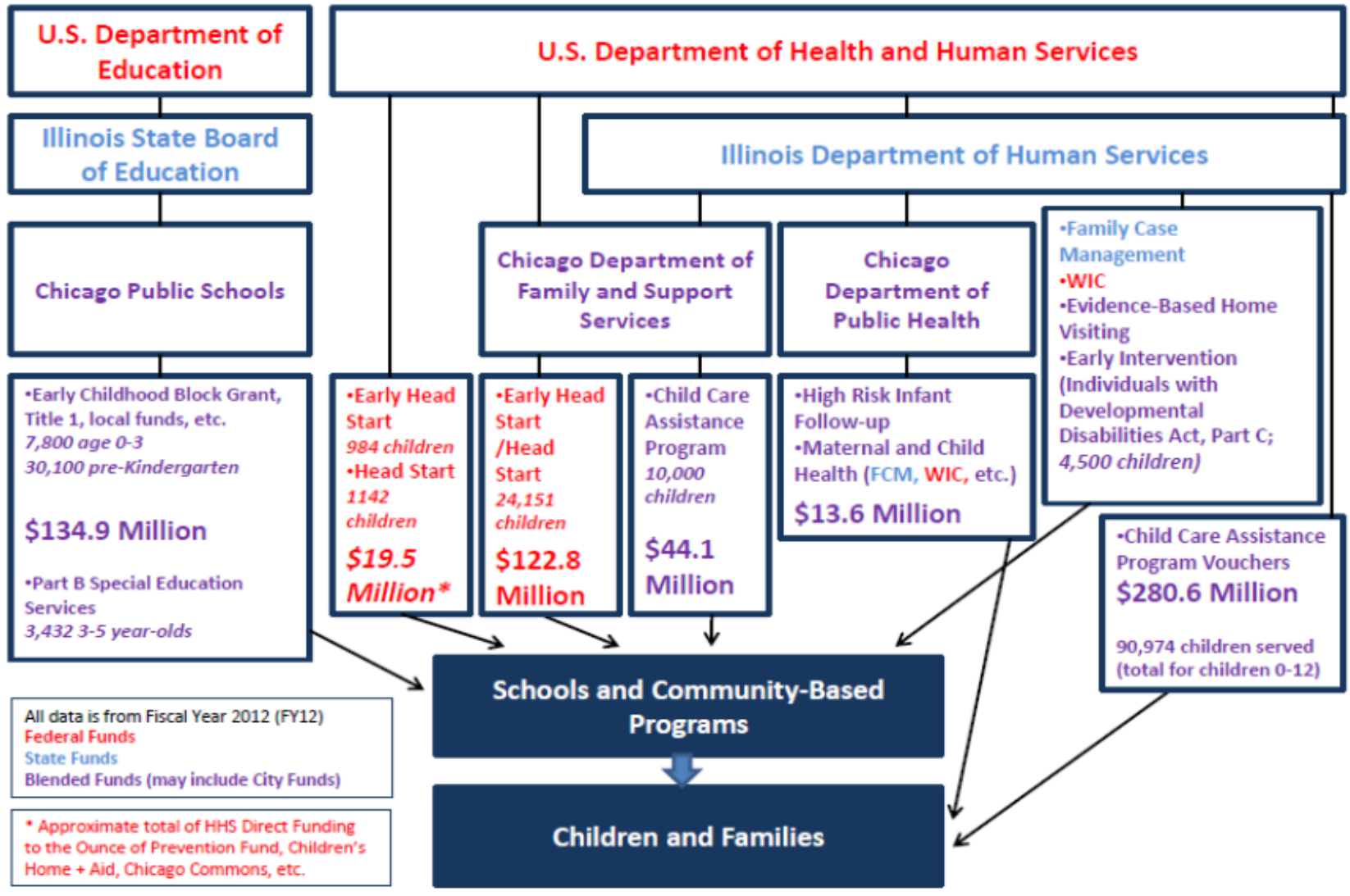
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Current Early Childhood Funding Streams in the City of Chicago: Funding Drives Services and Programs

U.S. Department of Education

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Illinois State Board of Education

Illinois Department of Human Services

Chicago Public Schools

Chicago Department of Family and Support Services

Chicago Department of Public Health

•Family Case Management
•WIC
•Evidence-Based Home Visiting
•Early Intervention (Individuals with Developmental Disabilities Act, Part C; 4,500 children)

•Early Childhood Block Grant, Title 1, local funds, etc.
7,800 age 0-3
30,100 pre-Kindergarten

$134.9 Million

•Part B Special Education Services
3,432 3-5 year-olds

•Early Head Start
984 children
•Head Start
1142 children

$19.5 Million*

•Early Head Start /Head Start
24,151 children

$122.8 Million

•Child Care Assistance Program
10,000 children

$44.1 Million

•High Risk Infant Follow-up
•Maternal and Child Health (FCM, WIC, etc.)

$13.6 Million

•Child Care Assistance Program Vouchers
$280.6 Million

90,974 children served (total for children 0-12)

All data is from Fiscal Year 2012 (FY12)
Federal Funds
State Funds
Blended Funds (may include City Funds)

* Approximate total of HHS Direct Funding to the Ounce of Prevention Fund, Children's Home + Aid, Chicago Commons, etc.

Schools and Community-Based Programs

Children and Families

*Prepared by the Ounce of Prevention Fund, May 2013

Program	Eligibility	Child Outcome Assessment Systems	Curriculum Requirements	Teacher Credential Requirements	Program Monitoring	Parent Engagement
Chicago Public Schools						
Preschool for All	• All children, 3- and 4-years of age; with first priority given to children who meet at-risk criteria, based on screening	• Community partner agencies required to utilize Teaching Strategies GOLD for child assessment.	• Research-based curriculum required, must include language development component • Programs may choose which research-based curriculum to use	• Teachers: Type 04 Certificate or be enrolled in an approved certification program • Teacher assistants: At least 30 college credit hours	• Community partner agencies must provide a Quality Improvement Plan or Program Self-Evaluation Plan • City monitoring information needed	• Community partner agencies must offer an appropriate parent education and involvement component
Prevention Initiative: Center-Based	• At-risk children, from six weeks to 3 years of age	• Community partner agencies required to utilize Teaching Strategies GOLD for child assessment.	• Research-based educational curriculum required, must include language development • Programs may choose which research-based curriculum to use • Requires a language curriculum or commitment to CPS *Reading is Fundamental Program*	• Teachers: BA/BS or AA in Early Childhood Education or Child Development • Teacher assistants: At least 30 college credit hours, of which 15 must be in early childhood education • Clarification needed on plans to require the Infant/Toddler Credential?	• Agencies must provide a Quality Improvement Plan or Program Self-Evaluation Plan • City monitoring information needed	• Must offer a research-based parent education and involvement component • Financial incentive offered for hiring of Family Support Specialist
Prevention Initiative: Home-Based	• At-risk children, from birth to 3 years of age, based on criteria defined by program model • Includes prenatal services as well?		• Must offer a research-based educational curriculum • Programs may choose which research-based curriculum to use	• Staff must hold appropriate certificates or credentials to comply with the program model	• Agency must provide an end of year self-assessment • City monitoring information needed • *CPS Program Agreement: A variety of tools may be selected to monitor program quality such as, but not limited to, ITERS, Ages and Stages, Creative Curriculum, etc.*	• Must offer a research-based parent education and involvement program

Program	Eligibility	Child Outcome Assessment Systems	Curriculum Requirements	Teacher Credential Requirements	Program Monitoring	Parent Engagement
Chicago Department of Family and Support Services						
Early Head Start/ Head Start	• Income eligibility: Children/pregnant women at or below100% FPL, with some ability to enroll up to 130% FPL. Regulations allow up to 10% of enrollment to be over-income • Eligibility for 2 years (requiring redetermination between Early Head Start and Head Start) <u>Early Head Start age eligibility:</u> <u>Head Start age eligibility:</u> • Children who are 3 (as of September 1) to age 5 (as of September 1) • 10% of children served must be children with special needs	• The agencies must focus on assessment of specific indicators of literacy, numeracy, and language skills, and implement and collect data on Child Outcomes Framework domains.	• Developmentally and linguistically appropriate curriculum required • Programs may choose which curriculum to use	<u>Head Start</u> • By Oct. 2011, in classrooms where there is not a teacher with a bachelor's degree, teacher must hold associate's degree in early childhood education or a related field with experience teaching preschool children *(National goal: 50% center-based Head Start teachers with bachelor's degrees in early childhood or a related field with experience teaching preschool children)* <u>Early Head Start</u> • Center-based: CDA and coursework in early childhood development • Home-based: In process	• Annual program self-assessment required • City monitoring information needed • Triennial federal monitoring site visit	• Federal law and rule require robust parent involvement activities required in both children's activities and program governance
City of Chicago Child Care Licensing					• On-site licensing visits for health and safety	
Illinois Department of Human Services						
Child Care Assistance Program	• Parents must be employed and/or engaged in an approved education or training with combined income of less than 185% of the federal poverty level. Redetermination of eligibility is every 6 months;	• None	• None required			• None required

Program	Eligibility	Child Outcome Assessment Systems	Curriculum Requirements	Teacher Credential Requirements	Program Monitoring	Parent Engagement
	annually in certain programs					
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services						
Child Care Licensing		None		• Center directors and teachers: Diploma or GED, specialized coursework or experience required	• On-site licensing visits for health and safety • Every 3 Years	

Evolution of Funding and Enrollment for Head Start (all US)*

Year	Funding	Enrollment
1997	793,809	3,980.50
1998	822,316	4,347.40
1999	835,365	4,658.20
2000	857,664	5,266.20
2001	905,235	6,199.10
2002	912,345	6,536.60
2003	909,608	6,667.50
2004	905,851	6,774.80
2005	906,993	6,843.10
2006	909,201	6,785.82
2007	908,412	6,887.90

*Source:
http://democrats.waysandmeans.house.gov/sites/democrats.waysandmeans.house.gov/files/documents/head.pdf

APPENDIX D*
Early Care and Education Program Collaboration Models
Approved by the Head Start State Collaboration Office

	ONE AGENCY, MULTIPLE FUNDERS	MULTIPLE AGENCIES PARTNER	PARTNERING WITH FAMILY CHILD CARE
Model/ Structure Type	A single program or agency blends/braids funds and program requirements from multiple sources at a single site.	Two or more agencies, which are separate legal entities, partner to serve children at a single site. These collaborations generally include two types: those that co-locate, or share only space, and those that actually share programming & funding.	A program or agency partners with family child care home providers.
Definition	An agency may do this by merging early care & education programs, such as child care, PreK and/or Head Start, by blending/braiding funding, resources & program requirements from those programs. Or, an agency that operates one type of program may access and integrate new funding, such as child care assistance, to extend services to full day and full year.	The collaboration's costs may be covered through subcontracts, purchase of services, or other interagency agreements. Children who need full day/year, comprehensive care remain at one site. Classrooms may be team-taught by teachers who are employed by two different organizations. The partnering programs share an early care & education philosophy, ensuring programmatic continuity for the child's full day of care.	Children receive full day/year services in a family child care home. The partnership enhances comprehensive services for the child and family. The family child care provider may be a contractor or hired as an employee by the early care & education program.
Examples	**Example:** A child care center that receives PreK funding directly in a grant from the State Board of Education along with its state child care assistance funding and other child care revenue sources to provide full day/year services that include PreK educational & support services. **Example:** A community action agency that is a Head Start grantee and runs a child care center blends its Head Start and child care programs to serve children full day/year with high quality comprehensive services. The agency allocates costs between programs, as appropriate. **Example:** A Head Start program partners with the CCR&R to use child care certificates to extend the children's day.	**Example:** A local school that has a PreK program partners with a child care center that uses the child care assistance program. Child care staff work with children at the school site and their schedules overlap with the PreK teacher to ensure continuity. **Example:** A Head Start program contracts with a child care center to provide full day/year services for Head Start children at the child care center. Head Start allocates their specialists' time to work with child care staff to provide comprehensive services to children & families in the collaboration.	**Example:** A Head Start agency or PreK program contracts with family child care home providers or a provider network to provide full day/year Head Start or PreK services in the home(s). **Example:** An employer sponsored child care center provides sick child care through partnership with family child care providers. *Adapted from QUILT materials*

*Source: IDHS Head Start Collaboration Office 2007

Spring 2013 Interview Guide for Study of SECE Collaboration

This study is being done to learn more about collaboration among publicly-funded or subsidized early care and education (SECE) programs in Illinois—specifically the Child Care and Development Fund (the child care assistance program or CCAP in IL), Head Start, and preschool programs that are provided through the Chicago Public Schools (such as Preschool for All, tuition-based pre-K, the Child Parent Centers [CPC], and collaborations with CBOs). The study examines what types of collaborations exist, the quality of those collaborations, and the factors that facilitate or hinder the development of collaborations. It explores collaboration in different areas of the early childhood system, e.g., funding, data collection and evaluation, program quality, and professional development. It also will attempt to assess whether the current array of early childhood programs and level of integration, alignment, or collaboration is meeting the needs of children, families, and communities and families in terms of supporting parental employment and the development needs of children. We also would like to learn about any needed improvements in the operation and effectiveness of local programs. Today, I would like to talk with you about your perceptions about the early childhood system, particularly with respect to collaboration and competition among subsidized ECE. I'll ask you a series of open-ended questions to which you may respond. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you have any questions for me or do not feel comfortable answering any questions, please let me know. We can skip anything that you don't feel comfortable answering. After we complete this interview, if I have any additional questions to help me clarify what we discussed, I might contact you again to follow-up on these questions. Do you want to ask me anything before we begin?

*[**Note**: The following questions are to be used as a guide to a semi-structured conversational interview. Sub-questions are included as possible probes to use if the respondent does not mention these topics; you are not expected to ask all sub-questions but should try to address each topical area. Because state informants vary, not all questions will be appropriate for all respondents. New relevant topic areas may also emerge during the course of the interview. The order of questions may also vary.]*

Background *[I'd like to begin by learning a little more about your background and how you became involved in early care and education services in the state.]*

- What is your position and title? How long have you held this position? What is your role in relation to the early childhood system in Illinois?
- What is the role of your organization in the EC system? Please describe your organization, funding, etc.
- What challenges does your organization face in implementing and supporting high quality ECE programs? How has your organization responded to these challenges?

System Development
- To begin, how would you describe the SECE system in Chicago (and/or Illinois) at this point in time? What are some things that have been put in place in the past decade years to build IL's SECE system?
- We are particularly interested in the relationships among the three main types of publicly-funded ECE programs in the state—Head Start, child care (CCDF/CCAP), and CPS preschool programs.
  - How would you describe the relationship among these 3 programs at this point in time? (Probe for different levels of collaboration/coordination and variations in strength of

relationships.) How has this relationship evolved? (Probe for how PFA changed relationships when it began in 2006, what existed between Head and CCDF before PFA [recall there was a state pre-K program before PFA].)

- What policies enable collaboration between your agency/organization and other agencies or programs in the SECE system?

- What are the "drivers" for collaboration? (E.g., meet diverse needs of families, improve access for families, improve program quality and accountability, reduce program costs, reduce duplication of services, improve gaps in services, funder requires it, etc.)

- What is your/your organization's attitude towards collaboration in general (e.g., it provides much more value than expected, somewhat more value than expected, lived up to expectations, provided less value—or is more trouble than it's worth)? What are some of the benefits and drawbacks?

  - Does your agency/organization have a particular policy (explicit or implicit?) on partnering with other institutions and community organizations?

  - In what ways have you adjusted your ways of working in order to partner with other SECE programs?

  - Looking back 5-10 years, is the current perspective on collaboration similar to that of the past? What is different, if not? What do you think it will be in the future? (Probe for factors that have changed this, e.g., policies and regulations, changing demographics, etc.)

- As a representative of [agency/organization], how often do you have professional contact with [other SECE organizations], say, in the last year? What is the nature of your contact? (Please be specific.) How well are these relationships working? (Please explain.) Are the frequency and nature of your contacts similar to what they were, say, 5 years ago? If not, how have they changed?

  - Do you feel you sufficiently understand the practices and policies of other SECE? If so, how have you come to understand them, or what has facilitated your knowledge? If not, what have the barriers been? How could this learning be facilitated better?

Barriers to and Supports for System Integration and Alignment
Probe in Different Domains: (1) standards, assessment and evaluation; (2) funding; (3) governance and planning; and (4) regulations that specify structural and procedural quality of care, including professional development, QRIS, and licensing

- What do you see as the primary benefits to collaboration (vs. competition) for families; workforce; program quality; etc.?
- What do you see as some of the drawbacks or disadvantages? (e.g., different quality, eligibility guidelines, staff credentials and qualifications, ratios, class size)
- How can benefits be enhanced and drawbacks minimized?
  - What are some of the supports/facilitators vs. challenges/barriers to collaboration? (Possible probes: Federal policy mandates over the past 2 decades [e.g., Welfare Reform, CCDF, GSGS, Head Start, ARRA, EC2010, RTT-ELC, new Obama early learning initiative]; State system efforts [BUILD/IAT, SAC, ELC, ECCES; state agencies]; Mayor/city structures and systems; individual providers; Family needs and preferences)
- What factors make collaboration work? (E.g., personal qualities of people, management skills, communication, problem-solving, finances, etc.) What supports are there in terms of workforce

training or coaching to improve skills

Potential Tensions in Collaborations
- There are some natural tensions in collaboration, e.g., a tension between advancing or improving a particular program vs. developing a system of services. Do you agree? Where is the emphasis in current policies and practices? Is there a way to resolve the tension? Can you see where there are opportunities to create or expand programs that also further system development? Do you think the drive to create universal pre-K in many states (PFA in IL) over the past decade a strategy was focused too narrowly on program advancement, or has Illinois been able to use that momentum to advance the ECE system?
- Another issue is governance and leadership. With the new OECD and the ELC overseeing early childhood system, is there balanced representation of the three programs—Head Start, CCDF, and PFA?
- Another common tension is that between quantity/access and quality. In this tight fiscal context, how is Illinois balancing the need for more services for families with commitment to quality improvement? How does collaboration affect quality?

Local Example
- Can you describe a successful collaboration among ECE providers in the city? What are the benefits? How did participating agencies come together? How were responsibilities determined? How did participants define objectives? What are the critical components of successful collaboration (e.g., funding strategies, communication structure, etc.)

Wrap-Up
We appreciate your time in talking with us. Is there anyone else you think we should interview? Is there anything else you would like to say regarding SECE in Illinois or do you have any questions for me?
Thank you!