United States Government Accountability Office

Report to the Chairwoman, Committee on Education and the Workforce, House of Representatives

July 2017

# EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

# Agencies Have Helped Address Fragmentation and Overlap through Improved Coordination

Accessible Version

GAO-17-463

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## Agencies Have Helped Address Fragmentation and Overlap through Improved Coordination

GAO Highlights

Highlights of GAO-17-463, a report to the Chairwoman, Committee on Education and the Workforce, House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

Millions of children age 5 and under participate each year in federally funded preschool and other early learning programs, or receive federally supported child care. Federal support for early learning and child care has evolved over time to meet emerging needs. In 2012, GAO reported that multiple federal agencies administer numerous early learning and child care programs. GAO was asked to re-examine federal programs that provide or support early learning and child care.

This report examines 1) the federal investment in early learning and child care programs; 2) fragmentation, overlap, and duplication among early learning and child care programs and agencies' efforts to address these conditions; and 3) the extent to which agencies assess performance for programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose. GAO analyzed responses to questionnaires from nine agencies and one regional commission; reviewed budget and tax expenditure documentation, evaluations, annual program performance results, and other agency documentation; and interviewed officials from HHS, Education, and Interior.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO makes no recommendations in this report. In its comments, HHS agreed with GAO's findings and noted that children benefit most from investments in federal early learning and child care programs when they are coordinated with similar programs. Education and HHS also provided technical comments, which GAO incorporated as appropriate.

View GAO-17-463. For more information, contact Cindy Brown Barnes at (202) 512-7215 or brownbarnesc@gao.gov.

## What GAO Found

Multiple federal programs may provide or support early learning or child care for children age 5 and under. Of these programs, nine describe early learning or child care as an explicit purpose and are administered by the Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS), Education (Education), and the Interior (Interior). Fiscal year 2015 obligations for these nine programs totaled approximately $15 billion, with the vast majority of these funds concentrated in Head Start and the Child Care and Development Fund. An additional 35 programs did not have an explicit early learning or child care purpose, but permitted funds to be used for these services. Additionally, three tax expenditures subsidized individuals' private purchase of child or dependent care.

As GAO found in 2012, some early learning and child care programs are fragmented, overlap, or have potential for duplication. Specifically:

- **Fragmentation.** The federal investment in early learning and child care is fragmented in that it is administered through multiple agencies.
- **Overlap.** Some programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose overlap, given that they target similar beneficiaries, such as low-income children, or engage in similar activities. However, these programs often have different goals and administrative structures.
- **Duplication.** Some programs are potentially duplicative because they may fund similar types of services for similar populations. However, the extent to which actual duplication exists is difficult to assess due to differing program eligibility requirements and data limitations.

HHS and Education have helped address these conditions through improved agency coordination, particularly by following leading practices for interagency collaboration. For example, in response to needed actions GAO identified in 2012, HHS and Education expanded membership of their inter-departmental workgroup on young children to include other agencies with early learning and child care programs. The agencies have also documented their agreements, dedicated staff time to promote the goals and activities of this inter-departmental workgroup, and issued joint policy statements. The resulting improvement in coordination has helped mitigate the effects of fragmentation and overlap.

HHS, Education, and Interior use different methods to assess performance for the nine programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose. These agencies collect performance information through various combinations of performance moni0074oring, program evaluations or studies, and other information, such as grantee-submitted reports. In addition, they collect performance information that aligns with program objectives, and many programs examine common aspects of performance. However, the specific results agencies assess differ for a number of reasons. For example, some programs assess children only while they receive services, while others assess later impacts on children.

# Contents

Tables

Figures

**Abbreviations**

| | |
|---|---|
| AA | Associate of Arts |
| BA | Bachelor of Arts |
| CCAMPIS | Child Care Access Means Parents in School |
| CCDF | Child Care and Development Fund |
| CFDA | Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance |
| Education | Department of Education |
| FACE | Family and Child Education |
| FACES | Family and Child Experiences Survey |
| FY | Fiscal Year |
| GPRAMA | GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 |
| HHS | Department of Health and Human Services |
| IDEA | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act |
| Interior | Department of the Interior |
| NEILS | National Early Intervention Longitudinal Study |
| PEELS | Pre-Elementary Education Longitudinal Study |
| TANF | Temporary Assistance for Needy Families |
| Treasury | Department of the Treasury |
| SSBG | Social Services Block Grant |
| USDA | U.S. Department of Agriculture |

U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE
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July 13, 2017

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
House of Representatives

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

Millions of children age 5 and under participate each year in federally funded preschool and other early learning programs or receive federally supported child care. Research cites the importance of providing high-quality early learning experiences during children's formative years.[1] Furthermore, we have previously reported that having high-quality child care is critical to sustaining parents' ability to work.[2] Federal funding for early learning and child care has evolved over time to meet emerging needs. In 2012, we reported that multiple federal agencies administer numerous early learning and child care programs.[3]

The array of federal agencies involved in administering early learning and child care programs raises questions about potential overlap and duplication among programs, as well as about how agencies that administer the programs are coordinating with each other and measuring program performance. You asked us to review the programs that comprise the federal investment in early learning and child care. This report examines:

1. What is known about the federal investment in early learning and child care programs;

[1]For example, see J. Shonkoff and D. Phillips, Eds, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2000).

[2]GAO, *Multiple Factors Could Have Contributed to the Recent Decline in the Number of Children Whose Families Receive Subsidies,* GAO-10-344 (Washington D.C.: May 5, 2010).

[3]GAO, *2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue*, GAO-12-342SP (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 28, 2012).

2. The extent to which early learning and child care programs are fragmented, overlap, or are duplicative, and the efforts agencies have made to address these conditions; and
3. The extent to which agencies assess performance for programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose.

To address our objectives, we used three criteria to identify relevant programs: they (1) funded or supported early learning or child care services, (2) were provided to children age 5 and under, and (3) delivered services in an educational or child care setting. We limited our review to programs for which federal funds were obligated in fiscal year 2015, the most recent available obligations data at the time we conducted our work. We did not conduct a separate legal review to identify and analyze relevant programs or verify the accuracy of the information agencies provided to us.

To address our first objective, we started with the list of 45 programs and 5 tax expenditures in our 2012 review.[4] We sent questionnaires to nine agencies and one regional commission included in the 2012 review and received responses from them all. We conducted follow-up interviews with agency officials to confirm that these programs and tax expenditures continued to meet all three of our criteria in fiscal year 2015. We also reviewed supplementary information, such as information from annual reports and program notices in the Federal Register, from the Departments of Education (Education), Health and Human Services (HHS), the Interior (Interior), and all the other agencies included in our prior review. After we created a preliminary list of programs, we counted the number of federal early learning and child care programs by

[4]We excluded kindergarten programs from our scope because early learning applies to children who are pre-school age (age 5 and under), while children who are in kindergarten are grouped as part of the standard K-12 education demographic. In this review, we also excluded any programs that were not listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA), a government-wide compendium of federal programs, projects, services, and activities that provide assistance or benefits to the American public. As we did in 2012 and prior work, we excluded programs operated by the U.S. Department of Defense because these programs are available only to members of the military and their families, and are not listed in the CFDA. For a more detailed description of the methodology for our 2012 review, see p. 201, "How GAO Conducted Its Work," GAO-12-342SP.

examining the key benefits and services they provide.[5] Using a similar definition as in our prior review, we considered a program to have an explicit early learning or child care purpose if, according to our analysis, early learning or child care is specifically described as a program purpose in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) or in agency documents. We categorized all other programs included in this review as not having an explicit early learning or child care purpose. In this review, we also included tax expenditures that could be used to subsidize families or employers for early learning or child care related expenses.[6] After we identified programs and tax expenditures that met our criteria, we obtained information about fiscal year 2015 program obligations from the President's budget for fiscal year 2017. We used the Department of the Treasury's (Treasury) Tax Expenditure Estimates for fiscal year 2017 to obtain information on estimated losses in revenue in fiscal year 2015 for tax expenditures.

To analyze potential fragmentation, overlap, and duplication, we used the responses agencies provided us through our questionnaires and other documents to assess the programs' activities and target populations. We also interviewed Education and HHS officials regarding their efforts to coordinate with other agencies that administer early learning or child care programs and examined supporting documentation. We compared these

[5]In 2012, the Office of Management and Budget issued guidance allowing agencies flexibility to define and count their programs using five possible approaches for the purpose of preparing program inventories. These include defining programs by: 1) goals and outcomes; 2) beneficiaries, customers, or other target populations; 3) key benefits, services, or products; 4) administering agencies or organizational structure; and 5) budget. The resulting number of programs can vary depending on the approach used to define programs.

[6]Tax expenditures are reductions in a taxpayer's tax liability that are the result of special exemptions and exclusions from taxation which include deductions, credits, deferrals of tax liability, or preferential tax rates. Tax expenditures included in this review include those that (1) fund or support early learning or child care services, (2) are obtained on behalf of children under age 5, and (3) forgo taxes so those funds can be used to purchase child care services occurring in an educational or child care setting. To identify relevant tax expenditures, we: 1) started with the list of tax expenditures in our 2012 review; 2) reviewed descriptions in the Congressional Research Service's *2014 Tax Compendium* to identify any new tax expenditures that can be used for early learning or child care; and 3) confirmed with officials from the Department of the Treasury that the tax expenditures we identified met our criteria.

efforts against leading practices for agency collaboration.[7] In addition, we obtained information about program performance for programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose by interviewing agency officials and reviewing agency performance reports, congressional budget justifications, program studies, and other documentation. Details on our objectives, scope, and methodology can be found in appendix I.

We conducted this performance audit from April 2016 to July 2017 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

# Background

## Early Learning and Child Care Programs

While parents are primarily responsible for the education and care of children who are younger than school age, a variety of factors have led to an increased demand for early learning and child care programs. For example, workforce participation among mothers with children age 5 and under has generally increased since the 1970s. In addition, initiatives to expand access to preschool have developed at the local, state, and federal level. Federal support for early learning and child care has developed gradually in response to emerging needs. Historically, early learning and child care programs existed separately with separate goals: early learning programs focused on preparing young children for school, while child care programs subsidized the cost of child care for low-income parents who worked or engaged in work-related activities. Over time, the distinction between these two types of programs has blurred somewhat

[7]Key features of leading practices for agency collaboration fall into the following categories: outcomes and accountability; bridging organizational cultures; leadership; clarity of roles and responsibilities; participants; resources; and written guidance and agreements. See GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: Practices that Can Help Enhance and Sustain Collaboration among Federal Agencies,* GAO-06-15 (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 21, 2005); *Managing for Results: Key Considerations for Implementing Interagency Collaborative Mechanisms,* GAO-12-1022 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 27, 2012); and *Managing for Results: Implementation Approaches Used to Enhance Collaboration in Interagency Groups*, GAO-14-220 (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 14, 2014).

as policymakers seek to make educationally enriching care available to more young children.

In addition to costs paid by parents, multiple levels of government contribute funding to support early learning and child care through a loosely connected system of private and public programs. Public financing for early learning and child care in the United States involves multiple funding streams and programs at the federal, state, and local level. A portion of federal support for child care is provided through funding to states, which in turn provide subsidies to low-income families. Within the parameters of federal law, regulations, and guidance, states generally determine their own specific policies concerning the administration of these funds, including who is eligible to receive subsidies, the amount of the subsidies, and the standards that programs must meet.

## Program Fragmentation, Overlap, and Duplication

We previously reported that different agencies administer the array of federal early learning and child care programs.[8] This report, like our prior work, uses standard definitions to describe fragmentation, overlap, and duplication among government programs:[9]

- **Fragmentation** refers to those circumstances in which more than one federal agency (or more than one organization within an agency) is involved in the same broad area of national need and opportunities exist to improve service delivery.
- **Overlap** occurs when multiple agencies or programs have similar goals, engage in similar activities or strategies to achieve their goals, or target similar beneficiaries.
- **Duplication** occurs when two or more agencies or programs are engaged in the same activities or provide the same services to the same beneficiaries.

[8]GAO-12-342SP.

[9]GAO, *Fragmentation, Overlap, and Duplication: An Evaluation and Management Guide*, GAO-15-49SP (Washington, D.C.: April 14, 2015).

As we have previously reported, fragmentation, overlap, and duplication exist across many areas of government activity.[10] In some cases it may be appropriate or beneficial for multiple agencies or entities to be involved in the same programmatic or policy area, due to the complex nature or the magnitude of the federal effort.

## Performance Assessment

For policy makers considering investments in early learning or child care programs, understanding more about the quality of the program or the results of early learning interventions can be instructive. Evaluative information can help demonstrate whether and why a program is working well or not. We have previously reported that performance assessment is an important way to obtain such information.[11] Performance assessment is also critical to effective program management. Agencies may use different methods to assess the performance of programs. Performance measurement focuses on whether a program has achieved its objectives, expressed as measureable standards, while program evaluations typically examine a broader range of information on program performance and its context. Both forms of assessment aim to support resource allocation and other management decisions. Agencies may measure different types of performance information, including the type or level of program activities (process), the direct products and services delivered by a program (output), or the results of those products and services (outcomes).

[10]GAO has conducted a review of opportunities to reduce fragmentation, overlap, and duplication every year since 2011. For example see GAO, *Opportunities to Reduce Duplication in Government Programs, Save Tax Dollars, and Enhance Revenue*, GAO-11-318SP (Washington, D.C.: March 1, 2011); *2017 Annual Report: Additional Opportunities to Reduce Fragmentation, Overlap, and Duplication and Achieve Other Financial Benefits*, GAO-17-491SP (Washington, D.C.: April 26, 2017).

[11]GAO, *Managing for Results: Enhancing Agency Use of Performance Information for Management Decision Making*, GAO-05-927 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 9, 2005); *Performance Measurement and Evaluation: Definitions and Relationships,* GAO-11-646SP (Washington, D.C.: May 2011); and *Program Evaluation: Strategies to Facilitate Agencies' Use of Evaluation in Program Management and Policy Making*, GAO-13-570 (Washington, D.C.: June 26, 2013).

# Federal Investment in Early Learning and Child Care Includes Multiple Programs that Either Require or Permit Use of Funds for Such Services

## Multiple Programs May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care

Multiple federal programs may provide or support early learning or child care for children age 5 and under. The federal investment in early learning and child care includes three broad categories of programs:

1. **Programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose:** For these programs, early learning or child care is specifically described as a program purpose, according to our analysis of the CFDA and agency documents. This may include some programs that also serve children older than 5 or provide some services outside a formal early learning or child care setting. The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), which provides subsidies to low-income working families, is an example of a program in this category.
2. **Programs without an explicit early learning or child care purpose:** These programs may provide or support early learning or child care; however, early learning or child care is not specifically described as a program purpose in the CFDA or agency documents. According to agency officials, these programs permit, but do not require, using funds for these services. Programs in this category include multipurpose block grants; programs that permit funds to be used for early learning or child care as an ancillary service; and programs that support early learning or child care through food, materials, or other services. Examples of programs without an explicit early learning or child care purpose include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
3. **Tax expenditures that subsidize child care through the tax code:** These include tax credits and exclusions that subsidize the private purchase of child care. Tax credits allow eligible individuals or employers to reduce their tax liability dollar for dollar. The credits included in this review are nonrefundable and do not offer benefits to

individuals or businesses with no tax liability.[12] Exclusions allow individuals to exclude certain compensation from their taxable income and generally provide larger tax savings to those taxed at higher rates. The revenue that the government forgoes through tax expenditures can be viewed as spending channeled through the tax system, which contributes to the overall federal investment.[13] The credit for child and dependent care expenses is an example of such a tax expenditure.

Within this framework, we identified 9 programs that have an explicit early learning or child care purpose and another 35 programs that do not have an explicit early learning or child care purpose.[14] In addition to these federally funded programs, we identified three federal tax expenditures that forgo tax revenue to subsidize the private purchase of child care and adult dependent care services. (For a complete list of programs and tax expenditures we identified, see fig. 5 through fig. 14 in appendix II.)

[12]A nonrefundable tax credit can be used to reduce current-year tax liability to zero, and a refundable credit in excess of tax liability results in a cash refund.

[13]GAO, *Tax Expenditures: Opportunities Exist to Use Budgeting and Agency Performance Processes to Increase Oversight,* GAO-16-622 (Washington, D.C.: July 7, 2016).

[14]Using a similar methodology in 2012, we reported that the federal investment in early learning and child care was administered through 12 programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose, 33 programs without such a purpose, and 5 tax expenditures. For this review, we removed 6 programs and 2 tax expenditures because they were no longer funded or we determined that they do not meet our criteria. We added 8 programs that were not part of our 2012 review for various reasons, including some that were new since 2012, or were identified by agency officials and we determined that they met our criteria. Additionally, in our 2012 report, we listed each component of the Child Care and Development Fund and Community Development Block Grant separately because they were listed individually in the CFDA. However, for our current review, we used the Office of Management and Budget's guidance for identifying programs and considered key benefits and services as the framework to guide our identification of programs, regardless of how the components are listed in the CFDA. Therefore, we consider the Child Care and Development Fund to be one program, rather than two. Similarly, we consider the Community Development Block Grant to be one program, rather than three (see appendix II).

## The Federal Government Obligated $15 Billion in Fiscal Year 2015 for Programs with an Explicit Early Learning or Child Care Purpose, and Other Programs Also Permit Using Funds for These Purposes

Agencies obligated approximately $15 billion in fiscal year 2015, the most recent obligations data available at the time we conducted our review, across the nine programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose. The vast majority of this funding is concentrated in two programs administered by HHS: Head Start and CCDF. Together, these two programs comprised over 90 percent of total obligations for programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose in fiscal year 2015. All other programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose each obligated less than $500 million in fiscal year 2015 (see table 1).

**Table 1: Funding for Programs with an Explicit Early Learning or Child Care Purpose, Reported by Federal Agency, Fiscal Year 2015**

| | Program name | Total program obligations (dollars in millions) | Obligations for early learning or child care purposes (dollars in millions)[a] | Early learning or child care obligations as a percent of total program obligations |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Department of Education** | Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS)[b] | **15** | NA | NA |
| | Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities | **439** | 439 | 100 |
| | Preschool Development Grants[c] | **250** | 250 | 100 |
| | Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities | **353** | 353 | 100 |
| | Promise Neighborhoods[d] | **52** | NA | NA |
| | Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy[e] | **160** | 23 | 14 |
| **Department of Health and Human Services** | Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)[f] | **5,311** | NA | NA |
| | Head Start[g] | **8,718** | 8,718 | 100 |
| **Department of the Interior** | Family and Child Education (FACE)[h] | **17** | NA | NA |
| | **Total** | **15,315** | NA | NA |

Legend: – = information not available, according to agency officials

Source: GAO analysis of the Budget of the U.S. Government, Appendix, Fiscal Year 2017, and federal agency responses to GAO questionnaire. | GAO-17-463

[a]The amount of obligations for early learning or child care purposes include funds for services for children from birth through age 5; however, this may include some funds obligated for services provided in homes or other informal settings (e.g., home visits).

[b]The primary purpose of the Child Care Access Means Parents in School program is to provide grants to institutions of higher education to support the participation of low-income parents enrolled in postsecondary programs through the provision of campus-based child care services. This program does not limit child care to children age 5 and under.

[c]According to agency officials, the Department of Education obtains Preschool Development Grant information from state grantees that outlines program activities and the intended use of funds for eligible 4-year-old children. Additionally, according to Education officials, state grantees are allowed to reserve a portion of their funds for grant administration, technical assistance, evaluation, and other activities that support quality improvements in early learning.

[d]The Promise Neighborhoods program provides competitive grants to support distressed communities in implementing a comprehensive, effective continuum of coordinated solutions designed to improve the academic and developmental outcomes for children, youth, and their families from birth through college to career. Officials told us that Education's reporting system does not allow Education to identify the amount of funds obligated at the grantee project level for early learning services.

[e]The Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program requires state education agency grantees to ensure that 15 percent of subgranted funds serve children from birth through age 5. State education agencies must subgrant no less than 95 percent of the total grant award they received from the Department of Education.

[f]The Child Care and Development Fund serves eligible children under age 13. However, the majority of funds are spent by states on children younger than kindergarten entry. Total program obligations do not include funds transferred from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, which are considered CCDF discretionary funds once transferred at the state level, according to HHS officials.

[g]The Early Head Start program targets pregnant women and children under age 3.

[h]The Family and Child Education program funds early learning and supportive services primarily for pregnant women and children from birth to age 5, as well as some adult and family activities. It also serves children in kindergarten through grade 3 in some instances. Officials told us the way they track program funds does not allow them to isolate funds used specifically for children age 5 and under.

All of the programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose require at least some funds to be used on early learning or child care services, according to agency officials. However, not all funds for these programs are targeted toward children from birth through age 5 in an early learning or child care setting, and agencies noted that they are generally not required to track funds used specifically for these purposes. One exception is the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program: Education officials collect data on the amount of funds used for pre-literacy activities because grantees must ensure that local providers use 15 percent of funds to serve children from birth through age 5. In fiscal year 2015, all four programs that exclusively target children age 5 or under—Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities, Preschool Development Grants, Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities, and Head Start—used 100 percent of their funds for early learning or child care services for this population, according to agency officials. In contrast, CCDF, Family and Child Education (FACE), Promise Neighborhoods, and Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) programs provide services to school-age children in addition to children age 5 and under. Officials told us they were unable to identify the amount of funds used specifically for children age 5 and under for these programs. For example, CCDF serves eligible children under age 13, and while states report the percentage of children served by age, officials told us states are not required to report the amount of CCDF funds spent by age. Not all CCDF funds are used for child care subsidies. In addition to directly subsidizing access to child care services for eligible low-income children, CCDF invests in improving the quality of child care available to families. We recently reported that the majority of children who received CCDF subsidies were under age 5.[15]

[15]In December 2016, we reported that children age 4 and under comprise 57 percent of all children who received child care subsidies through CCDF between 2010 and 2012. GAO, *Child Care: Access to Subsidies and Strategies to Manage Demand Vary Across States,* GAO-17-60 (Washington D.C.: Dec.15, 2016).

Among programs without an explicit early learning or child care purpose, none require spending on early learning or child care, according to agency officials. Further, agency officials told us that they do not track the amount of funds used for early learning or child care for most of these programs and are not required to do so. Officials from 3 of these 35 programs could identify the amount of funds obligated for early learning and child care purposes.[16] Funding for early learning or child care for these three programs ranged from $2 million to $14 million in fiscal year 2015. Additionally, HHS officials told us that although they do not track program obligations specifically for early learning or child care purposes for the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) and TANF, they do track state spending on child care. However, HHS does not track spending specifically for services provided to children age 5 and under, according to agency officials.[17] (See table 6 in appendix III for details.)

Moreover, although they do not track this information, officials from some programs without an explicit early learning or child care purpose said it is likely that little funding, if any, actually went toward these purposes. For example, officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) told us that the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program are targeted to school-age children, and they did not think very many children under age 5 receive meals from the program. Additionally, Department of Labor officials told us that the Native American Employment and Training Program permits funds to be used for child care services, among other supportive services, to enable parent participation in the program. However, due to the limited grant size,

[16]The Department of Agriculture provided us with an estimate of program obligations used for meal reimbursement by home daycare providers and child care centers based on average reimbursement rates, but officials do not track this amount for their program administration purposes. Therefore, we did not count this estimate among the 3 programs that track spending specifically for early learning or child care purposes.

[17]According to HHS officials, states do not obligate SSBG funds for child care or early learning; however, states may elect to use any portion of their funding for services categorized as children's daycare. HHS officials told us that in fiscal year 2015, states expended a total of $2,761,559,075 in SSBG funds, including TANF transfer funds and allowable carryover from the previous fiscal year. Of that total expenditure amount, officials said that $287,826,781 (including TANF transfer funds) were expended for children's daycare services. Additionally, TANF obligations used for early learning or child care of are not tracked at the federal level, according to HHS officials. However, states do report TANF spending and transfers for child care. In fiscal year 2015, states used $1,250,115,096 in federal TANF funds for child care (spent directly or transferred to the Child Care and Development Fund) and $52,438,839 for pre-kindergarten or Head Start.

officials said it is likely that most participants only receive referrals to child care providers.

Much like the agencies with programs that do not have an explicit early learning or child care purpose, Treasury does not estimate the amount of forgone revenue resulting specifically from tax credits or exclusions that support the care of children age 5 and under, according to agency officials. All of the tax expenditures we identified are available for the care of dependent children. The credit for child and dependent care expenses also subsidizes dependent care of individuals who are physically or mentally incapable of self-care, including adults with disabilities or who are elderly. Combined, these tax expenditures accounted for approximately $5.4 billion of forgone federal income tax revenue in fiscal year 2015 (see table 2).[18] This amount, however, includes forgone revenue for care of children older than age 5 and dependent adults, since the available data do not distinguish children and other dependents by age.

**Table 2: Estimated Total Income Tax Expenditures that Support Child Care, Fiscal Year 2015**

| Tax expenditure | **Estimated revenue loss** (Dollars in millions) |
|---|---|
| Credit for child and dependent care expenses | 4,500 |
| Employer-provided child care credit[a] | 10 |
| Employer-provided child care exclusion[b] | 900 |
| **Total[c]** | **5,410** |

Source: Department of the Treasury's Tax Expenditure Estimates for fiscal year 2017. | GAO-17-463

Note: Tax provisions listed in this table are not exclusively available for the care of children age 5 and under. The credit for child and dependent care expenses may also cover dependent care for individuals who are physically or mentally incapable of self-care, including adults with disabilities or who are elderly. In our 2012 report (GAO-12-342SP) on this topic, we listed the names of tax expenditures as they appeared in the Congressional Research Service's 2010 Tax Compendium. For our current review, we list the names of these tax provisions as they appear in the Department of the Treasury's Tax Expenditure Estimates for fiscal year 2017.

[a]In our 2012 report, we listed this tax expenditure as the credit for employer-provided child care.

[b]This tax expenditure is also known as the dependent care assistance program exclusion. In our 2012 report, we listed this tax expenditure as the exclusion of employer-provided child and dependent care. For the purposes of this report, we refer to this tax expenditure as the employer-provided child care

[18]Summing tax expenditure estimates provides a sense of size but does not take into account possible interactions among individual tax expenditures and within the tax code. Total change in tax revenues from repealing all tax expenditures could differ from the sum of the estimates.

exclusion, which is how it is referred to in the Department of the Treasury's Tax Expenditure Estimates.

[c]Summing tax expenditure estimates provides a sense of size but does not take into account possible interactions among individual tax expenditures and within the tax code. Total change in tax revenues from repealing all tax expenditures could differ from the sum of the estimates.

# Improved Agency Coordination has Helped Address Fragmentation, Overlap, and Potential Duplication

## Some Early Learning and Child Care Programs are Still Fragmented, Overlap, or Have Potential for Duplication

As we found in 2012, some fragmentation, overlap, and potential duplication exist among early learning and child care programs.

### Fragmentation

The federal investment in early learning and child care is fragmented in that it is administered through multiple agencies. HHS, Education, and Interior administer programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose. Five additional agencies and one regional commission administer programs without an explicit early learning or child care purpose, and the Internal Revenue Service at Treasury is responsible for administering federal tax expenditures (see table 3).

**Table 3: Number of Programs and Tax Expenditures that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care, by Federal Agency, Fiscal Year 2015**

| Federal agency | Number of programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose | Number of programs without an explicit early learning or child care purpose but that permit such uses of funds | Number of tax expenditures that support early learning or child care |
|---|---|---|---|
| Appalachian Regional Commission | NA | 1 | NA |
| Department of Agriculture | NA | 5 | NA |
| Department of Education[a] | 6 | 12 | NA |
| Department of Health and Human Services | 2 | 3 | NA |
| Department of Housing and Urban Development | NA | 3 | NA |
| Department of the Interior | 1 | 2 | NA |
| Department of Justice | NA | 2 | NA |
| Department of Labor | NA | 6 | NA |
| Department of the Treasury | NA | NA | 3 |
| General Services Administration | NA | 1 | NA |
| **Total** | **9** | **35** | **3** |

Legend: – = no programs

Source: GAO analysis of the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, Congressional Research Service's 2014 Tax Compendium, and other agency information. | GAO-17-463

[a]The Preschool Development Grants program is counted among the Department of Education's (Education) six programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose, but this program is jointly administered by Education and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The Every Student Succeeds Act, which was signed into law in December 2015, authorized Preschool Development Grants to be administered by HHS, jointly with Education. Pub. L. No. 114-95, § 9212, 129 Stat. 1802, 2152 (2015). Previously, the program had been authorized through appropriations language and was funded through Education and jointly administered by HHS and Education.

## Overlap

We found some overlap between early learning and child care programs, as some programs target similar beneficiaries (see fig. 1). For example, five of the nine programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose primarily target children age 5 and under, and four programs target low-income children. Despite these general similarities, however, some of these programs target very specific populations that in some cases have limited overlap or no overlap. For example, Preschool Development Grants specifically target 4-year-olds, the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities targets children with disabilities from birth through age 2, and Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities targets children with disabilities ages 3 through 5. Other

programs target more specific populations, such as children whose low-income parents are pursuing postsecondary education, or children living in certain distressed geographic areas.

**Figure 1: Purposes and Targeted Populations of Federal Programs for Which Early Learning or Child Care Is an Explicit Program Purpose, as of Fiscal Year 2015**

| Program name by federal agency | Explicit program purpose | | Primary child population targets | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Age group | | Other targeted demographics | | | |
| | Early learning services | Child care services | Primarily children age 5 and under[a] | Larger age group, including children age 5 and under | Low-income | Children with disabilities | Native American, Native Alaskan, or Native Hawaiian | Other[b] |
| **Department of Education** | | | | | | | | |
| Child Care Access Means Parents In School (CCAMPIS) | ☐ | ■ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ |
| Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities | ■ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Preschool Development Grants | ■ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ | ■ | ■ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities | ■ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Promise Neighborhoods | ■ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ |
| Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy | ■ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ☐ | ■ |
| **Department of Health and Human Services** | | | | | | | | |
| Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) | ☐ | ■ | ☐ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Head Start | ■ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| **Department of the Interior** | | | | | | | | |
| Family and Child Education (FACE) | ■ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ■ | ☐ |

**Legend:**

■ = Yes ☐ = No

Source: Federal agency responses to GAO questionnaire and GAO analysis of other agency documents. | GAO-17-463

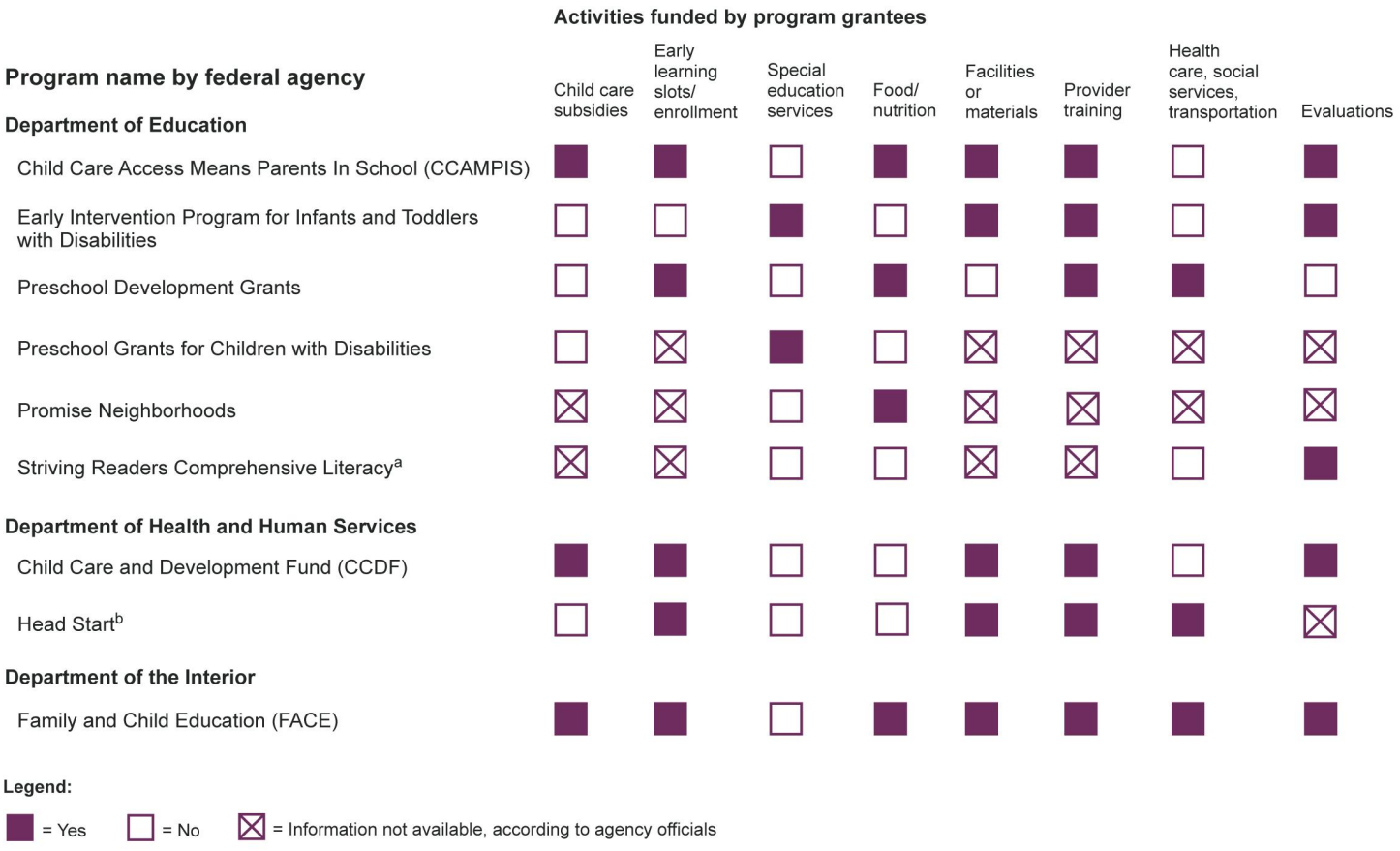
Note: All programs included in this figure are those for which early learning or child care is explicitly described as a program purpose, according to our analysis of Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance and other agency information. However, early learning or child care may not be a primary or sole purpose for all of these programs.

[a]Some programs target children of a specific age under age 5. For example, Preschool Development Grants targets 4-year-olds, the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities targets children with disabilities from birth through age 2, and Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities targets children with disabilities ages 3 through 5.

[b]Other primary population targets identified by agency officials include children whose low-income parents are pursuing postsecondary education (CCAMPIS); children who live in a grantee-determined geographic area (Promise Neighborhoods); disadvantaged students at risk of educational failure, such as children who are homeless or in foster care, among others (Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy); homeless children (CCDF and Head Start); children of migrant workers (Head Start); and children in foster care (Head Start).

Additionally, some programs engage in similar activities, according to our analysis of agency-provided information. For example, grantees of Head Start, Preschool Development Grants, and FACE use funds for enrollment slots (spots for individual children to participate in programs on an ongoing basis), health care, and social services or transportation, according to agency officials. However, other programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose do not fund enrollment. Instead, some programs fund additional services to aid early learning, such as special education services or evaluations (see fig. 2).

**Figure 2: Activities Agencies Reported as Funded by Federal Programs with an Explicit Early Learning or Child Care Purpose, Fiscal Year 2015**




Source: Federal agency responses to GAO questionnaire and GAO analysis of other information from agency officials. | GAO-17-463

Note: All programs included in this figure are those for which early learning or child care is explicitly described as a program purpose, according to our analysis of the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance and other agency information. However, early learning or child care may not be a primary or sole purpose for all of these programs. In our questionnaire to agencies, we asked officials to report approximately what portion of each program's grantees use funding for a range of early learning and child care activities (e.g. no grantees, a few grantees, most grantees, etc.). The figure above indicates the activities funded by any of the program's grantees, according to agency officials.

[a]Each state educational agency that receives a Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy grant must use at least 95 percent of its allocation to make competitive subgrants to one or more local educational agencies or, for the purposes of providing early literacy services, to local educational agencies or other nonprofit providers of early childhood education that partner with a public or private nonprofit organization with a demonstrated record of effectiveness in improving early literacy.

[b]According to HHS officials, children with disabilities who qualify for services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) must receive services funded by the local educational agency responsible for implementing IDEA. In some cases, children with developmental delays or other special needs may not be eligible under IDEA. In such cases, Head Start grantees provide necessary accommodations using Head Start funding.

Despite some similarities in target populations and activities, programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose often have different goals and administrative structures. For example, while the CCAMPIS program and CCDF both fund child care, they have different goals. The goal of CCAMPIS is to support the participation of low-income parents in postsecondary education. In contrast, CCDF has dual goals of providing child care as a work support to parents and providing children with quality child care to prepare them for success in school, according to HHS. Additionally, the two largest programs—Head Start and CCDF—differ significantly from each other both in their goals and in how they are administered. Head Start was created, in part, to support children's early development by offering comprehensive, community-based services to meet children's multiple needs and, as such, provides federal grants directly to community-based public and private service providers. In contrast, CCDF was created to help states reduce dependence on public assistance. It provides grants to states to subsidize child care to support parents' involvement in the workforce. States, in turn, generally provide subgrants to counties or other local entities for distribution to parents.

Though some overlap exists among programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose, the majority of the programs we identified–35 of 44–do not have such a purpose. Overlap is limited among these 35 programs and those 9 programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose for a number of reasons. For example:

- **Multipurpose block grants can be combined and jointly administered:** In their comments regarding our 2012 report, HHS officials noted that many states choose to integrate CCDF, TANF, and SSBG funding streams to provide services. They noted that states jointly administer these funding streams under one set of rules, often in coordination with other state and local funding.[19]
- **Programs that provide child care as an ancillary purpose are not targeted toward children:** Overlap between programs that permit funds to be used for child care as an ancillary service and those with an explicit child care purpose is limited given that such programs are not targeted to children and that child care is not among the programs' objectives. For example, six worker training programs authorized by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act allow for grant dollars

[19]According to HHS officials, all TANF funds have to follow TANF rules, which are different from CCDF and SSBG rules. HHS officials also noted that TANF funds that are transferred to CCDF or SSBG follow the rules of those programs.

to pay for child care and other supportive services that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in training and other authorized activities. These programs are not targeted to children age 5 or under—their objectives are to provide individuals with job search assistance and training.

- **Some programs support but do not provide early learning or child care for young children:** Other programs we identified support early learning or child care by providing food, materials, or other services. These programs have limited overlap with programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose because they support such programs rather than provide early learning or care for children age 5 and under. For example, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which is administered by USDA, reimburses child care centers for the cost of meals and snacks, among other things. Additionally, the General Services Administration donates unused federal property to certain state and local agencies through the Donation of Federal Surplus Personal Property program. Officials from the General Services Administration told us that agencies that receive the donations pass them along to eligible organizations, which may include preschools. They also told us that they do not track the ultimate destination of the donated property.

HHS and Education have acknowledged some overlap among early learning and child care programs. In a November 2016 joint report to Congress, HHS and Education identified eight federal programs with a primary purpose of providing early learning for young children.[20] In this report, HHS and Education stated that overlap among early learning and

[20]These include Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), Head Start, Early Head Start, Preschool Development Grants, Department of Defense Child Development Program, Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities, Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities, and the Family and Child Education (FACE) program. The methodology we used to identify programs for this report differs from HHS and Education's approach in three key ways. First, HHS and Education focused their review on programs that have a primary purpose of promoting early learning for children from birth to age 6. In contrast, early learning or child care may not be a primary or sole purpose for the programs we identified as having an explicit early learning or child care purpose. Second, HHS and Education included programs available only to the military and their families, which we excluded. Third, HHS and Education listed Head Start and Early Head Start as two separate programs for the purposes of their report because they serve children of different ages. In contrast, we used key benefits and services as a framework for identifying programs, and therefore considered Head Start and Early Head Start to be one program, with two different age targets. As previously noted, the Office of Management and Budget guidance allows agencies flexibility to define their programs using five possible approaches, including target populations or key benefits, services, or products.

child care programs is purposeful and necessary to meet the needs of children and parents. For example, some programs fund enrollment slots and others fund additional services to aid early learning, such as special education services, according to HHS and Education officials. They also noted that families may have multiple needs that require more than one type of service. For instance, families can combine Head Start and CCDF, which allows families to meet children's learning needs and parents' child care needs, according to HHS officials.

Despite this overlap, there may be service gaps because these programs are not entitlements, and therefore do not serve all eligible children. For example, we recently reported that an estimated 1.5 million children received CCDF subsidies, out of an estimated 8.6 million children who were eligible in their state in an average month in 2011 and 2012.[21] Additionally, Education officials told us that many states have narrowed their eligibility criteria for the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities because of funding constraints. According to these officials, states are focusing these services on children with the most severe disabilities.

## Duplication

There may be potential for duplication among early learning and child care programs insofar as some programs may fund similar types of services for similar populations. However, as we noted in our 2012 review, the extent to which actual duplication exists is difficult to assess at the federal level due to differing program eligibility requirements and data limitations.[22] For example:

- **Program eligibility requirements:** Eligibility requirements differ among programs, even for similar subgroups of children, such as those from low-income families. For example, Head Start serves primarily low-income children under age 5 whose families have

[21] In the same report, we also found that it is difficult to accurately predict the extent to which families with eligible children are likely to apply for and receive subsidies. This is, in part, because several factors influence families' child care decisions, which can make it difficult or unappealing to pursue subsidies. See GAO-17-60.

[22] A portion of federal support for child care is provided through funding to states, which in turn provide subsidies to low-income families. For example, federal funding for CCDF is distributed to states, not families. For this reason, state and local governments may be better positioned to assess the extent that two or more programs provide the same services to the same families.

incomes at or below the official federal poverty guidelines, while CCDF serves children under age 13 whose parents are working or in school and who earn up to 85 percent of state median income. Moreover, states have the flexibility to establish specific eligibility policies for CCDF within broad federal eligibility requirements. Given this flexibility, it may be possible for families with similar circumstances to be eligible to receive CCDF subsidies in some states but not others. Additionally, although the CCAMPIS program also provides funding for child care, families must be eligible for Pell Grants, which are need-based federal grants to low-income undergraduate students, in order to receive services.

- **Data limitations:** For some programs, relevant programmatic information is sometimes not readily available. For example, as we previously reported, HHS does not collect data on all families who receive child care funded by TANF. This is because some families that do not receive cash assistance receive child care funded through TANF. States are not required to report on families who receive only TANF-funded child care without also receiving cash assistance. This leaves an incomplete picture of the number of children receiving federally funded child care subsidies. We previously suggested requiring additional data collection on families receiving TANF-funded child care, but this information is currently not collected.[23] Additionally, inadequate or missing data, as well as difficulties quantifying the outcomes of some tax expenditures, can make it difficult to study the beneficiaries of these expenditures.[24]

While the extent of potential duplication may be difficult to fully assess, some early learning and child care programs include some safeguards against duplication. For example, some programs can use funds to expand access to other programs, thus limiting the likelihood that the same beneficiaries receive the same services from more than one program. Promise Neighborhood grantees can use funds to expand access to Head Start or to establish new child care or preschool options.

[23]GAO, *Child Care: Additional Information Is Needed on Working Families Receiving Subsidies*, GAO-05-667 (Washington, D.C.: June 29, 2005) and *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families: Update on Families Served and Work Participation*, GAO-11-880T (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 8, 2011).

[24]As GAO noted in earlier work, tax returns generally do not collect information necessary to assess how often a tax expenditure is used and by whom unless the IRS needs the information or collection is legislatively mandated. See GAO, *Government Performance and Accountability: Tax Expenditures Represent a Substantial Federal Commitment and Need to be Reexamined,* GAO-05-690 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 23, 2005).

Similarly, Preschool Development Grants can be used to expand the capacity of Head Start to serve more eligible children. Specifically, Preschool Development Grant funds must be used to supplement, not supplant, any federal, state, or local funds, including Head Start and CCDF, among others.

In addition, the tax code has limits on combining the credit for child and dependent care and the employer-provided child care exclusion. Taxpayers can claim the credit for child and dependent care if they pay someone to care for a dependent under age 13 or for a spouse or other dependents who are not able to care for themselves. The credit can be up to 35 percent of dependent care expenses with a limit of $3,000 per qualifying person and $6,000 for two or more qualifying persons.[25] The employer-provided child care exclusion, a kind of flexible spending account for dependent care expenses, generally provides participants an opportunity to exclude an amount not to exceed $5,000 for dependent care each year from their gross income.[26] Families using the employer-provided child care exclusion must subtract the amount of those benefits from the maximum they are eligible to receive for the credit for child and dependent care, thereby preventing duplication of benefits.

## HHS and Education Have Helped Address Fragmentation, Overlap, and Potential Duplication through Improved Coordination with Other Agencies

We found that since our 2012 review of early learning and child care programs, HHS and Education have improved coordination among the agencies that administer these programs, which has helped to address potential risks regarding fragmentation, overlap, and potential duplication. As we previously reported, effective coordination can help mitigate the effects of program fragmentation and overlap and potentially help bridge service gaps.[27]

[25]26 U.S.C. § 21(a)(2) provides that the credit can be up to 35 percent, but it is reduced (but not below 20 percent) by 1 percentage point for each $2,000 (or fraction thereof) by which the taxpayer's adjusted gross income for the taxable year exceeds $15,000.

[26]26 U.S.C. § 129(a)(2) also provides that in the case of a separate return by a married individual, the amount is not to exceed $2,500.

[27]GAO-12-342SP.

Based upon our analysis, the Early Learning Interagency Policy Board—HHS and Education's inter-departmental workgroup that focuses on children from birth through age 8—has followed leading practices for interagency collaboration that we have identified, such as defining outcomes, tracking progress toward goals, and including relevant participants across agencies, among others (see table 4).[28] For example, in response to needed actions we identified in 2012, HHS and Education expanded membership of this group to include other agencies with early learning and child care programs.

**Table 4: Collaboration Efforts of the Early Learning Interagency Policy Board**

| | Key considerations for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms | Examples of Interagency Policy Board efforts |
|---|---|---|
| **Defining outcomes and accountability** | Have short-term and long-term outcomes been clearly defined? | The Interagency Policy Board has defined its intended outcomes by setting goals, which include developing policy recommendations and improving program coordination and quality across federally funded early learning and development programs serving children from birth through age 8.<br>Specifically, the Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education formed the Interagency Policy Board to:<br>• increase the coordination of early learning and development research, technical assistance, and data systems;<br>• improve family engagement; and<br>• advance the effectiveness of the early learning and development workforce among the major federally funded early learning and development programs. |
| | Is there is a way to track and monitor progress? | The Interagency Policy Board has tracked and monitored its progress. In January 2017, it submitted a report to the Secretaries of HHS and Education detailing its major activities and accomplishments, including providing technical assistance to agencies that administer early learning and child care programs, and sponsoring research on early childhood issues such as parent-child interactions. |

[28]GAO-06-15, GAO-12-1022, and GAO-14-220.

| | Key considerations for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms | Examples of Interagency Policy Board efforts |
|---|---|---|
| **Bridging organizational cultures** | Have agencies agreed on common terminology and definitions? | Agencies have agreed upon common terms and definitions and worked together to bridge organizational differences. According to HHS' fiscal year 2016 Congressional Budget Justification, HHS and Education coordinated to define high quality benchmarks for early learning and child care programs. Additionally, HHS and Education officials told us that planning joint initiatives and issuing joint reports has helped bridge organizational differences across agencies because of the level of problem solving and discussion involved. For example, in March 2014, the Interagency Policy Board launched a federal effort to encourage universal developmental and behavioral screening for children. It also issued a report regarding the integration of early childhood data in November 2016. |
| **Leadership** | If leadership is shared, have leadership roles and responsibilities been clearly defined? | HHS and Education are the co-leads of the Interagency Policy Board. They have established workgroups, which are led by key staff, to develop strategies for addressing certain issues. For example, HHS' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation and Education's Office of Policy and Program Studies Service lead a workgroup pertaining to research and data. This group is responsible for providing research support to the Interagency Policy Board. It is also a venue for federal staff to communicate about ongoing and upcoming federally-funded research on early learning. According to HHS and Education, this workgroup serves as an important platform for researchers across agencies to ensure that their efforts and investments build on each other, that they are informed by key research findings funded by other agencies and offices, and that research is used to support leadership decision-making. |
| **Clarity of roles and responsibilities** | Have participating agencies clarified roles and responsibilities? | Participating agencies have clarified roles and responsibilities. The roles and responsibilities of the key members of the Interagency Policy Board include meeting on a regular basis and identifying areas in which enhanced information-sharing about agency activities is needed. |
| **Participants** | Have all relevant participants been included? | In response to needed actions we identified in 2012, HHS and Education expanded membership of the Interagency Policy Board to include other agencies with early learning or child care programs. HHS and Education expanded membership in this workgroup to include high-level officials in the Departments of Interior and Agriculture (USDA). These federal agencies administer programs with an explicit purpose of early learning that targets a specific population (Interior), or complementary programs that provide direct services that support early learning programs (USDA). Other agencies that operate programs without the explicit purpose of providing early learning or child care services, such as the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Labor, and Justice, serve as partners to the Interagency Policy Board, and are periodically invited to attend quarterly meetings. |
| | Do they have the ability to commit resources? | HHS and Education have agreed to dedicate staff time to promote the goals and activities of the Interagency Policy Board. |
| **Resources** | How will the collaborative mechanism be funded and staffed? | HHS and Education have agreed to bear the costs of their participation and related activities, including the cost of staff-time. |
| | Have online collaboration tools been developed? | Education's website includes information regarding the Interagency Policy Board and its activities, including links to policy statements and partner agencies. |

| | Key considerations for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms | Examples of Interagency Policy Board efforts |
|---|---|---|
| **Written guidance and agreements** | If appropriate, have participating agencies documented their agreement regarding how they will be collaborating? | HHS and Education have documented their agreement through a Memorandum of Understanding. This document details the purpose of the Interagency Policy Board, a list of its activities, and the responsibilities of parties. |
| | Have they developed ways to continually update and monitor these agreements? | HHS and Education have monitored their agreements. In the aforementioned report to the Secretaries of HHS and Education in January 2017, the Interagency Policy Board detailed its agreements and the efforts agencies have made to meet these agreements. |

Source: GAO, Managing for Results: Key Considerations for Implementing Interagency Collaborative Mechanisms, GAO-12-1022 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 27, 2012); and GAO analysis of agency documents and interviews with agency officials. | GAO-17-463

In addition to efforts related to the Interagency Policy Board, HHS and Education have improved coordination in other ways since our 2012 review of early learning and child care programs. For example, they have:

- **Jointly administered the Preschool Development Grants:** HHS and Education coordinate to co-administer the Preschool Development Grants program, which began in 2014.[29]
- **Issued joint policy statements:** HHS and Education have also issued joint policy statements on a range of early learning and child care issues. Examples include statements on limiting preschool suspensions and expulsions, and strategies to increase the inclusion of young children with disabilities in high-quality early learning programs. Joint policy statements create consistent guidance for local programs, according to HHS and Education officials.
- **Coordinated training and technical assistance:** In 2015, HHS redesigned its training and technical assistance system across Head Start and CCDF. Previously, Head Start and CCDF had separate training and technical assistance centers that were operated independently of one another. The new training and technical assistance centers provide services to both Head Start and CCDF. Additionally, HHS and Education coordinated technical assistance by issuing a literature review about strategies to help children maintain the benefits of preschool attendance. They also held joint webinars on the use of assistive technology to support young children with

[29]The Every Student Succeeds Act, which was signed into law in December 2015, authorized a new Preschool Development Grants program to be administered by HHS, jointly with Education. Pub. L. No. 114-95, § 9212, 129 Stat. 1802, 2152 (2015).

disabilities and strategies to limit preschool suspensions and expulsions.

## Agencies Assess Performance for All Programs with an Explicit Early Learning or Child Care Purpose, and Methods Vary by Program

Agencies assess performance for all nine programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose, and they do so using different methods. The agencies use various combinations of three approaches: performance monitoring, conducting program evaluations or studies, and reviewing other performance information (see fig. 3). Specifically:

- **Performance monitoring:** For all nine programs, agencies reported they monitor performance annually either through performance measures or other annual reviews. Interior monitors performance for the FACE program through an annual review. This review includes implementation data and program outcomes, such as children's proficiency in math and literacy, parenting practices, and integration of native language and culture into FACE program instruction, which officials can use to assess program progress from year to year. For the other eight programs, HHS and Education report results on measureable performance standards in agency congressional budget justifications or other publicly available sources.
- **Program evaluations or studies:** For six of the nine programs, agency officials also periodically conduct internal or contracted program evaluations or studies.[30] Most of the programs that have conducted program evaluations have done so to fulfill a program requirement. For example, the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) called for a national assessment to measure the implementation progress and relative effectiveness of the law.[31] Similarly, in response to a congressional mandate in the 1998 reauthorization of Head Start,[32] HHS conducted

[30]In contrast to these programs, a primary goal of the Promise Neighborhoods program is to learn how particular strategies affect student outcomes, including through a rigorous evaluation of the program, but Education has not yet conducted such an evaluation. We previously recommended that the Secretary of Education develop a plan to conduct a national evaluation of the program. As of May 2017, this recommendation remained unimplemented. GAO, *Education Grants: Promise Neighborhoods Promotes Collaboration but Needs National Evaluation Plan*, GAO-14-432 (Washington D.C.: May 5, 2014).

[31]Pub. L. No. 108-446, 118 Stat. 2647, 2783.

[32]Pub. L. No. 105-285, § 116(2), 112 Stat. 2723.

a national impact evaluation of Head Start and an evaluation of the Early Head Start program. Additionally, since fiscal year 2000, Congress has appropriated funds through CCDF specifically for research and evaluation, according to agency officials.[33]

- **Other performance information:** Officials from six of the nine programs told us they collect other performance information through grantee-submitted performance reports or other methods. For example, the CCAMPIS program, which funds child care for student parents enrolled in postsecondary institutions, uses grantee-submitted annual reports to collect detailed information about individual student enrollment that provides context for understanding performance measures. Additionally, some programs track information about the cost of certain outcomes.[34]

Agency officials told us they use results from performance monitoring, evaluations, and other performance information to assist in grantee monitoring, determine continued funding to grantees, and develop technical assistance, among other things.

[33]According to HHS officials, the reauthorized Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 created a new research set-aside, which replaced the set-aside Congress previously included in annual appropriations. The Act allows the Secretary of HHS to reserve one-half of 1 percent of CCDF appropriations for research and demonstration activities (Pub. L. 113-186 Sec. 658O(a)(5)).

[34]For example, HHS officials track the number of children served each year through Head Start funding. For the CCAMPIS Program, Education officials measure the cost per student who receives child care services through the program and remains in postsecondary education at the end of the academic year.

**Figure 3: Methods for Assessing Performance in Programs with an Explicit Early Learning or Child Care Purpose**

| Program name by federal agency | Performance monitoring | Program evaluations or studies | Other performance information |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Department of Education** | | | |
| Child Care Access Means Parents In School (CCAMPIS) | ■ | □ | ■ |
| Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Preschool Development Grants | ■ | □ | ■ |
| Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Promise Neighborhoods[a] | ■ | □ | □ |
| Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy[b] | ■ | ■ | □ |
| **Department of Health and Human Services** | | | |
| Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Head Start | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| **Department of the Interior** | | | |
| Family and Child Education (FACE)[c] | ■ | ■ | □ |

**Legend:**

■ = Yes □ = No

Source: GAO analysis of agencies' reported performance information and interviews. | GAO-17-463

Note: Many program officials told us they collect other performance information through grantee-submitted performance reports or other methods.

[a]Education has not conducted an evaluation of the Promise Neighborhoods program, although a key purpose of the Promise Neighborhoods program is to learn how particular strategies affect student outcomes through a rigorous evaluation of the program. In 2014, we recommended that the Secretary of Education should develop a plan to use the data collected from grantees to conduct a national evaluation of the program. As of May 2017, this recommendation remained open. GAO, Education Grants: Promise Neighborhoods Promotes Collaboration but Needs National Evaluation Plan, GAO-14-432 (Washington D.C.: May 5, 2014).

[b]Education has not conducted an evaluation of the current Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program, but it has synthesized evaluations of adolescent reading interventions implemented by the related 2006 and 2009 Striving Readers grant cohorts. The original Striving Readers program funded the 2006 and 2009 grant cohorts, and aimed to, among other things, build a scientific research base for identifying and replicating strategies to improve adolescent literacy skills. The name of the program changed in fiscal year 2010 to Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy, with the new program focusing on supporting pre-literacy in addition to adolescent literacy.

[c]Interior monitors program performance of the Family and Child Education (FACE) program through an annual program review. These annual reviews include implementation data and program outcomes, such as children's proficiency in math and literacy, as well as indicators of cultural and social development, which officials can use to assess program progress from year to year.

While agencies use different methods to assess programs, all agencies that administer programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose collect performance information that aligns with program objectives to determine progress toward those objectives. For example, the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program aims to advance literacy skills—including pre-literacy skills, reading, and writing—for students from birth through grade 12. The program has four performance measures that assess student's literacy proficiency at age 4, grade 5, grade 8, and again at high school. (See appendix IV for more details on recent program performance for each of the nine explicit-purpose early learning or child care programs.)

Additionally, agency officials examine common aspects of performance for many programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose. Specifically, we found that many programs had assessments relating to 1) results for children age 5 and under, 2) program quality or teacher qualifications, and 3) academic improvement or kindergarten readiness (see fig. 4). For example:

- **Children age 5 and under:** Eight of the nine programs assess results regarding this age group.[35] For example, for the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities, Education officials assessed the percentage of children who entered the program with below age social-emotional skills and who then substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program.
- **Program quality or teacher qualifications:** Six of the nine programs assess program quality or teacher qualifications. For example, CCDF measures the number of states that implement a systemic approach to assessing, improving, and communicating a child care or education program's level of quality, including meeting certain benchmarks. Similarly, Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities measures the number of states with at least 90 percent of special education teachers certified in the areas in which they are teaching.
- **Academic improvement or kindergarten readiness:** Eight of the nine programs, including all seven of the programs with an explicit early learning purpose, assess academic improvement or

[35]The one program that does not measure results specific to children age 5 and under is CCAMPIS. This program collects information through grantee-submitted reports on children who participate in program-funded child care, and on child care facilities accreditation and licensure status, but officials have not established an outcome measure associated with children who receive child care.

kindergarten readiness. For example, for the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program, Education measures the percentage of participating 4-year-old children who achieve significant gains in oral language skills. For Preschool Development Grants, Education measures the number and percentage of children served by the grant who are ready for kindergarten.

**Figure 4: Common Aspects of Performance Assessed by Programs with an Explicit Early Learning or Child Care Purpose**

| Program name by federal agency | Results for children age 5 and under | Program quality or teacher qualifications | Academic improvement or kindergarten readiness |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Department of Education** | | | |
| Child Care Access Means Parents In School (CCAMPIS)[a] | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Preschool Development Grants[b] | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Promise Neighborhoods | ■ | ☐ | ■ |
| Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy | ■ | ☐ | ■ |
| **Department of Health and Human Services** | | | |
| Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)[c] | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Head Start | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| **Department of the Interior** | | | |
| Family and Child Education (FACE) | ■ | ■ | ■ |

**Legend:**

■ = Yes ☐ = No

Source: GAO analysis of agency-reported performance information. | GAO-17-463

Note: Some individual results relate to both children age 5 and under and to academic improvement or kindergarten readiness. Agencies assess results for the areas listed in this table through various methods, including performance monitoring, evaluations, or other studies. For evaluations, we limited our review to recent evaluations or studies that assessed results that aligned with program objectives.

[a]The goal of the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program is to support the participation of low-income parents in the postsecondary education system through the provision of campus-based child care services, with the objective of increasing access for these parents to postsecondary institutions. Therefore, program performance measures assess persistence and

graduation from grantee postsecondary institutions. Officials told us they collect additional performance information from grantees about child care services and participating children.

[b]In the cohort of grants funded prior to the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act, Preschool Development grantees were required to meet nationally recognized program quality standards.

[c]HHS conducted four studies examining different strategies to improve child care quality. Three of these studies assessed the impacts of specific strategies on early language development and school readiness.

Although many of the programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose assess common aspects of performance, the specific results agencies examine differ for a number of reasons. One reason is that agencies use different tools to assess performance. For example, although all seven early learning programs assess some aspect of academic improvement or kindergarten readiness, programs vary in how they perform these assessments. The Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program provides grants to states and requires them to use approved state accountability assessments to determine most program performance measures.[36] In contrast, the FACE program provides grants to Bureau of Indian Education-funded schools that implement in-home and center-based services, and uses a single student assessment tool to measure performance across participants.[37]

Another reason assessments differ is that some programs examine students' progress while they participate in the program, whereas others assess proficiency at a particular point in time. For instance, both of the special education programs administered by Education that we reviewed collect entry and exit data on children with disabilities who receive program services. Officials use these assessments to show children's developmental progress while in the program across a number of early childhood outcomes, including early language and literacy knowledge skills, including early language and literacy knowledge skills. In contrast, other programs assess children only once, during the academic year. For example, the Preschool Development Grants program assesses children once at kindergarten entry.

[36]For the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program, Education requires states to report on participating children's performance on state English language arts assessments or student growth on Education-approved state student growth models for children in grades 5, 8, and12. For assessments of children at age 4, the program measures the percentage of participating children who achieve significant gains in oral language skills on a variety of state-selected assessments.

[37]The FACE program compares scores on the Measures of Academic Progress Reading Assessment and the Measures of Academic Progress Mathematics Assessment at kindergarten entry between children who participated in the FACE program and those that did not.

Programs also differ in the time frame over which officials assess performance. For example, HHS has assessed the long-term impact of Head Start and Early Head Start by evaluating the same cohort of children as they progress through later grades, even after the children stopped receiving program services. Other programs gauge children's performance annually while grantees receive funding, but do not evaluate them after they stop receiving grant-funded services. (See appendix IV for additional performance details and a complete list of program performance measures for all nine programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose.)

In addition to assessing performance by program, HHS and Education each have an agency-wide priority goal that incorporates early learning or child care program performance measures, and both agencies assess performance on meeting these goals. The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA) requires that every 2 years, certain agencies identify their highest priority performance goals, which GPRAMA refers to as agency priority goals. Agencies are expected to identify performance measures to track progress on achieving these goals, or identify alternative ways of measuring progress, such as milestones for completing major deliverables.[38] Education incorporated performance measures for the Preschool Development Grants program into its priority goal, and HHS incorporated performance measures from Head Start and CCDF (see table 5). Education and HHS have incorporated these goals into their strategic plans and have published updates on progress toward meeting their priority goals at performance.gov.

[38]31 U.S.C. § 1120(b). GAO, *Managing for Results: Greater Transparency Needed in Public Reporting on the Quality of Performance Information for Selected Agencies' Priority Goals,* GAO-15-788 (Washington D.C.: Sept. 10, 2015).

**Table 5: Early Learning and Child Care Agency Priority Goals and Performance Indicators for Fiscal Years 2016-2017**

| Department | Priority goal | Performance indicator |
|---|---|---|
| Education | Increase the percentage of children, especially children from low-income families, enrolled in high-quality preschool programs. | Percentage of 4-year-old children enrolled in state preschool programs.<br>Number of state preschool programs meeting high-quality standards. |
| Health and Human Services | Improve the quality of early childhood programs for low-income children. | Increase the percentage of teachers in Head Start and Early Head Start that have a Bachelor's degree (Bachelor of Arts) or higher.<br>Increase the number of states with quality rating and improvement systems that meet high quality benchmarks for child care and other early childhood programs developed by HHS.[a]<br>Reduce the proportion of Head Start grantees receiving a score in the low range on the basis of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System.[b] |

Source: GAO analysis of agencies' reported performance information. | GAO-17-463

[a]Quality rating and improvement systems are a systemic approach to assessing, improving, and communicating the level of quality in child care and education programs. These standards are used to assign ratings to participating programs, providing parents and the public with information about each program's quality.

[b]The Classroom Assessment Scoring System is an observation instrument that assesses the quality of teacher-child interactions in preschool classrooms.

Guidance from the Office of Management and Budget states that agencies are to identify tax expenditures, as appropriate, among the various federal programs and activities that contribute to their strategic objectives and agency priority goals.[39] HHS officials told us that they decided the three child care-related tax expenditures we identified are not potential contributors to their agency priority goal to improve the quality of early childhood programs for low-income children. According to HHS officials, they concluded that low-income families who qualify for HHS's key programs, such as CCDF, are not likely to benefit from these tax expenditures due to their lack of tax liabilities. Moreover, agency officials told us the child care-related tax expenditures we identified are available to help pay for dependent care and do not directly align with HHS's

[39]We previously reported that agencies may not assess the effectiveness of tax expenditures because of 1) a reported lack of clarity about their roles and challenges with performance measurement, and 2) a lack of sufficient data available to estimate the degree to which some tax expenditures are used, since tax forms do not collect specific data on them. To help address these issues, we recommended that federal agencies identify which tax expenditures contribute to their goals. As of April 2017, this recommendation remained unimplemented. See GAO, *Tax Expenditures: Opportunities Exist to Use Budgeting and Agency Performance Processes to Increase Oversight*, GAO-16-622 (Washington, D.C.: July 7, 2016).

priority goal focused on program quality. According to Education officials, Education also does not incorporate these tax expenditures in its agency priority goal because families who benefit from publicly provided early learning services would not incur tuition costs, and therefore would not benefit from these expenditures.

## Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

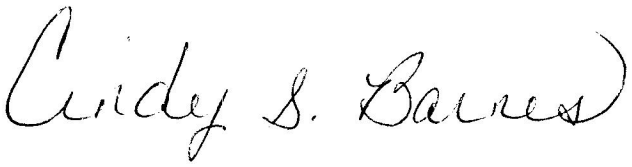
We provided a draft of this report for review and comment to the Departments of Education (Education), Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Interior (Interior). We also sent selected excerpts of the report to the Appalachian Regional Commission, and to the Departments of Agriculture, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, Labor, the Treasury, and the General Services Administration. We received formal written comments from HHS, which are reproduced in appendix V. In addition, Education and HHS provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate. Interior did not have comments on our report.

In its written comments, HHS agreed with our findings and noted that children and families benefit most from investments in federal early learning and child care programs when they are coordinated with similar programs and activities. The agency also noted that it will continue to work with the Department of Education and other agencies to streamline resources for early learning and child care programs, to the extent permitted by law.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees, the Secretaries of Education, Health and Human Services, and the Interior, and other interested parties. In addition, the report will be available at no charge on the GAO website at http://www.gao.gov.

If you or your staff have any questions concerning this report, please contact me at (202) 512-7215 or brownbarnesc@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix VI.

Sincerely yours,



Cindy S. Brown Barnes, Director
Education, Workforce, and Income Security Issues

# Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The objectives of this review were to examine: (1) what is known about the federal investment in early learning and child care programs; (2) the extent to which early learning and child care programs are fragmented, overlap, or are duplicative, and the efforts agencies have made to manage these conditions; and (3) the extent to which agencies assess performance for programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose.

## Selection Criteria for Programs and Tax Expenditures

To count the number of federal early learning and child care programs, we examined the key benefits and services they provide.[1] We used the following three criteria to identify relevant programs. The programs (1) funded or supported early learning or child care services, (2) were provided to children age 5 and under, and (3) delivered services in an educational or child care setting. We excluded kindergarten programs from our scope because early learning applies to children who are preschool age (age 5 and under), while children who are in kindergarten are grouped as part of the standard K-12 education demographic. We also excluded any programs that were not listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA), a government-wide compendium of federal programs, projects, services, and activities that provide assistance or benefits to the American public. Additionally, we limited our review to programs for which federal funds were obligated in fiscal year 2015, the most recent available obligations data at the time we conducted our work. As we did in 2012 and prior work, we excluded programs operated by the U.S. Department of Defense because these programs are available only

[1]In 2012, the Office of Management and Budget issued guidance allowing agencies flexibility to define and count their programs using five possible approaches. These include defining programs by: 1) goals and outcomes; 2) beneficiaries, customers, or other target populations; 3) key benefits, services, or products; 4) administering agencies or organizational structure; and 5) budget. The resulting number of programs can vary depending on the approach used to define programs.

to members of the military and their families.[2] Furthermore, these programs are not listed in the CFDA.

Tax expenditures included in this review include those that (1) fund or support early learning or child care services, (2) are obtained on behalf of children under age 5, and (3) forgo taxes so those funds can be used to purchase child care services occurring in an educational or child care setting.

## Efforts to Identify Programs and Tax Expenditures

In identifying programs and tax expenditures for this work, we relied on the results of our 2012 report, agency responses to our questionnaires, and other supplemental information provided by agencies. We did not conduct an independent legal analysis to verify the accuracy of the information provided to us by agencies.

To identify federal programs and tax expenditures, we started with the list of 45 programs and 5 tax expenditures in our 2012 review. For each program, we sent questionnaires to and received responses from nine agencies and one regional commission and conducted follow-up interviews to confirm that these programs and tax expenditures continued to meet all three of our criteria, which are described more fully below, in fiscal year 2015. We asked agency officials to identify additional programs meeting these criteria that were not included in our 2012 review. We reviewed descriptions in the Congressional Research Service's 2014 Tax Compendium to identify any new tax expenditures that can be used for early learning or child care. We used the questionnaires we sent to the Department of the Treasury (Treasury) to confirm that the tax expenditures we identified in 2012 remained in effect in fiscal year 2015. In addition to agency responses to our questionnaires, we obtained supplementary information from the Departments of Education (Education), Health and Human Services (HHS), the Interior (Interior), and other agencies.[3]

[2]For a more detailed description of the methodology we used in our 2012 review, see p. 201, "How GAO Conducted Its Work," GAO, *2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue*, GAO-12-342SP (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 28, 2012).

[3]Examples include information from annual reports and program notices in the Federal Register.

Using a similar definition as in our prior review, we considered a program to have an explicit early learning or child care purpose if, according to our analysis, early learning or child care is specifically described as a program purpose in the CFDA or other agency information.

## Efforts to Identify Program Obligations and Estimated Revenue Loss

After we identified programs and tax expenditures that met our criteria, we obtained information about fiscal year 2015 program obligations, the most recent year for which these data were available, from the President's budget for fiscal year 2017. We obtained information on estimated losses in revenue from fiscal year 2015 tax expenditures from Treasury's Tax Expenditure Estimates for fiscal year 2017.

## Efforts to Assess Potential Fragmentation, Overlap, and Duplication

To analyze potential fragmentation, overlap, and duplication across programs, we assessed the programs' activities and target populations using questionnaire responses from the nine agencies and one commission, as well as from supporting documentation. We also interviewed Education and HHS officials regarding their efforts to coordinate with other agencies that administer early learning and child care programs, and examined documents about these efforts. We compared these efforts against leading practices for agency collaboration.[4]

## Efforts to Assess Performance Information

In addition, we obtained information about program performance for programs with an explicit early learning or child care purpose by

[4]Key features of leading practices for agency collaboration fall into the following categories: outcomes and accountability; bridging organizational cultures; leadership; clarity of roles and responsibilities; participants; resources; and written guidance and agreements. See GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: Practices that Can Help Enhance and Sustain Collaboration among Federal Agencies,* GAO-06-15, (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 21, 2005); *Managing for Results: Key Considerations for Implementing Interagency Collaborative Mechanisms,* GAO-12-1022 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 27, 2012); and *Managing for Results: Implementation Approaches Used to Enhance Collaboration in Interagency Groups*, GAO-14-220 (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 14, 2014).

reviewing agency performance reports, congressional budget justifications, and program studies, and by interviewing agency officials. For programs with performance measures, we reported the results for the last 3 years of available data found in agency congressional budget justifications, or other publically available sources. We also reviewed program studies that were cited in congressional budget justifications or other published performance documents, and obtained additional program studies that Education, HHS, and Interior conducted or used independent contractors to conduct. Through these steps, we identified 30 studies published between 2002 and 2016. We then reviewed a subset of 27 studies that we determined to have assessed results aligned with the programs' objectives. We reviewed the methodological and analytical approaches of each of these studies to ensure that they were appropriate to measure program performance.

# Appendix II: Update of Programs and Tax Expenditures that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care

## Agencies that Administer Programs With and Without an Explicit Early Learning or Child Care Purpose

**Figure 5: Department of Education Programs that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Explicit early learning or child care purpose? | Rationale for adding or removing program |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Department of Education** | | | |
| Alaska Native Educational Programs | ✓ | ☐ | — |
| Child Care Access Means Parents in School | ✓ | ■ | — |
| Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities[a] | ✓ | ■ | — |
| Education for Homeless Children and Youth | ✓ | ☐ | — |
| English Language Acquisition Grants | ✓ | ☐ | — |
| Full-Service Community Schools | ✓ | ☐ | — |
| Indian Education-Grants to Local Educational Agencies[b] | ✓ | ☐ | — |
| Indian Education-Special Programs for Indian Children | ✓ | ☐ | — |
| Migrant Education-State Grant Program | ✓ | ☐ | — |
| Native Hawaiian Education | ✓ | ☐ | — |
| Preschool Development Grants[c] | + | ■ | New program as of fiscal year 2014 |
| Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities[d] | ✓ | ■ | — |
| Promise Neighborhoods[e] | ✓ | ■ | — |
| Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge | − | ■ | Not funded in fiscal year 2015 |
| School Improvement Grants[f] | + | ☐ | Program added early learning focus as of fiscal year 2015 |
| Special Education-Grants to States | ✓ | ☐ | — |
| Special Education-State Personnel Development | ✓ | ☐ | — |
| Special Education-Technology and Media Services for Individuals with Disabilities | − | ☐ | Program does not currently fund or support early learning or child care |
| State Fiscal Stabilization Fund-Education State Grants, Recovery Act | − | ■ | Not funded in fiscal year 2015 |
| Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy | ✓ | ■ | — |
| Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies | ✓ | ☐ | — |

**Legend:** ✓ = Remained on list; + = Added to list; − = Removed from list; ■ = Yes; ☐ = No; — = Not applicable

Source: GAO analysis of federal agency responses to GAO questionnaire and agency documents and GAO, *2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue*, GAO-12-342SP (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 28, 2012). | GAO-17-463

[a]In our 2012 review, we listed this program as Special Education-Grants for Infants and Families.

[b]In our 2012 review, we identified the Indian Education-Grants to Local Educational Agencies as having an explicit early learning or child care purpose. According to officials from the Department of

Education (Education), this program permits funds to be used for early learning or child care, but this is not a required component of the program. According to our analysis of the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) and agency documents, services provided through this program are not targeted to children age 5 and under, insofar as they include activities such as after-school programs, tutoring, and drop-out prevention. We therefore identified the program as not having an explicit early learning or child care purpose in this review.

[c]The Every Student Succeeds Act, which was signed into law in December 2015, authorized a Preschool Development Grants program to be administered by HHS, jointly with Education. Pub. L. No. 114-95, § 9212, 129 Stat. 1802, 2152 (2015). Previously, the program had been authorized through appropriations language and was funded through Education, and was jointly administered by HHS and Education.

[d]In our 2012 review, we listed this program as Special Education-Preschool Grants.

[e]In 2012, we did not classify Promise Neighborhoods as a program with an explicit early learning or child care purpose, because early learning or child care was not listed as a specific purpose in the program materials we reviewed. We changed the classification of this program to one that has an explicit early learning or child care purpose because "building a complete continuum of cradle-through-college-to-career solutions" is described as one of the purposes of the program in the Federal Register.

[f]The Every Student Succeeds Act eliminated the School Improvement Grants program. However, according to Education, consistent with the transition provisions of this Act and the Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2016, Education made a final round of School Improvement Grant awards for fiscal year 2016.

**Figure 6: Department of Health and Human Services Programs that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Explicit early learning or child care purpose? | Rationale for adding or removing program |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Department of Health and Human Services** | | | |
| Child Care and Development Fund[a] | ☑ | ■ | — |
| Community Services Block Grant | ☑ | ☐ | — |
| Head Start | ☑ | ■ | — |
| Social Services Block Grant | ☑ | ☐ | — |
| Temporary Assistance for Needy Families | ☑ | ☐ | — |

**Legend:**

☑ = Remained on list ■ = Yes ☐ = No — = Not applicable

Source: GAO analysis of federal agency responses to GAO questionnaire and agency documents and GAO, *2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue*, GAO-12-342SP (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 28, 2012). | GAO-17-463

[a]The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) consists of two funding sources: mandatory and matching funding authorized under section 418 of the Social Security Act, and discretionary funding authorized under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, as amended. In addition, states may transfer up to 30 percent of their allotment under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to CCDF. States operate subsidy programs using these two funding sources as one program, according to HHS officials. In our 2012 report, we listed each of these components separately because they were listed individually in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA). However, for our current review, we considered key benefits and services as the framework to guide our identification of programs, regardless of how the components are listed in the CFDA.

**Figure 7: Department of the Interior Programs that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Explicit early learning or child care purpose? | Rationale for adding or removing program |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Department of the Interior** | | | |
| Family and Child Education (FACE) | ☑ | ■ | — |
| Indian Child Welfare Act Title II Grants | ☑ | ☐ | — |
| Indian Education-Assistance to Schools[a] | ☑ | ☐ | — |

☑ = Remained on list ■ = Yes ☐ = No — = Not applicable

Source: GAO analysis of federal agency responses to GAO questionnaire and agency documents and GAO, *2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue,* GAO-12-342SP (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 28, 2012). | GAO-17-463

[a]This program is also known as Johnson-O'Malley Assistance Grants.

## Agencies that Administer Programs Without an Explicit Early Learning or Child Care Purpose

**Figure 8: Appalachian Regional Commission Program that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Rationale for adding or removing program |
|---|---|---|
| **Appalachian Regional Commission** | | |
| Appalachian Area Development | ✓ | — |

**Legend:**

✓ = Remained on list — = Not applicable

Source: GAO analysis of federal agency responses to GAO questionnaire and agency documents and GAO, *2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue,* GAO-12-342SP (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 28, 2012). | GAO-17-463

**Figure 9: Department of Agriculture Programs that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Rationale for adding or removing program |
|---|---|---|
| **Department of Agriculture** | | |
| Child and Adult Care Food Program | ✓ | — |
| Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Program | + | Program identified by agency officials |
| National School Lunch Program | ✓ | — |
| School Breakfast Program | ✓ | — |
| Special Milk Program for Children | ✓ | — |

**Legend:**

✓ = Remained on list + = Added to list — = Not applicable

Source: GAO analysis of federal agency responses to GAO questionnaire and agency documents and GAO, *2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue,* GAO-12-342SP (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 28, 2012). | GAO-17-463

**Figure 10: General Services Administration Programs that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Rationale for adding or removing program |
|---|---|---|
| **General Services Administration** | | |
| Donation of Federal Surplus Personal Property | ✓ | — |
| The General Services Administration's Child Care Program[a] | − | Benefit for limited number of federal employees; not in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance |

**Legend:**

✓ = Remained on list  − = Removed from list  — = Not applicable

Source: GAO analysis of federal agency responses to GAO questionnaire and agency documents and GAO, *2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue*, GAO-12-342SP (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 28, 2012). | GAO-17-463

[a]In 2012, we noted that the General Services Administration's Child Care Program had an explicit early learning or child care purpose. We determined that this program is out of the scope of our current review because it is a benefit for a limited number of federal employees and not listed in the CFDA.

**Figure 11: Department of Housing and Urban Development Programs that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Rationale for adding or removing program |
|---|---|---|
| **Department of Housing and Urban Development** | | |
| Choice Neighborhoods | + | Program identified by agency officials |
| Community Development Block Grant[a] | ✓ | — |
| Jobs-Plus Pilot Initiative | + | Program identified by agency officials |

**Legend:**

✓ = Remained on list  + = Added to list  — = Not applicable

Source: GAO analysis of federal agency responses to GAO questionnaire and agency documents and GAO, *2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue*, GAO-12-342SP (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 28, 2012). | GAO-17-463

[a]The Community Development Block Grant comprises Entitlement Grants, Special Purpose Grants/Insular Areas, and State Program and Non-Entitlement Grants in Hawaii. In our 2012 report, we listed each of these components separately because they were listed individually in the CFDA. However, for our current review, we considered key benefits and services as the framework to guide our identification of programs, regardless of how the components are listed in the CFDA.

**Figure 12: Department of Justice Programs that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Rationale for adding or removing program |
|---|---|---|
| **Department of Justice** | | |
| Children and Youth Exposed to Violence | − | Program does not currently fund or support early learning or child care |
| Defending Childhood/Children's Exposure to Violence[a] | + | Program replaced the Reduction and Prevention of Children's Exposure to Violence (Safe Start) program |
| Reduction and Prevention of Children's Exposure to Violence (Safe Start)[a] | − | Program was replaced by the Defending Childhood/Children's Exposure to Violence program |
| Transitional Housing Assistance for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking, or Sexual Assault | ✓ | — |

**Legend:**

− = Removed from list + = Added to list ✓ = Remained on list — = Not applicable

Source: GAO analysis of federal agency responses to GAO questionnaire and agency documents and GAO, *2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue,* GAO-12-342SP (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 28, 2012). | GAO-17-463

[a]In our 2012 report, we listed this program as the Reduction and Prevention of Children's Exposure to Violence (Safe Start) program. The Department of Justice has since replaced the Reduction and Prevention of Children's Exposure to Violence (Safe Start) program with the Defending Childhood/Children's Exposure to Violence program.

**Figure 13: Department of Labor Programs that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Rationale for adding or removing program |
|---|---|---|
| **Department of Labor** | | |
| National Farmworker Jobs Program | ✓ | — |
| Native American Employment and Training | ✓ | — |
| Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult Program[a] | ✓ | — |
| Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Dislocated Worker Program[b] | ✓ | — |
| Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth Activities | + | Program identified by agency officials |
| YouthBuild | + | Program identified by agency officials |

**Legend:**

✓ = Remained on list + = Added to list — = Not applicable

Source: GAO analysis of federal agency responses to GAO questionnaire and agency documents and GAO, *2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue*, GAO-12-342SP (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 28, 2012). | GAO-17-463

[a]This program was listed as the Workforce Investment Act Adult Program in our 2012 report. The program's name changed as a result of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which amended the previous law in 2014.

[b]This program was listed as the Workforce Investment Act Dislocated Worker Formula Grants in our 2012 report. The program's name changed as a result of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which amended the previous law in 2014.

## Tax Expenditures

**Figure 14: Department of the Treasury Child Care-Related Tax Expenditures (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Tax Expenditures GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Rationale for adding or removing program |
|---|---|---|
| **Department of Treasury - Tax Expenditures** | | |
| Credit for child and dependent care expenses | ✓ | — |
| Employer-provided child care credit[a] | ✓ | — |
| Employer-provided child care exclusion[b] | ✓ | — |
| Exclusion of benefits provided under cafeteria plans[c] | – | According to Treasury officials, revenue loss associated with child care through cafeteria plans is the employer-provided child care exclusion |
| Exclusion of income earned by voluntary employees' beneficiary associations | – | Does not reimburse families or employers for expenses they incur to purchase early learning or child care services |

**Legend:**

✓ = Remained on list – = Removed from list — = Not applicable

Source: GAO analysis of federal agency responses to GAO questionnaire and agency documents and GAO, *2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue,* GAO-12-342SP (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 28, 2012). | GAO-17-463

Note: The tax provisions listed in this figure are not exclusively available for the care of children age 5 and under. The credit for child and dependent care expenses may also cover dependent care for individuals who are physically or mentally incapable of self-care, including adults with disabilities or who are elderly. In our 2012 report on this topic, we listed the names of tax expenditures as they appeared in the Congressional Research Service's 2010 Tax Compendium. For our current review, we list the names of these tax provisions as they appear in the Department of the Treasury's (Treasury) Tax Expenditure Estimates for fiscal year 2017.

[a]In our 2012 report, we listed this tax expenditure as the credit for employer-provided child care.

[b]This tax expenditure is also known as the dependent care assistance program exclusion. In our 2012 report, we listed this tax expenditure as the exclusion of employer-provided child and dependent care. For the purposes of this report we will refer to this tax expenditure as the employer-provided child care exclusion, which is how it is referred to in Treasury's Tax Expenditure Estimates.

[c]The exclusion of benefits provided under cafeteria plans includes revenue used for health insurance and other benefits, in addition to dependent care. According to Treasury officials, estimates for various benefits under cafeteria plans are reported separately by budget function (e.g., healthcare). Revenue loss associated with child care through cafeteria plans is the employer-provided child care exclusion.

# Appendix III: Fiscal Year 2015 Obligations for Programs without an Explicit Early Learning or Child Care Purpose

**Table 6: Obligations for Programs without an Explicit Early Learning or Child Care Purpose, but That Permit Such Uses of Funds, by Agency, Fiscal Year 2015 (dollars in millions)**

| | Program | FY 2015 program obligations | FY 2015 obligations for early learning or child care[b] | FY 2015 early learning or child care obligations as a percent of total program obligations (percent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Appalachian Regional Commission** | Appalachian Area Development | 117 | 2 | 2 |
| **Department of Agriculture**[a] | Child and Adult Care Food Program | 3,350 | 2,935[a] | 88 |
| | Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Program | 139 | No info | No info |
| | National School Lunch Program | 12,002 | No info | No info |
| | School Breakfast Program | 4,057 | No info | No info |
| | Special Milk Program for Children | 11 | No info | No info |
| **Department of Education** | Alaska Native Educational Programs | 31 | No info | No info |
| | Education for Homeless Children and Youth | 65 | No info | No info |
| | English Language Acquisition Grants | 739 | No info | No info |
| | Full-Service Community Schools | 10 | No info | No info |
| | Indian Education-Grants to Local Educational Agencies | 100 | No info | No info |
| | Indian Education-Special Programs for Indian Children | 18 | 4[b] | 22 |
| | Migrant Education-State Grant Program | 365 | No info | No info |
| | Native Hawaiian Education | 32 | 14[b] | 44 |
| | School Improvement Grants[c] | 504 | No info | No info |
| | Special Education-Grants to States | 11,502 | No info | No info |
| | Special Education-State Personnel Development | 42 | No info | No info |
| | Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies | 14,410 | No info | No info |
| **Department of Health and Human Services** | Community Services Block Grant | 674 | No info | No info |
| | Social Services Block Grant[d] | 1,576 | No info[d] | 18 |
| | Temporary Assistance for Needy Families[e] | 16,716 | No info | No info |
| **Department of Housing and Urban** | Community Development Block Grants[f] | 2,662 | No info | No info |
| | Choice Neighborhoods | 148 | No info | No info |

| | Program | FY 2015 program obligations | FY 2015 obligations for early learning or child care[b] | FY 2015 early learning or child care obligations as a percent of total program obligations (percent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Development** | Jobs-Plus Pilot Initiative | 15 | No info | No info |
| **Department of Justice** | Defending Childhood/Children's Exposure to Violence | 7 | No info | No info |
| | Transitional Housing Assistance for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking or Sexual Assault | 25 | No info | No info |
| **Department of Labor** | National Farmworker Jobs Program | 82 | No info | No info |
| | Native American Employment and Training Program | 46 | No info | No info |
| | Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult Program | 775 | No info | No info |
| | Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Dislocated Worker Program | 1,240 | No info | No info |
| | Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth Activities | 830 | No info | No info |
| | YouthBuild | 76 | No info | No info |
| **Department of the Interior** | Indian Child Welfare Title II Grants | 28 | No info | No info |
| | Indian Education-Assistance to Schools[g] | 15 | No info | No info |
| **General Services Administration** | Donation of Federal Surplus Personal Property | 58 | No info | No info |

Legend: – = no information available, according to agency officials

Source: GAO analysis of the President's Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Proposal and federal agency responses to GAO questionnaire. | GAO-17-463

Notes: Obligations amounts published in the President's budget are published as dollars in millions. We similarly rounded obligation amounts provided by agency officials to the nearest million. Agency officials told us they could not identify the amount of funds used for early learning or child care purposes for many programs. Obligations identified for early learning or child care purposes include funds for services for children birth through age 5. However, this may include some funds obligated for services provided in-home or in other informal settings (e.g., home visits).

[a]The Department of Agriculture provided us with this estimate of program obligations used for meal reimbursement by home daycare providers and child care centers, based on average reimbursement rates. However, officials noted that they do not track this amount for program administration purposes.

[b]Education officials told us that the amount of funds used for early learning or child care in fiscal year 2015 is an estimate, and it is the total amount that was awarded to grantees for projects that were exclusively focused on early childhood. Additionally, officials said that for those grantees, it is likely that not every dollar went to support early childhood directly (e.g., some funds were probably used for program administration).

[c]The Every Student Succeeds Act eliminated the School Improvement Grants program. However, according to Education, consistent with the transition provisions of this act and the Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2016, the Department made a final round of School Improvement Grant awards for fiscal year 2016.

[d]According to HHS officials, states do not obligate Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funds for child care or early learning; however, states may elect to use any portion of their funding for services categorized as children's daycare. HHS officials told us that in fiscal year 2015 states expended a total of $2,761,559,075 in SSBG funds, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) transfer funds and allowable carryover from the previous fiscal year. Officials said that of that total expenditure amount, $287,826,781 (including TANF transfer funds) were expended for children's daycare services.

[e]TANF obligations used for early learning or child care of are not tracked at the federal level, according to HHS officials. However, states do report TANF spending and transfers for child care. In fiscal year 2015, states used $1,250,115,096 in federal TANF funds for child care (spent directly or transferred to the Child Care and Development Fund) and $52,438,839 for pre-kindergarten or Head Start.

[f]Officials from the Department of Housing and Urban Development told us that they track expenditures related to early learning or child care activities, not obligations.

[g]This program is also known as Johnson-O'Malley Assistance Grants.

# Appendix IV: Performance Information for Programs with an Explicit Early Learning or Child Care Purpose

## Department of Education: Performance Assessment of Programs with an Explicit Early Learning or Child Care Purpose

### Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS)

The Department of Education (Education) has two performance measures for Child Care Access Means Parents in School program (CCAMPIS), but has not set program-wide targets (see table 7). Education reports performance on these measures separately for four-year and two-year institutions of higher education in its annual congressional budget justification. The fiscal year 2017 budget justification contained performance information for fiscal years 2012 and 2013. Education officials told us reporting requirements for the program changed recently, from 18- and 36-month performance reporting to annual performance reporting. At that time, officials revised the data collection instrument and program performance measures to reflect the annual data collection. As of 2016, officials said they have two years of baseline data and are considering setting performance targets for future years.

Education has not conducted an evaluation of the CCAMPIS program. However, officials told us they use data from other Education-conducted evaluations of post-secondary students to gather contextual information about conditions associated with low-income student parents.

**Table 7: Performance Measures for the Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program, Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013**

| **Summary of program objectives** |
|---|
| Increase access for low-income parents to postsecondary institutions. |

| **Performance measures** (in percent) | **FY 2012 2-year Institutions** | **FY 2012 4-year Institutions** | **FY 2013 2-year Institutions** | **FY 2013 4-year Institutions** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage of CCAMPIS program participants enrolled at CCAMPIS grantee institutions receiving child care services who remain in postsecondary education at the end of the academic year, as reported in the annual performance report. | 49 | 69 | 45 | 46 |
| Percentage of CCAMPIS program participants enrolled at 2-year CCAMPIS grantee institutions receiving child care services who graduate from postsecondary education within 3 years of enrollment.[a] | 31 | No Data | 35 | No Data |

Legend: – = No Data

Source: GAO analysis of agency-reported program performance information and interviews. | GAO-17-463

Note: According to Education officials, in addition to these primary performance measures, Education reports on an additional efficiency measure: the federal cost per CCAMPIS student enrolled at grantee institutions receiving child care services who remains in postsecondary education at the end of the academic year.

[a]Education recently stopped reporting completion rates at 4-year grantee institutions. According to Education's Fiscal Year 2017 congressional budget justification, the methodology used for this measure was problematic because the denominator included students who had not been in school long enough to graduate even if they persisted without interruption. The Department does not plan to replace this measure. CCAMPIS grantees at 4-year institutions will continue to be required to submit completion rate data for students served by their projects; however, the data will not be aggregated to obtain completion rates at 4-year CCAMPIS grantee institutions.

## Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities

Education has six performance measures for the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and set program-wide targets for each of these (see table 8).[1] In its congressional budget justification, Education reports its progress toward achieving these targets annually. Results have remained relatively stable among the six measures over the 3 years of data we reviewed (2012-2014). However, in 2014, the most recent year of available data, Education reported meeting two performance targets: the number of states that serve at least 1

[1]This program is also known as Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

percent of infants in the general population under age 1 through this program, and the percentage of children receiving age-appropriate early intervention services in the home or in programs designed for typically developing peers. Other measures were relatively close to meeting targets. Education acknowledges that some data quality issues exist, particularly with regard to missing data.[2]

In various reauthorizations, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has included provisions for collecting information on the implementation and impact of the law. For example, in response to a requirement in the 1997 reauthorization, Education conducted four longitudinal child-based studies on specific age groups, including the National Early Intervention Longitudinal Study (NEILS). NEILS was a descriptive study of young children and families served through this program, the services they received, the cost of those services, and the outcomes that children and their families experienced. According to the authors of the final NEILS report, outcomes for families and children from birth through age 3 were generally positive.[3] For example, nearly one third of children who received early interventions were not receiving special education services at kindergarten, nor did they have any disability. However, a large percentage of children who received early intervention services had communication problems, such as speech or communication delay, or the inability to make needs known, and for many children, these problems continued through kindergarten.

The 2004 reauthorization of IDEA also called for a national assessment to measure the implementation progress and the relative effectiveness of the law. Among other reports published as part of the IDEA national assessment, Education published an analysis of the patterns in identification of and outcomes for children with disabilities as well as a

[2]According to Education's published performance information, because the program's performance measures require entry- and exit-testing of participating children in order to measure growth in these outcomes, it requires a significant investment of time and technical assistance at both the federal and state levels to ensure that the data collected are valid, reliable, and meaningful. Education reports that it has made efforts to address these concerns by investing in technical assistance to state grantees.

[3]Kathlen Hebbeler, et al. "Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and their Families: Participants, Services, and Outcomes, Final Report of the National Early Intervention Longitudinal Study (NEILS)" SRI International for the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (January 2007).

report on IDEA implementation.[4] Among other key findings, Education found that 32 states have early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers. Few states, however, provide a mandated or suggested written plan documenting the early intervention services a child should receive and how these services are to be administered for infants and toddlers and their families.

Education also uses the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort, a nationally representative sample of children studied from birth through their entry into kindergarten, to obtain important demographic information on infants and toddlers with disabilities.

**Table 8: Reported Performance Targets and Results for the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities, Project Years 2012-2014**

### Summary of program objectives

The functional development of infants and toddlers will be enhanced by early intervention services.

All infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families will receive early intervention services in natural environments that meet their individual needs.

| Performance measures | 2012 Target | 2012 Actual | 2013 Target | 2013 Actual | 2014 Target | 2014 Actual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage of infants and toddlers who entered the program below age expectations in positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships) who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program. | 67 | 66 | 69 | 66 | 69 | 65 |
| Percentage of infants and toddlers who entered the program below age expectations in acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy) who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program. | 71 | 72 | 73 | 71 | 73 | 71 |

[4]Jose Blackorby, et al. “Patterns in the Identification of and Outcomes for Children and Youth with Disabilities. Final Report. NCEE 2010-4005.” *National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance* (2010), and M.C. Bradley, et al. “IDEA National Assessment Implementation Study.” Final Report. NCEE 2011-4027.” *National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance* (2011).

| Performance measures | 2012 Target | 2012 Actual | 2013 Target | 2013 Actual | 2014 Target | 2014 Actual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage of infants and toddlers who entered the program below age expectations in the use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program. | 71 | 73 | 73 | 71 | 73 | 72 |
| Number of states that serve at least 1 percent of infants in the general population under age 1 through Part C. | 27 | 28 | 27 | 30 | 28 | 31 |
| Number of states that serve at least 2 percent of infants and toddlers in the general population, birth through age 2, through Part C. | 32 | 44 | 42 | 41 | 45 | 44 |
| Percentage of children receiving age-appropriate early intervention services in the home or in programs designed for typically developing peers. | 93 | 95 | 94 | 95 | 95 | 96 |

Source: GAO analysis of agency-reported program performance information and interviews. | GAO-17-463

## Preschool Development Grants

The Preschool Development Grants program has three performance measures for its fiscal year 2014 cohort of grantees (see table 9).[5] Education has not set program-wide performance targets, but requires individual grantees to set targets. Education published a progress update on grantee performance for the 2015-2016 school year, which was the program's first year of implementation. In this update, Education reported that the state grantees met nearly 90 percent of their targets for the number of children served in high-quality preschool programs. Education has not yet published results for all three of its performance measures.

Education officials told us that Education and HHS have not conducted an evaluation of this program, in part because the program is new and in the process of implementation.

[5]The Every Student Succeeds Act, which was signed into law in December 2015, authorized a Preschool Development Grants program to be administered by HHS, jointly with Education. Pub. L. No. 114-95, § 9212, 129 Stat. 1802, 2152 (2015). Previously, the program had been authorized through appropriations language and was funded through Education, and was jointly administered by Education and HHS. The new program will be funded through HHS and jointly administered by HHS and Education.

**Table 9: Performance Measures for the Preschool Development Grant Program**

| Summary of program objectives | Performance measures |
|---|---|
| Support state and local efforts to build, develop, and expand high quality preschool programs so that children from low- and moderate-income families enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and in life. | Number and percentage of eligible children served in high-quality preschool programs funded by the grant;<br>Number and percentage of children served overall in the state preschool program; and<br>Number and percentage of children in the high-need communities served by the grant that are ready for kindergarten as determined by the state's kindergarten entry assessment or, if the state does not yet have a kindergarten entry assessment, other valid and reliable means of determining school readiness. |

Source: GAO analysis of agency-reported program performance information and interviews. | GAO-17-463

Note: The measures we describe in this report pertain to Preschool Development Grants awarded in fiscal year 2014. Additionally, this program has supported two types of grants to states: (1) Development Grants for states with small or no state public preschool program to develop or enhance their preschool program infrastructure and capacity to deliver high-quality preschool services to eligible children in one or more high-need communities, and (2) Expansion Grants to states that have robust preschool systems or that have been awarded a Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge grant, to implement and sustain high-quality preschool programs to serve additional children in high-need communities. Education developed the following performance measure specifically for Development Grants: the number of states that collect and analyze data on state preschool program quality, including the structural elements of quality specified in Education and HHS's definition of high-quality preschool programs.

## Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities

Education has five performance measures for Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities and sets program-wide targets for each of these (see table 10).[6] In its congressional budget justification, Education reports its progress toward achieving these targets annually. Results have remained relatively stable among the five measures over the 3 years of data we reviewed (2012-2014). However, in 2014, the most recent year of available data, Education reported meeting only one performance target—the percentage of children with disabilities (ages 3 through 5) attending a regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of hours of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program. Other measures were relatively close to meeting

[6]This program is also known as Part B, section 619 of IDEA.

targets. Education acknowledges that some data quality issues exist, particularly with regard to missing data.[7]

In various reauthorizations, IDEA has included provisions for collecting information on the implementation and impact of the law. For example, in response to a requirement in the 1997 reauthorization, Education conducted four longitudinal child-based studies on specific age groups, including the Pre-Elementary Education Longitudinal Study (PEELS). PEELS was designed to describe young children with disabilities, their experiences, the services they receive, as well as their performance over time in preschool, kindergarten, and elementary school. Education has conducted several reports based on these longitudinal data. In the most recent report we reviewed, Education found, among other things, that children who received preschool special education services showed growth each year in vocabulary and mathematics; however, growth slowed in both subject areas as children got older. Children's performance varied across assessments and across subgroups defined by disability. At age 10, the gap between these subgroups persisted, and there were no differences in growth rates between subgroups.[8]

The 2004 reauthorization of IDEA also called for a national assessment to measure the implementation progress and the relative effectiveness of the law. Among other reports published as part of the IDEA national assessment, Education published an analysis of the patterns in identification of and outcomes for children with disabilities as well as a report on IDEA implementation.[9] Education found that the percentage of children identified for services increased every year from 1997 to 2006 for all preschool-age children, among other findings. Furthermore, children in

[7]According to Education's published performance information, because the program's performance measures require entry- and exit-testing of participating children in order to measure growth in these outcomes, these measures require a significant investment of time and technical assistance at both the federal and state levels to ensure that the data collected are valid, reliable, and meaningful. Education reports that it has made efforts to address these concerns by investing in technical assistance to state grantees.

[8]Elaine Carlson, et al. "A Longitudinal View of the Receptive Vocabulary and Math Achievement of Young Children with Disabilities. NCSER 2011-3006." *National Center for Special Education Research Institute for Education Sciences* (2011).

[9]Jose Blackorby, et al. "Patterns in the Identification of and Outcomes for Children and Youth with Disabilities. Final Report. NCEE 2010-4005." *National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance* (2010), and M.C. Bradley, et al. "IDEA National Assessment Implementation Study. Final Report. NCEE 2011-4027" *National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance* (2011).

each of the disability categories differed significantly from the general population in academic skills as well as social development. Among other key findings, this study found that 27 states either mandate or suggest a standards-based individualized education program for preschool age children. Such a program is designed to enable a child to make progress in the general education curriculum through the inclusion of state academic standards, among other things.

Additionally, through two complementary cohort studies of children's early school experiences, Education is currently investigating outcomes experienced by children with and without disabilities in preschool programs, through its National Center for Education Statistics.[10]

**Table 10: Reported Performance Targets and Results for Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities, Project Years 2012-2014**

| **Summary of program objectives** |
|---|
| Preschool children with disabilities will receive special education and related services that result in increased skills that enable them to succeed in school. |

| Program measures | 2012 Target | 2012 Actual | 2013 Target | 2013 Actual | 2014 Target | 2014 Actual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage of children who entered the program below age expectations in positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships) who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program. | 81 | 79 | 82 | 81 | 83 | 80 |
| Percentage of children who entered the program below age expectations in acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy) who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program. | 81 | 80 | 82 | 80 | 83 | 80 |
| Percentage of children who entered the program below age expectations in the use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program. | 81 | 77 | 82 | 80 | 83 | 79 |

[10]Education is currently collecting data on children participating in The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010-11 cohort. It plans to release the final round of data by fall 2018. Education collected the last round of data on the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort, during the 2007-2008 school year.

| Program measures | 2012 Target | 2012 Actual | 2013 Target | 2013 Actual | 2014 Target | 2014 Actual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage of children with disabilities (ages 3 through 5) attending a regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of hours of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program.[a] | NA | NA | set baseline | 44 | 44 | 44 |
| Number of states with at least 90 percent of special education teachers of children with disabilities ages 3 to 5 who are fully certified in the areas in which they are teaching. | 41 | 44 | 42 | 43 | 45 | 44 |

Source: GAO analysis of agency-reported program performance information and interviews. | GAO-17-463

[a]Education set the baseline for this measure in fiscal year 2013 because this is a new measure that replaced a previous measure on the extent to which children with disabilities receive their special education services in regular education settings.

## Promise Neighborhoods

Education has 15 performance measures for the Promise Neighborhoods program (see tables 11 and 12).[11] Education requires that individual grantees set their own performance targets. Education publicly reports available data for its two grant cohorts online. Due to data reliability concerns, Education officials have not reported results for some of the performance measures. Education officials stated that some of these data are under development because they have not been able to collect them consistently from their grantees. They noted that they have made efforts to address these concerns by investing in technical assistance to grantees.

Education has not conducted an evaluation of the Promise Neighborhoods program. A key purpose of the Promise Neighborhoods Grant program is to learn how particular strategies affect student outcomes through a rigorous evaluation of the program. In 2014, we recommended that the Secretary of Education develop a plan to use the data collected from grantees to conduct a national evaluation of the

[11]Tables 11 and 12 below contain data on 18 measures. Education reports student attendance, academic proficiency, and kindergarten readiness measures to display more specific information. For example, Education reports its student attendance measure separately by average daily attendance rates and chronic absenteeism rates. Additionally, Education reports student proficiency on math and reading assessments separately.

program. As of May 2017, this recommendation remained unimplemented.[12]

**Table 11: Performance Measures for the Promise Neighborhoods Program for Grantees Awarded Funds in 2011, Project Years 2013-2015** (in percent)

### Summary of program objectives

Provide competitive grants to support distressed communities in implementing a comprehensive, effective continuum of coordinated services designed to improve academic and developmental outcomes for children, youth, and their families, from birth through college.

| Performance measures | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Percent of children, from birth to kindergarten entry, who have a place where they usually go, other than an emergency room, when they are sick or in need of advice about their health. | 80 | 79 | 71 |
| Percent of 3-year-olds who demonstrate at the beginning of the program age-appropriate functioning across multiple domains of early learning as determined using developmentally-appropriate early learning measures. | No info | 70 | 71 |
| Percent of children in kindergarten who demonstrate at the beginning of the school year age-appropriate functioning across multiple domains of early learning as determined using developmentally-appropriate early learning measures. | 48 | 50 | 55 |
| Percent of children, from birth to kindergarten entry, participating in center-based or formal home-based early learning settings or programs, which may include Early Head Start, Head Start, child care, or preschool. | No info | 42 | 39 |
| Percent of students at or above grade level according to state English language arts assessments in at least the grades required by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (3rd through 8th grades and once in high school). | No info | 41 | 39 |
| Percent of students at or above grade level according to state mathematics assessments in at least the grades required by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (3rd through 8th grades and once in high school). | No info | 35 | 27 |

[12]GAO, *Education Grants: Promise Neighborhoods Promotes Collaboration but Needs National Evaluation Plan*, GAO-14-432 (Washington D.C.: May 5, 2014).

| Performance measures | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Attendance rate of students in 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grade (measured by average daily attendance rate of students). | 95 | 95 | 94 |
| Attendance rate of students in 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grade (measured by chronic absenteeism rate). | 16 | 18 | 16 |
| Graduation rate (four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate). | data under development | data under development | data under development |
| High school graduates that obtain a postsecondary degree, certification or credential (as measured by the percent of high school graduates who enroll in a college or university). | data under development | data under development | data under development |
| Performance measures (in percent) | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
| Percent of children who participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily. | No info | 33 | 35 |
| Percent of children who consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily. | 36 | 33 | 32 |
| Percent of students who feel safe at school and traveling to and from school, as measured by a school climate needs assessment. | 70 | 68 | 69 |
| Student mobility rate (measured by percent of student entries and withdrawals from school). | data under development | data under development | data under development |
| For children birth to kindergarten entry, the percent of parents or family members who report reading to their children three or more times a week. | data under development | data under development | data under development |
| For children in kindergarten through 8th grade, the percent of parents or family members who report encouraging their children to read books outside of school. | data under development | data under development | data under development |
| For children in the 9th to 12th grades, the percent of parents or family members who report talking with their child about the importance of college and career. | data under development | data under development | data under development |
| Percent of students who have school and home access to broadband internet and a connected computing device. | 86 | 89 | 90 |

Legend: – = No Data

Source: GAO analysis of agency-reported program performance information and interviews. | GAO-17-463

Note: According to Education's published performance reporting, data are not available for some measures. These reports state that Education does not yet have enough data to report on how grantees are progressing, but is gathering this data to share in the future. Additionally, these reports also state that some data are under development. According to these reports, Education could not compile grantee data to assess a trend because it has not been able to collect uniform data from grantees.

**Table 12: Performance Measures for the Promise Neighborhoods Program for Grantees Awarded Funds in 2012, Project Years 2013-2015 (in percent)**

**Summary of program objectives**
Provide competitive grants to support distressed communities in implementing a comprehensive, effective continuum of coordinated services designed to improve academic and developmental outcomes for children, youth, and their families, from birth through college.

| Performance measures | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Percent of children, from birth to kindergarten entry, who have a place where they usually go, other than an emergency room, when they are sick or in need of advice about their health. | 75 | 62 | 82 |
| Percent of 3-year-olds who demonstrate at the beginning of the program age-appropriate functioning across multiple domains of early learning as determined using developmentally-appropriate early learning measures. | 53 | 88 | 69 |
| Percent of children in kindergarten who demonstrate at the beginning of the school year age-appropriate functioning across multiple domains of early learning as determined using developmentally-appropriate early learning measures. | 35 | 39 | 52 |
| Percent of children, from birth to kindergarten entry, participating in center-based or formal home-based early learning settings or programs, which may include Early Head Start, Head Start, child care, or preschool. | 47 | 40 | 35 |
| Percent of students at or above grade level according to state English language arts assessments in at least the grades required by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (3rd through 8th grades and once in high school).[a] | 46 | 48 | 43 |
| Percent of students at or above grade level according to state mathematics assessments in at least the grades required by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (3rd through 8th grades and once in high school).[a] | 43 | 44 | 42 |
| Attendance rate of students in 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grade (measured by average daily attendance rate of students). | 95 | 90 | 91 |
| Attendance rate of students in 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grade (measured by chronic absenteeism rate). | 20 | 20 | 16 |
| Graduation rate (four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate). | 66 | 72 | 81 |
| High school graduates that obtain a postsecondary degree, certification or credential (as measured by the percent of high school graduates who enroll in a college or university). | 57 | 67 | 63 |

| Performance measures | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Performance measures (in percent) | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
| Percent of children who participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily. | 24 | 21 | 25 |
| Percent of children who consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily. | 25 | 29 | 31 |
| Percent of students who feel safe at school and traveling to and from school, as measured by a school climate needs assessment. | 77 | 67 | 61 |
| Student mobility rate (percent of student entries and withdrawals from school). | 27 | 23 | 20 |
| For children birth to kindergarten entry, the percent of parents or family members who report reading to their children three or more times a week. | 58 | 63 | 59 |
| For children in kindergarten through 8th grades, the percent of parents or family members who report encouraging their children to read books outside of school. | 76 | 70 | 73 |
| For children in the 9th to 12th grades, the percent of parents or family members who report talking with their child about the importance of college and career. | 72 | 84 | 79 |
| Percent of students who have school and home access to broadband internet and a connected computing device. | 89 | 88 | 88 |

Source: GAO analysis of agency-reported program performance information and interviews. | GAO-17-463

[a]According to Education's published performance information, due to changes in the tests given to students, English language arts and mathematics assessment data is only comparable across multiple years for two grantee Neighborhoods.

## Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy

Education has four performance measures for the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program and sets program-wide targets for each of these (see table 13). In its congressional budget justification, Education reports its progress toward achieving these targets annually. One of the four performance measures is specific to the early learning population: the percentage of participating 4-year-old children who achieved significant gains in oral language skills. Results on this measure have declined over the 2 years of data we reviewed (2013-2015). Education reported meeting none of the four performance targets in 2015, the most recent year of available data.

Education has not conducted an evaluation of the current Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program, but officials told us they are

considering conducting one in the future. However, Education has synthesized evaluations of adolescent reading interventions implemented by the related 2006 and 2009 Striving Readers grant cohorts. The original Striving Readers program funded only the 2006 and 2009 grant cohorts and aimed to build a scientific research base for identifying and replicating strategies to improve adolescent literacy skills. [13] For those cohorts, Education found that four of the 10 interventions had at least one study showing a positive effect on reading achievement. The remaining six interventions had no discernible effects. The findings from the studies funded by Striving Readers expanded the evidence base on effective reading interventions for adolescents by adding information on interventions not previously reviewed by Education's Institute of Education Sciences.

**Table 13: Reported Performance Targets and Results for Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy, Project Years 2013-2015 (in percent)**

### Summary of program objectives

To advance literacy skills, including pre-literacy skills, reading, and writing, for students from birth through grade 12, including English learners and students with disabilities.

| Performance measures | 2013 Target | 2013 Actual | 2014 Target | 2014 Actual | 2015 Target | 2015 Actual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage of participating 4-year-old children who achieve significant gains in oral language skills. | set baseline | 68 | 68 | 63 | 68 | 61 |
| Percentage of participating 5th-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on state English language arts assessments. | set baseline | 75 | 75 | 77 | 75 | 72 |
| Percentage of participating 8th-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on state English language arts assessments. | 76 | 81 | 76 | 71 | 76 | 60 |
| Percentage of participating high school students who meet or exceed proficiency on state English language arts assessments. | 75 | 72 | 75 | 65 | 75 | 62 |

Source: GAO analysis of agency-reported program performance information and interviews. | GAO-17-463

Note: According to Education's published performance reports, all states are required to report on the performance measure specific to 4-year-old children. States have the option of either reporting on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th performance measures, or reporting proficiency rates for those same measures that include students who demonstrate adequate growth under the state's Education-approved growth

[13]The name of the program changed in fiscal year 2010 to Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy, with the new program focusing on supporting pre-literacy in addition to adolescent literacy.

model and are counted as meeting or exceeding proficiency for purposes of accountability determinations.

# Department of Health and Human Services (HHS): Performance Assessment of Programs with an Explicit Early Learning or Child Care Purpose

## Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)

HHS has six performance measures for CCDF and sets targets for the four that it considers outcome measures (see table 14), and reports results annually. HHS reported in its congressional budget justification that CCDF met two of its six performance targets in 2014, the last year of available data.[14] Some of CCDF measures are reviewed biannually. HHS is in the process of updating these measures due to recent statutory and legislative changes to the Child Care and Development Block Grant program. In addition, one of CCDF's measures is under development, and HHS is still building capacity to collect this information from all states. Officials plan to obtain this information from states and territories in 2017.

HHS has conducted evaluations of CCDF to learn about different approaches to improving quality and helping parents retain employment. For example, one evaluation examined three types of programs that promote language development. This evaluation found that two of these programs improved teacher interactions with children and increased pre-literacy skills of children. Another evaluation found that expanding income eligibility and extending the time before families have to reapply for child care subsidies temporarily increased the use and stability of subsidy receipt.

[14]This includes two performance measures with data from fiscal year 2013.

**Table 14: Reported Performance Targets and Results for Child Care and Development Fund, Fiscal Years 2012-2014**

### Summary of program objectives

Provide financial assistance to help low-income working families and families engaged in training or education activities obtain access to child care and to improve the quality of child care for all children.

| Performance measures | FY 2012 Target | FY 2012 Actual | FY 2013 Target | FY 2013 Actual | FY 2014 Target | FY 2014 Actual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maintain the proportion of children served through Child Care and Development Fund, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, and Social Services Block Grant child care funding compared to the number of children in families with income equal to or less than 85 percent of state median income (in percent).[a] | 17[b] | 18[b] | 18[c] | 15[c] | 17 | 15 |
| Increase the number of states that implement quality rating and improvement systems that meet high quality benchmarks. | 20 | 19 | 25 | 27 | 29 | 29 |
| Increase the number of states and territories with professional development systems that include core knowledge and competencies, career pathways, professional development capacity assessments, accessible professional development opportunities, and financial supports for child care practitioners.[e] | No info | 31 (baseline)[d] | 35 | 30 | 35[e] | 30[e] |
| Increase the number of states and territories that have implemented early learning and development standards for children birth to age 5 that cover a range of domains across physical, cognitive, and social and emotional development, are incorporated into other parts of the child care system, and aligned with other education standards.[f] | No info | 27 (baseline)[d] | 30 | 36 | 30[e] | 36[e] |
| Increase the number or percentage of low-income children receiving CCDF subsidies who are enrolled in high quality child care settings.[g] | No info | No info | No info | No info | No info | No info |

| Performance measures | FY 2012 Target | FY 2012 Actual | FY 2013 Target | FY 2013 Actual | FY 2014 Target | FY 2014 Actual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amount of CCDF expenditures on quality improvement activities (in dollars). | N/A | 1 billion[b] | N/A | 1 billion[c] | N/A | 958 million |

Legend: N/A = Not Applicable – = No Data

Source: GAO analysis of agency-reported program performance information and interviews. | GAO-17-463

Note: HHS officials told us they report the most recent data available at the time they publish the congressional budget justification for each measure. Therefore, not all data reported in a particular budget justification will be from the same fiscal year.

[a]This measure estimates the average monthly number of children receiving child care subsidies from all federal sources (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Child Care and Development Fund, and Social Services Block Grant), compared on an annual basis to an estimate of the average monthly number of children eligible for child care subsidies. Under CCDF law, states have substantial flexibility to establish their own rules regarding eligibility for child care subsidies within broad federal guidelines. This estimate does not take into account state-specific eligibility thresholds and other requirements families must meet to receive child care subsidies. Prior to fiscal year 2014, the family income used to determine eligibility included only income from the household head, spouse, and children. The new definition of family income includes the household head, spouse, children, unmarried cohabiting parent, and older siblings and other relatives who are unmarried and childless. The result of this is that slightly fewer families are income-eligible, relative to the previous definition of family income.

[b]Data are from fiscal year 2010.

[c]Data are from fiscal year 2012.

[d]Data are from fiscal year 2011.

[e]Data are from fiscal year 2013.

[f]The 2014 reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act, and the CCDF final rule published in September 2016, include changes to the program. These reforms include requirements around professional development, including early learning and development standards. Because of these requirements, HHS officials are in the process of revising these measures, including looking at new data sources, such as the quality progress report, and changing the measures from biannual to annual.

[g]According to HHS officials, this is a developmental measure designed to track progress on increasing the number of low-income children in high-quality child care settings. HHS officials told us that this measure is developmental because they have not had sufficient data to set a baseline and track progress. HHS has implemented changes to its data reporting form, and they expect all states and territories to begin submitting this data in October 2017.

## Head Start

HHS has 11 performance measures for Head Start. In fiscal year 2015, the last year of available data, HHS reported progress toward achieving targets for the five measures that it considers related to outcomes or efficiency (see table 15). HHS reported meeting two of these five performance targets in fiscal year 2015. For example, HHS reported that Head Start met its target for reducing the proportion of grantees receiving a score in the low range on a classroom assessment tool. Officials told us that improving the quality of teacher-child interactions, staff training and competency, and classroom environments have been primary goals of the program in recent years. HHS added a fifth outcome measure, to

increase the percentage of Head Start and Early Head Start teachers that have a Bachelor's degree or higher. In its fiscal year 2017 performance report, HHS collected baseline data on this measure, and used this information to set targets for the future.

In response to a mandate in the 1998 reauthorization of Head Start, HHS conducted a national level, random-assignment impact evaluation of the Head Start program (Head Start Impact Study). HHS published this impact study, which followed children through first grade, in 2010, and in a subsequent report, researchers followed the same cohorts of children as they transitioned to third grade. These impact studies assessed the advantages that 4-year-old children gained during 1 year of participation in Head Start and 3-year-old children gained during 2 years of participation in Head Start among cognitive, social-emotional, health, and parenting outcomes. The Head Start Impact Study showed that having access to Head Start improves children's preschool experiences and school readiness in certain areas, though few of those advantages persist through third grade. However, some subgroups of children in this study experienced sustained benefits into third grade. In more recent work, HHS examined the extent to which classroom quality affected outcomes observed in the impact study. Although some subgroups experienced sustained positive effects, the evaluation found little evidence to support that Head Start leads to program impacts lasting into third grade for participants overall, regardless of the program's quality level. However, the study's ability to detect effects of Head Start participation may have been limited by difficulty maintaining the random assignment of children to Head Start and to comparison groups, an important component of such impact studies.

The 1994 reauthorization of Head Start that established the Early Head Start program called for an evaluation to focus on services delivered to families with infants and toddlers and the impacts of these services on children and families. In response, in 2002 HHS published a separate rigorous, random-assignment evaluation of the Early Head Start program. This evaluation investigated program impacts on children and families through their time in the program. Subsequent reports followed children and families as they transitioned from preschool and again in the 5$^{th}$ grade. HHS found, among other things, a consistent pattern of modest, favorable impacts across a range of outcomes when participating children were 2 and 3 years old, with larger impacts in some subgroups. However, some impacts on the full sample of children and families did not persist when assessed at grade 5, though some subgroup impacts remained. In more recent work, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention linked

data from this project with child welfare records to and found that the program may be effective in reducing some kinds of child maltreatment outcomes among Early Head Start children when compared to children in a control group.

Additionally, HHS collects information on the characteristics, experiences, and outcomes of children participating in Head Start through the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES). This survey provides data from five successive, nationally representative samples of Head Start participants. HHS also maintains a similar survey specific to the Early Head Start population called Baby FACES.

**Table 15: Reported Performance Targets and Results for Head Start, Fiscal Years 2013-2015 (in percent)**

### Summary of program objectives

Provide comprehensive early learning and development services to economically disadvantaged children and families, with a special focus on helping preschoolers develop the education and skills required to be successful in school.

| Performance measures | FY 2013 Target | FY 2013 Actual | FY 2014 Target | FY 2014 Actual | FY 2015 Target | FY 2015 Actual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reduce the proportion of Head Start grantees receiving a score in the low range on the basis of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System. (in percent) | 23 | 31 | 27 | 23 | 26 | 22 |
| Increase the percentage of Early Head Start children completing all medical screenings. (in percent) | 93 | 84 | 93 | 83 | 93 | 81 |
| Percentage of parents of children in their pre-kindergarten Head Start year who report reading to a child three times per week. (in percent) | N/A | 77 | N/A | 77 | 80 | 81 |
| Increase the percentage of Head Start teachers with an Associate of Arts (AA), Bachelor of Arts (BA), advanced degree, or a degree in a field related to early childhood education. (in percent) | 100 | 95 | 100 | 96 | 100 | 96 |
| Reduce the number of grantees with repeat deficiencies through the provision of targeted technical assistance.[a] | 0 | 1 | No Data | No Data | No Data | No Data |

| Performance measures | FY 2013 Target | FY 2013 Actual | FY 2014 Target | FY 2014 Actual | FY 2015 Target | FY 2015 Actual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Increase the percentage of Head Start and Early Head Start teachers that have a BA or higher.[b] (in percent) | No Data | No Data | No Data | No Data | N/A | 60 |
| Decrease under-enrollment in Head Start programs, thereby increasing the number of children served per dollar. (in percent) | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.9 | 1.8 | 0.8 |
| Number of Early Head Start medical screenings completed. | N/A | 126,594 | N/A | 126,644 | N/A | 126,120 |
| Number of Head Start teachers without a degree who are enrolled in Early Childhood Education degree program. | N/A | 2,811 | N/A | 2,262 | N/A | 2,175 |
| Number of Head Start teachers with at least an AA degree. | N/A | 52,923 | N/A | 51,298 | N/A | 53,005 |
| Number of teachers' aides with at least an AA degree. | N/A | 14,517 | N/A | 15,569 | N/A | 16,517 |
| Number of Head Start staff who are current or former Head Start parents. | N/A | 57,317 | N/A | 57,702 | N/A | 58,636 |

Legend: N/A= Not Applicable – = No Data

Source: GAO analysis of agency-reported program performance information and interviews. | GAO-17-463

[a]HHS officials stopped collecting information on this performance measure following fiscal year 2013.

[b]In its fiscal year 2017 performance report, HHS collected baseline data on this measure and used this information to set targets for the future. HHS officials told us that they added this measure to track the progress of increasing the credentials of Head Start and Early Head Start teachers as well as to support its early childhood priority goal.

# Department of the Interior: Performance Assessment of Programs with an Explicit Early Learning or Child Care Purpose

## Family and Child Education (FACE)

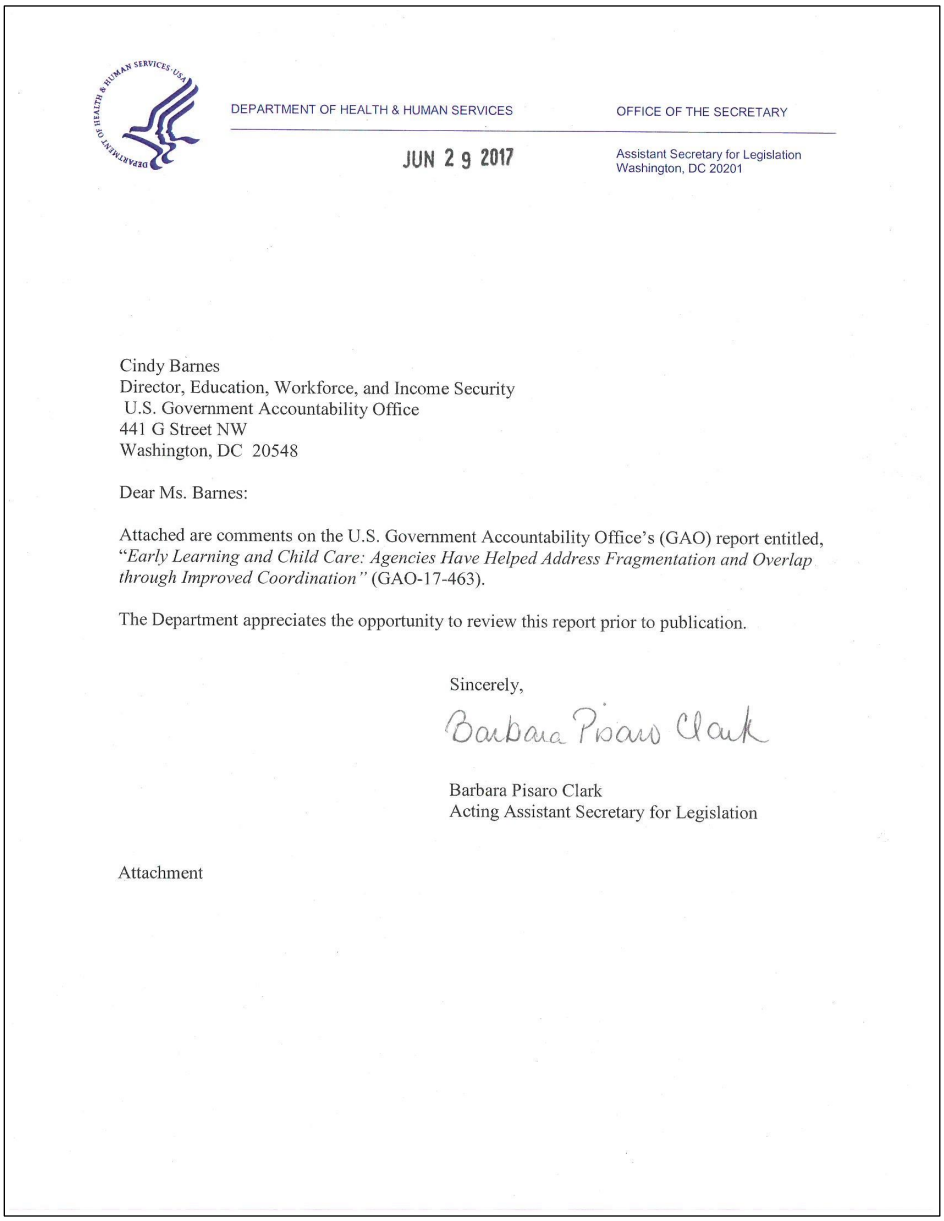
The Department of the Interior (Interior) does not have specific performance measures for the Family and Child Education (FACE) program. Instead, Interior uses an independent contractor to conduct annual reviews of the FACE program to obtain performance information. These reviews identify program outcomes and provide implementation data, which are summarized for the program overall and disaggregated for individual program sites. Interior reports a number of outcomes in these reviews, including children's proficiency in math and literacy,

parenting practices, and integration of native language and culture into FACE program instruction.

In response to a 2004 Office of Management and Budget mandate, Interior contracted an external impact evaluation of the FACE program. In 2008, Interior funded a second FACE impact study. Interior subsequently published a report that integrated findings from both impact studies.[15] Selected findings from this report indicate that a greater number of the FACE parents included in this study were more likely to participate in literacy activities with their children and to be involved in their children's school than parents of non-FACE participants. However, both groups of children appeared equally kindergarten-ready, on several measures. Because FACE serves children with greater needs, the study concludes the program puts those children, as well as those with special needs, on an equal playing field with their peers. However, the study did not account for some child and program factors that may have affected participants' outcomes.

[15]Judy Pfannenstiel and Vicki Yarnell, "Family and Child Education Program (FACE) Impact Studies: Synthesis of 2004 and 2008 Findings." Research and Training Associates, Inc. (2010).

# Appendix V: Comments from the Department of Health and Human Services



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

JUN 29 2017

Assistant Secretary for Legislation
Washington, DC 20201

Cindy Barnes
Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Ms. Barnes:

Attached are comments on the U.S. Government Accountability Office's (GAO) report entitled, "*Early Learning and Child Care: Agencies Have Helped Address Fragmentation and Overlap through Improved Coordination*" (GAO-17-463).

The Department appreciates the opportunity to review this report prior to publication.

Sincerely,

Barbara Pisaro Clark

Barbara Pisaro Clark
Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislation

Attachment

**GENERAL COMMENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS) ON THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE'S DRAFT REPORT ENTITLED: EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE: AGENCIES HAVE HELPED ADDRESS FRAGMENTATION AND OVERLAP THROUGH IMPROVED COORDINATION (GAO-17-463)**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) thanks the Government Accountability Office (GAO) for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft report.

HHS would like to note that the FY 2018 President's Budget further reduces overlap and duplication of early learning and child care programs. The budget proposes to eliminate three programs GAO labeled as having an "explicit early learning or child care purpose"- Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools, Preschool Development Grants, and Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy. It also eliminates or reduces funding for several programs GAO has labeled as "without an explicit early learning or child care purpose, but permit such uses of funds." For HHS, this includes eliminating the Community Services Block Grant and the Social Services Block Grant.

Children and families benefit most from investments in federal early learning and child care programs when they are done wisely and in coordination with similar programs and activities. HHS will continue to work with the Department of Education and other agencies with a view to streamlining resources for early learning and child care programs, to the extent permitted by law, and reducing the burden on grantees that may receive funding from various federal departments and programs.

# Appendix VI: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

## GAO Contact

Cindy Brown Barnes, (202) 512-7215 or brownbarnesc@gao.gov

## Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact named above, Rebecca Woiwode (Assistant Director), Hedieh Fusfield (Analyst-in-Charge), Colin Ashwood, and Karissa Robie made key contributions to this report. Additional assistance was provided by Kay Brown, Carol Henn, Brian James, Melissa Jaynes, John Lack, Kirsten Lauber, Benjamin T. Licht, Elizabeth Mixon, Janet Mascia, Drew Nelson, Mimi Nguyen, Dae Park, Jessica Orr, James Rebbe, Marylynn Sergent, Stephanie Shipman, Deborah A. Signer, Almeta Spencer, Rachel Stoiko, Rebecca Kuhlmann Taylor, Sarah Veale, Betty Ward-Zuckerman, Greg Whitney, and Craig Winslow.

# Appendix VII: Accessible Data

## Data Tables

**Data Table for Figure 1: Purposes and Targeted Populations of Federal Programs for Which Early Learning or Child Care Is an Explicit Program Purpose, as of Fiscal Year 2015**

| | Program name by federal agency | Explicit program purpose | | Primary child population targets | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Age group | | Other targeted demographics | | | |
| | | Early learning services | Child care services | Primarily children age 5 and under[a] | Larger age group, including children age 5 and under | Low-income | Children with disabilities | Native American, Native Alaskan, or Native Hawaiian | Other[b] |
| **Department of Education** | Child Care Access Means Parents In School (CCAMPIS) | no | yes | no | yes | no | no | no | yes |
| | Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities | yes | no | yes | no | no | yes | no | no |
| | Preschool Development Grants | yes | no | yes | no | yes | yes | no | no |
| | Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities | yes | no | yes | no | no | yes | no | no |
| | Promise Neighborhoods | yes | no | no | yes | no | no | no | yes |
| | Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy | yes | no | no | yes | yes | yes | no | yes |
| **Department of Health and Human Services** | Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) | no | yes | no | yes | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| | Head Start | yes | no | yes | no | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| | Department of the Interior | | | | | | | | |
| | Family and Child Education (FACE) | yes | no | yes | no | no | no | yes | no |

**Data Table for Figure 2: Activities Agencies Reported as Funded by Federal Programs with an Explicit Early Learning or Child Care Purpose, Fiscal Year 2015**

| | Program name by federal agency | Child care subsidies | Early learning slots/ enrollment | Special education services | Food/ nutrition | Facilities or materials | Provider training | Health care, social services, transportation | Evaluations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Department of Education** | Child Care Access Means Parents In School (CCAMPIS) | yes | yes | no | yes | yes | yes | no | yes |
| | Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities | no | no | yes | no | yes | yes | no | yes |
| | Preschool Development Grants | no | yes | no | yes | no | yes | yes | no |
| | Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities | no | Information not available, according to agency officials | yes | no | Information not available, according to agency officials | Information not available, according to agency officials | Information not available, according to agency officials | Information not available, according to agency officials |
| | Promise Neighborhoods | Information not available, according to agency officials | Information not available, according to agency officials | no | yes | Information not available, according to agency officials | Information not available, according to agency officials | Information not available, according to agency officials | Information not available, according to agency officials |
| | Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy[a] | yes | no | no | yes | no | no | no | yes |
| **Department of Health and Human Services** | Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) | yes | yes | no | no | yes | yes | no | yes |
| | Head Start | no | yes | no | no | yes | yes | yes | Information not available, according to agency officials |
| | Family and Child Education (FACE) | yes | yes | no | yes | yes | yes | yes | yes |

**Figure 3: Methods for Assessing Performance in Programs with an Explicit Early Learning or Child Care Purpose**

| | Program name by federal agency | Performance monitoring | Program evaluations or studies | Other performance information |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Department of Education | Child Care Access Means Parents In School (CCAMPIS) | yes | no | yes |
| | Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities | yes | yes | yes |
| | Preschool Development Grants | yes | no | yes |
| | Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities | yes | yes | yes |
| | Promise Neighborhoods[a] | yes | no | no |
| | Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy[b] | yes | yes | no |
| Department of Health and Human Services | Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) | Yes | yes | yes |
| | Head Start | Yes | yes | yes |
| | Department of the Interior | | | |
| | Family and Child Education (FACE)[c] | yes | yes | no |

**Data Table for Figure 4: Common Aspects of Performance Assessed by Programs with an Explicit Early Learning or Child Care Purpose**

| | Program name by federal agency | Results for children age 5 and under | Program quality or teacher qualifications | Academic improvement or Kindergarten readiness |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Department of Education | Child Care Access Means Parents In School (CCAMPIS) | no | no | no |
| | Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities | yes | yes | yes |
| | Preschool Development Grants | yes | yes | yes |
| | Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities | yes | yes | yes |
| | Promise Neighborhoods[a] | yes | no | yes |
| | Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy[b] | yes | no | yes |
| | Department of Health and Human Services | | | |
| Department of Health and Human Services | Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) | yes | yes | yes |

| | Program name by federal agency | Results for children age 5 and under | Program quality or teacher qualifications | Academic improvement or Kindergarten readiness |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Head Start | yes | yes | yes |
| Department of the Interior | Family and Child Education (FACE)[c] | yes | yes | yes |

**Data Table for Figure 5: Department of Education Programs that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Explicit early learning or child care purpose? | Rationale for adding or removingprogram |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alaska Native Educational Programs | Remained on list | no | Not applicable |
| Child Care Access Means Parents in School | Remained on list | yes | Not applicable |
| Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities[a] | Remained on list | yes | Not applicable |
| Education for Homeless Children and Youth | Remained on list | no | Not applicable |
| English Language Acquisition Grants | Remained on list | no | Not applicable |
| Full-Service Community Schools | Remained on list | no | Not applicable |
| Indian Education-Grants to Local Educational Agencies[b] | Remained on list | no | Not applicable |
| Indian Education-Special Programs for Indian Children | Remained on list | no | Not applicable |
| Migrant Education-State Grant Program | Remained on list | no | Not applicable |
| Native Hawaiian Education | Remained on list | no | Not applicable |
| Preschool Development Grants[c] | Added to list | yes | New program as of fiscal year 2014 |
| Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities[d] | Remained on list | yes | Not applicable |
| Promise Neighborhoods[e] | Remained on list | yes | Not applicable |
| Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge | Removed from list | yes | Not funded in fiscal year 2015 |
| School Improvement Grants[f] | Added to list | no | Program added early learning focus as of fiscal year 2015 |
| Special Education-Grants to States | Remained on list | no | Not applicable |
| Special Education-State Personnel Development | Remained on list | no | Not applicable |
| Special Education-Technology and Media Services for Individuals with Disabilities | Removed from list | no | Program does not currently fund or support early learning or child care |
| State Fiscal Stabilization Fund-Education State Grants, Recovery Act | Removed from list | yes | Not funded in fiscal year 2015 |
| Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy | Remained on list | yes | Not applicable |
| Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies | Remained on list | no | Not applicable |

**Data Table for Figure 6: Department of Health and Human Services Programs that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Explicit early learning or child care purpose? | Rationale for adding or removing program |
|---|---|---|---|
| Child Care and Development Fund[a] | Remained on list | yes | Not applicable |
| Community Services Block Grant | Remained on list | no | Not applicable |
| Head Start | Remained on list | yes | Not applicable |
| Social Services Block Grant | Remained on list | no | Not applicable |
| Temporary Assistance for Needy Families | Remained on list | no | Not applicable |

**Data Table for Figure 7: Department of the Interior Programs that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Explicit early learning or child care purpose? | Rationale for adding or removing program |
|---|---|---|---|
| Family and Child Education (FACE) | Remained on list | yes | Not applicable |
| Indian Child Welfare Act Title II Grants | Remained on list | no | Not applicable |
| Indian Education-Assistance to Schools[a] | Remained on list | no | Not applicable |

**Data Table for Figure 8: Appalachian Regional Commission Program that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Rationale for adding or removing program |
|---|---|---|
| Appalachian Area Development | Remained on list | Not applicable |

**Data Table for Figure 9: Department of Agriculture Programs that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Rationale for adding or removing program |
|---|---|---|
| Child and Adult Care Food Program | Remained on list | Not applicable |
| Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Program | Added to list | Program identified by agency officials |
| National School Lunch Program | Remained on list | Not applicable |
| School Breakfast Program | Remained on list | Not applicable |
| Special Milk Program for Children | Remained on list | Not applicable |

Data Table for Figure 10: General Services Administration Programs that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Rationale for adding or removingprogram |
|---|---|---|
| Donation of Federal Surplus Personal Property | Remained on list | Not applicable |
| The General Services Administration's Child Care Program[a] | Removed from list | Benefit for limited number of federal employees; not in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance |

**Data Table for Figure 11: Department of Housing and Urban Development Programs that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Rationale for adding or removingprogram |
|---|---|---|
| Choice Neighborhoods | Added to list | Program identified by agency officials |
| Community Development Block Grant[a] | Remained on list | Not applicable |
| Jobs-Plus Pilot Initiative | Added to list | Program identified by agency officials |

**Data Table for Figure 12: Department of Justice Programs that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Rationale for adding or Removing program |
|---|---|---|
| Children and Youth Exposed to Violence | Removed from list | Program does not currently fund or support early learning or child care |
| Defending Childhood/Children's Exposure to Violence[a] | Added to list | Program replaced the Reduction and Prevention of Children’s Exposure to Violence (Safe Start) program |
| Reduction and Prevention of Children’s Exposure to Violence (Safe Start)[a] | Removed from list | Program was replaced by the Defending Childhood/Children’s Exposure to Violence program |
| Transitional Housing Assistance for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking, or Sexual Assault | Remained on list | Not applicable |

**Data Table for Figure 13: Department of Labor Programs that May Provide or Support Early Learning or Child Care (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Programs GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from 2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Rationale for adding or Removing program |
|---|---|---|
| National Farmworker Jobs Program | Remained on list | Not applicable |
| Native American Employment and Training | Remained on list | Not applicable |
| Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult Program[a] | Remained on list | Not applicable |
| Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Dislocated Worker Program[b] | Remained on list | Not applicable |
| Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth Activities | Added to list | Program identified by agency officials |
| YouthBuild | Added to list | Program identified by agency officials |

**Data Table for Figure 14: Department of the Treasury Child Care-Related Tax Expenditures (as of Fiscal Year 2015), Using Tax Expenditures GAO Identified in 2012 Report as a Baseline**

| Program Title | Changes from2012 list of early learning and child care programs | Rationale for adding or Removing program |
|---|---|---|
| Credit for child and dependent care expenses | Remained on list | Not applicable |
| Employer-provided child care credit[a] | Remained on list | Not applicable |
| Employer-provided child care exclusion[b] | Remained on list | Not applicable |
| Exclusion of benefits provided under cafeteria plans[c] | Removed from list | According to Treasury officials, revenue loss associated with child care through cafeteria plans is the employer-provided child care exclusion |
| Exclusion of income earned by voluntary employees' beneficiary associations | Removed from list | Does not reimburse families or employers for expenses they incur to purchase early learning or child care services |

# Agency Comment Letter

## Text of Appendix V: Comments from the Department of Health and Human Services

Page 1

Cindy Barnes

Director, Education , Workforce, and Income Security

U.S. Government Accountability Office 441 G Street NW

Washington , DC 20548

Dear Ms. Barnes:

Attached are comments on the U.S. Government Accountability Office's (GAO) report entitled, "Ear y learning and Child Care: Agencies Have Helped Address Fragmentation and Overlap through Improved Coordination" (GAO-17-463).

The Department appreciates the opportunity to review this report prior to publication.

Sincerely,

Barbara Pisaro Clark

Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislation

Attachment

Page 2

GENERAL COMMENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS) ON THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE'S DRAFT REPORT ENTITLED: EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE: AGENCIES HA VE HELPED ADDRESS FRAGMENTATION AND OVERLAP THROUGH IMPROVED COORDINATION (GA0-17-463)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) thanks the Government Accountability Office (GAO) for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft report.

HHS would like to note that the FY 2018 President's Budget further reduces overlap and duplication of early learning and child care programs. The budget proposes to eliminate three programs GAO labeled as having an "explicit early learning or child care purpose"- Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools, Preschool Development Grants, and Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy. It also eliminates or reduces funding for several programs GAO has labeled as "without an explicit early learning or child care purpose, but permit such uses of funds." For HHS, this includes eliminating the Community Services Block Grant and the Social Services Block Grant.

Children and families benefit most from investments in federal early learning and child care programs when they are done wisely and in coordination with similar program s and activities. HHS will continue to work with the Department of Education and other agencies with a view to streamlining resources for early learning and child care programs, to the extent permitted by law, and reducing the burden on grantees that may receive funding from various federal departments and programs.

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