



A Potential Shared Services Approach to EHS-CC Partnerships

Using the [Opportunities Exchange summary](#) of how Shared Service Alliances share staff roles and responsibilities across sites, this document imagines how a Shared Services framework might be used as the structure for an Early Head Start/Child Care partnership.

Outreach and Enrollment

A centralized Enrollment Department would be housed in either the HS grantee or a large child care partner. This office would be the first point of contact for all families who enroll children in the Alliance, regardless of age. (Thus, families with an infant/toddler as well as older children could be served in one place.) This office would be responsible for:

- Gathering enrollment information (e.g. ages of children, type of services needed, qualification for EHS or child care subsidy, etc.)
- Helping the family fill out any required applications, gathering necessary verification information, and so forth
- Giving the family a choice of options where a slot is available for the child(ren) – assuming that more than one option is available – and scheduling a tour.
- Walking the family through Alliance-wide policies and procedures, including required medical records, parent fees and late payments, parent engagement requirements, developmental screenings, and so forth.
- Maintaining up-to-date information on vacancies at each site that participates in the Alliance.

Billing, Fee Collection and Fiscal Oversight

A centralized Finance Office would manage billing and fee collection for all funding streams, including EHS/HS, child care subsidy, PreK, philanthropy, parent fees, etc. Collection of parent fees would not be the responsibility of site directors or teachers; parents would deal directly with the finance department (which could have staff go on site to meet with parents and/or collect fees, if appropriate.) To the maximum extent possible, all fiscal management would be automated.

Centralizing billing and fee collection in one place would make it easier for families with children of varying ages to receive consistent services, apply for subsidy or scholarships in one place, work out payment arrangements in one place, etc. It also enables fiscal staff to get to know families and develop a 'kind but firm' relationship regarding payment—that is not connected to staff who are responsible for their child's early care and learning.

The Finance Office would also be responsible for running weekly reports on the [“Iron Triangle”](#) – to make sure that enrollment and fee collection are hitting targets and that revenues will cover costs. These reports can be run by classroom/home, so that management has a good handle on where slots are available and budgets on track (or not.)

Food and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Management

By maximizing automation, the Fiscal Department can use attendance logs to identify the exact meals for which a child is expected to be present. Teachers then verify actual meal counts using pre-populated forms and the Fiscal Department Administrative Assistant verifies accuracy. In this way, CACFP can be efficiently managed for ALL children in a site –regardless of age of child or source of funding.

If center-based sites are small and unable to support a cook, meals could be catered from a central, shared kitchen. Or all sites could collaboratively negotiate a contract with a food vendor. If participating sites have their own cooks and kitchens, they could collaborate on menus, training and food purchase – based on the Nashville, TN [“Cooks Academy.”](#)

Purchasing/Discounts

Members of the Shared Service Alliance could collaborate on group purchase of a host of goods and services, either using the ECESharedResources.org web portal (either national site, or state-specific URL in some states), and/or via collaborative contracts for insurance, audit, maintenance/janitorial, heating fuel, and legal. If a participating HS/EHS agency or child care center has its own Human Resources Department, these services could be made available Alliance-wide.

Quality Assurance

Ensuring that all classrooms or homes serving infants and toddlers are meeting EHS performance standards as well as state QRIS requirements is key. (Indeed, a Shared Service Alliance wants to make sure that all classrooms/homes are of the highest quality, regardless of funding stream.) To this end, responsibility for quality assurance can be centralized to maximize efficiency. Several options are possible:

- Site Directors are responsible for supervising classroom teachers (including professional development planning and performance appraisal) and monitoring child assessments. Additionally, they must conduct at least one classroom observation each month and one coaching session for every staff person a month based on the observations. An Alliance-wide Curriculum and Assessment Director focuses on helping directors intentionally link assessments and teaching, which might include reviewing lesson plans and child assessment data and meeting regularly with site directors. ([Early Connections model](#))
- Directors in all the sites can be hired by, and responsible to, the Alliance Hub; teaching staff are supervised by the Director but employed by the Partner Center, a separate non-profit. ([Chambliss Center model](#))
- Home-based Providers are independent contractors, but are required to join a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC). The LLC signs a contract with the ‘Hub’

agency to provide a host of services, including overseeing professional development, curriculum and child assessment data; recruitment and enrollment; billing, fee collection and fiscal management; CACFP administration; and so forth. (Early Connections and [The Community Group model](#))

- Classroom Teachers participate in quarterly learning communities, by age group (e.g. infant teachers – across sites – meet together) that are peer-led and focused on deepening reflective practice. Teachers are encouraged to visit each other’s classrooms, get to know one another and share ideas, so that they see themselves as a team. (Early Connections and [Sound Child Care Solutions model](#))
- Site Directors meet together at least monthly to discuss/coordinate administrative issues as well as participate in collaborative training and coaching. Directors are encouraged to visit each other’s centers and share ideas so that they see themselves as a team. (Early Connections and Sound Child Care Solutions model)
- If an EHS/CC partnership included home-based providers, they could also participate in learning communities with one another as well as with center-based staff.

Note: Shared floaters could be used to cover relief time so that teachers and directors can attend professional development and learning communities as well as have time ‘off the floor’ to plan. [Sound Child Care Solutions](#) supports a centralized “Relief Squad” which hires full-time staff to be shared among sites.

Family Supports and Comprehensive Services

EHS/HS agencies that hire staff to provide and/or coordinate: health services, disability services, family services, home visits, and so forth, could expand these services to include all centers/homes in the Alliance. Child Development Agencies that have a social services department and/or a nurse or health clinic could similarly extend these services Alliance-wide. (Chambliss Center, Early Connections, The Community Group models)