

HEAD START® BULLETIN

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ★ Administration for Children and Families ★ Administration on Children, Youth and Families

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Technology: A Key to the Future

By Helen H. Taylor



Helen H. Taylor

Technology is more than a tool—and much more than a game. Technology is freedom. Without it, our children will have a hard time in this world.

More than 60 percent of all new jobs in the U.S. require some technology skills, and that number will only increase. “Computer literacy” is as critical to children today as “literacy” was to their parents and grandparents. Recent studies have shown that the “digital divide” between races and classes in America continues to grow. Unless Head Start children and families have access to computer technology and learn how to use it, they will find themselves cut off from the information and economic opportunities they need to succeed in the 21st century.

Head Start programs must take advantage of available technologies and pass those advantages on to parents and children. Many programs around the country are using technology in creative ways, to the benefit of Head Start families. Computer technology also helps programs manage program

information, track child outcomes, and document success. Internet access enables Head Start programs to tap into a wealth of resources and to share program goals and achievements with people in their communities and around the country. In short, *everyone* in Head Start can benefit from the use of technology.

This issue of the *Head Start Bulletin* describes some of the ways that Head Start programs are making innovative use of technology to achieve program goals. All aspects of the Head Start program—from management to education, and from health to family and community partnerships—can benefit from these powerful electronic tools.

Technology is a priority area of the Head Start Bureau. You have a responsibility, as champions of the Head Start vision, to take advantage of available technology and to bring it home to Head Start parents and children.

Helen H. Taylor is Associate Commissioner of the Head Start Bureau.

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Technology 101

By Bridget Shea and Bernie Lagud

Savvy. To be savvy means to have know-how, ability, and a practical grasp on how to handle something. It would be nice to be savvy—especially about computers.

Computers can be intimidating, especially if you've never turned one on, touched a mouse, or surfed that thing called the Internet. But it is important that we in Head Start help our staff, our parents, and our children to become computer literate.

The first step in this process is to get a computer. This can be more complicated than it sounds! There is an amazing amount of computer lingo circling around that can be very confusing—have you heard phrases such as 56K modem, megs of ram, gigabytes, or Pentium or K62 processors? What does this all mean? (And did you ever wonder where people came up with these words?) What you probably want to know if you're just getting your feet wet in the pool of technology is: what can I buy that will do what I need it to do, that won't be outdated in two minutes, and that won't bankrupt my program?

Well, there are a lot of questions to consider, and no two Head Start programs will have the same answers. The two key questions are: what do I need, and what can I afford? Think about what you want the computer to help you accomplish. Do you want one powerful online computer for your whole staff, or do you want every staff member to have access to an online computer and have her or his own e-mail account? Do the computers need to be able to share information, or are computers that are independent of one another OK? Do you want a fast computer so you don't have to wait long for Web pages to load or is that not a priority? After identifying and

prioritizing your needs, look at your budget. What can you afford?

When you're looking for answers, a vendor can provide helpful information on what's available and offer recommendations on hardware, software, and service. The challenge is to find one that is just as interested in making you a satisfied customer as they are in making a quick sale.

Choosing a Vendor and Getting Help

The following tips will help you to select a reliable vendor.

- Get referrals from others and create a list of potential vendors. Ask questions about technical knowledge and level of support provided.
- Check your local Yellow Pages for display ads of computer vendors. Display ads are expensive and may indicate that the vendor is financially stable.
- Do preliminary phone interviews of the vendors on your list. Find out how long the company has been in business (the longer the better), what kind of ongoing support they provide to customers, and whether their technicians are certified. Computer repair certification is called "A+ Certification." There are two major certifications for installing computer networks: Novell's CNE or CNA (Certified Novell Engineer or Administrator), and Microsoft's MCP or MCSE (Microsoft Certified Professional or Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer). To ensure professional support, your vendor should have employees with these certifications.

You might want to use essentially this same process in hiring a consultant

to help you review your computer needs and determine what system would work best for you. Once you have your consultant vendor list narrowed down to a few finalists, schedule appointments with each. Ask them to visit your program to discuss your computer needs. Prepare a written list of your requirements and get quotes.

The decision to choose a consultant or vendor should not be based on cost alone, but on the total package—recommendations, length of time in business, level of support provided, staff qualifications, and your assessment of how well the people listened and responded to your needs.

As you talk with your consultant or vendor about the hardware you need, you will undoubtedly discuss the software that is suitable to your Head Start program as well. When you're thinking about this topic, there are some issues to consider.

Software and Licensing Issues

To determine what software your program needs, you must consider what tasks you want the computer to be able to do. If you already use a specific word processing program and you realize that you also need a spreadsheet program, it probably makes sense to stick with the same manufacturer because software programs will normally work well together. For example, if you already use Microsoft Word for word processing, you'd probably want to buy Microsoft Excel for your spreadsheet program.

Other factors to consider include:

- Cost.
- Do you need to buy software that runs on both Macintosh and

Windows? Do you need a “bundled” package that includes word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, and database software, such as Microsoft Office or Corel Perfect Office?

- Are you going to use Head Start-specific software?
- Is your staff already familiar with a particular software program?
- Is the software manufacturer reputable?

When you buy a software package, be sure to purchase enough licenses for each computer that will have the software. If you are buying it for a stand-alone computer, you need only one license, which automatically comes with the software. But to use it legally on multiple computers, you must purchase an additional license for each additional computer—you can’t just buy one copy and load it on every computer you have.

Software licenses for networked computer systems can usually be purchased on a “per-seat” or “per-server” basis, or under a “site license” arrangement. The licensing arrangements available for any given software program are completely at the discretion of the manufacturer.

Per-seat licensing means you buy a license for each computer workstation that will use the software. If you have ten workstations on your network, but only five of your users require a particular software program, then you need to buy ten licenses for that program under per-seat licensing.

Per server licensing means you buy a license to install a software program once on a server, and that license includes usage by a fixed number of workstations. The software normally includes some kind of a monitor that prevents more than the licensed

number of workstations to load and run the software simultaneously.

Site licensing means you buy a license for your entire organization, and there is no limit to the number of workstations that can run the software simultaneously. Site licensing is normally expensive and therefore only cost-effective for large organizations with hundreds of workstations that require the same software.

Computer Networking Basics

The word “server” gets us onto the topic of networking computers so they can talk to each other and share information. As Head Start programs seek to streamline their administrative workloads, improve information sharing, and make the most out of available resources, more and more programs are turning to computer networks.

What is a computer network? A network is two or more computers connected by some communications link (e.g., cable or infrared signal) in order to share data files, program files, or hardware devices (e.g., printers). In contrast, a computer is a “stand alone” if it’s not connected to any other computers.

The benefit of using a network is that it allows you to share information and resources, such as printers, data files, application programs (e.g., word-processing or e-mail software), expensive hardware devices, or a high-speed data line for Internet or wide-area network access. Networking also makes it easier to schedule regular backups of critical data files without having to rely on the individuals who use and update those files.

Networks can be configured to support everything from two computers sharing a single printer to hundreds of computers needing to run the same

application programs against a common database. Networks become more expensive as the complexity of the configuration increases, so it’s important to select the best network solution for your specific needs. The most common configurations are:

- Peer-to-peer networking—a simple network in which two or more computers are connected and each may share some, all, or none of its resources with some or all of the other connected computers on the network.
- Client-server network—a network in which one computer is designated as a “server” to share its resources with the other computers (called “workstations” or “clients”) linked to it. The server is normally a high-speed, high-capacity PC. Loading all of your primary or most expensive systems onto one server can save money, since all of the workstations can share these resources. The server is not normally used as a workstation, since this may create access problems for other users on the network.

If you decide you need a network, the type you choose depends on several factors:

- How many people in your program regularly use the computers, and do you expect this number to grow in the future?
- Is it important to be able to share resources like printers or high-speed data lines in order to keep costs down or for any other reason?
- Do several people in your program currently update separate copies of the same data, and is it

important to consolidate and share that data to maintain better data integrity and credibility?

- Are you planning to install client-server software or any program that requires a database management system (DBMS) program running on a server (e.g., Microsoft SQL-Server or Oracle)?

Plan to spend money on network support now and in the future. You may occasionally need to bring in a consultant or network specialist to troubleshoot and fix any major problems that come up with the network or server. Depending on the size and complexity of the network you choose, you may decide to purchase a support plan if your vendor offers one. In any case, you must budget for support, because your computers and your network will become critical to your way of doing business once your staff is accustomed to it.

Plugging In and Getting Online

So now you've got your computer (or computers) set up, and you're ready to roll. What's next? These days you can't even whisper the word "computer" without hearing the echo of "Internet, Internet, Internet." The Internet is growing and moving from being solely a research tool to a community development tool. Head Start programs can use it to access the newest trends and research in early childhood and family-centered programming. Connecting to the Internet is also an excellent way to retrieve current information from local, regional, and national sources relevant to your program.

Programs are finding that technology can improve the efficiency of everyday chores. E-mail, for example, can reduce the time and effort it takes

to schedule staff meetings or share important program information. E-mail can also improve communication within your programs, as well as strengthen communication with other programs in your local community, the state, and the region. Finally, sending documents via e-mail can reduce dependency on faxing and lower telephone costs.

How do you get plugged in? E-mail accounts are available through an Internet Service Provider (ISP) such as AOL or a local company. There are also numerous ways to obtain free e-mail. Juno is a popular system for those who have a modem and do not necessarily need Internet access. Yahoo, Hotmail, and other similar free e-mail systems allow you to access your mail via an Internet browser.

The cost of Internet access varies widely, depending on your location and situation. Most individuals and small organizations use the slower "dial-up" method available through your local ISP. This means that your computer "dials in" to the ISP each time you want to go on line. Services usually provided include e-mail storage and Internet access for around \$20.00 per month. Medium- to large-sized organizations usually have a full-time connection to the Internet available to workstations through their computer network using special high-speed, digital phone lines. The monthly cost and availability of these lines vary depending on your local telephone service.

So Now We're Ready... Aren't We?

You have all this wonderful technology—computers and printers and modems hooked up, linked up, and "souped-up." Are you set? Well, no amount of wonderful equipment will help your organization unless staff receives training and buys into using technology

resources on a regular basis. One issue many organizations face is persuading staff members to use technology (although once they do, there's no going back!). We all know that sometimes people need help in forming new routines, and there are steps you can take to encourage staff and parents to use the computer. For example, one way to encourage staff to use their e-mail accounts is to distribute all important memos and critical organizational information via e-mail.

If you have a network, staff should also be trained in using it. The type and amount of training depend on the level of expertise and comfort your staff already has with PCs. You should train one or more persons (depending on the size of your office) as a network administrator who can perform occasional administrative tasks, such as adding and maintaining network user IDs and passwords, adding workstations to the network, installing software programs, performing backups, and so forth.

Technology is amazing and can improve your program operations in more ways than you can imagine. Staff will also find that routine tasks can be accomplished quickly, and that essential, up-to-date information is at their fingertips. Perhaps most importantly, though, bringing technology into Head Start will help to ensure that our children and families have the tools they need to survive and thrive in this increasingly technology-oriented world.

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Technology Vocabulary

A quick guide to some of those words you may have wondered about!

Central processing unit (CPU): Also called a microprocessor. It is the “box” part of your computer, and its engine goes into motion when you turn your computer on. The CPU does the actual interpreting of program instructions and processing of data in a computer. The operating system (such as Windows 98) instructs the CPU on what tasks to perform.

Diskette (“floppy disk”): A removable disk that stores data and can be used with PCs. The term usually refers to a rigid plastic cartridge measuring 3.5 inches square. Some older computers provide drives for diskettes that are 5.25 inches square with a flexible housing. These were often called “floppy disks,” and even though the new type of diskette is more rigid, many people still call it a “floppy.”

E-mail: Electronic mail—an Internet feature that allows the user to send and receive messages over the Internet to and from any other e-mail address in the world.

Gigabyte (“gig” or GB) and megabyte (“meg” or MB): Units of measurement of computer memory and storage.

Hard drive: Where files and programs are stored in a standalone computer, as opposed to a diskette, which is removable and transportable.

Hardware: Any part of the computer that can be physically touched. Printers, keyboards, monitors, and the computer itself are all hardware.

Listserv: A program that automatically distributes e-mail to names on a mailing list. Users can subscribe to a listserv mailing list by sending an e-mail note to a mailing list they learn about; listserv will automatically add the name and distribute future e-mail postings to every subscriber.

Modem: Allows the computer to access the Internet or other computers via telephone lines. Modems are categorized by speed; for example, a model with a speed of 28.8 bps can transfer 28.8 kilobytes of data per second. Modems are located either inside or outside the computer.

Operating system: Manages all the programs, or applications, in a computer. Microsoft’s Windows 98 and IBM’s OS/2 are operating systems.

Random access memory (RAM): A temporary memory area where programs and files are loaded while they are being used. To save the information in RAM, it must be transferred to a hard drive or diskette.

Search engines: A program that allows a user to search for specific Web sites on the Internet by subject.

Software: Programs that allow you to make use of the computer. There are many kinds of software available for such activities as word processing, database management, desktop publishing, and educational games and experiences.

Uniform resource locator (URL): A Web site’s address. Any information available online can be located by its URL. To pull up a specific Web site, type in the URL; for example, Head Start’s URL is <http://www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb>. All Web site addresses begin with “http://”; for brevity, it is often omitted in listings of URLs.

World Wide Web (or “the Web”): A network of computers known as Web servers that holds information and Web sites. Anyone can access the Web using Internet browser software (e.g., Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Explorer).

Head Start Programs and the World Wide Web

By Tim Rogers

The World Wide Web opens up a world of opportunities for Head Start programs. Since 1994, Head Start of Lane County, Oregon, has maintained a Web site, offering information about its program to the Head Start community and to the general public. The Web also enables program staff and parents to access information and resources that would otherwise be unavailable to them.

I hope I can convince you that building a Web site for your local program is neither difficult nor expensive, and that it is a wonderful way to collaborate with the entire Head Start community and to promote Head Start nationwide.

From Modest Beginnings...

Head Start of Lane County's first Web site, offering little more than basic information about both Head Start nationally and our local program, was hosted at no cost by Eugene Freenet, our local Internet service provider (ISP). The site was developed in a few days, hand coded in HTML, the "language" of the Web, with WordPerfect 5.1 for MS-DOS, and posted with little or no fanfare. Within a few weeks, the site was included in the Lycos, Yahoo!, and the other search engines, and we began to receive visitors and electronic mail from outside our organization.

Over the next year we updated and modestly expanded the site, but it never grew beyond a few dozen documents and a collection of links.

Then late in the 1996–1997 program year, we decided to establish a full-time connection to the Internet and to shift to an Internet-standard electronic mail system. This move allowed us to dramatically expand our Web site. We envisioned a site that could be a resource to both Head Start families and Head Start staff, and could grow to include much, if not all, of the information the organization provides to staff and to children and families.

Content for the site is created with Netscape Composer (available for free as part of Netscape Communicator 4) or with Microsoft Word 97 or one of the other applications in the Microsoft Office 97 suite. Some pages—including our home page—are still hand coded (or at least

hand corrected). We have recently received donations of Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Acrobat from Gifts in Kind International and look forward to using them to improve the site.

Last year we redesigned our Web site, hoping to make it easier to use and maintain. After much discussion, we chose to integrate some recent technologies, using frames, JavaScript, and purchasing a \$99 Java navigation applet (an abbreviated application of pre-formatted Web software). Both our staff and visitors were generally pleased with the new site, but after many people reported problems with the applet, we removed it.

We have also developed a Web "portal" for Head Start of Lane County staff and volunteers. This portal is the "home page" for our staff. It includes program information and updates, newsletters, calendars, meeting minutes, forms, links to useful information both on our own Web site and elsewhere on the Internet, and a Web-based interface to staff Internet e-mail and several databases. With a few clicks, staff can post news and calendar items directly to the portal, where they can be viewed by everyone in the organization.

Policy

The most difficult aspect of building our Web site was not technical, but political. Once we decided to expand the site to include a wide variety of information, the question became, "What information is appropriate to include, and what is not appropriate for general distribution on the Web?" Although the Web site enjoys the support of our executive director, crafting a policy that addresses the concerns of leadership and our board of directors while not unnecessarily restricting the development of the site has been, and continues to be, a challenge. Our goal has been to create a policy that permits an open exchange of information between Head Start staff and volunteers, parents, and the public while guaranteeing that nothing published on the site reflects poorly on either the organization or the national Head Start program.

The current policy, the fifth draft of which is now in use, outlines the process by which documents are prepared and approved for publication



on the Web site. It defines topics that either are prohibited or require permission from leadership or the individuals involved. In brief, it allows the executive director to delegate daily responsibility for the Web site to a “Webmaster” (think “postmaster”) responsible to her and to the board of directors. No material may be posted on the Web site except by the Webmaster. The Webmaster reviews all material before it is posted and is responsible for ensuring that no material deemed inappropriate by the Web site policy (e.g., political

or copyrighted materials, confidential information) is posted to the Web site.

The Webmaster also works with the Web Site Design Team, composed of interested staff members and parents, to develop the overall appearance and structure of the Web site. The group, working with others in the organization, also finds or develops the content of the site, subject to the Web site policy.

Benefits

Head Start of Lane County originally developed its Web site to help us to communicate better with our staff, volunteers, families, and community. And we believe that it has. Several years ago, for example, we revised and updated our Policy and Procedure Manual and, instead of creating paper manuals, posted it on our Web site. This allowed us to index and cross-reference each policy not only to all other related policies and work plans, but

also to the relevant Program Performance Standards. All of this information is available at the click of a button! Since then, we have posted everything from Policy Council by-laws to job openings and descriptions to community resources.

We have also found that the Web site can be a powerful tool for collaboration within the larger Head Start community. By working together and sharing what we can, each Head Start program can better focus on those aspects of its community that most need attention. Head Start programs should be willing, even eager, to work together, seeing one another not as competitors but as collaborators and teammates in a common project. It is our duty not only to help our program succeed, but to help every Head Start program serve the children and families in its area. Everything that one Head Start program produces—every policy, every presentation, every handout and every manual—can be made available to any other Head Start program, or to anyone else who might be interested, through a Web site.

Another important benefit of a Web site is the education it provides to the general public about Head Start. In the five years that our organization has offered a Web site in one form or another we have received dozens of e-mail messages from people—students, parents, and the curious—from across the country, asking for more information about something that they read on our site. Thousands and thousands more have simply visited the site.

Recommendations for Building Your Own Web Site

1. *Start Small.* If you or your organization has an Internet connection, your Internet Service Provider (ISP) almost certainly offers space for a small Web site at no additional cost. Ask how to use it.
2. *Use the tools you already have.* While outstanding tools for creating and maintaining Web sites have become available in the past few years, you don't need them. Software that is either already installed on your computer or available for free through the Internet is more than good

enough. If you use Microsoft Internet Explorer, try FrontPage Express. If you use Netscape Communicator, try Composer. Or try the "Save as HTML" option under "File" in Microsoft Word 97 and most other recent word processors. Once saved in HTML, the document is ready to be posted on the Web.

3. *Collaborate.* Work with others inside your organization, in your community and, using the Internet, across the nation. If any of your staff members have made their own Web sites, ask them to help. Consider working with other non-profit organizations in your area. One may be willing to help you develop or maintain a Web site in return for your help in some other area. Commercial Web site design firms may be willing to donate their expertise. Likewise, local college students—and maybe even high school students—may have expertise to contribute. And other Head Start programs should certainly be willing to help.

Tim Rogers (trogers@head-start.lane.or.us) is the network administrator at Head Start of Lane County. He provides comprehensive computer and network training and support for 200 staff and volunteers at 20 sites and four networks throughout Lane County, Oregon. He is also the primary architect of Head Start of Lane County's Web site: www.head-start.lane.or.us/.

Resources

Head Start of Lane County has a number of resources available on its Web site, including:

- **Head Start and the Internet**, which familiarizes program administrators and other leadership staff with some of the possibilities and pitfalls of an Internet-based network, and provides computer support staff with a sort of road map to implementing such a network.
- **Connecting People**, which explores how the Head Start community could use the Internet to improve collaboration — both inside and outside each program — as well as some of the issues raised by these technologies.
- **Computer and Network Information**, which provides detailed information about Head Start of Lane County's computer and network systems, as well as our future plans.

There are, of course, hundreds of books and thousands of Internet resources on this subject available today. These are just two examples:

A Beginner's Guide to HTML

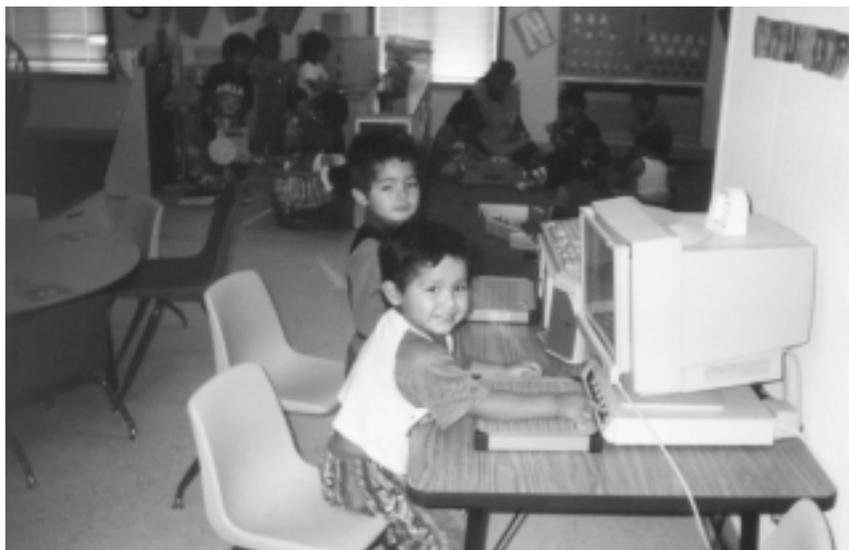
www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/General/Internet/WWW/HTMLPrimer.html. This is a primer for producing documents in HTML. The guide is intended to be an introduction to using HTML and creating files for the Web. Links are provided to additional information.

An Interactive Tutorial for Beginners

www.davesite.com/Webstation/html. This tutorial is for those who are serious about learning HTML, so they can have their own home page and maybe eventually their own Web site. It is not for HTML experts, but they might have fun and learn something new anyway! You need not have any prior experience in HTML, but it assumes you know how to do basic things with your computer, such as word processing.

Additional resources are listed on p. 23 in the Resources section of this Bulletin.

Web Innovations in the Regions



Many Head Start programs around the country are developing Web sites to heighten communication within their programs, within their communities, and with the general public. Though these sites vary widely in their content, focus, and purpose, each program has achieved a comprehensive, user-friendly site that will represent the good work they do with children and families. The process that each program went through to get to this point also varies. The following highlights will give you insight into the ways that your program can initiate a Web site and move into the technical age.

Upper East Tennessee Head Start

Kingsport, Tennessee

www.uppereasttnhs.com

The Upper East Tennessee Head Start decided to develop a Web site over two years ago when staff realized the need for more information about the good work that Head Start does. Upper East collaborated with a small up-and-coming firm that was looking to get into the Web business. This company agreed to provide Upper East with a free Web site for one year as a test market for its services. Recently, Upper East has contracted with a Web expert, Bud Creech, who maintains and develops the Web site through in-kind contributions. The Head Start program has found this arrangement very effective because Bud has the time necessary to keep the Web site current, one of the program's main concerns.

When Upper East started thinking about developing this site, it was guided by the Program Performance Standards. Originally, the content centered around the seven component areas. Since then it has been revised to reflect the revised Standards, focusing on Program Design and Management, Family and Community Partnerships, and Early Childhood Development and Health Services.

Upper East has found having a Web site to be very useful. It has received feedback from across the region and the country, and the site has been an effective marketing tool at the local level. Upper East plans to update it often and make it as user-friendly as possible.

For more information, contact Steve Courtner, Upper East Tennessee Head Start Director, at T: 423-246-6180.

Economic Opportunity Corporation of Greater St. Joseph

St. Joseph, Missouri

www.eoccaa.org/

A little over three years ago the Economic Opportunity Corporation (EOC) Head Start of Greater St. Joseph, Missouri, decided to develop a Web site to provide information on Head Start and their program in a new way.

Even though EOC had a general idea of what to feature on its site, it was still a challenge to nail down the particulars. It took many meetings and much deliberation for EOC to choose its site's content. For this reason, Jeff Carolus, EOC's information systems manager, recommends sitting down and thinking about content first: who you're trying to reach, what information you want people to have, and what aspects of your program you want to highlight.

Once EOC decided on the content, the transition to the Web proved to be relatively smooth. EOC already had the technology to create a site and Jeff was available to develop it. This meant limited set-up costs, so the site was a cost-effective project for EOC.

That isn't to say that EOC didn't need some guidance along the way. Once Jeff started developing the site, he found a lot of information available on the World Wide Web.

Jeff continues to maintain the site today, and says that the biggest challenge is finding the time to make changes and updates. It is important, he says, to think about what information the broader community will need and continually update the site as requests for more information come in.

For more information, contact Jeff Carolus, Information Systems Manager, at T: 816-233-8281, E: jeff@eoccaa.org.

Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA) Head Start

Sacramento, California

<http://headstart.seta.net/>

When SETA was trying to think about new and effective ways to increase public awareness about its services, staff began to develop the idea of creating a Web site. Since no one on staff felt comfortable or had enough time to devote to this project, SETA decided to hire an outside consultant to develop and maintain the site. Head Start staff writes the content for the page, each member focusing on her or his area of expertise, and they give the text to the consultant to post. Denise Lee, Program Officer at SETA, feels that it is very important to have a person in charge of this project who can keep the information up-to-date. This is especially important when you're talking about time-sensitive issues such as job openings.

SETA really wanted to highlight the innovative services that it provides to the local community, to help open avenues of collaboration with local agencies and child care. SETA markets its site heavily, including the Web address on all of its flyers, posters, publications, and handouts that they provide to the community. Lee recommends that, when you're developing a site, you try to highlight the uniqueness of your program and community to set yourself apart. And again, it is important to have someone in charge of the project who can devote the time that is necessary to keep the site current and useful.

For more information, contact Denise Lee, Program Officer at SETA, at T: 916-263-3916, E: denise@headstart.seta.net.



Technology: Transportation into the 21st Century

By Suzanne Thouvenelle

We are moving from a period of rapid change into a period of radical change. Computers now exhibit the rudiments of human intelligence. Information is transmitted around the globe in seconds. We are surrounded by rapidly evolving technologies, and we can't keep running faster. Today that's a strategy of diminishing returns. So is working harder.

What are the skills, knowledge, and experiences children in Head Start need to be prepared to take their places in a world facing this magnitude of change? How can technology help to ensure that today's education will help children meet the requirements of the 21st century?

We need to work "smarter" by helping teachers use technology as a tool. How can we do this? By offering training and support to teachers that assists them in:

- Selecting software that reflects educational goals;
- Using software that provides open-ended activities and problem-solving experiences;
- Linking computer activities with hands-on classroom materials; and
- Using the computer as a tool for their own work.

Let's look at the history of computers in Head Start.

Milestones: Personal Computer Use in Head Start

1981—IBM Corporation Personal Computer introduced.

1983—National Head Start Association Conference includes an exhibit with administrative and child-tracking software applications running on IBM Personal Computers. During the remainder of the 1980s, several more developers create Head Start-specific software to meet the Program Infor-

mation Requirements (PIR) and other management and administrative needs.

1984—Head Start Task Force convenes to explore classroom use of computers with young children. Due to the lack of appropriate software applications for young children, the task force invokes a moratorium on purchasing classroom computers with Head Start funds.

1986—Head Start Bureau and the IBM and MOBIUS Corporations begin discussions on revisiting the moratorium on Head Start use of computers in classrooms.

1987—Head Start and IBM establish a partnership to explore issues around classroom computer use. MOBIUS coordinates a three-year formative evaluation of nine grantees, a University of Maryland lab school, and a California state-funded preschool program. The research includes a review of over 120 software programs and data collection in more than 60 early childhood classrooms nationally.

1990—The Head Start Bureau lifts the classroom computer moratorium, citing results of the Head Start/IBM Partnership Project. Head Start programs with an interest in technology can now acquire computers and software for classroom use. A report of the research, *Computers in Head Start Classrooms* (published by MOBIUS), and the official memorandum are distributed to every Head Start grantee.

1993—NAEYC convenes a Technology Panel to consider issues related to the use of computers with young children and to develop a position statement concerning appropriate use of technology in early childhood education.

1994—The Head Start Bureau requests that MOBIUS update the original research and publish copies of the revised *Computers in Head Start Classrooms*.

1996—NAEYC publishes its position statement on technology and young children, providing broad principles for software selection and appropriate use.

1996—ACF joins the Department of Education and issues Performance Standards that apply to Head Start and Title I programs throughout the U.S.

1997—Region IV Technical Assistance Center sponsors a regional conference focused on technology use in Head Start programs.

1997—Nike Corporation partners with the National Head Start Association to establish the Start Line technology grant program to support classroom computer use in Head Start.

1998—National Head Start Association sponsors the first Technology Conference for Head Start programs nationally.

1999—Second National Head Start Association Technology Conference held in suburban Washington, D.C.

Head Start recognizes that technological literacy is becoming the standard in our country. Head Start has an important role in preparing children for a lifetime of computer use, which is just as essential today as teaching them the basics of literacy and numeracy. You are encouraged to take advantage of technology in supporting children and families in your Head Start program.

Suzanne Thouvenelle is a faculty associate of the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD, and a founding partner of MOBIUS Corporation, a software publishing company in Alexandria, VA. She was a member of the 1993 NAEYC Technology Panel and has extensive experience developing computer-based curriculum for early childhood educators and young children.

Making Your Web Site Useful

By Margreta Silverstone

Web sites abound and meet a variety of needs. They provide an effective vehicle to present a consistent message about services and programs. Web publication saves printing costs, and referring students and other callers to the Web site can reduce staff time answering common program questions. But the key question remains: how useful does your audience find the information provided?

“Web usability”—lingo used to define what makes a Web page useful—provides some common answers for content development on the Web. Of primary importance, content needs to be relevant, timely, and credible. Graphics can assist in providing information or in navigating the site. Testing your Web pages on your audience can provide feedback for improvement.

Content

To be useful to an Internet audience, a Web site must deliver entertainment or knowledge or improve the way its audience accomplishes some important task. The members of your audience need to quickly find what they're looking for and do what they want to do.

Using common news-oriented writing skills can enhance content developed for the Web. Answer the key questions first and write concisely. Identify key items by:

- Highlighting words
- Using meaningful subheadings
- Bulleting lists
- Dating materials and providing links to other Web pages that may be of interest to your audience.

Often the materials made available on Web sites by government agencies cannot be rewritten for a Web audience. Policy or audit procedure documents,

for example, are written to educate an audience about an activity. These documents follow different writing styles, but stylistic aids can still be employed within them to help the audience find key items.

Graphics

A picture is worth a thousand words, but only if used wisely. Graphics can provide valuable information about the material in quickly accessible ways and can help your audience find where they want to go. Poor use of images, however, can be a hindrance. Web pages that dazzle the viewer can be distracting and can hide important information. Also, over-reliance on images may turn an audience away because each image in a page will increase the time it takes to load.

In designing your Web site:

- Only use graphics critical to content
- Limit images used solely for visual appeal
- Keep the total size of all images on a page to less than 30K
- Use graphic bullets purposefully
- Supply alternate text for graphic navigation buttons.

Feedback

Usability testing, a process for getting feedback from your audience on your Web materials, provides input for Web page design and content. A variety of methods, varying from simple to complex, are available to test the usefulness of materials.

Given the opportunity, your audience will provide feedback about the materials presented. If they cannot find the information they want, they will tell you. A feedback mechanism can be as simple as an e-mail address.

The host computer for your Web page can provide a log of audience activity. Web log analysis through commercial off-the-shelf products yields information about the members of your audience and the information they want. The analysis can identify which pages are accessed most or least frequently, track the number of pages your audience views before leaving the site, and identify the type of Internet accounts your audience is using.

Other methods of testing include observing a representative group of volunteers navigating through the materials, conducting a treasure hunt of your materials with a representative group, and surveying your customers.

At the time this article was written, Margreta Silverstone was a Public Affairs Specialist in ACF's Office of Public Affairs. This article first appeared in Child Support Report, August 1998.

Web Accessibility: Has Bobby Been to Your Web Site?

CAST created Bobby, a Web-based program, to address the following objectives:

- To encourage the implementation of the Unified Web Accessibility Guidelines by providing a simple tool for Web designers;
- To raise awareness about disability access on the Web; and
- To provide a model of universal design and to illustrate its principles on the Web.

The Web is growing as an important learning tool, but currently it is not accessible to everybody, and this is especially true for persons with disabilities. That's why Bobby is here to help.

Bobby is a tool that can help make your Web site accessible to the largest number of people possible, including persons with disabilities. Bobby points out barriers to information; for example, people who are blind cannot access information that is provided solely by visual images such as graphics, and deaf people cannot access information portrayed through audio files that do not have captions.

Bobby uses the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines to judge if a particular Web page is accessible to people with disabilities. Some examples of these guidelines include providing text transcriptions of audio files, ensuring that documents are clear and simple, creating a consistent style between pages, and providing clear navigation mechanisms.

In addition, Bobby looks for a Web site's compatibility with various browsers and HTML 4.0, and for slow load times. Once you have asked Bobby to analyze your Web site, you will be provided with a report on the accessibility of your site, outlining problems that affect the ability of people with disabilities to use the page. Also, you will receive an annotated version of the Web page with markers pointing out the particular points that have a problem with disability access or browser compatibility. An access problem makes it hard for a person with a disability to access a page's information. A Web site will only be approved if it has no accessibility problems.

There are two versions of Bobby. One is an on-line tool that analyzes individual Web pages posted on the Internet. The second is the Bobby Application that is run on your personal computer to check the Web sites on it. The Application can check entire sites and is much more efficient for large-scale accessibility testing. It is also easier to fix any accessibility problems *before* a site has been posted.

Once your Web site has received Bobby's approval, you can post the "Bobby Approved" icon on your site. This icon identifies the site as a model accessible Web site. It also raises awareness of disability issues and encourages others to look into Bobby and its applications. It can be downloaded from the Bobby Web page.

The Bobby assessment tool is having a large impact. It is currently being used by people all around the world to test more than three million Web pages each month.

Bobby was created by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), a not-for-profit organization founded to expand opportunities for people with disabilities through computer technology. CAST is involved in both product development and applied research towards this end, with Bobby being only a small part of its work.

To find out more about Bobby you can visit CAST's Web site at www.cast.org/bobby/. Here you will find links to information on CAST, a detailed description of Bobby, and instructions on how to use this important tool.

For more information, contact Michael Cooper at CAST at T: 978-531-8555 or visit CAST's Web site at www.cast.org.

Helping Families Become Computer Literate

In a remote area in Minnesota lies Northwest Head Start. This rural Head Start program in Badger, Minnesota, serves 300 children and families through locally designed combination program options. It also faces the same challenges of most rural Head Start programs—accessing resources and creating a strong communication system for its staff and families.

Mark Carlson, Head Start Director, sees technology and the Internet as a perfect way to close gaps within the 6,500 square miles his program covers. About six years ago, Northwest Head Start decided to equip each of its home visitors with a personal notebook computer to take into homes and work with children and parents. These computers allow teachers to provide children with developmentally appropriate activities while also sparking their interest in computers and how they work. And while this time is not used as one-on-one training for parents, they too can become familiar with the way that computers work, how they feel, and basic ways to manipulate common operating systems as they work with their children. With this exposure in a non-threatening environment, parents and children can feel comfortable with technology and learn to appreciate its uses and benefits.

Families' access to the world of technology was expanded three years ago when Northwest Head Start developed its Web site and home visitors began plugging into the Internet in parents' homes. This is possible through a unique agreement developed between Northwest and its local telephone company that allows home visitors to dial into the Internet from any location in their area under one Head Start account. Both staff and parents can

sometimes feel very isolated in their communities, and this connection to the Internet gives them the chance to feel connected to the broader community while learning invaluable Internet skills.

This is, in fact, one of the primary goals of the site. In thinking about its purpose, Northwest decided to focus its content on ways to improve working with children and families in their local community. Carlson wants to help eliminate the view that there is an insurmountable gap between

“Don't ever think anything is impossible; don't ever close doors on possibilities.”

—Mark Carlson, Director,

Northwest Community Action Inc. Head Start

low-income families and the world of technology. “Our families may not have a \$2,000 computer in their home,” states Carlson, “but if they did, they would feel comfortable with it.” Northwest Head Start's families do not feel that the world of technology is a foreign land outside of their reach—they do not have that sense of being “left out.” It is this basic feeling of competence that Carlson wants to foster.

In addition to its Web site and its work during home visits, Northwest offers technology training and referrals to parents. Through a cooperative agreement with community education agencies in the area, computer classes are available to Head Start parents. Northwest also works with volunteers to provide basic computer training. Carlson has found that parents are very interested in this type of training—he can tell by all the calls that he receives asking for help loading a program or using an older computer!

Many of these calls come from parents of special-needs children. Northwest has given about 15 families with special-needs children older computers to use in their homes. Northwest sends out a computer technician, usually Carlson, who sets up the computer and shows parents how to use it and how to solve common computer problems. He also gets them online so they can research their child's disability and resources available in their community. There are also many Internet “chat” groups formed around specific conditions, so that families can “talk” with other families facing the same issues.

In the future, Carlson hopes to have every family hooked up to the Internet with e-mail capabilities. “Today phone lines are almost a given,” he said, “and one day so will Internet connections.” It is this type of forward thinking that is moving his community into the technological era smoothly.

Technology is the buzzword of this decade—and for good reason. It is a tool that allows people to work and make connections in ways that were never possible before. Northwest Head Start uses this tool to improve its services to children and families to improve children's education, to help staff and parents connect with the broader community, and to help families move into the 21st century. But as Carlson is quick to point out, it is not and will never be a replacement for the important hands-on work of Head Start programs.

For more information, contact Mark Carlson, Northwest Head Start Director, at T: 218-528-3227 or E: mcarlson@nwcaa.org. Visit the Northwest Head Start Web site at www.rrv.net/nwheadstart.

Neighborhood Networks Work!

In an age where more than half of all new jobs require some technology skills, low-income neighborhoods are mobilizing to make sure residents get the skills they need to earn a living. Neighborhood Networks in communities across the country are increasing resident self-sufficiency, expanding job opportunities, and creating life-long learning communities.

What Is a Neighborhood Network?

Neighborhood Networks, an initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), brings together a variety of public and private organizations and community residents to create computerized learning centers tailored to meet the needs of community residents. A Neighborhood Network Center (NNC) can provide:

- Computer literacy and job training skills
- Access to job data banks
- A variety of early childhood programs
- Adult education opportunities
- Personal, motivational, and job-training software
- A means for developing micro-enterprises, such as data entry
- Connections to people and resources in the community

HUD has launched 490 NNCs over the past four years, and some 760 more are planned. The program has been so successful that the U.S. Department of Education hopes to create 600 similar centers in the next few years.

How Can I Get a Neighborhood Network Started in My Community?

Neighborhood Networks outlines a five-step process for establishing an NNC:

- Form an NNC Steering Committee including residents and selected members of the broader community, and decide upon a governance structure.
- Identify the needs, goals, and interests of neighborhood residents, take an inventory of community institutions that could be NNC partners, and build partnerships.
- Design programs to match the needs, goals, and interests of neighborhood residents and the resources available from existing community institutions.
- Develop a business plan that maps out the NNC's operational and financial assumptions, so that interested parties and contributors can "buy into" the effort.

Neighborhood Networks is not a grant program, so local support is vital. To ensure the success of an NNC, local businesses, government, educational institutions, private foundations, and other community organizations need to donate computers and software and provide capital funding.

While the HUD-sponsored program is aimed specifically at HUD-assisted or HUD-insured housing, a multitude of resources, "how to" guides, newsletters, and information are available on the Neighborhood Networks Web site, www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org. These resources are useful to anyone thinking about developing a similar kind of community learning initiative.

For additional information, or to find a Neighborhood Network Center near you, call the Neighborhood Networks Information Center at 1-888-312-2743.

Distance Learning and the Early Head Start Community

By Mary M. LaMantia and Stefanie Powers

As the Early Head Start learning community continues to grow dramatically in numbers and locations, distance education has become a key component of the development and service elements of the Early Head Start mission. Distance learning helps staff reach out to a broader community and brings multidisciplinary expertise to EHS programs.

The Early Head Start National Resource Center (EHS NRC) has developed a menu of T/TA opportunities that uses distance learning technologies. These opportunities will be expanded as EHS programs acquire the capacity to make cost-effective use of increasingly sophisticated technologies for training staff and improving program quality.

Television Broadcast Series

The EHS NRC's 1999 Infant and Toddler Distance Learning Series launched its Television Broadcast Series in May 1999. This initiative reflects the developing collaboration between EHS NRC and RISE (Resources and Instruction for Staff Excellence, Inc.), using the NHSA Heads Up! Network to connect EHS sites to the broadcasts.

The first two programs explored process and curriculum for home visiting initiatives:

- **“Effective Home Visiting, Part I”** focused on the use of relation-based intervention in home visitation, explored parent-child interactive techniques, and discussed strategies for nurturing the nurturer.
- **“Effective Home Visiting, Part II”** addressed effective home visiting with pregnant women, explored curriculum approaches to home visiting, and examined parent-infant mental health strategies.

The next three programs addressed developmentally appropriate curriculum through the eyes and needs of the child and the community. The Head Start Program Performance Standards' definition of curriculum and requirements underscores the content and recommended strategies.

- **“What Curriculum Means to Infants and Toddlers”** discussed how curriculum relates to the care of infants, what we know about how and what infants are learning, what we know about how infants learn best from research, and the infant's role in the process of learning.
- **“Developing Curriculum Plans for Infants and Toddlers”** examined the caregiver's role as the facilitator of learning, the use of infant's curriculum in planning, the application of observation in planning, and the practice of keeping a curriculum journal to support appropriate programming.
- **“Curriculum in Action”** shared experiences in curriculum development, discussed specific challenges and successes, explored a development process for designing infant toddler curriculum, and featured lessons learned from two established Early Head Start programs.

The programs, broadcast between May and September 1999, provided 90 minutes of information designed to support Early Head Start program and staff development. Through a relationship with the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition, EHS NRC offered CDA clock-hour credits for those Early Head Start staff working toward their Infant Toddler Credential.

Audio-Conference Series

The Audio-Conference Series, held from July through September 1999, promoted peer learning through conference calls.

- **“Program Directors: Sharing Our Strengths”** described the experiences of established program EHS directors and factors that contributed to the success of their programs, specifically during the implementation year.
- **“Together, How We Grow”** discussed why and how quality assurance measures become essential components of successful collaborations with EHS partnering agencies.
- **“Getting Together with Parent and Child”** explored the characteristics of quality socialization experiences for children, parents, and the staff of EHS programs.

As technology makes possible new approaches to the teaching and learning process, the Early Head Start National Resource Center is stepping forward to meet the challenge. The EHS NRC will continue these distance learning events in 2000 as part of its commitment to continuous improvement in the quality of services provided to pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and their families.

Mary M. LaManitia served as Assistant Director at the EHS NLR. Stefanie Powers is Senior Program Assistant at the EHS NLR, T: 202-638-1144, E:s.powers@zerotothree.org. For more information on the video and audio 1999 Infant and Toddler Distance Learning Series, contact Everette Shupe at e.shupe@zerotothree.org.

The HeadsUp! Network

Q: What is the HeadsUp! Network?

A: The HeadsUp! Network, presented by the National Head Start Association, is a satellite television network exclusively dedicated to the training needs of the Head Start and early childhood professionals and parents. The HeadsUp! Network was established to:

- Create opportunities for consistent, shared learning experiences;
- Connect programs with Head Start Bureau staff and national experts on a regular basis;
- Provide the latest information relevant to the quality growth of programs; and
- Inform about outside events affecting Head Start programs, families, and communities.

The HeadsUp! Network provides cost-effective training and professional development to Head Start and early childhood centers across America and its territories. Courses cover such topics as program management, health, special needs, infant/toddler development, and parenting issues. Teachers and education coordinators can learn how to guide early literacy skills, strengthen parent relationships, create active learning environments, and much more.

Q: How much does it cost?

A: A subscription to the HeadsUp! Network costs \$50 a month, plus a one-time installation fee (from \$40 to \$300 per site). Where else can you get premium, hour-long training for only \$4.16 a session?

Q: Where is it available?

A: You can receive training right in your center. Once connected, simply tune in to “903” the HeadsUp! channel.

Q: What equipment is required for my center?

A: All you need is a television large enough to accommodate the staff viewing the programs. For 20-40 viewers, a 30-inch screen is recommended. You receive the satellite dish system free of charge with your subscription. This system enables you to tune in to the broadcasts.

Q: When is the training held?

A: Training is broadcast 12 hours a month — approximately three hours a week, in the afternoons and evenings.

Q: Where is the training taped?

A: Most of the training you’ll see was conducted at the HeadsUp! studio or at programs across the country. One hour a month

is dedicated to bringing you the latest early childhood news and information. This is a live call-in show that gives you the opportunity to speak to the guests, audience, and other viewers nationwide.

Q: How does HeadsUp! benefit staff and parents?

A: The HeadsUp! Network offers the chance to receive high-quality, inexpensive training year round. This is one step to help ensure the highest quality education for your children by preparing staff and parents to meet their needs.

Q: Can I receive continuing education (CEU) and other credit(s)?

A: Yes. HeadsUp! Training is CEU approved for a minimum of four hours per series. There is an additional fee for CEUs. You can also earn credit toward your CDA. In Winter 2000, college credit curriculum will be added.

If you have any questions or to subscribe to the HeadsUp! Network, call (800) GET-HUTV (438-4888) or visit the Web site at www.heads-up.org.

HSFIS Update

by Paolo Angulo

HSFIS, the Head Start Family Information System, is a fully automated, standardized software package designed by Head Start for Head Start. It supports a case management information system approach to needs assessment and service delivery.

Information in the HSFIS system can help Head Start programs determine eligibility for enrollment, identify family service needs, provide program-level demographic statistics, and track delivery of services to Head Start families. HSFIS is also intended to assist Head Start programs in meeting local and federal reporting requirements.

HSFIS is available free of charge to Head Start programs. The software can be downloaded from the Cleverex technical assistance Web site (www.cleverex.com). To receive software updates, training and technical assistance, and to be placed on a special HSFIS mailing list, programs should notify their Regional Office or Quality Improvement Center (QIC) HSFIS liaison as soon as they become HSFIS users.

The Web site also includes:

- Online training conference registration;
- Online problem/idea report log for HSFIS users; HSFIS software/report downloads; and
- A discussion group addressing such topics as current HSFIS use, HSFIS 4.0 proposed features, Migrant Head Start, Early Head Start, Crystal Reports, and the PIR module.

Training and Technical Support

More than 1100 Head Start agencies are currently implementing HSFIS. Cleverex is conducting HSFIS software

training at its facility in Rockville, Maryland, through March 2000. For more information about the training sessions available, call 301-738-1122 or visit the Web site.

Each Regional Office and Quality Improvement Center has a designated HSFIS liaison to assist programs in obtaining automation funding and technical support. For more technical information about HSFIS, please contact the HSFIS Technical Support Center at HSFIS@cleverex.com or call 301-738-1122.

Feedback from HSFIS users has been essential to its growth and development. Information and ideas are regularly solicited from program users, regional and central office federal staff, Quality Improvement Center staff, and contractors. The many comments and suggestions received over the past seven years have given us a greater understanding of your needs, and HSFIS continues to refine and enhance the software and technical support and training.

Support is currently being provided to HSFIS users in a variety of ways, including user group conference calls with CTI/Cleverex technical support staff; regional cluster training and discussion groups; on-site training; Web sites and listserves; and broadcasts on the Heads Up! Network.

Future plans

A number of initiatives for providing training and technical support for HSFIS users are in the works. These include:

- Creating an on-line tutorial;
- Using video conferencing technology to conduct simultaneous training sessions;
- Developing videotapes with lessons on automation/HSFIS issues;

- Establishing a "HSFIS University" conference dedicated to HSFIS and automation issues;
- Making automation part of the grantee T&TA plan;
- Conducting training on automation for program specialists at Regional Offices, including its effects on funding, staffing, and other issues;
- Developing clearly defined data for grantees to use in developing data collection and reporting procedures;
- Providing training for on-site review teams regarding technology and the use of HSFIS to generate data necessary for the review process; and
- Developing HSFIS reports that are more management focused (e.g., aggregate rather than individual data).

HSFIS has grown tremendously over the past seven years, both in functionality and comprehension. We encourage you to continue to apprise us of changes in your use of the software — as you grow, we grow. Together, we will meet the challenges ahead.

Paolo Angulo is Training and Technical Assistance Team Leader at Cleverex, T: 301-738-1122, E: paolo@cleverex.com.

Head Start Materials and Information Online

By Anita Prince and Paula Ralph

Did you know there is an online source for Head Start publications and materials? It's the Web site <http://www.hskids-tmssc.org>, developed by the Head Start Publications Management Center (HSPMC). It was launched in April 1999 and is one more avenue for HSPMC to provide vital materials and information to local programs and the wider Head Start community.

HOW CAN YOU USE THE WEB SITE?

Access Information

The HSPMC Web site gives you access to a wealth of resources and has many user-friendly features. HSPMC's objective was to keep the site as straightforward as possible. When local programs see how easy it is to use, they expect that more and more grantees will want to visit them on-line.

The information on the site is organized under five sections: 1) Publications, 2) Conferences, 3) Partnership and Collaboration, 4) Recruitment and Awareness, and 5) Information Center. A map gives an overview of the Web site so you can see where to locate specific information. You can also search by "keyword" or subject. (Search for "parent involvement," for example, and you will find many materials referenced, including an Information Memorandum on parent involvement, *Head Start Bulletin*, and the *Resource Guides*.)

Other user-friendly features of the site include a *text-only option* that allows it to be viewed with some of the earlier versions of Internet browsers. The site is also accessible to people with disabilities. It has received the "BOBBY" rating, given by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), to recognize Web sites that are compatible

with enhancement software used by disabled persons to access technology.

Join Discussion Groups

The electronic forums on the HSPMC Web site give you an opportunity to join discussion groups with Head Start colleagues. You can participate in forums on *Early Head Start*, *Health and Disabilities*, *Technology*, *Family and Community Partnerships*, or other topics. How you decide to participate is up to you. You can share ideas, pose questions, discover colleagues with similar interests, or gain insight from the viewpoints expressed.

Download Materials

You can download material from the site in various formats, including *full text* (for faster printing of documents without graphics), and *Portable Document Format (PDF)*, which preserves a document's original graphics and page layout.

Order Online

The HSPMC site gives you access to the *Catalog of Head Start Materials* and makes it easy to order any catalog materials online. Since the launch of the site in April, online orders from Head Start programs have grown steadily from 55 in the first month to now more than 200 per month. "The online catalog allows you to select what you need from more than 130 Head Start publications, videos, materials, and training guides," says Rita Fravel, HSPMC Internet specialist, "and you can browse the materials available alphabetically or by subject. Plus, if there is something you can't locate or you have a question, you can send an E-mail message via askus@hskids-tmssc.org and an HSPMC staff person will assist."

What will you find on the HSPMC Web site?

The Web site gives you online access to the:

- *Catalog of Head Start Materials*,
- *Head Start certificates*,
- *Partnership and Collaboration Resources*,
- *Recruitment and Awareness Materials*,
- *Several Training Guides*
- *And many other valuable services.*

WHAT TOOLS WILL YOU FIND ONLINE TO ENHANCE YOUR PROGRAM?

Recruitment and Awareness

Visit the HSPMC site for recruitment and awareness materials, such as a preschool to kindergarten transition guide, a tip sheet on recruiting, and public information sheets on Early Head Start and the CDA credential. In addition, you'll find downloadable text versions of the *Give Your Child A Head Start and Nurturing the Promise* brochures.

Partnership and Collaboration

Links from the HSPMC site will guide you to a listing of Head Start State Collaboration Office Directors; to a directory of grantees on the Head Start Bureau Website; to Head Start's Training and Technical Assistance Network; and to many other Head Start partners and family and child care organizations.

Online Resources

HSPMC's team of information professionals has created online *Resource Guides*, *Internet Pathfinders*, and *Tool Kits* which contain valuable information for you, whether you are a Head Start director or a program coordinator. There are *Resource Guides* on parent involvement, meeting techniques, and other topics. Also, there are four tool kits on Early Head Start, conflict management, transportation, and mental health.

See us at an upcoming conference!

See the Web site for a schedule of conferences where HSPMC will be exhibiting throughout the year. We participate in approximately twenty conferences nationwide each year as part of our efforts to serve Head Start programs and to educate communities about Head Start.

We want your feedback

We are continually updating and refining the content of the Web site. Significant enhancements to its search capabilities and the online catalog are already underway. But we want to hear how you think we can make it more useful to you. Visit the HSPMC Web site today and often—add us to your bookmarks and create a link to the HSPMC Web site from your own Web page. We also want to hear from you! Please send your comments to our Webmistress at: Webmistress@hskids-tmssc.org.

Anita Prince is Senior Marketing Director and Paula Ralph is Writer and Publisher Specialist at the Head Start Publications Management Center. For more information, contact the HSPMC at T: 202/737-1030, F: 202/737-1151, Web site: <http://www.hskids-tmssc.org>.



Look what you'll find at www.hskids-tmssc.org

- An Online Catalog of Head Start Materials
 - Selected Head Start Bulletins
 - Full text of all *Information Memorandums* (1995-1998)
 - Links to the Head Start Bureau for the Directory of Head Start Grantees and the Training and Technical Assistance Network
 - *Nurturing the Promise* and *Give Your Child a Head Start* brochures (text versions)
 - *Tool Kits* and *Resource Guides* on various topics Links to key national organizations
- ...and much more!

3 Easy Steps for Ordering Online:

- 1) Browse the online catalog for the publications you want to order.
- 2) Complete the online order form, entering catalog numbers for all items.
- 3) Click on SUBMIT. (Your order is delivered instantly to the HSPMC Distribution Center.)

HSFIS 4.0 is Here!

HSFIS, the Head Start Family Information System, provides Head Start programs with free software to meet program information management needs. Version 4.0 was released in November 1999 and includes the following new features:

- **PIR Highlights** are incorporated throughout the software.
- **Custom Report Writer** users to create their own reports inside the HSFIS software. For the experienced user, Crystal Reports will still be a viable way to create more detailed customized reports.
- **Re-engineered Intake Forms** for even easier use.
- **Improved Letter/Labels Module** tracks letters previously sent.
- **Powerful New Family Browser** has expended search criteria and enables users to add/retrieve data on any form without switching modules.
- **New Center Browser** centralizes all center/class/caseload/group-related functions in one location, making it easier to use the system.
- **Custom Immunization Schedule** for tracking state/regional specific vaccines.
- **CD-ROM Distribution** to reduce file corruption and allow easier/quicker software installation.

Minimum requirements to use HSFIS 4.0 are: (1) Windows 95/98/NT; (2) Pentium 133 MHZ; and (3) 32 MB RAM. The software is free to Head Start programs. For more information, visit the Web site at www.cleverex.com, or contact the HSFIS Technical Assistance Center at 301-738-1122.

Early Head Start Web Site

The Web site for the Early Head Start National Resource Center (www.ehsnrc.org) was developed in 1996 to provide immediate access to important information and critical resources. Its main features include:

- **EHS Grantees:** Provides contact information for EHS programs throughout the United States.
- **EHS Program Support Network:** Provides contact information for the Training and Technical Assistance providers in the 28 regionally based Quality Improvement Centers around the country.
- **EHS NRC Current Events and Calendar:** Includes information on training events, distance learning opportunities, resource documents, listservs, and more.
- **Resources:** Contains full-text articles, annotated multi-media resources, and research abstracts, and is organized according to the Head Start Performance Standards. Describes and links to over 35 related Web sites.
- **Information Alert:** Provides vital information to the EHS community, such as job opportunities, funding announcements, and consumer product safety recalls.
- **Bulletin Boards:** Facilitate discussion among members of the EHS community. There are five bulletin boards, or discussion groups, on key areas of interest: Director's Board, Delivering EHS Services through Home Visiting, Training Tips and Strategies, Using Reflective Supervision, and EHS/Child Care Partnerships.

In addition, the Web site contains background information about Head Start, the EHS initiative, and the national evaluation of Early Head Start. Programs are encouraged to visit the site at www.ehsnrc.org to experience this valuable, dynamic resource.



RESOURCES

Webliography for Head Start

The following is a list of some of the many Web sites available with information that may be useful to Head Start programs.

Head Start-specific sites:

Head Start Bureau Home Page
<http://www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb/>

Head Start Publications Management Center
<http://www.hskids-tmhc.org/index.htm>

National Head Start Association
<http://www.nhsa.org/>

Head Start- Johnson & Johnson Management Fellows Program at UCLA
<http://www.anderson.ucla.edu/community/headstart/>

Early Head Start National Resource Center
<http://www.ehsnrc.org/nrc.htm>

Commissioner's Office of Research and Evaluation
<http://www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb/CORE>

Education:

Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education at Wheelock College
<http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/ccdece/ccdece.html>

Center for Early Childhood Leadership
<http://nlu.nl.edu/cecl/>

Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition
<http://www.cdacouncil.org/index.html>

ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
<http://ericece.org/index.html>

ERIC Educational Resources Information Center
http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/ERIC/

ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Education
http://www.cua.edu/www/eric_ae/

High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
<http://www.highscope.org/>

National Association for the Education of Young Children
<http://www.naeyc.org/>

National Center for Family Literacy
<http://www.familit.org/index.html>

National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/ECI/>

U.S. Department of Education Publications
<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/index.html>

Technology:

<http://www.computers.com>

- This site has endless information about every kind of hardware product with helpful reviews in layman's terms. It also has a very basic intro to setting up a small network in the networking section.

<http://www.isp.com>

- This is a useful site for shopping around for an ISP. It has an extensive database of local, regional and national Internet Service Providers with lots of information to help people make an informed choice when choosing a service provider.

<http://www.zdnet.com/smallbusiness>

- This site provides useful information for those pondering a network, as well as lots of links to other relevant resources.

<http://www.techweb.com/encyclopedia>

- This is an indispensable site for learning computer terminology; a searchable database allows you to look up unfamiliar technology terms.

Health:

American Academy of Pediatrics
<http://www.aap.org>

American Public Health Association
<http://www.apha.org/index.html>

Healthfinder (DHHS)
<http://www.healthfinder.gov/default.htm>

National Center for Education in
 Maternal and Child Health (NCEMCH)
<http://www.ncemch.org>

National Clearinghouse on
 Child Abuse and Neglect
<http://www.calib.com/nccanch/>

National Safe Kids Campaign
<http://www.safekids.org>

Substance Abuse and Mental
 Health Services Administration
<http://www.samhsa.gov>

Child Care:

Child Care Bureau
<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ccb/>

Child Care Action Campaign
<http://www.usakids.org/sites/ccac.html>

National Child Care Association
<http://www.nccanet.org>

National Child Care
 Information Center
<http://nccic.org/>

National Network for Child Care
<http://www.nncc.org>

Advocacy/Children's Issues:

Annie E. Casey Foundation
<http://www.aecf.org/>

Child Trends, Inc.
<http://www.childtrends.org/>

Child Welfare League of America
<http://www.cwla.org/>

Children's Bureau
<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb>

Children's Defense Fund
<http://www.childrensdefense.org/>

Future of Children
<http://www.futureofchildren.org/>

National Center for
 Children in Poverty
<http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/nccp/>

Together We Can
 (collaboration/leadership)
<http://www.togetherwecan.org/>

Welfare Information Network
 (Finance Project)
<http://www.welfareinfo.org/>

Families:

Administration for
 Children and Families
<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/>

ACYF Research,
 Demonstration and Evaluation
<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/rde>

Families and Work Institute
<http://www.familiesandworkinst.org/>

Fathernet
<http://www.cyfc.umn.edu/Fathernet/>

National Center on
 Fathers and Families
<http://www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu/>

National Clearinghouse
 on Families and Youth
<http://www.ncfy.com>

National Fathers Network
<http://www.fathersnetwork.org/mn/index1.html>

NPIN: National Parent
 Information Center
<http://npin.org/>

WestEd/Center for
 Child and Family Studies
<http://www.wested.org/ccfs/>

Zero to Three: National Center
 for Infants, Toddlers and Families
<http://www.zerotothree.org/>

Disabilities:

Administration on
 Developmental Disabilities
<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/add/>

Division for Early Childhood of the
 Council for Exceptional Children
<http://www.dec-sped.org/>

ERIC Clearinghouse on
 Disabilities and Gifted Education
<http://ericec.org/>

Federal Resource Center
 for Special Education
<http://www.dssc.org/frc/>

National Information Center for
 Children and Youth with Disabilities
 (NICHCY)
<http://www.nichcy.org/>

Office of Special Education Programs
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/index.html>

National Early Childhood Technical
 Assistance System (NECTAS)
<http://www.nectas.unc.edu>

*Compiled by Barbara Weedman, National
 Head Start Training and Technical Assistance
 Resource Center/Pal-Tech, Inc.
<http://www.pal-tech.com>*

Advisory Committee on Head Start Research and Evaluation

As increasing attention focuses on outcomes and accountability for Federal resources, Head Start has been challenged to document its effectiveness in new ways. In responding to this challenge, Secretary Shalala signed a charter on March 23, 1999, establishing the Advisory Committee on Head Start Research and Evaluation.

An independent panel of experts was convened to review and make recommendations on the design for a national study on the impact of Head Start, and to monitor and apprise the Secretary on the progress of subsequent research and its impact on Head Start programs.

Evaluating Head Start: A Recommended Framework

The Advisory Committee held a series of meetings in 1999 to fulfill the first phase of its charge. A report was issued in November 1999 summarizing the deliberations of the committee and setting forth its recommendations for a study or series of studies that provide a national analysis of the impact of Head Start.

Head Start's reauthorization in 1998 provides specific guidance about how Congress envisions this research. For example, the legislation calls for research that uses rigorous methodological designs and techniques (based on the recommendations of the advisory group), including longitudinal designs, control groups, nationally recognized standardized measures, and random selection and assignment, as appropriate. The legislation also states that the research shall include comparison of individuals who participate in Head Start programs with control groups (including those who participate in other early childhood programs and those who do not participate in any other early childhood program).

Outcomes are to be measured at three points in time: (1) on the dates participants leave Head Start programs; (2) at the end of kindergarten; and (3) at the end of first grade.

The Advisory Committee concluded that a study or set of studies on the impact of Head Start must address two key questions: (1) What difference does Head Start make in the development of the nation's lowest-income children?; and (2) Under what circumstances does Head Start work best, and for what children?

In addition, the committee believed strongly that the research design must be both credible—providing scientifically convincing and persuasive evidence to Congress, the research community, program staff, and parents—and feasible—capable of being implemented in the real world by researchers working in close partnership with Head Start programs.

The 1998 Head Start reauthorizing legislation requires a report by 2003. Because the law and the committee support the follow-up of children through at least the end of first grade, the committee estimated that new research reports would be available in approximately 2006. However, reports from studies currently underway will provide policy makers with useful, evaluative information by 2003.

Next Steps

The Advisory Committee on Head Start Research and Evaluation believes that the framework outlined in its report represents the best strategy for evaluating the impact of Head Start on children. At the same time, the committee believes that several key next steps are critical to translating this strategy into a credible, powerful, and feasible study or set of studies. In particular, the committee urges Secretary

Shalala, the research community, and the Head Start community to commit to the following steps:

- Demonstrate clear leadership and commitment to the rigorous evaluation of Head Start, at all levels of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Head Start community;
- Ensure true partnership between researchers and the Head Start community, and involve the Head Start community from the earliest phases of the design;
- Conduct an initial feasibility study or set of activities to collect additional information that is essential to the detailed planning and refinement of the design; and
- Pay close attention to the ongoing implementation of the research, including ensuring several opportunities to review the design and modify it where appropriate.

The committee hopes that a rigorous, credible, and feasible evaluation of the impact of Head Start on the school readiness of low-income children across the country will contribute to the nation's ability to achieve its goals of providing high quality care and education and enhancing opportunities for all children. The committee has attempted to design a framework that, in conjunction with the rich and active research agenda currently underway, will assist policy makers and the Congress to ensure that the goals of the Head Start program are fully accomplished and will help early childhood professionals, in Head Start and other programs, to learn more about how to improve their efforts to enhance results for children.

The full report of the Advisory Committee on Head Start Research and Evaluation is available at www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsreac

1999–2000 National Head Start Fellows



Susan Andersen is an early childhood consultant and program manager for multiple state and federal early childhood programs in Des Moines, Iowa. She has direct responsibility for awarding \$6.5 million in grants to local education agencies and regional agencies. She manages fiscal reports, legislative reports, and grants management functions. *Susan's placement is in the Education Services Branch, Head Start Bureau.*



Yasmine Daniel is a special projects liaison for the Drake University Head Start program in Des Moines, Iowa. She represents the University on community boards, committees, and task forces in an effort to build collaborative relationships with the community by exchanging information and services. She develops and produces informational and promotional materials to inform clients, community agencies, and other government entities of the importance of Head Start. *Yasmine's placement is in the Family and Community Partnerships Branch, Head Start Bureau.*



Kathryn Fernandez is an education director at the Orleans Community Action Committee in Albion, New York. She directs the Head Start program, child care resource and referral program, Community Kids Place day care, Eastern Community Center preschool program and the grantee training program for staff. *Kathryn's placement is in the Training and Technical Assistance Branch, Head Start Bureau.*



Kimberly Frank is the program manager of the Child Care Link for the South Central District Health Department in Twin Falls, Idaho. She coordinates the resource and referral program that serves eight counties. She is an active member of the South Central Head Start Advisory Board, the Child Care Task Force of Magic Valley, the Idaho Children's alliance, and the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral agencies. *Kimberly's placement is in the Program Support Division, Child Care Bureau.*



Khari Garvin is a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) advocate for the St. Louis Community College in St. Louis, Missouri. He implements a program working to increase retention rates and academic success of students who are TANF participants. Khari is a George Washington Carver House Board Member. *Khari's placement is in the Office of Educational Research & Improvement, Department of Education.*



Juan Gordon is a senior accountant at the Friends of Children of Mississippi, Inc., a Head Start agency located in Jackson, Mississippi. Juan assists in organizing and directing all fiscal management activities of a \$12 million federal grant. He coordinates and facilitates meetings in 15 Mississippi counties to address agency and community needs in the fields of education, child care, healthcare, community development, economic development, local government, and public policy. *Juan's placement is in the Program Management and Operations Branch, Head Start Bureau.*



Gail Joseph is a head teacher and trainer for an Early Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) classroom at the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington. She provides training to Head Start and ECEAP teachers and helps them develop strategies for teaching children with special needs. She develops and implements curricula in which the program's individual education goals and objectives are embedded into developmentally appropriate activities. *Gail's placement is in the Commissioner's Office on Research and Evaluation.*



Regina Lockett is a program assistant and a public education and legislative advocate with the Children's Defense Fund in Washington, D.C. She is responsible for assisting the coordinator of the Judges Leadership Council in recruiting and mobilizing members of the judiciary to participate in the advocacy initiative.

She tracks juvenile justice legislation, drafts position papers and activates networks to mobilize against congressional action on misguided legislation. *Regina's placement is in the Office of the Commissioner, Administration on Children, Youth and Families.*



Frances Moore is a Head Start Director at the Pueblo of Laguna, Department of Education in Laguna, New Mexico, where she manages a \$1.2 million dollar budget. Under her management, the program went from a severely deficient status to an exemplary status within two years. She is responsible for all

planning and reporting as well as conducting community assessments. She developed and wrote the grant application for expanding program funding, as well as the grant application for Early Head Start that was funded in September 1998. *Frances' placement is in the Immediate Office of the Program Operations Division, Head Start Bureau.*



Deitra Nealy-Shane is an education specialist for the KCMC Child Development Corporation. She works with a team of specialists and center staff to develop individualized training plans for each of the agency's six full-day community child care centers. The team provides ongoing program analysis and evaluation

using on-site observations, monthly reports, site visits, team meetings, and the Child Plus database program. The team is responsible for monitoring Head Start Performance Standards compliance. She is the primary team member responsible for designing the format for classroom staff workshops and determining training content and materials. *Deitra's placement is in the Immediate Office of the Program Support Division, Head Start Bureau.*



Susan Wilson is the lead planning analyst for the Child Care Team within the Department of Social Services in Connecticut. She designs and implements the state child care programs, and builds partnerships with other state and community agencies to develop strategic plans for child care in Connecticut. She

wrote the state's Head Start-State Collaboration proposal and served as interim staff for nine months. Susan actively represents the agency on interagency collaborations including Head Start, family support, Healthy Child Care Connecticut, and the Map to Inclusive Child Care initiatives. She is the lead staff person for the design and implementation of the state's \$40 million school readiness program for three- and four-year-olds, jointly managed by the Department of Education. *Susan's placement is in the Immediate Office of the Program Support Division, Head Start Bureau.*

For more information on the National Head Start Fellowship Program, contact Donnell Savage-Hounsell, Program Officer in the Head Start Bureau's Training and Technical Assistance Branch, at T: 202-205-8420, or by e-mail at dsavage@acf.dhhs.gov.

Send Us Stuff!

The purpose of the Bulletin is to serve the Head Start community, and we want to hear from you! Send us information on events and new initiatives you've been involved in, and send us photographs! When you send us photos, please be sure to include the following:

- The names of any people pictured in the photo
- Signed forms from each person in the photo giving us permission to print it
- Where the photo was taken (or at what event)
- The name of your Head Start program

Please do not write in ink on the back of the photo—it smears when you stack them and ruins the picture underneath! Use a label or a pencil (and don't press too hard).

Because we keep these materials on file for use both now and in the future, we would appreciate your sending only those photos and materials that you do not need returned. Send your questions, comments, and contributions to:

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Washington, DC 20447

Put us on your mailing list!

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