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Leah Awkward-Rich

4/17/2017

“Head Start Works,” But Why?

Understanding the Persistence of an American Welfare Program

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Preface

My interest in Head Start began when I started tutoring for America Reads at the now-closed Head Start in Oberlin in the fall of 2013. I had never heard of the Head Start program before tutoring there, but I knew that I was working with some of Oberlin's most disadvantaged children. I was devastated when the program closed in 2014 due to low enrollments; I worried about where those kids would end up without many other options for affordable preschool in Oberlin. However, I still have fond memories of reading to, playing with, and hanging out with those children, who are now in first and second grade; I sometimes see them, looking arrestingly grown-up, when I go to tutor at Eastwood, where I ended up after the Head Start was shut down.

These memories, and my distress at the program's closure, motivated me research and write about Head Start on many occasions during my time at Oberlin. I researched Head Start outcomes for *Unequal Educations* with Daphne John, wrote an Oberlin Story about my time with the program when I became an academic ambassador, did a project comparing the number of Head Start students in different states when I took Statistics with Robert Bosch, and wrote the paper which became the outline for my literature review for Christi Smith's Education Policy seminar. Most recently, I wrote a paper about the roots of the Head Start program in Mississippi for African American History with Pamela Brooks. I also had the opportunity to work with a Head Start classroom outside of Chicago during Winter Term of 2016.

My research and personal experiences with Head Start show me that the program is a unique attempt by the US government to address and rectify educational inequality for our nation's children. For me, Head Start represents a rare acknowledgement on the part of the federal government that it is the government's responsibility to address poverty and income inequality, and that such intervention has the ability to positively impact the whole country. As the program is up for reauthorization this year, it is my hope that politicians and citizens continue to understand the value in providing preschool education to low-income children, and that Head Start's high standards and service provision might influence the way the country thinks about the education system as a whole.

Many people in my life have contributed to this project in a variety of ways. Thank you to the former students and staff at Oberlin Head Start for allowing me to work with you my first year at Oberlin, and to Maureen Simen at America Reads for supporting me as a tutor. Thank you to all the professors who allowed me to bring my interest in Head Start into your courses, especially Christi Smith, who helped invaluablely in the early stages of this research. Thank you to my interviewees for taking the time to speak with me about early childhood education in Lorain County. Thank you to my advisor, Greggor Mattson, for your guidance and encouragement throughout the year. To Lauren, Cara, Bridget, and all my family and friends, thank you for your love and support.

Abstract

Head Start, a federally-funded preschool program for low-income children which also provides social services to parents, has persisted since its founding in the 1960s. The program has also received consistent public support since its implementation. Head Start's popularity makes it unique in comparison to other welfare programs in the country. The United States' welfare state is weak and underfunded when compared to other countries; the US lacks a comprehensive national welfare system, and the existing system exacerbates inequalities based on gender and race.

Despite the lack of support for welfare services, Head Start continues to serve children and families across the country. Head Start programs are available in every state, and 1,000 local agencies provide services to over 1 million children and their families yearly. The program has been shown to increase academic and social outcomes for low-income children well past the preschool years, and continues to endure in communities like Lorain County.

I present the findings from 15 interviews with parents, preschool program and Head Start administrators, and coordinators of community agencies that collaborate with Head Start. I find that Head Start has persisted in Lorain County due to its adaptability to county-specific challenges surrounding the lack of public transportation, its degree of embeddedness in the community due to organizational ties, and its adherence to the growing prioritization of academic preparation for kindergarten during preschool. I conclude by suggesting future research to better understand the link between welfare services and public transportation, and by making policy recommendations.

Introduction

Although Head Start is a welfare program which continues to be funded by the federal government and supported by Americans, the United States has a unique welfare state characterized by significantly less spending than in similar nations. The US has a relatively weak welfare state when compared to other countries, and is often considered to be stingy and backwards; the United States spends less on social policy than most other capitalist, industrialized nations (Amenta, Bonastia, & Caren 2001). In addition, the United States fails to guarantee workers a minimum standard of living, and has few nationally-implemented programs. While other capitalist nations such as Germany developed comprehensive systems of benefits following WWII which guaranteed workers a basic standard of living, the US still lacks a comprehensive national welfare system (Quadagno 1987). In the United States, Social Security is the sole national welfare program, while unemployment and aid to dependent children are joint federal-state programs for which states have the ability to independently determine eligibility requirements (Quadagno 1987).

Although welfare in the United States is underfunded, the Head Start program, a national welfare state program run by the United States federal government with the intention of providing preschool experiences to encourage school readiness in marginalized children, continues to thrive to this day. Started during the 1960's as part of President Johnson's War on Poverty, Head Start programs are an attempt to provide more equal educational opportunities to young children living in poverty, as well as to provide social services to their families such as nutritional education, mental health services, and access to medical and dental attention through partnerships with other community service providers. Currently, Head Start programs provide services to more than one million children each year, and Head Start services are implemented

by over 1,000 agencies across the nation (Department of Health and Human Services). Support for Head Start has remained constant since it was implemented during the War on Poverty (Lee & Loeb 1995). In other words, and according to Stefanie Drew, the Family Health and Community Services Specialist for Head Start in Lorain County, “Head Start works!” and has been doing so for over 50 years.

The continued success of the Head Start program presents a puzzle between the United States’ limited funding of welfare programs and the fact that this particular welfare program has retained the support of the government and the public. I argue that although Head Start is a welfare program in the US, which provides less funding for welfare than similar countries, the program has managed to endure in communities such as Lorain County due to its ability to become embedded in communities through partnerships, its strong regulations and educational standards which adhere to a trend towards increasingly academically-focused preschool programs, and its creative responses to community-specific problems, such as the lack of public transportation in Lorain County.

Literature Review: Head Start and the United States Welfare State

Introduction

The following literature review will provide information regarding Head Start and the United States' welfare state. First, I provide a detailed description of Head Start, including historical and contemporary research on the program and the outcomes of children and families. In section two, I will offer an overview of the provision of early childcare and education in welfare states in order to provide a context for the emergence of Head Start in the US. The following sections will include a description of the US welfare state, including its history, theories of its expansion, and the ways in which it diverges from other welfare states. Thereafter, I include information on trends of bureaucratization and privatization, which influenced the development of the US welfare state, as well as sections which discuss citizens' relationships with the welfare state and theories regarding public support for welfare programs such as Head Start.

I: Evidence from Head Start

Head Start programs seek to increase school readiness in preschoolers who are living at or below the federal poverty line, and have persisted since the program's creation despite the weakness of the US welfare state. Started during the 1960s, Head Start programs are an attempt to provide more equal educational opportunities to young children living in poverty, as well as to provide social services to their families. Although the federally-funded program gives many children living in poverty access to structured preschool and other important resources, which are often otherwise expensive and privatized, the quality of Head Start programs and teachers and the program's success in preparing children for kindergarten are often questioned. Head Start

programs are also not accessible to all low-income children who qualify due to the limited availability of program spots in many communities, although increasingly common partnerships between Head Start programs and private child care centers and state-funded preschool programs in public school districts make the program accessible to growing numbers of children (Schilder and Leavell 2014, Wrobel 2012).

Since the 1960s, Head Start has positively impacted the educational and social outcomes of low income children. The Head Start program succeeds in increasing levels of social competence in children, meeting national achievement standards, in positively impacting parenting styles of parents of enrolled children, and in instilling positive, long-term career and personal outcomes for alumni. A limited 1968 study of Head Start programs in New York found that first grade teachers found Head Start graduates to be better able to adapt to elementary school than their low income peers. Head Start began as a summer program in the 1960s, and New York state first grade teachers cited that Head Start children were better prepared for school in general than other low-income kids. In addition, teachers found that the children were more ready to accept discipline, more able to socialize readily with their peers and classmates, were more inquisitive and highly motivated, and had more highly developed verbal abilities (Mentzer 1968).

The success of the Head Start program in Mississippi is due in large part to the influence of the Freedom Movement on the program's insistence on centering the experiences and needs of local Black communities, and in the ability of Head Start centers to empower the communities of which they were a part. The state of Mississippi has been and continues to be particularly successful in its implementation of Head Start services, and this success is due in large part to the influence of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Mississippi's Head Start programs

followed in the tradition of Citizenship Schools and Freedom Schools, institutions founded and run by activists during the 1960s in order to provide Southern Black people with the education necessary to vote and run for political office, and to raise the political awareness of Black children and youth (Hale 515, Tomek 119). Activists' desires to continue and sustain these educational efforts aligned with President Johnson's desires to address the connection between poverty, illiteracy, and poor academic performance through War on Poverty programs (Tomek 120). Local activists saw providing Head Start services to impoverished communities in Mississippi as an extension of their activist work, and organizers and teachers at Head Start programs were already involved in grassroots activism when they became involved with the Child Development Group of Mississippi (CDGM), the former primary provider of Head Start services in the state (Hale 512).

Volunteers brought grassroots organizing techniques such as canvassing for eligible families to their work with Head Start, tactics which were essential to mobilizing the people and funds necessary to run the programs (Hale 514). In addition, in order to encourage the "maximum feasible participation" of low-income communities as outlined by the Johnson Administration for War on Poverty programs, Head Start centers run by the Child Development Group of Mississippi across the state were committed to centering the experiences of impoverished Black communities and involving community members in the education of their children. CDGM encouraged parental involvement in classrooms and the operation of centers, parents often serving as teachers and other employees, and built its curriculum around the experiences of local communities. And, because of the organization's success in encouraging communities to participate in Head Start services, CDGM worked to empower and uplift Black communities.

In addition to providing educational opportunities to children, the Head Start program in Mississippi sought to support families as well (Samuels). Ultimately, CDGM empowered local parents and provided them with a sense of confidence which spread to their children (Tomek 130). The legacy of CDGM is apparent in Mississippi today, where 25,000 children were enrolled in Head Start services in 2014 (National Head Start Association).

In the country as a whole, Head Start program attendance has substantial, long-term benefits for marginalized, low-income children. While numerous studies find large gaps in achievement between both African American and White students, and between children of low and high socioeconomic status (Condrón 2009), a longitudinal study of a cohort of kids enrolled in Head Start programs between 1984 and 1990 showed the far-reaching advantages accrued through Head Start program participation. The cohort was tracked over time and surveyed every two years from 1986 through 2004 (Deming 2009). The study identified and analyzed the effects of Head Start using within-family differences in program participation (*ibid*). When compared with other preschool programs, Head Start “generates about 80 percent of the benefits of other preschool programs at about 60 percent of the cost” (*ibid*). Head Start attendance also results in life-cycle benefits resulting from early skill formation. Head Start graduates are more likely to graduate from high school and to be employed later in life, and are less likely to be incarcerated or on public assistance (Entwisle, Alexander, and Olson 2011).

Despite tangibly benefitting low-income preschoolers in the transition to elementary school and beyond, the skills and advantages gained through Head Start participation tend to wane over time. Although the “fade-outs” of benefits from Head Start program participation are strong for Black kids and very disadvantaged kids, these demographic groups also experience the most long-term benefits from the program (Deming 2009). In addition, “fade-outs” may be

associated with the fact that Head Start graduates go on to attend schools of lower quality than their peers. Valerie Lee and Susanna Loeb investigated the relationship between preschool experience and quality of schools children ended up attending. The study differentiated characteristics of middle schools eighth graders attended based on if they attended Head Start, other preschools, or did not attend preschool; Lee and Loeb controlled for school quality, which is defined by social composition, academic rigor, safety, and social relations. After accounting for family background and family demographics, Lee and Loeb found that former Head Start program attendees attend middle school grades of lower quality than peers who didn't go to preschool or who went to other preschools. This finding might help to explain why the benefits that children accrue from Head Start participation tend to fade over time (Lee & Loeb 1995). The educational stratification demonstrated by Lee and Loeb means that the benefits that low income children are able to gain from attending Head Start programs are ultimately undermined by attending subsequent schools of poor quality.

Although the United States spends less on welfare programs such as Head Start than other countries' welfare states, the program continues to persist to this day. Head Start programs have the ability to positively impact the educational and life outcomes of low-income children and their families. The program has maintained high levels of success across the country, especially in Mississippi. The following section will discuss the provision of early childhood education and care in welfare states.

II: The Role of Early Childhood Education and Care in Welfare States

The public provision of early childhood education and care programs such as Head Start by welfare states reduce inequalities based on gender and class background. Increasingly,

industrialized welfare states such as the United States provide early childhood education and care (ECEC) to citizens using a variety of models and rationales for the provision of these services. In the Nordic countries, for example, public ECEC was expanded in order to reduce gender inequalities in paid and unpaid work (Meyers & Gornick 380). Similarly, Latin American countries such as Argentina and Mexico have increased spending on public ECEC in order to address women's increased participation in the paid labor force (Loppreite & Macdonald 81). In many English-speaking countries, the public provision of ECEC functions to provide disadvantaged children access to compensatory education, and to allow low-income mothers to retain employment. Across countries, the public financing or provision of early childhood education and care reduces workforce gender inequality by increasing the workforce participation of the mothers of young children. In addition, publically-provided ECEC can decrease inequalities between children with more and less class advantage by making access to high-quality programs universal; participation in high-quality ECEC is linked with increased education and earnings later in life (Meyers & Gornick 381). Welfare states across the globe provide early childhood education and care in order to address inequalities caused by gender and class-based differences. The following sections will provide information regarding the welfare state in the US, including its history, expansion, and divergence from other welfare states in similar countries.

III: The US Welfare State

When scholars discuss welfare services, they often consider programs like Head Start to be the “non-market, governmental provision of, or direct funding of, consumption needs” (Hasenfeld, Rafferty, & Zald 1987). Welfare states are compilations of social programs created

with the intention of supporting citizens' needs, and exist in every industrialized, advanced capitalist democracy, including the United States (Moller 2002). Programs run by the welfare state include health care, family support, retirement support, support for those living in poverty, and unemployment benefits (ibid). Most often, welfare programs take the form of public assistance and income programs, in which each citizen contributes a portion of their income in order to participate in a program as a benefit of citizenship (Hasenfeld et al. 1987).

Yehekel Hasenfeld and Jane Rafferty argued that, historically, the ideological justification for the welfare state in the United States is due to the extension of citizenship rights to include social rights, such as the right to economic welfare and security (1987); the endorsement of these rights is linked with welfare program support. In general, social rights are linked to ideologies of economic individualism/work ethic and social equality/collective responsibility which are dominant in American society. These ideologies state, in part, that, "the individual must work hard and that the system must be open for advancement" (ibid). According to the principles of economic individualism, people have responsibility for their own welfare, and success is the result of hard work, while poverty is the result of personal deficiencies (ibid). Additionally, economic individualism states that intervention through welfare programs thus creates dependency and must only be used for residual welfare to grant welfare to the infirm poor (ibid). Individuals who identify with economic individualism are less likely to endorse social rights or support welfare state programs. In addition, individuals in support of economic individualism are unlikely to have ideals of social equality and collective responsibility.

IV: History of the Welfare State in the United States

There have been four distinct periods of welfare state development in the United States

(Hasenfeld et al. 1987). The experimentation stage lasted from 1870 to 1920 and was defined by the altering of existing welfare programs, which included pension programs for Civil War soldiers and their families. During this period, most Western countries had welfare programs in place that were modeled after traditional relief systems, which provided limited monetary benefits to those living in poverty (Quadagno 1987). The consolidation era, which occurred between 1930 and 1950, was characterized by government commitment to intervention in the lives of its citizens (Hasenfeld et al. 1987). This commitment was encouraged by the evening out of instabilities in the business cycle following World War II, which allowed the US government to contribute more to welfare spending (Quadagno 1987).

The expansion period of welfare state development in the United States occurred from 1950 to 1970, when the government created a broader variety of welfare programs such as Head Start and devoted more government spending to the welfare state, resulting in government deficits. Finally, reformulation began in 1970 and continues into the present, and is defined by the government rethinking the welfare state and pushes to reduce social spending. Economists and conservative commentators have linked decline in the economy in the 1970s to welfare programs working to decrease the profitability of capitalism in the marketplace by serving as a disincentive for citizens to work and to make investments (ibid). This view is challenged by the research of other scholars, such as Ann Orloff, who argued that the US welfare state, in ignoring differences in participation in the workforce on the basis of gender and race, forces welfare recipients to be employed (2002).

V: Theories of Welfare State Expansion

The development of the welfare state in the US can be explained by a number of factors,

including economic growth, trends of industrialization, the structure of the nation's tax structure, the organization of national bureaucracy, the effect of electoral politics, the strength of labor organizations, and the logic of capitalism (Hasenfeld et al. 1987).

Economic Growth

The economic theoretical frame links the rise of the welfare state with economic expansion and development. High levels of economic development in the United States following World War II provided the nation with a re-allocable economic surplus that allowed for the creation of welfare programs (Quadagno 1987). Additionally, as societies develop and the economy expands, there are new social problems to address, which necessitates the creation of new services to address them (Hasenfeld 1987).

Industrialization

Nations must industrialize in order to develop welfare states. According to the logic of industrialism, all industrializing nations become similar through a process resulting from the impact of economic and technological development on the occupational system (Quadagno 1987). High national revenues gained through industrialized labor allow governments to offer greater benefits to citizens (Moller 2002). In addition, due to new labor demands which push people of working age into the labor market, new needs for public spending are created as the traditional family is no longer responsible for or able to care for young children, sick people, and the elderly; the state must expand in order to meet these needs.

The Logic of Capitalism

The “logic of capitalism” theoretical frame understands the capitalist state to have two primary functions: the accumulation of capital and legitimation. The welfare state intends to rectify social inequities that come with capitalist market systems. Welfare programs serve legitimating functions through their use of accumulated funds to rectify social inequalities such as poverty (Hasenfeld et al. 1987). However, there is an inherent contradiction between capitalism and democracy. Capitalism is based on inequality among social classes, while democratic ideals purport to equally protect all citizens. According to neo-Marxist theory, the state cannot develop policies to meet the needs of citizens because welfare programs will be constrained by the demands of the market system (Quadagno 1987). These contradictions between capitalism and democracy can be rectified through the political system.

Politics and Labor Organizations

Politically-based theories suggest that a strong labor movement promotes welfare state expansion. The existence and strength of welfare programs depends upon the political strength of the working class, who are able to influence levels of public spending through electoral politics (Hasenfeld et al. 1987). Since they are the most disadvantaged by the capitalist system, the working class should be strongest supporters of welfare legislation. Therefore, the number of welfare programs and the amount of spending on the welfare state should be closely associated with strength of social democratic/pro-labor political parties (ibid). Additionally, widespread citizen participation in electoral politics leads to the development of strong welfare states because voting allows the poor the ability to lobby the state to increase social spending (Moller 2002). In the US, the Democratic Party has historically functioned as a working-class party

because it often aligned itself with the agendas of the working class and those living in poverty (ibid). Therefore, welfare state expansion in the United States can be linked to the strength of the Democratic Party.

VI: Exceptionalism of the US Welfare State

The American welfare state is exceptional because the United States was later than other industrialized, capitalist nations in developing national welfare programs. Additionally, welfare programs in the US are ultimately less comprehensive than in other, similar nations, and lack national standards. While other capitalist, Western nations such as Germany developed comprehensive systems of benefits following WWII which guaranteed workers a basic standard of living, the US still lacks a comprehensive national welfare system (Quadagno 1987). In the United States, Social Security is the sole national welfare program, while unemployment and aid to dependent children are joint federal-state programs for which states have the ability to independently determine eligibility requirements (ibid). Head Start services, while federally funded, are administered similarly by local, community-based agencies.

The welfare state in the United States is also exceptional because it operates under a system which bifurcates programs, which further exacerbates existing social inequalities. Welfare programs in the United States are divided between contributory or top tier programs, and means-tested programs or bottom tier programs (Hasenfeld et al. 1987, Moller 2002). Entitlement to the benefits of top-tier, contributory benefits is based on active participation in the labor market and automatic payroll contribution to the program, such as Social Security and unemployment compensation (Hasenfeld & Rafferty 1989). People with well-paying jobs qualify for top-tier social assistance (Moller 2002). On the other hand, eligibility for means-tested

programs such as food stamps or Head Start programs is determined on the basis of need, such as relation to the federally-defined poverty line. People without consistent jobs are relegated to participation in programs in the bottom tier, where they must qualify for assistance from “locally administered and highly stigmatized programs” (ibid).

Additionally, welfare in the United States combines two ideal models of welfare: the male breadwinner model and the individual model. The male breadwinner model of welfare is based on the institution of heterosexual marriage where the nuclear family is the unit of distribution. This model also sees women’s rights as tied to men’s rights as men are expected to provide financially for families while women are expected to be homemakers. In contrast, the individual is the unit of distribution according to the individual model of welfare. In this model, both men and women are responsible for the wellbeing of their families, and entitlement to services is tied to one’s citizenship, not to one’s role in a family or employment status (Haney 1998).

In addition to often basing entitlement to welfare services on a model of heterosexual families which often puts women at a disadvantage, the US welfare state institutionalizes race and gender inequalities (Moller 2002). Programs in the top tier are modeled on male patterns of participation in the work force (ibid); women and underemployed workers have a disadvantage because they earn less overall and so are granted less benefits from these programs. Women receive varying levels of support from US welfare programs; welfare policies which are universal and based on citizenship provide women with more equal access to distributed resources, and resources are not distributed based on gender, while male breadwinner-based models perpetuate gender inequality and provide men with more access to resources (Haney 1998). Additionally, Black families most often fall into the bottom tier because Black people are

more likely to hold lower wage, less secure jobs (Moller 2002). Black single mothers also receive unequal levels of assistance from welfare programs (ibid). In summary, the US welfare state disadvantages both women and minorities by basing welfare program participation on income level. Pushes for bureaucratization and privatization, discussed in the following section, also impact the delivery and availability of welfare services in the United States.

VII: Bureaucratization and Privatization

Trends of bureaucratization and privatization encouraged the development of the welfare state in the United States. During the Reagan administration, the reach of the federal government shrank, giving rise to privatization and devolution. Privatization is defined as the contracting out of public services to private third parties, while devolution is the transfer of decisions regarding the details of public spending from the federal government to states, counties and municipalities (Marwell 2004). Furthermore, the War on Poverty sought to push government funding to areas affected by growing poverty and segregation, and funds were allocated to Community Action Agencies (CAAs) which were private and nonprofit (ibid). Head Start exemplifies a War on Poverty program designed to combat poverty which followed trends of privatization; the national Office of Head Start grants funding and oversight to private organizations that administer Head Start services (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).

Privatization gives private organizations the power to impact the ways in which federal funds and services are administered to the public. According to Shauhin Talesh's research on automobile makers in California, private organizations govern themselves while at the same time providing services and benefits which are usually administered by public entities (Talesh 2009). For example, when automobile makers in California were subject to harsh consumer warranty

laws in the 1970s, these companies created venues for customer dispute resolution, organizational practices which were later incorporated into new warranties through lobbying (ibid). Thereby, private car makers created the terms of customer compliance with warranty protection laws and changed the rights available to the public in court into private rights to dispute resolution (ibid).

Similarly, Florencia Torche finds that voucher-driven educational privatization in Chile has failed to alter levels of educational stratification in the country, even though there has been a great deal of educational expansion and reform (Torche 2005). The resulting inequality is due to decreased access for marginalized classes, not to increased opportunity for privileged classes (ibid). Privatization allows private entities the ability to determine the cost of education, which drives up prices. The growing cost of secondary education for lower income families took children from the education system and placed them into the labor market instead (ibid). Trends of privatization allow private organizations to determine how government funds and services are administered to the public.

According to Mark Van Vugt, public support for privatization trends depends upon several factors. There is a negative relation between approval and perceived costs of privatization: individuals who expected transition costs to be higher disapproved more of privatization (Van Vugt 1997). The approval of privatization depends on concerns for personal outcomes for individuals but also on beliefs about collective implications (ibid). “Privatization challenges the belief that public goods should be equally accessible to everyone, regardless of income” (ibid). The public approval of privatization is determined by individuals’ concerns about immediate costs and about uncertainty about the transition between public and private (ibid).

In addition, welfare program expansion is predicted by relative degree of bureaucratization and centralization, and by government reliance on direct taxation (Quadagno 1987). A strong state bureaucracy leads to the creation of welfare programs (ibid). Bureaucratic agencies are decentralized with limited jurisdictions in terms of administering their services. This limits services to specific populations with prescribed needs (Hasenfeld et al. 1987). Additionally, bureaucratic welfare agencies lack administrative controls because they are held accountable to several levels of government (ibid). In addition, welfare agencies create bureaucratic rationing because citizen demand for services such as Head Start often exceeds the available supply (ibid).

Yehekel Hasenfeld, Jane Rafferty, and Mayer Zald argued that welfare state bureaucracies are organized into sectors based on the rights and entitlements they make available to citizens, which affect the content and form of citizens' encounters with the welfare state (1987). Bureaucratic sectors are structured by programs' domain, the level of scarcity or availability of offered services, and agencies' administrative control over these services (ibid). Sectors are administrated according to the level of discretion and the level of professionalization of officials in charge of agencies (ibid). In addition, there are specific norms which govern citizen encounters with welfare agencies. For example, when understanding the welfare program Aid to Families with Dependent Children, citizens' rights are circumscribed, and public awareness of the program is limited. In addition, the program has a selective domain, scarcity of services is high, and control over services is decentralized. Given that officials also have discretion but low levels of professionalization, the norms governing encounters are stigmatizing and perceived as unfair by those who use the services.

Welfare programs such as Head Start are defined as publicly funded supportive services,

many of which are delivered by private, nonprofit organizations, called community-based organizations (CBOs) (Marwell 2004). Direct services are usually from a third party that is not directly affiliated with the government, a private nonprofit organization (NPO). Although not directly from the government, direct services such as Head Start are supported by discretionary government funding. Direct services are not entitlements, meaning that the demand for these services can exceed supply since they are not guaranteed to every citizen by right. This creates a competitive system in which service providers compete for funding allocations and recipients compete for access to organizations' limited services (ibid). Because they are administered by a variety of different private organizations with no direct supervision from the government, direct services can vary a great deal in their quality and effectiveness (ibid). Public supportive services are distributed on state and local levels, and allocative processes that place government contracts at community-based organizations to serve specific neighborhoods and individuals (ibid). Additionally, through organizational ties, or connections between institutions, community-based organizations such as Head Start centers are able to provide community members with access to a wide variety of resources. Although poverty withholds community members from social networks available to the middle class which provide resources such as information about jobs and education, neighborhood poverty is associated with more organizational ties because of the influence of institutional factors such as access to heterogeneous sets of resources, including information, services, and material goods (Small, Jacobs, Massengill 2008 389).

Nicole Marwell argued that there exist three distinct functions of community-based organization activity: service provision, community building, and electoral politics (Marwell 2004). In their role as service providers, CBOs provide services on either nonreciprocal or reciprocal bases (ibid). In their role as community builders, CBOs can work to produce either

community participants or organizational adherents; CBOs call upon neighborhood volunteers who want to improve their communities in order to create community participants, and frame and publicly promote organizations producing benefits for individuals rather than for the entire community (ibid).

Understanding the impact and structure of community-based organizations might aid in understanding the persistence of welfare programs such as Head Start. Community-based organizations have the ability to participate in the political system by influencing fund allocations and creating voter constituencies. Community-based organizations actively become engaged in electoral politics so that they can have influence over the federal government's allocation of social service provision contracts (Marwell 2004). Executives in the government have the ability to control decisions about allocation of funds, which directly affects community-based organizations in the amount of funds available to be allocated and the number of individuals who can profit from limited services. Organizers of CBOs can thus engage in electoral organizing to back specific government officials with the individuals receiving services, thereby producing voting constituencies in order to influence policy makers (ibid). In addition to engaging citizens in electoral politics, welfare programs such as Head Start can impact citizens' relationship and encounters with the government, which is discussed in the next section.

VIII: Citizens and the Welfare State

The development of the United States welfare state has shifted the relationship between citizens and governments. The relationship between citizens and the state is characterized by citizens' right to the welfare programs provided by the state and federal government, such as Head Start, and the state's obligations to citizens to provide these services (Hasenfeld et al.

1987). With the rise of the welfare state came expanded citizenship rights by increasing the obligation of the state to its citizens (ibid).

Yehekel Hasenfeld, Jane Rafferty, and Mayer Zald found that citizen encounters with bureaucratic agencies are increased due to the growth of welfare state programs (Hasenfeld et al. 1987). The more social rights a nation guarantees its citizens leads to the creation of more welfare state bureaucracies that control these rights. Bureaucratic agencies control citizens' right to participate in welfare programs and services by determining citizens' eligibility, levels of entitlements, and the benefits given to citizens (ibid). In addition, these agencies reflect and affirm the justifications of the welfare state (ibid).

Encounters between citizens and the welfare state can also impact welfare service recipients' levels of political participation. In general, low-income people "tend to lack resources needed for political participation - such as money, skills, and time - as well as connections to organizations that recruit people into politics" (Bruch, Ferree, and Soss 2010). However, Sarah Bruch, Myra Ferree, and Joe Soss found that client experiences with incorporating authority models such as those displayed by Head Start, which encourages parental program involvement as a means of community empowerment (2010), have positive effects on political participation among people living in poverty. Head Start involvement provides parents and families with personal experience of public policy, which in turn provides clients with knowledge of political identities, as well as lessons about group status, the level of responsiveness of the government, and the efficacy of participating in political processes, all of which encourages political involvement such as voting and political and civic participation (ibid). The next section discusses the factors which contribute to citizens' support, or lack of support, for welfare programs.

IX: Support for the Welfare State

Welfare state programs such as Head Start gain support from citizens based on their place in the United States' bifurcated system of welfare service allocation. While citizens offer substantial support for welfare programs in general, Yeheskel Hasenfeld and Jane Rafferty found that individual support of contributory programs is significantly higher. Top-tier, contributory programs are widely supported while means-tested programs have only begrudging legitimacy (Hasenfeld & Rafferty 1989). Citizen support of means-tested, bottom tier welfare programs such as Head Start comes from self-interest, personal and life experiences which shape one's values, and identification with the dominant social ideologies of work ethic and social equality (ibid). The identification with these ideologies influences individuals' endorsement of social rights and so leads to support of the welfare state. In addition, welfare state support depends upon the type of welfare program, which includes contributor programs and means-tested programs. Social groups who support the welfare state are economically and socially vulnerable and, in addition, identify with social democratic values.

US citizens demonstrate strong support of programs for the disabled, elderly, and children, and for social security and health care, but programs for welfare recipients lack widespread support. Furthermore, there is general ambivalence toward public assistance and unemployment programs. Most Americans support the welfare state even though some scholars suggest that welfare programs are losing support and popularity because of growing political conservatism across the nation (ibid). Welfare programs have more support among the economically vulnerable, including those who are low income, have low levels of education, are non-white, and are young. These demographic groups tend to support welfare programs in the interest of benefitting themselves, and additionally are more likely to endorse social rights,

another predictor of support of welfare state programs. In the United States, policies regarding welfare programs change due to changes in public opinion (ibid), but the opinions of citizens can often be manipulated by political elite, among whom there is a widespread belief that the existence of welfare state programs leads to recipients experiencing dependence on them and the desire to defend them. In general, both the public and politicians tend to express more resistance to welfare programs when the government spends more money on maintaining and expanding the welfare state (ibid).

Conclusion

Although the United States has a relatively weak welfare state which is characterized by a lack of nationally-implemented programs and less federal funding than similar nations, Head Start programs continue to be widely supported, funded, and used to benefit low-income preschoolers and their families. Historical trends of welfare state expansion spurred by a variety of factors such as economic growth following World War II supported the creation of additional welfare programs to support US citizens. Welfare programs have been able to sustain high degrees of support due in part to the political power of community-based organizations, which often engage in the political process by creating voter constituencies who support candidates who have the ability to increase funds allocated to nonprofit organizations. In addition, research shows welfare programs garner citizen support through the widespread support of ideals of social equality and the endorsement of social rights, as well as support for privatization trends. Despite research into support for the welfare state, we do not know why Head Start in particular continues to persist in the US despite lack of funding for welfare programs in general. Why does Head Start continue to “work” in the context of the United States’ weak welfare state?

Methods

To investigate the contradiction between the persistence of Head Start and a relative lack of welfare services in the US, I conducted interviews with parents, service providers, and early childhood education professionals living across Lorain County. My data are drawn from interviews with 15 Lorain County residents, including 2 parents of preschool-age children, 4 preschool program administrators, 4 Head Start program administrators, 2 community collaborative directors or coordinators, and 3 social service organization administrators (*see Appendix A for a table listing interviewees' names and titles*). Initially, my project sought to understand how parents choose preschool programs for their children as a way of understanding the continued support for Head Start. However, I shifted my focus to understanding how Head Start's relationships to other organizations relates to its persistence after I struggled to recruit parents. The parents I did interview were recruited via flyers posted around town and sent home with preschoolers at Eastwood Elementary School. I first interviewed Susan Alig, the principal at Eastwood, because I tutor at the school for America Reads. A number of my subsequent interviewees were contacted at Principal Alig's suggestion, and I found many others via the suggestion of other interviewees, or snowball sampling.

The interviews for my project touched on how parents choose preschool programs, how residents gain access to community organizations, the availability of resources for parents in the county, the concerns of parents in the county, and the role of organizations in the community. In particular, interviews with administrators who have formal partnerships or connections to Head Start were asked about these collaborations and their impact on both organizations. On average, the interviews lasted about 30 minutes and were conducted over the phone or in person.

Lorain County

Located in northeastern Ohio, Lorain County had a population of 303,152 residents in 2015, over 85% of which were white; about 8% of residents were Black, and 9% identified as Latinx/Hispanic. The median household income in the county was \$52,457. Lorain County's unemployment rate for residents over age 16 was 5.56%, which is over one percentage point higher than the federal rate, which stands at 4.5%. 10.9% of Lorain County families were living below the federal poverty line in 2015, and 22.74% of residents under the age of 18 were living below the federal poverty line. Of residents living below the federal poverty line, 10.45% were white, 26.75% were Latinx/Hispanic, and 36.74% were Black. 10.89% of residents over the age of 25 did not have a high school diploma; the federal average is 11.6%. In 2015, about 5% of Lorain County residents were under the age of 5 (*see Appendix B for a demographics table comparing Lorain County, Ohio, and the United States*).

Lorain County Community Action Agency

Lorain County Community Action Agency (LCCAA) was founded in 1966 with the intention of connecting residents living in poverty with resources and opportunities throughout the county. The organization distributes grants to support local food pantries, provides residents with winter coats and home weatherization, and runs youth programming and adult education classes, among other services. LCCAA also provides Head Start services to approximately 1,000 children and their families with incomes of 130% or more of the federal poverty level, and operates centers in Lorain, Elyria, Wellington, and Amherst. Early Head Start services, which serve infants, toddlers, and pregnant people, as well as home-based Head Start services, are also available. Participation in LCCAA Head Start programs gives children and families access to

services such as health and dental coverage, mental health services, housing assistance, emergency/crisis help, job training, and adult education (LCCAA Annual Report 2016). The provision of these services not only connects children and families with important resources, but also contribute to the success of Head Start in Lorain County by allowing the organization to meet its goals through collaboration with other service providers.

Chapter 1 - Success through Collaboration: Head Start's Partnerships with Other Organizations

Introduction

Because Head Start is required by federal regulations to provide services to its students and their families, Lorain County Head Start has formed organizational ties with a variety of local social service agencies. These partnerships make it possible for Head Start to meet the needs of its families, as well as meeting federal requirements. In addition, these partnerships allow other service providers to reach more clients. Says Stefanie Drew, LCCAA Head Start's Family, Health, and Community Services Specialist, "we can only be successful because of the partners that we do have. [Partnerships allow us to] have a way of connecting people with resources that they need." Head Start's success and persistence in Lorain County is due in large part to the organization's partnerships with other community organizations.

Head Start Partnerships with Other Preschools

Although the Head Start program might be expected to compete with other early childhood education programs, the organization has found success in forming partnerships with local preschool and childcare centers across the nation. Researchers have documented and described Head Start programs' partnerships with both public school and private preschool programs. Diane Schilder and Ashley Leavell (2014) investigated the efficacy of partnerships between Head Start programs and child care centers, which have been encouraged and enabled by state and federal funding over the past few decades. The motivation fueling the creation Head Start/child care partnerships hinges on the notion that Head Start, which is highly regulated and of uniformly high quality across the nation, can best address children's developmental needs,

while child care centers, which are far less regulated but more often offer full-day, year-round care, best meet the needs of working parents, and that a combination of these services will better serve both parents and children. Schilder and Leavell found that classrooms in Head Start/child care center partnerships are of higher overall quality than classrooms in non-partnership child care centers.

Sharon Wrobel (2012) examined the relationship between Head Start programs and state-funded public preschools, programs which often must compete for enrollment. Although some Head Start agencies view state-funded preschool as a threat, other programs use interagency collaboration to improve service delivery. Wrobel conducted a case study of the collaboration between an urban Head Start center and public school system, and found that the collaboration gave children and families access to both the high quality, state-regulated instruction provided by the public school, and the access to community resources offered by Head Start.

Organizational Ties

Partnerships between Head Start programs and other childcare and preschool providers can also be conceptualized as organizational ties, or formal and/or informal relationships between organizations within a neighborhood which lead to referrals for patrons. In part due to the proximity of various service providers in neighborhoods and communities, organizations are able to provide clients access to multiple resources through their ties with a variety of other providers. In a study of a Head Start program and other local organizations in a low-income neighborhood in New York City, Mario Small, Erin Jacobs, and Rebekah Massengill (2008) found that neighborhood poverty is associated with more organizational ties. In particular, the Head Start program included in the study, Family Focus Head Start, allowed parents to have

access to a wide array of resources related to well-being from other organizations, including information, material goods, housing, physical and mental health services, education, government programs, employment, and immigration services through workshops and referrals (Small, Jacob, and Massengill 2008). The extensive network of organizational ties available to Head Start families is due to the federal government's requirement that centers provide families with resources. In response to the government's demand that they offer parents and children comprehensive services, Head Start centers such as those in Lorain County form organizational ties with other service providers in order to meet the needs of families.

LCCAA's Partnerships with Lorain County Preschools

In Lorain County, LCCAA's Head Start programs have formed partnerships with other childcare providers which mirror the arrangements made in other parts of the country. LCCAA maintains partnerships with Horizon Education Centers and Little Lighthouse Learning centers in the area, as well as with the public school systems, including Elyria and Lorain City Schools; Horizon Child Care Centers and Little Lighthouse Learning Centers are privately-owned, non-profit organizations which provide childcare across the US, and which have locations throughout Lorain County. These partnerships allow Head Start to provide its classrooms and services in organizations across the county. To begin a formal partnership relationship, Head Start rents classroom space in another care facility, and provides the center with funding to provide for the placement of Head Start qualifying children in the other center. Head Start parents and children at other centers then have the opportunity to benefit from the resources provided by both organizations.

Maria Vasquez, a Family, Health, & Community Services Supervisor at Head Start, explains that, for example, in Elyria City Schools' preschool program, Head Start has two classrooms in which "half of those children if not more are Head Start children. So they get our component- the health and social services in addition to the education at that school." Head Start-qualifying children placed at other local preschool and childcare programs are granted access to both the education provided by the other center, and to the array of services provided by Head Start.

Horizon Education Centers contracts with Head Start to provide classrooms, as well as services, to Head Start children and families. David Smith, Director of Horizon, a partner of Head Start in Lorain County, says that his centers in the county contain four Head Start classrooms:

They contract with us to provide Head Start classrooms, and then we provide the entire gamut of services from home visits to dental checks and, you know, referring parents to their services, very comprehensive services to that classroom. So we provide that entire system and it's basically a contract that they pay us per child. It's a contract for a certain amount of children.

Mr. Smith understands Horizon's partnership with Head Start to consist of a legally binding contract, and as a way for Head Start to provide comprehensive services to Horizon's children.

Head Start's partnerships not only have the ability to make the organization's services more accessible to families across Lorain County, but also work to increase the quality of other preschool providers. According Shauna Matelski, Head Start's Executive Director, integrating Head Start's high standards into other programs through partnerships allows more children to have access to high quality preschool experiences:

The goal of the partnerships is to make sure all preschool children have the same opportunities for preschool services. [Other centers having partnerships with us] makes

sure that their program is high quality. [Since we] follow federal performance standards, you know those services get to other children.

Not only do partnerships with other preschool providers allow more children to access Head Start classrooms and services, but Head Start's partnerships provide families in Lorain County with better access to high quality preschool programming. Ms. Matelski also notes that the success of these partnerships has brought those involved with the early childhood field in the county together, allowing for collaboration and information sharing between early childhood education professionals.

Partnerships with Social Service Providers

Although other researchers have studied Head Start's partnerships with other preschool programs (Wrobel 2012, Schilder & Leavell 2014) the Head Start program in Lorain County has also formed partnerships with social service providers. Stefanie Drew, as Head Start Family Health and Community Services Specialist, is responsible for overseeing service provision to families and for the program's partnership with other community organizations. According to Ms. Drew, Head Start's social service provider partners include Ohio GuideStone, a mental health services provider, the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, the Department of Children's Services, Lorain and Elyria public libraries, El Centro, a provider of bilingual social services for Lorain County's Spanish-speaking population, and Genesis House, a domestic violence shelter, as well Lorain and Elyria public school districts, Horizon Education Centers, and Little Lighthouse Learning Centers, all of which have Head Start classrooms in their buildings. Ms. Drew states that Head Start's relationships with local organizations "invite people to share about programs with their staffs to create mutual partnerships. [Our partners] provide information about our services, and pass along information about Head Start to [their] families."

Head Start's partnerships with social service agencies allow the organization to be connected with other service providers across the county, providing the opportunity for clients of particular organizations to have access to a variety of other services in Lorain County through referrals made by one organization to others.

In order to understand the nature of Head Start's partnerships with social service providers in the county, I spoke with Heidi Corso, a supervisor at OhioGuideStone, a mental health services provider which provides services in Lorain County. GuideStone's partnership with Head Start has implemented a consultation program for children with behavioral challenges:

We have a classroom consultation program, where, if there's a child who's in the daycare program or preschool program who is struggling behaviorally, kind of one of those that are at-risk for being asked to leave the center or the program, we have a consultant that can go in and provide support to that center and the teacher, to the child and the family, and come up with strategies and different techniques to help the child become more successful in that placement.

Ms. Corso says that the consultation program alleviates stress from teachers, families, and Head Start administrators, and by allowing children to remain in their classrooms, while also allowing GuideStone to reach more members of the community. Ms. Corso considers the partnership between GuideStone and Head Start to be beneficial to both organizations, in that it provides support to teachers, parents, and students through services provided directly and indirectly, and by bringing more community members in contact with GuideStone's services.

Community Resources

Program administrators across Lorain County understand there to be a disconnect between the availability of resources and services, and the public's knowledge of those services. Most of my interviewees stated that there is a great deal of resources in the community, but that many people either do not know about them or do not know how to access them. According to

Jennifer Dodge, the Director of the Child Care Resource Center, an organization which connects parents with childcare in Lorain and other nearby counties, “resources are available but parents are not reaching out or are not aware of resources that are available.” Ms. Dodge thinks that, while resources are available across the county, parents often do not know how to access them. Jeni Hoover, the director of the preschool program at Kendal, agrees that many residents do not know about available resources, and links some Lorain County residents’ lack of awareness of available resources to inaccessibility: “I think a lot of parents are, you know, they’re getting adequate resources... but I think there’s a population that isn’t aware of what’s out there or isn’t able to find or connect with what they need because of time or because of lack of transportation.” Ms. Hoover understands a population of Lorain County residents to be missing out on resources due to inaccessibility linked to a lack of time or transportation needed to make use of resources. Although, like Ms. Dodge and Ms. Hoover, Ms. Matelski acknowledges that many Lorain County parents do not know how to access the services they need, she understands the role of Head Start to be addressing this disconnect between available resources and people who can benefit from them:

[There are a] plethora of resources in the county. Parents don’t know how to tap into them. That’s the job of Head Start: family engagement. [We] help families get out of the low-income range by providing resources and job opportunities. Community Action gives Head Start families access to other programs like weatherization for homes, and access to these programs gives parents access to other programs.

Ms. Matelski states that the role of Head Start is to connect Lorain County residents with resources of which they otherwise they might not have been aware. Most program administrators view a significant portion of residents as not being knowledgeable about the availability of services within Lorain County. Administrators at Head Start understand their role within the community to be to ameliorate the lack of awareness of accessible resources across the county.

Partnerships with Community Collaboratives:

In addition to forming organizational ties with other preschool programs and local social service providers, Head Start in Lorain County also partners with community collaboratives. Nicolle Bellmorepieerse, the Director of Ready, Set, Go... to Kindergarten!, describes community collaboratives as “bringing agencies and community members together to address large scale problems.” According to Shauna Matelski, Head Start collaborates with county-wide initiatives to provide health and developmental screenings to children, including Oberlin Kids, an Oberlin-based kindergarten readiness collaborative, and Ready, Set, Go... to Kindergarten! (RSG), based in Elyria. Both Ready, Set, Go and Oberlin Kids intend to address the barriers that are present for children in achieving kindergarten readiness during their preschool years. Jenn Keathley, the Coordinator of Oberlin Kids, says that her organization:

[wants] every child in Oberlin that will be entering Oberlin City School district to be ready to learn... it's a kindergarten readiness program. So I do developmental screening[s], we do playgroups. I do referrals, advocacy, anything really that could help the families, kind of, take care of it all, anything from food to, you know, food, clothing, and shelter, to referrals for speech, occupational, and physical therapy, classes, everything really.

Oberlin Kids is a community collaborative intended to provide every child in Oberlin with the preparation needed to succeed in kindergarten. Funded by the United Way, Oberlin Kids has 15 partners, including LCCAA and a number of Lorain County childcare and preschool providers, which refer parents to the program.

Similarly, Ready, Set, Go... to Kindergarten! is a collaborative which intends to prepare Elyria's children for preschool. In order to address the four pillars that it has identified as necessary for kindergarten preparation, which include academics, physical health, behavioral health, and social-emotional development, Ready, Set, Go works directly with preschool programs across Elyria, such as Head Start, to provide trainings to teachers such as CPR, First

Aid, and workshops on effectively teaching fine motor skills. Ready, Set, Go also pays for developmental screenings for each child in partnering programs, and runs playgroups for families in the community. These services work to improve the quality of preschool centers throughout the city, as well as to educate parents about the importance of school readiness for preschoolers. The organization was founded at the request of a former Elyria school superintendent who found that many of Elyria's children were not arriving in kindergarten with adequate preparation. Ms. Bellmorepierser explains:

There was a big group of students who were arriving at kindergarten's doors not having been to a preschool program, and nobody was sure how to find those children or really how to reach out to them. So the collaborative formed really to address those needs, and was initially very academically-focused with a few community providers and 14 preschool programs throughout the city of Elyria to really work on increasing center-based quality, to make sure that they were meeting the kids' needs.

According to Ms. Bellmorepierser, community leaders formed Ready, Set, Go in response to many of Elyria's children arriving to kindergarten unprepared to learn. Ms. Bellmorepierser also states that "...Ready, Set, Go is a tremendous resource to help programs increase their quality, and also to help parents understand what kindergarten readiness means and provide them programs and ways to help their children achieve that." Ms. Matelski echoes this sentiment, saying that Head Start also does health and developmental screenings in order to determine "where children are developmentally, and if referrals are needed," and cites RSG as a collaborator which helps Head Start to make screenings accessible to the children that need them. Ready, Set, Go, like Oberlin Kids, is a community collaborative aimed at preparing children in Lorain County for kindergarten. Head Start's partnerships with community collaboratives such as Ready, Set, Go and Oberlin Kids allows the program to continue to provide children with screenings and other tools to prepare children for kindergarten.

Head Start's Family Service Workers

Head Start's Family Service Workers (FSWs) do the work of forming and maintaining organizational ties, allowing families to have access to a variety of social services within Lorain County through Head Start. Each family enrolled in a Head Start program has a Family Service Worker, who is a family's point of contact both with the Head Start agency and with outside resources. Ms. Drew considers the family service workers' main responsibility to be "to work with families on their goals outside of crises." According to Ms. Vasquez, who supervises the Family Service Worker program at Head Start, Family Service Workers connect parents with appropriate community organizations to meet the specific needs of each family:

They are the ones that enroll the children into the program. They, in addition to enrolling them, when they sit with the parents and review paperwork, they do partnership agreements, which means that they're doing goal-setting, finding out what things the parents are working towards, they're asking them what type of needs that they might have. And depending on the responses they get, they do referrals and offer resources to those families that have different needs. They follow up on their medical home, meaning [they] make sure that they have a doctor and a dentist, and if not, give them referrals for that, make sure that all of their physicals are up to date, all the different screenings that the doctor needed to do, and if the doctor said that they needed to go back for something, that they're supposed to make sure the parent does that. Same with the dentist.

In facilitating the connection between families and outside resources, such as health care and screenings, Family Service Workers put organizational ties to work.

In addition to wielding ties to support families, Family Service Workers also form and maintain new relationships between Head Start and other agencies. Family Service Workers are assigned to create partnerships with community organizations in order to form a collaborative relationship. Ms. Vasquez says:

Our FSWs each have what's called a Community Connection, so they have at least two different people out in the community that they partner with. So, for example, I might have the Lorain County Health Department and Children's Services. So, my partnership means that I'm going to share information with those agencies to tell them all about Head

Start, so when they have families that go to them, that they have a place to refer them to. And when our families have needs that maybe their agency can offer, we can refer back and forth. So we do have those great relationships throughout the county where our FSWs work directly with these different agencies to, you know, offer them services and let them know all about ours.

Ms. Drew echoes Ms. Vasquez's description of Family Service Workers, saying that Head Start "purposely assign[s] FSWs with community organizations where families receive services" in order to link families with resources, and to promote Head Start in the community. In forming and maintaining relationships with service organizations which benefit families, other organizations, and Head Start itself, Family Service Workers are entrusted with cultivating and tending to Head Start's organizational ties. Family Service workers not only serve as gatekeepers between parents and available resources in the community, but utilize their partnerships to garner referrals for Head Start. Because they are tasked with connecting Head Start families and local service providers, Family Service Workers further Head Start's mission.

Head Start is Embedded in the Community: Head Start is a Community Collaborative

In its connection to community organizations and ability to maintain and further organizational ties, Head Start itself can be understood as a community collaborative. Head Start's mission includes preparing low-income children for success in kindergarten and the later grades (Administration for Children and Families), and the organization understands this preparation to necessarily include providing families with access to social services. Indeed, Ms. Drew sees the organization's goals to be "providing comprehensive child development services, [and] prepar[ing] children for kindergarten and future academic success, by providing emotional, nutritional, psychological services, family needs and health concerns services." Similarly, Ms. Matelski describes Head Start as "a comprehensive childhood program" which uses a "holistic

approach to ensure children are ready for school,” including components of “health, nutrition, and family engagement.” The federal mandate to provide comprehensive services as well as education to families often sets Head Start apart from other childcare and preschool programs. In Ms. Drew’s estimation, the plethora of services that Head Start is able to offer or refer families to both differentiates the organization from competing centers, and is a vital aspect of Head Start’s educational mission: “[You] don’t always find nutrition and health services in other schools or programs... some schools don’t even have social workers. So much work goes into addressing children’s education: [it also includes] emotional and social development.” She goes on later to say that, “education is more than just educating 3 and 4 year olds, [it is] educating everybody. [Head Start] is there to support and educate the entire family, even outside of the early childhood spectrum.” Similarly, Ms. Vasquez describes Head Start in this way:

We teach them- it’s a preschool program, and we also build lots of different social skills in addition to teaching them their letters and numbers and things like that, gross motor, fine motor skills. And then we have our social-emotional, social and health components, where we have those Family Service Workers able to offer those families different things depending on their needs.

Both Ms. Drew and Ms. Vasquez understand Head Start’s role to be to provide a variety of different resources to children and their families in order to prepare children for kindergarten. Head Start’s mission thus necessarily situates the organization as a community collaborative. In striving to provide children and families with the educational, social, and physical supports needed for children to later succeed in kindergarten, Head Start establishes a vast network of organizational ties which work together to support families. In this way, Head Start is seen as being set apart from other educational institutions by enforcing that multiple needs be addressed within the setting of a preschool program.

Conclusion

In Lorain County, Head Start has formed a variety of organizational ties or partnerships with local service providers and preschool programs. In this way, Head Start can be seen as a community collaborative because it pulls together a variety of community organizations in order to address the needs of low-income children and their families. Head Start's partnerships, which are facilitated by Family Service Workers, allow the program to offer numerous services to eligible residents, including health and dental care, mental health services, and developmental screenings. The program's partnerships also allow the organization to continue to offer services in a community which lacks access to widely available public transportation.

Chapter 2 - The Wheels on the Bus (Don't) Go 'Round and 'Round: Head Start's Troubles with Transportation

Introduction: The Lack of Public Transportation in Lorain County

A lack of transportation options in Lorain County presents a hidden cost of Head Start services for parents and families and impedes the organization's ability to serve the county's low-income population. When operational, Lorain County Transit had 12 fixed routes and a dial-a-ride service which served around 40,000 people each month. The transit system was funded through sales taxes which contributed to all county operations (Farkas 2010). Unfortunately, today there are limited public transportation options in most of the county, and some areas have no access to public transportation at all. After county tax receipts plummeted during the Great Recession, and following a rejected sales tax increase in November of 2010, county commissioners stated that public transportation operation costs were too high to continue to provide buses to residents. Later in 2010, Lorain County Transit eliminated public bus routes throughout the county (Farkas 2010).

The absence of public transportation in the county most severely impacts low income residents who also do not have access to personal vehicles. On average, owning a car costs about \$8,500 per year. This constitutes more than half of the yearly income of a one- or two-person household (Marvar 2010). However, riding a bus twice a day five days a week costs closer to \$1,000 per year. In Lorain County, which has a poverty rate of between 12% and 27%, there is a significant portion of residents that cannot afford to own a vehicle and which would benefit from a system of public transportation to get to work or to seek employment (Marvar 2010). Indeed, 20% of residents walk to work because they don't have access to a vehicle (LCCAA Annual Report 2016). Although scholars have noted the particular importance of accessible public

transportation for low income communities (Serulle & Cirillo 2016, Sanchez 2008), public transportation is not usually considered to be a welfare program. However, Lorain County program administrators understand the lack of transportation in the county to be a barrier to receiving services for many clients. Melissa Fischer, director of Help Me Grow in Lorain County, a state-funded organization which links parents of children with developmental delays and disabilities with services, explains, “For some of the more impoverished families, we hear concern about transportation because it’s very limited in the county.” The lack of public transportation in Lorain County most heavily impacts people living in poverty, and limits their ability to access services such as Head Start.

Lorain County Providers Circumventing Lack of Public Transportation

In order to address the lack of public transportation in the county, Lorain County service providers bring their services to clients’ homes. Although all Head Start programs offer home-based Early Head Start services for families, in Lorain County, these services allow both LCCAA and families to navigate the county’s lack of public transportation. Ms. Vasquez says, “we have a home-base program that works with the families that are maybe farther out or don’t want their child to come to the center. They’ll go to the homes and work with those children.” Furthermore, Jenn Keathley of Oberlin Kids says that one family in Oberlin is receiving home-based Head Start services, which is especially interesting given the fact that the Head Start center based in Oberlin was closed in 2014 due to low enrollments. Home-based programs allow parents without access to reliable transportation, as well as parents who are unable to send their child to preschool for a variety of other reasons, to still benefit from the resources and services provided by Head Start.

Other service providers in the county have implemented home-based service provision within their organization in response to the needs of the community. OhioGuideStone, a state-wide mental health services provider with locations in Lorain County, offers home-based counseling and other services to clients. Heidi Corso, supervisor of GuideStone services in Lorain County says:

One really cool thing is... most of our programs go to the families' house. So we'll go to the daycare. We have the option to provide services in our office, but the majority of clients are served either in the home or in the community. So I think that that's a really huge impact to our clients because transportation doesn't become an issue.

GuideStone, like Head Start, provides clients with mental health services in their homes so that transportation is not a barrier to receiving care.

Similarly, Help Me Grow, an agency which provides interventions and therapy for children with developmental disabilities and/or delays, operates a home-visiting program which serves families across the county. Ms. Fischer says, "there's about 130 families being served in the home-visiting program. And generally we have an ongoing caseload of about 275 for the early intervention. That would be kids with a delay or disability." Just as GuideStone and Head Start work to provide home-based services to clients, Help Me Grow offers a home-visiting program to serve children with developmental delays or disabilities in Lorain County. In direct response to the lack of public transportation options in Lorain County, providers such as GuideStone and Help Me Grow offer services in clients' homes. Service providers have responded to the county's lack of transportation by circumventing clients' need for transportation altogether.

Head Start and Transportation

Transportation presents a hidden cost for the otherwise free services provided by Head Start programs in Lorain County. These costs are particularly significant in a county with few to no public transportation options. Lorain County Community Action Agency (LCCAA), the organization which is the direct grantee for Head Start programs in the area, discontinued bussing options for families due to budget constraints. According to Head Start director Shauna Matelski, Head Start was forced to relinquish these services in 2009, just one year before Lorain County eliminated its public bus system. When asked about the biggest concerns of Lorain County parents, Ms. Vasquez responded:

Transportation. We no longer offer transportation. We used to do that, but because of the budget and the amount- the cost- we are no longer able to provide that but a lot of families- that's what they're looking for. Who can transport their preschooler to wherever it is they need to be? So if that family is working, 'Can you come pick up my child and then bring them back home?' And we can't do that.

Echoing Ms. Vasquez, Ms. Bellmorepierce of Ready, Set, Go says, "I think transportation is always an issue for our families," and Ms. Dodge of the Childcare Resource Center says, "We run into things like transportation being an issue." Although it is a distinct need for parents in Lorain County, especially those that are working, Head Start is no longer able to offer transportation for children. This lack of transportation is compounded by the fact that many families cannot afford a car and relied on public transportation, which is now unavailable (Marvar 2010). Even though Head Start is free for low-income families, the transportation of children to and from centers presents a substantial barrier for families in Lorain County, where neither Head Start nor the county is able to provide transportation services.

Partnerships Fueled by Transportation Needs

With no other available public options to allow parents to transport children to Head Start centers in Lorain County, LCCAA turned to partnerships to continue to be able to serve children across the county. Head Start centers throughout the country form partnerships with other community organizations, including private day care centers, public school systems, and social service providers. Private childcare center-Head Start partnerships, such as the one between Horizon Childcare Centers and LCCAA Head Start centers in Lorain County, place Head Start classrooms in childcare centers. These partnerships provide families with access to Head Start programs and services in their neighborhoods, and to the long term care that benefits working families. Partnerships have allowed Lorain County Head Start to withstand the challenges presented both by the cessation of public transportation in the county and of the organization's own transportation services.

Lorain County Head Start programs were forced to reevaluate their original model of service provision due to the unavailability of transportation in the area. As David Smith, director of Horizon puts it, Head Start was originally operating under a "mega-center model" in which the organization operated a few large centers in Elyria, Lorain, and a now-closed center in Oberlin to which children were bussed from all across the county. This model was rendered obsolete when LCCAA relinquished its transportation services:

They discontinued their transportation, and so when they went to that model, you know, they basically had the mega-center model, you know, where you had a big center in Lorain, a big center in - I believe it was - Oberlin, and a big center in Elyria. And then what you do is you basically bus everybody in to these big centers... and when they decided to go away from transportation, they really needed to be able to... put programs in communities close to the people that were being served.

According to Mr. Smith, Head Start was forced to reevaluate its method of service provision in response to cuts to the organization's transportation budget. Similarly, when asked why eligible

Lorain County families might not choose Head Start, Ms. Bartlebaugh, Head Start's Education and Disabilities Specialist, says that some eligible parents might not choose Head Start because they might "not have a location nearby. We don't provide transportation, so this is a challenge." A "mega-center model" was ineffective in a county with little to no public transportation. Inadequate access to transportation in Lorain County encouraged Head Start to shift its mode of service provision to emphasizing and utilizing partnerships with other preschool programs.

According to Ms. Matelski, Head Start was spurred to engage in partnerships after the organization lost its transportation services in 2009. LCCAA began to form partnerships in order to be able to continue to provide services across the county to families without access to reliable transportation. Connections with preschool providers across the county allowed Head Start to continue to serve families in the area, while placing the burden of transportation on other providers; both Horizon Child Care Centers and Lorain County's public school systems provide transportation for students to and from school. Mr. Smith states that transportation is one of Lorain County parents' largest concerns when it comes to finding and accessing child care, and that his organization, and now Head Start through their partnership, is equipped to meet parents' needs surrounding transportation:

Oh yeah, I think that a big thing is transportation. Transportation is very important. And we have a fleet of buses that we transport kids all over the place with, school-age as well as preschool. 3 of our sites, we actually provide transportation from the house to the preschool program because it's a need- a real heavy need in those communities.'

Horizon recognizes the lack of transportation in Lorain County as a barrier for a number of families, and has responded to this need by offering children transportation between home and Horizon centers. Through their partnership, Head Start and Horizon are able to provide families with transportation in order to continue to offer Head Start services across the county. By forming partnerships with private and state-run preschool programs in Lorain County such as

Horizon Child Care Centers, Head Start circumvented its own and the county's transportation deficits and managed to continue to provide services to families across the county. Head Start's organizational ties to Horizon in particular allow the organization to continue to reach community members without access to reliable private or public transportation.

Conclusion

In response to dwindling options for transportation in Lorain County due to the elimination of public busses and Head Start busses due to budget constraints, Head Start both continued to offer home-based programming, and forged partnerships with other childcare centers such as Horizon in order to continue to reach families across the county. In a similar manner, service providers throughout Lorain County offer clients services in their homes so that transportation does not become a barrier to receiving resources and care. The partnership model has allowed Head Start to weather the blows both of the elimination of county-wide transportation and the bussing provided by LCCAA, and to continue to serve families in Lorain County. Head Start's partnerships also work to allow collaboration among professionals in early childhood care and education, a field which is increasingly focused on academic standards and which seeks to distance itself from the concept of "daycare."

Chapter 3 - “Not Just Watching Kids”: Is Preschool is the New First Grade?

Introduction

Trends suggest that daycare is becoming obsolete as increasing academic requirements for kindergarten impose stricter educational standards on preschool instruction. My interviews with preschool and Head Start administrators reveal that a growing stigma against the concept of daycare as unprofessional and not educational has, in part, pushed an emphasis on academics and kindergarten preparation on preschool programs. Although scholars have noted an increased focus on academics during the kindergarten years, tightening standards imposed on preschool instruction have received less attention.

The Language of Stigma Against Daycare

Daycare is portrayed as an outdated institution which fails to account for the necessity to educate as well as care for children. My interviews reveal a growing stigma against the concept of “daycare” as unprofessional and an inadequate means of addressing the needs of parents and communities. When I mistakenly called his organization’s centers, “daycare centers,” Horizon director Mr. Smith corrected me: “Well we prefer to be called education centers or early childhood centers or something of that- because daycare’s really got a negative connotation. Childcare’s a better word.” Later in the conversation, when I faltered over the proper term for the centers again, Mr. Smith said, “You can call them education centers, that’s OK. Just don’t call them daycare. *Laughs.* That’s the scarlet word for them. Don’t say daycare... you know or babysitting or watching kids, you know, those things are very unprofessional.” Mr. Smith’s comments show that the concept of daycare has come to be associated with more casual arrangements like babysitting or merely watching children, and that “daycare” is a shameful

word due to this reputation; Mr. Smith worked throughout the interview to distance himself from this shame. By adjusting the way in which I described Horizon's centers, Mr. Smith is able to disrupt the potential perception of his centers as "unprofessional."

Debbie Marvin, a long-time administrator at Oberlin Early Childhood Center, also finds daycare to be a pejorative and ill-fitting term for the center she oversees. According to Ms. Marvin, both "daycare" and "childcare" carry a negative connotation which is linked to recent efforts to educate children at younger ages:

Throughout the whole country, basically, when you talk about childcare, that's such a stigma nowadays because it's more than childcare. A lot of centers are now becoming education centers where... you're looking further and further to education at younger ages. So, sometimes I think childcare is a stigma when you hear that, or daycare center, because we're more than that. Lots of centers are much more than that because of what you provide, what you're giving your children, what the teachers are learning, what we're learning as a center ourselves and with new licensing rules. So I think there's a stigma applied to those names 'childcare' and 'daycare center.'

Ms. Marvin asserts like Mr. Smith that childcare and daycare have become stigmatized concepts. Through listing the reasons that OECC is "more than" daycare - the services provided, training made available to teachers, meeting licensing requirements - Ms. Marvin also is distancing her work from that of daycares which "just watch kids."

Additionally, Ms. Marvin notes that there are increasing pushes to educate children at younger ages. Because of the growing necessity to educate young kids, centers like OECC and Horizon find that "daycare" is a stigma associated with programs that lack an educational component. While addressing the idea that daycare has begun to carry a negative connotation, Ms. Marvin also shows that OECC and other centers have been motivated to take a more learning-centered approach, so as not to be negatively perceived by the public.

Increasing Preschool Standards

Recently, scholars have noted the increasing academic standards in kindergarten classrooms (Bassok, Latham, and Rorem 2016). However, this trend of growing academic focus also extends to preschool curricula. In line with the increasingly negative connotations associated with daycare, over time, preschool has become increasingly driven by academic standards, emphasis on evaluation, and informed by the necessity of preparing children for kindergarten. Ms. Marvin, who has been in the early care and education field for decades, expands upon the idea that education is being emphasized for younger children: “So when we’re looking at what’s happening here at the center now, it’s all about children’s growth, social skills, and education because that’s where the future’s leaning towards- more and more education as children are getting younger.” Ms. Marvin notes that there is a growing emphasis on skill building for young children which was not present or mainstream in previous decades. Increasingly, it is expected that young children receive an educational component to their preschool experiences, and that young children are not merely being “watched” by adults. This move towards preschool and childcare as an educational endeavor blasts traditional conceptions of daycare as inadequate and unprofessional. If daycare is a “scarlet word” linked to casual childcare arrangements, childcare providers like Ms. Marvin and Mr. Smith must push away these associations to be taken seriously.

Embracing trends towards education for younger and younger children distances centers like OECC and Horizon from the stigma of daycare. Not only are trends in the education field foisting more academic work and educational standards upon kindergartners, but preschool and childcare is also becoming increasingly educational in order to remain legitimate. Although it is widely accepted and discussed that kindergarten is “the new first grade” in that children are

being taught skills such as literacy at younger and younger ages, not enough attention is paid to the increasing strict academic standards that children are being forced to meet in preschool; these trends paint daycare as an inadequate means of caring for young children.

The Importance of Kindergarten Preparation

In part, educational standards in preschool classrooms and curricula are growing in order to keep pace with increasing standards for kindergarten students. The necessity to ready children for kindergarten classrooms that increasingly emphasize skill gain and academic work increases the role of kindergarten preparation in preschool and childcare classrooms. Overwhelmingly, the preschool program administrators I interviewed emphasized the importance of kindergarten preparation in their programs. Ms. Vasquez says the goal of Head Start, in addition to providing families with services that will enable them to be self-sufficient “is also to work towards school readiness, getting [the children] prepared to go to kindergarten.” Ms. Bartlebaugh says that Head Start’s role consists mainly of “making sure children are ready for kindergarten” and “preparing children for kindergarten success.” Central to the mission of Head Start in Lorain County is to prepare its preschoolers to attend kindergarten in the future. Similarly, Mr. Smith of Horizon Education Centers says that, in addition to providing parents with access to preschool programming which allows them to work, “...there’s the education piece, which is basically, you know, let’s get the kids ready for kindergarten.” As kindergarten becomes more rigorous and academically focused, preschool administrators and centers find readying young children to enter kindergarten more central to the mission of their organizations. An increased emphasis on kindergarten readiness both coincides with and stems from stricter academic standards in both preschool and kindergarten.

The Role of (Perceived) Public Ignorance

Despite the fact that preschool standards are rising, as is the necessity to prepare young children for kindergarten, many preschool program administrators perceive Lorain County parents to be unaware of the important role high quality preschool education can have in preparing their children for kindergarten. My interviewees both felt pigeonholed into a stigmatized notion of childcare as simply “watching kids” while parents are at work, and felt that parents and community members did not understand the growing need to educate young children through childcare and preschool programs. Administrators understand the public both to assume that their programs are merely “daycare” and to assign stigma based on this assumption, and to fail to understand the educational importance of the work of childcare and education centers.

Jennifer Dodge of the Childcare Resource Center perceives parental ignorance of the importance of early childhood education to be a roadblock for parents in selecting high quality programs. She notes: “...I think that... is also them not understanding early care and education. I think a lot of them just assume it’s babysitting and they’re just looking for a babysitter so they can go to work. So I think that sometimes can also be a barrier.” Ms. Dodge understands parents to be “just looking for a babysitter” when they look to select childcare for their children, without understanding that childcare centers increasingly strive to provide education as well as care.

However, although she emphasizes the educational component of childcare, just as she characterizes parents as only looking for casual childcare arrangements to allow them to obtain and keep employment, Ms. Dodge also sees childcare as a work assistance program for parents:

People don’t think about that. They think it’s just babysitting... they also don’t think about how it’s, it’s a way for people to work. If you need a community to be strong, you need those folks to be able to pay taxes and buy homes and to be a part of that community, and early care and education actually provides that because if you’re a parent, you’re not gonna just leave your kids at home.

Although she understands many parents to be merely looking for babysitting and not understanding the importance of preparing children academically, Ms. Dodge also sees a little understood benefit of childcare being work assistance for parents. In Ms. Dodge's estimation, parents do not properly understand childcare to be educationally beneficial to their children, but also fail to grasp that childcare allows parents to work and contribute to community wellbeing, even though they are looking for childcare to allow them to work.

Similarly, Ms. Marvin from OECC also finds that parents are unaware of what she sees as a recent shift from daycare programs to education programs. According to Ms. Marvin, "...I think that needs to be addressed more and more to the public, that we're not just a drop-off center for you to leave your child. We're much more than that." Ms. Marvin echoes Ms. Dodge's belief that parents often do not understand the important role that childcare and preschool programs hold in providing children with academic preparation as well as care. Mr. Smith of Horizon also believes that, although his centers are successfully preparing children for kindergarten by academic measures, many parents do not understand this facet of Horizon's work. He states:

A lot of parents don't even know what that stuff is [measures of early educational success], you know, when you talk to them about it. But, the fact of the matter is, we have a great track record as far as on standardized kindergarten entry tests and those types of things. Our kids are scoring on the top end.

Many preschool and childcare program administrators understand parents and community members to be unaware of the growing importance of childcare and preschool in preparing children to excel academically in kindergarten. However, there is also a discrepancy between preschool administrators' emphasis of their programs' role as a work assistance program, and their portrayal of parents as ignorantly seeking babysitting so that they can work. Both preschool

administrators and the parents they describe understand childcare as a work assistance program that benefits and builds community strength and wellbeing.

High Head Start Standards: Head Start Sets Itself Apart

From its founding, Head Start has held its teachers and grantees to high standards of quality, including measures of educational success and teacher preparation. The program was founded with the intention of preparing low-income children for success in school (Administration for Children and Families 2016). More recently, a revision to Head Start's Performance Standards in 2016 calls for strengthened curriculum requirements, implementation of evidence-based and individualized professional development activities for teachers, the systematic use of valid child assessment data by teachers, and an expansion of Head Start hours to serve all children for a full school day and full school year by 2021 (Administration for Children and Families 2016). In line with these high standards, administrators at Head Start stressed to me that Head Start is not a childcare or daycare program. Ms. Vasquez elaborates by saying, "Head Start stands out more from daycare centers because we offer in addition to- well it's not day care, a lot of people are looking for just that... it's not just daycare, we're not just putting them all in a big gym and playing some games, or watching movies." Similarly, Ms. Drew characterizes Head Start as "not a childcare program." In comparison to other programs out there, Head Start is portrayed by Ms. Drew as "heavily regulated [in order] to be accountable to children, families, and the community." Ms. Drew also states that, because preschool programming can be a "very competitive" field, "everything we do is to meet or exceed guidelines, [and] be of high quality." In order to set itself apart from other preschools in the county, which may or may not have educational components, Head Start is characterized by its

administrators as striving for high quality education, not just care, for children. In line with increasing educational standards in preschool and a general stigma towards daycare as unprofessional, Head Start brands itself as “more than just daycare” by emphasizing the importance of academic regulations to the integrity and success of the program.

Conclusion

Preschool program administrators emphasize the growing role of education and academic preparation in preschool programming, a trend which is in part due to the increasingly stigmatized status of daycare and the necessity of preparing children to attend more and more academically-oriented kindergartens. Although more academic pressure is being placed on preschool students, teachers, and administrators, parents are often perceived as viewing preschool and childcare as merely an institution which allows them to work. In keeping with these demands, Head Start is a leader in providing high-quality, standards-driven preschool education to children, and, through preparing children for kindergarten and by driving up standards at other preschool centers with which it has partnerships, has kept pace with the growing demands of standards for preschool instruction.

Conclusion

Head Start remains a successful welfare program despite the weakness of the United States' welfare state, which spends significantly less money on social services than other, similar nations. Since the 1960s, Head Start has provided high-quality, highly regulated preschool programming for low-income children, as well as providing their families with access to other service providers through extensive networks of organizational ties. Children who attend Head Start programs have been shown to fare better academically and socially in subsequent years of schooling when compared to children who did not attend the program. Despite its status as a welfare program, Head Start has managed to persist due to its embeddedness in communities through its partnerships with service providers and other preschool programs, its strong academic focus which mirrors trends away from daycare and towards kindergarten preparation in the preschool years, and its ability to adapt to community-specific issues, such as the lack of transportation in Lorain County. Head Start continues to serve low-income children and their families despite the general lack of support for other welfare programs in the United States.

Future research might investigate more thoroughly how parents choose preschool programs for their children, as I was unable to recruit many parents as interviewees. Parental choice may be an important factor in Head Start's persistence in communities such as Lorain County. As many of my interviewees revealed, transportation and accessibility are important factors in clients' decision and ability to seek out resources and services in Lorain County; many service providers, such as Help Me Grow and OhioGuideStone, provide in-home services so that transportation does not become an issue for clients. It is reasonable to assume that access to reliable transportation for their children to and from preschool programs is an important factor in parental choice of childcare. Perhaps Head Start's ability to provide more local services through

partnerships with other centers impacts parents' decision to choose the program for their children, and therefore impacts Head Start's persistence.

In addition, future research on welfare should seek to understand the relationship between welfare services and public transportation. My research shows that the ability of parents to access Head Start programs for their children is determined by the availability of public transportation in the community, and by the ability of Head Start to provide its own transportation. In addition, the service providers I interviewed understood transportation as a vital issue for their clients, and seek to remove barriers linked to transportation by providing home-based services. Although the availability of public transportation within low-income communities is an important determinant of who can access welfare services and how accessible these services are, public transportation is not often conceptualized as a welfare service. Scholars and social service providers alike should understand the importance of transportation in determining clients' ability to access welfare services such as Head Start, and, in addition, understand the consequences of eliminating transportation options for low-income residents in communities such as Lorain County.

Policy Recommendations

In this last section, I want to feature the policy recommendations that many of my interviewees offered me in order to recognize that they are experts in their fields and know the inner workings of early childhood education and care better than I do. Their ideas come from years of experience living and working in Lorain County, and they are therefore more qualified to offer recommendations than a college student who has lived here for less than 4 years.

A number of my interviewees had suggestions for better connecting Lorain County residents with available resources. Ms. Vasquez recommends that organizations use text messaging services and social media to connect families with community resources. Similarly, Ms. Keathley recommends that, in order to make residents more aware of resources in the community, organizations utilize more inclusive forms of communication because “not everybody gets emails or not everybody reads the newspaper.” Ms. Bartlebaugh recommends that the United Way, a service provider with locations in Lorain County, move to a more central location in the county in order to ensure that resources are available to all residents. Ms. Drew recommends that service providers use nontraditional planning and outreach in order to reach more people. She points to the fact that the “Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services has late hours on Tuesdays and Thursday for families that work or have kids to access services outside of the traditional workday.” Ms. Drew thinks that other community organizations could offer alternative hours for families that might otherwise miss out on services at offices that close at 5 pm. Making residents aware of the resources available to them and increasing their ability to access those resources was a concern of many of my interviewees.

My interviewees also brought up policy recommendations surrounding funding for early childhood education and care. Ms. Bellmorepieerse recommends that the state assist programs so

that they are able to both be affordable and high-quality; she understands childcare affordability to be a nationwide issue, which is often exacerbated by state requirements for programs, such as having only bachelor-degreed teachers, which makes providing care more expensive for centers, and therefore, makes care more expensive for families. Ms. Dodge recommends that federal and state governments prioritize funding early care and education in order to lower costs for families and providers. Similarly, Mr. Smith recommends that the state government offer childcare subsidies to families with incomes up to 200% of the poverty level; currently, Ohio subsidizes childcare for families with incomes up to 130% of the federal poverty line, which means that many families do not have access to high quality childcare because they do not meet the requirements to receive subsidies and cannot afford care. Mr. Smith also recommends that state funding for childcare centers be in line with the quality of centers. Currently, some centers choose to remain unrated under Ohio's childcare rating system, but still receive funding from the government. These centers remain unrated because the requirements that come with a rating involve providing costly services, such as more training for staff; Mr. Smith says that it is cheaper for centers to be unrated, even though this means they are providing families with lower-quality care. Recognizing that cost is a barrier to many parents seeking childcare, my interviewees offered many suggestions for addressing this issue.

In addition to the broader recommendations put forth by other interviewees, Principal Alig of Eastwood made a policy recommendation specific to her program. Principal Alig recommends that the Early Childhood Education program grant that Eastwood and other preschool programs receive, which provides subsidies for programs to provide spots for students living in poverty, be expanded. Currently, the grant only applies to four year-olds. However, Principal Alig does not think this grant is effective in small towns like Oberlin: "There are empty

spots in the program because there aren't enough four year-olds in the town- the spots could be filled by three year-olds, but they don't qualify." Principal Alig thinks the grant would make more of an impact if it targeted both three and four year-olds.

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Appendix A: Interviewee Table

Name	Title, Agency
Susan Alig	Principal , Eastwood Elementary School
Jennifer Bartlebaugh	Education and Disabilities Specialist , Head Start
Nicolle Bellmorepieerse	Coordinator , Ready, Set, Go... to Kindergarten!
Heidi Corso	Supervisor , OhioGuideStone
Jennifer Dodge	Executive Director , Child Care Resource Center
Stefanie Drew	Family, Health, & Community Services Specialist , Head Start
Melissa Fischer	Director , Help Me Grow
Jeni Hoover	Director , Kendal at Oberlin
Jenn Keathley	Coordinator , Oberlin Kids
Debbie Marvin	Assistant Director , Oberlin Early Childhood Center
Shauna Matelski	Director , Head Start
Amanda Schmidt	parent
David Smith	Executive Director , Horizon Education Centers
Maria Vasquez	Family, Health, & Community Services Supervisor , Head Start
Vanessa White	parent

*All interviewees agreed to be quoted using their full names.

Appendix B: Demographics Table

	Lorain County	Ohio	United States
Population Density (per sq mile)	617.3	283.3	87.4
Total Population	303,152	11,575,977	323,127,513
- % White	85.31	82.4	77.1
- % Black	8.37	12.2	13.3
- % Asian	1	1.87	5.6
- % Latino/Hispanic	9	3.38	17.6
% of Population Under 5 Years Old	5.3	6.01	6.2
Median Household Income	\$52,457	\$49,429	\$53,889
% Families Living Below Poverty Line	10.9	11.54	10.4
% Under 18 Population Living Below Poverty Line	22.74	22.8	21
% White Below Poverty Line	10.45	12.6	9
% Black Below Poverty Line	36.74	34.16	24
% Latino/Hispanic Below Poverty Line	26.75	28.12	21
Unemployment Rate (Over 16)	5.56	5.17	4.5
% Over 25 Population Without High School Diploma	10.89	10.87	11.6

*data: Social Explorer, UScensus.gov, kff.org, Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Center for Children in Poverty

Appendix C: Recruitment Flyers

Eastwood Preschool Parents: I would love to interview you!



My name is Leah, and I am an America Reads Tutor for Mrs. Jackson's morning preschool class. I am also a student at Oberlin College, where I'm doing a project about how and why parents in Lorain County choose certain preschool programs for their kids.

Please contact me if you are interested in participating in a brief interview (about 15-30 min) for my project! Thanks!

Appendix D: Interview Questions

Parents:

Intro:

1. Tell me about your child or children. How many kids do you have and what are their ages?

Main Questions:

1. Tell me a little bit about the child care and/or preschool programs that your children attend(ed).
 - a. Do you like the program?
 - b. What do you like/dislike about it?
 - c. Would you change anything about the program?
 - d. Have you considered switching your child to a different program?
2. How did you choose this/these program(s)?
 - a. How did you hear about the program?
 - b. Did you know other parents using the program?
 - c. Describe your decision-making process: what factors went into your choice of this particular program? Was (meals provided/location/cost/length of program/etc.) a factor in your decision?
3. What other programs did you consider?
 - a. Did you consider a Head Start program? Why or why not?
 - b. What do you know about Head Start?
 - c. Why did you ultimately not choose these other programs?
4. What are the biggest challenges you face while having a child in preschool?
 - a. Is (transportation/cost/meals provided/cost/length/etc.) a barrier?

End:

5. Is there anything else I should know?
6. Do you have any questions for me?
7. One last question: Do you have the names/contact info of any parents that would be willing to talk to me?

Head Start Administrators:

Intro:

1. Tell me a little bit about your program or organization.
 - a. How many families/children do you serve?
 - b. Where are you located and which areas do you serve?
 - c. What are your goals or objectives? How successful are you at meeting these objectives?

Main Questions:

2. How do parents find your program or organization?
 - a. How do parents hear about your program?
 - b. Are parents referred to your program by community members or other agencies?
 - c. Is your program targeted at a specific demographic? How well does it serve this demographic?
3. How do parents choose preschool/daycare programs in Lorain County?
 - a. What factors are you aware of that go into parents' decision making process?
 - b. How do parents make the decision to enroll in your program or other programs?
 - c. Do parents ultimately not choose your program because of cost/transportation/services provided or not provided/etc.?
 - i. Does Head Start have competitors?
4. What are the concerns of Lorain County parents?
 - a. What barriers do parents with preschool children face?
 - b. Are the needs of Lorain County parents being met?
 - c. What could be done to better address the concerns of parents and families?
5. What role does your program or organization play in the community of which it is apart?
 - a. What is the reputation of your program?
 - b. Does your program receive support from community members or other local organizations?
 - c. What kind of impact does your program have on the community?

Closing:

6. Is there anything else I should know?
7. Do you have any questions for me?
8. One last question: Do you have the names/contact info of any parents or administrators that would be willing to talk to me?

Preschool Program Administrators/Directors:

Intro:

1. Tell me a little bit about your program or organization.
 - a. How many families/children do you serve?
 - b. Where are you located and which areas do you serve?
 - c. What are your goals or objectives? What are some of the successes you've had in meeting these objectives? What are some of the challenges you've faced?
 - d. How are you funded? Does the way in which you're funded impact your program or the services you provide in any way?

Main Questions:

2. How do parents find your program or organization?
 - a. What are the different ways in which parents hear about your program?
 - b. Are parents referred to your program by community members or other agencies?
 - c. Is your program targeted at a specific demographic? If so, what are some of the successes you've had in serving this demographic? What are some of the challenges you've faced?
3. How do parents choose preschool/daycare programs in Lorain County?
 - a. What factors are you aware of that go into parents' decision making process?
 - b. How do parents make the decision to enroll in your program or other programs?
 - c. Do parents ultimately not choose your program because of cost/transportation/services provided or not provided/etc.?
 - d. How do parents find Head Start programs?
4. What are the concerns of Lorain County parents?
 - a. What challenges do parents with preschool children face, if any?
 - b. What are the needs of Lorain County parents that you feel are being met? What needs are not being met?
 - c. What could be done to better address the concerns of parents and families?
5. What role does your program or organization play in the community of which it is apart?
 - a. How do parents and community members view your program?
 - b. In what ways does your program receive support from community members? In what ways could the community provide more support?
 - c. What kind of impact does your program have on the lives of families in Lorain County? In what ways could it have a bigger impact?

Closing:

6. Is there anything else I should know?
7. Do you have any questions for me?
8. One last question: Do you have the names/contact info of any parents that would be willing to talk to me?