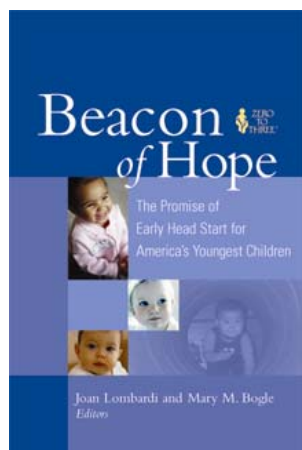


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Beacon of Hope

The Promise of Early Head Start for America's Youngest Children

Edited by Joan Lombardi and Mary M. Bogle



Since 1995, Early Head Start (EHS) has grown from 68 to more than 700 programs nationwide serving more than 62,000 children and securing the program's reputation as a beacon of hope for the nation's low-income families with infants and toddlers. According to a comprehensive five-year national evaluation of EHS, children who participated in the program

- Scored higher on standardized measures of cognitive and language development,
- Exhibit greater engagement with their parents during play, and
- Are less likely to engage in aggressive behavior than children who did not participate.

Additionally, parents who participated in EHS

- Are more emotionally supportive and less detached,
- Are more likely to read to their child every day,
- Report spanking their children less frequently, and
- Are more likely to seek out education and job-training activities than parents who did not participate in the program.

This volume provides a glimpse into the successes, the challenges, and the potential of EHS.

The book's 11 chapters are written by Early Head Start program experts, members of the national evaluation team, and policy analysts. The first section of the book describes the history and current structure of Early Head Start and analyzes the factors underlying the program's documented successes. The second section examines the core components of the program, highlighting strategies to provide services to pregnant women; insure high-quality child care for infants and toddlers; reach out to fathers and teen parents; meet the mental health needs of children and families; and effectively include children with special needs. The final section addresses emerging policy issues, including the need for increased federal and state investments to expand the program and ensure its continuing improvement.

Continued

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The Promise of Early Head Start for America's Youngest Children

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About the Editors

Joan Lombardi, PhD, is one of the nation's leading experts on early childhood education. She is the director of The Children's Project, a non-partisan effort to improve public, private and civic investments in children and families. Through The Children's Project, she serves as an advisor to a number of national organizations and foundations across the country and helps create partnerships that support children and families. In 2001, working with several national and state organizations, she launched the *Better Baby Care Campaign* to help improve the quality of infant care in the United States.

Dr. Lombardi has served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for External Affairs in the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and she served as the first Associate Commissioner of the Child Care Bureau. She also served as the staff director of the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Head Start Quality and Expansion and was the primary author of the committee's landmark report, *Creating a 21st Century Head Start*.

Dr. Lombardi is the author of *Time to Care: Redesigning Child Care to Promote Education, Support Families and Build Communities*.

Mary M. Bogle is the president of Bogle Consulting, which provides community-based organizations and foundations with expertise and assistance in the areas of organizational development, nonprofit sustainability, community building, and the healthy development of children from infancy through adolescence. She is also the Strategic Coordinator for the Annie E. Casey Foundation's initiative to improve the economic well-being of families and nonprofit capacity in several high-poverty neighborhoods in the District of Columbia.

Ms. Bogle was a Program Specialist for the Head Start Bureau and served as the Federal Project Officer for the Comprehensive Child Development Program. As a member of the federal design team for the Early Head Start program, she co-authored the program's founding document, *The Statement of the Advisory Committee on Services for Families with Infants and Toddlers*.

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