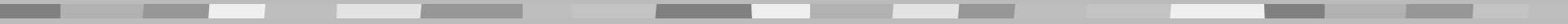


# All Together Now: State Experiences Using Community-based Child Care to Provide Pre-kindergarten



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# Presentation Overview

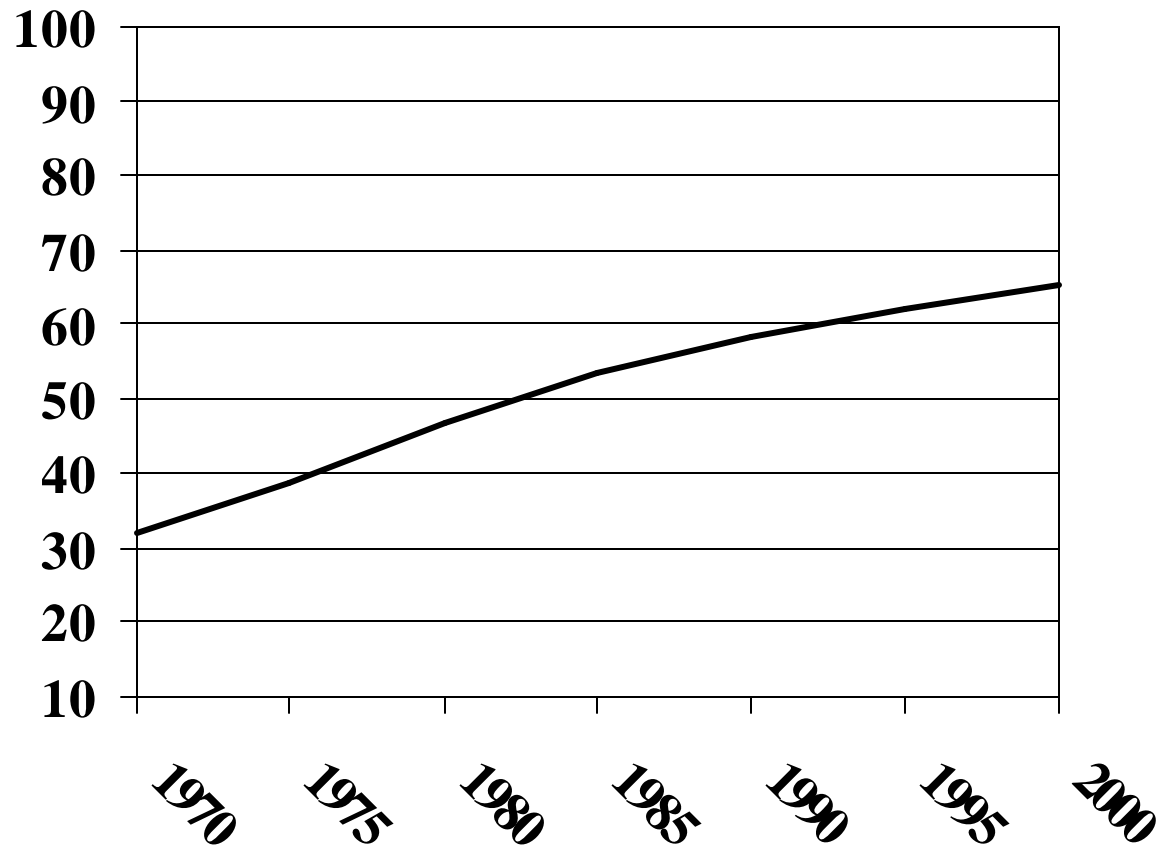
- Goals and methodology of the CLASP study of state pre-k policies
- Preliminary summary of key questions and findings from CLASP study
- Implications

# Focus of the Study

- States offering pre-k in a variety of settings, including schools AND
  - community-based child care settings, including for- and non-profit child care centers and family child care homes,
  - Head Start programs, and
  - other community organizations.
- Our research focused on pre-k in community-based child care settings.

# Why Important?

Labor Force Participation Rate of Mothers with Children under Age 6, 1970-2000



Source: U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means. (2004). *2004 Green Book*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

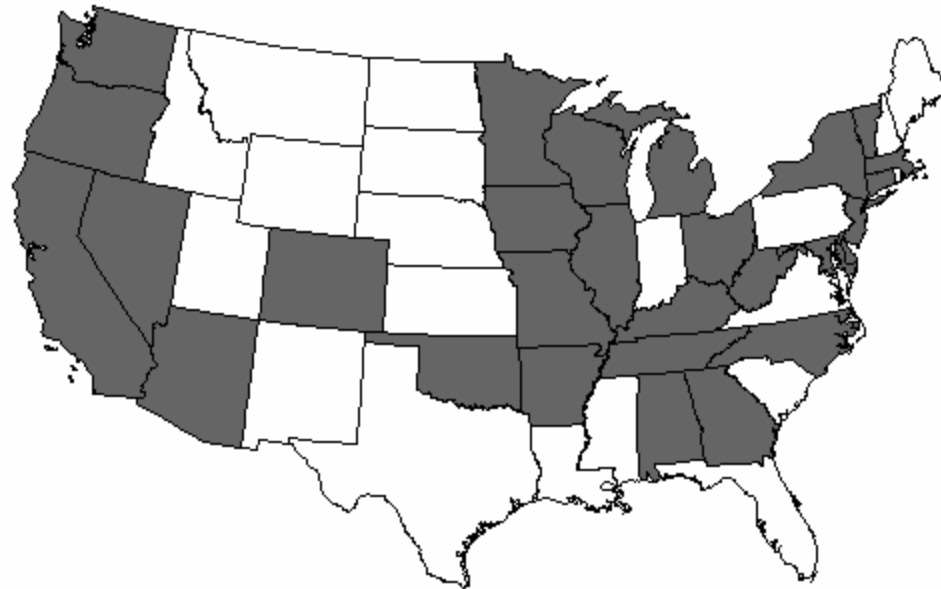
# Why Important?

- Majority of 3 – 5 year-old children with employed mothers are in non-parental care over 15 hours/week
  - 45% at least 35 hours/week
- Integration of pre-k into community-based settings has the potential to address needs of working families and improve the quality of child care, although challenges remain.

# Methodology

- States were selected according to four criteria:
  1. The state has a pre-k program that is separate from other state initiatives. (Where states had state-funded Head Start supplements or expansion funds, we only include those that were also considered the state pre-k program.)
  2. The pre-k program is delivered in community-based child care settings, not just in the public schools.
  3. The pre-k program serves three- and/or four-year-olds.
  4. The pre-k program differs from child care requirements in at least one the following for participating providers:
    - pre-k program standards;
    - pre-k teacher education and qualification standards;
    - pre-k monitoring and evaluation requirements beyond child care licensing rules or self-reporting.
- Data were collected from in-depth reviews of state websites, legislative history, published documents, and interviews with state pre-k administrators.

# States with Community-based Pre-K



Some states report more than half of pre-k children in community-based settings, for example, DE, GA, NC, NJ, and NY.

# Key Questions

- Do states allow or require inclusion of community-based child care?
- Who decides which community-based child care providers can participate?
- Who hires the teachers?
- Does pre-k pay for a full work day?
- Are program and teacher standards the same regardless of setting?
- What supports help community-based child care providers meet standards?
- How are rates set and funds melded?
- Do states link governance of pre-k to child care?
- Is the program collecting setting-specific information on program quality and child outcomes?

# Do States Allow or Require Inclusion of Community-based Child Care?

- Require that a certain percentage of pre-k programs operate in community-based child care settings.
- Allow community-based providers to participate, without requiring that a specified percentage be allowed.
- Establish a separate program that contracts with community-based child care programs to provide pre-k.

# Who Decides Which Community-based Child Care Providers Can Participate?

- Funds flow directly from the state agency to community-based providers.
- The local school decides whether to include local providers with required input from the community.
- Individual school districts have the authority to subcontract with community-based providers.
- Local community councils or boards administer funds and set policy to determine whether and how local providers participate.

# Who Hires the Teachers?

- The school district hires the teacher to provide the pre-k part of the day in the community-based setting.
- The community-based provider hires the teacher.

# Does Pre-k Pay for a Full Work Day?

- The pre-kindergarten program is funded for up to 10 hours, at least for some families.
- The state coordinates policies across funding streams to provide pre-k services during the hours families are working.
- State policies encourage programs to address the full-day, full-year needs of families through coordination, but do not require or fund these activities.

# Are Program and Teacher Standards the Same Regardless of Setting?

- All programs—including community-based child care and schools—are required to meet the same program standards as soon as they begin to receive pre-k funds.
- Programs are allowed a grace period to comply with specific standards.
- Different standards are in place for some settings.
- Local communities establish their own standards, with no requirement that they be the same across settings.

# What Supports Help Community-based Child Care Providers Meet Standards?

- Provide start-up funds.
- Provide funds for professional development.
- Require that salaries be the same across settings.
- Create monitoring systems combined with proactive state-level technical assistance.
- Provide funds for supplies or curriculum materials.
- Provide supports to help programs become accredited.
- Allow pre-k funds to help adapt facilities.

# How Are Rates Set and Funds Melded?

- Funding set by state agency uniformly per child or per classroom.
- Funding set by a central agency based on auspice and other criteria.
- Funding rate set by negotiation with each eligible contracted provider, either at the state or local level.
  
- Some state child care assistance policies allow programs to receive both pre-k and child care subsidy funds for the pre-k portion of the day.
- Some states place limitations on how providers can combine pre-k and child care subsidy funds.

# Do States Link Governance of Pre-k to Child Care?

- State-level coordination is required.
- Informal state-level coordination occurs, but there is no statutory requirement.

# Is the Program Collecting Setting-Specific Information on Program Quality and Child Outcomes?

- State evaluations include some information about program quality or child outcomes, but do not compare across settings.
- State evaluations can be used to look across settings at child outcomes.
- Local evaluations are being used to look at child outcomes.

# Research Implications

- What state approaches do the most to strengthen quality and standards for participating child care providers and others?
- What is the impact on quality of participating and non-participating child care settings, and experiences of children in those settings?
- What are parent preferences and what are the best ways to support choice of setting and length of program?
- Does this approach result in pre-k policies more responsive to working families? What are the best practices and policies to do so?

# Policy Implications

- Pre-kindergarten in community-based settings has potential to bridge the dual missions of providing quality early education with the needs of working families.
- We found both encouraging policies and missed opportunities.
- To strengthen the approach, there is need for:
  - adequate funding,
  - state and federal policy choices that include and strengthen community-based providers, and
  - state access to technical assistance to do this and to learn from each other.