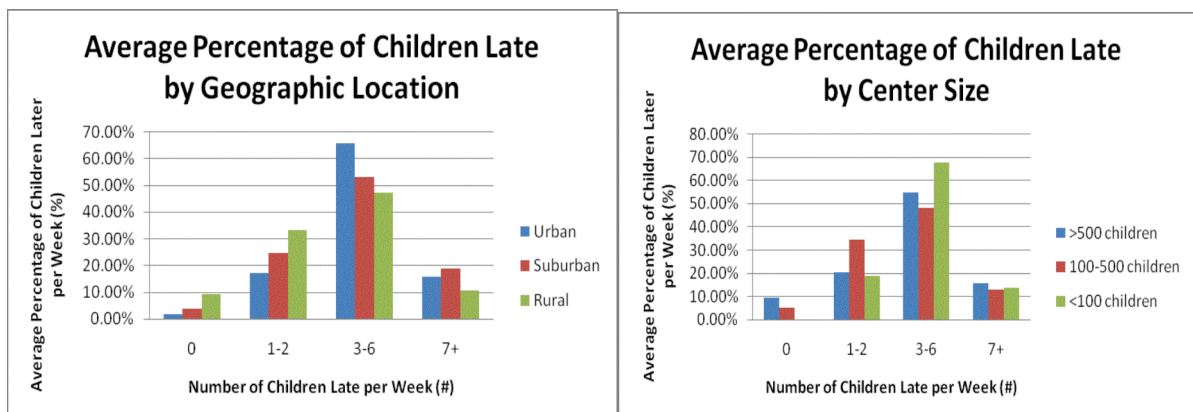


SUMMARY REPORT ON PUNCTUALITY SURVEY
An underappreciated parent involvement issue
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Learning and Leadership in Families (LLF), in partnership with the National Head Start Association (NHSA), disseminated a national parent involvement survey on punctuality in Head Start in March 2009. Children’s punctuality is a behavior which parents control and on which preschools and schools depend. The behavior has significant ramification for the development of children’s work habits, attitudes and academic progress in preschool and beyond. Three findings stand out:

- **Tardiness is under-recognized and widespread.** Teachers’ reports of the number of different children tardy during an average week contradict the low key (slightly less than 3 on a scale of 1- to 5 response to the general statement “Punctuality is a problem in my program / classroom.” Yet whether charted by urban, suburban, or rural location, or by agency size (more than 500, 101-500, fewer than 100, the number of different children tardy in an average week is substantial. More than 50% reported 3-6 different children late in an average week, and more than 10% reported 7 or more. Head Start classes are limited to 18 children per classroom.



- **Punctuality is associated with parent behaviors and responses to parents.** Virtually all respondents rated parents as the most significant influence on children’s punctuality. Directors and family service identified tardiness as an influence on teacher attitudes about parent at a higher rate than did the teachers themselves.
- **Punctuality practices focus on penalties.** Family Services staff manage most interventions related to punctuality. Ten per cent of respondents indicate incentives encourage punctuality. Ninety percent of respondents use varying levels of penalty oriented interventions.

This data raises new questions, adds new dimension to the understanding of tardiness as an influence within Head Start, and suggests this rarely discussed issue merits further exploration. New thinking and new parent-child strategies are needed to educate families about the significance of punctuality to children’s academic success, to improve interactions between parents and preschool, and to instill important work habits in children.