PROMOTING A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY: A PILOT INVENTORY OF EDUCATION-RELATED FEDERAL PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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Today, there is renewed and welcome interest in meeting the educational needs of children and youth in a coherent and coordinated fashion. Moreover, policymakers are finally beginning to catch on to what the research, not to mention common sense, has long made clear: learning does not begin at the school-house door or end when the bell rings. It begins at birth and continues in school and after the school day and year are over. Our schools have helped many disadvantaged children beat the odds stacked against them. But they could do even more with some help. And the same is true of distressed families and communities, whose strengthened capacity to educate their children will strengthen the productivity of our schools, which will further strengthen families and communities. And by working together in a coherent and coordinated fashion, all these educational institutions can strengthen the nation's children and our democracy itself.

This report presents the rationale for adopting a more comprehensive approach to education reform, the role an inventory of federal programs can play in this effort, and the findings from a pilot inventory of education-related federal programs for children and youth. The inventory, which is at the heart of this work, illustrates the best and the worst of federal investments focused on improving educational outcomes for children and youth-- particularly those from disadvantaged families and communities. The pilot clearly shows the many ways that federal programs are seeking to support our young people, and it also highlights the clear and pervasive fragmentation in the system, which often prevents resources from being used to their greatest effect.

The report is organized into four sections. Section I provides the background and rationale for this work; Section II focuses on the inventory, what it includes and how it can be used; Section III details the findings from the inventory; Section IV includes some suggestions and

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recommendation to strengthen this work and transform the pilot into a full-fledged project; and Section V provides some concluding thoughts. Appendix A, at the end of the report, includes a detailed key for using the worksheets that contain the information in the pilot inventory. The inventory itself can be downloaded from the Cross & Joftus website at www.edstrategies.net.

I.   BACKGROUND[1]

Since the passage of the historic 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which marks the beginning of the modern federal role in education, achievement gaps have narrowed substantially. It has been a stunning, hard-won and fitfully realized accomplishment. Yet youngsters' educational outcomes still differ so markedly by class, race, and ethnicity that it is grimly apparent that our nation has a long way to go to achieve equal educational opportunity and that accelerating progress towards that goal is a civic, economic, and social imperative.

The contentious question is how to do so. The dominant assumption of American educational policy is that schools, by themselves, can fully overcome the impact of social and economic disadvantage on children's development into thriving citizens. This assumption is now so deeply ingrained that it is worth noting that it is of relatively recent vintage. Although it can be traced to the original enactment of ESEA, which was launched alongside the Lyndon Johnson administration's War on Poverty, education was but one of the many key fronts in that war. The idea that schools alone could eradicate poverty and produce a "great society" was unthinkable.

In keeping with the belief that opening up the pursuit of the American dream to Americans who had been deprived of that opportunity required not only improving under-resourced schools but also strengthening distressed families and communities, virtually every federal agency, including the Department of Defense, was engaged in the war on poverty. Ironically, the Office of Education, which had been a small, freestanding sub-agency prior to its 1953 incorporation into the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare that President Dwight Eisenhower enacted that year, was among the least programmatically involved. Although ESEA increased federal funding for elementary and secondary education from practically nothing to a then substantial

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[1] Among the sources this discussion benefited from were Christopher T. Cross, Political Education: National Policy Comes of Age, NY: Teachers College Press, 2004; Gareth Davies, See Government Grow: Education Politics from Johnson to Reagan, Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007; and David K. Cohen and Susan L. Moffitt, The Ordeal of Equality: Did Federal Regulation Fix the Schools?, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009 (read by this author in manuscript form).

$1.2 billion dollars, 80 percent of which was intended for poor children, the Office of Education was not expected to craft and implement programs but, rather, to administer funding streams to assist states and school districts to mount their own responses to the new national interest in equalizing educational opportunity. The idea that the federal government should or could prescribe school improvements was even more unthinkable than the notion that schools by themselves could eradicate poverty – and not only because the Constitution vested responsibility for public schooling with the states, but also because the idea was politically untenable and practically unfeasible.

Obviously, both the federal role in education and the assumptions underlying it have changed substantially since 1965. Although this transformation is the result of the profound social, economic, and cultural changes our nation has experienced over almost a half century -- not to mention the altered political dynamics of the federal capital -- they are also the product of both our successes and failures in improving disadvantaged children's educational outcomes. The great extent to which achievement gaps had closed by the mid 1980s –about one-third to one-half reduction – strengthened the popular belief in the capacity of schools to greatly improve outcomes for children and youth.[2] Yet higher expectations and stalled progress thereafter, broken up by fits-and-starts improvements, fostered the conviction that schools were not doing all they could or should.

By the late 1990s, these confluent streams were surging into the most recent reauthorization of ESEA. The result was the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which perpetuated and gave further credence to the assumption that schools could fully mitigate the impact of low socioeconomic status on students' achievement and that schools were also the chief cause of poor performance. With the long delay in the reauthorization of ESEA, we are now in the midst of a debate about the federal role in education and its underlying assumptions that is as overdue as it is fierce.

Yet, the fact that there is a debate at all is rather perplexing. First, since at least 2000, there has been a broad scientific consensus that "virtually every aspect of early human development, from the brain's evolving circuitry to the child's capacity for empathy, is affected by the environments

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[2] See, for example, *NAEP 2004 Trends in Academic Progress: Three Decades of Student Performance in Reading and Mathematics,* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Wash., DC: 2005.

and experiences that are encountered in a cumulative fashion, beginning in the prenatal period and extending throughout the early childhood years."[3] When those environments are disadvantaged – when the child lacks proper nutrition and health care, is raised in stressed families that cannot provide emotional support and intellectual stimulation, to name a few examples – the likelihood of that child thriving in school is diminished. As James Heckman, a Nobel Prize economist, wrote, "Life cycle skill formation is a dynamic process in which early inputs strongly affect the productivity of later inputs [especially schools].[4] Put another way, "education" does not begin or end at the schoolhouse door, and the "education" that children receive before they enter school significantly affects their success after they go through that door.

Second, the evidence does not support the view that the substantial gap closing that had occurred by the mid-1980s was entirely the result of schools, though schools did indeed contribute. Great uncertainty remains about the relative contributions of families, communities and schools to closing that gap – and the interactions among them; the only certainty is that families, communities and schools are the three bedrock educational institutions that shape youngsters' educational and adult outcomes.[5]

Third, despite the ongoing debate about whether or not schools alone can level the education playing field, the federal government has long been engaged in a schools-plus approach. Indeed, as our pilot inventory strongly indicates, almost every federal agency now contains some program – and, often, a number of overlapping ones – directed at one or another key component of children's educational development, starting at conception. Yet, as our still unrealized goal of equal educational opportunity suggests, those parts are not adding up to a coherent and effective response to the needs of children.

Exactly 20 years ago, the children's services scholar and practitioner Sid Gardner, who has worked in every level of government, as well as in the private sector, throughout his legendary

[3] Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah A. Phillips, eds., *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development,* National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, Wash., DC: National Academy Press, 2000.
[4] "Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children," *Science*, vol. 312, June 30, 2006, pp. 1900-1902, p. 1900 and 1901.
[5] David W. Grissmer et al, *Student Achievement and the Changing American Family,* Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1994 and Katherine Magnuson and Jane Waldfogel, eds., *Steady Gains and Stalled Progress: Inequality and the Black-White Test Score Gap,* NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008.

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career, wrote a seminal article entitled "Failure by Fragmentation." Gardner painted a grim picture of the effects of service fragmentation on the lives of youngsters and their families and made a compelling case for the need to coordinate those services and the benefits, as well as the difficulties, of doing so. Judging from tales told by powerful leaders of even the most successful community partnerships, accessing and coordinating the services necessary to meet the educational needs of youngsters in a comprehensive and sustained fashion is even more difficult than ever. This is hardly surprising; there are even more federal programs and, thus, state and local ones, to coordinate.

In that same article, Gardner wrote that accountability for results is crucial and that it requires taking an inventory of children and youth services, which "is a scary thing."[6] The federal government, for better and worse, has made states and localities increasingly accountable for the results of its children and youth policies and programs. Yet, it has neglected to apply the lesson to itself and examine whether its actions, however inadvertently, may themselves be constraining the capacity of state and local governments and grass-roots providers to produce better outcomes for youngsters. It is time to take inventory.

II.   THE PILOT INVENTORY

Producing an inventory of education and education-related programs across all the executive agencies of the federal government is a daunting task. Inventory-like projects have been produced a few times before, by both governmental and other groups, and have taken considerable time and personnel. To the best of our knowledge, however, the nature and scope of our inventory are unprecedented. This is not to say that our ambition was fully realized; far from it. But it is to say that it has been sufficiently realized to provide a template, as well as a test product, that can be further refined and expanded into what we believe could be a powerful, ongoing tool for improving the effectiveness of federal efforts to improve outcomes for children – and, by virtue of the federal government's strong influence on them, state and local efforts, as well.

Our inventory can be distinguished from similar efforts in a number of key ways. First, the decisions we made about which programs to include were guided by the research on the environmental influence on children's educational development – to use a shorthand, family,

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[6] "Failure by Fragmentation," *California Tomorrow*, Fall 1989, pp. 18-25, p. 25.

community and school. In contrast, other child- and youth-oriented inventories have either had a special focus or included all major programs that directly or indirectly provide federal funds or services to children and/or youth. While there is considerable overlap between the programs uncovered by the latter approach and our own – and we, too, include spending, in the form of appropriation levels -- our lens makes it possible to more precisely examine the nature of federal support for child and youth development.

Second, in keeping with our developmental perspective, our inventory offers a more finely grained categorization of programs than has been produced before.[7] Typically, federal programs have been "chunked" into one of the following categories: Education and Training (which are sometimes separated out); Health; Housing; Income Support; Nutrition; and Social Services (sometimes termed Child Welfare). Some have included tax programs (e.g., dependent exemption), the single largest category of federal spending on children, in Income Supports, others have put them in a separate category, while some have excluded them altogether.

The dominant categorization system is tidy and useful. However, it also tends to obscure important information about programs or force some arbitrary and sometimes misleading categorizations. We break down many of these prevalent categories in a way that provides a clearer picture of an individual program's purposes. For example, do early care and/or education programs belong in Education or Social Services? Forced to select between one or the other, different compilations have chosen differently. In contrast, we treat early care and/or education as a separate category and can also show, for example, if a particular program includes health and/or other services. (Further details on our classifications are provided below.)

Of course, to avoid an analytically unwieldy proliferation of categories, we, too, do some "chunking." Still, given that classifying often complex programs inevitably entails some simplification, our inventory nonetheless breaks new ground in providing a fuller, "at a glance"

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[7] One could legitimately argue that the classifications used by the White House Task Force on Disadvantaged Youth (2003) were even more finely grained. There would be equally solid grounds for arguing that programs were assigned so many categories that classification often obscured more than it illuminated about the programs' main purposes. It is easy to understand why. The programs were multiply categorized according to almost every allowable purpose mentioned in the federal laws that created those programs. Although this was faithful to the letter of the laws, as well as being instructive, it also produced an overly generous view of the needs being addressed by these programs. See www.ncfy.com/publications/whreport.htm.

understanding of the nature of a wide variety of education and education-related federal programs.

Third, recognizing that this pilot could not include every federal agency, our inventory provides the most comprehensive contemporary snapshot of the scope and structure of federal programs related to children's educational development, including information about the congressional committees and executive agencies that control them, that is presently available. Moreover, by assembling this data on Excel spreadsheets, the inventory allows interested parties to interact with the information and analyze it further. There are a few compilations of child- and youth-related federal programs that permit user interaction through web-placed data bases, which is clearly superior to navigating Excel and a direction we hope to pursue. However, none of them is as comprehensive or as detailed as the one we have assembled.

Consequently, our pilot inventory is akin to an initial, important experiment whose highly instructive, if incomplete, execution and results confirm the desirability and feasibility of realizing the project's full aspirations: promoting an ongoing inventory of federal programs related to children's educational development that permits navigation across and within those numerous programs, as well as the myriad executive agencies and legislative committees that control them. We believe that not only would such a tool enable routinely examining the extent to which the sum of the parts of the federal role in education, writ large, adds up to a coherent and rational response to the needs of our future citizens and the national interest in educational excellence and equity; it could also serve as a means by which policymakers and others interested in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of federal efforts had the information necessary to do so.

Information Sources for the Inventory

The 2008 program information displayed in the inventory spreadsheets comes from the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA); executive agency web sites; the online version of the First Focus publication Children's Budget 2008 (ChildrensBudget.org); the premier guide to federal grants, grants.gov (through the search at
http://www.grants.gov/applicants/find_grant_opportunities.jsp.); and congressional committee web sites. The results of the latter search necessitated making mostly futile phone calls to the

committees to fill in missing information, reaching out, more successfully, to some personal contacts, and stitching together various written materials.

We learned a great deal from our experience using these sources including:

- Agency web sites differ markedly in the amount of critical program information they provide and in how easy they make accessing it, especially for persons who may not be familiar with any given agency. None of these sites provides additional information about individual programs that are part of a multi-program funding stream listed in CFDA. In fact, CFDA is typically the better tool for discerning that a program has multiple programs within it than the relevant agency's web site is.

- With the exception of appropriations committees, identifying the congressional committees that have jurisdiction over these programs is a surprisingly difficult task. As the Library of Congress confirms, there is no single source that provides this information.[8]

- The Rules of the Senate and the Rules of the House, respectively, indicate the jurisdictions of standing committees by subject area, for obvious reasons. But subject area often provides only general clues for determining which committees have jurisdiction over which programs. Even when the subject provides a clear guide, it sometimes turns out that programs under the same law fall under different congressional jurisdictions. For example, most of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act is under the House Education and Labor Committee. But the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant, which is also part of that Act, is under the House Judiciary Committee. In the Senate, the Act is all under the Judiciary Committee.

- Most congressional websites have a Jurisdiction tab, but some make finding the information a test of ingenuity. In both cases, the tabs often yield no more than a reproduction or summary of the jurisdictional information in the Rules documents. Trying to discover under which House and Senate subcommittees the programs fall is an even more challenging task.

- Discovering which congressional committees and subcommittees have jurisdiction over what federal programs is a game that cannot be easily played without the help of a small army of

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[8] Personal communication, Sept. 23, 2009, from law@loc.gov, Public Services Division, Law Library of Congress, Library of Congress.

insiders to various programs or a powerful command post of one's own. It is easy to understand why congressional websites are largely oriented toward present legislative proceedings and hot-button issues. But the premium on public relations comes at the price of public information.

Scope of the Inventory

The summary inventory and basic analyses cover seven agencies: the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, as well as the Corporation for National and Community Service and the National Science Foundation. Each of these agencies may also be examined individually on separate spreadsheets.

We also conducted a program search in an additional seven agencies -- the Departments of Homeland Security, Interior, Labor, Transportation, Treasury, and Veterans Affairs, as well as the Environmental Protection Agency – and display the selected programs and program information on agency-specific spreadsheets. However, while the programs in the first set of agency spreadsheets are all categorized, time did not permit doing so with all the programs in the second set. For the same reason, while the programs in the second set are all related to children and youth, they did not all get the second review given to programs in the first set to see if they met our more specialized criterion. Although we deliberately erred on the side of inclusion rather than exclusion in deciding which programs ultimately made it into the summary inventory, the lack of opportunity to more fully review and categorize the programs in the second set of agencies argued for excluding those agencies from the inventory for now.

Our pilot inventory nonetheless includes a total of 363 project-relevant, federal programs in operation in 2008.[9] However, the exactness of this number and some of the others we will present is only relatively meaningful, since, as CRS and others have observed, closely related programs can be grouped together or described separately. An inventory focused on spending, for example, would yield a much smaller number of programs because it would consolidate the constituent parts of a program. But because our focus was on programs – all the relevant ones, and all the relevant programs under them – our number is large.

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[9] This number would likely increase with an even more extensive search to uncover all the frequently shifting individual programs that comprise some nominally single federal programs. The important thing to notes is that our summary numbers are highly serviceable for heuristic purposes, but should not be given an air of precision that they lack.

Appendix A, at the end of this report, provides detailed information on how to use the Excel sheets that house the data for this inventory.

III.   PRELIMINARY RESULTS AND OBSERVATIONS

Before we present our preliminary findings, it is useful to note that the fact that the seven-agency pilot inventory contains 363 programs is by itself a finding. Even if we excluded all the 2008 programs we highlighted whose inclusion is debatable, as well as the programs on the chopping block for 2009, that number would not diminish appreciably. Further, even allowing for the fact that the pilot includes programs in the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services, the two main agencies in which federal education-related programs are housed, 363 is still a sizable number. We do not mean to suggest in any way that having a large number of federal programs is a problem in and of itself. Clearly, significant needs are now being addressed that were neglected in the past. The question is, *how* are they being addressed and with what impact on the capacity of practitioners who deliver those services to children and their families to do so coherently and effectively?

A few years ago, Gardner updated his 1989 article, "Failure by Fragmentation." Its focus, like the original article, was on the local level, and its title was "Still Fragmented, After All These Years."[10] Even in its pilot state, our inventory reveals that the fragmented nature of education-related federal policymaking and programs is a key cause of this ongoing lament.

Findings

The good news is that federal programs cover just about every key aspect of youngsters' education development. The bad news is that they do not reflect or promote a rational and comprehensive approach to the federal interest in achieving successful adult outcomes for children. With the necessarily repeated proviso that any summary numbers presented here only describe general tendencies among seven agencies and must therefore be treated with great caution, we present preliminary findings and observations below**.**

> *Overarching Findings*
> - **Some programs' purposes are so broad and diffuse that it is difficult to characterize them**. At this stage of the inventory, this is especially, though by no means

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[10] http://www.cffutures.org/files/publications/Frag%20II.pdf.

predominantly, characteristic of one agency. Grab-bag programs can promote flexibility, but they may also foster the pursuit of an ever-shifting array of "reforms du jour.

- **The majority of programs appear to be focused more on intervention than on prevention of any given problem.**

- **Using even a generous standard for classifying programs under the category of Comprehensive/Coordinated netted only 84 such programs.**

- **There is little demonstration of a continuum of care across programs.** Although the frequently overlapping age or education-level groupings of most programs would seem to indicate a continuum or alignment of services, the program descriptions do not support this inference. Moreover, few programs make any provision for issues related to transitioning out of one kind of service or level of schooling to another.

- **Most programs provide benefits for children through families.** The 176 programs that involve children from 0-18 ("all" in the Child Age/Education Level heading of the inventory) are typically ones that provide their benefits or services to children indirectly, through their families.

- In keeping with the federal role in equity**, the target or emphasis of the great majority (139) of included programs is poor children or their families.** The next greatest number of programs (72) do not restrict their benefits/services (General), followed by 71 programs targeted on Special Risks, 22 focused on Disability and 17 targeted by Race and/or Ethnicity. There are 10 or fewer programs in each of the other Child Target Population categories, respectively. We repeat the warning not to confuse number of programs with relative federal spending levels. While there is good justification for each of these targets, it is also easy to see that many of these "categories" of children overlap considerably**.** We also know that this does not necessarily mean that children who fall into one or more of the relevant categories are receiving all the relevant services. Indeed, we know from research, not to mention the often great difference between the funding level of a given program relative to the number of youngsters eligible for that program, that most programs fall well short of serving all eligible children. Federal programs and

their targeted populations may have proliferated, but funds are thinly spread among most programs.

- Not including each legislative chamber's Appropriations committee, **the federal laws that originated the programs in the inventory are under the jurisdiction of a total of seven Senate committees and eight House committees,** combined in 13 different ways. Time did not permit us to unearth the House and Senate authorizing committees for one-third of the included programs, so we cannot say at this point if this web of congressional jurisdictions is even more intricate. And, of course, our missing subcommittee information is also necessary to complete the picture.

Agency Findings

- **The Department of Health and Human Services had the greatest number of relevant programs** (140), which is not surprising, given its multiple purposes, followed by the Department of Education (114). The Departments of Housing and Urban Development (38), Agriculture ((34), and Justice (28) accounted for the great majority of remaining programs, and the others were distributed between the National Science Foundation (7) and the Corporation for National and Community Service (2).

- **There appears to be an obvious rationale for where most of these programs are housed.** However, many of the programs across diverse agencies are targeted on the same or closely related problem. The great variation in how they define that problem, in their requirements and in how they direct their funds, is likely one of the major reasons why we are both duplicating services for children and their families, failing to serve them altogether or putting them in a bind about which service they receive; it certainly helps to explain the piecemeal or fragmented nature of many services.

- **A handful of programs are coordinated across two or more agencies,** and we uncovered a few more in the agencies that we surveyed that are not yet part of the pilot inventory. It would be useful to examine how these agencies work together and particularly interesting to examine how the programs they coordinate "trickle down" to the state and local levels compared to a similar set of separately administered ones.

- **In most cases, there is an obvious or semi-obvious fit between a program and the specialized office in which it is administered within a given agency.** Yet often, programs with similar or overlapping purposes and services are administered by different offices. Although our project did not include uncovering program coordination mechanisms within agencies, neither the research nor our experience suggests that they are routine. Fragmentation is apparent within, as well as across, agencies.

Program Focus Findings

- **Relatively few programs (23) focus exclusively or primarily on the early care/education of very young children, and relatively few of these are directly focused on learning.**[11] Those that are, however, typically also encompass one or more indirect influences on learning, such as parent involvement or children's health, an approach whose effectiveness is unanimously supported by research.

- **The majority of programs represent indirect influences on children's learning** – by which we mean that they do not involve academic instruction – followed closely by Ed and/or Training programs. However, while there are 81 programs focused solely or primarily on Ed and/or Training, the 96 programs whose sole or primary focus falls into the former category are distributed among a variety of program types: Nutrition (18); Health (65); Mental Health/Socioemotional Development (9); and Counseling/Mentoring (4). Another 52 programs are unevenly divided between the Drugs and/or Alcohol and Violence/Safety categories. (Numbers do not add up to 363 in either the "simple" or "complete" chunking analysis because of the nature of those analyses, which is explained more fully on the inventory tab labeled Sheet Name and Sheet Description.) As our collapsing together of programs focused exclusively or primarily on Drugs and/or Alcohol or Violence/Safety suggests – and as is evident by looking at how similar some of the program categories we had to use are – the boundaries among some types of programs represent more a difference in degree than in kind.

- **Considering only formal school-age programs, we found only a literal handful of programs exclusively or primarily focused on after-school activities** (Ed and/or

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[11] This finding is corroborated, in spending rather than programmatic terms, by Jennifer Macomber et al, "Federal Expenditures on Infants and Toddlers in 2007," Wash., D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2009, http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=411875.

Training, Extension). Using a more generous standard brought the total to 12. Looking for any type of program that also had some after-school or summer component revealed 20 such programs.

IV.   REALIZING THE POTENTIAL OF THE PILOT

The last time something similar to our own inventory was produced was in 1999. Getting it to happen involved the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) and four powerful Senators (equally divided between Democrats and Republicans) asking the Congressional Research Service (CRS) to "compile a report outlining the provisions of major federal programs affecting children, youth and families."[12] Getting the report done involved more than three dozen CRS program experts working for more than a year, and even they were unable to find all the requested information. CRS's abstract from that report prominently stated that neither the full nor the condensed version of the report "will be updated in the near future."[13] Fully a decade later, CRS's promise remains in effect, and, until now, no one else has filled that void.[14]

Our pilot inventory offers more, and more detailed, information to answer this question than has been available in a long time, but a more complete and robust examination requires an even fuller inventory. As we were working on the pilot, we noted several important ways that our work could be improved on, should additional resources be available. These include:

- Plugging some of the holes (e.g., agency and office) that still remain in our initial data collection to ensure that consistent information is available for each entry.

- Categorizing information about relevant programs in the Departments of Homeland Security, Interior, Labor, Transportation, Treasury, and Veterans Affairs, and the

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[12] Letter from Senators James Jeffords, Dan Coats and Christopher Dodd to Daniel P. Mulhollan, Director, Congressional Research Service, November 12, 1997, in Federal Programs for Children & Families, A CRS Report for Congress, Special Report #15, IEL Policy Exchange, 2000, p. 214, http://www.iel.org/pubs/fedprogs.pdf. Senator Kennedy's corresponding letter, dated February 4, 1998, can be found on p. 216. IEL's 2000 report was a re-publication of the original, May 12, 1999, CRS report, Children and Their Families: Federal Programs and Tax Provisions, by Joe Richardson and Sharon House, Coordinators, Domestic Social Policy Division, CRS, The Library of Congress, RL30179. CRS works exclusively for Congress and does not typically make its reports publicly available. IEL's re-publication of the 1999 report was in the interest of doing so and was made possible by the cooperation of the Senators who requested the CRS report.
[13] http://www.iel.org/pubs/fedprogs.pdf., p. 7.
[14] A partial, and flawed, exception to this statement is the 2003 report of the White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth. See FN 7.

Environmental Protection Agency – information on these agencies was collected but not yet coded as part of the pilot.

- Reviewing programs in the Departments of Commerce, Defense, Energy and State to determine whether they had programs relevant to our inventory. There also are a host of other independent federal agencies that likely house programs related to the educational development of children and youth, such as the National Endowment for Humanities or the National Endowment for the Arts and many others. These too could be added to the inventory.

- Employing a methodology developed by The Urban Institute for First Focus that identifies the portion of a particular program's resources that is dedicated to children and youth. First Focus provides those percentages in *Children's Budget 2008.*[15]

- Adding information on congressional subcommittees to gain a fuller picture of who controls federal programs related to children and youth,

While making refinements and additions to the inventory will help improve its usability, there are also steps that the federal government can take to: (1) improve the usability of data on programs that serve children and youth; and (2) to facilitate better coordination of programs for this group. These could include:

- Encouraging the Office of Management and Budget to convene a task force to determine what barriers exist to effective collaboration and what incentives might be created. The task force should consist of state and local officials involved in the delivery of education, health, mental health, social services, and juvenile justice programs. Recommendations from the Task Force should be transmitted to the appropriate Congressional committees. As part of this effort OMB could Document and analyze past federal efforts at coordinating federal education-related programs for lessons about how this goal might be more successful achieved.

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[15] *Children's Budget 2008*, Wash.: DC, 2008. The 2009 edition was issued in the fall of this year and also includes these allocations. Online versions can be found at www.childrensbudget.org.

- Congress should task the Congressional Research Service, or the White House should designate a federal agency, to produce an annual report, using the main categories in this report, on newly enacted Federal legislation and how it affects other programs serving children and families.

- Coordinate the drafting of new regulations for programs with regulations for existing programs that serve the same or similar populations. One way to do this is when deliberating on new, education-related legislation. Congress could consider routinely asking the Congressional Research Service for an "environmental impact statement" to determine how the new proposal fits in with or otherwise affects existing, similar federal programs and their implementation. Such CRS reports should be publicly released and become part of the legislative deliberations process. If the new legislation is enacted, the CRS "environmental impact statement" should also be consulted during rule-making.

- Eliminating barriers in existing law and regulations on topics such as where services and programs are provided, to permit maximum coordination around children and family services.

- To maximize the coherent delivery of services at the school district and school level, Congress should coordinate, to the extent possible, the reauthorization of major federal education programs (e.g., ESEA, IDEA).

- In addition to its traditional program reviews, OMB should experiment with cross-boundary reviews of education programs, using the broader, 0-18 educational development framework now accepted by the scientific community.

V.   CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

As the historical references made in this report indicate, the fragmented nature of services for children and their families is not a new problem. Interest in this issue has waxed and waned over the decades, and so, too, have federal efforts to address the problem.[16] Some of these efforts have

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[16] Reviewing the literature on this topic was outside the scope of our project. However, one good example of the richness of this topic can be found in a 2005 CRS report, authored by Cheryl Vincent of the CRS Domestic Social Policy Division, that was only made publicly available, through WikiLeaks Document Release, on February 2, 2009 (http://wikileaks.org/wiki/CRS-RL32859): "The 'Superwaiver' Proposal and Service Integration: A History of

been comprehensive and have failed, whether for good or bad reasons. Some have involved cross- and within-agency reorganizations, for better and for worse. And some have involved, also for better and worse, granting states and local fund recipients more or less flexibility in their use of federal funds.

But the most common, and "successful," way the problem of fragmentation has been addressed is through the creation of a new "integrated" or "coordinated" program. Yet typically, and ironically, and irrespective of the merits of the new program, it is created and operates just like the vast majority of other programs: with barely a nod to the existence of related programs and its impact on them or on the capacity of the states and local providers that must implement the similar new program. Put another way, most of the efforts to integrate or coordinate programs end up creating new silos.

Policymakers' growing recognition that achieving positive educational outcomes for children requires a 0-18 developmental perspective is therefore a highly encouraging development. Yet there are also troubling signs at the federal level that, once again, the silo approach will be the predominant means for crafting a more comprehensive approach to meeting the educational needs of children.[17] It doesn't have to be that way. Between the creation of more silos and the kinds of efforts to integrate federal programs that either fly in the face of *homo politico's* nature or involve time- and energy-consuming – and often deck-chair rearranging – reorganizations, there are other ways. We can only hope that our pilot inventory spurs the kind of discussion and further analysis that will lead to those ways and, through them, a better future for our children and our nation.

Federal Initiatives. As the abstract states, "Much of the discussion in this report transcends the 'superwaiver' debate, and can be understood as an analysis of service integration as a long sought after policy objective."

[17] One telling example is the administration's proposed grants program inspired by the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ), which has a 0-18, family, community and school framework. The Promise Neighborhoods initiative, by appearances to date, is more focused on creating new programs than on fostering coordination across existing programs.

APPENDIX A: USING THE INVENTORY: A KEY TO THE SPREADSHEET HEADINGS

This appendix provides detailed information on how to read and utilize the excel spreadsheets that contain the data for this inventory. There are 19 headings across each of the agency inventories and across the summary inventory. Some of the headings require little explanation; others need and get more, including a discussion of our methods. Moreover, to inform the efforts of others who might undertake an inventory, we also comment on a few of the challenges involved in doing so.

CFDA #: Entries under this heading show the number the Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance gives the program, which is provided so that readers may verify and/or search for more program information.

Program Name: The full or abbreviated name of the program. Programs whose names appear in red or are otherwise highlighted are borderline selections. There are more and less rigorous ways to apply our research-based selection criteria. We attempted not only to strike a middle ground in working out our pilot, but also to indicate our most debatable program selections. Others may find more, and we ourselves did when we applied different stringency rules. We elaborate on this in a number of the sections below.

Alt Name: Notes the more familiar name by which some programs are known.

Agency: The federal agency in which the program is housed (e.g., Department of Justice).

Program Office: The name of the administrative unit in which the program is housed within an Agency. Many agencies' administrative units are like Russian nesting dolls: when you open the main office, you find there are many sub-offices within. We mostly listed the offices for the program entered in CFDA. However, our agency web-site reviews often revealed that behind that office was another organizational chart. Due to study limitation, we could not track down the particular office in which each of 363 programs might be lodged so most entries contain only CFDA information.

Our point in including Program Office was to make it possible to discern whether fragmentation of child and youth programs exists within, as well as among, agencies. For example, depending on one's definition of "major," the Department of Education has seven or more major separate offices that deal with elementary and secondary education, each focusing on one particularly salient characteristic of students, such as economic disadvantage, disability or limited English proficiency, or issue, such as innovation and improvement or career and technical education. Of course, merely knowing the number and focus of different federal offices reveals little about whether a particular organizational design for responding to the complexities of policy illustrates or abets dysfunctional fragmentation or productive specialization. However, with the additional information our inventory provides and some of the basic analysis it enables, we can gain some initial insights into a question that is vital for understanding the extent to which the structure of federal policymaking fosters or constrains the capacity of states, local districts and others to meet the needs of children coherently and effectively.

Main Program Category: The notations under this heading are a first-level categorization of a program's purpose according to its representation of a direct or indirect influence on educational development. This is also the criterion we used in considering agencies' child- and youth-related programs for inclusion in this project, so the listed programs are the ones that made that cut. The shorthand we used was AD (Academic Direct) and AI (Academic Indirect). To be able to indicate that a program's purpose involved both AD and AI and to show which of these predominated, we also use two combinations: AD + AI or AI + AD. For example, if the main focus of a federal after-school program, according to its program description, is on tutoring in math and reading but the program also includes a component involving children's social or emotional development or physical health, the program would be characterized as AD + AI.

The ground we claimed, in choosing how to categorize programs, is both practical and heuristic. We reviewed all the main program's separately listed program parts, as indicated in the CFDA, and based our selection and classification decision on the described purpose of the main program, unless there was a reason in the program description to make an exception, in which case we note it, or exclude that part altogether.

Program Note: The designations under this heading indicate the second, more descriptive level we developed to characterize a program's purposes. The categories are the end product of using key words found in a program's description to make a note about the main stated purposes of every child- and youth- related program listed in CFDA for the agencies we reviewed; disassembling the categories typically used in child- and youth- spending inventories (see discussion earlier in this report) into more precise parts, where warranted (Social Services is the prime example); comparing the two; comparing the results of the two activities; and then consolidating closely related categories to avoid over-categorizing to the point of dysfunctionality. We then tested our results for their applicability across agencies and made further modifications. The resulting main categories are listed in the chart below.

Program Note Main Categories
Comprehensive and/or Coordinated Services
Counseling/Mentoring
Drugs and/or Alcohol
Early Care/Education
Ed and/or Training
Emergency
Facilities
Family and/or Community
Health
Housing
Income Support
Mental Health/Socioemotional Development
Nutrition
Technology/Media
Violence/Safety

Although all of these categories are justified by the research on the environmental influences on children's educational development, Emergency, Facilities, and Technology/Media are, with varying degrees, weaker examples. Indeed, they did not become categories until the last empirical test that involved applying the working categories across agencies to see if further modifications were necessary in order to include reasonably relevant programs without misrepresenting their essential nature. We chose these final categories as they illustrate the feasibility and potential of using a cross-agency inventory to examine a looser variety of education-related federal programs.

A few additional points about these heading are necessary. First, to provide fuller but concise Program Note information, we also developed a stem system, which uses a plus mark (+) to link categories when a program describes more than one main purpose. Thus, if a program is aimed at preventing or overcoming drug and/or alcohol abuse among youth and also at preventing or reducing violent behavior, it is categorized as Drugs and/or Alcohol + Violence/Safety; the first purpose in the program description always goes first. Because programs are wont to describe multiple aims --itself a telling finding -- and for the sake of keeping the inventory wieldy, we limit the number of plusses we use. By the same token, when a program has a grab bag of allowable purposes that are not prioritized sufficiently for us to categorize it with any degree of accuracy, we use Miscellaneous (Misc.) as a stem (e.g., Ed and/or Training, Misc.).

Second, while we were successful in breaking down the typically used but lumpish category of Social Services, by handled the problem with the stem system. For example, a program aimed exclusively at one or another academic subject, which was a frequent case, is characterized as Ed and/or Training + Subject Specific. Inventory viewers can easily discover the specific subject in the program's description, which is provided under a different heading.

Third, a word about the Comprehensive and/or Coordinated Services and Family and/or Community categories, which we developed not only to avoid a proliferation of categories but also because of their relevance to our project. Like Miscellaneous, the Comprehensive and/or Coordinated Services category indicates that the program has multiple stated purposes. But unlike Miscellaneous, that category indicates that the program is intended to provide a set of complementary services and/or aims at the coordination of closely related services; other features of the inventory allow users to make this distinction and also see the range of intended services.

The Family and/or Community category indicates that the program affects children's educational development through its intended services for families or communities or both. For example, a program aimed at preventing family breakdown would be in that category, with additional stems, if appropriate. The category can also indicate that the program's main purpose is intended to be carried out outside the fund recipient's regular base of operation (e.g., schools, child-welfare offices, community-based health clinic), in which case the main purpose would be the lead category followed by a Family and/or Community stem. The latter case is distinct from Comprehensive and/or Coordinated Services because although the program involves a

partnership, the intended service is singular and is delivered by the "outside" entity. For example, if a program funds a community-based health clinic to provide services in that clinic, that program would be categorized as Health. If the program funded it to provide those services in a school, it would be categorized as Health + Family and/or Community. The inventory itself, unlike a brief written description, makes it obvious how this all works, but there are also good grounds for further unpacking these categories.

Child Target Population: The entries under this heading show the group of children and youth the program directly or indirectly targets by income level, race or ethnicity or some other factor. (The targeted age or education level of children encompassed by the program appears under a separate heading.)

We derived our categories empirically by looking at the targeting information in each of the hundreds of programs we reviewed. However, many programs are aimed at children with a highly specific risk factor, such as AIDS, for example. So, again, to avoid an unwieldy number of categories, we used Special Risks to designate the targets of those kinds. Elsewhere, the inventory provides specific information about the nature of those risks. Reasonable people may differ about our including runaway children in Special Risks but Migrant children in a separate category, for example, but should be assured that we were not editorializing. Rather than argue, however, they can use the information we provide in the inventory to construct their own categories.

The resulting main categories are:
- **Disability**
- **Foster/Adoption**
- **Gender**
- **General**
- **Homeless**
- **Immigrant/Refugee**
- **Limited English Proficient**
- **Migrant**
- **Other**
- **Poverty**
- **Race and/or Ethnicity**
- **Race and/or Ethnicity/native American**
- **Rural**
- **Special Risks**
- **Urban**

Some programs designate the intended beneficiaries by more than one criterion, which we show with our stem system. For example, Poverty + Rural indicates that a program targets poor children in rural areas. "Poverty" means that the program either restricts its benefits with a low-income criterion or emphasizes poverty in targeting, which is the routine way of defining such programs.

It is worth noting here that, although the great majority of the 363 programs in the seven-agency summary inventory are targeted on poverty, in one way or another, this is somewhat misleading. It is almost certain that a complete inventory would also reveal a *numerical* preponderance of poverty programs. However, this does not mean that the greatest share of federal spending on children and youth goes to poor youngsters. Tax programs, while greatly diminished in importance over the past 50 years (which is also true of income security programs) nonetheless remain the single largest category of federal spending on children and are predominantly directed at all children.[18] Tax programs, as well as some additional income security programs, are administered in agencies that are not yet included in this pilot.

Child Age/Education Level: Here we present the age or education level of the children and youth a program targets or encompasses. Since the research-identified environmental influences on children's educational development served as the conceptual framework for our project, our selection of relevant programs was restricted to those that involved youngsters from 0, which includes the prenatal period, to 18 years of age, excepting those engaged in postsecondary education and/or training. The additional justification for automatically excluding postsecondary programs, unless they were directed to youngsters within our purview, is that participation in this level of education or training is typically a key outcome measure of successful educational development. Coincidentally, the age/education-level span that resulted from our decision rules is identical to the one delimited by the great majority of projects focused on federal spending on children and youth.

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[18] Adam Carasso, C. Eugene Steuerle, Gillian Reynolds, Tracy Vericker, and Jennifer Macomber, *Kids' Share 2008: How Children Fare in the Federal Budget,* Wash., DC: Urban Institute and New America Foundation, n.d., pp. 15-16. Readers interested in more information about the changed pattern of federal spending on children over time would benefit from this and the 2007 report, as well as from Rebecca L. Clark, Rosalind Berkowitz King, Christopher Spiro and C. Eugene Steuerle, "Federal Expenditures on Children, 1960-1997," Assessing the New Federalism, Occasional Paper 45, Wash., DC: Urban Institute, 2000.

In order to understand as precisely as possible the extent to which, and how, federal programs deal with the various stages of children's educational development, our age/education level categories come directly from the information given in these programs. The result is not particularly tidy, but it is instructive.

The following list should be read with a few things in mind: (1) the elementary-school level (elem) includes kindergarten (K);[19] (2) secondary education (sec) includes the middle-school level; and (3) sec+ means some aspect of the program extends beyond our upper age/education level standard. Last but not least, while this list reflects the great majority of the age/education-level ranges represented by the programs we reviewed, additional permutations in those ranges are captured in the inventory; the few programs whose classification would involve an overly long string of stems are designated as "other," with the relevant information provided in the Program Description entries.

- **all**
- **<1**
- **0-2**
- **0-3**
- **0-5**
- **0-6**
- **0-7**
- **0-7 + sec**
- **0-8**
- **0-9**
- **0-13**
- **0-14**
- **0-15**
- **pre-K**
- **early elem**
- **pre-K + early elem**
- **elem**
- **elem + sec**
- **sec**
- **pre-K + elem + sec**
- **sec+**
- **other**

Program Description: These entries provide basic information about the program's purposes. The descriptions come from the CFDA and, when necessary, were supplemented with

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[19] This is not the result of our decision, but because "elementary" is typically defined in federal education laws as including kindergarten. Interestingly, we did not find a single program devoted exclusively to kindergarten children.

information from agencies' web sites or from the guide found through grants.gov. (See the Sources section above.)

Who Is Eligible: This heading refers to the entities that are eligible to apply for the funds, such as states, local governments, school districts, Indian tribes, non-profit or for-profit organizations and others.

Funding Method: Entries under this heading allow the reader to see the method by which the program's funds are distributed, such as formula grant, competitive grant, or tax program, to name a few examples.

2008 Appropriation: These entries present the amount of money appropriated by Congress for the program in 2008.

At this stage of the inventory's development, readers who are eager to add up or compare appropriation levels will not be able to do so, nor should they. Individual-level program information is often hard to come by when a program contains multiple programs. Consequently, for some individual programs, the only information we could provide was the appropriation level for the overall program, including a note to that effect, which means that this overall level repeats[20].

Another shortcoming of the entries under this heading is that they do not indicate the share of the program's funding that is directly or indirectly dedicated to children and youth. Many of the programs in the inventory devote all their funds. But with some others, children and youth constitute only a portion of the program's intended beneficiaries. As CRS and others have noted, this issue has traditionally bedeviled efforts to get an accurate picture of federal spending on children and youth. It is still not easy to determine. But thanks to the methodology developed by the Urban Institute for their First Focus commissioned report, *Kids Share 2008: How Children Fare in the Federal Budget,* it would be possible to calculate the relevant share.[21].

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[20] This is a problem that can be solved, either by supplying program-by-program appropriations figures, provided that data exist, or through a technical fix of our spreadsheets, but our time permitted neither activity.
[21] Ibid., pp. 8-11, 34-36.

Congressional Oversight (S): Refers to the Senate authorizing committee for the program. (Note: The comments under the next heading pertain to this one, as well.)

Congressional Oversight (H): Refers to the House authorizing committee for the program.

An inventory capable of providing an even fuller picture of federal education-related policymaking and the extent to which its structure and programs reflect or promote a coherent response to the needs of children and youth should supplement the above headings with another two devoted to the congressional subcommittees with jurisdiction over these programs.

Why would this matter to anyone but inside-the-Beltway junkies, one might reasonably ask. The answer can be found by looking at the extraordinary 1995 report and "spaghetti" charts put out by the Institute for Educational Leadership's (IEL) now defunct Policy Exchange, which revealed that the fragmentation of major federal programs for children and their families began at the Congressional level, where it washed across to executive agencies and then down to the grass-roots level, where it leached away capacity to treat youngsters as whole beings and respond to their needs in a comprehensive and coordinated fashion.[22]

To the best of our knowledge, this extraordinary work has not been repeated since. Yet, since 1995, federal programs and agencies[23] have proliferated, Congress has become more intricate, and the needs of youngsters, as well as the need of our nation to meet them, have intensified.

Legislation: Entries under this heading provide the legislative sources of the program.

Regulations: A source for finding the regulations governing a program may be found under this heading. We included this because it would be beneficial to users of a complete and fully functional inventory, but we spent the least amount of time in gathering this kind of information.

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[22] Margaret C. Dunkle, *Who Controls Major Federal Programs for Children & Families: Rube Goldberg Revisited,"* Special Report #3, Wash., DC: Institute for Educational Leadership, The Policy Exchange, 1995. The report surveyed the agency and congressional landscape of major federal programs in 1993 in detail and also compared the number of agencies and committees/subcommittees in 1993 with the 1995 number, which had become even higher.

[23] This includes independent agencies, which were also counted in the IEL report.

Website: Users interested in more information about a program will find a website address under this heading to help them.

Notes: If there is a problem we are aware of or some other issue with the information about a program under the previous headings, we enter a comment under this heading.

In sum, the pilot inventory offers interactive, one-stop shopping for key information about 363 education-related federal programs by 19 categories, including program name. Notwithstanding the experimental nature of this work, the results, we believe, make it apparent why an inventory at the federal level, is eye-opening and useful. It is also easy to imagine the desirability – though not necessarily the easy execution -- of an inventory that contains other information, such as an indicator for whether or not the program has been evaluated and, if so, a summary characterization of the results. There are, of course, many other worthwhile possibilities that can be put together to enable analysis according to the particular interests of the tool's users.

Unfortunately, the time necessary to construct the pilot inventory did not permit us to exploit even all of the limited analytical capabilities of Excel, but the individual agency and summary inventories offer that potential. The chart on the next page lists and briefly describes all of the sheets in the summary inventory. Users of the Program Counts sheet, as well as those who wish to do their own counting using this or other sheets, should strictly avoid treating any summary numbers as exact; at this stage of the inventory, those numbers are highly but strictly suggestive.

Summary of Excel Sheets	
Sheet Name	**Sheet Description**
Program Counts	Summary of Program Counts
Program Name, alphabetically	Programs arrayed alphabetically by Program Name
Agency, Program Office	Programs arrayed by Agency, then by Program Office, then by Program Name
Child Age/Education Level, Program Name	Programs arrayed by Child Age/Education Level, then by Program Name
Child Age/Education Level, Program Note	Programs arrayed by Child Age/Education Level, then by Program Note
Child Target Population	Programs arrayed by Child Target Population, then by Program Name
Program Note, alphabetical	Programs arrayed by Program Note, then by Child Target Population, then by Child Age/Education Level
Program Note "Chunking" Simple	Program Note Simple "Chunking" Analysis: Each chunk contains only programs categorized solely or primarily by the category/categories for that "chunk"
Program Note "Chunking" Complete	Program Note Complete "Chunking" Analysis: Each chunk contains not only programs categorized solely or primarily by the category/categories for that "chunk", but also programs for which the category is listed anywhere in the Program Note string
Program Note "Chunking" Complete by Child Age/Education Level	Program Note Complete "Chunking" Analysis BY CHILD AGE/EDUCATION LEVEL: Each chunk contains not only programs categorized solely or primarily by the category/categories for that "chunk", but also programs for which the category is listed anywhere in the Program Note string, AND EACH CHUNK IS SORTED BY CHILD AGE/EDUCATION LEVEL
Comprehensive, Coordinated	All programs for which "Comprehensive and/or Coordinated Services" appears anywhere in the Program Note string
Family, Community	Programs arrayed by Program Note, then by Child Target Population, then by Child Age/Education Level
Main Program Category, Agency	All programs categorized by Main Program Category and then by Agency within each Main Program Category
Agency, Main Program Category	All programs categorized by Agency and then by Main Program Category within each Agency
Afterschool, Summer	Programs with Ed and/or Training, Extension in the Program Note string as well as programs for which summer, afterschool, after school, or after-school appear in the Program Description and/or Notes
Committees	Congressional Oversight Committee Senate and House combinations

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