



Early Head Start Participants, Programs, Families and Staff in 2010

December 2011

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In 1994, the federal Early Head Start (EHS) program was created to address the comprehensive needs of low-income children under age 3 and pregnant women. Early Head Start was created almost 30 years after Head Start was established in 1965 to serve low-income 3- and 4-year-old children and their families with comprehensive early education and support services. Both of these programs provide services focused on the “whole child,” including early education addressing cognitive, developmental, and socio-emotional needs; medical and dental screenings and referrals; nutritional services; parental involvement activities and referrals to social service providers for the entire family; and mental health services.

All Head Start programs are required to complete the Program Information Report (PIR) on an annual basis.¹ Based on information reported through the PIR, this fact sheet describes the characteristics of Early Head Start children and families and the services provided to them during the 2009-2010 program year.²

Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), Head Start received a \$2.1 billion increase in funding, including \$1.1 billion targeted for the expansion of Early Head Start. The 2010 PIR data in this brief is the first year of data that includes the EHS expansion.

In 2010, the Early Head Start program served 120,433 children under age 3 and 13,538 pregnant women through 1,007 grantees/delegates throughout the country.³ This is an increase of more than 40,000 participants served from the

previous year as the result of ARRA funds. Eleven percent of all funded Head Start slots were in Early



Head Start. Nationally, less than 4 percent of eligible children were served by Early Head Start.⁴

Key findings from the 2010 PIR include:

Participants

- Most children (85 percent) received a medical screening as required by the Head Start Program Performance Standards. Eleven percent required follow-up treatment, and of those children, nearly all (94 percent) received that treatment.
- By the end of the program year, 96 percent of children had a medical home for ongoing care, and 69 percent had a source for ongoing dental care.
- Twelve percent of enrolled children had a disability, 59 percent of whom were diagnosed prior to enrollment in Early Head Start and 41 percent of whom were diagnosed during the program year.

- Eighty-eight percent of pregnant women received prenatal and postnatal health care while enrolled in EHS. Additionally, 91 percent of pregnant women had health insurance, 41 percent received a dental examination, and 36 percent accessed mental health interventions and follow-up services.
- Among participants enrolled in EHS, 43 percent were white and 25 percent were African-American. Thirty-four percent were of Hispanic origin, regardless of race.
- The age breakdown for children participating in EHS was relatively even: 31 percent of children were under age 1; 33 percent were age 1; and 32 percent were age 2.
- Early Head Start served a linguistically diverse group of participants. More than one-quarter (26 percent) of participants were from homes where English was not the primary language. Among these, 84 percent were from Spanish-speaking homes. Other languages each accounted for less than 1 percent of the total EHS population.

Programs

- About half (49 percent) of Early Head Start slots were center-based. Forty-five percent of slots were in home-based programs, which included weekly home visits and group socialization programs. Early Head Start children also received services in combination programs (3 percent), family child care settings (2 percent), and locally designed programs (1 percent) in 2010.
- The total number of funded EHS slots reported by the PIR was 104,533. The federal government funded 103,238 slots, and states and other sources funded 1,295 slots.

Families

- A large proportion of EHS families accessed support in 2010. Eighty-two percent of EHS families accessed at least one support service. Parenting education (65 percent) and health education (62 percent) were the most frequently accessed services in 2010. Other frequently accessed services included emergency and crisis intervention, adult education, and mental health services.
- Forty-two percent of families included two parents, and 58 percent had a single parent.
- Sixty-one percent of EHS families included at least one working parent, and 23 percent of families included at least one parent in school or job training.
- One of every five families (20 percent) received cash assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program in 2010. Nearly four of every five families (78 percent) received the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

Staff

- About half (51 percent) of Early Head Start teachers and 64 percent of EHS home visitors had at least an associate degree (A.A.) in early childhood education or a related field. In addition, 24 percent of teachers and 45 percent of home visitors had a bachelor's degree (B.A.) or higher in early childhood education or a related field.
- Overall, EHS teachers earned an average of \$25,834 and EHS home visitors earned an average of \$28,944 in 2010.

¹ For more information on Head Start Program Information Reports (PIR), visit



<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/Program%20Information%20Report>.

² For more information on the Head Start preschool program, see CLASP's fact sheet, *Head Start Participants, Programs, Families, and Staff in 2010*.

³ The PIR collects data on all children and pregnant women who participate in Head Start at any point during the program year, including those who do not complete the year.

⁴ National Women's Law Center calculations based on data from the Office of Head Start on number of enrolled children and Census Bureau data on children in poverty by single year of age.