



Head Start Participants, Programs, Families and Staff in 2010

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By Stephanie Schmit

Since 1965, the Head Start program has served low-income 3- and 4-year-old children and their families with comprehensive early education and support services. 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 (including Head Start preschool programs, Early Head Start, and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start) 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 Head Start children and families enrolled in the preschool program and the services provided to them during the 2009-2010 program year.²

Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Head Start received a \$2.1 billion increase in funding, including \$1.1 billion to Early Head Start for expansion, quality

improvements, training and technical assistance and cost-of-living adjustments. The 2010 PIR data examined in this brief is the first year of data that includes ARRA funds.

In 2010, the Head Start preschool program served 949,003 young children through 1,804 grantees throughout the country—about 20,000 more children than in 2009.³ Key findings from the 2010 PIR include:

Participants

- Most children (91 percent) received a medical screening as required by the Head Start Program Performance Standards. Fifteen percent required follow-up treatment, and of those children, nearly all (95 percent) received that treatment.
- The majority of children in Head Start preschool programs receive health insurance through public programs, even though 65 percent of families had one or both parents working in 2010. Ten percent of children had private insurance in 2009, while 84 percent had publicly-funded health insurance through Children’s Health Insurance Programs (CHIP), Medicaid, a combined CHIP/Medicaid program, or other state funded insurance.
- By the end of the program year, 96 percent of children had a medical home for ongoing care, and 92 percent had a source for ongoing dental care.
- Twelve percent of enrolled children had a disability, about half of whom were diagnosed prior to the Head Start year and half during the program year. Among those preschool children diagnosed with a



disability, 99 percent received special education and related services.

- Among children enrolled in Head Start preschool programs, 39 percent were white and 31 percent were African-American. Thirty-four percent were of Hispanic origin, regardless of race.
- Seventy-two percent of children in Head Start preschool programs were from homes where English was the primary language, and 24 percent were from homes speaking primarily Spanish. Other languages each accounted for 1 percent or less of the total Head Start preschool population.

Programs

- In 2010, the total number of funded Head Start preschool slots was 822,892, an increase of almost 27,000 from 2009 (prior to ARRA funding). Both federally funded slots and slots funded from other sources increased.
- Ninety-five percent of Head Start preschool slots were center-based. An additional 3 percent were in home-based programs, which included weekly home visits and group socialization activities. Slots in family child care homes, locally designed programs, and combination programs each comprised 1 percent or less each of all Head Start preschool slots in 2010.



Families

- Seventy-six percent of Head Start preschool families accessed at least one support service in 2010, with parenting education (49 percent) and health education (48 percent) accessed most frequently. Other frequently accessed services included emergency and crisis intervention, adult education, and mental health services.
- Most Head Start preschool families (65 percent) included at least one working parent, and 14 percent of families included a parent in school or job training.
- Sixteen percent of Head Start preschool families received cash assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program in 2010. The percentage of families receiving the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) was 53 percent in 2010.
- Forty-two percent of families included two parents, and 58 percent had a single parent.

Staff

- Eighty-five percent of Head Start preschool teachers had at least an associate degree (A.A.) in early childhood education or a related field. In addition, 53 percent of teachers had a bachelor's degree (B.A.) or higher in early childhood education or a related field.
- Head Start preschool teachers earned an average of \$29,214 in 2010. This average salary was similar to the national average for public and private preschool teachers, which was \$29,200 in 2010, but fell well below the national average for kindergarten teachers—\$51,550.⁴

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 Early Head Start, see CLASP's fact sheet, *Early 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 U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *May 2010 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates*, www.bls.gov/oes/oes_data.htm.