



# Head Start Participants, Programs, Families and Staff in 2011

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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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

This fact sheet uses information reported through PIR to describe the children and families enrolled in the Head Start preschool program and the services provided to them during the 2010-2011 program year.<sup>2</sup>

The 2011 appropriation for Head Start totaled \$7.56 billion.<sup>3</sup> In 2011, the Head Start preschool program served 942,354 young children through 1,789 grantees nationwide.

Key findings from the 2011 PIR include:

## Participants

- Most children (91 percent) received a medical screening as required by the federal Head Start Program Performance Standards. Fifteen percent required follow-up treatment, and of those children, nearly all (94 percent) received that treatment.
- The majority of children in Head Start preschool programs receive health insurance through public programs, even though 63 percent of families had one or both parents working in 2011. The number of children with one or both parents working decreased 2 percent from 2010. Nine percent of children had private insurance in 2011, while 86 percent had publicly funded health insurance through Children’s Health Insurance Programs (CHIP), Medicaid, a combined CHIP/Medicaid program, or other state-funded insurance. The number of children with publicly funded health insurance increased 2 percent from the previous year.
- By the end of the program year, 97 percent of children had a medical home for ongoing care, and 93 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, 40 percent were white and 30 percent were African-American. Thirty-five percent were of Hispanic origin, regardless of race.
- Seventy-one 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 2011, the total number of funded Head Start preschool slots was 821,649, a decrease of just over 1,000 slots from the previous year.
- Ninety-six percent of Head Start preschool slots were center-based. An additional 2 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 of all Head Start preschool slots in 2011.



## Families

- Seventy-eight percent of Head Start preschool families accessed at least one support service in 2011 (up 2 percent from 2010), with parenting education (51 percent) and health education (47 percent) accessed most frequently. Other frequently accessed services included emergency and crisis intervention, adult education, and mental health services.
- Most Head Start preschool families (63 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 2011. The percentage of families receiving the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) was 51 percent in 2011. This decreased 2 percent from 2010.
- Forty-two percent of families, with children in Head Start preschool, included two parents, and 58 percent had a single parent.

## Staff

- Eighty-eight percent of Head Start preschool teachers had at least an associate degree (A.A.) in early childhood education or a related field. This increased 3 percent from 2010. In addition, 57 percent of teachers had a bachelor's degree (B.A.) or higher in early childhood education or a related field -- an increase of 4 percent from 2010.
- Head Start preschool teachers earned an average of \$29,259 in 2011 – a similar amount to the national average for public and private preschool teachers (\$30,150 in 2011), but well below the national average for kindergarten teachers (\$52,350 in 2011).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 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>.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on Early Head Start, see CLASP's fact sheet, *Early Head Start Participants, Programs, Families, and Staff in 2011*.

<sup>3</sup> This allocation includes the \$977 million spent for Early Head Start.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *May 2011 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates*, [www.bls.gov/oes/oes\\_data.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/oes_data.htm).