



Head Start Participants, Programs, Families and Staff in 2012

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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; 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 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 2011-2012 program year.²

The 2012 appropriation for Head Start totaled \$8 billion.³ In 2012, the Head Start preschool program served 946,011 young children through 1,765 grantees nationwide.

Key findings from the 2012 PIR include:

Participants

- Most children (91 percent) received a medical screening as required by the federal Head Start Program Performance

Standards. Fourteen percent required follow-up treatment, and of those children, nearly all (94 percent) received treatment.

- The majority of children in Head Start preschool programs receive health insurance through public programs, even though 62 percent of families had one or both parents working in 2012. Eighty-four percent of children had publicly funded health insurance through Children’s Health Insurance Programs (CHIP), Medicaid, a combined CHIP/Medicaid program, or other state-funded insurance percent (down 2 percent from the previous year), while 8 percent had private insurance in 2012.
- By the end of the program year, 97 percent of children had a medical home for ongoing care, and 95 percent had a source for ongoing dental care. The percent of children with a source of ongoing dental care was up two percent from 2011.



- Twelve percent of enrolled children had a disability, 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-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 2012, the total number of funded Head Start preschool slots was 821,852.
- Ninety-six percent of Head Start preschool slots were center-based. Two 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 2012.

Families

- Seventy-five percent of Head Start preschool families accessed at least one support service in 2012 (down 3 percent from 2011), with parenting education (50 percent) and health education (46 percent) accessed most frequently. Other frequently accessed services included emergency and crisis intervention, adult education, and mental health services.
- Most Head Start preschool families (62 percent) included at least one working parent, and 14 percent of families included a parent in school or job training.

- The percentage of families receiving the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) was 55 percent in 2012. This is an increase of 4 percent from 2011. Seventeen percent of Head Start preschool families received cash assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program in 2012.
- Fifty-nine percent of families with children in Head Start preschool were single-parent families, and 41 percent included two parents.

Staff

- Ninety-three percent of Head Start preschool teachers had at least an associate degree (A.A.) in early childhood education or a related field. This increased 5 percent from 2011. In addition, 62 percent of teachers had a bachelor's degree (B.A.) or higher in early childhood education or a related field -- an increase of 5 percent from 2011.
- Head Start preschool teachers earned an average of \$29,857 in 2012 -- well below the national average for preschool and kindergarten teachers (\$37,800 in 2012).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 2012*.

³ This allocation includes the \$1.3 billion spent for Early Head Start.

⁴ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *May 2012 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates*, http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm.