



Head Start Participants, Programs, Families, and Staff in 2014

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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; 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 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 2013-2014 program year.²

The 2014 federal appropriation for Head Start was over \$8.6 billion.³ The Head Start preschool program served 885,410 young children through 1,763 grantees nationwide in 2014.⁴ Eighty-five percent of all federally funded Head Start slots were in Head Start preschool programs. Nationally, about 42 percent of eligible children were served by Head Start.⁵

Key findings from the 2014 PIR on Head Start preschool include:

Participants

- Most children (88 percent) received a medical screening as required by federal Head Start Program Performance Standards. Eleven percent required follow-up treatment, and of those children, the majority (93 percent) received treatment.
- The majority of children in Head Start preschool programs receive health insurance through public programs. Eighty-nine 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, while 7 percent had private insurance in 2014.
- 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 regular dental care.



- Twelve percent of enrolled children had a disability, more than half (57 percent) of whom were diagnosed prior to the Head Start year. Among those preschool children diagnosed with a disability, almost all of them (99 percent) received special education and related services.
- Among children enrolled in Head Start preschool programs, 41 percent were White and 30 percent were Black or African-American. Thirty-six 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 23 percent were from homes speaking primarily Spanish. Other languages each accounted for 1 percent or less of the total Head Start preschool population.
- Four percent of children in Head Start programs in 2014 received a child care subsidy.

Programs

- In 2014, the total number of funded Head Start preschool slots was 777,884.
- 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 2014.

Families

- Fifty-nine percent of families with children in Head Start preschool were single-parent families, and 41 percent included two parents.

- Most Head Start preschool families (64 percent) included at least one working parent, and 14 percent of families included a parent in school or job training.
- Three-quarters (73 percent) of Head Start preschool families accessed at least one support service in 2014, with parenting education (49 percent) and health education (44 percent) used most frequently. Other frequently accessed services included emergency and crisis intervention, adult education, and child abuse/neglect services.
- The percentage of families receiving benefits from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) was 52 percent in 2014 – down 3 percent from 2013. Fourteen percent of Head Start preschool families received cash assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, and 56 percent participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in 2014.

Staff

- Ninety-six percent of Head Start preschool teachers had at least an associate's degree (A.A.) in early childhood education or a related field. In addition, 71 percent of teachers had a bachelor's degree (B.A.) or higher in early childhood education or a related field—a 4 percent increase from 2013.
- Head Start preschool teachers earned an average of \$30,409 in 2014—well below the national average for preschool and kindergarten teachers (\$38,680 in 2014).⁶

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

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/data/pir>.

² For more information on Early Head Start, see CLASP's fact sheet, *Early Head Start Participants, Programs,*

Families, and Staff in 2014 and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Participants, Programs, Families, and Staff in 2014.

³ This allocation includes the \$1.4 billion spent for Early Head Start.

⁴ Note: The FY 2014 appropriation restored the 5.27 percent reduction grantees received in FY 2013 due to sequestration, helping grantees restore the number of funded enrollment slots, the number of days or weeks in the program year, or other cuts programs made to absorb the reduction.

⁵ NWLC calculations based on children in poverty by single year of age in 2014, according to data from the Current Population Survey 2015 Annual Social and Economic Supplement,

https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032015/pov/pov34_100.htm, and on Head Start and Early Head Start funded slots in 2014, according to data in the Administration for Children and Families FY 2016 Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees,

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/olab/2016_acf_cj.PDF, page 119.

⁶ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *May 2014 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates*, http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm.