



Frequently Asked Questions About Head Start

Head Start offers family support services and the chance for families to participate as full partners in the education of their children. Parents may use this fact sheet to answer questions about the program.

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1. Q: Is My Child Eligible for Head Start or Early Head Start?

A: Children from birth to age five from families with low income, according to the Poverty Guidelines published by the federal government, are eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start services.

Children in foster care, homeless children, and children from families receiving public assistance (TANF or SSI) are categorically eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start services regardless of income.

Head Start programs may enroll up to 10% of children from families that have incomes above the Poverty Guidelines. Programs may also serve up to an additional 35% of children from families whose incomes are above the Poverty Guidelines, but below 130% of the poverty line if the program can ensure that certain conditions have been met.

Pregnant women may also be eligible for Early Head Start.

2. Q: How Do I Find a Head Start Program Near Me?

A: If you need help finding a Head Start program in your area, call Head Start Information and Communications Center toll-free at **1-866-763-6481**, or you may use the online national Head Start Program Locator Tool at **<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HeadStartOffices>**.

3. Q: Are Children in Foster Care Eligible for Head Start?

A: Children in foster care are Head Start eligible, regardless of family income.

4. Q: Does Head Start Accept Children with Disabilities or Special Needs?

A: The Head Start Act of 2007 requires that, beginning in fiscal year 2009 (i.e. beginning October 1, 2008) "not less than 10 percent of the total number of children actually enrolled by each Head Start agency and each delegate agency will be children with disabilities who are determined to be eligible for special education and related services, or early intervention services...by the State or local agency providing services under section 619 or part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.)."

5. Q: What If My Income Level Is Higher Than the Poverty Guidelines?

A: Head Start programs may enroll up to 10% of children from families that have incomes above the Poverty Guidelines. Programs may also serve up to an additional 35% of children from families whose incomes are above the Poverty Guidelines, but below 130% of the poverty line if the program can ensure that certain conditions described in the section 645 (a)(1)(B)(iii)(II) of the Head Start Act have been met.

6. Q: What Are the Other Options If My Child Is Ineligible For Head Start?

A: If you are ineligible for Head Start, the Child Care Aware program can help you in locating other childcare services in your community. To find the local child care resource and referral agency, please contact Child Care Aware toll-free at 800-424-2246. Web site: <http://www.childcareaware.org/>.

7. Q: How Can I Get Involved with Head Start?

A: Head Start welcomes volunteers. By becoming a volunteer you can help in the classroom and on field trips, assist in renovating centers, and support parent education. Your volunteer experience may later qualify you for training which can help you find employment in the child care field. For information about volunteering please contact your local Head Start program. To locate a program near you visit the online national Head Start Program Locator Tool at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HeadStartOffices>.

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