

Memorandum

TO: IHSA Head Start/Early Head Start Directors
FROM: Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, IHSA
DATE: March 3, 2015
RE: Parent Ambassador Applications

I wanted to let you know the IHSA is accepting applications for the Parent Ambassador program, supporting parent leadership. We have received a small grant to support the IHSA Parent Ambassador Program. I wanted to make sure you had a bit of information and time lines for the Parent Ambassador Program so you can decide if you would like your parents to participate and what you can expect:

Goals of Parent Ambassador Program

- Teach ambassadors about the legislative process.
- Train ambassadors how to educate, organize, and mobilize parents in their program.
- Give ambassadors the skills to advocate for themselves and their community.
- Help ambassadors serve as a liaison between a local program, IHSA, and the larger early learning community.
- Ensure that parents have a voice in policy making discussions and deliberations.
- Provide IHSA and the Head Start community with a strong grassroots network that can help move positive policy proposals forward.

What do ambassadors learn and who do they meet?

Ambassadors will learn the basics of advocacy, speaking skills, and how legislation is crafted. By being an ambassador they also get to take part in developing policy proposals and the IHSA advocacy agenda.

Each Parent Ambassador will be linked with a coach.

Responsibilities of a Parent Ambassador

- Each Parent Ambassador must be available to participate in one conference call a month. These calls take place in the evening and are meant to share information and provide updates.
- Each Parent Ambassador is expected to attend two face to face trainings put together by IHSA.
- Each Parent Ambassador is expected to attend the IHSA Spring Training Conference in March 2016 and be part of a presentation/panel discussion.

- Each Parent Ambassador must commit to provide “teach backs” at their policy council meetings and/or other parent meetings.
- Each Parent Ambassador is expected to participate in the legislative process by advocating for Head Start at the state and federal levels.

Responsibilities of a Director with a Parent Ambassador

- Each Director will make time at policy council and parent meetings for ambassadors to share information.
- Each Director will support their ambassador(s) by check-ins and/or through the help of family engagement/parent staff.
- Director support is essential to the success of the Parent Ambassador.

Costs for Participation

Travel expenses for the Parent Ambassador Program activities taking place in Springfield are paid for by IHSA. This includes hotel, travel, food, materials, and any registration fees.

Travel expenses to the NHSA Fall Leadership Conference will be shared by IHSA and the participants program. IHSA will cover the cost of registration and the participants program will cover the cost of airfare, hotel and per diem.

Timeline of Events/Activities

Each Parent Ambassador will attend two face to face trainings in Springfield, put together by IHSA. The tentative dates of these trainings are the following:

- May 7 – 8, 2015
- September 17-18, 2015

Application Process

Applicants must have a letter of support from their Director.

Applications for the Parent Ambassador Program are available now and soon on the IHSA website, www.ilheadstart.org. Applications for the Parent Ambassador Program will be due April 1, 2015 by close of business. To be eligible for the Parent Ambassador Program the parent’s application must be signed off by the Head Start/Early Head Start director. Announcements will be made on April 15, 2015.