

Ohio's Head Start Program



Leading the Nation

Ohio continues to lead the nation in state support for Head Start, the 36-year-old federal preschool program for low-income children and their families. Because of state funding, more than 70% of Ohio's income-eligible three- and four-year-old children participate, compared to only 45% nationally through federal funding alone. In Ohio, very poor preschool children have about the same opportunity to participate in an enriching early childhood program as their upper income peers.

What Is Head Start?

Head Start provides an educational preschool program for children and services for the whole family. Head Start children:

- Learn basic skills, such as listening to teachers, following directions, and answering questions, that help prepare them for school.
- Become familiar with books and telling stories, letters, numbers and counting, colors, music, art, nature, science, and community helpers like police and firefighters.
- Practice cooperation; problem-solving; self-help skills like hand washing, teeth brushing, and buttoning; and personal responsibility through table setting and clean-up activities.
- Visit libraries, parks, zoos, fire stations, police departments and their future kindergarten classrooms.
- Receive physical and dental exams; get follow-up treatment as needed; are screened for vision, hearing and developmental problems; and are brought up-to-date with needed immunizations.
- Receive special services for handicapping conditions such as speech or physical therapy, adaptive equipment, and transportation and are administered doctor-prescribed medications or special diets.

Head Start parents:

- Volunteer in classrooms, on field trips, and to maintain centers and playgrounds.
- Work with their children at home on educational activities such as counting and literacy activities.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences, parent meetings, and training in child development.
- Participate in the management of the program through special committees.
- Get help with family needs like adult literacy, job training, housing, substance abuse issues and domestic violence.

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In 2000-01:

- 57,684 preschoolers participate in Head Start in Ohio.
 - 22,066 children are funded through state GRF.
 - 35,618 children are funded through federal funds.
- Ohio has appropriated \$100.8 million for Head Start.

In 1998-99 in Ohio:¹

- 63% of Head Start parents worked.
- 50% of children were white.
- 46% of children were black.
- 41% of families needed full-day, full-year child care.
- 31% of Head Start staff were current or former Head Start parents.
- 76 parents volunteered for every 100 children enrolled in Head Start.

Who Is Eligible for Head Start?

Head Start enrolls three- and four-year-olds. Currently, 90% of the children must be from families who earn no more than the federal poverty level (in 2000, \$14,150 for a family of three). At least 10% of the enrollment opportunities must be reserved for children with disabilities.

What Does Head Start Look Like?

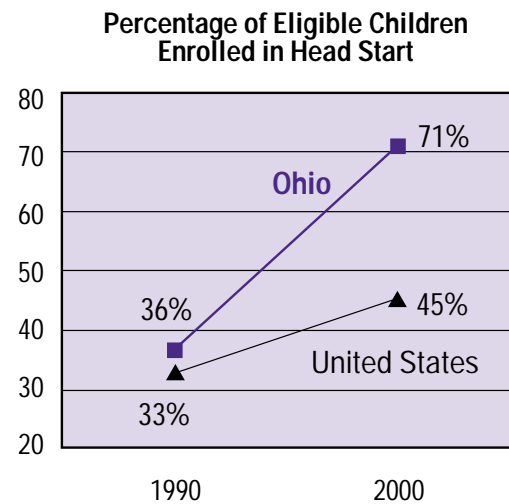
Head Start is available in every Ohio county. Community Action Agencies, private non-profit organizations and school systems receive grants to run Head Start programs. Head Start buses usually transport children to these programs.

Most programs operate part-day, part-year preschool classrooms. Some programs provide full-day services or develop partnerships with child care providers. Classrooms may be located in religious institutions, community facilities, housing projects, child care centers, converted businesses, public schools, or buildings owned by the Head Start agency. Others offer a home-based program where teachers work with parents and children in the child's home.

More Head Start Parents Are Working

The percentage of Head Start parents who work rose from 49% in 1996-97² to nearly 63% in 1998-99.¹ Families' reliance on cash welfare assistance decreased during this same time, from 57% to only 37%. To help these low-income working families, many Head Start programs partner with child care centers and family day care homes to provide full-day care. In 1999 more than 9,000 children received the comprehensive services of Head Start in one of 580 child care centers or family day care homes. Ohio policymakers have supported these partnerships through incentives and cooperation between the Ohio Department of Education (responsible for Ohio Head Start funding) and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (responsible for child care funding).

For more information on Head Start in Ohio, see the companion briefing guide "Head Start: Helping Children Succeed."



Source: Ohio Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

In fiscal year 2000:

- Average state allocation per child: \$4,164.
- Average federal allocation in Ohio per child: \$4,841.
- Average federal allocation per child nationwide: \$5,826.

¹ Federal Program Information Report 1998-1999.

² Federal Program Information Report 1996-1997.

For sources and more information, visit the CDF – Ohio web site (<http://www.cdfohio.org>).



Children's Defense Fund-Ohio

52 East Lynn Street, Suite 400
 Columbus, Ohio 43215-3551
 (614) 221-2244
 (614) 221-2247 (Fax)
 E-mail: CDFOhio@cdfohio.org
 Web site: <http://www.cdfohio.org>

Briefing Guides are available on the following topics:

- Child Care Assistance
- Child Care Quality
- Child Poverty
- Child Support
- Children's Health Insurance
- Fourth Grade Reading
- Head Start Basics
- Head Start Quality
- Immunizations
- Ohio Works First
- School Facilities