

Early Head Start and Head Start Programs

Early Head Start and Head Start are comprehensive child-development programs which aim to increase the school readiness of young children in low-income families. For program purposes, school readiness is defined by these criteria:¹

- ❖ The child has developed skills in socialization and preliteracy.
- ❖ The child is current in all immunizations and has had access to physical, dental, and mental-health care.
- ❖ The child has experienced good nutritional habits.

Early Head Start serves children from birth to age three and Head Start serves children ages three to five years. These Head Start programs must comprise at least 10 percent of children with disabilities. Inclusion and service to children with disabilities is a crucial piece of Head Start philosophy. Head Start programs deliver comprehensive services, providing individualized support in the areas of education and early childhood development, medical, dental, mental health, nutrition, social services, and parent involvement.²

Children enrolled in Head Start have various program options depending on availability. For example, half-day center-based programs, full-day center-based programs, and home-based settings may be offered. The entire range of Head Start services is responsive and appropriate to each child's and family's developmental, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage and experience.³

Seven entities in Nevada operate Early Head Start programs (ages birth up to age three) and/or Head Start programs (ages three to five). The following enrollment numbers indicate the total number of children (available slots) federally funded in Early Head Start and/or Head Start per agency during program year 1999-2000 in Nevada. For each entity, the total number of children served throughout the reporting period is higher due to

client turnover. There are seven Early Head Start and 45 Head Start sites currently operating in Nevada.

The Head Start program is administered by the Head Start Bureau; Administration of Children, Youth and Families (ACYF); Administration for Children and Families (ACF); and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Grants are awarded by the ACF Regional Offices and the Head Start Bureau's American Indian and Migrant Program Branches directly to local grantees, which are public agencies, private organizations, Indian Tribes, and school systems for the purpose of operating Head Start programs at the community level.

The Head Start-State Collaboration Project is funded through a separate grant from the Head Start Bureau. Its purpose is to (1) help build early childhood systems and increase access to comprehensive services and support for all low-income children and their families; (2) encourage widespread collaboration between Head Start/Early Head Start and other appropriate programs, services, and initiatives; and (3) facilitate the involvement of Head Start/Early Head Start in state decision-making forums.

The eight initiative areas targeted in this collaboration effort are child care and preschool, welfare, health care, education, community services activities, family-literacy services, activities relating to children with disabilities, and services for homeless children. Because the Head Start/Early Head Start programs are comprehensive, the Collaboration Project serves as a liaison to aid in identifying and initiating the partnerships to assist each grantee in serving children and their families.⁴

Early Head Start and Head Start Programs Continued

Number of Children (Available Slots) Funded in Early Head Start and/or Head Start in Nevada: 1999-2000

Agency	<i>Number of Site Locations</i>	<i>Number of Slots</i>
Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County	Four Early Head Start sites in Las Vegas, Ely, and Elko; and 13 Head Start sites in Henderson, Las Vegas, and North Las Vegas	1,343
Inter Tribal Council of Nevada	Fourteen Head Start sites in Elko, Fallon, Lovelock, McDermitt, Moapa, Nixon, Owyhee, Reno, Schurz, Sparks, Susanville, Wadsworth, and Yerington	291
Little People's Head Start	One Head Start and one Early Head Start site in Ely	71
Northeastern Nevada Head Start	Three Head Start sites in Elko, Jackpot, and Wells	156
University of Nevada Reno Community Services Agency	Two Early Head Start sites in Reno Nine Head Start sites in Carson City, Fallon, Fernley, Hawthorne, Reno, and Sparks	64 441
Washoe Tribe Head Start	Three sites in Carson City, Gardnerville, and Markleeville	90
	Total number of annual available/funded child-service slots	2,456

Source: Head Start-State Collaboration Project, Health and Human Services Region IX Head Start Program Information Report for 1999-2000 Program Year Enrollment Statistics Report.