

# HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START

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<b>What are Head Start and Early Head Start programs?</b>	Head Start and Early Head Start are federally funded, comprehensive early childhood education programs for low-income children from birth to age five and pregnant women. Families with incomes at or below the federal poverty level are eligible for services.
<b>What is the purpose of Head Start?</b>	Head Start is designed to promote the school readiness of low-income children by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development and providing a supportive learning environment. Early childhood education, health services, parent education, nutrition, and family partnership agreements are integral components of Head Start and Early Head Start.
<b>How many people are receiving services?</b>	Over 12,644 children and 144 pregnant women are receiving services at approximately 260 programs sites through 18 grantees. A minimum of 10% of enrollees are children with disabilities.
<b>What are the benefits of Head Start and Early Head Start?</b>	Longitudinal studies and evaluations reveal that Head Start children demonstrate improved skills in vocabulary, early writing skills, and social competence after completing Head Start programs. Children in Early Head Start programs exhibit positive outcomes in cognitive and language development.
<b>How is funding provided?</b>	Approximately \$88,000,000 in Federal Funding is provided to grantees for direct services and for quality improvements to programs. The programs are directly funded and monitored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. State Supplemental Funding for Head Start and Early Head Start provides \$1.8 million annually for summer programs.
<b>Where can I get more information?</b>	Information on Early Childhood Initiatives: Head Start and Early Head Start can be found at: <a href="http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/program">http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/program</a> , or call the Division of Early Childhood Development Help Desk at: 1-877-605-1539.