



FACES of Head Start

Our Children, Our Families, Our Classrooms

Charting Children's Learning and Development
During One Year in Head Start

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FACES 2009





The Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) provides a picture of children's development and academic readiness over their time in Head Start.



What Is Head Start?

Head Start is a national program that aims to promote school readiness in our youngest children. Children can enter Head Start at age 3 or 4 in the fall and continue for one or two years in the program. Each Head Start center is designed to meet the needs of the children, families, and cultures that they serve.

To help children get ready for kindergarten, Head Start focuses on “whole-child” development:

- Children receive a variety of learning experiences that foster intellectual, social, and emotional skills.
- Children have access to health care services.
- Programs promote family engagement for healthy, lifelong learning and well-being.
- Families receive support services that help create safe, supportive environments for children.

Many factors influence children's development and their later kindergarten readiness:



What Is 'FACES'?

The Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) collects information from children as they progress through their Head Start programs. It also collects data on family, classroom, and program characteristics. Together this information provides a picture of classroom quality and children's development and academic readiness over their time in Head Start. The information presented in this brochure was gathered from 3- and 4-year-old, newly-enrolled children in fall 2009 who completed one year of Head Start. Data were collected in fall 2009 and spring 2010 ("2009 Cohort") using three data collection methods: (1) direct assessments of children's learning and development; (2) interviews with parents, teachers, and program staff; and (3) observations of classrooms.

FACES Measures

Information in this report was obtained using the following measures:

- **The Parent Interview** collects information on family characteristics, educational activities, parent mental health, child health status, parent involvement (and barriers to participation), community, and satisfaction with Head Start.
- **The Teacher Interview and Teacher Child Report** collects information about teacher education and credentials, knowledge and beliefs about early childhood programs, perspectives on program management, teacher mental health, educational activities in the classroom, and children's development.
- **The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Fourth Edition (PPVT-4) (or Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody, TVIP)** measures children's receptive vocabulary knowledge in English (or Spanish).
- **Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT)** measures children's expressive vocabulary.
- **The Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery III (or Bateria-III Woodcock-Munoz) (WJ-III; 3 subscales)** assesses early reading skills (Letter-Word Identification), early math skills (Applied Problems), and early writing skills (Spelling) in English (or Spanish).
- **Body Mass Index (BMI)** procedures from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study measure height and weight.
- **The Social Skills Scale** measures children's cooperative behavior and social skills, as reported by teachers.
- **The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-K) Approaches to Learning Scale** measures children's attention, persistence, adaptability, and independence.

FACES Explores...

Children's Learning and Development:

- Vocabulary, early reading, early writing, and early math
- Social skills
- Motivation to learn
- Health

Family Characteristics:

- Background
- Participation in learning-related activities
- Participation in Head Start
- Satisfaction with Head Start

Classroom Characteristics:

- Teacher qualifications and training
- Teaching activities
- Services for children with special needs

- **The Behavior Problems Index (BPI; 3 subscales)** measures children's aggressive behavior, withdrawn behavior, and hyperactive behavior, as reported by teachers.
- **Items from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth & Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-B and ECLS-K)** measures children's mathematics knowledge like number, shape, and counting skills.
- **The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)** measures three types of classroom quality: classroom organization, emotional support, and instructional support.
- **Preschool Language Assessment Survey 2000 (preLAS)** measures children's early language skills, including children's ability to follow simple spoken directions.

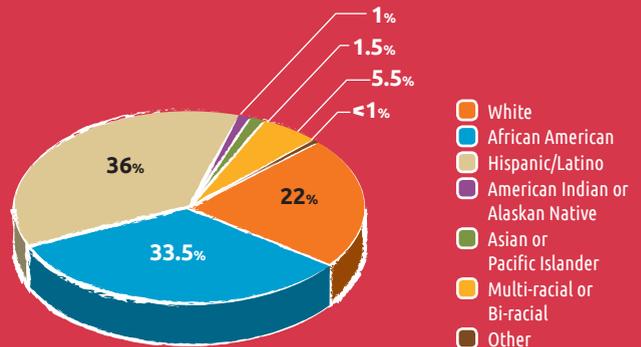


Our Children

Head Start Children: Who Are We?

Head Start programs serve children and their families from a variety of backgrounds:

- 61% were 3 years old at program entry and the rest were 4.
- 58% attended “full-day” Head Start programs and the rest attended “half-day” programs.
- 13% attended “Early Head Start” when they were younger.



Children Come from Diverse Backgrounds

Head Start Serves Children of All Abilities

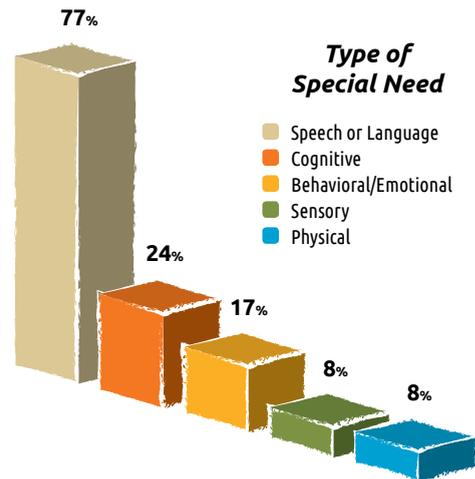
By the end of their first year, approximately 14% of children are identified as having a disability—defined as having had a professional indicate that the child had a developmental problem, delay, or other special need.

The vast majority of children with a disability had a speech or language impairment and 27% of children with an identified disability had multiple impairments. 67% of children with a disability had an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). Such plans create opportunities for teachers, parents, school administrators, and related services personnel to work together to improve educational results for each child in need.



What Is a Special Need?

- **Speech or Language Impairment** includes difficulty in communicating.
- **Cognitive Impairment** includes mental retardation, autism/pervasive developmental delay, and other developmental delays.
- **Behavioral/Emotional Impairment** includes behavior problems, hyperactivity, and ADHD.
- **Sensory Impairment** includes deafness, other hearing impairment, blindness, and other visual impairment.
- **Physical Impairment** includes motor impairments.



Snapshot: One Year in Head Start

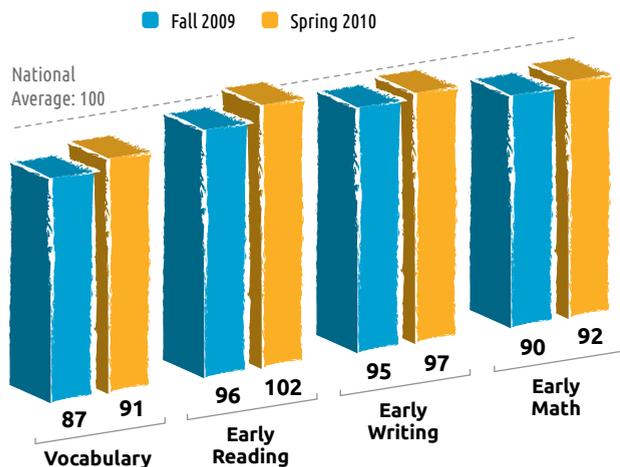
Most Children Enter with Below Average Academic Skills

Most children enter Head Start at a great disadvantage across many subjects and skill areas. This is particularly evident in early **vocabulary and math**, with scores below national averages.

However, children come to Head Start with a range of knowledge and skills—with some scoring at or above the national average, while others score in the bottom 25% of all U.S. preschoolers.

Head Start Children's Growth in Academic Skills

Children showed growth across all subject areas after completing one year in their Head Start program.



Scores reported on this page are only from children assessed in English

Spotlight on Learning

What percent of Head Start children can:	Fall 2009	Spring 2010
Identify numbers and shapes, like circles and squares?	29%	51%
Count to 10 or higher?	43%	70%
Follow 9 or 10 simple directions (out of 10), like "touch your knee," "pick up the pencil," or "put the paper on top of the book"?	28%	50%



Head Start Children Display More Positive Approaches to Learning

Children's success in school also depends on their "approaches to learning"—their attitude, motivation, and behaviors in learning-related tasks and activities. A child with a positive learning approach:

- Wants to learn and do well
- Enjoys trying new activities
- Doesn't give up when things get hard
- Tries different approaches and problem-solving strategies
- Welcomes help when "stuck"
- Gets along with others
- Pays attention and follows directions
- Displays confidence

Children Show Stronger Social Skills and Fewer Problem Behaviors

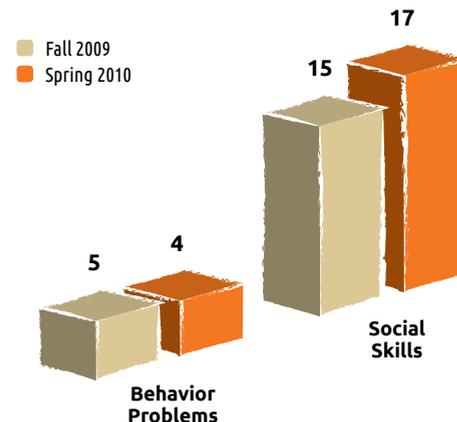
Teachers reported that children, on average, showed more frequent positive social skills during Head Start, such as making friends easily and waiting his/her turn in games or other activities. Teachers also reported that, by spring, children were less likely to have behavior problems in the classroom, such as being very restless and unable to sit still (hyperactive).

Spanish Speaking Children's Growth in Language and Literacy Skills

Spanish-speaking children showed progress in early reading, but not in vocabulary knowledge:

- **"Receptive Vocabulary"**—the ability to recognize and understand vocabulary concepts—was assessed in both Spanish and English. On average, children showed no change in English or Spanish.
- **"Expressive Vocabulary"**—the ability to name items and actions, like "house" or "jump"—showed no change.
- **"Early Reading"**—the ability to identify letters and words—showed an increase from fall to spring.

Teacher reports reveal children show growth in positive approaches to learning over the course of Head Start.



Feeling Good? Head Start Children's Health

Health and Wellness

After completing 1 year of Head Start, 81% of children were reported by their parents as being in "excellent" or "very good" health, 14% were "good," and 5% were considered in "fair" or "poor" health.

Healthy Habits, Healthy Children!

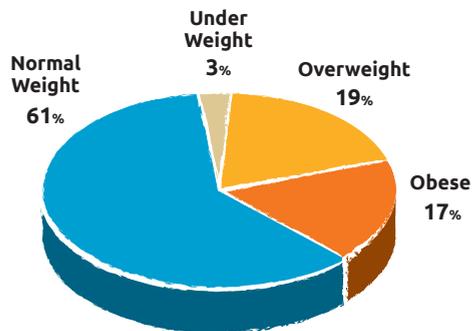
- Promote physically active games and play activities
- Serve fresh fruit and water (rather than juice)
- Serve low-fat milk instead of whole milk
- Serve child-sized portions – a child's fist = 1 portion!
- Limit children's TV and "non-active" time



Weight and Obesity

Childhood obesity is a growing health problem, linked to short- and long-term negative physical, social, and emotional outcomes. In the spring, 61% of children were within normal weight range. However, more than one-third of children were considered "overweight" or "obese," defined as having a Body Mass Index (BMI) at or above the 85th percentile for age and gender.

When comparing children of different backgrounds, 41% of Hispanic/Latino children were above the normal weight range. In contrast, approximately 1/3 of African-American (32%) and Caucasian (34%) children were above normal weight range.



Childhood obesity is a growing health problem, linked to short- and long-term negative physical, social, and emotional outcomes.



Our Families

What Does a Typical Head Start Family Household Look Like?

- 4 -5 family members
- 43% of children live with both of their biological/adoptive parents and approximately 53% live in single-parent households.
- 72% of fathers were employed and a little over half worked full-time.
- Approximately half of mothers (48%) were employed and roughly 1/4 work full-time.
- 64% of mothers and 53% of fathers had at least a high school education.

Diversity in Head Start: Changing Faces

The number of Head Start Hispanic/Latino families grew from 27% in 1997 to 36% in 2009.

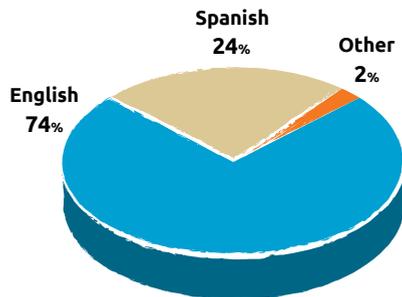
Primary Language Spoken to Head Start Children at Home

A little more than a quarter of the children—26%—lived in households where a language other than English was primarily spoken to them.

For most of these “dual language learners” (DLL), Spanish was the home language, spoken in 24% of all households. Other languages spoken by Head Start families include:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Central/South American and Mexican
- Middle Eastern/South Asian
- East Asian
- Pacific Island
- African
- European and Slavic
- Caribbean

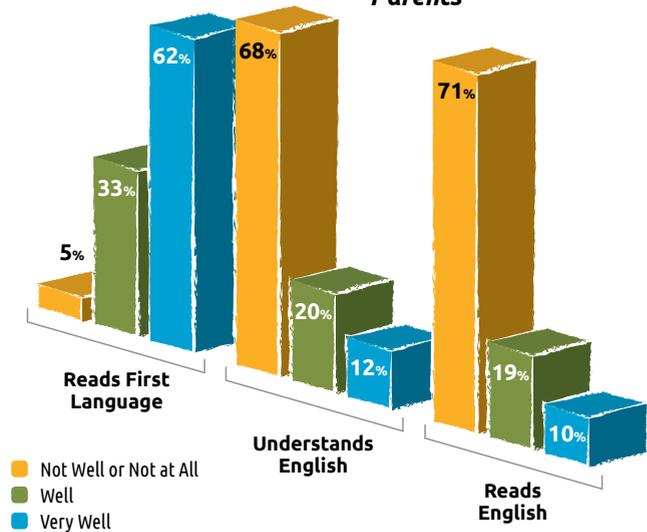
Primary Language Spoken at Home



Language Abilities of Parents of Dual Language Learners in Head Start

Parents of dual language learners varied in their own language and literacy abilities in English as well as in their home language.

Language Ability of Head Start Parents





Many parents are involved with the Head Start program their child attends. Over 80% of parents attend parent-teacher conferences.

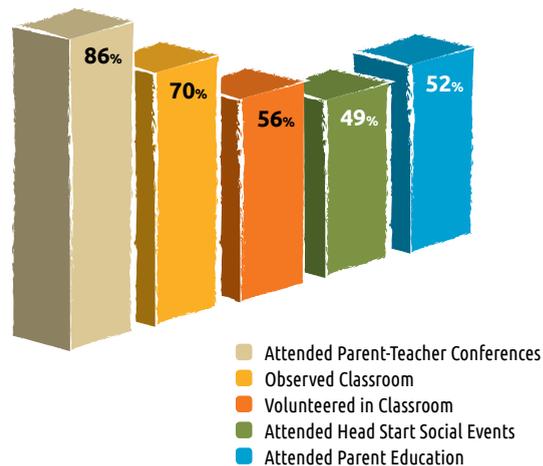
Parents as Leaders: Parents' Involvement in Head Start

Many parents reported that they were involved with the Head Start program their child attends.

Yet some barriers interfere with parents' participation in Head Start:

- Work schedule
- Lack of child care
- Conflict with school/training schedule
- Lack of transportation
- Opportunities were not of interest

***In What Ways Do
Parents Participate in
Head Start?***



Bringing Head Start Home: Learning with Families and Communities

Learning does not stop at the door of Head Start! Parents and families engage in learning activities with children outside of their Head Start program. Parents reported that they participate in a variety of home-based and community-based learning activities. Some activities increased during Head Start while others, such as visiting a playground or park, declined:

Learning at Home: Activities in the Past Week

- ↑ Told a story
- ↑ Taught letters, words, or numbers
- ↑ Taught songs or music
- ↑ Worked on arts and crafts
- ↑ Played a game or sport or exercised together
- ↑ Talked about TV programs or videos
- ↑ Played a board game or card game
- ↑ Played with toys or games indoors

Learning in the Community: Activities in the Past Month

- ↑ Visited a library
- ↑ Visited art galleries, museums, or historical sites
- ↑ Visited a zoo or aquarium
- ↑ Talked about family history or ethnic heritage
- ↑ Attended a play or concert
- ↑ Attended a community event
- ↓ Visited a playground or park

Percentage of Parents "Very Satisfied" with Head Start

In general, parents reported high levels of satisfaction with Head Start program services. In particular, more than 80% of parents reported that they were very satisfied with the program in terms of helping their child develop, providing services for the child, providing a safe program, preparing their child for kindergarten, being open to parent's ideas and participation, and respecting their culture.





Our Classrooms

Head Start Teachers: Who Are We?

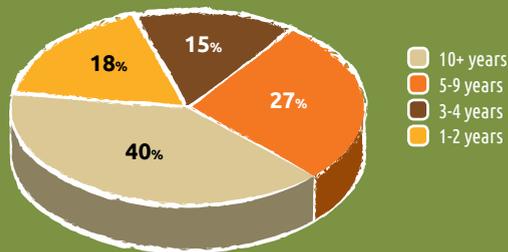
The average Head Start teacher has been in the classroom for 9 years. Approximately 67% of teachers surveyed have more than 5 years of experience.

Teachers' Qualifications

Head Start has a mandate to increase teacher qualifications and education. Head Start lead teachers have a range of educational experiences:

- 85% have at least an associate's degree
- 50% have at least a bachelor's degree
- 9% have a graduate or professional degree

Classroom Teaching Experience



What Goes on in Head Start Classrooms? A Close Look at Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic

Teachers reported that they frequently engaged in early literacy and math activities in their classrooms. At least 80% of classrooms engaged in the following daily or almost every day:

Literacy Activities

- Letter naming
- Learning new words
- Learning print concepts
- Writing name
- Listening to teacher read stories where they see print

Math Activities

- Counting aloud
- Engaging in calendar activities
- Working with geometric shapes and manipulatives
- Engaging in shape and pattern activities



The average Head Start teacher has been in the classroom for nearly 9 years. Approximately 67% of teachers surveyed have more than 5 years of experience. More than 80% of Head Start lead teachers have degrees.

Ready, Set, Learn!

Quality of Head Start Classrooms

“Classroom quality” refers to the quality of teacher-child interactions and the types of learning activities that are observed in the child’s classroom. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) measures three types of classroom quality: classroom organization, emotional support, and instructional support:

Classroom Organization – How well teachers organize and manage each child’s behavior, time and attention in the classroom to make efficient use of class time, such as:

- Using interesting materials and different activities to promote learning throughout the day
- Monitoring and preventing misbehavior
- Redirecting misbehavior into appropriate activities

Emotional Support – How well teachers respond to each child’s social and emotional needs, such as:

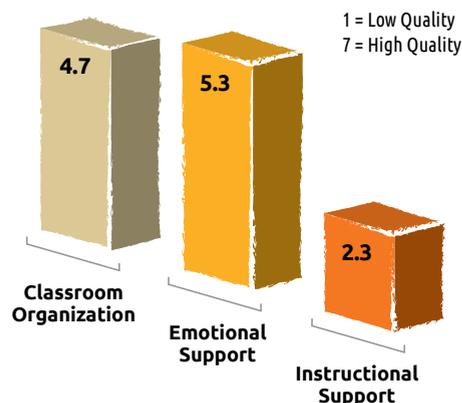
- Showing interest in the child’s ideas
- Building on the child’s individual interests and motivations

Instructional Support – How well teachers promote each child’s learning through positive, supportive interactions, such as:

- Helping the child learn and practice new ideas
- Showing a child how to use complex language
- Listening to the child’s ideas, providing feedback, and asking questions



Teachers were rated from 1 (Low Quality) to 7 (High Quality) on each type of classroom quality. On average, teachers scored in the middle range for classroom organization and emotional support. Similar to other preschool classroom findings, most (87%) of Head Start classes scored in the low range for instructional support.





Our Program

Improving Program Quality and Outcomes

Head Start has made significant investments in improving classroom practice to support children's learning and development.

An Eye on the Goal: Getting Ready for School

The Office of Head Start's "Approach to School Readiness" outlines the key steps that programs must take to help prepare children for success in school. These include:

- Establishing school readiness goals for children's learning and development while in Head Start.
- Assessing children's progress toward meeting goals and improving strategies to help children succeed, such as enhancing training and professional development plans for staff or providing indicated curriculum enhancements or improved instructional strategies.
- Creating a plan and implementing key strategies for achieving these goals. This includes using research-based curricula and teaching practices, engaging parents in supporting their children's growth and learning, and providing supervision and ongoing supports for teachers and home visitors.

"How You Teach" Is Important

The quality of teacher-child interactions is critical for children's social and academic development. Children need teachers and caregivers who are sensitive and responsive to their learning and emotional needs, and who provide language-rich, stimulating learning environments. The Office of Head Start is using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) to assess key aspects of classroom quality as part of its federal monitoring program. The Office of Head Start also offered CLASS training to every Head Start program in the country to help staff improve quality learning experiences for children.

Head Start Staff Grow and Learn, Too!

As part of a redesigned "Training and Technical Assistance System," the Office of Head Start supports six National Centers that provide information and resources on evidence-based practices and effective professional development strategies for all Head Start and Early Head Start programs and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, and American Indian/Alaska Native grantees. These Centers include:

- National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning
- National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations
- National Center on Health
- National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness
- National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement
- Early Head Start National Resource Center

Additionally, in 2010, the Office of Head Start launched an Early Learning Mentor Coach Initiative designed to provide local programs with coaches to support on-the-job-guidance, assistance, and training to teachers, home visitors, and family child care providers. This initiative aims to improve the qualifications and training of teaching staff; assist grantees in promoting positive, sustained outcomes for children; and promote career development in Head Start staff.

All of the efforts listed above are designed to increase each program's internal capacity to provide the highest possible quality comprehensive early childhood services.





For More Information

The following reports were used in preparing this brochure. They also contain more detailed information about the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES):

- Child Outcomes and Classroom Quality in FACES 2009 Report (1 Year in Head Start) (OPRE Report 2012-37A)*
- Data Tables for Child Outcomes and Classroom Quality in FACES 2009 (1 Year in Head Start) (OPRE Report 2012-37B)*

The reports listed above and others from FACES are available at:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/hs/faces/index.html>

Please note that the numbers may have been rounded from original reports for ease in presentation.

FACES data are available through Research Connections: <http://www.childcareresearch.org>

For related information on Head Start research, please visit <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc>

*Additional analyses were conducted to identify demographic information on children and families for this report (p.3, 5, 8, 9). Please note that the following corrections were made from the previously printed version: p. 3 “Percent of 3 year olds: 61%” (originally 59%), p. 7 “Caucasian (34%) children were above normal weight range (originally 35%), and p. 13 removed “ reading stories/print” from list of literacy activities. For more information, please contact the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre>