

Head Start Program Facts: Fiscal Year 2021



Established in 1965, Head Start promotes school readiness for children in low-income families by offering educational, nutritional, health, social, and other services. Since its inception, Head Start has served more than 38 million children birth to age 5 and their families. In 2021, Head Start received funding to serve about 839,116 children and pregnant people in centers, family homes, and in family child care homes. The program is rooted in urban, suburban, and rural communities throughout the nation. [Learn more about Head Start.](#)

Terms

Throughout this fact sheet, unless otherwise specified, "Head Start" refers to the Head Start program as a whole. This includes Head Start preschool services to children primarily ages 3 to 5; Early Head Start services to infants, toddlers, and pregnant people; and services to families provided by American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) programs.

"Funded enrollment" (also called "enrollment slots") refers to the number of children and pregnant people supported by federal Head Start funds in a program at any one time during the program years. This number includes slots funded by state or other funds when used by grant recipients as required nonfederal match. States may provide additional funding to local Head Start programs, which is not included in federal Head Start reporting.

"Cumulative enrollment" refers to the actual number of children and pregnant people Head Start programs serve throughout the entire program year, inclusive of enrollees who left during the program year and the enrollees who filled those empty places. Due to turnover, more children and families may receive Head Start services throughout the program year than is reflected in funded enrollment. All of these enrollees are reported in the Program Information Report (PIR).

Federal Budget

The U.S. Congress authorizes the amount of federal spending for Head Start each year. The Head Start program is administered by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Head Start awards federal grants directly to public agencies, private nonprofit and for-profit organizations, tribal governments, and school systems for operating Head Start programs in local communities.

Activity	Amount
Head Start Program, incl. Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships	\$10,363,049,571
Training and Technical Assistance	\$247,078,421
Research, Demonstration, and Evaluation	\$19,950,756
Monitoring Support	\$36,000,000
Program Support	\$56,836,681
Designation Renewal System (DRS) Transitions Support	\$25,000,000
Total	\$10,747,915,429

Annual Federal Funding and Funded Enrollment by State

The Head Start program serves children, families, and pregnant people in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and six U.S. territories. The table in this section presents the total actual funding awarded and funded enrollment of Head Start programs in each state and territory.

AIAN funding goes directly to AIAN tribal governments. AIAN programs operate in 26 states, and their services cross state lines in some cases. MSHS funding and funded enrollment are shown as one total, as this program supports children and families who receive services in various states during the year. Thus, federal funding and funded enrollment for these services cannot be attributed to individual states.

Annual Federal Funding and Funded Enrollment

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Head Start (excl. AIAN)</i>		<i>AIAN</i>	
	<i>Federal Funding</i>	<i>Funded Enrollment</i>	<i>Federal Funding</i>	<i>Funded Enrollment</i>
<i>Alabama</i>	\$156,825,889	13,438		
<i>Alaska</i>	\$20,579,547	1,348	\$35,776,476	1,965
<i>Arizona</i>	\$175,213,573	13,054	\$35,818,987	2,726
<i>Arkansas</i>	\$106,372,981	9,191		
<i>California</i>	\$1,320,500,737	87,819	\$14,106,767	825
<i>Colorado</i>	\$119,296,359	9,489	\$767,684	56
<i>Connecticut</i>	\$73,144,144	5,585		
<i>Delaware</i>	\$21,533,287	1,996		
<i>District of Columbia</i>	\$36,656,754	2,370		
<i>Florida</i>	\$442,454,135	40,319		
<i>Georgia</i>	\$258,763,401	23,259		
<i>Hawaii</i>	\$31,997,148	2,941		
<i>Idaho</i>	\$38,883,862	2,908	\$4,830,384	319
<i>Illinois</i>	\$410,844,005	29,117		
<i>Indiana</i>	\$160,915,337	13,327		
<i>Iowa</i>	\$80,666,369	7,148		
<i>Kansas</i>	\$79,968,282	6,809	\$2,139,862	109
<i>Kentucky</i>	\$180,999,075	14,921		
<i>Louisiana</i>	\$209,932,116	20,165		
<i>Maine</i>	\$43,094,677	2,957	\$982,196	60
<i>Maryland</i>	\$121,176,389	9,192		
<i>Massachusetts</i>	\$162,250,043	11,589		
<i>Michigan</i>	\$367,417,126	29,085	\$8,058,354	598
<i>Minnesota</i>	\$125,893,518	10,946	\$15,722,681	1,080
<i>Mississippi</i>	\$225,587,275	21,622	\$2,458,409	268
<i>Missouri</i>	\$186,607,110	13,916		
<i>Montana</i>	\$37,266,084	2,916	\$17,213,981	1,436
<i>Nebraska</i>	\$61,472,858	4,885	\$5,704,645	349
<i>Nevada</i>	\$41,621,944	2,937	\$4,466,309	362
<i>New Hampshire</i>	\$21,040,873	1,521		
<i>New Jersey</i>	\$193,901,043	15,267		

New Mexico	\$77,925,474	6,502	\$27,297,406	2,098
New York	\$626,590,038	46,051	\$1,560,466	143
North Carolina	\$243,871,997	20,822	\$3,031,241	230
North Dakota	\$25,014,453	1,877	\$10,491,826	819
Ohio	\$383,581,783	33,303		
Oklahoma	\$137,635,270	12,984	\$31,468,794	2,701
Oregon	\$105,339,943	12,899	\$4,723,353	396
Pennsylvania	\$355,878,475	35,372		
Rhode Island	\$34,309,953	2,592		
South Carolina	\$132,548,140	12,167	\$1,825,269	112
South Dakota	\$28,547,672	2,713	\$24,612,785	1,883
Tennessee	\$182,106,785	16,480		
Texas	\$719,676,508	68,467	\$1,325,722	134
Utah	\$74,286,011	5,501	\$2,290,027	230
Vermont	\$24,372,338	1,419		
Virginia	\$151,962,333	13,886		
Washington	\$174,784,499	11,145	\$25,465,339	1,566
West Virginia	\$75,200,678	7,824		
Wisconsin	\$151,400,958	13,050	\$14,027,829	1,089
Wyoming	\$21,166,369	1,442	\$3,089,685	261
American Samoa	\$4,452,717	1,332		
Guam	\$3,744,033	534		
No. Marianas	\$3,627,943	460		
Palau	\$1,916,424	350		
Puerto Rico	\$325,872,430	28,318		
Virgin Islands	\$10,987,496	914		
Subtotal:	\$9,589,676,661	790,441	\$299,256,477	21,815
MSHS	\$455,143,869	26,860		

Total ¹	
Funding	\$10,344,077,007
Enrollment	839,116

¹ In FY 2021, there were expansion Funding Opportunity Announcements posted in multiple states including for AIAN and MSHS programs. None of these funds nor funded enrollment are included in this table as they were not awarded by the end of FY 2021.

Program Year Statistics

Each year, Head Start programs are required to submit Program Information Reports (PIR) on the services they provided to children and families throughout the program year. This report includes child, family, and staff demographics and program characteristics.

For a copy of the PIR form, detailed reports, instructions on how to access PIR data sets, and further information, visit the [Program Information Report \(PIR\) page](#).

Note that many PIR measures, including the cumulative enrollment and health measures, look different than historic trends due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in

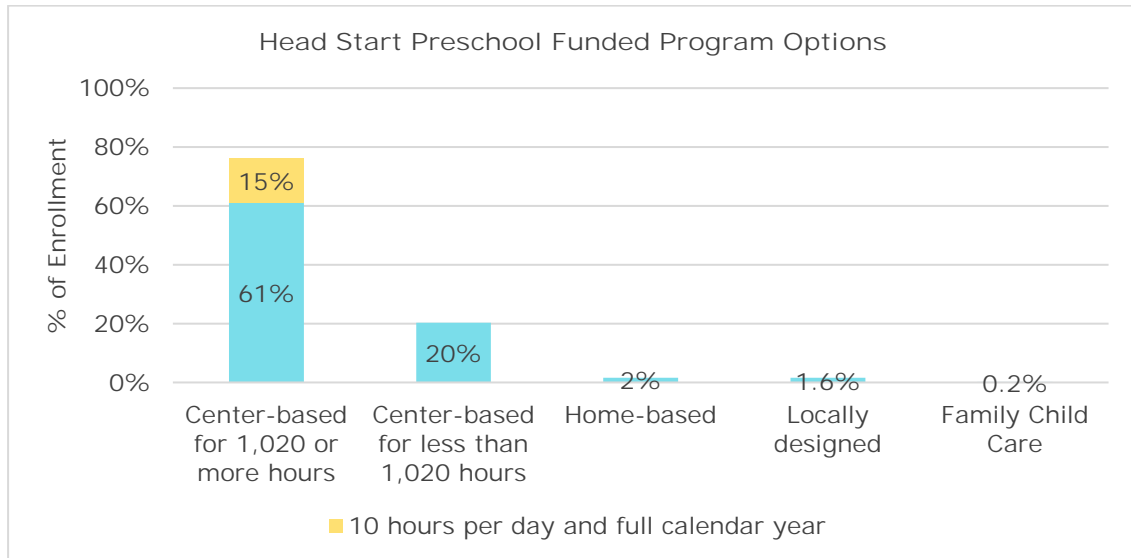
program closures and impeded the ability to resume full program services across the country during the 2020-2021 program year.

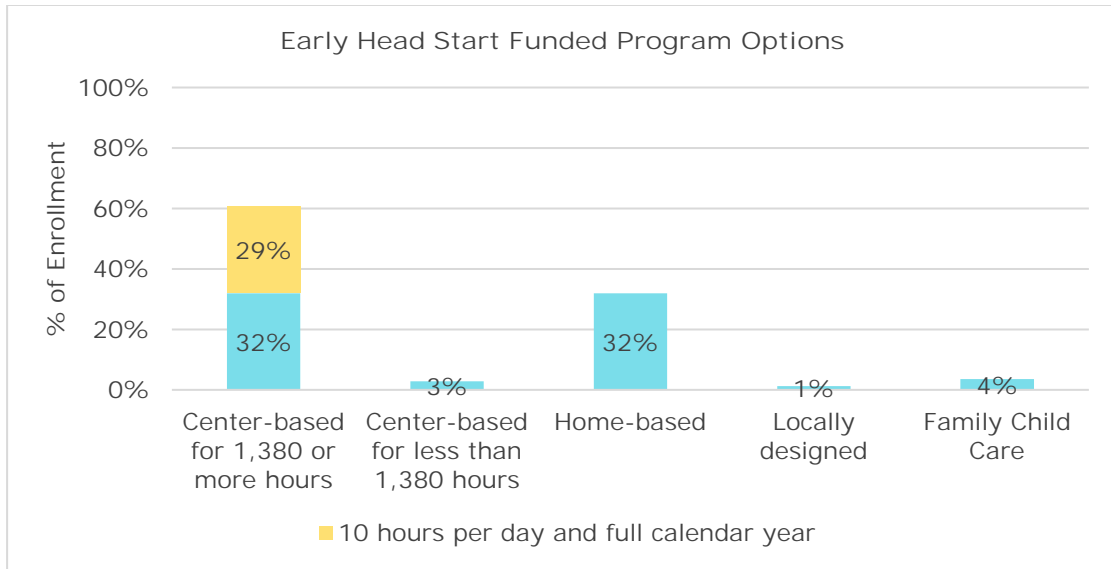
Program Characteristics

Most grant recipients provided both Head Start and Early Head Start services during the 2020-2021 program year.

- Head Start preschool services only: 27%
- Early Head Start services only: 12%
- Both: 61%

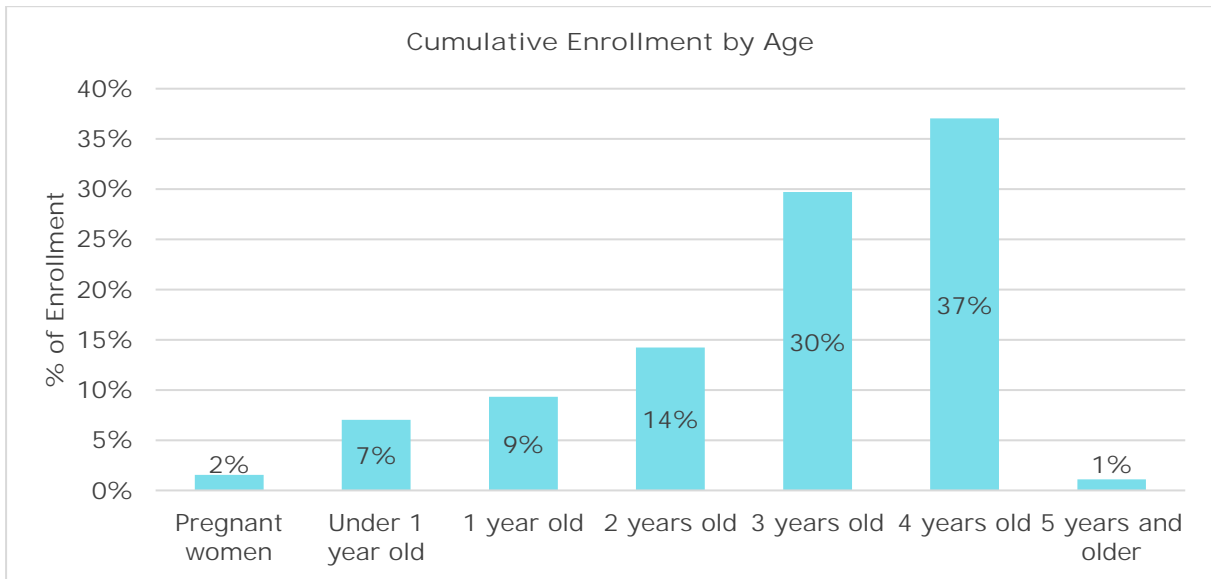
About 97% of funded Head Start preschool services were in center-based settings, and the majority were funded for 1,020 or more hours. This includes 15% to operate in center-based settings for 10 hours per day for the full calendar year. About 63% of funded Early Head Start services were in center-based settings, including about 29% operating center-based settings for 10 hours per day for the full calendar year. Additionally, about 32% of funded Early Head Start services were in home-based settings.



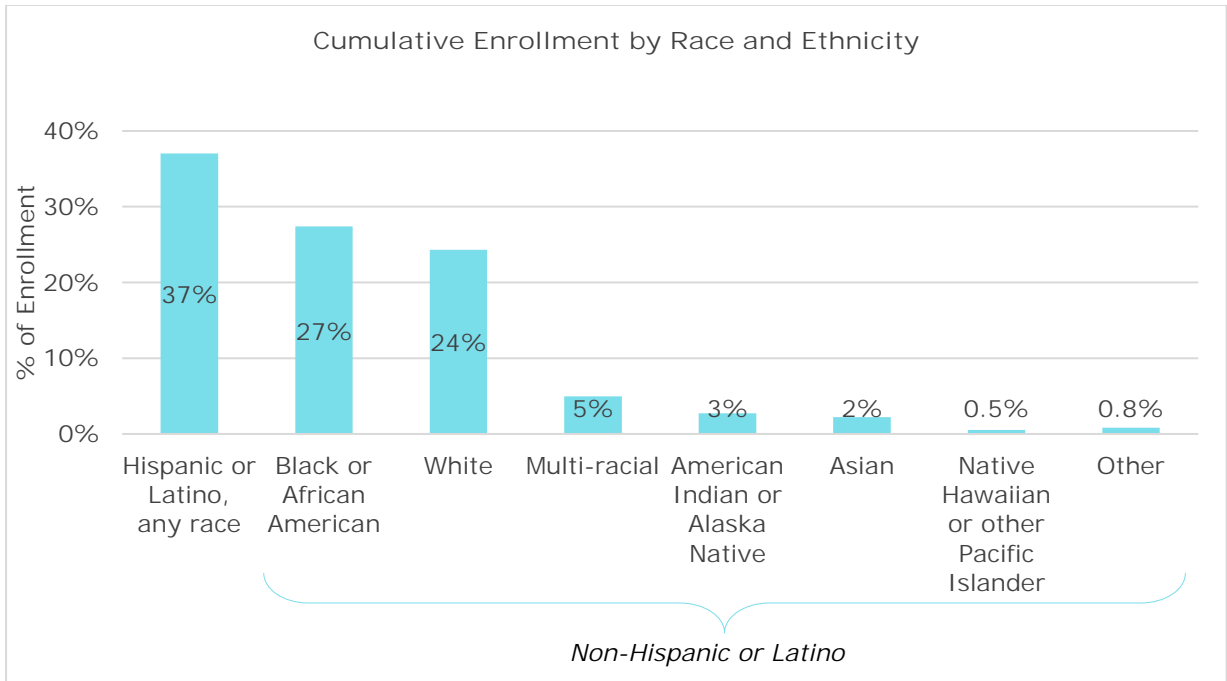


Child and Family Demographics

Head Start programs cumulatively served 756,000 children ages birth to 5 and pregnant people throughout the 2020–2021 program year.

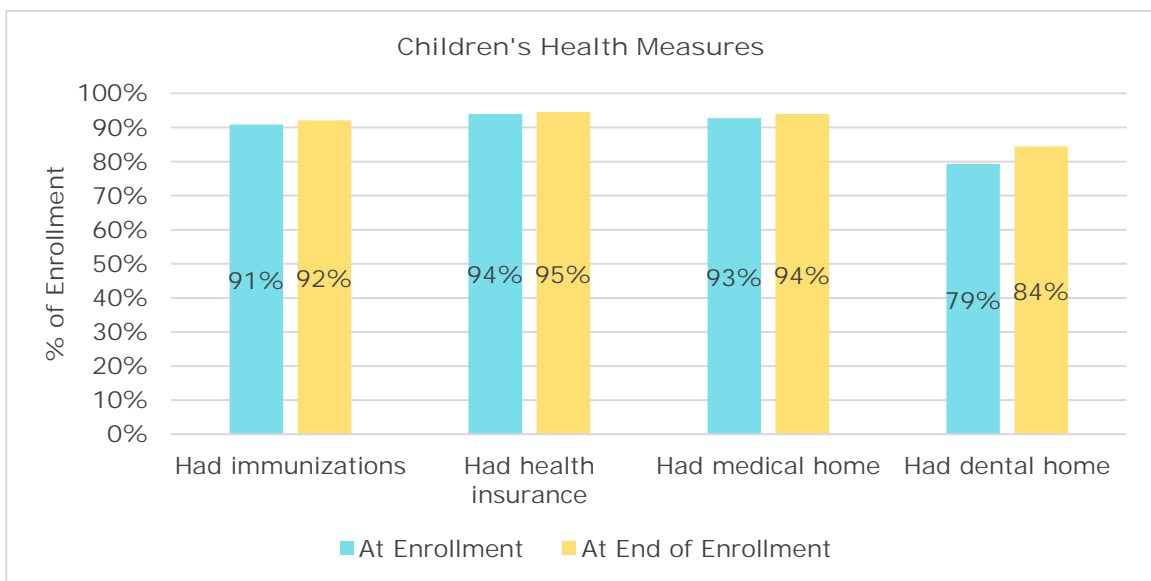


Head Start serves a diverse group of children, families, and pregnant people. During the 2020–2021 program year, 37% identified as Hispanic or Latino, and 27% identified as Black or African-American, non-Hispanic or Latino. Additionally, about 32% of children enrolled were dual language learners, of which two-thirds were in families that primarily spoke Spanish at home.



Services to Children and Families

Head Start programs work with families to help ensure children have access to needed services and resources. The number of children who received immunizations increased from the beginning of the program year to the end of the program year. Also, more families had health insurance and medical and dental homes for their children at the end of the 2020-2021 program year than at the beginning.



Head Start programs work with families to ensure they have the means to obtain health insurance, services for children with disabilities, adequate housing, job training, and more.

During the 2020-2021 program year:

- Most children had public health insurance. At the end of the program year, 95% of children had health insurance and were primarily enrolled in Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) program.
- Children with disabilities made up 13% of Head Start cumulative enrollment. Children with disabilities are those who have special plans under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In comparison, about 4% of infants and toddlers and 7% of preschool-age children across the U.S. had identified disabilities in 2019. Head Start serves a greater proportion of children with disabilities than found in the overall population.
- Among pregnant people enrolled in Early Head Start, approximately 79% received prenatal education on fetal development and 23% had medically high-risk pregnancies.
- Head Start served about 681,000 families cumulatively throughout the program year. The number of families served is less than the number of participants served, since some families have more than one child enrolled.
- Approximately 42,000 families served during the enrollment year experienced homelessness. Of those families, 25% found housing during the program year. Approximately 59,000 Head Start families received housing assistance, such as subsidies, utilities, and repairs.
- Approximately 76,000 families, or 11%, received services related to job training and adult education, such as general equivalency diploma (GED) programs and college selection.

Program Staff

Head Start programs employed and contracted with 263,000 staff. Parents of current or former Head Start children made up 22% of Head Start staff.

- Approximately 378,000 adults volunteered in their local Head Start program. Of these, 295,000 were parents of Head Start children.
- About 121,000 staff members provided child development services to children, including teachers, assistant teachers, home visitors, and family child care providers.
- Among child development staff, 30% were proficient in a language other than English.
- Of all Head Start center-based preschool teachers, 72% had a baccalaureate degree or higher in early childhood education or a related field with experience. The Head Start Act specifies that 50% of center-based preschool teachers nationwide should have these credentials.

Center-Based Preschool Teachers' Degrees

