Enrollment
In 2020-21, Early Head Start served children 0-3 and pregnant women through 187,771 slots in all 50 states and territories. Enrollment includes children and families enrolled in American Indian / Alaska Native Head Start and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start. Throughout the year, a total of 209,821 infants and toddlers and 11,576 pregnant women participated in Early Head Start.

Access
There are nearly 500,000 fewer Early Head Start slots than Head Start slots, which prevents our nation’s most vulnerable learners from experiencing a continuum of quality care during the critical prenatal-to-five period. Early Head Start Rising is NHSA’s campaign to raise Early Head Start slots to at least equal the number of Head Start slots.

By the Numbers
187,771 Federally funded Early Head Start slots
Only 10% of eligible children and their families had access.

243,345 Served
- 4.8% Pregnant Women
- 21.9% Under Age One
- 29.0% Age One
- 44.3% Age Two

15,601 classrooms in the United States

Program Types
Early Head Start provides extensive options to meet the needs of working parents.

- **Center-based programs** offer classroom-based care and education for at least 6 hours a day in community settings and schools
- **Home-based services** bring staff to families to support child development through a weekly 90-minute home visit and bi-monthly group social activities
- **Prenatal and postpartum services** offer information, education, and support directly to women during and after pregnancy
- **Family child care programs** provide the Early Head Start model in a private home daycare or a family-like setting
- **Hybrid-option programs** tailor services specifically to local needs

Our mission is to coalesce, inspire, and support the Head Start field as a leader in early childhood development and education.

For more than 25 years, Early Head Start has leveraged the proven Head Start model to positively affect the brain development, health, and well-being of pregnant women and children birth to age three. Through year-round, full-day services in centers, as well as home-based options, its impact is undeniable.
Early Head Start Improves Wellbeing

- Children in Early Head Start are more likely to be immunized and to receive services if they have a diagnosed disability.
- Early Head Start children show significantly better social-emotional, language, and cognitive development.
- For families in the child welfare system, children enrolled in Head Start are 93% less likely to be placed in foster care.

45,595
Children served by Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships

Through Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, Early Head Start programs have partnered with over 1,400 child care centers and 1,000 family child care providers to raise the bar on quality and services. By working together, the partners are able to extend Early Head Start resources to more early learning settings.

Equity

Early Head Start is rooted in equity, supporting children from the most at-risk backgrounds. Through a comprehensive model of support for the whole child and whole family, Early Head Start serves as a buffer to prevent and address childhood trauma, hunger, poor health, and other outcomes associated with living in poverty, which disproportionately affect children of color.

Of the 221,397 children served:

17,259 Experienced homelessness
10,025 Were in foster care
24,352 Had a diagnosed disability

Race & Ethnicity of Children & Staff

- White: 21% (24% Hispanic Children), 19% (24% Non-Hispanic Children)
- Black or African American: 1% (3% Hispanic Staff, 28% Non-Hispanic Staff)
- American Indian/Alaska Native: 1% (0.5% Hispanic Staff, 2% Non-Hispanic Staff)
- Asian: 0% (0.1% Hispanic Staff, 0.2% Non-Hispanic Staff)
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 0% (0.1% Hispanic Staff, 0.5% Non-Hispanic Staff)
- Bi- or Multi-Racial: 6% (6% Hispanic Staff, 6% Non-Hispanic Staff)
- Other or Unspecified: 8% (8% Hispanic Staff, 1% Non-Hispanic Staff)

Supports for Families & Pregnant Women

- 15,912 Parents Educated on Postpartum Care
- 86,146 Health Education
- 23,090 Adult Education
- 71,553 Emergency or Crisis Intervention
- 10,340 Pregnant Women connected with a Medical Home
- 9,976 Substance Abuse Prevention
- 20,450 Housing Assistance
- 24,585 Assistance Enrolling in Education or Job Training Program

Health Supports Provided to Children

- Health Insurance to 199,995 Children
- Dental Home to 158,426 Children
- 154,192 Children Up-to-Date on Immunizations

The majority of this data was collected from the 2020-21 Program Information Report. For additional citations, visit go.nhsa.org/EHS-Facts