



Head Start Cares for Children and Families Like Yours

Head Start knows that starting life over in a new country is hard. Moving to a new place means finding:

- Somewhere to live
- Some way to get around
- Some way to make a living

And a new job means finding someone you trust to care for your children while you are at work.

About Head Start

That's why the U.S. government made Head Start. Head Start is an early childhood education model committed to 360-degree development of the whole child—providing a strong foundation to help set children up for a lifetime of learning and growth in school and in the wider world.

- Head Start preschool programs serve the families of children ages 3 and 4.
- Early Head Start programs serve pregnant women and the families of children from birth through age 2.

Why you should enroll your child in Head Start

Head Start provides children:^{1,2}

- Care in a safe space where they can learn and play while parents work
- Free breakfast, lunch, and snacks
- Free health care, including medical, mental health, dental, hearing, and vision
- Education that supports learning in both English and the language your child's family speaks at home³

Parents and families also benefit. Head Start provides families:

- Help getting assistance from their community and from the federal government
- The opportunity to apply for work at Head Start
- A place to meet other families with children in their community

The Head Start Promise

Compared with their peers who don't attend Head Start, children enrolled in Head Start programs are more likely to:

- Graduate from high school and attend college
- Have improved social, emotional, and behavioral development
- Be better prepared to be parents themselves

¹U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.hhs.gov/answers/programs-for-families-and-children/how-can-i-get-my-child-into-head-start/index.html>

²Based on a small survey of Head Start programs' stated application requirements.

³<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED590725.pdf>

⁴U.S. Department of Education. "Information on the Rights of All Children to Enroll in School." <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-factsheet-201101.html>

Disclaimer: The information provided here does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice. All information is for general informational purposes only.



Apply for Head Start today

Head Start encourages families with refugee status to apply.

Contact a Head Start program near you to apply. The staff will answer your questions and help with any forms or documents you need.

To find a Head Start program near you, you can:

- Use the [Head Start Center Locator](#)
- Call 1-866-763-6481 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday
- Email: headstart@eclkc.info¹

Also talk to your case manager at your refugee resettlement agency. They can help you with the application process.

What you will need to apply to Head Start

Each Head Start program has its own application process. Typically, they ask for information about your family's household. They may also ask for proof of:²

- Your child's birth
- Your household income
- Where you live
- Your child's immunizations

Your child may qualify for immediate enrollment in Head Start if you meet the requirements of a federal law called the McKinney-Vento Homelessness Act.³ Talk to Head Start or your resettlement case manager about whether your child qualifies.

Know your rights

All children in the United States, including children with refugee status, have a right to go to public school. It is against the law for Head Start programs to require any of the following documents when enrolling children:⁴

- Proof of citizenship
- Birth certificate (you must be able to provide alternative)
- Social Security number

For more information

Learn more about your child's education rights as a refugee at www2.ed.gov/about/overview/focus/immigration-resources.html.

¹U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.hhs.gov/answers/programs-for-families-and-children/how-can-i-get-my-child-into-head-start/index.html>

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