



Head Start and Early Head Start

Managing Agency

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



Program Description

Head Start is a Federal program that promotes the school readiness of children from birth to age five from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Head Start programs provide a learning environment that supports children's growth in many areas such as language, literacy, and social and emotional development. Head Start emphasizes the role of parents as their child's first and most important teacher. These programs help build relationships with families that support family well-being and many other important areas.

Many Head Start programs also provide [Early Head Start](#), which serves infants, toddlers, and pregnant women and their families who have incomes below the Federal poverty level.

General Program Requirements

Children from birth to age five from families with low income, according to the Poverty Guidelines published by the Federal government, are eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start services.

Children in foster care, homeless children, and children from families receiving public assistance (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or Supplemental Security Income) are categorically eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start services regardless of income.

Head Start programs may enroll up to 10 percent of children from families that have incomes above the Poverty Guidelines. Programs may also serve up to an additional 35 percent of children from families whose incomes are above the Poverty Guidelines, but below 130 percent of the poverty line if the program can ensure that certain conditions have been met.

Pregnant women may also be eligible for Early Head Start.

Because many programs offer services to families that may qualify them under other local criteria, we strongly recommend you contact the program in your community for more information and guidance.

**POVERTY GUIDELINES
2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR
BASED ON ANNUAL INCOME**

Number in Family	Eligible 75-100% L:75% Pt:90	Eligible 50 -74% L:50% Pt:80	Eligible 25-49% L:25% Pt:75	Eligible 0-24% L:00% Pt:70	Over 1-10% O:10% Pt: 25	Over 11% Over Pt: 00
1 12,140	0 – 3,035	3,036 – 6,070	6,071 – 9,105	9,106 – 12,140	12,141 – 13,354	13,355+
2 16,460	0 – 4,115	4,116 – 8,230	8,231 – 12,345	12,346 – 16,460	16,461 – 18,106	18,107+
3 20,780	0 – 5,195	5,196 – 10,390	10,391 – 15,585	15,586 – 20,780	20,781 – 22,858	22,859+
4 25,100	0 – 6,275	6,276 – 12,550	12,551 – 18,825	18,826 – 25,100	25,101 – 27,610	27,611 +
5 29,420	0 – 7,355	7,356 – 14,710	14,711 – 22,065	22,066 – 29,420	29,421 – 32,362	32,363+
6 33,740	0 – 8,435	8,436 – 16,870	16,871 – 25,305	25,306 – 33,740	33,741 – 37,114	37,115+
7 38,060	0 – 9,515	9,516 – 19,030	19,031 – 28,545	28,546 – 38,060	38,061 – 41,866	41,867+
8 42,380	0 – 10,595	10,596 – 21,190	21,191 – 31,785	31,786 – 42,380	42,381 – 46,618	46,619+

FOR EACH ADDITIONAL PERSON ADD \$4,180