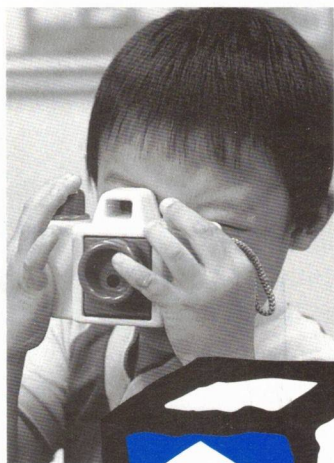




Give Your Child A Head Start





WHAT IS HEAD START?

Head Start is a Federal program for preschool children from low-income families. The Head Start program is operated by local non-profit organizations in almost every county in the country. Children who attend Head Start participate in a variety of educational activities. They also receive free medical and dental care, have healthy meals and snacks, and enjoy playing indoors and outdoors in a safe setting.

Head Start helps all children succeed. Services are offered to meet the special needs of children with disabilities. Most children in Head Start are between the ages of three and five years old. Services are also available to infants and toddlers in selected sites.

WHAT CAN THE HEAD START PROGRAM OFFER TO YOUR CHILD?

Head Start provides children with activities that help them grow mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically. The Head Start staff recognize that, as parents, you are the first and most important teachers of your children. They will welcome your involvement in Head Start activities, and will work as partners with you to help your child progress.

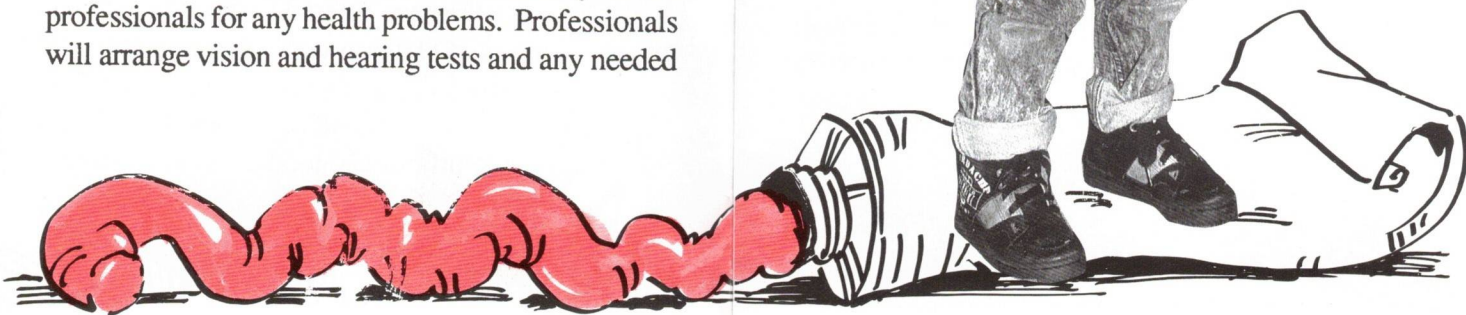
Head Start staff members offer your child love, acceptance, understanding, and the opportunity to learn and to experience success. Head Start children socialize with others, solve problems, and have other experiences which help them become self-confident. The children also improve their listening and speaking skills.

The children spend time in stimulating settings where they form good habits and enjoy playing with toys and working on tasks with classmates. Your child will leave Head Start more prepared for kindergarten, excited about learning, and ready to succeed.

Your Head Start child will also be examined by skilled professionals for any health problems. Professionals will arrange vision and hearing tests and any needed

immunizations. Head Start offers a nutrition assessment and dental exams as well. Children with health needs receive follow-up care.

Mental health and other services are available for children and families with special needs.



WHAT WOULD BE YOUR CHILD'S ROUTINE IN A HEAD START PROGRAM?

Most children who enroll in Head Start attend a half-day center-based program. However, some communities may operate a full day program or provide Head Start services through a home-based setting. In a home-based program, staff called Home Visitors teach parents how to provide learning experiences for their own children.

Some center-based programs offer children bus rides to and from home.

When the children arrive at the center, they are greeted warmly by their teachers. They put whatever they have brought from home in a place which is their own to use every day.

Classroom time includes many different activities. Some teachers begin the day by asking the children to sit in a circle. This encourages the children to talk about an idea or experience they want to share with others. In some centers, the children plan their activities. They may choose among art, playing with blocks or table toys, science activities, dancing to music, looking at books, or pretend housekeeping. Children can switch activities if they prefer another challenge.



Each day, they have time to work in a small group with other children and to play outdoors on safe playground equipment.

At lunchtime, children receive a nutritious meal and brush their teeth. All the children are taught to wash their hands before meals, and are encouraged to develop good personal and health habits. If they come for an afternoon session, they also receive a healthy snack.

WHAT CAN HEAD START OFFER YOUR FAMILY?

Head Start offers you a sense of belonging, other support services, and a chance to be involved in activities to help your whole family. You can take part in training classes on many subjects, such as child rearing, job training, learning about health and nutrition, and using free resources in your own community. Some parents learn the English language; others learn to read. Head Start also offers assistance to parents interested in obtaining a high school General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or other adult education opportunities.

If you have a family member with a special problem, such as drug or alcohol abuse, job loss, or other family crisis, your family can receive help through Head Start.



Head Start staff members refer families needing help to medical, social welfare, or employment specialists they know in the community, and will follow up to be sure you receive assistance.

You can become a Head Start volunteer and learn more about child development. This experience may later qualify you for training which can help you find employment in the child care field.

You can also have a voice in the Head Start program by serving on various committees. Parents' experiences in Head Start have raised their own self-confidence and improved their ability to make decisions.





IS THERE A HEAD START PROGRAM NEAR YOU?

There are Head Start programs nationwide. The name and address of the nearest Head Start program is stamped on the back of this pamphlet.

Some Head Start programs offer special services in addition to those described above. The staff will be happy to explain their services in detail when you contact them for information.

