

Head Start Needs a Restart



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Head Start Needs a Restart



In the 1960s as part of President Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty," the Head Start Program started with a laudable goal: providing free early childhood education and other programs focused on children for families in need. Since its inception, the program has served 40 million children, and in recent years, there were 833,000 participants in fiscal year 2022 and 778,000 in fiscal year 2023.

Sadly, this program has deviated from its mission in recent years, and all on the taxpayer dime. According to documents reviewed by FGI, Head Start now promotes radical diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) ideology, peddling a divisive world view on the government's dime. The worst part of this situation is that this ideology, which is antithetical to America and outwardly outspoken as such, is being presented to our youngest, most impressionable children. The same ideology was also used to facilitate and attract illegal immigration. A microscope must be applied to the program to assess how, where, and why our taxpayer money promoted controversial political ideologies antithetical to the real progress America has made for children and families.

One thing is abundantly clear, though: Head Start needs a restart, and as soon as possible. Our tax dollars should not be going toward the indoctrination of our children to ideologies that divide them based on race, religion, or whatever oppression flavor of the day the government picks.

Radical Ideology Directed at Infants and Young Children

As FGI dug into the program, it became very clear that much of what Head Start has been doing for families was not focused the early childhood education that most Americans would expect. Instead, it was infused with politically charged and divisive rhetoric.

Here's a question you may never have thought parents would be told to ask themselves: is my infant racist? The answer is obviously no. Yet, the Head Start program intended for very young children focused repeatedly on that very topic. Here are just a few examples of Head Start's radical and controversial items included in this report:

- Advocating on social media for childcare professionals to "advance equity and inclusion when children are first beginning to understand these issues."
- Hosting a series of webinars that claimed babies and toddlers have racist tendencies and can "discriminate between faces by race" at three months as well as "can categorize people by gender and race" at six months.
- Publishing a recommended reading list which includedDEI thought leader Nikole Hannah Jones' highly criticized pseudohistorical 1619 Project and the controversial cornerstone text of DEI How to be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi.
- Partnering with and funding activist organizations that help illegal immigrants break the law.

Head Start Needs a Restart



- Stating that its core mission was "to promote equity across race, ethnicity, income, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, education level, ability, age, citizenship, and geography."
- Using scientifically dubious language like "birthing parents."

Our education system clearly has been under attack by special interest groups and unelected bureaucrats in Washington, from the collegiate level all the way down to preschool. This situation is not the sign of a functional government program, nor is it a sign of the program's success at living up to its name. These special interest groups and unelected bureaucrats would rather divide Americans from the earliest of ages with politically charged and divisive rhetoric than provide real help to struggling families.

What Next?

As the founders of the Head Start would surely appreciate, the first step toward reform is education. This report is intended to shine a light on a well-meaning federal program that has significantly deviated from its mission.

It is critical to share these findings on social media, relay them to the media, and talk about them with our fellow citizens to continue to shed light on the deep dysfunction embedded within the Head Start program. Fortunately, the Department of Health and Human Services has already begun streamlining the program under the new administration. Still, more scrutiny, including audits by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), will uncover additional details. These reviews provide a unique opportunity to learn how Head Start and other federal programs are using taxpayer dollars – inappropriately and often egregiously - on political pet projects. Studies have also shown that the current program may be ineffective, so the program should be reviewed for general effectiveness at the same time as it is reviewed to remove its objectionable priorities.

Federal programs aimed at helping those most in need and vulnerable in our population should not be used to advance controversial political or social goals. Sadly, as this report outlines, that is exactly what happened with the Head Start program. It must be reformed to serve our neighbors in need, not special interests who seek to divide us and sow discord in our nation.



Advancing Racial and Ethnic Equity in Head Start Webinars

Head Start hosted a series of webinars aimed at promoting "anti-bias and anti-racism strategies" for use in Head Start programs, each of which included a litany of DEI and race-oriented commentary and advocacy:

In 2020, Head Start hosted a four-part series of webinars on "Advancing Racial and Ethnic Equity." ("Advancing Racial and Ethnic Equity in Head Start," Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)



The series' stated goal was to promote "anti-bias and anti-racism strategies" for use in Head Start programs. "The Advancing Racial and Ethnic Equity in Head Start Webinar Series promotes anti-bias and anti-racism strategies Head Start programs can use in their practices, services, and systems. It builds upon foundations in the Multicultural Principles for Early Childhood Leaders and the Head Start Program Performance Standards. It also complements Head Start's history of anti-racism in action. Watch the webinars to reflect on individual perspectives and recommit to building program environments that communicate genuine care, value, and respect for all children, families, and staff." ("Advancing Racial and Ethnic Equity in Head Start," Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)

Engaging in Conversations About Racial and Ethnic Equity

On August 6, 2020, Head Start hosted a webinar focused on "Engaging in Conversations About Racial and Ethnic Equity" to create "inclusive environments that invite and honor the diverse perspectives of staff and families." "In this webinar, the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement focuses on racism and equity. Explore information about creating respectful, inclusive environments that invite and honor the diverse perspectives of staff and families in service of moving forward together. Review foundational and key terms, resources, and strategies for addressing racism in Head Start settings." ("Engaging in Conversations About Racial and Ethnic Equity," Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)





Slide 5 introduced Dr. Deborah Bergeron, Director of Head Start, as a speaker.



During opening remarks, Dr. Bergeron said that equity is "at the core of the Head Start principles and its philosophy" and there was still a lot of work to be done "as individuals and as a country to advance racial and ethnic equity." "And, you know, a basic Head Start principle is that all individuals have assets and talents, and Head Start builds on them. It's a positive view that is at the heart of equity, no matter race, ethnicity, gender of enrolled children and families, and this relates to Head Start staff too. Equity is not just embedded in Head Start practices, it's at the core of the Head Start principles and its philosophy. So, we have a lot of work to do as individuals and as a country to advance racial and ethnic equity. But it is important to be having this national conversation at this time, and I can't think of a better platform than the Head Start platform on which to have this conversation. I feel like we have the perspective, the sensitivity, the empathy, baked into what we do, to have a conversation that's honest and open and productive." ("Engaging in Conversations About Racial and Ethnic Equity," Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)



Slide 8

Laid out the learning objectives of the webinar, including identifying specific actions to "apply an equity lens" to viewers' roles and practices.

Learning Objectives

- · Understanding why and how equity matters in Head Start and Early Head Start programs
- · Unpacking key concepts related to race and ethnic equity and what they look like in the context of your program
- · Identifying specific insights and actions to help you apply an equity lens in your own role and practice
- · Learning about tools and resources that can support conversations about race, racism, and equity



Slide 9

Listed the presentation's key messages, including the notion that "advancing equity is directly tied" to the mission and purpose of Head Start.

Key Messages

- Advancing equity is directly tied to the historical mission and purpose of Head Start.
- Raising awareness is an important first step in doing better for all the children and families served.
- Taking actionable steps is essential to ensure that:
 - equity is not just a buzzword or afterthought;
 - equity is an implicit part of providing all children and families with experiences and opportunities that enable them to thrive;
 - racism is addressed in all levels of early childhood education.



Slide 10

Included a guide to "courageous conversations about race."





Slide 17

Stated that families play a role in advancing equity by engaging in conversations about "race, ethnicity, racism, and justice."

Role of Families in Advancing Equity

- Building strong networks among diverse families and communities
- Increasing knowledge about the rights of children and families, navigating systems, and control of resources
- Engaging in conversations with staff about race, ethnicity, racism, and justice
- Calling out stereotypes, bias, and discrimination in learning materials, interactions, educational practices, and offering anti-racist resources



17

Slide 18

Continued the role families play in advancing equity, including "identifying and correcting one's own racially biased thoughts, feelings, and actions."

Role of Families in Advancing Equity, cont.

- Monitoring their child's educational experiences to ensure they help to promote a healthy racial identity and an appreciation of and respect for others
- Learning more about how to help their child navigate the complexities of race
- Identifying and correcting one's own racially biased thoughts, feelings, and actions
- · Modeling anti-biased thoughts, feelings, and actions



18

Slide 19

Stated that advancing equity requires "confronting one's own biased ideas" and "championing antiracist ideas."

Advancing Equity Requires...

- An ongoing journey
- · An understanding of key terms and constructs
- Identifying racial and ethnic inequities and disparities
- · Confronting one's own biased ideas—past and present
- Championing antiracist ideas, attitudes, practices, and policies



19



Slide 14

Included a graphic for the engagement framework of "positive & goal-oriented relationships" through DEI.



Slide 15

Stated that the role of professionals included promoting DEI concepts.

Role of Professionals in Advancing Equity

- Engaging in professional development experiences that support more effective service delivery with diverse children and families
- Promoting diversity, equity, belonging, and inclusion through program leadership, staffing, curriculum development, the learning environment, and practices
- Understanding, appreciating, and leveraging differences among children and their families



15

Slide 16

Continued that professionals have the obligation to advocate for and implement DEI policies, engage in self-reflection, and commit to being antibiased.

Role of Professionals in Advancing Equity, cont.

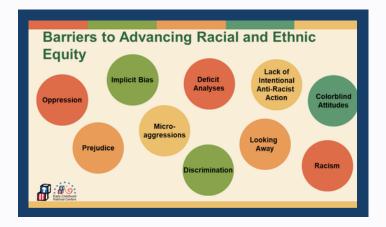
- · Encouraging and honoring family wisdom and voice
- · Ensuring that children & families get the supports they need
- Advocating for and implementing policies, practices, and opportunities that promote equity
- Engaging in self-reflection about one's own beliefs that have shaped one's perceptions and treatment of other racial and ethnic groups
- · Committing to be anti-biased and advancing equity





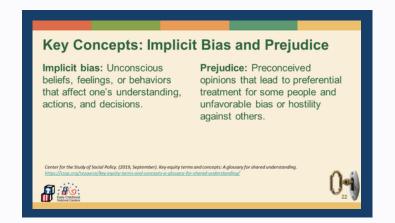
Slide 21

Contained barriers to advancing equity, including "oppression," "implicit bias," "micro-aggressions," "lack of intentional anti-racist action," and "colorblind attitudes."



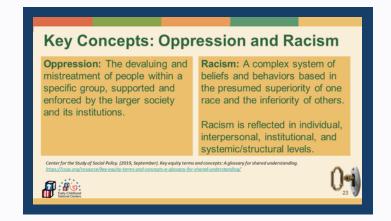
Slide 22

Contained definitions of "implicit bias" and prejudice.



Slide 23

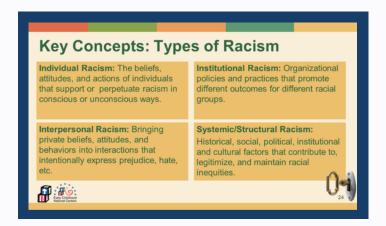
Contained definitions of "oppression" and racism.





Slide 24

Defined four types of racism.



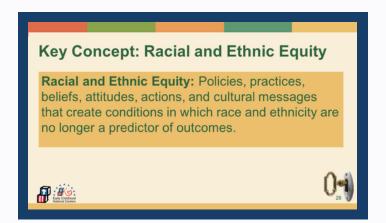
Slide 25

Defined the key concept of advancing equity by "acknowledging unequal starting places" caused by policies, beliefs, and actions.

Key Concept: Advancing Equity Acknowledging unequal starting places due to policies, practices, beliefs, attitudes, and actions that create differential outcomes Giving voice to those unheard Protecting basic human rights and valuing inherent human dignity Ensuring equal opportunity and fairness at all levels Providing the specific needs of an individual or group

Slide 26

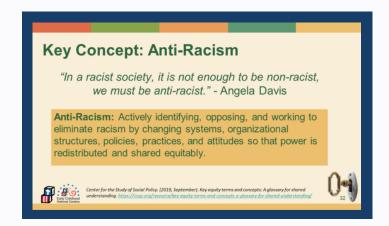
Defined the key concept of racial and ethnic equity.





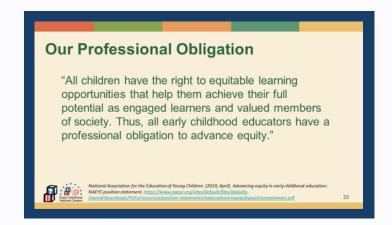
Slide 32

Promoted the concept of "anti-racism"



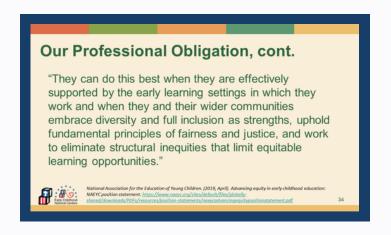
Slide 33

Declared that "all early childhood educators have a professional obligation to advance equity."



Slide 34

Continued the professional obligation declaration, opining that professionals and communities should "embrace diversity and full inclusion as strengths," and work to "eliminate structural inequities."



10



Slide 44

Advocated pro-DEI actions, including creating "a strategic plan for anti-racism in the classroom."



Slide 45

Provided resources to address "personal level" biases.

Personal Level Resources Take Action to De-bias Build new associations through increased intergroup contact—diversity matters. Among the conditions for success Equal status within the contact situation Intergroup cooperation Intergroup cooperation Common goals Take the Implicit Association Test Racial Equity Tools. "Racism." PERSONAL The individual consistently works alone and with othera, to understand their own values, beliefs, implicit biases, unconscious racism, actions and relative privileges that a contribute to racial inequity; the individual acrs to advance racial equity.

Slide 46

Provided resources to address "interpersonal level" biases.





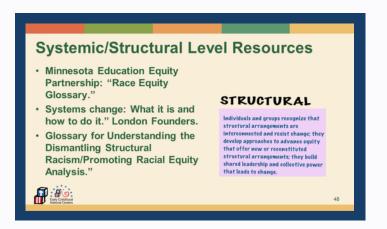
Slide 47

Provided resources to address "institutional level" biases



Slide 48

Provided resources to address "systemic/structural level" biases.



Slide 49

Posed guestions on what actions and commitments could be taken at each bias "level."



12

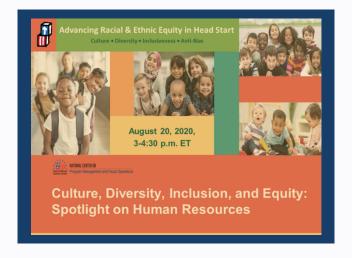


NOTE: The full video download is available <u>here</u>, and a transcript can be found <u>here</u>.

Culture, Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity (CDIE): Spotlight on Human Resource Systems

On August 20, 2020, Head Start hosted a webinar focused on integrating "Culture, Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity" in human resource systems. "Discover how the Multicultural Principles for Early Childhood Leaders support Head Start management systems through the lenses of culture, diversity, inclusion, and equity. In this webinar, the National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations puts a spotlight on the human resource system. Consider how to honor culture, diversity, inclusion, and equity when developing program goals and objectives. Learn strategies to facilitate effective and impartial dialogue."

(Culture, Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity (CDIE): Spotlight on Human Resource Systems," Head Start, Archived 12/4/24)



Slide 5

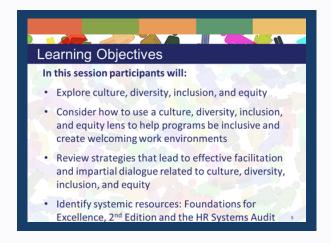
Posed a question on what leadership could do to "support an organizational culture that systematically advances diversity, inclusion, and equity."





Slide 9

Laid out the session objectives, including a review of strategies that lead to "effective facilitation" of DEI.



Slide 18

Introduced the "Head Start Mix" of culture, diversity, inclusion, and equity.



Slide 26

"Practical strategies" for DEI implementation, including forming "an inclusion council."





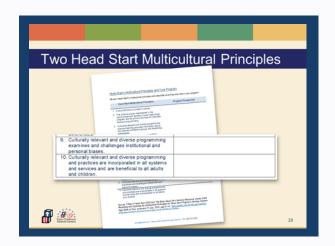
Slide 27

Promoted the ideals of DEI buzzwords.



Slide 29

Introduced multicultural principles on challenging biases and incorporating diversity into programming.



NOTE: The full video is available <u>here</u>, and a full transcript is available <u>here</u>.



Anti-Bias Teaching and Learning Environments in Head Start Programs

On September 10, 2020, Head Start hosted a webinar on facilitating "Anti-Bias Teaching and Learning Environments in Head Start Programs," with a focus on exploring "children's understanding of race." "This webinar focuses on supporting anti-bias teaching practices and promoting inclusive learning environments in Head Start settings. Explore children's understanding of race and identity development. Discover strategies to promote anti-bias practices through supportive interactions and activities with children." ("Anti-Bias Teaching and Learning

Environments In Head Start Programs, Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)



Slide 16

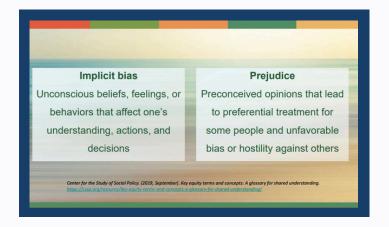
Introduced principles on challenging biases and incorporating diversity into programming.





Slide 17

Defined "implicit bias" and prejudice.



Slide 18

Began a section on the "myth" that children don't see race.



Slide 25

Stated that "race is one of the earliest emerging social categories."





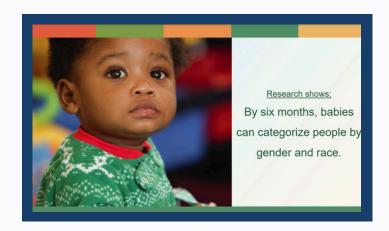
Slide 26

Stated that by three months, old babies "discriminate between face by race."



Slide 27

Stated that by six months, old babies "can categorize people by gender and race."



Slide 28

Stated that toddlers "use racial categories to reason about others" and "may use race to choose playmates."





Slide 29

Stated that between three and five years old, children use race "to include or exclude, and to negotiate power."



Slide 30

Stated that by five years old, "some children express preference for their own race" and that by kindergarten they have learned "many of the same racial attitudes as adults."



Slide 43

Advocated for being "open and honest" of "implicit bias."





Slide 52

Advocated for safe spaces in anti-bias learning environment.



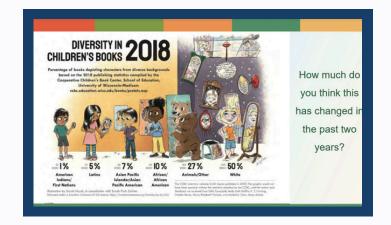
Slide 57

Provided questions on reviewing books related to their author, characters, and representation.



Slide 58

Included diversity metrics for children's books from 2018.





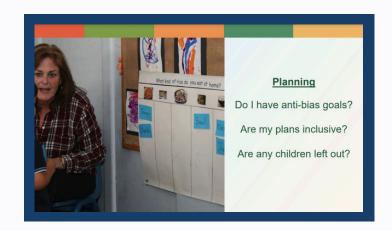
Slide 59

Outlined the "four core goals of antibias education" for children: identity, diversity, justice, and activism.



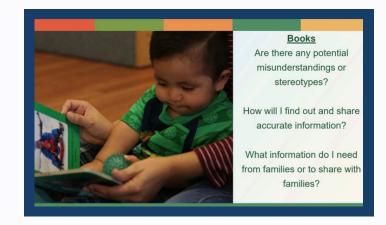
Slide 64

Provided questions related to planning, including "anti-bias goals" and inclusivity.



Slide 65

Provided questions related to choosing books, including whether there were "potential misunderstandings or stereotypes."





Slide 67

Provided a graphic on the framework for anti-bias teaching.



Slide 68

Included a quote on talking to young children about race.



NOTE: All 71 slides are available <u>here</u>, and a full transcript is available <u>here</u>.



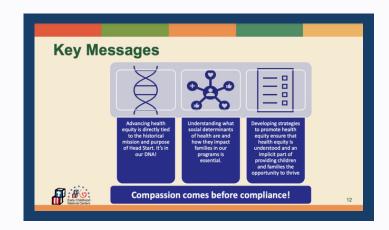
Health Disparities: Responding with a Lens on Race and Ethnicity

On September 17, 2020, Head Start hosted a webinar on responding to health disparities "with a lens on race and ethnicity", which included a litany of DEI and race-oriented commentary and advocacy. ("Health Disparities: Responding with a Lens on Race and Ethnicity, Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)



Slide 12

Included the phrase "Compassion comes before compliance!"





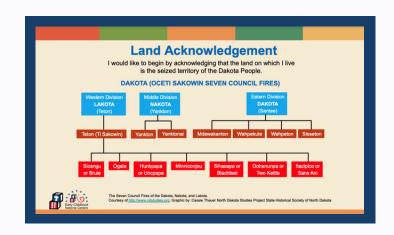
Slide 17

Referred to Head Start enrollees as "OUR children."

These are OUR children When we make decisions for other people's children, and don't seek to understand their perspective; don't value their voices; ignore their challenges...we effectively silence them.

Slide 21

Included a land acknowledgment for the "seized territory of the Dakota people."



Slide 24

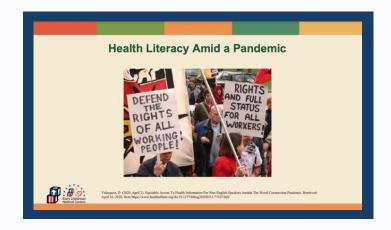
Included a graphic stating "Environmental Racism is Nothing New."





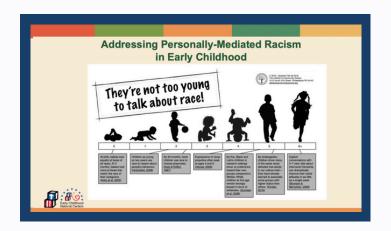
Slide 27

Included an image of protesters.



Slide 30

Stated that "They're not too young to talk about race!" beginning at birth.



Slide 40

Advocated that "all Head Start policies

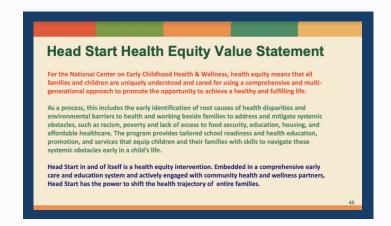
AND funding" should be applied through
a "racial equity lens."





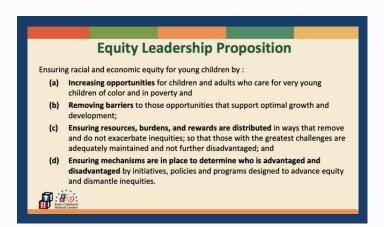
Slide 45

Included a "Head Start Health Equity Value Statement."



Slide 63

An "Equity Leadership Proposition" that included "Ensuring resources, burdens and rewards are distributed in ways that remove and do not exacerbate inequities."



Slide 71

Provided data sources to use for decision-making, including race-based metrics.





Slide 85

Provided a conversation topic on actions that can be taken to increase benefits for "Black, Latinx and Native American children."

Chat: What actions can you take to increase benefit for Black, Latinx and Native American Children? Interpretation of the Policy Modifications of Policy Modifications of Practices New or Modification of Legislation (statutes) Workforce/Leadership (public/private)

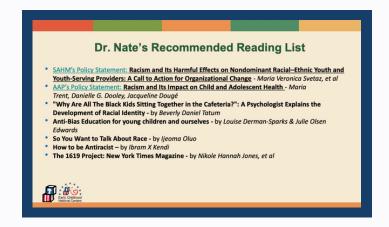
Slide 94

Announced an upcoming video series on identifying and prioritizing groups including "Communities of color" and Migrant & Refugee Families."

COMING SOON: Identifying and Prioritizing Families Video Series Identifying & Prioritizing Families Communities of Color Prioritizing Children in Foster Care Migrant & Refugee Families Rural Families Homeless Children & Families

<u>Slide 95</u>

A recommended reading list, including the Nikole Hannah Jones' 1619 Project and "How to be Antiracist" by Ibram X Kendi.





One presenter advocated that decisions on funding and black grants should be made "through a racial equity lens" to "become more anti-racist through Head Start." "And so, we see there was opportunities to do that with Head Start funding that was released through the CARES Act. And so, thinking about those funds as way to protect staff, both physically and financially, right? And so, how do we spend money in a ways that protect the staff that work at Head Start, and then how do we decide which families are prioritized for some of these opportunities funding through like the childcare development block grants? Making sure that we're making these decisions through a racial equity lens is one way we can really become more anti-racist through Head Start."

("Health Disparities: Responding with a Lens on Race and Ethnicity (Transcript), Head Start, Archived 12/6/24)

NOTE: All 100 slides are available <u>here</u>, and a full transcript is available <u>here</u>.



Sesame Street in Communities Webinar Series

Head Start hosted a three-part webinar series with the makers of Sesame Street to provide "racial justice resources" through storybooks, workshops, games, videos, and printable material located on the Sesame Street website.

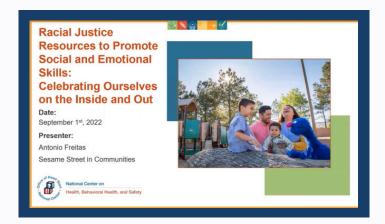
In September 2022, Head Start hosted a webinar series with the makers of Sesame Street on "talking about race and diversity." "This three part series supports early childhood staff in building young children's social and emotional skills by talking about race and diversity. Watch these videos to learn more about celebrating identities, building community, and resolving conflicts with resources designed for young children, their families, and the staff who care for them." ("Racial Justice Resources to Promote Social and

Emotional Skills," Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)

NOTE: The Sesame Street in Communities website has since been taken down, but an archived version is available <u>here</u>.

Celebrating Ourselves on the Inside and Out

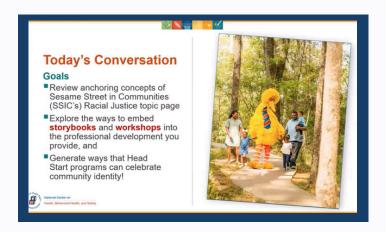
On September 1, 2022, Head Start hosted a webinar with the makers of Sesame Street to provide "racial justice resources" using storybooks and workshops. "In this webinar, we are celebrating our differences on the inside and out. This webinar recording explores developmentally appropriate ways to discuss race with young children and language that staff can use in response to challenging questions children may have about race." ("Celebrating Ourselves on the Inside and Out," Head Start, Archived 12/5/24)





Slide 4

Cited the goal of embedding storybooks and workshops for racial justice education.



Slide 5

Defined "social determinants of health" including "structural and systemic racism."



Slide 7

Defined racism as a social determinant of health, including via increased stress, exposure to toxins and barriers to education.





Slide 8

Included a graphic of Head Start services as "health equity intervention."



Slide 14

Documented the history of inclusion in Sesame Street.



Slide 15

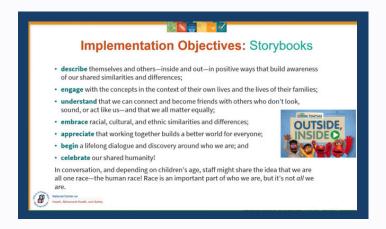
Presented new, inclusive Sesame Street characters.





Slide 18

Detailed the implementation objectives of storybook for racial justice.



Slide 23

Provided guidance on using workshops to address racial justice.



Slide 25

Included an example workshop "helping parents talk about (and stand up against) racism."



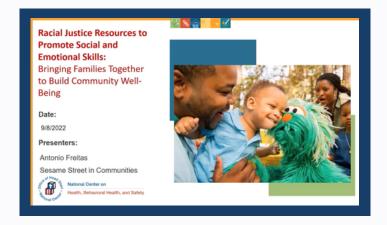
32



NOTE: The full video download extension is available <u>here</u> and a transcript can be found <u>here</u>. The Sesame Street in Communities website has since been taken down, an archived version is available here.

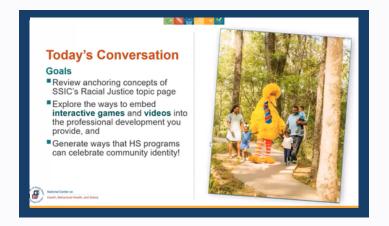
Bringing Families Together to Build Community Well-Being

On September 8, 2022, Head Start hosted a webinar with the makers of Sesame Street to provide "racial justice resources" using games and videos. "In this webinar, learn how to bring families together and build a strong sense of community. Discover ways to foster connections that improve community well-being and contribute to better outcomes for children." ("Bringing Families Together to Build Community Well-being," Head Start, Archived 11/28/24)



Slide 3

Cited the goal of embedding games and videos for racial justice education.





Slide 8

Posed a question on what children and families have asked about race.



Slide 9

Displayed example interactive games, with one titled "let's talk about race."



Slide 10

Provided guidance on using interactive games to address racial justice.

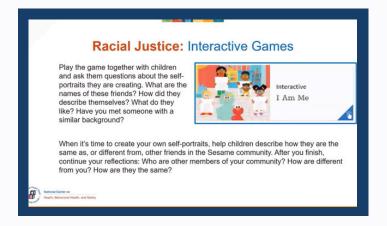


34



Slide 11

Detailed further guidance on using games to address racial justice.



Slide 13

Cited available videos regarding racial justice, including one titled "Explaining Race."



Slide 16

Detailed out the Sesame Street website's racial justice topic pages.



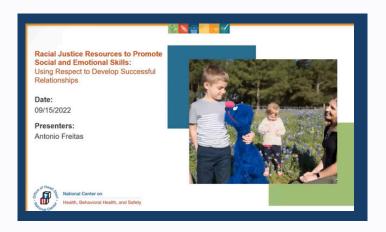


NOTE: The full video download extension is available <u>here</u>, and a transcript can be found <u>here</u>. The Sesame Street in Communities website has since been taken down, but an archived version is available here.

Using Respect to Develop Successful Relationships

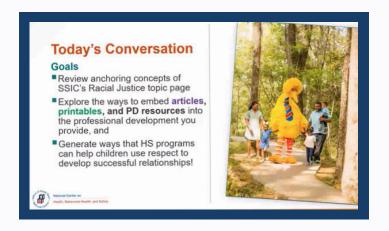
On September 15, 2022, Head Start hosted a webinar with the makers of Sesame Street to provide "racial justice resources" using articles and printable materials. "In part three of Sesame Street in Communities' Racial Justice Resources to Promote Social and Emotional Skills webinar series, explore resources to help develop social and emotional skills in young children. Supporting young children, their families, and staff in working together to make decisions and resolve conflicts is crucial to developing healthy, successful relationships. This webinar was broadcast on Sept. 15, 2022."

Relationships," Head Start, Archived 12/5/24)



Slide 4

Cited the goal of embedding articles and printable materials for racial justice education.





Slide 12

Laid out racial justice resources available through Sesame Street's website, including interactive games, videos, storybooks, workshops, articles, and printables.



Slide 13

Included a selection of articles on racial justice, including one titled "For White Parents: The 4 S' of Antiracist Parenting."



Slide 14

Provided guidance on using articles to address racial justice.





Slide 15

Detailed the implementation strategies of using articles for racial justice.

Embed in adult-facing emails/newsletters Share via social media Photocopy and place in reception areas Use on a resource board in common spaces Share with caregivers as a conversation starter on ways to support children Manual Carear Manu

Slide 16

Detailed a variety of printable materials available to address racial justice.



Slide 18

Detailed the implementation strategies of using printable material for racial justice.





Slide 24

Included professional development materials for addressing racial justice.



Slide 25

Laid out a weekly list of resources for racial justice.



NOTE: The full video download extension is available <u>here</u> and a transcript can be found <u>here</u>. The Sesame Street in Communities website has since been taken down, an archived version is available <u>here</u>.



Additional Webinars

Coaching to Support Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

On November 15, 2023, Head Start hosted a webinar on "Coaching to Support Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging." "Children and families thrive in learning environments where they feel a sense of belonging and are valued and included. This webinar highlights strategies coaches can use to support their coachees to create a sense of belonging for children with disabilities and their families. Practice using these coaching strategies through a case study focused on equitable and inclusive practices."

(Coaching to Support Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)



Slide 4

Outlined the webinar's scope, including strategies "to promote equity, inclusion and belonging in learning spaces."





Slide 9

Stated that inclusion is a "human rights issue."



Slide 16

Advocated for making inclusive practices "a focus."

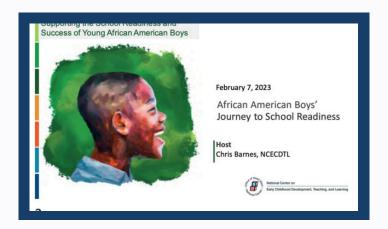


NOTE: All 28 slides are available <u>here</u>, and a full transcript is available <u>here</u>.



African American Boys' Journey to School Readiness

On February 7, 2023, Head Start hosted a webinar on supporting the school readiness of African American boys, with a focus on issues arising from "structural racism and implicit bias." "Early experiences and high-quality learning environments lay the foundation for healthy development and school readiness. Unfortunately, structural racism and implicit bias have resulted in inequitable learning experiences for young African American boys that negatively affect their development and well-being.... This episode gives an overview of the Supporting the School Readiness and Success of Young African American Boys project, including how and why it was launched. It also outlines the Head Start approach to meeting the unique needs of young African American boys and their families. Strategies to help participants to strengthen development, learning, and school success in ways that celebrate the diversity of young African American boys are discussed." (African American Boys' Journey to School Readiness, Head Start, Archived 12/4/24)



Slide 5

Listed strengthening "equitable learning environments" as one of the learning objectives.





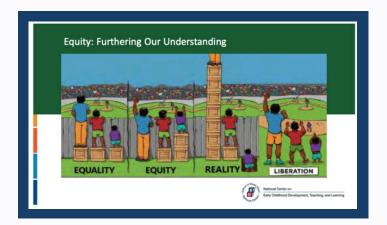
Slide7

Included a graphic of Head Start's "BIG 4" priorities, the first of which was "Advancing Equity"



Slide 12

Included a graphic of the differences between equality, equity, reality, and liberation.



NOTE: All 27 slides are available <u>here</u>, and a full transcript is available <u>here</u>. Parts 2 and 3 of the series were unavailable.



Supporting School Readiness of Young African American Boys

Head Start produced a series of guidance materials for education of African American boys, which included curriculum changes for accommodation of associated problematic behaviors and a goal of "overcoming bias":

Beginning in 2013, Head Start published and expanded a guide to address educational inequality in African American boys. "In 2013, the Supporting the School Readiness and Success of Young African American Boys Project began in response to national data that showed educational inequality for this group of children. Head Start programs saw an opportunity to address this concern by raising staff awareness and skills to meet the unique needs of African American boys and their families. The Office of Head Start continues to use research, meetings with subject matter experts, and feedback from Head Start educators, child care staff, and families to expand this guide, originally published in 2014."

The guide includes "understanding and overcoming bias" as a stated goal. "The reflection and strategy resources in this guide are for gaining knowledge, understanding and overcoming bias, seeing essential practices in action, and planning and implementing the practice in individual learning environments and across programs. Program leaders — coaches, education managers, and supervisors — can use them to support the learning and ongoing professional development of program and education staff. Education staff and others can also use the materials for their own self-directed learning." ("Supporting the School Readiness and Success of Young African American Boys," Head Start, Archived 11/27/24)

Reflections on a Culturally Responsive Strength-based Approach

Head Start developed a 56 page guide on supporting the education of African American boys, with suggestions including self-reflection to confront biases, awareness of "microaggressions," and critical analysis of intersectionality:

The guide advocated for self-examination to confront stereotypes, biases, and assumptions in order to force a "paradigm shift." "How do you make a paradigm shift? The work begins by engaging in self-examination and confronting your stereotypes, biases, and assumptions."

The resource included a claim that institutional racism and structural inequalities were part of the "macrosystem" affecting the education of African American boys. "Institutional racism and structural inequalities are part of the macrosystem that affect the development of African American boys." ("Supporting the School Readiness and Success of Young African American Boys Project: Reflections on a Culturally Responsive Strength-Based Approach," Head Start, Archived 12/5/24)



In the guide, "microaggressions" were noted as an obstacle to positive perceptions.

The deficit perspective is fueled by microaggressions (Sue, 2010). They are the brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities — either intentional or unintentional — that are aimed at people because of their marginal status in society." ("Supporting the School Readiness and Success of Young African American Boys Project: Reflections on a Culturally Responsive Strength-Based Approach," Head Start, Archived 12/5/24

Readers were encouraged to "engage in critical reflectivity" related to intersectionality.

"Engage in critical reflectivity about inequalities/discriminatory practices brought about by the intersection between gender and race." ("Supporting the School Readiness and Success of Young African American Boys Project: Reflections on a Culturally Responsive Strength-Based Approach," Head Start, Archived 12/5/24

In the development of the resource, Head Start conducted at least 51 training events with over **1,300 participants**. "In the course of the project, materials were developed and professional development was conducted. In total, there were 51 trainings with over 1,300 participants from Head Start and other early learning programs. The trainings included 8 at national conferences, 20 at Regional meetings, including a series of webinars for Head Start staff and Training/Technical Assistance specialists, 17 pilot trainings targeting Head Start and child care staff working in an urban setting, 6 pilot focus groups targeting parents" ("Supporting the School Readiness and Success of Young African American Boys Project: Reflections on a Culturally Responsive Strength-Based Approach," <u>Head Start</u>, Archived 12/5/24)

Strategies for Culturally Responsive Strength-based Practices

Head Start's guidance on education for African American boys called for a celebration of diversity and respect of "the culture and lived experiences of their families":

Guidance on education for African American boys called for staff to "celebrate the diversity of African American boys and respect the culture and lived experiences of their families." "Head Start and other early childhood education settings have an opportunity to create more responsive learning environments for African American boys, support their development, and promote their strengths. Supporting their school readiness starts with changing how we view African American boys and their families. This change is achieved by moving from a deficit mindset to a culturally responsive, strengthbased mindset. This requires making a shift to high-quality learning environments where adults recognize and celebrate the diversity of African American boys and respect the culture and lived experiences of their families." ("Strategies for Culturally Responsive Strength-based Practices," Head Start, Archived 11/30/24)

NOTE: PDF is no longer available.



Communicate High Expectations for Learning

Head Start staff were instructed to "challenge their personal biases and prejudices" when educating African American boys:

Guidance instructed Head Start staff to "challenge their personal biases and prejudices" when educating African American boys. "To best support African American boys, education staff must challenge their personal biases and prejudices to make sure they have appropriate and meaningful expectations. This requires learning about and understanding the social, cultural, and political contexts in which young African American boys live. It requires engaging in critical reflection about teaching and home visiting practices and the ideas behind them." ("Communicate High Expectations for Learning," Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)

Implement Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

Head Start included recommendations for curriculum changes to accommodate behaviors associated with African American boys, including "verve" and " "strong oral and call-and- response traditions in African American culture":

The guidance suggested changing activities to allow children to stand or sit in order to accommodate African American boys "expressing verve." "Be responsive and open to African American boys expressing verve — or lively, active play and engagement. At table-top activities for toddlers and preschoolers, allow children to stand or sit as they engage in their activity." ("Implement Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum," Head Start, Archived 12/4/24)

Head Start recommended that rules be modified so that children could "speak without waiting to be called on" in order to accommodate "strong oral and call-and- response traditions in African **American culture**." "Offer a variety of ways for children to show what they know. Leaning on strong oral and call-and-response traditions in African American culture, modify rules by allowing children to speak without waiting to be called on in some activities." ("Implement Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum," Head Start, Archived 12/4/24)

Head Start Heals Podcast



Head Start Heals Podcast

Head Start released a podcast series which included strategies to communicate about race and equity. "The Head Start Heals campaign increases awareness about how Head Start programs are uniquely qualified to address trauma and promote resilience in young children and families. This podcast series covers a variety of relevant topics to provide Head Start staff with information, strategies, and resources to support children and families during difficult times. Learn how to communicate about race, coping with grief and loss, mental health planning for disaster and trauma, and equity." ("Head Start Heals: Podcast Series," Head Start, Archived 11/27/24)

Episode 1: Talking to Children About Race

A Head Start podcast guest advocated for talking to children about race before informing parents and suggested starting book clubs on anti-racism for white Head Start staff:

Dr. Rosemarie Allen, CEO of the Center for Equity and Excellence, joined episode 1 of the podcast to discuss strategies on "how to talk about race with toddlers and preschoolers." "This podcast discusses implicit bias and provides concrete strategies on how to talk about race with toddlers and preschoolers. Dr. Rosemarie Allen, chief executive officer of the Center for Equity and Excellence, offers guidance on developmentally appropriate ways to discuss racial injustice with young children. Explore language that staff can use in response to challenging questions that children may have about race." ("Talking to Children About Race," Head Start, Archived 11/30/24)

During the conversation, Dr. Allen presented a way to talk about the George Floyd riots to children.

"First, you don't want to teach children to sympathize, and you don't want to scare them to death. You don't want to say, the police killed George Floyd and people are mad, so that's why they're rioting. That's the wrong conversation for young children. But you can say that there are people, because of the color of their skin, who's not treated fairly and it's really unfair. And when people are not treated fairly, sometimes they get mad and they make different decisions. Some people decide to protest so people can hear their voices, and some people decide to do some other things that aren't consistent with who we are as a family, but it's because they're angry, so we don't judge it. So, there are different ways based on grade level and age level developmental stage." ("Talking to Children About Race," Head Start, Archived 11/30/24)

In response to a question on parents believing their children are too young to talk about race, Dr. Allen suggested that educators "can do it first and ask later." "DR. HOREN: I could also imagine them parents or families saying, our children are too young to talk about this. So, how do we help families understand why we want to build these treasure chests, why it's important for us in our early Head Start programming, in our Head Start programs to be talking about this and not waiting until children are older or are waiting until families feel more comfortable with it? DR. ALLEN: Your approach is everything.

Head Start Heals Podcast



What you're talking about is a difference. We don't ask parents if they want their children to learn their colors or their shapes or numbers, and this should be so embedded in your curriculum that it's not a separate conversation. You can talk about some words of the day and how this happened, and I loved one of my son's preschool teachers – they used "Way Back When," the storybook curriculum. Do you remember that? And they would send a sheet home that summarized the book, guestions that we could ask. But we could do that in preschool. We can talk about; we read a book. Let's talk about race, and we noticed all the differences, shades of brown and this and that, and you may have some parents who began to ask questions. So, you can do it first and ask later, or you can say, this is the book that's coming up. Would you like to attend a parent information session so that we can talk about the book and how that's happening. And a parent may say, "Why are you choosing this book. I am not sure my children are ready." One of the things that I've done with reluctant families is that I've shown them Anderson Cooper's "Children and Race" so that they could see, outside of just me telling them, how early children noticed race and without talking about it, we reinforce racism." ("Talking to Children About Race," Head Start, Archived 11/30/24)

In response to a question on white Head Start staff wanting to have conversations on race, Dr. Allen suggested forming book clubs to talk about "anti-racism" "DR HOREN: So, I can imagine that there are staff within programs who want to start those kinds of conversations, and I'll be specific here. There may be white staff who want to start more conversations about race. How do they do it in a way that is a good sort of first step amongst themselves and staff? DR. ALLEN: Neal, the best way in the world is to be authentic, is to say, "You know what? I am watching this civil unrest, and I realize there's so little I know and say, I have no idea even what some of the terms are. It used to be implicit bias. Now, I hear this new thing called anti-racism, and now I hear about systemic and institutional racism, and I don't even know what that is. I want to learn more. I want to talk. What can we do? And that can happen at a team meeting. Let's Google how to get involved in anti-racism and see what books they recommend, and maybe we can start with a book club." And then we can let parents know, and if they would like to have their own book club." ("Talking to Children About Race," Head Start, Archived 11/30/24)

Episode 6: Our Role in Equity

A Head Start podcast guest suggested using social media to find "racial equity consultants" and advocated for white Head Start Directors to acknowledge their "white privilege":

Dr. Eva Marie Shivers from the Indigo Cultural Center joined episode 6 of the podcast and outlined strategies for Head Start staff to use to "increase opportunities for equity within their programs." "Listen as Dr. Eva Shivers, founder and executive director of the Indigo Cultural Center, shares her thoughts about equity as both a process and an outcome within Head Start programs. She discusses strategies that program leaders and staff can implement to increase opportunities for equity within their programs. They include self-reflection, reflective supervision or mentoring, training and support for

Head Start Heals Podcast



cultural responsiveness, and authentic parent engagement." ("Our Role in Equity, Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)

During the discussion, podcast guest Dr. Shivers suggested following "racial equity consultants" and organizations on social media. "DR. HOREN: You did mention, a little bit ago, a racial equity consultant. I don't know that folks are oftentimes as familiar with what that is. I want this racial equity consultant. What is that? What am I going to do? I'm going to program him. That sounds like something that might be helpful. DR. SHIVERS: Yeah. Well, in this day and age of lots of social media, Instagram is a great place to start. I'm not a big social media user, but I will say, there are five people/organizations related to social justice and racial equity that I follow. Find those voices that resonate with what you believe because there are many voices now in this social justice world, racial equity consultants who understand our world of early care and education? Now we're talking about a more narrow field, but they're out there and they're doing a ton of webinars right now." ("Our Role in Equity, Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)

Dr. Shivers later advocated for white Head Start staff to acknowledge their "white privilege." "DR. EVA MARIE SHIVERS: For directors who identify as White, those steps involve acknowledging White privilege, acknowledging power, learning or relearning history, and then starting to have the kinds of conversations where you can say the unspeakable." ("Our Role in Equity, Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)

NOTE: The full transcript is available <u>here</u>



Publications and Guidance

Multicultural Principles for Early Childhood

Head Start's 2023 edition of Multicultural Principles for Early Childhood Leaders, directed to apply to all Head Start programs, incorporated research "in child development, equity, and inclusion." "The 2023 edition of Multicultural Principles for Early Childhood Leaders builds on growing research about how race, ethnicity, ability, gender, and socio-economic status influence young children's learning. These influences can impact the practices, policies, and systems of early learning programs and the parent-child relationship. In the 15 years since the last publication, research literature in child development, equity, and inclusion has grown significantly. This edition builds on the time-tested strength of the original principles, updating the language and organizational structure to support use the principles in daily practice... The Multicultural Principles apply to all Head Start programs and program options, but they do not present a one-size-fits-all approach." ("Multicultural Principles for Early Childhood Leaders, Head Start, Archived 1/14/25)

Head Start's Multicultural Principles for Early Childhood Leaders included a glossary of key terms including ableism, bias, equity, gender identity, inclusion intersectionality, LGBTQIA2S+, prejudice, and race.



("Key Terms," Head Start, Archived 11/30/24)



Equitable Programs Embrace Reflection and Change

In a resource dedicated to "reflection and change," Head Start directed staff to use mental health consultants and potentially "uncomfortable" diversity trainings to recognize biases:

As part of the Multicultural Principles for Early Childhood Leaders guidance, educators were encouraged to "embrace an equity-focused mindset" and "recognize discriminatory biases." "Creating a caring, equitable community of engaged and joyful learners requires staff to be aware of and address biases that influence their practice and interactions with children and families. It requires staff to embrace an equity-focused mindset, learn about individual children and family backgrounds and values, recognize discriminatory biases, and commit to high-quality, child-led, play-based approaches that equitably support children's social and emotional well-being." ("Equitable Programs Embrace Reflection and Change," Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)

The guidance promoted staff using mental health consultants to "provide opportunities for self-reflection." "Promote reflective practices that encourage and support staff in recognizing and addressing bias. Encourage staff use of mental health consultants to help to develop or facilitate communities of learning, which provide opportunities for self-reflection and peer-to-peer support in programs." ("Equitable Programs Embrace Reflection and Change," Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)

Because Head Start had "invested in diversity training for all its staff," the resource directed staff to access potentially "uncomfortable" trainings on topics including "culture, race, equity, and the LGBTQIA2S+ community" "In addition to the checklist, the agency has invested in diversity training for all its staff. Training topics include culture, race, equity, and the LGBTQIA2S+ community. The agency knows that these trainings can be uncomfortable because they require people to examine and acknowledge their own bias." ("Equitable Programs Embrace Reflection and Change," Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)

Framework for Effective Practice

Head Start's Framework for Effective Practice includes Equity-focused Practices as a core principle of their teaching programs:

Head Start included "equity-focused" training in their Framework for Effective Practice, noting the importance of awareness on "how one's biases" impact children. "To accomplish this, education staff need to have an equity-focused mindset. Being equity-focused means that one is consciously aware of the historical and contemporary injustices and discrimination that have marginalized the identities of children and their families in our society. It requires an understanding of the barriers that racism, classism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, xenophobia, and other systems of oppression have had on



children and families' lived experiences. It also means that beyond awareness and understanding, one is committed to action to disrupt these inequities within our spheres of influence so children and families can thrive. Having an equity-focused mindset is key to working with children and families from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and ability backgrounds. In the House Framework, this equity-focused mindset is shown as the strong siding that surrounds the house. It highlights the importance of entering all aspects of the work with awareness of how one's biases and daily actions impact children and families." ("Framework for Effective Practice," Head Start, Archived 1/23/25)

Equity-Focused Practices was included as one of the six elements of the Framework for Effective Practice.

The six elements of the Framework for Effective Practice, or House Framework are:

- Interaction and Environments: Providing nurturing, responsive, and effective interactions, and engaging environments
- . Curriculum: Implementing research-based curriculum and teaching practices
- Screening and Assessment: Using screening and ongoing assessment of children's skills
- · Individualized Support: Embedding highly individualized teaching and learning
- · Families: Engaging parents and families
- Equity-focused Practices: Promoting high-quality equitable learning environments

("Framework for Effective Practice," Head Start, Archived 1/23/25)

A graphic shows that Equity-Focused Practices encircles the five other framework elements.



("Framework for Effective Practice," Head Start, Archived 1/23/25)



Head Start Work is Heart Work: OHS Priorities

Head Start's national priorities list included ensuring that all programs "advance and promote equity" and used equity as "a lens that informs each of our priorities":

In their five national priorities list, Head Start endeavored to "ensure all Head Start programs advance and promote equity." "The Office of Head Start (OHS) continually works toward our mission for eligible children and families to receive high-quality services in safe and healthy settings to prepare children for school and life. OHS has five national priority areas to support this mission, described below. Fundamental to this commitment is the belief that all children, families, staff, and communities — including those adversely impacted by persistent poverty, racism, and bias — should have the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential. OHS endeavors to ensure all Head Start programs advance and promote equity. This ideal includes a Head Start workforce that is representative of the communities served, as well as programs that intentionally embed the language, culture, and lived experiences of enrolled children and families in their systems and services." ("Head Start Work Is Heart Work: OHS

Priorities," <u>Head Start</u>, Archived 11/29/24)

As part of their national priorities, Head Start used equity as "a lens that informs each of our priorities" "Each program's leadership is key to this effort. They create conditions favorable for a program culture that facilitates opportunities for staff, families, and community partners to have safe spaces for open dialogue about equity, and to develop actionable strategies that promote belonging and address bias in program systems and services. More than ever, equity is a lens that informs each of our priorities." ("Head Start Work is Heart Work: OHS Priorities," Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)

Equity Drivers to Strengthen Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

<u>Head Start released a resource for engagement stating their "core" mission was to promote equity across groups including race, gender identity, sexual orientation, and citizenship:</u>

Head Start stated that the "core" of their mission was to promote equity across a variety of groups, including race, ethnicity, "gender identity and expression," sexual orientation, and citizenship. "The core of the Head Start mission is to promote equity across race, ethnicity, income, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, education level, ability, age, citizenship, and geography. This mission also serves as a model for PFCE practices. Head Start programs intentionally build partnerships with parents and family members in support of children's health, learning, and development. These partnerships aspire to shared power between staff and enrolled families through Policy Council, parent committees, parent volunteer opportunities, and family input on children's learning." ("Equity Drivers to Strengthen Parent, Family, and Community Engagement," Head Start, Archived 11/27/24)



Engaging Parents with Disabilities and Learning Differences

In a resource for engaging parents with disabilities and learning, Head Start invoked "ableism" and <u>defined "LGBTQIA2S+"</u> as including transgender, intersex, "two-spirit," and other identities:

In the resource, Head Start defined ableism as "bias and discrimination" and prompted the reader to self-reflect on "false attitudes." "Many parents with disabilities have experienced ableism. Ableism is bias and discrimination against people with disabilities. This includes false attitudes that define people by their disability and see disability as a problem. Ableism results in barriers that can make it difficult for parents with disabilities to access important programs and services. When we understand biases like ableism, we can challenge them. Self-reflection and self-awareness allow us to understand and challenge our own biases. Self-reflection can help adjust our attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward disabled people. When we learn that a parent has a disability, we may assume there are certain things the parent is unable to do. We may assume that parents who have physical or sensory disabilities also have learning differences. By challenging those biases through self-awareness and self-reflection, we can shift our focus to learning more about the person and their disability, their strengths, needs, and preferences. We can also learn more about the accommodations they need, if any, to maximize their participation in programs." ("Engaging Parents with Disabilities and Learning Differences, Head Start, Archived 12/28/24)

In list of covered groups for equitable treatment, Head Start defined "LGBTQIA2S+" as "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, two-spirit, or additional sexual orientations and gender identities" "Equity promotes consistent, systemic, and equitable access to comprehensive services and systems for everyone, including... People who are LGBTQIA2S+ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, two-spirit, or additional sexual orientations and gender identities]" ("Engaging Parents with Disabilities and Learning Differences, Head Start, Archived 12/28/24)

Equity Courses

Head Start offered professional development courses on "belonging and diversity in early childhood <u>settings":</u>

As part of their Individualized Professional Development (iPD) Portfolio, Head Start offered courses on equity, with a focus on "belonging and diversity in early childhood settings." "This list provides direct access to the iPD courses that have a more focused lens on building belonging and diversity in early childhood settings. Acquire new skills in building belonging, empathy, identity, and care, and earn CEUs while you are at it!" ("Equity Courses," Head Start, Archived 11/27/24)

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Courses listed include "Building Belonging" and "Strengthening Equitable Learning Spaces."

Equity Courses

This list provides direct access to the iPD courses that have a more focused lens on building belonging and diversity in early childhood settings. Acquire new skills in building belonging, empathy, identity, and care, and earn CEUs while you are at it!

- Building Belonging
- Strengthening Equitable Learning Spaces

("Equity Courses," Head Start, Archived 11/27/24)

NOTE: Course links are no longer functional.

Equity Considerations for ERSEA

Head Start published guidance on equity considerations for use in eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance, including that programs "must be intentional in developing equitable systems." "Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) are some of the most important activities performed by Head Start program staff. ERSEA governs how programs determine eligibility, enroll children, track attendance, and more. By prioritizing equity in these procedures, Head Start programs ensure services are accessible and available to families who need services the most. Equity is foundational to the Head Start mission and to securing fair and just access and treatment for all children and families. It also requires ongoing action. Programs must be intentional in developing equitable systems and individualizing services that best meet the unique needs and strengths of the communities and families they are serving. A focus on equity ensures that support to families is culturally and linguistically responsive from the moment they are introduced to a program. Explore these considerations to support your program as you reflect, plan, and implement ERSEA activities that are grounded in equity. Use the questions to identify your program's current strengths and areas for growth, and then put equity into action." Equity Considerations for ERSEA, Head Start, Archived 11/27/24)

What Access and Equity Mean to ERSEA

Head Start published guidelines on equity considerations for use in eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance, including "chronically underserved populations" and providing an "anti-



bias" environment. "Equity means fair and just treatment to all children, families, and those who support them, enabling everyone to achieve their full potential. Equity promotes consistent, systemic, and fair access to comprehensive services and systems for everyone, including chronically underserved populations such as: African American, Black, Latino, Hispanic, Indigenous, American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian American, Pacific Islander, or other people of color Members of religious minorities Members of the LGBTQ+ community People with disabilities or other delays People who live in rural areas People adversely affected by persistent poverty or other forms of inequality. Equity means ensuring: An anti-bias and nurturing environment where children, families, and staff feel seen, heard, and acknowledged, and where they have a sense of belonging and a connection to their community" ("What Access and Equity Mean to ERSEA," Head Start, Archived 11/27/24)

Intake and Enrollment

Head Start offered questions for consideration in order to apply equity during intake and enrollment, including working with families to complete enrollment paperwork "in ways that respect a family's culture, home language, and unique strengths." "Questions for Consideration: How do you use the intake and enrollment process to learn about families and their stories? How do staff use the enrollment process from the start to build positive, goal-oriented relationships with families based on respect and trust? How does the program create a welcoming, comfortable, and safe physical and emotional environment for families, virtually and in person? How do staff practice nonjudgmental, strengths-based, and trauma-informed approaches in conversations with families about enrollment? What processes do the program have to enroll families who speak a language that program staff do not know? How do staff respect variations in families' cultures, experiences, expectations, and child-rearing beliefs and practices? How do staff work with families in completing enrollment paperwork in ways that respect a family's culture, home language, and unique strengths? How do staff ensure confidentiality in enrollment processes? How do staff encourage families to share their personal lives and experiences at their own pace?" ("Intake and Enrollment," Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)

Selection with Equity

Head Start offered questions for consideration in order to apply equity during assistance selection, including "the effects of discrimination, historical oppression, and trauma."

"Questions for Consideration How do you use community assessment data to determine your selection criteria? What are you doing to reduce biases in the selection process and prioritize the selection of families who are most in need of services? What professional development or support do staff receive to understand their own beliefs, values, experiences, ethics, and biases? To increase their self-awareness about how these factors may affect the selection process? How do you prioritize the selection of

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children in foster care, families experiencing homelessness, and families who receive public assistance (e.g., Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF], Supplemental Security Income [SSI])? Do you consider the effects of discrimination, historical oppression, and trauma as you develop your selection criteria? What additional eligibility criteria should you consider based on the specific communities you serve? Who is prioritized from your waiting list? How do you use an equity approach to identify and select families from the list? How do you keep families updated during the selection process? How do you promote transparency and open communication in the process? How do you communicate your selection criteria to families so they can help with program outreach and recruitment? How do you communicate in sensitive and culturally responsive ways to let families know if they are not selected or if they have been put on a waiting list? How can you support families even if they are not selected for your program? How can you ensure a warm hand-off to other programs or partners in your community? What are your processes for identifying strengths or areas of growth in your current selection processes? How can you use selection data to improve future selection processes and demonstrate continuous quality improvement?" ("Selection with Equity, Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)

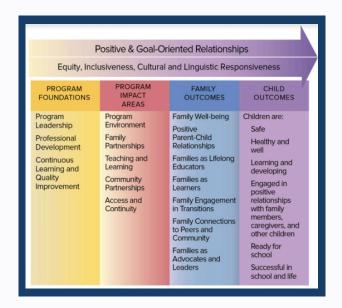
Community Assessment and Equity

Head Start offered questions for consideration in order to apply equity during community assessments. "The community assessment provides a starting point for Head Start programs to understand community strengths and identify gaps in services to mobilize necessary resources. When used in conjunction with other program data, the community assessment informs program planning and can help to ensure equity. Questions for Consideration: What changes have occurred in your community during the past year that may affect ERSEA strategies? How can your program better understand the history and background of the communities being served? How have discrimination, historical oppression, or trauma affected the populations you serve? How do you ensure that families are involved in the community assessment process? Do families find themselves reflected in the community assessment? Do they agree with the results? How can you ensure data collected are from reliable sources that reflect the current population and activity of the community? How do you ensure that the data are disaggregated to provide a more complete context for its meaning?" ("Community Assessment and Equity, Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)

Equity, Inclusiveness, and Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

Head Start published a graphic on the importance of integrating DEI attitudes "throughout the system." "The PFCE Framework for Early Childhood Systems identifies important drivers for positive and goal-oriented relationships across the entire early childhood field. Equity, inclusiveness, and cultural and linguistic responsiveness are important to integrate throughout the system."





("Equity, Inclusiveness, and Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness," Head Start, Archived 11/27/24)

Resources About Diverse Family Structures

Head Start published a list of resources including a guide on how to support "lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) children":

Head Start published a list of pamphlets, articles, and research to address LGB families, including a guide on best practices to support "lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) children." "This resource guide offers information and resources to help practitioners in health and social service systems implement best practices to engage and help families and caregivers support their lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) children." ("Resources About Diverse Family Structures," Head Start, Archived 12/5/24)

Children's Books That Include Diverse Family Structures

<u>Head Start published a list of children's picture books featuring "LGBTQIA2S+ characters to create a welcoming early childhood setting "for all LGBTQIA2S+ children and families":</u>

The children's book resource was designed to "create an early childhood setting that is welcoming for all LGBTQIA2S+ children and families" "This resource features age-appropriate books to read with children about different kinds of family structures. Use the books as inspiration to create an early childhood setting that is welcoming for all LGBTQIA2S+ children and families." ("Children's Books That Include Diverse

Family Structures," <u>Head Start</u>, Archived 11/29/24)



The reading suggestions included eight "Picture Books Featuring All Kinds of Families" and twelve "Picture Books Featuring LGBTQIA2S+ Characters"

Creating a Welcoming Early Childhood Program for LGBTQIA2S+ Families

Head Start's guidance for "LGBTQIA2S+" families included suggestions for answering questions from children and inclusive practices such as modifying songs to include neutral gender pronouns or encouraging children to use all dress-up materials during playtime:

Head Start produced guidance for interacting with LGBTQIA2S+ families, which included answering questions from children. "Be ready to answer questions from children about LGBTQIA2S+ parents and families. Children are curious and want to know about everything they see and hear. They may have questions such as, "Why does my friend have two moms?" You could say, "She has two moms who love each other and who love and take care of her, just like your grandma takes care of you." They might ask, "Where is Isaac's mom?" while pointing at Isaac's two dads. You could say, "Isaac has two dads instead of a mom and a dad. That's who is in his family. A family can be made up of many different people." Keep your answers simple and straightforward."

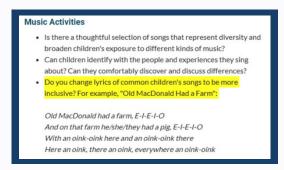
In the Dramatic Play Area section, the resource posed a question of whether children were being encouraged to "use all the different props and dress-up materials."

Dramatic Play Area

- $\bullet \ \ \text{Are there props that encourage multiple ways of playing family or other imaginative play?}\\$
- Are children encouraged to use all the different props and dress-up materials?

("Creating a Welcoming Early Childhood Program for LGBTQIA2S+ Families," Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)

As part of the Music Activities section, Head Start suggested changing the gender pronouns in common children's songs to "they."



("Creating a Welcoming Early Childhood Program for LGBTQIA2S+ Families," Head Start, Archived 11/29/24)



Social Media Activism

Head Start has used its social media to advocate for many DEI initiatives throughout t he years:

On June 19, 2024, Head Start posted that "justice demands dedication" "Juneteenth reminds us that justice demands dedication. Head Start programs across the country celebrate progress that has been made and continue to look forward to the work ahead. #Juneteenth"



(@HeadStartgov, <u>X</u>, 6/19/24)

On October 21, 2022, Head Start shared a link to resources and a graphic with the phrase "Head Start Celebrates Inclusion!" "These NEW resources help education staff learn what research says about supporting language and literacy development for young children who have disabilities or suspected delays and are also dual language learners. Take a look: https://buff.ly/3DkUtOW #Inclusion #Representation"



(@HeadStartgov, <u>X</u>, 10/21/22)

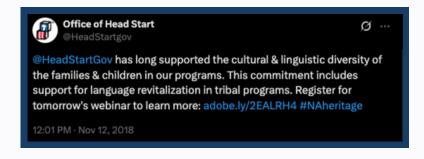


On June 14, 2019, Head Start advocated for childcare professionals to "advance equity and inclusion when children are first beginning to understand these issues." "#ECE professionals have a unique opportunity to advance equity and inclusion when children are first beginning to understand these issues. Equitable learning enables children to achieve their full potential as engaged learners. Learn more: https://buff.ly/2Iq5May"



(@HeadStartgov, X, 6/14/19)

On November 12, 2018, Head Start posted that it had "long supported the cultural & linguistic diversity of the families & children in our programs." "@HeadStartGov has long supported the cultural & linguistic diversity of the families & children in our programs. This commitment includes support for language revitalization in tribal programs. Register for tomorrow's webinar to learn more: https://adobe.ly/2EALRH4 #NAheritage"



(@HeadStartgov, X, 11/12/18)



Anti-Women Language

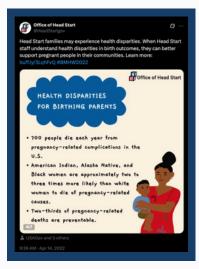
Head Start has frequently used anti-women language, including "pregnant people" and "birthing parents":

On January 10, 2023, Head Start posted the phrase "birthing parents." "Perinatal depression is one of the most common complications of pregnancy. Help all birthing parents access effective mental health care w/ strategies from this webinar: https://buff.ly/3QgoluC"



(@HeadStartgov, X, 1/10/23)

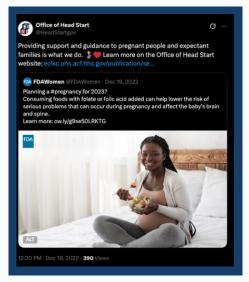
On April 14, 2022, Head Start posted using the term "pregnant people" with a graphic including the phrase "BIRTHING PARENTS." "Head Start families may experience health disparities. When Head Start staff understand health disparities in birth outcomes, they can better support pregnant people in their communities. Learn more: http://buff.ly/3LqhFvQ #BMHW2022"



(@HeadStartgov, X, 4/14/22)



On December 19, 2022, Head Start used the term "pregnant people." "Providing support and guidance to pregnant people and expectant families is what we do. \tilde{\text{\colored}} \bigcup Learn more on the Office of Head Start website: https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/services-pregnant-women-expectant-families-early-head-start"



(@HeadStartgov, X, 12/19/22)

On October 18, 2021, Head Start posted using the term "pregnant people." The "Brush Up on Oral Health" series on the ECLKC features important health tips and guidance for #HeadStart children, pregnant people, and families. Take a look: https://buff.ly/3jycSgD"



(@HeadStartgov, <u>X</u>, 10/18/21)

Using Head Start to Promote Illegal Immigration



Background

In 1982, SCOTUS ruled that immigration status and citizenship could not be used to deny children access to public schools. "The U.S. Supreme Court has affirmed that citizenship or immigration status of students, parents, or guardians cannot be used to bar students from public schools (Plyler v. Doe, $1982)." ("Equal Rights to Public Education Regardless of Immigration/Citizenship Status, \underline{US Department of Education}, 1/14/25)$

Use of Federal Funds to Enroll Children of Illegal Immigrants

Head Start and Head Start Collaboration Offices use federal funds to enroll the children of illegal <u>immigrants</u>

Migrant Head Start has attempted to convince undocumented parents to enroll their children. "Most funding for Migrant Head Start comes from the federal government (80 percent), with the remainder picked up by local communities (20 percent). Under the Plyler doctrine – the Supreme Court case that established that all children have a right to public education - Migrant Head Start serves children regardless of immigration status. Still, it is at times difficult for Migrant Head Start workers to convince undocumented parents to engage with a government program, even one that helps their Children." (Raul A. Reyes, "Life-Changing': Head Start Gives Latino Migrant Children Early Education," NBC News, 12/20/16)

According to a 2023 report sponsored by the Department of Health & Human Services, multiple Head Start Collaboration Offices "noted challenges serving undocumented immigrant families." "Multiple HSCO Directors noted challenges serving undocumented immigrant families and families enrolled in MSHS. The challenges varied from state to state based on factors such as the number of available services and resources for farm workers, as well as how farm workers are treated." (Sara Shaw, Audrey

Franchett, Doré LaForett, Kelly Maxwell, and Erin Bultinck, "Head Start's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic," Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation, March 2023)

Suspected Health Care Access Funding for Children of Illegal Immigrants

A Head Start grant recipient of nearly \$1 billion seemingly funds health care access for children of illegal immigrants:

According to Salud America, the East Coast Migrant Head Start Project works with "undocumented parents" and partners with local organizations "to ensure each child has a medical home." "With federal funding, the East Coast Migrant Health Start Project serves 3,145 children annually through 26 Head Start centers in Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. Early Head Start, specifically, serves pregnant women, infants, and toddlers until children turn three. Additionally, East

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Using Head Start to Promote Illegal Immigration



Cost Migrant Head Start Project partners with local community-based organizations to ensure each child has a medical home. Unfortunately, it can be difficult to convince undocumented parents to participate in a government program, no matter how beneficial." (Amanda Merck, "Early Head Start Services for Migrant Families," Salud America, 5/26/17)

According to Together Rising, East Coast Migrant Head Start Project centers provide "literacy lessons and child development classes for parents, healthcare, nutrition, transportation, and more." ECMHSP's work is centered in lived experience, as their executive director, board chair, and many direct care providers are children of migrant farm workers. In 48 centers across the coast, they provide excellent early childhood education to children of migrant farm work up to age six. Children read books, play in sand, build legos, enjoy educational games and group activities, and so much more. In addition to education, the centers meet other critical needs for families: literacy lessons and child development classes for parents, healthcare, nutrition, transportation, and more." ("This holiday season, we're supporting essential workers and their families," Together Rising, 11/17/21)

In a 2024 interview, the CEO of the East Coast Migrant Head Start Project denied providing health care, but stated "We do cover and provide an array of comprehensive services... and health is one of the requirements." "Maria Garza, the CEO of the East Coast Migrant Head Start Project (ECMHSP), shared with North State Journal the impact of what the organization does and how it has made a "big difference" in the lives of migrant farmworker families... 'We don't provide housing, we don't provide health care,' said Garza. 'We do cover and provide an array of comprehensive services – holistic services and approaches to the children that we serve – and health is one of the requirements.'" (A.P. Dillon, "The 411: How a 50-year old Head Start nonprofit has helped migrant farmworker children," North State Journal, 3/1/24)

Since 2013, the East Coast Migrant Head Start Project has received over \$976 million in Head Start funding.

Grantee Providing Immigration Services

<u>The Mexican American Opportunity Foundation operates 21 Head Start centers while also providing free immigration services, including DACA applications:</u>

Since 2018, the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation has received nearly \$33 million in federal grants. ("Head Start Center Locator," Head Start, Accessed 4/15/25)

The Mexican American Opportunity Foundation operates 21 Head Start centers.

("Immigration Services," Mexican American Opportunity Foundation, Accessed 4/15/25)

Using Head Start to Promote Illegal Immigration



The Mexican American Opportunity Foundation offers pro-bono immigration services, including DACA applications.



("Immigration Services," Mexican American Opportunity Foundation, Accessed 4/15/25)

The Mexican American Opportunity Foundation provides resources for immigrants, including "red cards" of rights available to non-citizens.



("Immigration Services," Mexican American Opportunity Foundation, Accessed 4/15/25)

On February 24, 2025, Rep. Norma Torres praised a Head Start location operated by the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation as "inspiring." "It was inspiring to tour a local Head Start program in Ontario, operated by the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation. early childhood programs are

Using Head Start to Promote Illegal Immigration



essential for the growth and success of future generations. Let's continue advocating for accessible and highquality education for all families in our community!"



(@NormaJTorres, <u>X</u>, 2/24/25)

ICE Investigation Preparedness

The Florida Head Start Association distributed a guide on responding to ICE inquiries, including preparing immigration attorney information in advance:

In January 2025, the Florida Head Start Association distributed a guide on responding to ICE inquiries, including training staff on their rights to not answer questions and preparing a directory with immigration attorneys beforehand. "Consider preparing a directory of resources, including immigration attorneys and other local advocates, whom the organization and/or individual families may call for additional guidance on responding to an immigration raid. Consider training employees on their rights when interacting with immigration officials in different places, such as the home, workplace, car, and in public, by providing the Catholic Legal Immigration Network's Know Your Rights Guide."

("Tips for Responding to ICE Inquiries at Head Start Centers," Florida Head Start, January 2025)

Programs for Agricultural Workers

The Biden Administration expanded the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program eligibility to reduce the necessary income from agriculture, potentially benefiting illegal immigrants:

In 2024, the Biden Administration expanded Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs to any eligible children with "one family member whose income comes primarily from agricultural employment" regardless of family income.

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Using Head Start to Promote Illegal Immigration



"This provision specifies that in FY 2024, and every year after, MSHS programs can serve any age-eligible child who has one family member whose income comes primarily from agricultural employment as defined in Section 3 of the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (29 U.S.C. 1802), regardless of total family income." ("New Eligibility Provisions for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Programs," Head Start, 5/13/24)

The previous eligibility indicated that the majority of total family income had to be primarily through agricultural work. "One unique characteristic of MSHS eligibility is a family connection to agricultural employment. To be eligible for a MSHS program before the passage of this provision, a family had to show that their income came primarily from agricultural labor, in addition to meeting income eligibility or other criteria for Head Start services. However, it has become increasingly less common for agricultural work to be the primary source of a family's income. Agricultural work has become less available or stable due to unpredictable weather events and higher pay in other industries."

("New Eligibility Provisions for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Programs," Head Start, 5/13/24)

According to the USDA, between 2020 and 2022 approximately 42 percent of crop farmworkers were illegal immigrants. "In 2020–22, 32 percent of crop farmworkers were U.S. born, 7 percent were immigrants who had obtained U.S. citizenship, 19 percent were other authorized immigrants (primarily permanent residents or green-card holders), and the remaining 42 percent held no work authorization. The share of workers who are U.S. born is highest in the Midwest, while the share who are unauthorized is highest in California."

Guidance for Illegal Immigrants

The New York City Department of Education provided guidance declaring that immigration status was irrelevant for families enrolling in Head Start.

The New York City Department of Education provided guidance that eligible families could enroll in Head Start "regardless of citizenship or immigration status." "Eligible families are welcome to enroll in Head Start programs regardless of citizenship or immigration status. Programs may not ask for proof of citizenship or legal immigration status when applying for Head Start."

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Financial Mismanagement



Financial Mismanagement

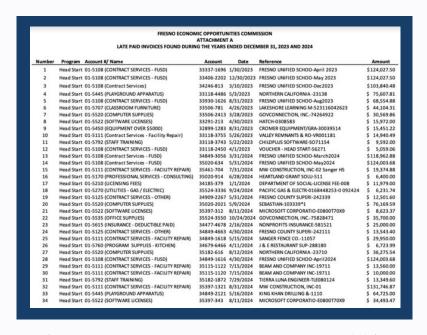
Fresno Head Start Alleged Misappropriation of Funds

After a 2025 audit, the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission found that over \$1.5 million in Head Start program funding had been unpaid or was more than 30 days overdue:

A February 2025 audit found that 28% of the Fresno EOC's Head Start program payments were late by over 30 days or left unpaid. "The audit found 34 out of 120, or 28%, of the Head Start's invoices were being paid later than 30 days, or had not yet been paid... While he didn't name Pineda directly, Angus indicated the former Head Start director wasn't paying invoices."

The audit found that in October 2023, the program had approximately 400 unpaid invoices as well as improper staff cost allocations. "Arambula said during the audit meeting that his "major focus" is around the month of October, when the organization had about 400 unpaid invoices. The audit also found two improper staff cost allocations to the Head Start program — one undercharging and another overcharging the program. A few program staff were also found to be out of compliance with required training requirements." (Melissa Montalvo, "Fresno Head Start program raised 'red flag' months before executive's firing, budget crisis," The Fresno Bee, 3/3/25)

The total amount of late paid invoices totaled \$1,555,065.



(AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING," Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission, 2/27/25)

Abuse and Neglect



Abuse and Neglect

A 2022 investigation found that over a quarter of Head Start funding recipients had incidents of child abuse, lack of supervision, or unauthorized release, including over 1,000 total individual incidents and with a third of cases going unreported.

In September 2022, the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General published an investigation into child abuse, lack of supervision, and unauthorized release, finding standard violations by over 27% of Head Start grant recipients. "From our review of Federal monitoring data, we found that 438 out of 1,611 recipients received one or more adverse findings (noncompliance or deficiency) from ACF for child abuse, lack of supervision, or unauthorized release between October 2015 and May 2020. ACF issues an adverse finding when it determines that a recipient has violated one or more Head Start program standards." (ACF Should Improve Oversight of Head Start To Better Protect Children's Safety," HHS Office of Inspector General, 9/23/22)

The report found 1,029 individual incidents. "One adverse finding may be associated with multiple incidents, which may have occurred at one or more centers that the recipient operates. For example, an adverse finding for lack of supervision could be based on a monitoring report describing children left unsupervised on multiple dates. Our review of monitoring report narratives associated with these adverse findings identified 1,029 individual incidents." (ACF Should Improve Oversight of Head Start To Better Protect Children's Safety, HHS Office of Inspector General, 9/23/22)

Nearly a quarter of grant recipients cited for adverse incidents also failed to report the incidents in a timely manner, with one third of cases not reported at all. "We found that nearly one quarter of recipients that were cited for child abuse, lack of supervision, or unauthorized release were also cited for failure to properly report these incidents. Recipients are in violation of Head Start program standards if they do not report an incident as soon as practicable or if they fail to report the incident at all. From our review of monitoring report narratives associated with these adverse findings, we identified 202 individual incidents that were not promptly reported to the proper authorities as required. Of these, 78 percent had not been appropriately reported to ACF, and 22 percent had not been appropriately reported to State or local authorities. Many of these incidents violated the Head Start standards because the recipient did not report the incident "as soon as practicable," which OHS central office staff explained is generally interpreted as 3 to 5 days. However, in nearly one-third of cases, the recipient failed to report the incident at all." (ACF Should Improve Oversight of Head Start To Better Protect Children's Safety." HHS Office of Inspector General, 9/23/22)

Ineffectiveness



Ineffectiveness

A long-term study found that Head Start has shown "almost no evidence" of being effective:

According to a long-term study of Head Start effectiveness there was "almost no evidence of above-chance advantages." "Longer-term results over the next few years were discouraging: At the end of first and third grades, there was almost no evidence of above-chance advantages for Head Start attendees in any of the three domains. In the third-grade assessments of children who were 4 years old when they entered the lottery for Head Start slots, none of the 11 literacy and math achievement-related measures was statistically significant at the P < 0.05 level. Of 19 socioemotional outcomes, only one survived multiple testing adjustments, and in that case, teachers reported that children who were offered a Head Start slot displayed more emotional symptoms than children who lost the lottery. Largely null findings also emerged in the third-grade follow-up of children who were 3 years old a recruitment.

(Margaret Burchina, Anamarie Whitaker, Jade Jenkins, Drew Bailey, Tyler Watts, Greg Duncan, and Emma Hart, "Unsettled science on longer-run effects of early education," <u>Science</u>, 5/2/24)

Lobbying Network & Programs



National Head Start Association

The National Head Start Association produced a guide on political engagement for Head Start Employees which included an allowance for voter registration efforts at Head Start facilities and direction on the legality of activism and lobbying activities:

The National Head Start Association's political engagement guide for Head Start employees included a tacit allowance to conduct voter registration at Head Start facilities. "Voter registration and other voter engagement efforts are explicitly allowed to take place at Head Start facilities so long as no Head Start funds are used to support them. Employees may not engage in any political or voter engagement activity during any hours they are working directly on behalf of Head Start." ("Navigating Voting & Politics," National Head Start Association, October 2022)

The guide included information on the legality of activism and lobbying activities.

ertain activities or expendit	ures are allowed depending	on the fac	cts and circumstances.	
	candidate or political party.		rtisan manner, without showing a bias or	
Presenting public forums;	Publishing voter educ guides;	cation	Activities intended to encourage people to participate in the electoral process, such as voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives.	
It is important to ensure tha	t none of these activities have	ve any ev	dence of candidate bias.	
mited Lobbying Activities				
501(c)(3) Public Charities may engage in a <i>limited</i> amount of lobbying activities		501(c)	501(c)(3) Private Foundations may not lobby.	

("Navigating Voting & Politics," <u>National Head Start Association</u>, October 2022)

Washington State Parent Ambassadors

<u>The Washington State Associate of Head Start & ECEAP supports the Washington State Parent</u>

<u>Ambassadors, a group that advocates for increased Head Start funding on the state and federal level</u>

<u>while supporting families with no regard to immigration status:</u>

The WSA Parent Ambassador Program is supported by the Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP and trains members on activism and "racial equity and justice." "The WSA Parent Ambassador Program, established in 2009, is made possible with support from WSA as well as our advocacy partners at MomsRising, Child Care Aware of Washington, Save the Children Action Network, the Perigee Fund, the Ballmer Group, UPLAN and Voices for Healthy Kids. The parents selected for this program participate in a yearlong parent advocacy and leadership training program.

Lobbying Network & Programs



They receive training on communications, leadership, legislative advocacy, racial equity and justice, grassroots organizing, and financial literacy and are responsible for training parents in their local programs and participating in advocacy efforts on both the state and federal level. Parents receive 16 college credits for completing the program and a certificate in Parent Leadership and Advocacy from the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Skagit Valley College." ("Washington State Parent Ambassadors," Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP, Accessed 4/16/25)

The WSA Parent Ambassador Program's vision statement includes a commitment to being "antiracist" and supporting families regardless of immigration status. "We are a family of diverse parent leaders who are actively engaged in the process of transforming policies in all spaces where families need support to expand access and close opportunity gaps to from birth to adulthood to create strong, resilient communities. We create community where families feel welcome, supported, included, loved, empowered and celebrated to grow their advocacy skills. We are committed to being anti-racist and supporting all families regardless of race, gender, immigration or socioeconomic status and we empower all parents to be actively engaged in the process of transforming policies and decision making at local, state, and federal levels that affect their children's outcomes and advance family well-being."

("Washington State Parent Ambassadors," Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP, Accessed 4/16/25)

The group claimed success in both defeating a plan to diminish ECEAP and and a later expansion of **ECEAP funding.** "Over the years Ambassadors have played a pivotal role in defeating the Governor's plan to drastically cut child care assistance and ECEAP, and have led the charge for improvements to the child care subsidy system, expanded early learning opportunities for children in the child welfare system, and the expansion of ECEAP to all eligible children. Most recently, Parent Ambassadors were at the forefront of the passage of the Fair Start for Kids Act, the state's largest investment in to early childhood education to date and the Lived Experience Bill that passed in 2022. In the legislative session of 2023, Parent Ambassadors were instrumental in an increase in ECEAP provider rates and the passive of a historical new investment of 7.5 million dollars for a Tribal Early Learning Fund." ("Washington State Parent Ambassadors," Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP, Accessed 4/16/25)

Members have frequently provided testimony and made media appearances to advocate for **increased funding.** "Ambassadors have provided regular testimony on key issues that impact children and families including funding for early childhood education, TANF, SNAP and WAKIDS—a kindergarten readiness assessment process. Ambassadors have been featured in newspapers, TV and radio including coverage on KIRO 7, NPR, KING 5, and KHQ, the Seattle Times and the Washington Post and are regular contributors of letters to the editor." ("Washington State Parent Ambassadors," Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP, Accessed 4/16/25)

Lobbying Network & Programs



Head Start California

<u>Head Start California published a guide on lobbying and advocacy that informed Head Start employees on use of private fundraising for lobbying and advocacy tactics:</u>

Head Start California's guide on lobbying and advocacy included a section on lobbying with private donations. "Question: Is lobbying allowed with private donations? Answer: Yes. You can use fundraising dollars to pay for lobbying activity." ("Lobbying & Advocacy Guidance for Program Directors," Head Start California, Accessed 4/16/25)

Another section of the guide established technicalities on complying with lobbying rules.

("Lobbying & Advocacy Guidance for Program Directors," <u>Head Start California</u>, Accessed 4/16/25)



("Lobbying & Advocacy Guidance for Program Directors," <u>Head Start California</u>, Accessed 4/16/25)

Head Start Clearly Needs a Restart



Head Start Clearly Needs a Restart

Given these revelations, we can come to no other conclusion other than it's time to completely reassess the Head Start program. We must ensure that the program is focusing on early childhood development in a way that is acceptable to American families. Head Start should not be another government program hijacked by anti-American ideologues to push controversial issues.

The items detailed above are enough to warrant a major course change in Head Start, but we believe that what we found only scratches the surface of the issue. Even more objectionable content and dysfunctional actions are certainly to be uncovered as agency officials in the Trump administration continue digging into what this program has really been funding and doing.

A program designed for infants and very young children should not be a vehicle for radical indoctrination, nor should it be used as a magnet for illegal immigration. Its fiscal controls on grantees should be carefully examined, and the public should know that the program's participants are operating at the highest standards. Of course, there are many outstanding questions as to whether the program as it stands now is even effective at improving children's lives and giving them that "head start" the program is supposed to facilitate.

Improving the lives of children and helping families in need are, of course, laudable goals. To accomplish these goals, Head Start needs a restart.

