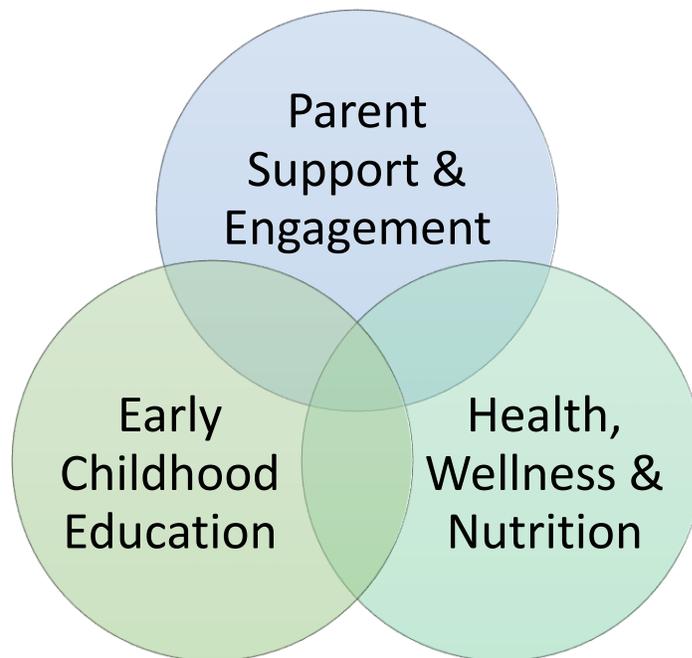


Head Start programs in Vermont provide high-quality, wrap around services to 1,408 Children and their families. (Some of these spots are currently unfilled due to staff shortages.) They also employ 577 workers and contract with another 129 service providers.

Head Start has long been seen as the model for high-quality early childhood education. However, that is only one of several high-quality services we provide for enrolled families. Head Start programs provide support to the whole family, not just the child. We understand that a child's advancement is dependent upon a stable family life.



Parent Support & Engagement

What it looks like

- On average, Head Start programs have a full-time family services employee for every 35 families.
 - Family services workers meet regularly with families to help problem solve challenges and to connect them with other community supports. This could mean helping them find housing or helping them enroll in post-secondary education.
- Each family is offered parenting training through an evidence-based curriculum. They are also offered fiscal training and training on topics requested by families.

Outcomes

- Parent Achievement

- Head Start parents have steeper increases in their educational attainment by the time their child is six years old.
- Head Start parents exhibit lower levels of parental distress.
- Early Head Start parents are more emotionally supportive, provide significantly more support for language and learning, and are less likely to engage in negative parenting behaviors.
- Early Head Start families have significantly lower rates of involvement with the child welfare system and Early Head Start children have significantly fewer substantiated reports of physical and sexual abuse. They continue to have lower rates of reported physical or sexual abuse between ages 5-9. Head Start children are 93% less likely to be removed from their homes and placed in foster care.
- Head Start participation reduces likelihood of being in a correctional facility by 31% by age 21. They are also less likely to be both unemployed and not engaging in education.

Health, Wellness, & Nutrition Services

What it looks like

- Contracts with registered nurses, registered dietitians, registered dental hygienists, and licensed mental health professionals who are available for consultation for staff and for families.
 - Children are provided with screenings, including medical, dental, hearing and vision.
 - Families are supported to access a regular doctor and dentist as well as to attain health insurance.
 - Diapers and wipes are provided while children are in care.
 - Center based Head Start programs provide nutritious dietician approved breakfast, snack, and lunch. (2nd snack in some cases)
 - Consultation with staff and families about dental issues. Provide dental hygiene training to classrooms. Provide dental screenings and apply silver diamine fluoride, as needed. Help families get access to a dentist.
 - Consultations with staff and families about mental health. Initial mental health visits for anyone in the family, as needed

Outcomes

- Early Head Start children have greater access to health care, are more likely to receive immunizations on schedule, and are less likely to be hospitalized for accident or injury.
- Head Start children are more likely to have hearing and vision screening, health insurance, to receive dental checkups, and to be immunized.
- Mothers in Early Head Start have significantly lower rates of depression. Early Head Start families have improved emotional responsiveness to their child and reduced family conflict.

Early Childhood Education

What it looks like

- Use of research-based curriculum. Lesson plans that include individualization for each child. On-going training for teachers and home visitors.
- Use of research-based skill assessment three times per year, which are then shared with families in a parent-teacher conference. Families are shown the child's strengths and weaknesses as well as provided with information about how to support their child in improving specific skills.

Outcomes

- Head Start children perform better in cognitive and language development and have better executive functioning skills.
- Head Start children have better pre-reading, pre-writing, and vocabulary skills.
- Head Start children pay better attention in school and are more engaged in learning as well as have more positive relationships with family, teachers, and peers.
- Head Start children have increased high school graduation rates and increased likelihood of pursuing and completing higher education.
- Head Start children show fewer behavioral problems, are less hyperactive, and are less aggressive.

The Vermont Head Start Association is happy to answer any questions or provide clarification on any of this information.

Christy Swenson

Vermont Head Start Association