

# Head Start Works for Ohio

Healthy Kids. Working Parents. A Stronger Ohio.



*Without Head Start, I wouldn't have been able to work.  
They gave my kids the support they needed and gave  
me the peace of mind to build a better future."*

— Lupe Bright, Head Start parent

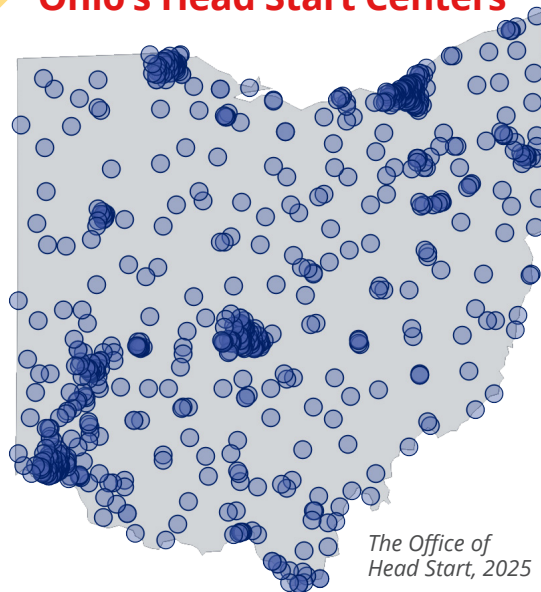


# What Is Head Start?

Head Start, the nation's premiere early learning program, is helping Ohio parents work while preparing kids to succeed. Trusted local organizations receive federal funding to design and run services for children from birth to age five who are living in poverty, in foster care, or experiencing homelessness in **each of Ohio's 88 counties**. It's a smart, targeted investment that supports learning and healthy development, strengthens families, and fuels Ohio's economy.

**In the 2024–2025 program year, Head Start and Early Head Start served more than 27,000<sup>1</sup> children in Ohio across more than 700 centers located in every county of the state.**

## Ohio's Head Start Centers



## Head Start is Integral to Ohio's Child Care Infrastructure



If counted as its own school district, Head Start would be Ohio's fourth-largest—trailing only Columbus, Cleveland, and Cincinnati City Schools. That's more children than are enrolled in any other public district in the state.

## Head Start Powers Ohio's Workforce



**Over 70%** of Head Start parents in Ohio are working, in school, or in job training.<sup>2</sup>



**7,600+** Ohioans Employed by Head Start—ranking it among the state's largest 50 employers and 25% of them are former Head Start parents.<sup>3</sup>

In many rural counties, Head Start is the only affordable child care option available.

When parents have reliable care, they stay in the workforce. And when children get a strong start, they grow into productive adults.

**Head Start delivers both.**



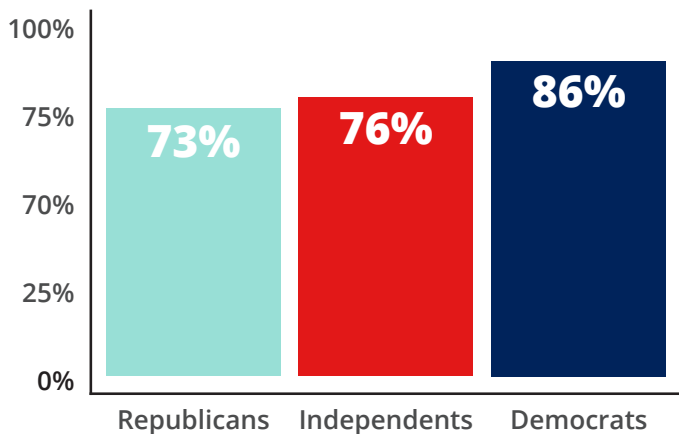
## Head Start is Foundational to Ohio's Early Learning Landscape



**Without Head Start, Ohio's Early Care and Education System crumbles. If Head Start was removed, over 21,000 employed parents would lose child care, costing the state an additional \$130 million annually.<sup>5</sup>**

## Broad Support Among All Types of Voters

**79% of voters<sup>8</sup> support Head Start, including:**



Voters across the political spectrum recognize that Head Start is a common-sense investment in our children, families, and economy.

## A Smart Investment with Proven Returns



For every \$1 invested, Head Start returns between \$7 and \$10 in long-term economic benefits.<sup>6</sup>



Head Start children are more likely to finish high school and college and earn higher incomes as adults.<sup>7</sup>



Head Start connects kids to preventive health care, reducing future medical costs.



Head Start doesn't just prepare kids for school—it prepares families for success.

## Protect What Works

As Congress and the State Policymakers consider funding decisions, protecting and expanding Head Start means supporting working families, strengthening rural communities, and investing in Ohio's future workforce.

**Head Start works for Ohio. Let's protect it—and the kids, working families, and businesses who count on it.**



*Head Start Strengthens Families and Ohio's Economy."*

— Julie Stone  
Ohio Head Start Association Inc.

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2. Office of Head Start. (2024). Program Information Report (PIR). Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
3. Office of Head Start (2025). Center Locator. [headstart.gov](https://headstart.gov)
4. Ohio Department of Children and Youth. (2024). Data pull: children served in publicly funded child care, Child Care Choice Voucher, and Head Start slots as of December 2024.
5. Office of Head Start. (2024). Program Information Report (PIR). Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; The Ohio Department of Children and Youth (2025). Weekly Payment Rates for Providers of Publicly Funded child Care. Appendix A to rule 5101:2-16-10.
6. Ludwig, J., & Phillips, D. (2007). The benefits and costs of Head Start. Social Policy Report, 21(3), 1–24; Deming, D. (2009). Early childhood intervention and life-cycle skill development: Evidence from Head Start. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 1(3), 111–134.; Meier, J. (2003). Interim report: Kindergarten readiness study: Head Start success. Preschool Service Department, San Bernardino County, CA.
7. Bailey, M., Sun, S., & Timpe, B. (2020). Prep School for Poor Kids: The long-run impacts of Head Start on human capital and economic self-sufficiency. American Economic Review, 110(6), 182–217.
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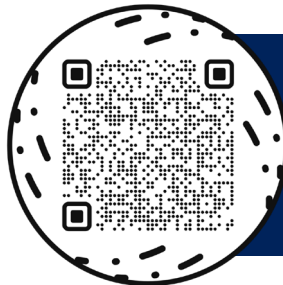
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Visit: [www.ohsai.org](http://www.ohsai.org)



*Locate a Head Start  
program near you.*

