



## Fact Sheet - Early Head Start in Washington

Early Head Start (EHS), created in 1995, is a federally funded community-based program for low-income pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers up to age 3. In 2010, 1,008 programs nationwide provided EHS child development and family support to over 133,000 children and pregnant mothers.

The mission of Early Head Start is:

- to promote healthy prenatal outcomes for pregnant women,
- to enhance the development of very young children, and
- to promote healthy family functioning.

Early Head Start programs are offered in three basic models. *Center-based* programs offer 3-5 days a week of center-based care for babies and toddlers, along with family support and education. *Home-based* programs offer weekly home visits for families, as well as regular 'socialization' opportunities for children with other home-based EHS families. *Combination* programs often start with home-based services and transition to center-based as the child grows older.

### Why Early Head Start?

Every year more research reveals the importance of the first three years of life. These are the years of the most rapid brain development, in which children acquire the ability to think, speak, learn, and reason. Good health, strong families, and supportive early learning experiences are all needed to enable children to succeed in school and life. Unfortunately, not all children receive these opportunities.

According to Zero to Three:

- 22% of children under the age of 3 are living in poverty, a number that is growing at a faster rate for infants and toddlers than for older children.
- Low-income children are at greater risk than middle- to high-income peers for a variety of poorer outcomes and vulnerabilities, such as later school failure, learning disabilities, behavior problems, developmental delay, and health impairments
- Children who participated in EHS had significantly larger vocabularies and scored higher on standardized measures of cognitive development than children in a control group., Early Head Start children and parents also had more positive interactions, and these parents provided more support for learning than did those in a control group.

### Washington State EHS Programs by the Numbers

<b>Number of EHS Programs:</b>	25
<b>Funded Enrollment:</b>	2,461
<b>Cumulative Enrollment:</b>	3,495
<b>Total Staff</b>	1,365
<b>Total Volunteers</b>	2,299
<b>Types of Programs:</b>	
Center-based	24.2%
Home-based	62.2%
Combination	9.5%
<b>Type of Eligibility:</b>	
Income eligibility	53.7%
Receipt of Public Assistance	27.2%
Foster Children	4.5%
Homeless Children	9.5%
Over 100% Poverty	5.1%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Hispanic or Latino Origin	41.5%
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	58.5%
<b>Race</b>	
White	47.7%
Other Race/Unspecified	23.8%
Biracial or Multi-Racial	13.1%
Black or African American	6.8%
Amer. Indian/Alaska Native	6.2%
Asian	2.4%
<b>Medical Services</b>	
Children receiving medical treatment	89.3%
Ch. with a dental home (end of enrollment)	77.9%
Ch. with an IFSP (disability)	14.5%
Ch. receiving mental health consultation or referral	9.6%