



The Mission of the New Jersey Head Start Association is to provide leadership to strengthen and inspire stakeholders through advocacy, support, collaboration and communication to benefit New Jersey's youngest children and families.

The Vision for Universal Pre-K in NJ: New Jersey is at the forefront of ensuring that our children benefit from a strong school readiness foundation. Aligned with the goals of the Biden-Harris American Families Plan, Governor Murphy has a vision of Universal Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) for all children in our State. In his words, *“Investing in early childhood education lays the foundation for a bright future for our early learners.”* [nj.gov]

Head Start's Critical Role in Achieving Universal Pre-K

Head Start is a federally funded, community-based early education program that gives young children ages 0-5 from at-risk backgrounds the skills they need to be successful in school and in life. It is the only coordinated preschool system in the country that serves three- and four-year-old children.

The New Jersey Early Head Start and Head Start programs work together to ensure families receive high quality, comprehensive early education services that address education, health, oral health, mental health, disabilities, nutrition, social services, family engagement, and parent leadership.

And yet, Head Start only reaches about one out of every three eligible children, leaving out significant numbers of Hispanic and Black children who live in neighborhoods where funding is insufficient to meet the need.

The American Families Plan for Universal Pre-K prioritizes preschool of the highest quality with a full range of services to families in high-need communities as well as support for educators seeking to earn a bachelor's degree or other early childhood education credential.

Head Start programs in New Jersey meet or exceed all of these requirements.

ACTION STEPS FOR SYSTEM-WIDE SUCCESS

Access to Quality	Early Learning Workforce	Healthy Learning Environments	Strategic Investment of Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase federal and state funding Mandate automatic pre-school eligibility and referral for the most vulnerable children • Ensure equitable access to school-district resources for all children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve parity of pay for teachers and staff throughout the entire system • Share increases in State funding with HS providers delivering state-funded pre-K • Offer State and district resources for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend regulations to provide space waivers to fully-licensed facilities • Extend contract terms to five years to enable effective long-term planning and cost savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorize HS agency rollover of unspent state funds • Ensure comparable per-child funding across the entire preschool system

Head Start's Impact in New Jersey

Funding

\$215,788,240

FY21 Funding (excluding Migrant & Seasonal)

Head Start Jobs

4,164

Head Start and Early Head Start Jobs in New Jersey

10,773 Funded *Head Start* Slots

3,959 Funded *Early Head Start* Slots

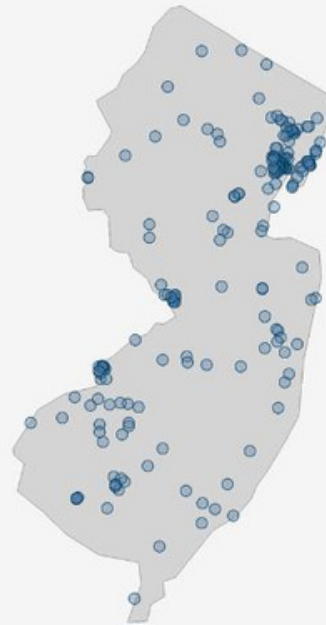
85 Funded *Migrant / Seasonal* Slots

14,817 TOTAL

**WHERE TO
FIND HEAD
START IN
NEW
JERSEY**

207

Head Start and Early Head Start Centers Statewide



Head Start's Model: Comprehensive and Multi-Generational

The New Jersey Head Start Association represents 14,817 pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and preschool children. During the 2022-23 program year, 12,417 families were served throughout the state of New Jersey. Extensive, independent research into the impact of Head Start clearly demonstrates that,

"... children who attend Head Start have enhanced physical health, improved social skills, and increased math, language, and literacy skills that better prepare them for Kindergarten and school" (Source: National Head Start Association, July 2021).