

# California Head Start Child & Family Outcomes Bulletin 2016



## RIGOROUS EVIDENCE SETS HEAD START APART

Every year, billions of dollars in federal, state, and local dollars are spent on education programs. Rarely are programs able to rigorously demonstrate their positive impacts — or even that they have a positive impact. Head Start is different. The California Head Start Association collected and analyzed robust evidence of the strong impacts Head Start programs have on the development of children and families across the state. The analysis demonstrates that Head Start helps children and families succeed.

## HOW DO WE MEASURE PROGRAM IMPACT?

As part of their daily operations, Head Start teachers meticulously collect information on each child's development. Teachers then use that information to assess each child's development three times a year. Most Head Start programs in California use the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) assessment tool for this purpose. The widespread use of the DRDP allowed for the collection of data on nearly 37,000 Head Start children served by 51 programs. This child assessment data was compared based on age, length of time in the program, and other demographic variables. The data was analyzed using a Regression Discontinuity (RD) model, which can be used to evaluate program effectiveness without having to create a control group of children who qualify for but do not participate in Head Start programs — which would effectively deny services to eligible children for the sake of research.<sup>1</sup>

## HEAD START IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Children with two years of Head Start are much better prepared for kindergarten than children with no Head Start. Based on an analysis of data from the spring of 2016, here's what we found.

Children with two years of Head Start are...

- **75%** more likely to meet or exceed age-specific expectations in mathematical development.
- **68%** more likely to meet or exceed age-specific expectations in language development.
- **57%** more likely to meet or exceed age-specific expectations in social and emotional development.

## ABOUT HEAD START IN CALIFORNIA<sup>2</sup>

- 88,704 3 to 5 year-olds were served by Head Start in California during the 2015-2016 school year.
- 68% of CA Head Start teachers have a baccalaureate degree or higher.
- 87% of CA Head Start Children live below the poverty level, receive public assistance, are foster children, or are homeless.
- 73% of CA Head Start families had at least one parent working during 2015-2016.

# Head Start Supports The Whole Child



A holistic model of support and development has been a cornerstone of Head Start since its inception. Children need not just an academic grounding, but the social and emotional foundation necessary for future success.

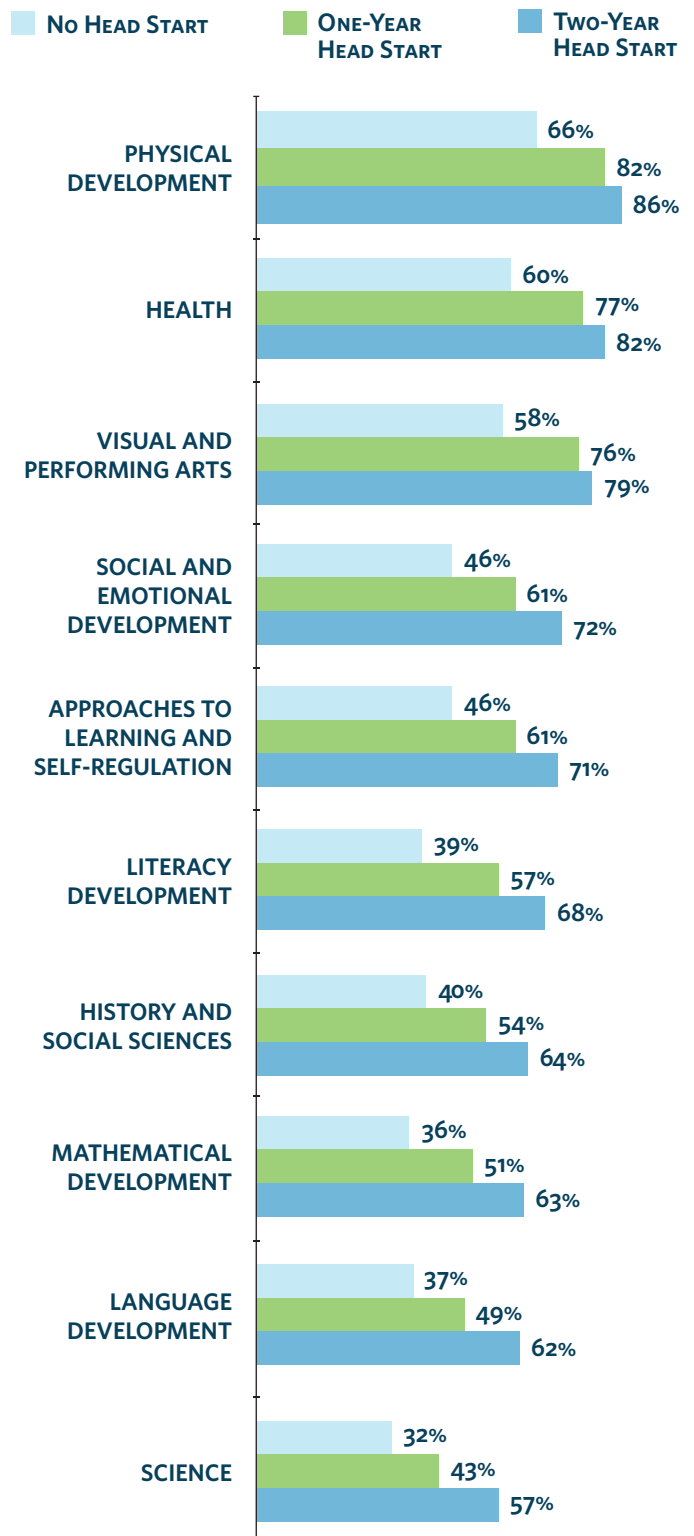
Head Start also supports the health and physical well-being of children. Typically, children are provided with breakfast and lunch. Children are also connected to health care including doctors, dentists, and immunizations. 98% of all CA Head Start children had on-going access to medical care and 96% had access to dental care in 2015-2016.<sup>2</sup>

The DRDP assessment tool reflects this broad perspective on child development. It covers a range of topics from social and emotional development to mathematics to health to visual and performing arts. The California Head Start programs included in this analysis were found to positively impact child development in all of these areas.

The graph to the right summarizes the developmental growth of children using DRDP data for children prior to entering kindergarten based on length of enrollment in Head Start. The difference between one year of Head Start and two years of Head Start are revealed by the rigorous RD methodology. The estimates for children with no Head Start are from a less rigorous extrapolation of data from nearly 3,200 children who were new to Head Start. The extrapolation does not account for selection bias (*as the RD methodology does*), but provides a reasonable estimate of the developmental readiness of children with less than two months of Head Start participation. All the data for the program impact analysis are from the spring of 2016.

## HEAD START CHILDREN ARE BETTER PREPARED FOR KINDERGARTEN

% Of children at or above age specific expectations in the spring before kindergarten\*



\*The differences between one-year and two-years of Head Start are statistically significant at the 99% confidence level in all cases except Visual and Performing Arts which is significant at the 96% confidence level.

# Head Start Supports The Whole Family

Head Start is a two-generation program, meaning it supports not only the child, but the parents and the whole family. Supports vary widely depending on the unique circumstances of each family. They can include help accessing health care, finding a job, enrolling in training or education, developing as parents, locating housing, and numerous other activities. In the spring of 2016, over 27,000 California Head Start and Early Head Start parents completed the CCR Family Outcomes Survey. The survey asks parents to rate Head Start benefits in 49 distinct areas as either 'very helpful', 'somewhat helpful', or 'not helpful'. Parents can also indicate that they did not need help in a particular area. The graphs below summarize the responses for parents who needed assistance or support in the area indicated. Since not all families need help in every area, this focuses the results on the opinions of parents impacted by the services. The survey responses overwhelmingly show that parents find Head Start programs very helpful. In the area of parenting, 81% found Head Start very helpful in finding ways to support their child's good behavior and 79% found Head Start very

helpful in increasing their confidence as a parent. In the overall well-being of the family, the survey found Head Start very helpful in improving their confidence in their family's future. The positive responses were robust when viewed across a range of demographic groups, including teenage parents, single parents, families with low housing stability, and non-English speaking parents.

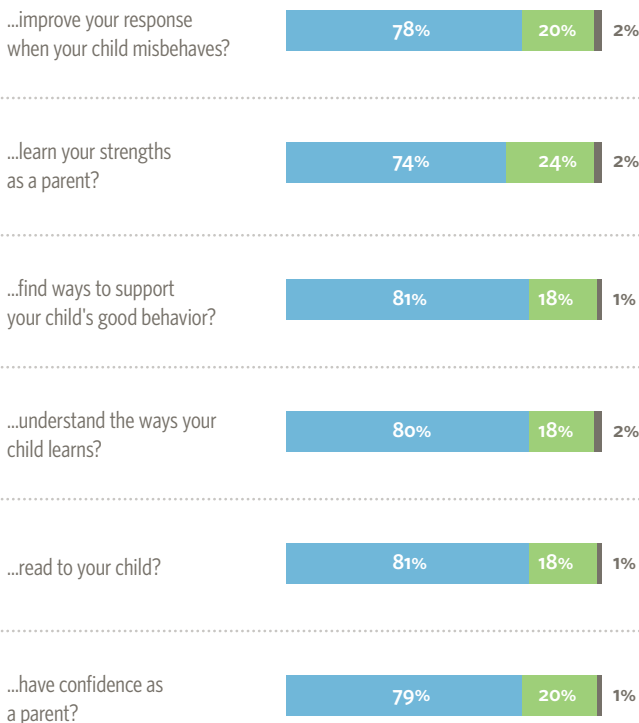
## MEASURING FAMILY OUTCOMES

The CCR Family Outcomes Survey was created following an approach to measuring family outcomes developed at the University of North Carolina. The survey is focused on the question of how much parents and families benefit from participation in the Head Start and Early Head Start programs. It is structured around the family outcomes identified in *The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework* published by the federal Office of Head Start. The CCR Family Outcomes Survey was tested for reliability with Head Start families in the spring and summer of 2013 and is available for free to all Head Start programs nationally.

### HEAD START SUPPORTS FAMILIES WITH PARENTING NEEDS

■ VERY HELPFUL ■ SOMEWHAT HELPFUL ■ NOT HELPFUL

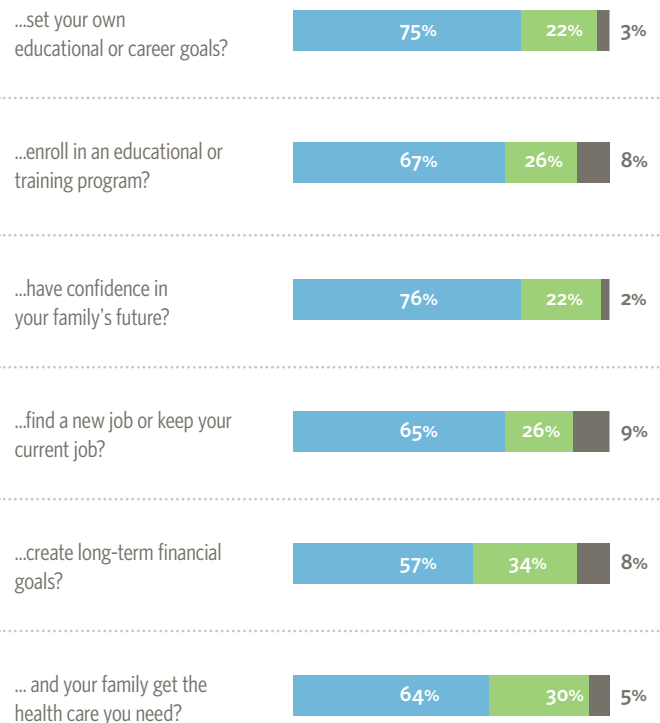
#### How much did Head Start help you...



### HEAD START IMPROVES OVERALL FAMILY WELL BEING

■ VERY HELPFUL ■ SOMEWHAT HELPFUL ■ NOT HELPFUL

#### How much did Head Start help you...



Note: Responses may not sum to 100 due to rounding

## ALIGNING THE DRDP 2015 TO THE CALIFORNIA EARLY LEARNING FOUNDATIONS

In order to meaningfully interpret the assessment results, the Desired Results Developmental Profile 2015 (DRDP 2015) was aligned to the California Preschool Learning Foundations and the California Infant-Toddler Learning & Development Foundations. These early learning foundations define developmental expectations for children of different ages. The alignment allows us to understand a child's development within an age appropriate context and to meaningfully compare results across the DRDP domains and sub-domains. More can be found on the alignment here:

[www.ccr-analytics.com/presentations/](http://www.ccr-analytics.com/presentations/)

A formal definition of school readiness aligned to the DRDP 2015 does not exist. However, evaluating whether children meet age-appropriate developmental expectations provides a close proxy. Combining the alignment and the program impact RD analysis allows us to estimate how many more children are school ready thanks to California Head Start programs.

## LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

For 46,000 California Head Start children, English is a second language. In addition to mastering all of the other areas of early childhood development, these children must also master a new language. Head Start has proven adept at supporting children in learning English as a second language. Over 20,000 of these English language learners were included in the sample of data used for the program impact analysis. The English language skills of children with two years of Head Start were rated 11% higher than children with just one year of Head Start.

## CALIFORNIA HEAD START CHILD AND FAMILY OUTCOMES BULLETIN 2016

The California Head Start Association is the unified voice providing leadership and advocacy for the Head Start community.

### California Head Start Association

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This document and the supporting analysis were constructed through a collaboration of CCR Analytics, the California Head Start Association, and participating Head Start programs.

## LIST OF PARTICIPATING PROGRAMS

- ABC Unified School District
- AKA Head Start
- Baldwin Park Unified School District
- Bassett Unified School District
- Bellflower Unified School District
- Berkeley Unified School District
- Central California Child Development Services
- Ceres Unified School District
- Child Care Resource Center
- Child Start, Inc.
- Children's Institute, Inc.
- City of Oakland Head Start
- Coachella Valley Unified School District
- Colusa County Office of Education
- Community Action Commission of Santa Barbara County
- Community Action Partnership of Kern
- Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County
- Crystal Stairs, Inc.
- Desert Sands Unified School District
- E Center Head Start
- El Monte City School District
- Empire Union School District
- Encompass Community Services
- Episcopal Community Services
- Foundation For Early Childhood Education, Inc.
- Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission
- Garvey School District
- Hacienda La Puente Unified School District
- Hemet Unified School District
- Jurupa Unified School District
- Kai Ming
- Keyes Union School District
- Kidango
- KidzKount: Placer Community Action Council, Inc.
- Lake Elsinore Unified School District
- Los Angeles County Office of Education
- MAAC
- Merced County Office of Education
- Mission Neighborhood Centers
- Modesto City Schools
- Monterey County Office of Education
- Moreno Valley Unified School District
- Mountain View School District
- Neighborhood House Association
- North Coast Opportunities, Inc.
- Northern California Child Development, Inc.
- Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District
- Options for Learning
- Pacific Asian Consortium In Employment
- Pacific Clinics
- Palm Springs Unified School District
- Palo Verde Unified School District
- Para Los Niños
- Plaza de la Raza
- Riverside County Office of Education
- Riverside Unified School District
- Romoland Unified School District
- Salida Union School District
- San Jacinto Unified School District
- Santa Clara County Office of Education
- Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District
- Shasta Head Start Child Development, Inc.
- Sierra Cascade Family Opportunities
- St. Anne's Maternity Home
- Stanislaus County Office of Education
- Turlock Unified School District
- Volunteers of America Los Angeles
- Waterford Unified School District
- YMCA Central Bay

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> RD was incorporated into the evaluation system for Title I programs of the ESEA Act as far back as the mid-1970's. More recently, it has been widely used to evaluate preschool programs, most prominently, by the National Institute for Early Education Research.

<sup>2</sup> Data from the 2015-2016 Program Information Report.