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SUMMER 2025

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PLATINUM PARTNER

# GRANT WRITING TRAINING SESSION

*Presented by Bukaty Companies*

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24**

**9 – 10:30 a.m.**

**Master the art and science of writing successful grant proposals. Whether you are new to fundraising or a well-seasoned pro looking to sharpen your grant writing skills, register now to learn more about**

- writing grants that align with funder’s objectives,
- a step-by-step process to strengthen your proposals,
- how to define and articulate the community needs driving your mission,
- setting achievable outcomes, and
- customizing your approach to funding from grant funders to individual donors.

## **About the presenter**

Megan Merritt Cooke is a veteran fundraising strategist and nonprofit consultant with over 25 years of experience in healthcare, the arts, and community development. She is known for her strategic, donor-centered approach, and has led multimillion-dollar fundraising efforts, successfully receiving major gifts, large grants, and dedicated continued annual support from a variety of entities. She is always aiming to align donor intent with organizational vision to create meaningful impact.

She served in development roles at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, the Denver Art Museum, and Habitat for Humanity. Megan now leads her own consulting practice, helping nonprofits build strong cases for support and sustainable funding strategies. She offers services in grant writing, major gift program design, and interim development leadership. She is a sought-after speaker and facilitator in the nonprofit sector.

**Scan the QR code to register, or visit**

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8755507198315261273>



# Thank You TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS!



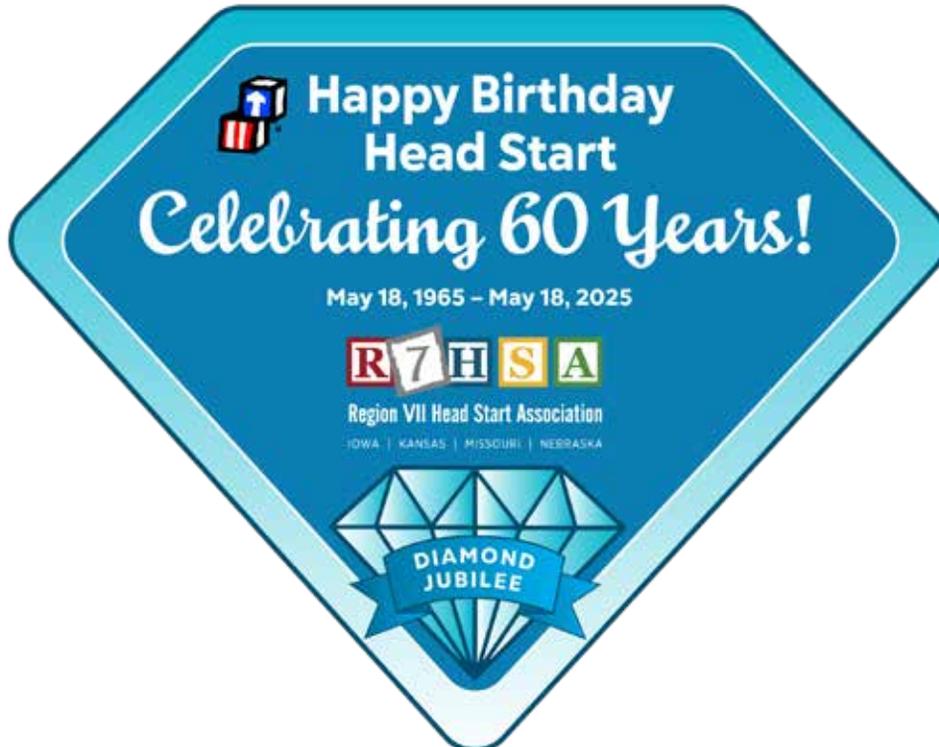
**LORI FERRIS**  
Executive Director  
Iowa Head Start Association



**HEATHER SINCLAIR**  
ERSEA Coordinator  
Independence School District  
Independence, Missouri



**NORTHEAST KANSAS COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM**





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#### One System for Everyone

Donor and Center apps sync automatically. Less confusion, more clarity.

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Region VII Head Start Association

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CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF HEAD START

1965 - 2025



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# SIXTY YEARS OF HEAD START

Source: HeadStart.gov

**1964 War on Poverty:** On Jan. 8, President Lyndon Johnson takes up the cause of building a “Great Society” by declaring “War on Poverty” in his first State of the Union Address. The goal of the War on Poverty is to eradicate the causes of poverty by creating job opportunities, increasing productivity, and enhancing the quality of life.

**1965 “Recommendations for a Head Start Program”:** On February 19, 1965, a panel of experts produced a report entitled, “Recommendations for a Head Start Program: Improving the Opportunity and Achievements of the Children of the Poor.” It has since come to be known as the Cooke Report. The report proposed an anti-poverty, early childhood education program for children that would be comprehensive in its approach, encompassing not only education but also nutrition, health screening, health care, social services, and new careers for the parents with training and income.

**Head Start Launch:** On May 18, President Lyndon B. Johnson officially announces Project Head Start from the White House Rose Garden. Head Start launches in the summer of 1965, serving more than 560,000 children and families across America in an eight-week summer program through Head Start Child Development Centers throughout the United States. The program is administered through the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO).

**1966 Funded for a full school year:** Based on success of the summer program, Congress authorizes Head Start as a primarily part day, nine-month program. The first school year programs had already started in the fall of 1965.

**1967 Infants and toddlers:** The Parent and Child Centers demonstration project is established. It offers Head Start services to families with children birth to 3. This program eventually becomes Early Head Start, first funded in 1995.

**Early Training and Technical Assistance:** Throughout the early years of Head Start, the OEO published the “Rainbow Series.” These pamphlets addressed single aspects of the program, and described the regulations and offered suggestions for implementing them. Eventually there were more than 20 books covering topics from health to staff development, and from nutrition to necessary supplies.

**1968 Head Start data and research:** The Research and Evaluation Division of the OEO works with the Bureau of the Census to collect and disseminate data about Head Start children, families, staff and programs. Studies such as “Project Head Start 1956–1967: A Descriptive Report of Programs and Participants” and “Project Head Start 1968: The development of a program” offer rich details at the national level of Head Start programs.

**1969 Assignment to new federal agency:** As the OEO’s major function was to innovate, experiment, and develop new approaches to the problems of poverty, Head Start is ready for assignment to an established department. Project Head Start is moved to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, where there is vigorous debate as to its place within the Office of Education or within the Children’s Bureau. On the basis of the broad mandate of Head Start, many supporters are pleased with its eventual assignment to the newly established Office of Child Development, within the Children’s Bureau.

**Migrant Head Start:** The Migrant Head Start program is begun to ensure that farmworker families and their children can enjoy the same advantages made available to other low-income children through Head Start. The program is initially established to provide for the needs of migrant farmworker children as they moved across the country with their families to pursue work. In 1998, these are expanded to include the services to children of seasonal agricultural workers.



State of the Union 1964



Head Start children surround President Johnson at his desk in the Oval Office.



The Rainbow Series

**1972 Services to Children with Disabilities:** Congress amends the Economic Opportunity Act, calling to expand Head Start program opportunities for handicapped children. The legislation mandates that at least 10 percent of Head Start’s national enrolment consist of handicapped children. Head Start collaborates with the Office of Education Bureau of Education for the Handicapped to fund 14 Resource Access Projects, or RAPs, to train and to offer technical assistance to Head Start teachers that work with handicapped children.

**1973 Improving options for professional development:** Head Start establishes 13 pilot projects to develop Child Development Associate (CDA) curriculum and methodology. The CDA project has three major features: 1) Identification of basic competencies needed by adults who work in preschool centers, 2) pilot training programs which are developing competency-based training strategies, and 3) procedures for assessment and credentialing. Developing systems for assessment and credentialing is the responsibility of the CDA consortium. The consortium will issue a CDA credential to persons who demonstrate the CDA competencies. Transmittal notice – Head Start Policy Manual 2/23/73.

**National association forms for Head Start advocacy:** Head Start directors at a national Conference decide to establish a national association that could advocate specifically for the Head Start community in Congress. From that idea, the National Head Start Association (NHSA) is born. NHSA’s mission is to coalesce, inspire, and support the Head Start field as a leader in early childhood development and education.

**1974 Community Services Act:** Congress enacts the Community Services Act of 1974, which includes three important provisions that affect Head Start. The act officially recognizes Head Start’s transfer from the Office of Economic Opportunity to Health and Human Services; extends the program’s authority for fiscal years 1975, 1976, and 1977; and establishes a mandatory formula to allocate funds among States.

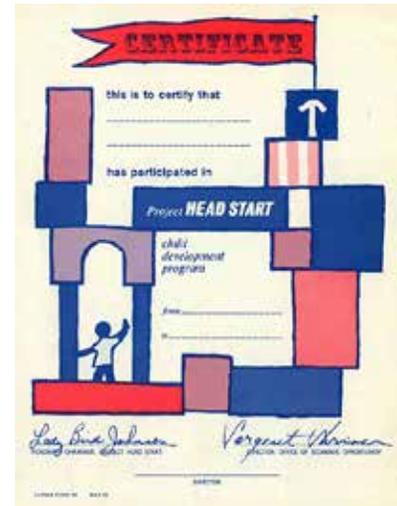
**1975 Head Start Program Performance Standards:** Head Start publishes first performance standards that detail guidelines for serving children ages 3 to 5. Head Start’s idea of establishing performance standards spreads to a federal standards initiative for public schools.

**1976 Training and Technical Assistance:** The Head Start Bureau develops materials to help programs implement the new program performance standards.

**1977 Research on Bilingual and Bicultural curriculum:** Between 1976 and 1979, Head Start, as part of its strategy for Spanish-speaking children, develops Bilingual and Bicultural Curriculum Models and uses them for training. These models support children’s cognitive and social growth and individualization of instruction based upon a child’s linguistic dominance.

**1978 Expansion:** Congress enacts a budget that allows the first expansion opportunities for existing Head Start programs. The Economic Opportunity Act is amended to state that all Head Start programs must be operated in accordance with Performance Standards. Furthermore, they must be no less comprehensive than those in effect on the date of enactment.

**1979 Reauthorization:** Congress reauthorizes Head Start for five years, and allows for a 20 percent funding increase each year in the number of children and families served.



Head Start Participation Certificate



Home based Head Start logo from the time period



**1980 Children with Disabilities:** Mainstreaming preschool children with disabilities is a major effort throughout the late 1970s and early 80s. The Head Start Bureau funds and publishes a series of manuals designed to help programs integrate children with disabilities into their classroom. This includes children with health impairments, children with speech and language impairments, children with hearing impairments, children with orthopedic handicaps, children with mental retardation, and children with emotional disturbances.

**1981 Head Start funding avoids proposed cut.** Head Start programs, supporters and members of Congress rally support to ensure that Head Start funding continues both without cuts and as a federal to local grant program.

**1982 Funding Increase:** Congress authorizes a \$125 million increase in funding and a subsequent increase of 9,500 funded enrollment slots. Funded enrollment reaches 395,800.

**End of Summer-only programs:** Summer programs are required to convert to school-year programs, increasing the level of exposure enrolled children receive to Head Start comprehensive services.

**1983 Training Funds to maintain qualified staff:** Essential training funds continue, in spite of a threat to funding, when Head Start grantees and supporters and Congress realize the importance of well-qualified and trained staff. Congress establishes important criteria for training funds.

**Nutrition component:** Calling for Head Start programs to consult with professional nutrition personnel, the Head Start Bureau publishes a Handbook for Local Head Start Nutrition Specialists. This handbook is prepared as a guide for the nutritionist who is providing services to Head Start and other preschool day care programs. The Head Start nutrition component has four major mandates. These are to provide nutritious food appropriate for children which helps meet their nutritional requirements; to provide a physical and emotional environment conducive for children to develop positive food attitudes and eating habits; to help the parents and the staff understand the role of nutrition in the child's physical, mental and social development; and to increase their ability to meet the child's nutritional needs.

**1984 Congress reauthorizes the Head Start program through FY 1986:** The Human Services Reauthorization Act of 1984 ensures that training funds and funding for the National Child Development Associate continue. In addition, reauthorization emphasizes that children are eligible for two years of services and maintains the Head Start's Performance Standards.

**Second expansion:** Funding increase for Head Start programs allows another opportunity for expansion of existing Head Start programs. Head Start budget exceeds the one dollar billion mark and the number of children served since the 1965 reaches 9,144,990.

**1985 Head Start celebrates 20th anniversary:** Dr. Edward Zigler notes Head Start success stories are due to “the fact that Head Start is a quality child development program that involves parents, hires the best teachers that can be found locally, maintains small classes and provides comprehensive medical, dental, nutrition and social services.”

**Head Start Bulletins:** The National Head Start bulletins are first published as a “National Resource Exchange” by the National Head Start Materials Center. The bulletins are first published on a bimonthly basis, and are published at regular intervals until 2009.



President Carter at a bill signing



Program manuals on children with health impairments, children with speech and language impairments, children with hearing impairments, children with orthopedic handicaps, children with mental retardation, and children with emotional disturbances

**1986** **Congress ensures children may receive multiple years of services:** The Human Services Reauthorization Act of 1986 reauthorizes the Head Start program through FY 1990. The Act ensures that children are able to remain in Head Start for multiple years. The policy debate over serving as many children as possible versus serving children for multiple years without increasing funding continues throughout the 1980s. Current practice takes research on continuity of care and dosage into consideration.

**1987** **McKinney-Vento Act:** Congress passes the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (renamed in 1990) that requires educational and social services for families. Head Start and Early Head Start programs use the definition of homelessness in the Act to automatically enroll eligible children. Programs must make efforts to locate and recruit children experiencing homelessness and to maintain their attendance.

**1988** **Head Start salary improvements:** Spurred by the information provided in the hearing, Congress recognizes the important role that teachers and staff play in the lives of the children and families they serve. Congress appropriates more than \$50 million for Head Start salary improvements.

**1989** **Funds to improve quality:** Congress appropriates a \$50 million quality set-aside to ensure all children receive a high-quality Head Start experience.

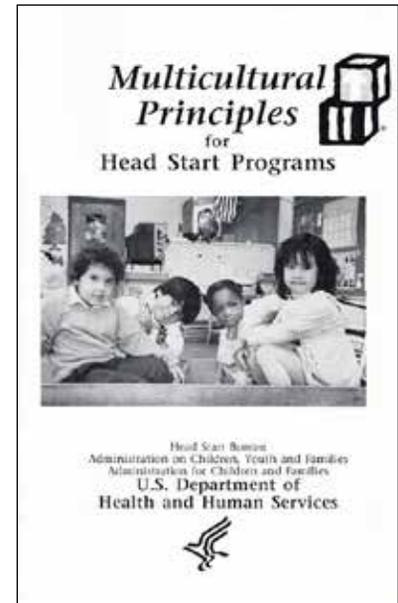
**1990** **Congress funds quality improvement:** Congress passes the Head Start Expansion and Quality Improvement Act which includes set-aside funds for quality improvement and reserves two percent of total funding for training. The Act also, for the first time, sets minimum requirements for teachers—every classroom must have at least one teacher with a CDA or appropriate early childhood degree or credential.

**Head Start-State Collaboration Projects:** Twelve states implement a Collaboration project to facilitate significant state wide partnerships between Head Start and the state. By 1998, all 50 states and two territories have Head Start State Collaboration Offices. Congress appropriates largest single funding increase in Head Start history. Further, Congress and the President promise “full funding” for the program.

**1991** **Multicultural Principles:** The Head Start Bureau publishes the Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs. Its purpose is to stand as a challenge for programs to focus efforts on individualizing services so that every child and family feels respected and valued, and is able to grow in accepting and appreciating different. These principles are revisited and updated in 2010.

**1992** **Congress passes the Head Start Improvement Act.** This legislation codifies the ability for programs to purchase facilities, establishes transportation regulations, requires review of grantees after first year, and provides for health services for younger siblings and literacy and child development training for parents.

**Services to Homeless children:** Local Head Start programs are encouraged to target for enrollment those families with preschool-aged children experiencing homelessness in ACF-IM-92-12. In October 1993, the Head Start Bureau funded 16 Head Start grantees to implement three-year demonstration projects for homeless children and their families. The objectives of this initiative were to: (1) enhance access of homeless families to Head Start services; (2) provide services responsive to the special needs of homeless children and families; (3) identify effective methods of addressing the needs of homeless families; and (4) implement and document replicable strategies for collaboration between Head Start programs and community agencies on behalf of homeless families.



Front cover of the original Multicultural Principles



President Bush plays with children in a jungle gym at the Emily Harris Head Start Center in Catonsville, Maryland, 01/21/1992

**1993** Federal legislation allows Head Start programs to purchase buildings, and pay interest with federal dollars. This is very important to the quality of Head Start programs ensuring that all children are served in safe environments.

**1994 Early Head Start:** Congress passes landmark Head Start reauthorization. The most groundbreaking provision was the creation of Early Head Start, establishing services for pregnant women, infants and toddlers. Further, the law expands Head Start, makes significant program quality improvements, focuses on staff qualifications and development and provides a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for staff. This reauthorization also requires revised performance standards and improved monitoring, and develops a system for continuing research and evaluation of the program. State Collaboration grants were also funded in this landmark legislation.

**1995 First Early Head Start (EHS) grants awarded:** These 68 new grants implement the vision in the 1994 reauthorization to provide services for infants, toddlers, and pregnant women. A rigorous national evaluation, including about 3,000 children and families in 17 sites also begins.

**Fatherhood Initiatives:** The federal Fatherhood Initiative brings several key government agencies together to evaluate the role of fathers in national policies and programs. The Head Start Bureau funded six male involvement demonstration projects between 1991 and 1994. In 1996, the “Head Start Handbook of the Parent Involvement Vision and Strategies” outlines how mothers and fathers can play critical roles in their children’s education. Early Head Start also incorporates a special emphasis on fathers into its mission and program practices.

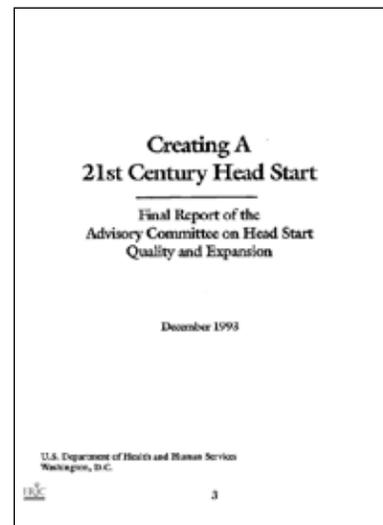
Head Start celebrates 30th anniversary.

**1996 The Head Start Bureau funds the Early Head Start National Resource Center.** This training and technical assistance center supports implementation of the new Early Head Start (EHS) program.

**1997 Head Start-Child Care partnership:** One of the most exciting initiatives currently underway is partnerships between Head Start and Child Care. We share a dream for early childhood, to provide high quality, comprehensive, full-day services to meet the needs of children and their parents, and we’ve made great strides over the past year in carrying that vision forward. This vision will be encouraged throughout the 90s and 2000s, but is not funded until 2015.

**1998 HHS revises Head Start Performance Standards.** The revised standards include EHS services for infants, toddlers, and pregnant women and the requirement that at least one teacher in each Head Start preschool classroom must have a CDA.

**Congress passes the Head Start Improvement Act.** The reauthorization revises the purpose of Head Start from the development of social competence to the promotion of school readiness, creating a major culture change for Head Start. Further the law requires at least one teacher in each classroom to have an Associate degree, includes flexibility for full-day, full year services and develops measures for academic skills. In addition this legislation enhances comprehensive social services; focuses on partnerships with other early childhood providers; strengthens management systems and improves oversight; adds education requirements; and requires transition activities for children and families.



Creating a 21st Century Head Start Final Report of the Advisory Committee on Head Start Quality Expansion



Head Start Bulletin on Head Start-Child Care Partnerships



Head Start Program Performance Standards

## 2000 **Head Start celebrates 35th Anniversary.** Further, Head Start marked a five-year

period of significant expansion in services to children and families with an enrolment increase of more than 100,000. In addition, the quality of the workforce improved with a 12 percent increase of Head Start teachers with degrees in early childhood education or a CDA credential.

**2001 Transportation Regulations:** Head Start issues the nation's first official regulation on transportation of preschool children. This regulation governs how grantees transport children to and from program activities. The Head Start Transportation final rule requires grantees to use either "school buses" or "allowable alternate vehicles," and to ensure children are seated in height and weight appropriate child restraint systems. The rule describes operator qualifications and training requirements, vehicle and pedestrian safety training for parents and children, and how to transport children with disabilities.

**2002** The Department of Health and Human Services implements a national training program with the goal of training the nearly 50,000 Head Start teachers in early literacy teaching techniques.

**2003 Head Start Bureau implements the Head Start National Reporting System (NRS).** As part of the Administration's Good Start, Grow Smart initiative, the NRS aims to collect information on a standard set of child outcomes in a consistent manner. This ambitious initiative aims to assess systematically the early literacy, language, and numeracy skills of all 4- and 5-year-olds enrolled in Head Start.

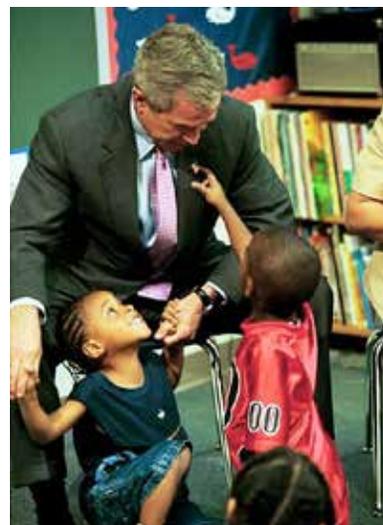
**Child Outcomes Framework:** Head Start promotes the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework to help programs plan their curricula and assess their children's progress and accomplishments of children. First published in 2000, and re-released in 2003, the framework is composed of eight general domains, 27 domain elements, and numerous examples of specific indicators of children's skills, abilities, knowledge, and behaviors. Head Start revises the framework in 2010.

**2004 The Head Start Bureau unveils the Head Start Management Initiative.** This initiative focuses on administrative practices and builds on earlier efforts to ensure that Head Start children enter school ready to learn. This initiative has two major goals: 1) Improving Head Start's monitoring system to address under-enrollment, erroneous payments, child outcomes and grantee compliance with regulations, including executive administrative personnel compensation; and 2) improving Head Start's training and technical assistance system delivery, outcomes, and impacts.

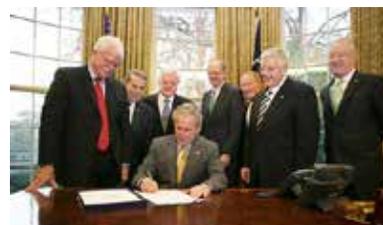
**2005 Head Start Celebrates 40th Anniversary:** Honoring the Past, Strengthening the Future. Total number of children served reaches more than 25 million.

**2006 Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) website:** The Office of Head Start announces launch of the ECLKC. The website offers an interactive, web-based resource providing relevant, timely information, knowledge, and learning to Head Start programs and the early childhood community in an easy-to-use format.

**Expansion of Services:** A funding opportunity for approximately 4 million dollars will increase Early Head Start services in counties, federally-recognized American Indian Reservations and Alaska Native villages, and for children of migrant farmworkers where Head Start services are not currently available.



During a tour of Highland Park Elementary School in Landover, MD, President George W. Bush plays with children at the school's Head Start Center on Monday, July 7, 2003. White House photo by Paul Morse.



President George W. Bush signs into law H.R. 1429, the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, in the Oval Office Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2007.

**2007** **The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act:** The 110th Congress passes a reauthorization begun in the 108th Congress. The new law: Makes quality improvements in all areas of the program including education staff qualifications, monitoring, and, collaboration, Increases accountability through strengthened monitoring and oversight, Changes to the funding and grants structure by revising the allocation formula and converting all grants to five year grants for which grantees may have to compete, Expands eligibility to allow grantees to fill up to 35 percent of their slots with children from families with income between 100 percent and 130 percent of the poverty line (in certain circumstances), Requires increasing qualifications and training requirements for Head Start staff, Clarifies the roles and responsibilities of a grantee’s governing body and policy council, Terminates the National Reporting System, Promotes coordination among Head Start grantees and other state and local early childhood program.

**2008** **Office of Head Start funds Head Start Higher Education Partnerships:** These grants support staff in attaining required degrees by establishing partnerships with institutions of higher education.

**Two childhood obesity prevention initiatives begin:** I Am Moving, I Am Learning and Little Voices for Healthy Choices. These initiatives promote healthy lifestyles and physical activity.

**The Head Start Family Child Care final rule is published:** Family child care is added as a Head Start and Early Head Start program option. It allows Head Start and Early Head Start children to receive services in a private home or other family-like setting.

**2009** **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA):** \$2.1 billion in ARRA funds expands enrollment by more than 61,000 children and their families. This nearly doubles the number of infants and toddlers served by Early Head Start. Funding was also provided for quality improvements which led to significant gains in the professionalization of the Head Start workforce and investments in mentor coaching for teachers.

**CLASS® Observations:** Use of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®) becomes widespread. CLASS® gives a way to consistently observe, rate and give feedback on the effectiveness of teacher-child interaction. CLASS® raises expectations for teacher practice and guided professional development, producing improved teacher practices. Our message has been that regular observation of teacher child interaction and instructional practices with resulting feedback and professional development is necessary for the operation of high quality programs.

**2010** **National Centers on Training and Technical Assistance:** Six training and technical assistance (T/TA) centers are funded to communicate best practices and provide content-rich, usable, and practical resources to Head Start grantees.

**Mentor and Coaching:** Early Learning Mentor and Coach grants are awarded to 131 Head Start programs in 43 states to improve staff qualifications and training. Grantees use the funds to hire coaches to provide on-the-job guidance, training, mentoring and technical assistance to Head Start staff. This in turn promotes positive, sustained outcomes for children; and promotes career development in Head Start grantees.



The Practice Based Coaching Cycle



**2011 Designation Renewal System:** Head Start Program Performance Standards are amended to add 45 CFR §1307. The Designation Renewal System (DRS) improves quality by holding programs accountable for their performance, and through competition, ensuring the best available early childhood services for our nation’s most vulnerable children and families. DRS requires that grantees not meeting certain quality benchmarks compete for renewed funding and converts all continuous Head Start grants to five year grants. By 2015, all grantees are converted to five year grants and have been through the DRS system.

**Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework:** OHS releases a research-based, birth to 8 approach to promote family well-being and engagement in children’s learning and development.

**2012 Tribal Language:** OHS releases a Tribal Language Report, which details the successes, progress, and challenges faced by tribal communities in various stages of preserving, revitalizing, or reclaiming their tribal language. Recommendations highlight the efforts of Head Start agencies required to support children’s and families’ cultural and linguistic diversity.

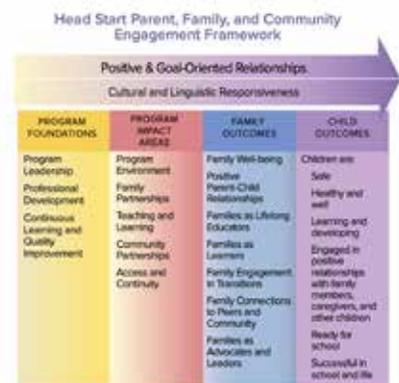
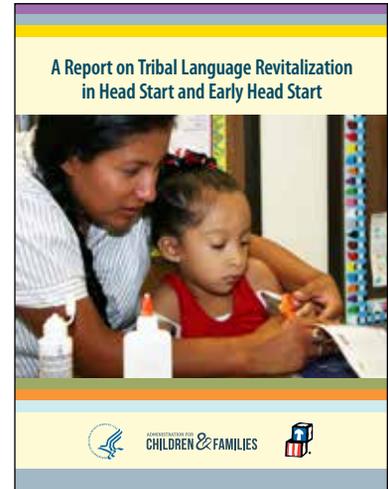
**2013 President’s Early Learning Initiative:** In the State of the Union address, the President proposes a series of new investments that will establish a continuum of high-quality early learning for a child—beginning at birth and continuing to age 5. This includes providing preschool for all, funding Early Head Start-Child Care partnerships, and expanding home visiting programs.

**Sequestration:** Due to a sequestration order, the Head Start program receives the biggest funding cut in Head Start history, and all grantees alter their programs to operate at reduced levels. The 5.27 percent funding cut represented a loss of about 57,000 children/slots. In 2014 Congress restores full funding to Head Start.

**Professional Development:** Sixty-six percent of all Head Start center-based preschool teachers have a baccalaureate degree or higher in early childhood education, or in a related field with experience. The Head Start Act specifies that 50 percent of center-based preschool teachers nationwide should have these credentials by 2013. As of 2014, 71 percent of Head Start teachers have a BA or higher and nearly all (96 percent) have at least an AA.

**2014 Birth to Five FOAs:** Through the Birth-to-Five funding opportunity announcement (FOA), applicants are encouraged to design a single, comprehensive proposal based on demonstrated community needs and their organizational capacity. Grants are awarded to the 14 agencies that were successful in applying to the Birth to Five pilot FOAs published in five communities: Baltimore, MD; Detroit, MI; Jersey City, NJ; Sunflower County, MS; and Washington, DC. The pilot is successful and is expanded to most FOAs for Head Start programs.

**Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnership Grants:** Congress appropriates \$500 million dollars to launch the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Grants. These grants capitalize on existing child care capacity and infrastructure to provide access to full day and full year high quality early care and education and continuous comprehensive services to low income infants and toddlers throughout the nation. Applicants for the EHS-CC Partnerships request nearly \$1 billion and reported tens of thousands of eligible infants and toddlers on waiting lists for high quality care and education. There are 275 new Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grants awarded in 2015.



**2015 Full-day and full-year program proposal:** President’s budget proposes to support all Head Start programs to operate for a full school day and full school year. Strong evidence from research strongly points to the importance of full-day programs. Research on summer learning loss and attendance indicated that extending the program year also is critical for Head Start children.

**Aligned Monitoring System:** Starting this year, the Office of Head Start (OHS) assesses grantee compliance through a monitoring system that is aligned with a comprehensive five year continuous oversight plan. The new methodology requires 100 percent review of all centers, classrooms, and outdoor play spaces within the grant period to better identify health and safety problems.

**50 years of Leading the Way:** Head Start celebrates 50 years of providing comprehensive services to eligible children and families and leading the way in early childhood education.

**2016 Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS):** Head Start streamlines the HSPPS with the first comprehensive revision since they were originally published in 1975. The HSPPS reflect best practices and the latest research on early childhood development and brain science. The Standards give grantees flexibility in achieving positive child and family outcomes. They also encourage the use of data to track progress and reach goals in all program areas.

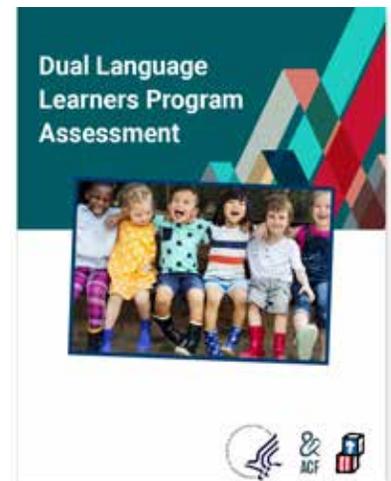
**2017 MyPeers:** Head Start provides a virtual learning network to help Head Start and child care staff connect and learn with people who share interests and program responsibilities. Early childhood colleagues can brainstorm, exchange ideas, and share resources with from across the country. There are more than 40 MyPeers communities and more than 10,000 members.

**2018 Safe Foundations, Healthy Futures Campaign:** The Office of Head Start dedicates a campaign to ensure safe and nurturing settings for very young children. The Safe Foundations, Health Futures campaign shares best practices to eliminate preventable risks to children’s health, safety, and well-being.

**Dual Language Learners Program Assessment (DLLPA):** Head Start offers a tool to help programs assess their management systems and services to ensure the full and effective participation of children who are DLLs and their families.

**Head Start Coaching Companion:** The Head Start Coaching Companion is a video sharing and coaching feedback application for early care and education staff and providers. It helps coaches, coachees, and peer-coaching teams work together, even between coach visits or from a distance.

**2019 Early Head Start (EHS) Expansion and Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnership grants:** The Administration for Children and Families funds 78 programs in Cohort 3, adding more than 8,000 slots for infants and toddlers.



**2020 COVID-19 suspends most in-person services:** Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) deeply affected Head Start and Early Head Start programs, enrolled children and families, and communities. Most programs stopped in-person services, offering instead a mix of virtual or remote child development services, combined with other family supports. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided \$750 million to support programs and maintain service delivery to children and families. Head Start programs that continued in-person services were examples to all early childhood programs on how to be safe while serving essential workers.

**Tribal Colleges and Universities Head Start (TCU-HS) Partnerships Program:** The Administration for Children and Families awarded \$4 million to six TCU-HS Partnership programs to increase the number of qualified education staff working in American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The funding was intended to support Tribal colleges and universities to implement efforts to strengthen career pathways and degree attainment for Head Start education staff, in partnership with AIAN agencies. Importantly, this funding strived to ensure that qualified AIAN Head Start educators who are linguistically and culturally competent can be employed in Head Start classrooms.

**2021 Office of Head Start (OHS) addressed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic,** waiving non-federal match requirements for certain funds and providing additional guidance on applying for COVID-19 supplemental funds.

**2022 State lawmakers directly committed over \$355 million** in state funding collectively to expand Head Start and Early Head Start to more than 22,000 children ages birth to five, filling critical services gaps for at-risk children and families.

**2023 NPRM Final Rule published.** This final rule makes regulatory changes to the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) to support and stabilize the Head Start workforce and improve the quality of services Head Start programs provide to children and families. These changes include requirements for wages and benefits, breaks for staff, and enhanced support for staff health and wellness. The changes also include enhancements to mental health services to better integrate mental health into every aspect of program service delivery. Enhancements are also included in the areas of family service worker family assignments, identifying and meeting community needs, ensuring child safety, services for pregnant women and other pregnant people, and alignment with State early childhood systems. Finally, the changes include minor clarifications to promote better transparency and clarity of understanding for grant recipients.

**2024 Updated Performance Standards:** The Head Start Program Performance Standards were updated, with many changes going into effect on October 21, 2024. These updates address various areas, including staff compensation, integration of mental health, child health and safety, and family engagement.

**Focus on Staff Wellness:** The updated standards place emphasis on supporting the wellness of Head Start staff, with requirements for regular breaks and other initiatives.

**2025 Head Start celebrates 60 years of serving children and families.**

**Headstart.gov website launch**

**Administration for Children and Families: Expanding Educational Freedom and Opportunities for Families in Head Start Programs.** Promoting Family Choice Through Active Participation in State and Local Efforts to Coordinate Early Care and Education



HeadStart.gov launched in 2025



Head Start celebrates 60-year milestone in 2025

# Tell your legislators what Head Start means to you!



## REPRESENTATIVES

Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R) • District 1 • 202.225.6576  
 Ashley Hinson (R) • District 2 • 202.225.2911  
 Zachary Nunn (R) • District 3 • 202.225.5476  
 Randy Feenstra (R) • District 4 • 202.225.4426

## SENATORS

Joni Ernst (R) • 202.224.3254  
 Chuck Grassley (R) • 202.224.3744



## REPRESENTATIVES

Wesley Bell (D) • District 1 • 202.225.4206  
 Ann Wagner (R) • District 2 • 202.225.1621  
 Robert Onder (R) • District 3 • 202.225.2956  
 Mark Alford (R) • District 4 • 202.225.2876  
 Emanuel Cleaver (D) • District 5 • 202.225.4535  
 Sam Graves (R) • District 6 • 202.225.7041  
 Eric Burlison (R) • District 7 • 202.225.6536  
 Jason Smith (R) • District 8 • 202.225.4404

## SENATORS

Josh Hawley (R) • 202.224.6154  
 Eric Schmitt (R) • 202.224.5721



## REPRESENTATIVES

Tracey Mann (R) • District 1 • 202.225.2715  
 Derek Schmidt (R) • District 2 • 202.225.6601  
 Sharice Davids (D) • District 3 • 202.225.2865  
 Ron Estes (R) • District 4 • 202.225.6216

## SENATORS

Roger Marshall (R) • 202.224.4774  
 Jerry Moran (R) • 202.224.6521



## REPRESENTATIVES

Mike Flood (R) • District 1 • 202.225.4806  
 Don Bacon (R) • District 2 • 202.225.4155  
 Adrian Smith (R) • District 3 • 202.225.6435

## SENATORS

Pete Ricketts (R) • 202.224.4224  
 Deb Fischer (R) • 202.224.6551

Visit [NHSA.ORG/ADVOCACY-ACTIONS](https://www.nhsa.org/advocacy-actions)  
 to learn more.



The future of Head Start  
*is in jeopardy.*  
 Head start needs you!

# Celebrating 60 Years of Head Start

at the R7HSA Head Start Conference





**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO ATTENDED!**



Ozark Action, Inc. Gainesville Head Start historical photos.

## Do you know a Head Start Alumni? **WE WANT TO HEAR FROM THEM!**

Head Start Alumni will be spotlighted during the R7HSA Award & Alumni Recognition Brunch at the upcoming June Conference, featuring inspirational Head Start Alumni stories and continuing journeys!

There are countless success stories out there, of former students, parents, staff, and volunteers who have taken their experience with Head Start and gone on to do amazing things in their lives. We need your help locating these inspirational people so we can share their success stories at the upcoming **2025 R7HSA Conference** and in future issues of the **Region 7 Head Start Sand Box™** magazine.

If you know a Head Start Alumni student, parent, staff or volunteer, please put us in touch with them so we can gather our community of Head Start alumni together to celebrate them, and Head Start's 60th Birthday!

Visit the alumni portal at [R7HSA.com/alumni-search!](https://R7HSA.com/alumni-search!)



# My Head Start Journey

Submitted by Lori Ferris, Iowa Head Start Association  
Written by Arichica Bank, Head Start Alumni, Drake University Head Start



Arichica and her mom at her Head Start graduation.

My Head Start journey began at Drake Head Start during the 1988-89 school year. I was just a little girl then, but the experience left an imprint on my life that I still carry today. I clearly remember Ms. Bruce, my teacher whose kindness, structure, and encouragement made learning feel exciting and safe. Her nurturing approach and belief in us as children planted seeds of confidence that would continue to grow over the years.

For my family, Head Start was a lifeline. It provided structure and early education for me while supporting my parents with the tools and resources they needed to help us thrive. It wasn't just a preschool program; it was a foundational community that empowered our family during a critical time.

For me personally, Head Start was the very beginning of my educational journey, and it gave me so much more than ABCs and 123s. I learned how to be part of a classroom, how to trust adults outside of my family, and how to use my voice. I remember the music, the crafts, the storytelling, and the loving care of the staff. Those early experiences helped shape my love for learning, my resilience, and my drive.

Today, I'm proud to say that I serve as a Manager at Molina Healthcare of Iowa, where I lead with empathy, strategy, and a strong commitment to community. I also operate a nonprofit initiative called Effort Creates Opportunity, which is focused on empowering youth and young adults with the tools, mentorship, and life skills they need to succeed beyond traditional education. We work to inspire the next generation, especially those from underrepresented or underserved backgrounds, to believe in their potential and pursue their dreams.

When I look back at where it all started, I can confidently say that Head Start laid the foundation for all of this. It was the first place where someone outside of my family believed in me, invested in my future, and made me feel like I mattered. Now, it's my turn to do the same for others. Head Start helped me, and now it's my mission to pay it forward, to give other children and families the same kind of head start that changed my life.

From those tiny classroom chairs at Drake Head Start to the boardroom and the community work I lead today; every step of my journey has been built on that strong beginning. And for that, I'm forever grateful.



# Head Start's Unending Support

Submitted by Heather Sinclair, ERSEA Coordinator  
Independence School District  
Independence, Missouri

My husband, Nicholas, struggled most of his life with untreated mental health issues, drug use and alcoholism. In April of 2015, after months of erratic behavior, he took his own life. Our daughter, Lilah, was two years old at the time. In the blink of an eye, I became a single mother who had to figure out how to afford shelter, food and other necessities on the meager income I was left with after Nick's passing. My daughter and I were forced to move in with my mother (who is herself a single parent) after I could no longer afford the home in which our family had lived. I relied on community food pantries to help feed our child when regular groceries became too expensive. Money was tight and the hope for a future that I could be proud of seemed bleak.

A cousin of mine introduced me to a local Early Head Start center and Lilah was enrolled within weeks of losing her father. Head Start generously provided my daughter the quality nutrition and care that I was struggling to afford, while simultaneously allowing me the space, resources and opportunity to begin working on rebuilding our lives. Not only did I become a proud Head Start parent, I soon became an even prouder Head Start employee after my family advocate at the time suggested that I apply for a job to better align with my daughter's Early Head Start hours.

The unexpected support my daughter and I received through the Head Start program sparked a fire within me and I became passionate about using that fire to light the way for those who would follow. So while Lilah was receiving quality early education services through Head Start, I was able to go back to school to pursue my own education. I earned my degree in Human Services, specializing in child and family support. I also completed a Family Development Credential course, offered through a Head Start grantee organization, that helped me better serve the children and families I work with each day.

This July I will begin my 10th year working for Head Start, supporting families who are struggling through similar life experiences that my family was able to overcome. I am not sure where our lives would be without the investment that Head Start made in my family ten years ago when we needed it the most...but that investment was made and my family is better for it!

The passion I have for the Head Start program continues to fuel my advocacy for its continued funding, operation and success. From the halls of my Head Start center in Independence, Missouri, to the steps of Capitol Hill in Washington DC and in the offices of congressmen on both sides of the aisle, I have proudly shared my story with all who would listen. I will continue to fight for this invaluable program and get in all the good trouble that comes along with it, because the families I serve deserve someone who will fight for them!





## FROM PARENT TO POWERHOUSE:

### One Head Start Mom's Mission to Uplift Families of Children with Autism

Submitted by NEK-CAP Inc.

In the close-knit community of Atchison, Kansas, a young mother's journey through the Early Head Start (EHS) and Head Start (HS) programs sparked something extraordinary. A grassroots movement focused on inclusion, empowerment, and unwavering support for families navigating autism.

When Molly Franklin enrolled her son Landon in the Early Head Start program, she was a new mom with a deep sense of love but many unanswered questions. Landon, a curious and joyful toddler, wasn't meeting key developmental milestones. Although Molly suspected something was different, she lacked the tools, resources, and connections to fully understand or support her son's needs.

That changed when EHS staff initiated a developmental screening and introduced her to tiny-k of Kansas, an early intervention service. They helped Molly navigate the system, including securing a referral to Children's Mercy Hospital for a formal evaluation. In May 2020, amidst the height of the

pandemic. Landon was diagnosed with Autism over a four-hour Zoom call.

"The hospital shared it was their first time diagnosing children over a webcam," Molly recalls. "It was an isolating experience."

The diagnosis marked both a turning point and a challenge. "There's a grieving process when you realize the life you imagined for your child might be different," she says. "At the time of diagnosis, we changed our plans from Little League, to prioritizing therapies."

Molly and her family dove headfirst into a demanding new reality. Five hours of therapy a day, five days a week, with a one-hour drive each way all while raising a newborn. "I was breastfeeding in the car, changing diapers in the trunk," she says. "Miss Pam from EHS was real support system. She always told me, 'Set him up for the best chance for success.'"

That mantra stuck. As Landon progressed through therapy and Molly became more confident, her role transformed from a concerned mother to a fierce advocate. Not just for her son, but for others like him.

During a self-sufficiency planning session with Head Start, Molly shared a dream: to start a local support group for families affected by autism. Between balancing life, lack of local services and constant traveling for therapy she hit burnout. This might have delayed her plans but never extinguished them. “We shouldn’t have to move away from rural America just to get the services our kids need,” she says.

This year Molly finally got her moment. After months of determination, she secured a meeting with the CEO of The Guidance Center. He was open but cautious. “He asked me, ‘What’s holding you back?’” Molly recalls. “So I started making calls to churches, schools, and organizations. I gathered advice and referrals to determine the unmet need.”

The result? A new, vibrant support group was born. At its very first meeting, more than twenty people showed up. From caregivers, teachers, paras, and those from nearby towns. “I didn’t want to waste anyone’s valuable time,” Molly explains. “So I came prepared, with binders full of resources, information, and a vision for what the group could be.”

Miss Pam was there again, offering support just as she had from the beginning. Donating those binders and giving a presentation about Nek-Cap Inc. services.

The group now meets monthly, with guest speakers lined up to share their expertise. In July, the group will welcome Amy Bodde, PhD, MPH, and research assistant professor for KU Medical Center. To give a presentation regarding the importance of mental health.

In August the group will welcome Alison Anderson, a retired police officer and current Autism Education Coordinator who has two children with autism. Molly has already connected her with Atchison and surrounding area local law enforcement agencies to provide autism training.

And the impact keeps growing. At the end of June, Molly presented her data and goals to the CEO of Amberwell, Atchison’s local hospital. The conversation went so well that the hospital will have a follow-up discussion to explore broader community involvement. Molly is also in contact with Benedictine College about supporting neurodiverse students through life skills training.

Her vision? “I want the group to be open to everyone parents, teachers, neighbors, anyone touched by autism,” she says. “At our

first meeting, 45% were educators. Which surprised me and truly show how dedicated our communities are to helping.”

Molly dreams of the support group evolving into multiple specialized gatherings: new moms connecting over early challenges, seasoned mothers of autistic adults planning for the future, and even adult individuals with autism enjoying social outings like movies and pizza nights.

“I would love to see this bring real change. As our group grows I am hoping our fellow business leaders or CEOs take notice and are called to action,” she says. “Because we’re not just families with challenges. We’re families with potential. Rural America matters and we shouldn’t have to fight this hard for the support our families need.”

Thanks to the nurturing foundation laid by EHS and HS, Molly Franklin transformed from a worried mother into a powerful voice for inclusion, hope, and systemic change. Her journey is a testament to what’s possible when parents are empowered. When dreams are supported, not just imagined.



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CELEBRATING **60 YEARS** OF HEAD START

**A New Day  
A New Way**

Embracing Tomorrow with  
Renewed Passion and Purpose

**2025 ANNUAL FALL LEADERSHIP CAUCUS**  
**OCTOBER 21-23, 2025**  
DoubleTree Hotel • 10100 College Blvd, Overland Park, Kansas

**R7HSA**  
Region VII Head Start Association  
IOWA | KANSAS | MISSOURI | NEBRASKA  
CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF HEAD START  
1965 - 2025

## Topics & More:

**Strategic Leadership in Transition: Navigating Federal Policy Changes in Head Start Programs**  
*(full day 5- part modules)*

**Policy Update on the Current Landscape and How it Impacts Programs**

**Expanded Q & A Session**

**Take-home materials and resources**

Additional guest speaker and session information coming soon!

## SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS



**Lucia Palacios**  
President, Breakwater & Associates, organizational management specialist and past President of Danya International



**Katie Hamm**  
Principal, Next Steps Early Childhood, LLC.



**Yvette Sanchez Fuentes**  
Senior Vice President, National Policy, Start Early, former Director of the Office of Head Start

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Head Start Association 



## 2025 Professional Development



August	Asst Teacher Bootcamps – 7,13,14,20 Data Camp – Acorn Learning 13-14
September	9 - Director Networking 10-Family Services Networking 10-Teacher Networking
October	7 - Director Networking 8 - ERSEA Networking 9 - Education Networking 21-24 Region VII Conference
November	5 - Annual Meeting/Fall Conference 19-Teacher Networking
December	2 - Directors Networking 3 - CACFP Networking 4 - Health Networking 4 - EHS Networking 10-Leadership/Supervisory Series Paul Behrman Part 1 of 3



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REACH OUT WITH QUESTIONS  
LORI FERRIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
IOWA HEAD START ASSOCIATION  
[LORI.FERRIS@IOWAHEADSTART.ORG](mailto:LORI.FERRIS@IOWAHEADSTART.ORG)

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Iowa Head Start Association**  
is excited to offer

**Leadership/Supervisory 3-Part Training Series**

Open to all programs!

Open to all Head Start programs - virtual training

Paul Behrman

<b>December 10, 2025</b> <i>Self-Regulated Leadership with Emotional Intelligence</i>	<b>January 14, 2026</b> <i>The CULTURE CLUB: Elevating Program Culture, Communication and Teamwork!</i>	<b>February 4, 2026</b> <i>From Supervisor to SuperVIBER: Best Practices in Supervision</i>
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How can leaders optimize well-being and utilize executive function to process challenging situations, minimize reaction and stress, and respond constructively with humility, compassion and truth? Using the Emotional Intelligence (EI) model, this workshop unpacks some of the key elements of EI necessary for great leadership, and how we cultivate and develop these qualities in ourselves and in those around us.

People working in a positive workplace culture are more likely to have high morale and job satisfaction and less likely to leave the organization. This session will review how we can develop and maintain environments of joy, teamwork, communication and mutual support. We will discuss the key elements of positive workplace culture and communication practices to enhance employee support and well-being.

Outstanding employee performance and retention requires outstanding supervision. Wages and benefits are important, but so is the vibe and climate created by the supervisor. This workshop will review the key principles of supervision, the proper balance of support and accountability, the mindset, values and character of outstanding supervisors, non-attachment to results, and how to handle challenges along the way.

Scan QR Code to register or learn more!

“People don't quit their job, they quit their supervisor.”

All sessions will end with peer engagement, open discussions and Q&A

For more info contact [Lori.Ferris@IowaHeadStart.org](mailto:Lori.Ferris@IowaHeadStart.org)  
To register: [www.iowaheadstart.org/events/](http://www.iowaheadstart.org/events/)

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All 3 sessions only \$325

**IOWA**  
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**IOWA**  
Head Start Association

Four options in August  
(All sessions are identical)

- August 7
- August 13
- August 14
- August 20

09:00 - 12:00pm - Zoom

**Head Start Assistant Teacher Bootcamp**

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Contact us/Register at:

- [www.IowaHeadStart.org](http://www.IowaHeadStart.org)
- [Lori.Ferris@IowaHeadStart.org](mailto:Lori.Ferris@IowaHeadStart.org)
- 515-371-9128
- [facebook.com/IowaHeadStartAssociation](https://facebook.com/IowaHeadStartAssociation)



August 12  
**Directors call**

August 13  
**NeHSA meeting and Board**

For more information contact:  
**Niki Gemar**  
[nehinfo@gmail.com](mailto:nehinfo@gmail.com)  
[neheadstart.org](http://neheadstart.org)

**Nebraska Head Start Association is selling Head Start tumblers. Contact Niki Gemar to get yours!**



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS



For more information contact:

**Karen Brichoux**  
Communications Coordinator  
and Office Manager  
Office Phone: 785-856-3132  
E-mail: [kbrichoux@ksheadstart.org](mailto:kbrichoux@ksheadstart.org)

[ksheadstart.org](http://ksheadstart.org)

## Human Resources Network

August 13, 2025  
September 3, 2025  
October 1, 2025  
November 5, 2025  
1:00 – 2:00 PM

## Head Start Director Network

August 21, 2025  
September 26, 2025  
November 20, 2025  
9:00 – 10:00 AM

## Head Start *NEW* Director Network

September 19, 2025  
October 17, 2025  
1:00 – 2:00 PM

## Fiscal Network

September 3, 2025  
November 5, 2025  
2:00 – 3:00 PM

## PFCE Network

November 18, 2025  
10:30 – 11:30 AM

## Health Managers Network

November 18, 2025  
2:00 – 3:00 PM

## KHSA Board Meeting

September 11, 2025  
November 13, 2025  
2:00 – 3:00 PM

## October State Meeting and Network Conversations for Directors, ERSEA, Education Managers, Behavioral Health/ Disabilities, and Parents

October 9, 2025, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM  
Webster Conference Center, Salina, KS



For more information contact:

**Tina Bernskoetter**  
[tina@moheadstart.org](mailto:tina@moheadstart.org)

## MHSA Board & Council Meetings

September 11  
December 11

## MO Head Start Directors & Partners' Calls

August 5  
September 2  
October 7  
November 4  
December 2

## Head Start ECHO Discussions

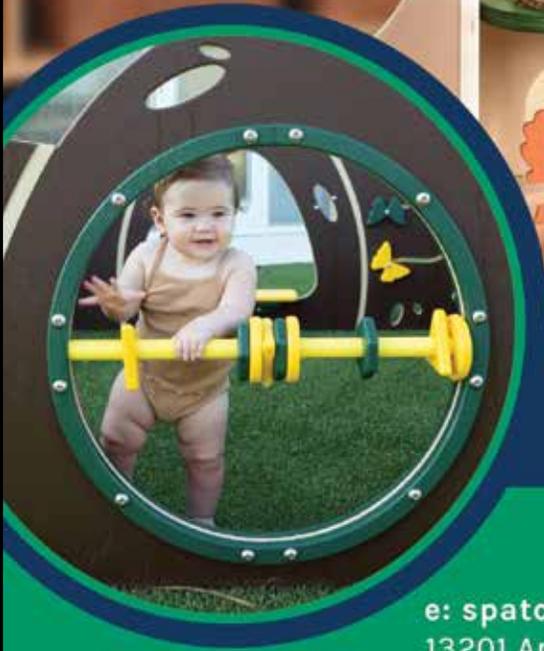
September 17  
October 15  
November 19  
December 17

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