

EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

Early Head Start programs provide family-centered services for low-income families with very young children. These programs are designed to promote the development of the children, and to enable their parents to fulfill their roles as parents and to move toward self-sufficiency. Services are provided in the following options:

OPTIONS

Home-based services: The full range of Early Head Start services are provided through weekly home visits to each enrolled child and family. The home visitor provides child-focused visits that promote the parents' ability to support their child's development. These visits last about an hour and a half each. About twice per month, the program offers opportunities for parents and children to come together as a group for learning, discussion, and social activity.

Center-based services: Education and child development services are delivered primarily in classroom settings, which are located in an Early Head Start center, school, or child care center. Staff members also visit family homes at least twice per year.

Family child care services: Education and child development services are delivered to children primarily in a private home or family-like setting. Family child care providers operate sufficient hours to meet the child care needs of families and not less than 1,380 hours per year.

ELIGIBILITY

The HHS Poverty Guidelines are used to determine income eligibility for participation in Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Program staff may refer to these resources when working with families.

The HHS Poverty Guidelines and Section 645 of the Head Start Act are used to determine income eligibility for participation in Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Program staff may refer to these resources when working with families.

Children from birth to age five who are from families with incomes below the poverty guidelines are eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start services. Children from homeless families and families receiving public assistance such as TANF or SSI are also eligible. Foster children are eligible regardless of their foster family's income. Program staff members may refer to this section of the Head Start Act to further understand eligibility for Head Start and Early Head Start: [Sec. 645 of the Head Start Act](#).

The poverty guidelines are adjusted for families of different sizes and may be used to determine financial eligibility for certain federal programs such as Head Start and Early Head Start services. The guidelines are issued each year in the Federal Register by the Department of Health and Human Services. A single set of guidelines applies to the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia. There are separate sets of poverty guidelines for Alaska and Hawaii. These guidelines may be used when determining a family's eligibility for Head Start and Early Head Start services. Select this link for the [HHS Poverty Guidelines](#)