

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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2013

*Maine*  
**HEAD START**  
*Report*



The data presented here reflect those programs funded by the federal Office of Head Start and are based on the 2011-2012 Program Information Report (PIR), a federally mandated report submitted annually to the Office of Head Start. The program year is September 1, 2011 to August 31, 2012. Eleven Head Start grantees in Maine are funded primarily through the federal Office of Head Start. Three additional Head Start programs are funded by the Tribal Office of Head Start and are managed by the Passamaquoddy, Micmac and Maliseet tribes within their communities.

The charts in this report reflect data from the PIR unless otherwise indicated.

The term "Head Start" in this report refers to both Early Head Start and Head Start serving children prenatal up to 5 years of age, unless otherwise specified.

This report was written by the Maine Children's Alliance in cooperation with the Maine Head Start Directors Association (MHSDA).

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## FEDERAL HEAD STARTS

### ANDROSCOGGIN HEAD START & CHILD CARE

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Coburn School, 269 Bates St., Lewiston, ME 04240

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P.O.Box 1116, Presque Isle, ME 04769

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Sue Powers, Director: spowers@acap-me.org

### MIDCOAST MAINE COMMUNITY ACTION

*County Served:* Sagadahoc, Lincoln and Greater Brunswick

34 Wing Farm Pkwy., Bath, ME 04530

(207) 442-7963 ext 214 or 1-800-221-2221

Sue Kingsland, Director: sue.kingsland@mmccorp.org

### CHILD & FAMILY OPPORTUNITIES (CFO)

*County Served:* Hancock and Washington

P.O.Box 648, Ellsworth, ME 04605

(207) 667-2995 or 1-800-834-4378

Doug Orville: dougo@childandfamilyopp.org

### COMMUNITY CONCEPTS

*County Served:* Oxford and Franklin

17 Market Square, S. Paris, ME 04281

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97 Water St., Waterville, ME 04901

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(207) 973-3500

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### WALDO COUNTY HEAD START

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(207) 338-3827

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### YORK COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION CORPORATION

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(207) 710-2404

## TRIBAL HEAD STARTS

### LITTLE FEATHERS HEAD START

Aroostook Band of Micmacs

County Served: Aroostook

13 Northern Rd.

Presque Isle, ME 04769

(207) 768-3217

Rick Getchell, Director: rgetchell@micmac-nsn.gov

### MALISEET HEAD START

1 Maliseet Dr.

Houlton, Maine 04730

(207) 521-2410

Cindy Fitzpatrick, Director: cindyfitz@maliseets.com

### PASSAMAQUODDY HEAD START

County Served: Washington

P.O.Box 344

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(207) 454-2128

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## WHAT IS HEAD START?

Head Start provides early care and education, as well as health, nutrition, mental health, social and family support, to low-income families with children from prenatal to five years old. Head Start services are delivered in a variety of ways, for example: a home visitor meets with a child and the child's family for 90 minutes each week; an infant is enrolled in Early Head Start either at a family child care home or at an early childhood center; a four year-old attends a collaborative partnership program of the local Head Start grantee and the public school; and three- and four year-old Head Start preschoolers attend a center in the community.

According to the 2011-2012 Program Information Report (PIR), Maine Head Start and Early Head Start had 3,762 funded enrollment slots, serving a total of 4,433 infants, toddlers and preschool children.

### Number of Children Enrolled more than 45 Days, 2011-12

Early Head Start	1,072	(24%)
Head Start	3,361	(76%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,433</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

## WHY IS HEAD START IMPORTANT?

The early years of a child's life are extremely important because early experiences affect the architecture of the maturing brain. When building a house, the foundation is laid carefully and with exact measurements so that the remaining structure will be sturdy and strong. In the same way, as a child's brain grows, the quality of the architecture establishes either a sturdy or a fragile foundation for all of the development and behavior that follows. Getting things right initially is easier and less expensive than fixing problems later.

A recent national study of Head Start found that children who were enrolled in Head Start continuously for at least three years

before entering kindergarten displayed greater rates of kindergarten readiness than children participating in Head Start for two years or less. The results of this study, along with the latest research on brain development, demonstrate the need to increase the number of children in Early Head Start programs that serve children prenatal to three years old\*.

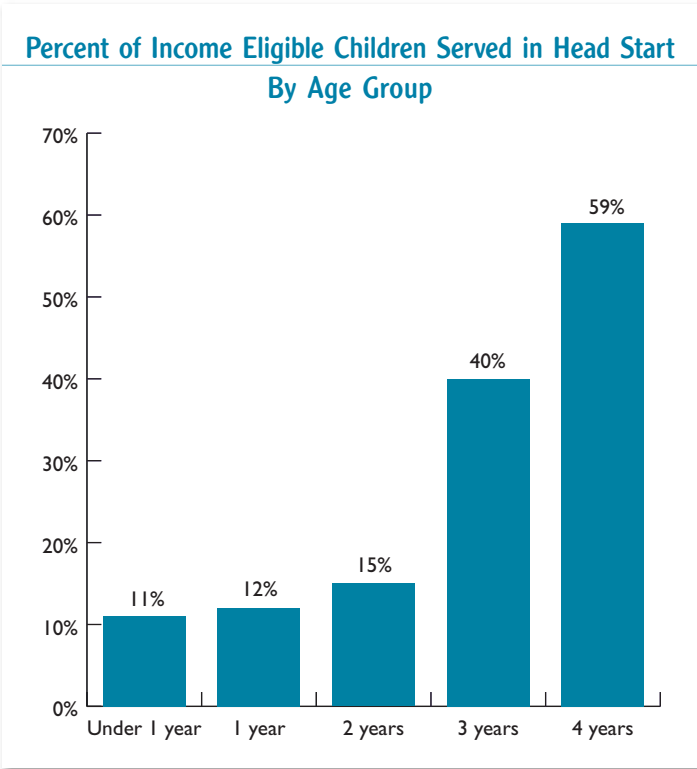
\* Head Start Impact Study U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation; January 2010



# WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO ENROLL IN HEAD START?

Head Start enrollment priority is given to families living in poverty as well as children who are: homeless; in foster care; living in areas defined as medically underserved; or have special needs. Programs use the Federal Poverty Guidelines to determine eligibility. Families with financial resources above the poverty guidelines are also eligible if they receive public assistance.

In 2011, an estimated 24.2 percent of Maine's children under age five lived in poverty and were eligible for Head Start<sup>1</sup>. In 2011-2012, Maine Head Start served an estimated 28% of income eligible children ages birth to five years old. However, the percent of children being served differs by age. Early Head Start served approximately 11% of the income-eligible infants and toddlers, while Head Start enrolled an estimated 48% of three and four year olds living in poverty<sup>2</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates (SAIPE). [www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/index.html](http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/index.html)

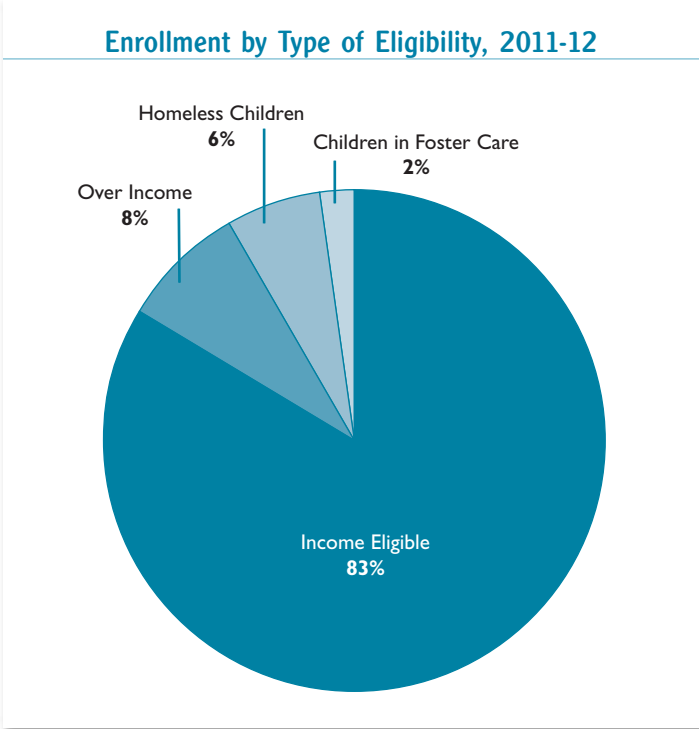
<sup>2</sup> **Calculating Percent of Income Eligible Children Enrolled in Early Head Start and Head Start:** In 2011, an estimated 15,848 (24.2 percent) of Maine's children under age five lived in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)). According to the 2010 US Decennial Census counts, there were 69,520 under age 5 living in Maine: 40,596 birth-two and 28,924 three and four year olds. Using the 24.2 percent under 5 poverty rate from above, it was estimated that 9,824 children birth to age two lived in poverty (40,596 X 24.2%). For three and four year olds, it was estimated that 6,997 lived in poverty (28,924 X 24.2%).

**Early Head Start** = 1,072 children enrolled for more than 45 days/9,824 children birth to two in poverty = 11% of income eligible children ages birth to two enrolled in EHS

**Head Start** = 3,361 children enrolled for more than 45 days/6,997 in poverty = 48% of income eligible 3 & 4 year olds enrolled in HS

FAMILY SIZE	ANNUAL INCOME
1	\$11,170
2	\$15,130
3	\$19,090
4	\$23,050
5	\$27,010
6	\$30,970
7	\$34,930
8	\$38,890

Add 3,960 for each additional family member above 8



## Getting a Head Start on Stable Housing

One important feature of Head Start is the Family Partnership Agreement. The Family Partnership Agreement is a process that identifies a family's particular needs and goals, and provides strategies for achieving them. For example, in the case of Jane, it was determined the greatest priority was to find permanent housing. After six months in the shelter, Jane received a voucher and secured an apartment for her family. She continued with Home Based Early Head Start, moving the visits to her new home. Jane took the initiative to seek evaluation and support services for her eldest daughter's speech and language needs.

Jane obtained a full-time job, participated in parenting education classes, maintained her apartment and participated in counseling. Through the whole process, Jane continued to participate in weekly visits with her Home Visitor through the Early Head Start program, and spent as much time with her daughters as possible. Jane's relationships with program staff helped her to feel like her voice was being heard and that she could make positive changes in her life.

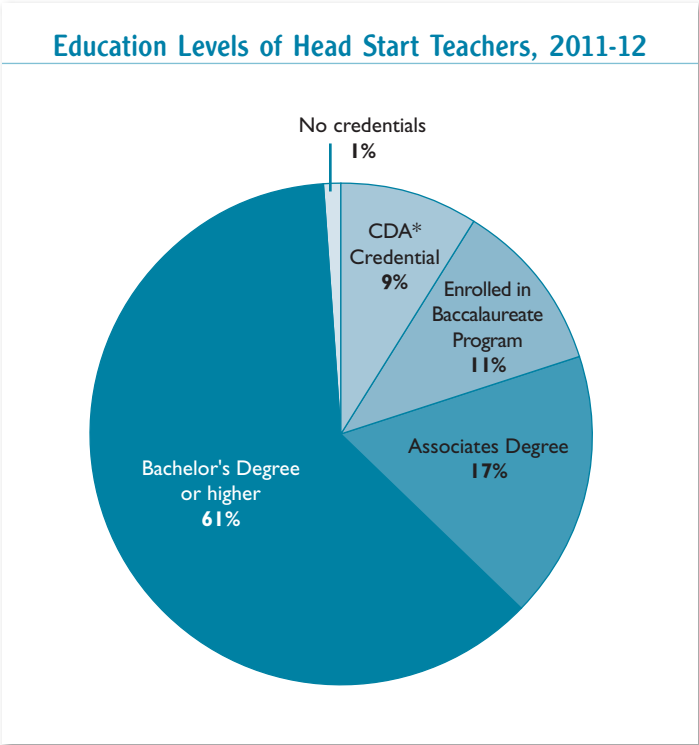
In the midst of finding safety, stability, and shelter, Jane has been able to maintain her focus on the importance of her role as a parent. With the encouragement and close connection with Head Start Staff, Jane has come to understand that she is the most important educator in her children's lives. No matter the obstacles, Jane is committed to helping her children learn, grow and flourish.



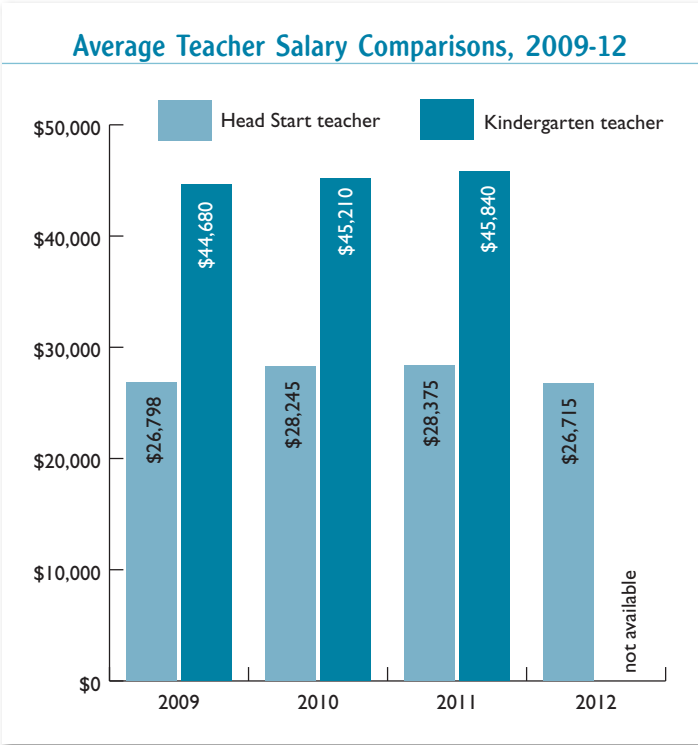
# HEAD START TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS AND SALARY

Federal Head Start regulations require that classroom teachers have formal early childhood training. Currently, Head Start programs are working toward meeting a national standard by 2013 that requires 50% of all classroom teachers to have at least a bachelor's degree in early childhood. According to the 2011-2012 PIR, 61 percent of Maine Head Start teachers have a bachelor's degree or higher in ECE or a related field.

The increased need for well-trained, qualified teachers in public pre-K classrooms has caused an increased teacher turnover in Head Start programs. As can be seen, the annual salary of a Head Start teacher is well below that of the average Kindergarten teacher. In 2012, the average salary for Head Start teachers was \$26,715, down from \$28,735 the previous year.



\* Child Development Associate (CDA) is an early childhood credential typically equal to 11 college credits.



Data Source: Average salary for public school kindergarten teacher from Maine Department of Labor

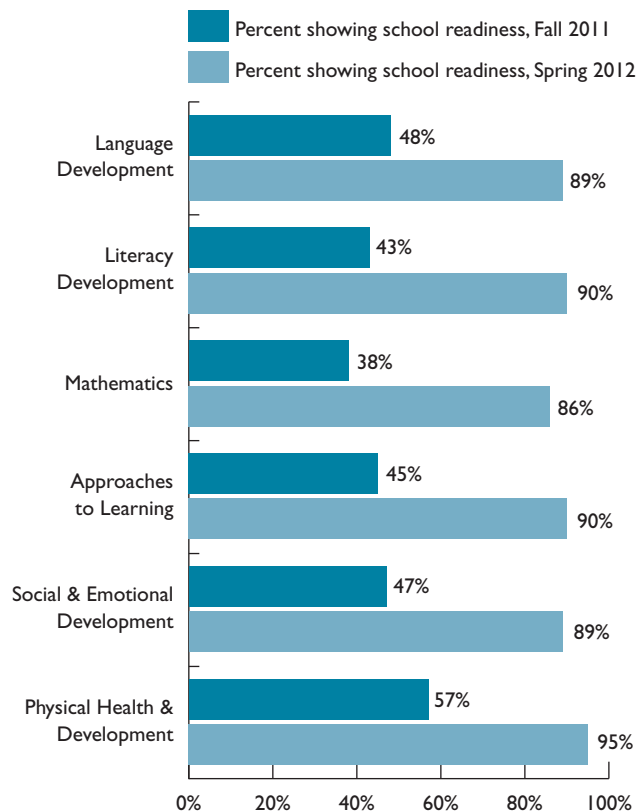


## WHAT IMPACT DOES HEAD START HAVE?

*Early Head Start* focuses on fostering social/emotional development, promoting secure attachments, and supporting positive brain development. Evaluation of each child's progress is ongoing, so that areas of concern are identified and appropriate supports are received. All assessments include parent input and all information is shared with the family. Ensuring the emotional well-being of infants and toddlers is part of the foundation for future school success.

*Head Start* focuses on kindergarten readiness skills. Parent input, along with ongoing observations and assessments provide important information on the growth and progress of each child. Individual assessments focus on social/emotional development, language, literacy, math and science. Teachers use these assessments when planning individual and group activities to support each child's progress. This information is also reviewed for overall program improvement goals.

### School Readiness Assessments of Head Start Children Who Entered Kindergarten in Fall 2012



### SCHOOL READINESS

Children are assessed in four areas of development: social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language/literacy. Head Start teachers assess each child's developmental progress a minimum of three times per year. These assessments are used to inform curriculum planning for the individual child and for small groups of children. The assessments are also used for parent-teacher conferences that occur at least twice each year. Aggregate child data are used by each program to inform systemic planning and professional development activities.

### CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Early identification of developmental delays and behavioral problems can lead to timely interventions that best support a child's development and decrease parental stress. Research has demonstrated that there are specific moments in the development of a young child when intervention can be the most effective and can reverse negative impacts. It is essential that such interventions occur within the first five years of life.

### HEALTH SERVICES

Evidence strongly indicates that success in adult life is directly linked to early childhood health. Supporting families by ensuring that their children have access to ongoing preventative medical, mental health and dental services is a hallmark of the Head Start program.





## Early Head Start Invaluable to Many... Just Ask Kayden

BY DAVID M. FITZPATRICK

*Reprinted from a March 1, 2012 Bangor Daily News story that appeared in the Waldo Community Action Partner's Annual Report.*

Mary Cox knew early in her pregnancy that her son would be born with a bilateral cleft lip and palate. And after Kayden arrived in the world, he underwent seven surgeries in Boston, all before 18 months, to correct the extensive deformation. There were concerns about his ongoing development, so his public-health nurse referred him to several professionals, such as a speech therapist at Waldo County General Hospital. Today, at 2½, Kayden has the vocabulary of a 5-year-old and speaks in complex sentences, although he's still working on his articulation. But part of that success was the collaboration the speech therapist had with another early referral.

That was to WCAP's Early Head Start program. Once a week, an EHS home visitor comes into the Cox home to work with Kayden and help with his development. The process begins with an Ages & Stages Questionnaire to identify challenge areas. From there, the home visitor works with Kayden in fun, engaging activities that are intensive evaluation and education — but looks and feels like playtime. That works well for an energetic guy like Kayden, and great for Mary.

"I love having a goal, knowing what I should be looking at, knowing what his strengths are," said Mary. "And they make it fun, too."

The home visitor observes the family engaging in activities with Kayden, and then suggests ways to get additional benefits from the activity. For example, the Coxes worked with Kayden to count and stack blocks, which works his brain in two ways. But the EHS visitor suggested a new idea: line up alternating long and short blocks, and ask Kayden which comes next.

And when Kayden was learning colors, the home visitor took him on outdoor color walks to find colors in nature and in the neighborhood — turning an educational task into physical exercise and an entertaining time with the family.

Such activities are not by accident. The EHS home visitors carefully track children's development to mark what are called milestones — ensuring the children can do certain tasks at certain ages. If they're behind, the visitor knows what areas to work on, and can suggest activities to help, without needing to spend much money to do them.

"These are all things that families can do in their homes," Mary said. "You use supplies that people usually have already." Kayden's parents are intimately involved with his development. Her parents, who live downstairs in the house, also spend a lot of time with him. "There's always somebody around that really cares for him, and really, really wants to see him grow and develop," said Kayden's father, Kenneth. That's key, the parents agree, and some parents might need a little boost in that department — a boost EHS can give a family that needs it.

But despite the success of EHS, its government funding could very well be endangered next year as across-the-board cuts for 2013 are considered as part of the debt-limit deal. "That's scary, because I just think what we've done is pure gold," Mary said. "A lot of that is that we've had tremendous support from them."

"It's just like a house: If you break the foundation, it isn't going to work," said Kenneth. "When they cut back all these Head Start programs, that's really what they're doing is they're breaking the kids' education right from the start."

Mary's mother, Kate Sweetland, didn't believe that Early Head Start would work with Kayden. "I thought, 'What can they do for him?'" she recalled. "We read to him already. He eats vegetables." But well into the program, she's a woman with a changed mind. "It really has done a lot for him," she said. "This has been a fantastic program. Even the doubting grandmother is well convinced. And the people in it are just incredibly good people."

The Family Partnership Agreement (FPA) is a key element in Head Start's comprehensive approach. The FPA is used by Head Start Family Advocates to support parents in developing short- and long-range goals for family success.

Head Start Programs provide support services to families and make appropriate community referrals. Training opportunities are also provided to parents, ranging from how to support a child's cognitive development to parent leadership development.

Parent involvement is integral to the success of Head Start. Parents volunteer in the classrooms, participate in decision making at both

the center and program level, and have a strong influence, through a Policy Council, over policies and procedures implemented by the Head Start program.

Every Head Start program has a Policy Council. Head Start parents comprise at least 51% of the Policy Council; other members are community representatives. The Council works in collaboration with each agency's staff and board of directors to administer responsive, relevant programs that comply with federal Head Start regulations.

### One of Many Family Success Stories

Head Start recognizes that parents are children's first teachers, and supports them in that role in a number of ways. Head Start parenting classes cover the full range of age and stage development in children, as well as offer some great tools for being a responsive parent. For example, as the mother of two young boys enrolled in Head Start, Carla took parenting classes that helped her learn new techniques and increase her skills as a parent. Carla had experienced a childhood of abuse and neglect and these classes helped her create a healthy family life for her children.

Another aspect of Head Start that helps parents thrive is the Family Partnership Agreement (FPA). Family service staff members work closely with families to develop an FPA Agreement with goals related to community resources and opportunities that will help them forge a better life for their children and themselves. And so with her Family Advocate, Carla highlighted her strengths and set goals that she wanted to accomplish. When she shared with the Family Advocate that she hadn't finished high school, information about the local adult education program was provided. Carla felt encouraged and supported by Head Start as she began the journey to complete her GED.

Not only did Carla complete her GED, she received an Associate's Degree in Business from Eastern Maine Community College and obtained a Bachelor's in Child Development and Family Relations from the University of Maine. This degree helped Carla obtain her current position with the Department of Health and Human Services as a Caseworker. Carla continues to work towards increasing her education, and is applying for a social work license to work with families and help them rebuild their lives after adverse situations.

## Parent Involvement in Head Start

Every Head Start program has a Policy Council comprised of at least 51% Head Start parents. The rest of the Council membership consists of community representatives. The Council works in collaboration with each agency's staff and board of directors to administer responsive, relevant programs in compliance with federal Head Start regulations. Head Start grantees are expected to have Policy Council involvement in the development of the grant application including approval of the budget submitted to the federal government each year.

At the April 2012 Policy Council meeting, a Head Start Program Director passed out a brochure on a parent leadership conference called "Ready, Set, Go" that was being presented in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Dawn, a member of the Council, was one of two parents chosen to participate and attend this conference with other Head Start staff. Through her participation, she attended workshops about child development, learned new activities to help her child develop literacy skills, and received leadership trainings. Traveling with the staff from her local Head Start program made it much easier to feel a part of the program and enjoy the workshops. Dawn's attendance at these workshops provided her with many opportunities to meet other parents from New England who had children enrolled in Head Start programs.

As a result of the workshops, Dawn began to think about her education and the example she wanted to set for her son. She came to the conclusion that she needed to further her own education if she wanted to inspire educational aspirations in her own child. Upon determining which college she wanted to attend, Dawn worked with her Head Start Family Advocate to complete and submit the necessary application forms. Because Dawn had been out of school for so many years, she needed to take three placement exams to assess her readiness. The Family Advocate provided Dawn with supports to take the exams, including transportation. Because she passed the exams with flying colors, Dawn enrolled in college classes and is on her way to pursuing the dreams she holds for herself and her family.

Dawn's Policy Council involvement gave her a voice and created opportunity, helping her to set and achieve goals that will positively affect her family's life.

## SUMMARY

Maine Head Start programs promote school readiness by providing comprehensive services for children and their families, including education, medical assessment, social skills and parenting education. Head Start places significant emphasis on parental involvement, with programs that engage parents in their children's learning

and help them make progress toward their own educational and employment goals. As Head Start programs expand opportunities and options for children and their families, Maine communities are also strengthened and enriched.

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