

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–2308

[[DATE]]

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Building Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
1036 Longworth House Office
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you consider Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations legislation, and given the significant role Head Start plays in supporting our country’s most vulnerable children and families, we urge you to provide robust funding for Head Start at the highest level the Subcommittee deems possible.

Leaning on decades of science, Head Start assists children in building the brain connections and self-confidence necessary for success in kindergarten and beyond. Knowing that children must be healthy to succeed, Head Start ensures they receive physical and mental health services and necessary referrals, plus balanced meals and a nutritious snack daily. Respecting the choices and responsibilities parents have in the upbringing of their children, parents play a central role in the decisions about how each program spends money, what children do in their classrooms, and how they work with community partners. Finally, acknowledging that each community has different strengths, resources, and challenges – and reflecting the federal to local funding of Head Start – each program is locally designed to reflect those community needs and priorities.

While difficult decisions must be made, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have long agreed that investing in Head Start is a fiscally responsible course of action because the Head Start model has proven remarkably successful. Research shows that Head Start alumni are more likely to graduate from high school, enroll in and graduate from college, and are less likely to smoke or experience poor health, live in poverty, or need public assistance as adults. And Head Start parents and caregivers, having benefited from goal-setting, parenting training, and experiencing real engagement, are more likely to join the workforce or stay employed, setting them and their families on a path of economic self-reliance.

Head Start programs can be found in every state and Congressional district across America, and in some communities, it is the only early learning option available to families. In many places, Head Start serves as a lifeline to connect families to the resources they need while also supporting quality child development. In Fiscal Year 2024, Head Start served over 750,000 children and their families nationwide. In that time, Head Start conducted over 3.9 million home visits to families, ensured that more than 685,000 children received preventative dental care, helped over 570,000 children stay up-to-date on early and periodic diagnostic treatments, and involved more than 203,000 fathers in their children’s educational experiences.

For decades, Congress has united around Head Start to provide high-quality early learning and support for our nation's underserved children and their families. As you evaluate FY26 funding requests, we urge the Subcommittee to prioritize Head Start. This proven, time-tested program unlocks the doors to opportunity for children and families across our great nation. This will allow Head Start to continue putting those children and their families on the path to success in school, in work, and in life, ultimately leading to greater prosperity for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

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