

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH

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Proclaim October 2024 as Head Start Awareness Month in Los Angeles County

Every October, Head Start Awareness Month is celebrated to raise awareness about the Head Start program, a comprehensive prenatal-to-five early learning program that gives children and families a springboard to success in school and life.

Head Start is an integral part of California’s Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) mixed delivery system, reflecting the state’s commitment to its youngest learners and their families. UPK ensures parent choice in early education for 3 and 4 year old children by offering a variety of program options, including transitional kindergarten, Head Start, California State Preschool Program, and private preschool programs, with both center-based and family childcare options available. The LA County Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education, a division within the Department of Public Health, is leading the integration of the early care and education mixed delivery system with UPK and Head Start is a key partner in this effort.

As a key component of UPK, Head Start is a valuable option for families to consider for their children. By nurturing and educating children from before birth until kindergarten entry, while also providing invaluable support, resources, and opportunities for families,

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Head Start helps children attain school readiness during the crucial first five years when 90% of brain development occurs.

Since launching in 1965, Head Start programs have served nearly 40 million children and families nationwide; today, nearly 800,000 children are enrolled each year in programs across the country, including more than 21,400 in Los Angeles County. Head Start is a direct investment from the federal government into local communities, with programs designed and operated by providers such as public-school districts and private nonprofits to meet their own community's specific needs. This investment supports small businesses and increases employment while also providing parents opportunities to rejoin the workforce.

In Head Start, parents are empowered as their children's first and best teachers, and children receive high-quality education and comprehensive health, nutritional, and social-emotional support in inclusive learning environments that embrace each family's home culture and language and celebrate each child's unique abilities.

This intentional, individualized approach creates lifelong benefits for participants and ripple effects for the community more broadly. Researchers from the University of California, Los Angeles and other institutions reported in 2020 that "the government makes 5.4% to 9.1% per year for at least 30 years for every child it put through Head Start due solely to savings on public assistance and a small increase in tax revenue from higher wages earned by participants," and concluding that "Head Start appears to have

achieved the goals of its early architects, both increasing children’s economic opportunities and reducing poverty.¹”

This October, in honor of Head Start Awareness Month, community members are encouraged to spread the word about the importance of early learning by sharing information about the Head Start program with friends, family, and neighbors. Those with a passion for young child development are encouraged to explore a career in early childhood education, including through apprenticeship opportunities offered by the County Department of Economic Opportunity at opportunity.lacounty.gov/early_education/.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Declare October 2024 as Head Start Awareness Month in Los Angeles County; and
2. Invite families of young children and expectant families to find their nearest Head Start center via the Head Start Agencies Referral System at prekkid.org or appcenter.gis.lacounty.gov/HARS/ or by calling (877) PRE-K-KID to apply.

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¹ Bailey, Martha, et al. “Prep School for Poor Kids: The Long-Run Impacts of Head Start on Human Capital and Economic Self-Sufficiency.” *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2020, www.econ.ucla.edu/bailey/Bailey_Sun_Timpe.pdf, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3756301>.