



**WSA** Washington State Association  
of Head Start & ECEAP



## Memorandum

**TO:** Media Outlets

**FROM:** Joel Ryan, Executive Director, Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP

**RE:** Head Start Creates Jobs

**DATE:** February 12, 2009

WSA believes that including Head Start/Early Head Start within the economic recovery package is a critical component for job creation. We believe that there are three critical areas in which new funding for Head Start will increase jobs, thereby stimulating and bettering the economy:

- 1) A \$2 billion increase in Head Start/Early Head Start funding will provide a safe and high quality place for low wage workers to leave their children. Having a place for their children to prosper will enable low wage workers to search for and obtain jobs.
- 2) A \$2 billion increase in Head Start/Early Head Start funding will allow the programs to hire new staff and teachers to assist low income children and families. A significant number of these jobs will be needed in Early Head Start in order to serve additional infants and toddlers.
- 3) A \$2 billion increase in Head Start/Early Head Start funding will allow programs to continue to assist low income parents in finding employment.

### **1. Safe and high quality early learning for low income preschoolers and infants and toddlers**

A \$2 billion increase in funding for Head Start/Early Head Start will provide low income families with a safe and high quality early learning experience for their children. Not only will this benefit thousands of at risk children, but it provides families with a place to leave their children while they are looking for employment or are working.

### **2. 60,000 jobs will be created**

The National Head Start Association (NHSA) estimates that a \$2 billion increase in Head Start funding will result in at least 60,000 new jobs. With an expansion in the number of both Head Start and Early Head Start slots, programs will need to hire additional teachers and staff.

### **3. Head Start helps low income parents enroll in school, provides them job training, and helps them find work**

Head Start is a two generational program. This means that while the program provides high quality early learning experiences for low income children, it also helps their parents become self-sufficient and enter or remain part of the job force. Head Start programs often help parents enroll in school, provide them with job training, and help them find employment opportunities in their community. Here are some specific examples from programs in WA of the value of Head Start/Early Head Start to stimulating the economy:

#### **Spokane County Head Start Program**

In this program, staff located, notified, and encouraged parents to attend job fairs in their community. They set up interviews for mothers considering careers in nursing. They assisted parents with resumes writing, located GED classes for parents, and helped them apply for financial aid.

Here are two good stories about Head Start helping parents find work:

#### **Example #1: Father finds work as technician**

One dad was working in fast food but wanted to work in Heating and Air Conditioning. The Head Start program was able to give him information about a program that offered job placement upon completion of technical training. That father is now in his third year as a technician, making an excellent wage and better able to support his family.

#### **Example #2: Mom opens up her own business with support from Head Start staff**

A mom who wanted to open her own on-line business was hesitant and unsure about her abilities. During many conversations, Head Start staff went over her strengths and set goals for her to start her business. She is now very competent with her website and has more business than she can handle.

#### **Seattle - Denise Louie Center**

In this program, staff helped many job seeking parents with their employment applications (e.g., translation and review), gave them online resources on how to interview, and referred them to agencies such as Center for Career Alternatives, Asian Counseling and Referral Service and Chinese Information and Service Center, which provide workshops and direct employment assistance. In addition, the staff guided

several parents seeking help in obtaining food handler permits. One of the parents to whom assistance was provided is employed at a Seattle Public Schools cafeteria.

Last year, Dress for Success sent the program "In Spa" scholarship opportunities, and helped parents sign up for the program. The program successfully enrolled a parent in the program and also obtained interview clothing for her.

Quite a few parents took early childhood education courses that are promoted at DLEC. One of the parents used this knowledge and started planning for a home based childcare.

The program also supplied parents with information about job fairs, job openings and job training opportunities.

#### **Lower Columbia College Head Start**

Lower Columbia provides parents with GED classes and an ESL class. Both of these classes are provided by Lower Columbia College. As the parents become better educated and obtain degrees, they are able to find new employment opportunities.

#### **Family Services of Grant County**

Last year the program served as a work experience training site for 34 individuals from Job Corps, Big Bend Community College, Goodwill Industries, and S.L. Start. At least 80% of them were hired upon completion of their program. FSGC hired 3 of them. A total of 26 former Head Start parents are employed at this program.

#### **Kitsap County Head Start**

This program reports helping many parents receive their GED. They have also worked with a family to start a home health care business. There are 13 parents attending Central Washington University. The program estimates that at least a dozen parents are employed as a direct result of the staff at the program. Staff referred them to local employers and assisted in putting together resumes.