



WSA Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP

*Serving ECEAP, Head Start, Migrant Head Start,
Tribal Head Start and Early Head Start
Programs and Families*



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Debt Deal Done; House Gearing Up to Cut Funding for Head Start by Up to 100,000 Children nationwide, 1140 in Washington

Independent Fact-checkers say Head Start Has Lasting Impact

Background

Congress has signaled their intention to make massive cuts to federal spending with the passage of the debt limit deal, and one of their first targets could be Head Start. The House Labor HHS Appropriations Subcommittee will “mark up” their FY2012 appropriations bill in early fall and it will likely include huge cuts to Head Start. According to the previously published report on the House Appropriations Committee web site, the Labor HHS appropriation will be cut by more than \$18 billion—an 11.5% cut. This may change as the committee revisits its proposal, but if this cut was applied, 100,000 Head Start children would lose the critical services that enable them to arrive at kindergarten ready to learn. In Washington State, more than 1100 at-risk children and families would be impacted. As early as 2013, as a result of the debt limit deal, even deeper cuts could be possible to unprotected programs like Head Start if no deficit-reduction agreement is reached by the special committee and the “trigger” is pulled.

PolitiFact Truth-O-Meter weighs in on Head Start Debate

Republicans have justified this proposed cut by saying Head Start doesn't work. This summer a debate between U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Ohio) and a Fox News host took place on this issue. The Fox News anchor, Greta Van Sustern, criticized Head Start, claiming that the gains made to the program fade out over time—an argument popular with right-wing blogs and think tanks. Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Ohio), her guest on the show, challenged her conclusions about Head Start and asserted that the program saves taxpayers money in both the short and long term.

So who won the debate? PolitiFact.com, the Pulitzer Prize winning fact-checking organization, dug into the research on the program and scored the debate to Congressman Ryan. They concluded that “numerous studies support the notion that Head Start is cost beneficial.”

What Politifact.com Found

- 1. Children exposed to the Head Start program were more likely to finish high school**
- 2. They are likely to have better jobs with greater earning power**
- 3. They are less likely to commit crimes as adults**

Additionally, the staff at Polifact.com reviewed [a letter signed by 300 researchers](#) that concluded that multiple studies demonstrate that Head Start is an astoundingly smart investment. Kids that have been through Head Start and Early Head Start are healthier, more academically accomplished, more likely to be employed, commit fewer crimes, and contribute more to society. **For every \$1 invested in Head Start, we get a Return on Investment (ROI) ranging from \$7 to \$9.**¹

About WSA

The Washington State Association of Head Start/ECEAP (WSA) is a statewide organization composed of representatives from ECEAP, Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant/Seasonal Head Start, and Native American Head Start. The association has been in existence since the late 1960's, and was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1986. The organization advocates for Head Start and for ECEAP in Olympia and in Washington DC. You can visit our web site at www.wsaheadstarteceap.com

ⁱ Ludwig, J. and Phillips, D. (2007). The Benefits and Costs of Head Start. *Social Policy Report*. 21 (3: 4); Meier, J. (2003, June 20). Interim Report. Kindergarten Readiness Study: Head Start Success. Preschool Service Department, San Bernardino County, California.