

Investment, it Starts in Head Start

In 2024, 209 AIAN Head Start and Early Head Start programs served nearly 18,000 children and pregnant women.

A Program That Supports the Current and Future Workforce

- ◆ Educational Attainment: A study by NBER found that children who participated in Head Start were 2.7% more likely to finish high school, an 8.5% increase in college enrollment, and a **39% increase in college completion**.¹
- ◆ Head Start decreased the likelihood of adult poverty by 23 percent and dependence on public assistance by 27 percent.¹
- ◆ During the 2024 year, **73% of families enrolled had at least one parent/guardian employed, in job training, or in school** at time of enrollment.²

Powered by Parents

- ◆ Many AIAN Head Start employees are past Head Start parents who fuel the program with their lived experience, knowledge, and education.²
 - 2,805 total staff during 2024
 - 6,368 volunteers were current or former parents
- ◆ Head Start graduates invest more in their children's development, spending more time teaching, praising, showing affection, and engaging in favorite activities.³

Giving our Kids a Strong Start and Saving \$\$\$

- ◆ Researchers from UCLA and the University of Nebraska found that **Head Start generates a 5.4% to 9.1% annual return for at least 30 years**, based on public assistance savings and higher tax revenues from participants' increased earnings.⁴
- ◆ The **economic return on investment for programs supporting disadvantaged children exceeds 13% annually** – surpassing even the long-term average returns of the stock market.⁵
- ◆ Head Start **decreased the likelihood of adult poverty by 23 percent and dependence on public assistance by 27 percent**.¹

1. *Prep School for Poor Kids: The Long-Run Impacts of Head Start on Human Capital and Economic Self-Sufficiency* (<https://www.nber.org/papers/w28268>)

2. *2024 Head Start Program Information Report*

3. *The Long-Term Impact of the Head Start Program* (https://www.hamiltonproject.org/assets/files/long_term_impact_of_head_start_program.pdf)

4. *Head Start, the Public Preschool Program, More Than Pays for Itself* (<https://anderson-review.ucla.edu/head-start-public-preschool-program-more-than-pays-for-itself/>)

5. *Quantifying the Life-Cycle Benefits of an Influential Early-Childhood Program* (<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/705718?journalCode=jpe>)

6. Fleming and Ledogar, 2008; Pu et al., 2013; Wexler, 2014

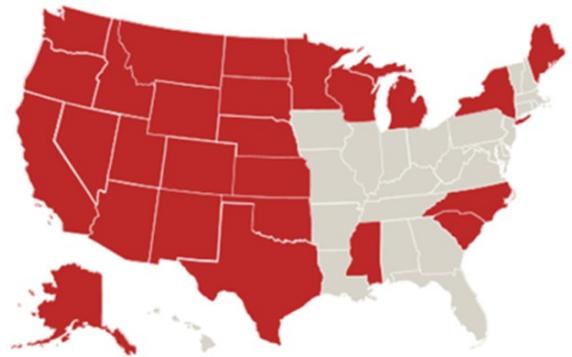
7. Hallett et al., 2007

8. Coe et al., 2004

9. Hodge & Nandy, 2011, Oster et al., 2014

Native Language and Culture is Critical to Success

- ◆ Research shows that **Native culture and language support children's development** in positive ways. Cultural identity can foster protective attributes such as health, resilience, and well-being.⁶
- ◆ Research has provided evidence that indigenous language use in AI/AN and Canadian First Nations groups is related to positive mental health outcomes⁷, engagement in healthy behaviors⁸, and physical health indicators.⁹
- ◆ More specific to education, research has shown that **Indigenous language instruction is associated with increased academic competencies**¹⁰, particularly for students from families who participate in cultural activities and speak Native language.¹¹
- ◆ The majority of AIAN Head Start children have teachers, center directors, or program directors who are tribal or community members.¹²
- ◆ Over half (56%) of AIAN Head Start children are in classrooms that receive formal Native language lessons.¹²
- ◆ Given the importance of Native language and culture for children's development, AIAN programs prioritize their incorporation into children's Head Start classroom and program experiences.¹³
- ◆ In many communities, the language and culture opportunities that Head Start provides often are central to the community's broader efforts to ensure that Native language and culture are sustained across the generations.¹⁴



States with AIAN Head Start Programs

10. Smallwood, Haynes, & James, 2009

11. Vincent, Tobin, & Van Ryzin, 2017

12. *Native Language and Culture Experiences Among Children in Region XI Head Start Classrooms and Programs: Findings From the American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey 2015* (<https://acf.gov/opre/report/native-language-and-culture-experiences-among-children-region-xi-head-start-classrooms>)

13. *National Center for Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness, 2012; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015*

14. Sarche, Dobrec, Barnes-Najor, Cameron, & Verdugo, (2020)