**Head Start Diamond Jubilee**

**Head Start History Overview**

* In January 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a War on Poverty in his State of the Union address. The government was influenced by new research on the effects of poverty, as well as its impact on education. This research indicated an obligation to help disadvantaged groups, compensating for inequality in social or economic conditions.
* Sargent Shriver soon took the lead in assembling a panel of experts to develop a comprehensive child development program that would help communities meet the needs of disadvantaged preschool children. Among these experts were Dr. Robert Cooke, a pediatrician at Johns Hopkins University, and Dr. Edward Zigler, a professor of psychology and director of the Child Study Center at Yale University.
* The Head Start program began as an eight-week demonstration project designed to help break the cycle of poverty. It gave preschool children from families with low income a comprehensive program to meet their emotional, social, health, nutritional, and educational needs. A key tenet of the program established that it be culturally responsive to the communities served, and that the communities have an investment in its success through the contribution of volunteer hours and other donations as non-federal share.
* The Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), the regulations governing Head Start programs, were originally published in 1975. In 1995, the first Early Head Start grants were awarded to serve expectant families and children aged birth to 3 from families with low income. In 1998, the Head Start program was reauthorized to expand to full-day and full-year services. The Head Start program, including the Early Head Start program, was most recently reauthorized in 2007 with bipartisan support.
* The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 introduced several provisions to strengthen Head Start quality:
  + Alignment of Head Start school readiness goals with state early learning standards
  + Higher qualifications for the Head Start teaching workforce
  + State Advisory Councils on Early Care and Education in every state
  + Increased program monitoring, including a review of child outcomes and annual financial audits
  + Redesign of the Office of Head Start training and technical assistance system to support programs' success through National Centers and state-based systems
  + Development of a system of designation renewal for grants
  + Revision of the HSPPS
* In 2011, the Designation Renewal System (DRS) established five-year grant periods for all Head Start service awards. Any agency which met a specified condition during the grant period would not be eligible for funding without competition. Instead, interested agencies would be given the opportunity to compete to provide Head Start and Early Head Start services in that area through a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Many agencies receive additional five-year grants without competing for funding.
* In 2016, the HSPPS were revised to incorporate findings from scientific research and reflect best practices and lessons learned from program innovation. They also integrated recommendations from the Secretary's Advisory Committee Final Report on Head Start Research and Evaluation. The new performance standards reduced the number of Head Start regulatory standards by approximately 30% and improved regulatory clarity and transparency.
* Head Start programs have served more than 38 million children since 1965, growing from an eight-week demonstration project to include full-day/full-year services and many program options. Currently, Head Start grants are administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Head Start programs serve more than 1 million children and their families each year in urban, suburban, and rural areas in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and U.S. territories, including American Indian and Alaska Native and Migrant and Seasonal communities.