



Head Start Month Awareness Activities

Communities across the nation join together in October to celebrate Head Start's birthday and strengthen the nation's awareness of the Head Start program. This is a list of some of the ways Head Start has been celebrated. We hope it will inspire you to create your own unique celebration!

Multi-faceted Public Relations Campaign

- **Planned Event.** The Lexington-Fayette County Head Start mapped out a public relations campaign that was initiated at the onset of the October Head Start Awareness Month.
 - **Front Page Interview.** The local newspaper featured a front page interview with the director of child development. The article (which included a color photograph) discussed the Head Start history, philosophy, and goals of the local program.
 - **Formal Proclamations.** In addition to the governor's proclamation, the mayor of urban-county government and the mayor of Carlisle also presented a formal proclamation of Head Start Awareness.
 - **Radio and Television Coverage.** Public service announcements using Head Start students aired, a talk show interview was held, KET (television) starred a number of Head Start youngsters in spot announcements for "Sesame Street," and radio stations blitzed the area with public service announcements.
 - **Decorations.** Children of the Head Start program decorated the exterior of the Community Action Agency. (Lexington-Fayette County Head Start, Lexington, Kentucky)

A Head Start Community Awareness Day

- **Various Events.** A Head Start Community Awareness Day was held at the San Diego Civic Center. Events included the following:
 - **Children's Parade.** Children participated in a parade around the downtown area wearing Head Start T-shirts and carrying balloons and signs.
 - **Children's Activities.** Teachers had different activities for the children, such as puppet shows and felt board stories.
 - **Clown.** A local clown contributed her time to entertain the children; in exchange she received publicity.
 - **Parental Involvement.** Parents and staff had a table and passed out literature about the various Head Start programs. The news media interviewed Head Start parents.
 - **Float.** The Head Start Policy Council sponsored a float in the annual Mother Goose Parade. It is the largest parade in San Diego, and it is televised nationwide.

Open House

- **Celebration of Birthday.** The Iowa Association sponsored an open house in October to commemorate Head Start's birthday.
 - **Government Involvement.** State senators and representatives, key Head Start personnel, the governor, key community leaders throughout Iowa, parents, and staff were invited to attend. A representative from the governor's office read and presented a proclamation to the association proclaiming October as Head Start Awareness Month in Iowa.
 - **Participation in Homecoming.** Other activities included decorating a Head Start van and participating in a homecoming parade.
 - **Publicity.** Staff visited school systems to talk about Head Start; newspaper articles were published around the state highlighting program activities; flower bulbs, donated by local greenhouses, were planted at various centers.
 - **Parental Participation.** A parent breakfast was held at one center for the children and their parents, and numerous businesses were visited by staff and parents to hand out literature about Head Start.

Historical Presentation

- **Program.** Head Start Awareness Week was celebrated at AJFCCA Centers throughout the four county areas. The culminating activity was a program presented to the public by the agency's staff and parents to increase awareness of Head Start goals. The highlight of the evening was a presentation of a brief history of Head Start, "Then and Now."

Congressional Reception

- **Honored Congressman.** In Pasadena, California, the Foothill Area Community Services Inc. held a Head Start Reception during October. The reception honored a local congressman who cosponsored the Head Start Awareness bill. Brochures were given to each participant.

Conference

- **All for Children.** The Rural CAP Head Start program (Anchorage, Alaska) sponsored a conference that was held October 11-13. The theme of the conference was: "All For Children." Families, community parent representatives, and staff attended the conference from more than 24 communities throughout the state of Alaska. More than 200 people participated.
 - **Shirts and Tote Bags.** A parent committee ordered T-shirts and tote bags with the saying, "People in Alaska Celebrate Head Start." Illustration for this theme included a silhouette of adults and children holding hands with balloons; these items were quite popular.
 - **Special Celebration.** A special celebration was scheduled for the last day of the conference. The media was invited, along with the mayor, governor, legislators, and Head Start friends. A local newspaper printed an article about Head Start, and a television station interviewed a Head Start parent and aired Head Start center slides for television viewers.

A special cake was ordered and helium balloons with the saying "People in Alaska Celebrate Head Start" were used to decorate the room. Each Head Start community attending was acknowledged with a special note of praise for individual Head Start community efforts and accomplishments.

The finale of the celebration included the group of participants (more than 200) holding

hands singing the song, "Sometimes You Need Just a Little Head Start." This ending touched many hearts.

Public Service Announcement

- ***Volunteers Sought.*** Upshur Human Services Inc. (Buckhannon, West Virginia) developed the following Public Service Announcement:
Do you love kids?—We have immediate openings for volunteers. Head Start needs you to read stories and sing songs with children—Give yourself today.—Call 472-2016 Monday through Friday, 8-4 p.m. and ask for Sandi. Your love could go a long way!!!

Media Event Involving Local Politicians

- ***Head Start Pledge.*** P.I.C.A.(Head Start Child Development Program, Minneapolis, Minnesota), presented the chair of the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners, the mayor, and a city councilwoman with a framed copy of the Head Start pledge in acknowledgment of their continuous support of the Head Start program. This page is an excerpt from "Promote Your Program" which can be purchased at www.nhsa.org or by calling (800) 687-5044. 4Head Start children thanked the county board for the local match contribution it gave for start up for one of our centers. The organization announced the permanent expansion of 100 children to P.I.C.A.'s program as well. This event received TV coverage, and we have a copy of the tape, which also includes the latest Ypsilanti Study data. (The Hennepin County Board of Commissioners passed a unanimous resolution extending its congratulations to the Head Start program.)

Health Fair

- ***Information and Awards.*** During Head Start Awareness month, in conjunction with other community agencies, Eisenhower Head Start, (Junction City, Kansas) conducted a Health Fair and set up booths. Information and brochures about Head Start were passed out.

Recruiting

- ***Birthday Party.*** Green Bay Public Schools Head Start sends notices of a "birthday party" to parents. The notices ask recipients to find a child who will be 3 years old by a particular date who lives in the school district—and invite them to the party. Children become involved by baking the birthday cakes in the centers. Guests share in the celebration.

Children Serve as Hosts and Hostesses

- ***Open House.*** A week-long celebration was held in honor of Head Start. The celebration schedule for P.A.C.E. (Hattiesburg, Mississippi) included a Health Fair (a conglomerate of all healthcare givers and fitness operations in the county), an open house at each center with children acting as host and hostesses, a staff banquet (including a candle lighting ceremony), a countrywide celebration, and a family day observance.

Involvement in Community Festival

- ***Autumn Fest Float.*** The E.O.A. Head Start program (Fayetteville, Arkansas) entered a float in the Autumn Fest parade. This year's entry included a Head Start child leading the way on his bicycle (with his parent along for stability). Parents carried a banner; a truck full a Head Start friends waved flags; and the float displayed colorful boxes depicting each component. The component coordinators were inside the boxes waving puppets and toothbrushes. A tape player belted out the Head Start song.

- **Pioneer Reunion Float.** Henrietta Head Start, (Henrietta, Texas) participates in the Clay County Pioneer Reunion each year. A recent float was entitled “Cowboys, Cowgirls, and Indians.” Children designed their own costumes.

Ideas for Organizations with Many Sites

- **Individual Center Activities.** The Jersey City Child Development Centers Inc./Project Head Start (Jersey City, New Jersey) promoted October Awareness Month in a variety of ways. Each of the 17 Head Start sites was responsible for planning and arranging their own activities for this occasion.
 - **Parade.** Staff, parents, and children from one center, accompanied by members of the community, paraded, carrying Head Start balloons, to McGinley Square, where they entertained spectators.
 - **Displays.** Another center invited the public to visit the site where the children displayed some of their talents, such as art, handicrafts, and songs. Refreshments were served. Another center invited city officials to lunch with them. The guests were taken on a tour of the site and entertained.
 - **Autumn Dinner Dance.** A committee was formed for the program to sponsor an “Autumn Dinner Dance” in Bayonne, New Jersey. Letters were mailed soliciting raffle prizes. Ad contracts and booster sheets were mailed and distributed to compile a Souvenir Journal. Fliers were also distributed. State and city officials were invited to attend the affair. The guest speaker was a former Head Start employee when the program first came into existence.
 - **Proclamation.** A proclamation was presented to the program by the mayor of Jersey City. Plaques were awarded to the guest speaker and other guests. The affair was a great success.

Children’s Festival

- **Annual Event.** Sponsored by Schuylkill County Child Development, the Children’s festival offers “fun, food, and games” to area youngsters. Duck ponds, color games, logo contests, horse rides, and pumpkin tosses are among the activities. Smokey the Bear attends the event.

Night School

- **Special October Activity.** During Head Start Month, West Central Head Start (Appleton City, Michigan) centers have held school at night. This gives the parents who work an opportunity to go to school with their child and observe them in a school setting. The teacher assistant/driver runs the route that evening to pick up the child and any parents who want a ride to school. The following is a sample of their daily evening plan:
 - **Eating:** First, the children and parents get ready to eat the evening meal.
 - **Free Choice:** The children are given free choice of play in the different activity areas.
 - **Circle Time:** After free choice the children go into Circle Time where they have role-call, sing, and do finger play.
 - **Art project:** They make an art project as a group or as individuals, or they may have a paper and pencil activity.
 - **Story Time:** The children gather together for a story.
 - **Dismissal:** The children either go home with the parents or ride in the van.

This is a mini version of the day school. The evening is an education for the parents and their children. It is enjoyed by all who attend.

Painting and Balloons

- **Participation in Festival.** Lutheran Social Services, Bedford, Pennsylvania, provided an opportunity for finger painting at the County Fall Festival. Parents also participated in an annual parade, distributing balloons to children along the parade route. The balloons included the theme *Reaching Families, Touching Children, Involving Communities*.

Awareness Campaign

- **Posters and Banners.** United Head Start (Pawnee, Oklahoma) began an awareness campaign by scattering posters and banners proclaiming October as Head Start Awareness Month throughout the agency's service areas.
 - -Publicity. Advertisements were displayed on marquees. Spot announcements were made by local radio and cable television stations. Proclamations were published in the local papers.
 - Parades with Leaflets. Head Start students, families, staff, and friends participated in special parades during their designated week. Leaflets promoting Head Start were handed out by the children.
 - Various Activities. A variety of other activities were carried out on the local level at this time. Some of these included a grandparent tea party, visits to nursing homes and other points of interest, and community service fund-raisers. News articles spotlighted these activities.

Committee Planning

- **Various Events.** The Montachusett Opportunity Council Head Start Program (Leominster, Massachusetts) has an enthusiastic committee of staff members and parents who have developed a series of activities.
 - **Training Conference.** The program developed a full-day training conference at Fitchburg State College for their staff and area agencies serving preschool children and their families. A display table highlighting children's art, photographs, and public relations material was set up in the lobby.
 - **Publicity Committee Actions.** A publicity committee established several contacts with local radio stations, a Spanish station, a local cable TV, and area newspapers for public announcements. A series of news articles were released over a period of time.

Special Exhibits

- **Banners and Flags.** An Exhibit Committee (for the Montachusett Opportunity Council Head Start Program, Leominster, Massachusetts.) planned a three-day table exhibit at a shopping mall displaying classroom material, photos, children's art work, and recruitment material.
 - A large 8-foot banner commemorating Head Start was made by staff and parents for this event. A similar exhibit was displayed at a library, Spanish Center, and local City Halls.
 - Head Start flags were purchased to be flown at each classroom site and a large banner to be hung over Main Street.
 - A parade committee made arrangements to decorate Head Start vans and participate in area parades.

Parades

- **Theme: A Labor of Love.** ABCD Head Start Program (Boston, Massachusetts) held a parade (in Boston Common) with the theme, A Labor of Love. More than 2,000 Head Start children and parents turned out for this annual event.
- **Shopping Mall Activity.** In Alamance County Head Start (Burlington, North Carolina) staff, parents, and children were transported via buses to the largest mall in the area where the entire group paraded through the mall carrying Head Start flags. The children and their teachers then went to Central Stage at the mall where they entertained shoppers and store employees with a program of songs. The entire group was then invited to the Fellowship Hall of First Baptist Church where they were served a bag lunch.

Mini Powwow

- **Indian Dances.** Fort Belknap Head Start (Harlem, Montana) hosts an Annual Head Start Mini Powwow. Throughout the year, the children are taught the various Indian Dances and perform for the first time in public at the Powwow. During Head Start's Anniversary, the Powwow included special events: a guest of honor, a public television performance, and a special Indian grand entry song (composed and sung by Bobby Talks Different, a noted Indian singer, of the Gros Ventre Tribe, of Fort Belknap).

Outreach to Others

- **Make-a-Difference-Day.** Broome County Child Development Council (Binghamton, New York) provides Head Start families an opportunity to support local soup kitchens, collect food for a local pantry, and make tea bags for shut-ins. Families also raise funds for community causes such as the local Leukemia chapter with a "Hop-for-Leukemia" event.

Multi-cultural Celebration

- **Inspirational Event.** A multi-cultural day sponsored by the Palm Beach County Head Start and Children Services Center (West Palm Beach, Florida) provided parents, staff, and children an opportunity to celebrate their heritage. Participants dressed in clothing from different countries, sampled a variety of food, and listened to many styles of music.

Countywide Extravaganza

- **Captures Media Attention.** Bolivar County Head Start (Cleveland, Mississippi) uses the media to inform the public about their county-wide Extravaganza (the title itself is an attention getter). The Extravaganza is held at a local Head Start center and provides displays, children's activities and information concerning available community resources and Head Start services.

Blowing Bubbles

- **Alternative to Balloon Launch.** The Salt Lake program participates in the awareness celebration a little differently than many programs. In an effort to support the slogan, "Give a Hoot, Don't Pollute," they have chosen not to do the balloon launch, which can leave litter. Instead they have the children blow bubbles which is a fun activity as well.