

Can my child/children attend Early Head Start or Head Start?

Children’s Friend is proud to provide Early Head Start and Head Start services at no cost to families who reside in Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls. Your child/children may be eligible for Early Head Start or Head Start if your family’s circumstances fit into one or more of the following eligibility criteria:

1. Low income
2. Public assistance
3. Temporary or chronic homelessness
4. Foster or kinship care
5. DCYF involved
6. Over-income

Please read below to learn more about each eligibility category. Questions can be directed to HeadStart@cfsri.org or by calling the center closest to you. Please find our center locations [linked here](#).

1. Low income

2022 Federal Poverty Guidelines

Family Size	100% or below	130% or below
1	\$13,590	\$17,667
2	\$18,310	\$22,803
3	\$23,030	\$29,939
4	\$27,750	\$36,075
5	\$32,470	\$42,211
6	\$37,190	\$48,347
7	\$41,910	\$54,483
8	\$46,630	\$60,619

In order to be income-eligible, or able to attend Early Head Start or Head Start based on your family’s income, the total family income for the previous 12 months, or the previous calendar year must be verified by a Head Start employee. Proof of income from ALL income sources must be submitted.

Proof of income includes:

- Tax forms (Tax form 1040, W-2, 1099)
- Pay stubs (minimum 4 previous)
- Unemployment documentation
- Self-employees and/or informal employment: please reach out to us and we will work with you individually

2. Public Assistance

Includes TANF/RIWorks, Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- If the caregiver receives or is eligible to receive public assistance, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a child in their care is eligible for Early Head Start or Head Start programming
- If the child living with relatives receives the “child-only” TANF grant, then the child receives public assistance and is eligible for Early Head Start or Head Start programming.

3. Temporary or chronic homelessness

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines homelessness as: individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including families housed with other families with no adobe of their own, families in a shelter program, and families that are unsheltered.

This can include the following living arrangements:

- Shelters or Transitional Housing
- Hotels/Motels
- Staying with others

- Staying in cars, parks, public spaces, bus or train stations, abandoned buildings, or similar settings
- Substandard housing such as living in a crowded apartment/home, car garage, laundry room, storage area, or similar settings
- If a child is living with non-parental relatives due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons, the child is eligible for Early Head Start or Head Start programming

If you are unsure if your family or child's current living arrangement meets the definition of homelessness, please contact us so we can assist you.

4. Foster or kinship care

Foster care is defined as a temporary service provided by the State of Rhode Island for children who cannot live with their families.

Kinship care is defined as the raising of children by grandparents, other extended family members, and adults with whom they have a pre-established family-like relationship with because biological parents are unable to do so at the time.

- A child who receives cash aid through Foster Care or Kinship Care is considered a family of one
- No caregiver's income information is required for children in Foster Care or Kinship Care.

5. DCYF-involved

Families who have had past or current involvement with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families may be eligible for Early Head Start or Head Start programming.

If you are unsure if your DCYF-related circumstance applies to your eligibility, please reach out to us so we can assist you.

6. Over-income

Head Start programs can enroll a limited number of children whose families are above the income guidelines. Families who are over-income are welcome to apply for Early Head Start and Head Start services.

- Over-income families will be considered for enrollment once the school year begins in September 2022.
- Families with a child or children who have an IEP or IFSP and are over-income will be prioritized over other over-income families

Apply to Early Head Start/Head Start programming by [selecting the link here](#).