

Head Start Puts Young Mom On A Road To Success

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Today, the California Head Start Association, in partnership with CCR Analytics released the 2015 California Head Start Family Outcomes Bulletin demonstrating that Head Start and Early Head Start programs support parents in career development and with parenting skills.

The bulletin follows the story of Bethany, a former Head Start parent who travels the difficult path from unemployed single mother to a bachelor's degree holder with a professional career. Data from a survey of more than 11,500 Head Start and Early Head Start parents from across California demonstrated that Bethany was not alone in finding Head Start a springboard to success. Seventy-six percent of parents found the program very helpful in setting their own educational or career goals. Another 21% found the program somewhat helpful.

Parents like Bethany were even more enthusiastic when reporting on how Head Start helped with parenting skills. Seventy-nine percent of parents reported that the program was very helpful in getting them to respond better when their children misbehave and 83% found the program very helpful in giving them activities to help their children learn at home.

Head Start and Early Head Start are federally funded programs that provide very low-income families and their children from birth to five years-old with educational and developmental opportunities. They simultaneously support the development of the whole family with activities like parenting training, case management, and medical screenings. The survey was conducted by 31 Early Head Start and Head Start programs in California. CCR Analytics, a research and analysis firm supporting early education providers, developed the survey and completed the analysis.

Just days ago, The National Head Start Association and Ascend at the Aspen Institute released a Two Generations Together report highlighting six programs from across the nation that are successfully bringing children, parents, and the community together to support the child's development. The California Head Start Family Outcomes Bulletin 2015, released today, provides further evidence of the impact of two-generation models of family engagement.

Rick Mockler, the Executive Director of the California Head Start Association, is pleased with the new research, "I am excited to see the mounting evidence for Head Start's two generation approach to child development which has been an implicit part of our work since 1965." For Bethany the matter is more personal. She feels, "Head Start certainly helped [my daughter] and was wonderful for her development, but it was also huge for our family and for my growth."

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