

MASSACHUSETTS
HEAD START ASSOCIATION

2020

• ANNUAL
REPORT •

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR.

Dear Friends,

2020 started off strong for the Massachusetts Head Start Association. Head Start programs were serving thousands of young children and families across the Commonwealth with high-quality comprehensive services. We gathered in February at the State House to advocate for our Head Start community and programs and welcomed champions across both chambers of the legislature. And then, March came.

One by one, Head Start programs closed their in-person classrooms to help flatten the curve and protect our families, staff, and communities from the coronavirus. We thought we would be closed for just a few weeks. Overnight, Head Start transformed into a rapid response program, providing necessary materials and virtual educational services to all families. Let us be clear, ***Head Start never closed, not for a day.***

While physical distance was necessary, our staff remained connected with children and families throughout the spring and summer. Head Start programs continued to provide high-quality, individualized comprehensive services to children and families through new and creative ways. Programs contacted each family to ensure they were healthy and had what they needed, providing emotional support, and delivering necessities including diapers, wipes, formula, and food. Education moved to videos and home visits were done over virtual platforms.

We are so proud of the work Head Start programs have done to adapt high-quality comprehensive services and supports to meet the changing needs of their children, families, and communities. MHSA has spent the past year working to support our programs and families with training opportunities, collaborations with state partners, and advocacy. It is our honor to represent Head Start!

In the next year, our Board Chair Anat Weisenfreund will be stepping off the Board of Directors. Under her leadership for the past seven years, MHSA has grown into a respected and unwavering voice in support of Head Start programs and communities. Anat's dedication to MHSA have made us into a stronger and more representative organization. Thank you for your service, Anat!



Michelle Haimowitz, Executive Director



Anat Weisenfreund, Board Chair

← HEAD START BY THE NUMBERS* →

SERVED

14,700+ YOUNG CHILDREN BIRTH TO AGE 5

EMPLOYED

1,600+ TEACHERS IN HEAD START PROGRAMS

*data based on 2018-2019 Program Information Report

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the **MASSACHUSETTS HEAD START ASSOCIATION** is to support its members to administer high quality, effective Early Head Start and Head Start programs that provide outstanding services to pregnant women, infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

To this end, MHSA:

- ◇ **ACTIVELY ADVOCATES** for resources and policies that support this mission
- ◇ Forges and **MAINTAINS STRONG COLLABORATIONS** with the Office of Head Start (OHS) and the MA Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), other partners, advocates, governmental agencies, and community members
- ◇ **PROVIDES MEMBERS** up to date **INFORMATION, ANALYSIS, STRATEGIC DIRECTION** and other resources as available
- ◇ Through regular meetings, provides members **MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES** for information sharing, goal setting, and professional development

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- ◇ Sustain excellence in programs
- ◇ Analyze impact of policies and procedures
- ◇ Develop parent ambassadors
- ◇ Further develop association business model



WHAT IS HEAD START?

THE PREMISE OF HEAD START IS SIMPLE:

Every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, has the ability to reach their full potential.

Head Start was founded in 1965 as a tool to help break the cycle of poverty by providing low-income parents with early childhood education and comprehensive family services. Since then, Head Start has expanded to include children birth-3 and now serves approximately one million children a year in all 50 states, including over 15,000 children in Massachusetts.

Head Start comprehensive services include:

- ◇ Health, mental health, nutritional, and educational services for children
- ◇ Leadership, volunteer, and parent education opportunities
- ◇ Referrals and family advocacy

Head Start programs prepare children for Kindergarten success and provide vital supports for their families according to the unique communities' needs. While maintaining the original vision of communities investing in their youngest, most vulnerable children, Head Start has also developed over the decades to adapt, build on evidence-based practices, and continually improve to provide the highest quality programs for children and families.



*Lady Bird Johnson with a group of Head Start children in the summer of 1967
Photo Courtesy of LBJ Library; by Robert Knudsen*

HEAD START IN A PANDEMIC

In March 2020, Head Start programs closed their doors to in-person services to protect their children, families, and staff from the coronavirus. But Head Start programs did not stop serving, not for one day. Instead, *Head Start programs flexibly retooled their services to strengthen their connection and engagement with children and families.* Head Start programs across Massachusetts have worked nonstop throughout the Covid-19 pandemic to find creative and effective ways to continue to provide comprehensive services. Programs have continued to provide regular early education, mental health services, and family support through virtual platforms and individual, consistent check-ins and sessions with Head Start families. Programs have provided emergency support and referrals, and delivered necessities to families including food, diapers, wipes, and formula. These strategic actions in a time of crisis again shows the passion, commitment, skill, and effectiveness of the Head Start workforce.

VIRTUAL SERVICES: Teachers, Family Advocates, Home Visitors, and other Head Start team members regularly connected with each of their Head Start and Early Head Start families to provide comprehensive services and referrals

EARLY EDUCATION: Teachers have held live virtual education experiences and recorded lessons in conjunction with weekly deliveries of materials to families so they can complete the lesson alongside the teacher

ESSENTIAL NEEDS: Programs have delivered necessities to families including food, diapers, wipes, and formula, and some programs have provided families with technology needs including iPads and hotspots

HOME VISITS: Some Home Visitors have used outdoor spaces to conduct in-person social distanced visits with families when both the family and the Home Visitor have been comfortable doing so

CELEBRATIONS: Teachers and staff socially distanced outside some Head Start programs to form a reverse parade as families drove by so children could see their teachers and Head Start family

REOPENING VISITS: Ahead of reopening in-person classrooms, programs invited families to attend virtual walk-throughs of the classrooms and new screening procedures or invited families to visit classrooms in person one at a time

POLICY COUNCIL: Programs moved Policy Council meetings to virtual platforms, including Zoom and conference calls

SUPPORTING STAFF: To recognize the extraordinary circumstances under which Head Start staff has been working this year, programs have found new ways to support their staff including providing flexible work environments, stipends, ongoing mentorship and management support, and engaging in advocacy on their behalf



Triumph, Inc. Head Start child receiving a new tablet to assist with remote and virtual learning

CITIZENS FOR CITIZENS

Pam Pierce, a Citizens for Citizens Head Start teacher, shared her story of teaching during the pandemic with MHSA. Her words:

“When the month of March 2020 arrived, we were all aware serious changes were about to happen in our everyday lives. What we didn’t know was how much would change, and how what used to be “normal” would be so drastically changed in just a few short weeks, and lasting for months.

In the beginning of March I readjusted my lessons. Next, I put a plan into action, turned my living room into an assemble packing plant for putting together Educational Support Bags filled with activities, materials and lessons. I would then post on our classroom news page various updates and ideas for the children. I videotaped myself reading their favorite story, and sang our new song “GERMS”.

With my special needs adult daughter in tow, I drove over 130 miles in the 6 different communities my Head Start families lived. I decided to wear my “Panda Suit” as a surprise for the children. Pandas are our class mascot, and I brought our treasured mascot “Cuddles” along as well. It was a delight to see the families. I delivered each bag with a Ziplock baggie of gloves and Lysol wipes so families could disinfect what I brought them.

I then entered the world of teaching remotely, Zoom was the new thing to learn. Just seeing faces and chatting was so vital in these early days. We quickly moved into a routine of doing our morning songs, then I highlighted each child to show their morning sign in and we ended with favorite gross motor songs and dances. It was fun to see entire families participating - even grandparents! Learning as we went, we adapted our classes and enjoyed our connections, especially in a world of lockdown. Toward the end of our school year, we held a drive by pick up of certificates and annual “Summer Survival Bags”.

Summer ended and a new plan was made, new learning bags were assembled and my assistant, Kristen and I, set out on another few days of driving over 130 miles to deliver the bags. We did a first virtual meet and greet and went right into classes - two days with a group and lesson, and adding a “Fun Friday” with Music and Movement”. We scheduled each child with a small group lesson, once a week.

As time moves on, we begin to master more and more of technology. Families are encouraged to share pictures and write about their experiences. We are indeed a village, learning and sharing together. Families cheer each other on.

All in all, virtual teaching of preschoolers has simply been a different type of challenge. We as a village; My CFC Head Start Program, our Ocean Grove Team, our families, and most importantly our children, have overcome the challenge and are embracing learning and engaging in a new way. It does take a village and I’m so happy with mine!”



COMMUNITY ACTION PIONEER VALLEY HEAD START

In response to the urgent need to provide robust support to Early Head Start and Head Start educators, one of Community Action Pioneer Valley Head Start and Early Learning Program's (HSELP) major achievements was the completion and implementation of a "Developmental Services Guide," a written behavior plan consistent with the Touchpoints™ trauma-informed approach. In collaboration with Allissa Marotto from Kids Included Together (KIT), Dr. Jayne Singer from the Brazelton Touchpoints Center, and with significant input from the Program's leadership and developmental services team, HSELP developed a comprehensive guide that outlines the framework, services, practices, and procedures used to support all children and families. This guide supports educator mastery and provides tools for implementing trauma-informed care while effectively managing challenging child behaviors. Grounded in the Touchpoints™ approach, the 50-page Developmental Services Guide explains the lenses used to observe and reflect on behavior. The guide also covers proactive supports such as reflective practice, community-building practices, calming and other regulation tools, infant mental health consultation, and responsive supports for responding to unsafe behavior. HSELP worked with KIT to support implementation of the Developmental Services Guide through training, reflective practice, and child-specific consultation.



**Brazelton
Touchpoints
Center**

QUINCY COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM

When Quincy Community Action Program (QCAP) Head Start moved to virtual services in the spring, the program sprung into action to make sure that families did not go hungry while their in-person Head Start program was closed. Some of the agency's unused building spaces were quickly transformed into an assembly of groceries for monthly distribution in conjunction with the agency's Southwest Community Food Center. Head Start staff worked to pack the bags to distribute to families. Soon, the program added school supplies and materials to their distribution program to continue to engage with children and families and home and continue to provide high-quality learning opportunities for young children.



MHSA HIGHLIGHTS

ADVOCACY SUCCESS!

MHSA has focused on advocacy work this year more than ever to move toward legislative and funding change to support our programs, educators, families, and communities through this pandemic. **This year, legislators and Governor Charlie Baker increased funding for Head Start State Supplemental Grants to \$15 million to support our programs and workforce!** Thank you to all of our legislative champions for this support, including former Speaker Robert DeLeo, Senate President Karen Spilka, Chair Aaron Michlewitz, Chair Michael Rodrigues, Representative Paul Schmid, and Senator John Keenan. Over 90% of these funds go to increasing staff salaries, supporting our staff for the high-quality services they are providing. In addition to our Head Start grant advocacy, MHSA has joined with other early childhood providers to lead advocacy regarding testing and vaccine distribution for early educators, funds to stabilize and support the early childhood field, and federal funding critical to early childhood and Head Start.



Photos taken at the Boston State House from Head Start Advocacy Day in February 2020

SUPPORTING PROGRAMS

Head Start programs have worked nonstop this year to meet the changing needs of families, and MHSA has worked alongside them to meeting the changing needs of our programs. Since March, MHSA has held Association meetings every other week to create a space for programs to share best practices, ask questions from one another, and hear directly from our state and federal partners. As our programs retool to ensure that Head Start in 2020 remains comprehensive and high-quality, our Association has similarly tailored our services to the needs this year.



MHSA HIGHLIGHTS

Throughout this uncertain year, MHSA has been hard at work supporting Head Start programs and the children, families, and communities they serve.

FALL CONFERENCE 2020

MHSA’s annual fall conference went virtual in 2020! Throughout the month of October we hosted eight virtual conference sessions on topics critical to meeting the changing needs of our field. Conference attendees included Head Start directors, managers, teachers, home visitors, coordinators, and parents! Some of our incredible national workshop presenters included Rachel Wagner from the Devereux Center for Resilient Children leading a session on resilient leadership and Melissa Giraud and Andrew Grant-Thomas from EmbraceRace leading a session on embracing race with young children. Thank you to the Head Start State Collaboration Office and our sponsors for making our first virtual conference so successful!

ADAPTING TO CHANGE OUR WORK IN 2020 AND BEYOND

8 workshops throughout October for our early education community



2020 US CENSUS

#WeCount #MA2020Census #2020Census

my2020census.gov

CENSUS 2020

Every ten years, each and every individual living in the United States is counted on the Census. The data collected is used to determine how billions of dollars are spent on programs critical to Head Start families and communities, including public education, child care, nutrition, and healthcare. This year, MHSA partnered with the Massachusetts Statewide Complete Count Committee and KIDS COUNT to work toward the goal of counting each Head Start family on the 2020 Census so that our communities get their fair share of federal funds.

COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

MHSA’s success is due to our strong member organizations, family collaborations, and partnerships with government and nonprofit partners. MHSA regularly partners and collaborates on topics important to Head Start programs and families. This year, we have been busier than ever working on collaborative projects to bring the Head Start voice to decision making tables across the Commonwealth! Thank you to all of our partner organizations and state agencies for bringing Head Start voices to the table.



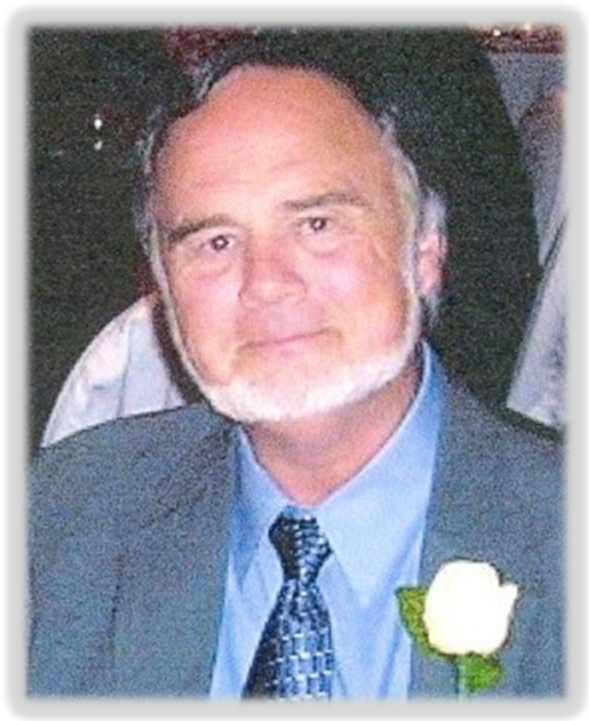
IN MEMORIAM



This year, the Massachusetts Head Start community lost two leaders and champions. We honor their legacy and their service to Head Start.



Patricia "Pat" Foley



Cornelius L. "Neil" Lynch

PATRICIA FOLEY • Pat started her career at Self Help, Inc. Head Start as a Head Start parent and went on to serve as the Head Start Director for over twenty years. Pat's leadership at Self Help was fueled by her experience as a parent. Her service to the Head Start community included serving as the President of the Massachusetts Head Start Association and the New England Head Start Association.

NEIL LYNCH • Neil served as the Director of Citizens for Citizens in Fall River, where he worked for over thirty years. He was a mainstay of the Head Start community for decades, mentoring countless Head Start leaders, teachers, and parents. Neil was a colleague and a friend.

All of us at MHSA will honor their memories through our commitment to our children, our families, our communities and one another.

BOARD MEMBERS

<u>MHSA POSITION</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>AGENCY</u>
Chair	Anat Weisenfreund	Community Action Pioneer Valley Head Start
Vice Chair	Kristen Hayes	Friend of the Board
Treasurer	Jill Fox	PACE, Inc. Head Start
Secretary	Lyndsey Vincent	Community Teamwork, Inc. Parent
	Nancy Mahoney	Making Opportunity Count Head Start
	Delia Ramirez	Self Help, Inc. Head Start Grandparent
	Yvette Rodriquez	ABCD Head Start
	Nancy Sullivan	Self Help, Inc. Head Start



MHSA MEMBERS

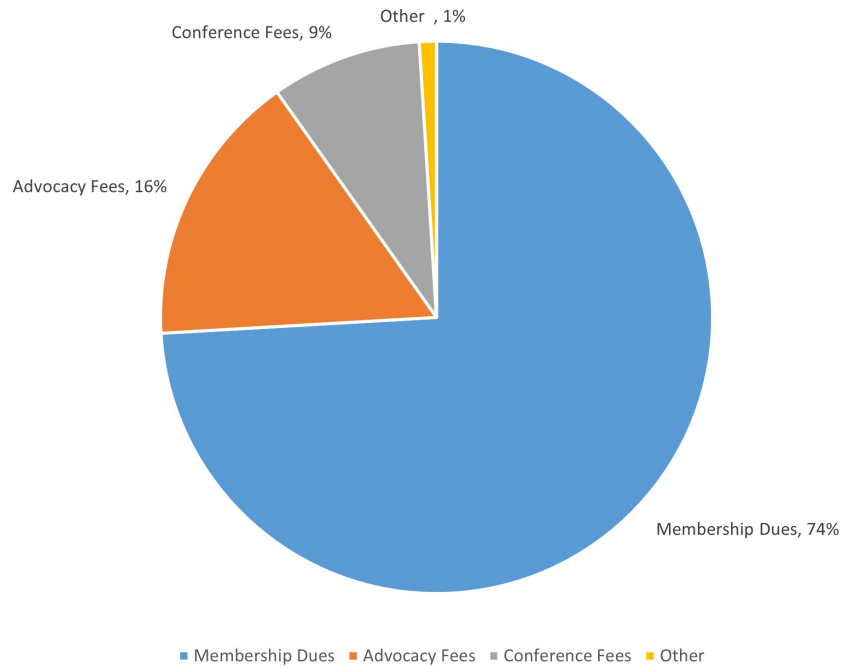
Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) Inc. Head Start
 Associates for Human Services Early Head Start and Early Learning Programs
 Berkshire County Head Start Child Development Program
 Citizens for Citizens Head Start
 Communities United, Inc. Head Start
 Community Action, Inc. Head Start
 Community Action Pioneer Valley, Head Start and Early Learning Program
 Community Action Programs Inter-City (CAPIC) Head Start
 Community Teamwork Inc. Head Start
 Dimock Community Health Center Head Start
 Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc. Head Start
 Holyoke Chicopee Springfield Head Start
 Lawrence Community Day Care Early Head Start
 Lynn Economic Opportunity (LEO), Inc. Head Start
 Martha's Vineyard Community Services, Inc. Head Start
 Making Opportunity Count (MOC) Child Care & Head Start
 Pathways for Children
 People Acting in Community Endeavors (PACE) Head Start
 Quincy Community Action Programs (QCAP) Head Start
 Riverside Community Care, Inc. Early Head Start
 Self-Help, Inc. Head Start
 South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC), Inc. Head Start
 South Shore Community Action Council
 South Shore Stars
 Triumph, Inc. Head Start
 Worcester Community Action Council, Inc.
 Worcester Child Development Head Start
 YMCA Cape Cod Head Start



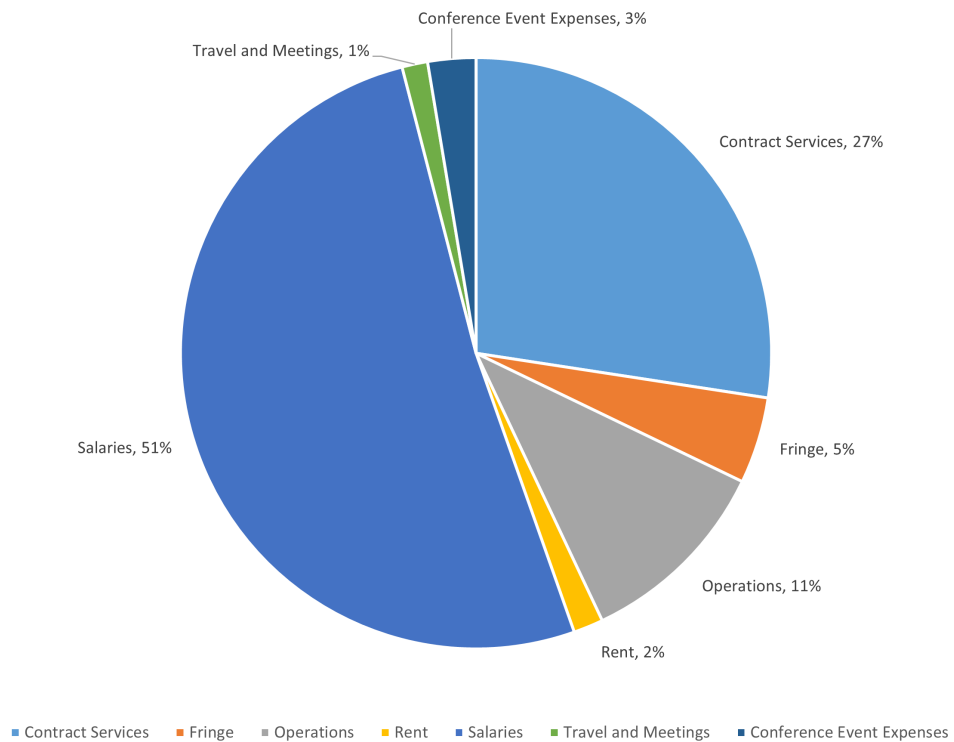
State Rep. Adrian Madaro visiting children at ABCD celebrating Read Across America Day March 2, 2020

2020 • MHSA • FINANCIALS

Fiscal Year 2020 Revenue



Fiscal Year 2020 Expenses





MASSACHUSETTS HEAD START ASSOCIATION

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