

## **Talking Points Regarding the President's Proposed Budget Calling for the Elimination of Head Start**

### **This Would Be a Crisis, Not just a Cut.**

- If Head Start were to lose funding and shut down, it would be a direct attack on our most at-risk children, their well-being, and their families.
  - More than a million parents wouldn't be able to work, forcing them to choose between their livelihoods and a safe, reliable place for their children to grow and start on the pathway to success.
  - A loss of Head Start would be catastrophic for thousands of families in our community.
- 

### **Background: What's happening now**

- On Friday, the National Head Start Association received a call from a USA TODAY reporter informing them that President Trump's proposed budget intends on eliminating Head Start.
- We have not seen a copy of that budget and cannot confirm the source, just what we have heard from the USA TODAY and NHSA.
- We were stunned to hear this news as every US President over the last 60 years, including President Trump in his first term, have stood up for low-income children and families by funding and strengthening Head Start. However, it is reminiscent of the recommendation in Heritage Foundation's Project 2025 re. eliminating Head Start, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, where the president's budget is being created, has been identified as involved with Project 2025.
- The "president's budget proposal" is simply that, a proposal, and it must go through Congress and the appropriations process before it becomes finalized.
- That is why we are speaking up now, there is still time for President Trump to change course and stand up for working parents, rather than make them choose between their livelihoods and a safe, reliable place for their children to grow and start on the pathway to success.

- Just last week, one of our colleagues, a Head Start leader from northern Alabama, spoke to the House appropriations committee about the importance of Head Start in her community. Her program is one of nearly 2,000 programs operating Head Start from a community-based organization in every corner of the country.
  - While we are confident that Congress will maintain our nation's commitment to at-risk children and families, we hope President Trump and the administration will work with us to improve and strengthen Head Start, not eliminate it.
- 

### **Core Message: Why Head Start Matters**

- Head Start is the American dream. It is more than child care and early learning. It's a lifeline for children and families in our community who face the steepest hills to climb to achieve success in school and in life.
  - In our community, Head Start serves [Insert number]. Additionally, there are currently [Insert number] on our waitlist.
  - Head Start leads families to economic self-sufficiency and helps them find a pathway to independence and success, one parent and child at a time.
  - Head Start has a proven track record and long-standing reputation of sixty years of results, thanks to bipartisan support from every US President — helping children succeed regardless of income or zip code.
  - Communities nationwide would lose a vital foundation of their child and family support systems without Head Start.
  - A loss of Head Start would mean an end to early learning, meals, vision, hearing, and developmental screenings, and dental care for nearly 800,000 of our nation's most at-risk children. Here in [Insert geographic area], that would be [Insert number].
  - Head Start is the only means for child care, especially in rural areas.
- 

### **More Extensive Talking Points**

#### **Impact on Children**



- If we want to build a healthier, freer, and more fair America, we have to start by giving every child a real shot regardless of circumstances at birth, “a Head Start” in life. That is why programs like Head Start matter.
- More than [Insert number] local children will lose access to early learning, nutrition, health, dental, vision, and other developmental screenings if our Head Start center loses funding and is forced to shut down.
- Head Start serves eligible families, families that often don’t have other means for childcare.
- Head Start is focused on protecting and nurturing children early on. It ensures that children enter kindergarten ready to learn. Without it, many will fall behind before they even begin.
- Head Start has been linked to long-term benefits such as better health, increased high school graduation rates, and higher employment. A loss of Head Start would mean a loss of academic and cognitive gains.

#### **Impact on Parents**

- Head Start programs are locally operated in partnership with parents and community members, which fits with a community-focused approach to solving problems. Without Head Start, a community-led strategy would be lost.
- Head Start actively involves parents, often helping families gain access to jobs, healthcare, and housing, which has multigenerational impacts.
- Many expectant moms rely on Head Start, especially in rural areas, where maternity wards don’t exist.

---

#### **Impact on Working Families**

- For many parents, Head Start is the only affordable childcare option allowing them to work or finish school.
  - Losing Head Start would mean lost jobs - not just for teachers and staff - but also for working families who rely on this support system.
- 



**Community & Economic Impact**

- If Head Start centers were to close, it would affect more than just children. It would weaken our entire local economy. All Head Start dollars go back into the community - through wages, supplies, services needed by the program
- Every dollar invested in Head Start returns \$7-\$10 in long-term benefits through better education, health, and employment outcomes. [Inset local data]

