

# Head Start

Head Start is a federally funded community-based, comprehensive early education program that gives children ages 3-5 years of age from at-risk backgrounds the skills they need to be successful in school and life.



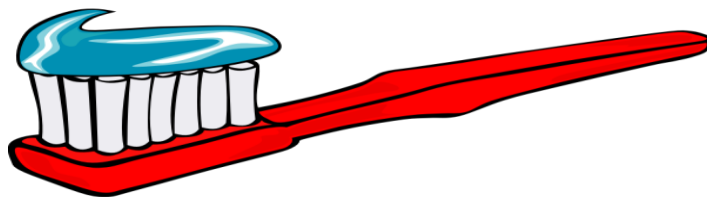
# Head Start in Maryland

7,797 Head Start Slots

2,991 Early Head Start Slots

Federal Funding: \$102,761,089

Head Start provides over 10,066 children with continuous access to dental care



# How has COVID-19 affected Head Start Children & Families?

Families have postponed well child visits and scheduled dental visits during the pandemic. Many children are now significantly behind on their well child visits, immunizations, required bloodwork (hemoglobin/hematocrit and lead), and 6 month routine dental appointments.



# What effect has COVID-19 had on Head Start programming?

Head Start classes have been virtual since March 2020. Teachers and Family Advocates/Home Visitors connect with children and families daily/weekly via internet virtual classes, phone calls, emails, and texts.

Learning packets are sent home if a family does not have internet access.



# What effect has COVID-19 had on oral health instructions & practice in Head Start Settings?



Toothbrushing will no longer be conducted during the Head Start school day (once we do open for children) due to the possibility of COVID-19 being spread via droplets.

Head Start children are still being referred to their dental homes every 6 months for an oral exam, cleaning, & fluoride varnish.

Colgate Bus will be scheduled for educational oral health twice a year for children to be screened (when possible and allowed during pandemic).

# What can MDAC members, partners, & stakeholders do to help promote good oral health in Head Start?

1. Educational materials regarding good oral health hygiene and practices. Dental video composed by a Dentist to send out to Head Start Parents.
2. Dental health educational opportunities in the Head Start classroom for children and parents.
3. Dental health providers/Dentist speakers at parent meetings and/or policy council meetings.
4. Providing toothbrushes and toothpaste to Head Start families for home care.



# What can MDAC members, partners & stakeholders do to promote good oral health in Head Start?

5. Waiving COVID-19 PPE fee for medicaid families at dental offices.
6. Transportation to dental appointments if needed.
7. Becoming active members of our Head Start/Early Head Start Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) which meets twice a year and now virtually (next meeting July 23rd at 1pm). \* Please email me at [joyauslander@ymaryland.org](mailto:joyauslander@ymaryland.org) if interested in becoming a member of our HSAC.