

THE Write Start

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE LACOE HEAD START AND STATE PRESCHOOL COMMUNITY

Executive Director's Message: Parents as Leaders

This is a pivotal moment for Head Start. It's time for our parents to stand up and make their voices heard. All the loudest voices are saying that Head Start does not work, but we know that Head Start services lead to better child outcomes. Now we need to take that message to all the key decision makers.



Keesha Woods

That's why LACOE introduced *Parents as Leaders*, an initiative empowering parents in civic engagement while educating elected officials about Head Start's long-term benefits. The groundwork was laid in April, when I traveled with County Superintendent Debra Duardo, Executive Deputy Superintendent Joseph Ybarra, and Governmental Relations Director Pam Gibbs to Washington, DC. We then took a major first step in September when more than 70 parents, community representatives, and staff shared their Head Start stories with 18 members of Congress in DC.

A couple weeks later, many of these parents presented their DC experience to the County Board. Following their moving talk, Superintendent Duardo praised Head Start's focus on the whole child and family,

and noted how empowering it is to learn how to advocate for yourself and your child. Board President Alex Johnson shared his excitement at seeing so many fathers involved in the effort, a clear result of our successful male engagement initiatives.

This was a great first step. Now, let's carry the momentum forward. Before June 2018, I want our parents to visit field offices for their local, state, and federal representatives. I want them to share their stories at the State Capitol in Sacramento. I want our agencies to invite elected officials into classrooms to observe and interact with teachers, children, and families.

Let's also continue to empower even more parents to share their Head Start story with key decision makers. Let's tell them how Head Start disrupts the cycle of poverty, stops the prison pipeline, and improves the country's economy. Let's get them to expand the education conversation from K-12 to start at birth instead. Let's make sure that every child has an opportunity for a better future, regardless of their family's circumstances.



Laying the groundwork for success. LACOE leadership visited Capitol Hill in April 2017 to discuss the importance of early childhood education. From left to right, Governmental Relations Director Pam Gibbs, County Superintendent Debra Duardo, Representative Linda Sánchez, Executive Director Keesha Woods, and Executive Deputy Superintendent Joseph Ybarra.



Keeping up the momentum. LACOE Superintendent Debra Duardo and Board members James Cross and Gregory McGinity greet Mountain View SD Head Start parent Mireya Velazquez and her daughter during the Oct. 10 Board meeting.

Reflections from the Hill...



Empowering parents through civic engagement. Parent Leaders and delegate agency staff share their stories of Head Start success with Representative Julia Brownley (fourth from left).

"As a Parent Leader, I gained great knowledge and confidence in myself in knowing that my story and thoughts can make a real difference in the lives of families. As a keynote speaker, I had the opportunity to speak to Congress and express on behalf of parents and families the value of the Head Start program. It is an empowering program for the family as a whole."

—**Tajauta Gilbert-McLaine**
(ABC Unified School District)

"I am empowered now to tell my story to everyone who will listen. I represented not only my child, but children around the United States and the importance Head Start has had in my life."

—**Anna Mojica** (LACOE Community Representative)

"[I gained] the empowerment we have as parents. It takes a group of parents to make a difference in the lives of all our children. OUR CHILDREN ARE THE FUTURE! They deserve a good quality education like the one LACOE offers."

—**Sally Gutierrez** (Plaza de la Raza)

"It was my first time visiting the Capitol and being a part of a group advocating for Head Start, which made me so proud. From some workshops, I got so inspired to be my kid's first teacher; I know that early learning matters."

—**Hanrong Feng** (Garvey School District)

"I learned that our support of the Head Start program, as parents, is very important. This trip demonstrated the great opportunity we have to use our voice to impact Congress and help Head Start progress and advance."

—**Julio Del Raso** (Plaza de la Raza)



Making a difference. Parent Leader Martha Flores and LACOE interpreter Oscar Carmona discuss Head Start's positive impact with Adam Brooks, legislative assistant to Representative Steve Knight.



Head Start makes a difference. The night before the parents visited their elected officials on Capitol Hill, they made personalized keepsakes for their representatives that reflect the impact the Head Start program has in their lives.

Keep the Conversation Going...



Head Start parents and staff attended the Oct. 10 County Board of Education meeting to introduce the *Parents as Leaders* initiative, share their stories, recap the DC trip, and thank the Superintendent and Board members for their continued support of Head Start.

Parents as Leaders Next Steps for 2017-18

- **LACOE:** Empower more parents to confidently share their Head Start story
- **Parents as Leaders Core Team:** Take the Head Start message to Sacramento
- **DA Staff & Parents:** Visit field offices for local, state, and federal officials
- **DA Staff:** Invite elected officials to visit classrooms and see Head Start in action



There is power in your story. Parent Leader Vicente Ibarra confidently shares his Head Start story before LACOE staff during the Oct. 9 LACOE Head Start All-Staff Meeting.

Write Start Submissions

The *Write Start* welcomes your articles pertaining to Head Start activities and events. Please submit them to thewritestart@lacoedu.edu. The deadline for the next edition is **Friday, January 19, 2018**. You may also fax your submission to (562) 940-1740, Attn: Stephaney Roy.

LACOE Immigration Resources

LACOE has created a web page that provides resources regarding immigration issues that affect our school communities. Information will be updated regularly.

To access the LACOE immigration resources web page, go to: <https://www.lacoedu.edu/Home/ImmigrationIssues.aspx>

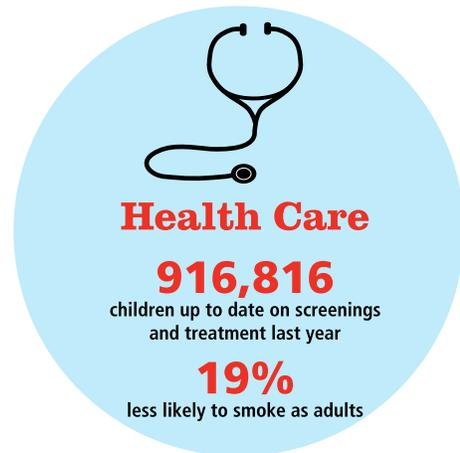
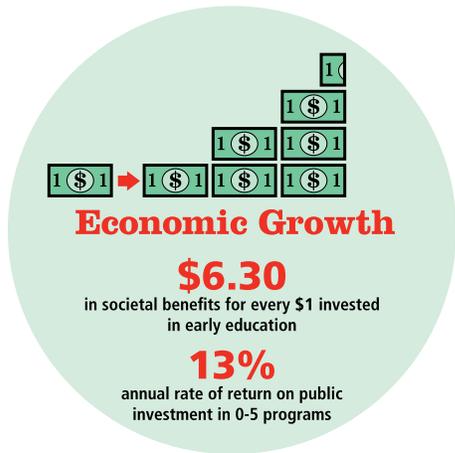
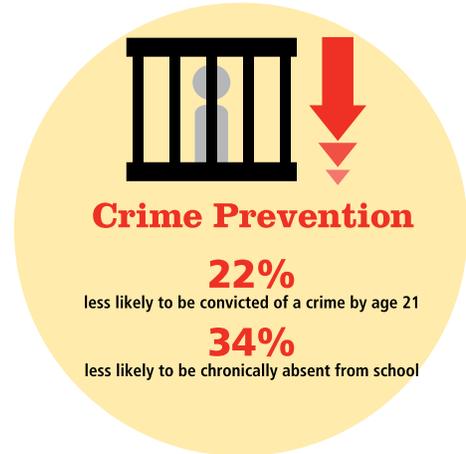
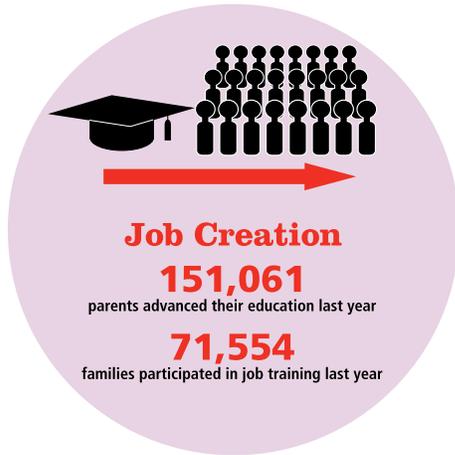
Resources are also regularly shared on social media at www.facebook.com/immigrationLACOE/ and twitter.com/lacoeresources



One block at a time. An example of the personalized Head Start blocks that parents gave to each of the elected officials that they visited in Washington, DC.

Talking Points: Head Start Makes a Difference

Head Start is a stepping stone from poverty to possibility. More and more research is showing the long-term benefits—Head Start keeps more kids in school and out of foster care; it makes them more likely to graduate high school and go on to college; it leaves them less likely to smoke or become pregnant teens. And the benefits even carry on to the next generation.



Los Angeles County Office of Education
 Head Start-State Preschool is now on...



Events, parenting tips, developmental milestones, and more... LACOE Head Start-State Preschool is your reliable source for early childhood education and early care information.

 <https://twitter.com/lacoeheadstart>

 www.facebook.com/headstartstatepreschoollosangelescounty