



HEAD START



# Write Start

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE LACOE HEAD START AND STATE PRESCHOOL COMMUNITY

## Executive Director's Message: A New Day with New Leadership

After 23 years serving our county's most vulnerable children, families, and communities with LACOE Head Start and Early Learning, including the past 12 as Executive Director, I will be retiring effective July 30, 2022. While any farewell is a little bittersweet, I am thrilled to leave this program in the capable hands of Luis Bautista, who has been selected as the new Executive Director following an exhaustive search.



Keesha Woods

Many of you are already familiar with Luis as our Assistant Director for the past eight years. He has been with LACOE for more than 25 years, including the past 15 serving in a leadership

role with Head Start and Early Learning. Throughout this time, he has played a key role in the growth and development of LACOE's early learning programs. I will be working closely with Luis throughout the rest of my tenure to ensure a smooth, successful transition.

It has been the honor of my life to serve the children of LA County with you—an amazing journey that I will forever hold dear to my heart. And I am confident that under the leadership of Luis Bautista, LACOE Head Start and Early Learning will continue to strengthen its culture of excellence and keep striving to give every child and family the tools to succeed in school and in life.

## OHS Expands Head Start Eligibility to Include SNAP

On April 21, 2022, the Office of Head Start announced it would expand its definition of public assistance to include families receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known as CalFresh in California. The change removes significant barriers from the application process, increasing access to Head Start early learning programs.

"This is a win towards equitable access to early learning opportunities for the many families in Los Angeles County confronted with food insecurity," said Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools Debra Duardo, MSW, Ed.D. "Providing young children with a quality early education should not be an additional burden, but an exciting milestone that families can celebrate. We applaud the Office of Head Start for taking this important action."

As nearly half of Head Start participants receive SNAP benefits, accepting SNAP enrollment as proof of Head Start eligibility represents a significant streamlining of Head Start's eligibility determination process.

Executive Director of LACOE Head Start and Early Learning Division Keesha Woods added, "Families are more stressed than ever before trying to stay afloat, and this action will help us to reach more families while also reducing the burden on those families to enroll. We thank the Office of Head Start for taking this bold step to support families."

Dr. Duardo applauded the efforts of the many individuals and organizations whose efforts contributed to this tremendous win for families and programs. "With 90 percent of brain development taking place in the first five years of a child's life, Head Start has a tremendous life-long impact on children and their families," Superintendent Duardo said. "This action to ease entry into the Head Start program will bring enormous benefits to our communities most in need."

Adapted from <https://www.lacoe.edu/Home/News-Announcements/ID/4686/Families-Receiving-CalFresh-Benefits-Now-Eligible-for-Head-Start-Early-Learning-Programs>.

## DA Spotlight: New Center Highlights Garvey SD's Commitment to Service

On Friday, March 11, Garvey School District held a ribbon cutting of its newest Early Head Start center, Williams. This event highlighted the beauty and quality of the facility and demonstrated the successful cooperation between grantee and delegate agency.

In-person services to toddlers and their families began on Monday, March 14, with nearly full enrollment. That milestone is a direct result of the quality and continuity of the comprehensive services children and families have been receiving for over a year through the home-based model while the new portable classrooms were under construction. A quality relationship was built with children and their parents over that time, and the previous "home visitors" have now become the EHS teachers through a seamless, thoughtful, and respectful transition.

In addition, the Garvey Education team has earned a reputation for giving full attention and maintaining high standards in every transition they encounter. This includes not only the start-up of this EHS center, but also the reopening of in-person services after we were providing Connected Learning (virtual) instruction during the Safer at Home Order.

The resumption of in-person services districtwide happened a year ago in 2021, and the HS/EHS program was able to innovate and think outside the box to continue to provide the full range of curriculum activities that occurred pre-pandemic in new ways that emphasized health and safety.



Director of Child Development Dr. Rosa Guerra commemorates the new Williams EHS center.



Liz Guerra, Program Manager, Quality Start LA, accepts a certificate of appreciation on behalf of HSEL Executive Director Keesha Woods. (Pictured, left to right: Vinh Ngo, Garvey School Board President; Anita Chu, Garvey School District Superintendent; Guerra; Choral Brown, LACOE Delegate Liaison Team Leader)



New playground outdoor climbing structure at Williams.



### **The importance of cultural inclusivity in how we present our program**

As parents, ECE caregivers, and providers, we can plant the seeds of healthy development by immersing our children in relationships, environments, and language that promote a sense of safety and belonging and welcome their own exploration of self.

Can you remember the first time you completed the sentence: I am...? Perhaps it ended with "I am Isabel," "I am 4," or "I am a girl"?

Identity develops incrementally over time, but it begins in infancy. Our sense of self, or who we are, is shaped by the people around us, words and labels used in our environment, the experiences we have, and our own thoughts about what is possible. A positive sense of identity promotes healthy development and can be a protective factor. Importantly, it also influences how we interact with others. So be sure to plant good seeds.

### **HSEL Resource Center Update: Welcome Back to the LACOE Head Start and Early Learning Division Resource Center!**

We are happy to announce that the Resource Center reopened on May 16, 2022! We feel extremely fortunate to be able to welcome our staff and parents back to the Resource Center! As we prepared for our reopening, we focused on creating a welcoming, fun, and safe space for everyone. Don't forget to stop by the Resource Center to get your new library card to check out children's books, staff/parent resources, use the copy/laminating room, and so much more! See you soon!

For any questions, please contact us at [HS\\_Resourcecenter@lacoed.edu](mailto:HS_Resourcecenter@lacoed.edu). For more library updates and hours of operation, please visit us at <https://hselresourcecenter.library.site/>

### **Parent Spotlight: Maria Riley, Plaza de la Raza Child Development Services**

**Parent and Plaza de la Raza Policy Committee Chairperson**

**Center:** Northrup and Highland Park



Maria Riley

#### **How did you learn about Head Start/Early Head Start?**

Learning about Head Start/Early Head Start has been one of the greatest things for my grandkids during the current stage of our lives. I have had custody of my grandkids for the last 23 months, and DCFS recommended the programs. Early Head Start/Head Start gave me the

ability to provide a formal education for both of my grandkids as their education is my utmost priority.

#### **Why did you choose Head Start?**

I chose Head Start for my three-year-old so he could learn and improve his basic social-emotional skills with other children. I also chose Early Head Start Home-Based Option for my one-year-old so he could learn basic skills through formal instruction.

#### **How has your agency supported you with your HS children's learning?**

Plaza de la Raza has provided support by collaborating with me to provide and enhance my grandkids' educational goals and achievements.

#### **How has your agency supported you with your personal goals?**

Plaza de la Raza has supported me with my personal goals of allowing me to collaborate and work as a team to provide the best education for them, with the understanding that basic education comes from the home because we are the first educators in our kids' lives. PDLR has enhanced the skills I have taught both of my grandkids at their early age.

#### **What advice would you give to another parent looking for a school for their infant/toddler?**

I can provide a parent's point of view that we need to broaden our children's education and provide them with more than one resource for their lives and their education. In order for our children to become successful in their lives, we need to work together toward their future success as productive adults.

## Important Dates to Remember July 2022 – August 2022

July	National Child Abuse Prevention Month
July 4	Independence Day—LACOE Offices Closed
July 12	Policy Council Meeting
July 19	Mexican Consulate Health Fair, Los Angeles, CA
August	Children’s Eye Health and Safety Month
August	National Immunization Awareness Month
Aug 1-3	Region IX Head Start 2022 First 1,000 Days! Early Head Start Conference, Las Vegas, NV
Aug 7	El Salvador Foundation Back to School Event, Los Angeles, CA
Aug 9	Policy Council Meeting
Aug 12	International Youth Day
Aug 16	Mexican Consulate Health Fair, Los Angeles, CA

## Write Start Submissions

The Write Start welcomes your articles pertaining to Head Start and Early Learning Division activities and events. Please submit them to [thewritestart@lacoedu](mailto:thewritestart@lacoedu). The deadline for the next edition is **Friday, July 1, 2022**.

## Los Angeles County Office of Education Head Start and Early Learning Division is now on...



Events, parentingtips, developmental milestones, and more... LACOE Head Start and Early Learning Division is your reliable source for early childhood education and early care information.

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### More Families are NOW Eligible

Have you heard? Families receiving CalFresh (SNAP) benefits are now automatically eligible for Head Start programs.

## LACOE Immigration Resources

LACOE regularly updates resources on immigration issues that affect our school communities.

Please visit: [www.lacoedu/Home/Immigrant-Relations](http://www.lacoedu/Home/Immigrant-Relations)

For social media, visit: [@lacoeimrel](https://www.facebook.com/lacoeimrel) on Facebook and Twitter.

An official newsletter of the Los Angeles County Office of Education’s Head Start and Early Learning Division, 10100 Pioneer Blvd., Ste. 325, Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670 (562/940-1770). [prekkid.org](http://prekkid.org). **Superintendent:** Debra Duardo. **Board of Education:** Betty Forrester, President; James Cross, Vice President; Judy Abdo; Yvonne Chan; R. Michael Dutton; Stanley L. Johnson, Jr.; and Monte E. Perez. **Executive Director:** Keesha Woods. Produced by the LACOE Communications Department in partnership with the Head Start and Early Learning Division Write Start Team. **Contributing writers for this issue:** Choral Brown, Silvia De La Riva, Colin Legerton, Stephaney Roy, Gabriela Trejo, and Keesha Woods. **Editor:** Colin Legerton. **Graphics/layout:** John Paster.