

# THE **POWER** OF HEAD START



Head Start changes the lives of children and families. These first-hand accounts from parents, staff, and graduates are a testament to the power of Head Start. There are countless Head Start success stories to be shared—here is one.

**Fast Fact**



**63,508**  
Head Start parents  
received job training  
last year

Source: National Head Start Association. 2019  
National Head Start Profile.  
<https://www.nhsa.org/national-head-start-fact-sheets#> Accessed October 5, 2020

## Story submitted by: **Jacquelyn**

Head Start parent and Assistant Director at  
San Bernardino County Preschool Services Department

My Head Start story began in 1973. I was 4 years old and enrolled in the Ramona Gardens Head Start Child Care Center in Los Angeles. At the time, my mom, dad and sister lived in the Ramona Gardens Project Housing Development. We were very poor and received financial assistance. I still remember my teacher, Ms. Rose. The Ramona Gardens Head Start is still there today, and when I drive by it on Interstate 10, it always brings a smile to my face.

More than two decades later, in 1996, I enrolled my first child in the Sivaland Head Start Center in Fontana. At the time, I was a single parent, on financial assistance and studying child development at a junior college in San Bernardino. The health specialist informed me that my son should have his breathing checked because he was exhibiting asthma-related symptoms. Soon after, my son was diagnosed with asthma and received the treatment he needed. I'm so thankful for the health services we received at the Head Start program.

I began my career in Head Start as a preschool teacher at the North Rialto Head Start Center. Now, I am the Assistant Director of the Preschool Services Department of San Bernardino County, overseeing the operations of 41 Head Start facilities, providing services to over 6,000 children and their families annually. My career with Head Start has helped me to get off financial assistance, graduate from college with a bachelor's degree and purchase my own home. When new families or staff enter our program, I share my story to show them that dreams really can come true!

I work for Head Start because I want to help others to be successful. Our mission is to "improve the well-being of children, empower families and strengthen communities" with a focus on the "whole" child (mental, emotional, physical). I am here to help remove any barriers that may hinder a child's progress and prepare them to be ready for school. I want to empower families by ensuring they receive every resource and opportunity available to live a self-sustainable lifestyle. When a family thrives, the community thrives. The community is strengthened when we strengthen the ones who live, work and play here.

**Head Start gives children from at-risk backgrounds the skills they need to be successful in school and life — supporting more kids, families, and communities on their path to success.**

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- Jacquelyn, Head Start parent and Assistant Director of Preschool Services

