



When I first signed my child up for Head Start, I met a group of caring parents and staff that welcomed me. I was in a deep depression and Head Start helped me through it. The program provided a learning environment not just for my child, but for me. As I began to share experiences, I found other parents who were going through tougher times than me. Being on the Policy Council and Policy Committee gave me the empowerment tools I needed to take back my life and move forward.

Alice V. Natera

former Head Start parent and
Head Start liaison for
Berks Community Action Program, Inc.

If you would like more information about the Head Start program, please call **Alice V. Natera, Head Start liaison**, at 610-376-6571.



BERKS COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM
Board of Directors &
Berks County Head Start Policy Council

in partnership with
Berks County Intermediate Unit

**Working together for the good
of the people we serve.**



**BERKS COMMUNITY
ACTION PROGRAM**

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Alice V. Natera, Head Start liaison
610-376-6571

All meals served to children under the Child and Adult Care Food Program are served at no separate charge regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. There is no discrimination in admission policy, meal service, or the use of facilities.



empowering families



reaching children

**BERKS COMMUNITY
ACTION PROGRAM**

Grantee for the local Head Start program,
which is operated by Berks County Intermediate Unit.

Head Start is: a federally funded, comprehensive child development program that serves preschool children from the ages of 3 to 5 years.

Head Start is designed to help break the cycle of poverty by providing children with a comprehensive program to meet their social, emotional, health, nutritional, and psychological needs.

Families must meet income guidelines established by the federal government. The guidelines are updated annually and are equal to the federal poverty rate.

Head Start is mandated by the federal government to provide the services necessary to meet its goals in the following areas:

- 1. Education:** Children are provided a safe, nurturing, engaging, enjoyable, and secure place to learn, in order to help them gain the awareness, skills, and confidence necessary to succeed in their present environment. Head Start teaches the skills needed to cope with ongoing responsibilities in school and in life. Each child is treated as an individual in an inclusive community that values, respects, and responds to diversity.
- 2. Parent Involvement:** Parents are the most important influence on a child's development. An essential part of every Head Start Program is educat-

ing parents, letting them plan the program, and involving them in the operational activities. Parents are elected to serve on local policy committees and on the Policy Council. Parents become decision makers as well as volunteers in the classroom. They are offered annual training sessions. Parents receive preference for employment in Head Start jobs for which they are qualified and receive help to secure employment in other fields.

- 3. Social Services:** The Social Services component delivers an organized method of assisting families to assess their needs and provides services that build on the families strengths in order to meet their own needs.
- 4. Health:** Head Start emphasizes early identification of health problems. Head Start arranges for every child to receive, if needed, comprehensive health care, including medical, dental, mental health, and nutrition services. Follow ups are provided for identified problems. A mental health professional must be available to every Head Start program to provide mental health service to children and to train staff and parents.
- 5. Disabilities:** A congressional mandate ensures that at least 10 percent of Head Start's enrollment is available for children with disabilities.
- 6. Transition:** This process enables children to maintain the developmental gains achieved in Head Start and to build on them through



further schooling. Local programs must establish and maintain procedures to support successful transitions from child care programs into Head Start and from Head Start into elementary school or other child care settings.



“ Being a child in Head Start when it first began and now working with Head Start as the administrator of federal grants makes me appreciate the program even more.

Head Start has helped me and my family in so many ways, such as building my social skills, providing dental care, and giving me an educational head start.”

David Rauch
former Head Start student and
administrator of federal grants

Berks County Head Start Program

The Berks Community Action Program is the grantee for the local Head Start Program. BCAP delegates the operational responsibilities of Head Start to the Berks County Intermediate Unit. For information on enrollment, please contact:

Isabel Henao, Assistant for Family Services

610-987-8237

Juli Borelli, Assistant ERSEA

610-987-8236