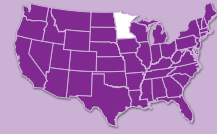


# Minnesota Head Start Facts 2020



## Minnesota Head Start Elementary Extension Study

Since 2011, the Minnesota Head Start Association (MHSA) has supported local Head Start programs to aggregate child and family data to support continuous quality improvement. In addition to providing real-time data analysis to inform annual child progress, the MN Head Start School Readiness Goals Project maintains 9 years of archived data on 4 year olds exiting Head Start.

In the Fall of 2018, participating programs boldly set out to learn how Head Start children were doing after leaving Head Start. Over 20,000 Head Start 4 year olds' data were matched to their K-3 data in the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) and Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA-III). The primary research question: ***What can be learned from public education administrative data about the early elementary school experiences of Head Start children?***

The study looks at children's attendance, 3rd grade MCA data and identification for special services. The Head Start children transitioned into nearly 1,200 different Minnesota elementary schools (or 463 school districts). "School Peers" from the same schools who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and had similar characteristics served as a best-fit comparison group. Key findings indicate Head Start children are on par with their School Peers (who are in fact more advantaged) on measures like math and reading, and outperform their peers on attendance.

*This study was made possible by the Minnesota Head Start Association, Inc. in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education and funding from a grant from the Otto Bremer Trust. Dr. Matthew Hendricks, PhD and Gayle Kelly, M.S. served as primary investigators, in collaboration with staff from Early Learning Services Division, Minnesota Department of Education.*

### Study Design: By the Numbers



20,000

Head Start 4 Year Olds



1,200

Minnesota Elementary Schools

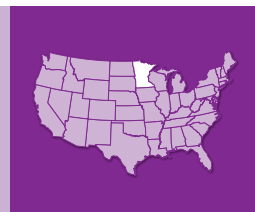


300,000

School Peers

# Minnesota Head Start

## Elementary Extension Study



### Key findings from the Minnesota Head Start Elementary Extension Study Include:

**Beating the Odds:** Head Start children's performance on 3rd grade math and reading assessments were comparable to their School Peers.

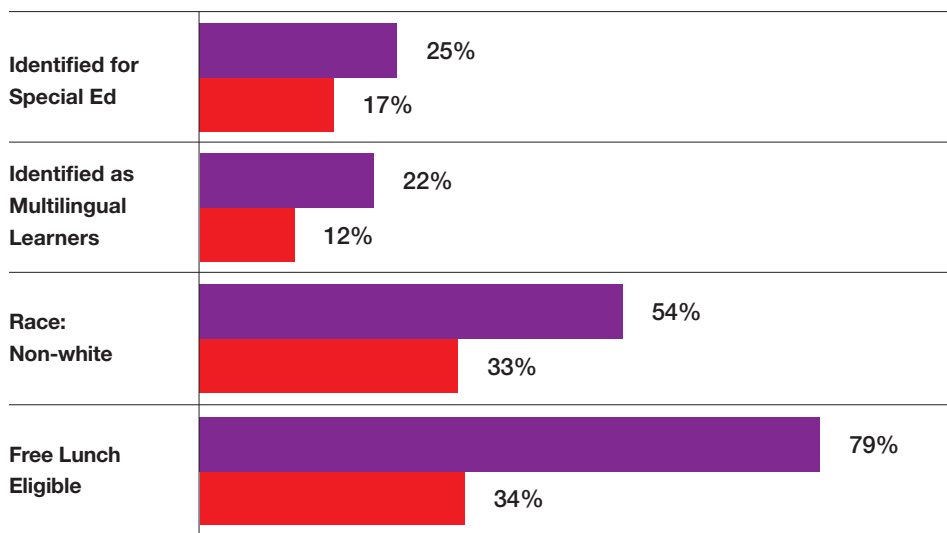
Minnesota educational data suggests children who are racially diverse, speak a language other than English at home, have a diagnosed disability or live below the poverty line are at risk of becoming part of Minnesota's achievement gap. The Head Start sample more often reflected these characteristics than their School Peers (Table 1). In spite of these challenges, the findings of the Extension study shows Head Start children are performing on par with their higher income School Peers.<sup>1</sup>

**Starting Early with Head Start:** Children with two years of Head Start (HS) or Early Head Start (EHS) achieved higher 3rd grade scores than those with just one year of Head Start. On average, multilingual learners with two or more years of HS/EHS passed Minnesota's English Proficiency Exam (ACCESS) slightly earlier than their School Peers.

**Attendance Matters:** The Head Start sample had significantly better attendance than their School Peers. Children with high attendance in Head Start continued to have better attendance in K-3. Children with high attendance (over 90% attendance) in Head Start outperformed their School Peers on both 3rd grade math and reading assessments, scoring higher on both measures.

<sup>1</sup> The MARSS data provides no comparable indicators of family income or social economic status (SES) available in the Head Start data. Head Start income eligibility is set at 100% of poverty (\$25,100 for a family of 4 in 2019). Free or reduced price lunch (eligibility at 130–185% of poverty, respectively) were the only proxy available to control for family income and potentially underestimates Head Start children's true performance compared to their School Peers.

**TABLE 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY SAMPLE IN K-5 (N=child-years)**



■ Head Start—72,829 ■ School Peers—933,987



For more information contact:

**Minnesota Head Start Association, Inc.**  
[www.mnheadstart.org](http://www.mnheadstart.org)

Joelle Hoeft, Executive Director  
 o: 763.208.7272 c: 763.544.1992

New Address:

PO Box 27851, Minneapolis, MN 55427-9998  
[joelle@mnheadstart.org](mailto:joelle@mnheadstart.org)