

Healthy Start Fact Sheet

Healthy Start was established in 1991 through Senate Bill 620, the Healthy Start Support Services for Children Act, to improve student learning and support families. Healthy Start enhances efforts to close the achievement gap by helping children and their family members gain access to an array of learning supports. While each local Healthy Start is unique, all are designed to do the following:

Ensure that each child receives the physical, emotional, and intellectual support that he or she needs — in school, at home, and in the community — to learn well.

Build the capacity of students and parents to be participants, leaders, and decision-makers in their communities.

Help schools and other child and family-serving agencies to recognize, streamline, and integrate their programs to provide more effective support to children and their families.

The California Department of Education (CDE) administers Healthy Start and awards 2-year planning, 5-year operational, and 7-year combined planning and operational grants to local education agencies (LEAs). The charts below show the number of planning, operational, and combined grants that have been awarded to date. In many cases, grants were awarded to multiple school sites in an LEA, as the charts indicate. Currently there is no new funding for Healthy Start grants.

Planning Grants 1991-2005

	Number of Grants Awarded	Number of Schools	Number of Students Enrolled
TOTALS	823	1,714	1,241,389

Operational Grants 1991-2007

Year	Number of Grants Awarded	Number of Schools	Number of Students Enrolled
1991-92	40	128	89,811
1992-93	25	82	63,953
1993-94	47	162	103,306
1994-95	37	97	90,638
1995-96	72	181	142,608
1996-97	74	157	114,117
1997-98	92	174	148,634
1998-99	82	141	111,914
1999-2000	80	122	84,225
2000-01	86	124	73,306
2002-03	8	9	8,161
2004-05	4	6	2,887
2006-07	4	5	6,900
TOTALS	651	1,388	1,040,460

Combined Planning and Operational Grants 2006-07

Year	Number of Grants Awarded	Number of Schools	Number of Students Enrolled

2006-07	19	23	15,065
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Services for Children, Youth and Families

Each local Healthy Start provides comprehensive school-integrated services and activities to meet the unique needs and desired results identified for children, youth, and families. These services and activities may include:

- Academic/Education (tutoring, mentoring, dropout prevention, adult education, and staff training)
- Youth Development Services (tutoring, employment, community services, recreation, and sports)
- Family Support (child protection, parenting education, English as a second language (ESL), citizenship classes, child care, case management, child abuse prevention, and family advocacy)
- Basic Needs (supplemental food, nutrition education services, clothing, shelter/housing, transportation, and legal assistance)
- Medical/Health Care (vision, hearing, dental, acute care, preventive health care, and health insurance)
- Mental Health Care and Counseling (therapy, support groups, and substance abuse prevention)
- Employment (career counseling, job placement, economic security, job preparation and development)

Healthy Start does not necessarily pay for these services. Rather, Healthy Start coordinates integrated service delivery which directly links children and families to needed supports and services. Healthy Start operational and combined grants provide the seed money to LEAs which are expected to sustain programs and services after the grant period has ended.

California's Healthy Start Evaluation Results

Results for Children, Youth, and Families

A statewide evaluation of the first three years of Healthy Start reported improvements for children and families in all measures, including the following:¹

- Reduction in unmet need for basic goods and services (including food, clothing, transportation)
- Reduction in unmet need for medical and dental care
- Improvement in emotional health and family functioning
- Reduction in teen risk behaviors
- Improvement in grade point average
- Reduction in student mobility

School-wide Results

School-wide results assessed in the same evaluation showed improvements in the areas listed below:²

- Student behavior (fewer suspensions and expulsions)
- Standardized test performance in math and reading
- Student attendance
- School climate

A second statewide Healthy Start evaluation, using data from operational grants funded in years 1994-1996, showed positive results in the following areas:³

- Significant increase in academic results for students most in need
- Substantial reduction in unmet basic needs, including housing, food, clothing, transportation, finances, and employment
- Decrease in family violence and increase in parent understanding of child development

Six Elements of Success

The six elements listed below contribute to sustaining Healthy Start in schools and districts after the grant funding has ended:

Supports and services to children, youth, and families are provided in a facility that has adequate space, is comfortable, and is accessible to children.

An active local Healthy Start collaborative demonstrates leadership and involvement in administering, governing, evaluating, and improving Healthy Start. This includes authority to make policy decisions regarding reinvestment of LEA Medi-Cal funds. Representation includes children, families, community organizations, businesses, schools, districts, and agencies.

A children/families' coordinator (at least one full-time employee [FTE] recommended) builds communication between policy-makers and those providing supports and services to improve and sustain service and supports for children and families.

Combined resources of families, communities, counties, cities, nonprofit organizations, businesses, schools and districts are committed to long-term support of children, youth, and families through Healthy Start.

Continuous efforts to measure and demonstrate the positive impact on targeted children, youth and families are evident, and these results are shared with collaborative partners, including families.

Healthy Start is integrated with the local school(s) and has strong administrator support and staff involvement.

1. Wagner, M. and Golan, S. April 1996. "California's Healthy Start School-Linked Services Initiative: Summary of Evaluation Findings," Menlo Park, CA: SRI International, p. 13-14.

2. Ibid., p. 15-16

3. Malloy, J. and Harlick, D. (March 1999) "Healthy Start Works: A Statewide Profile of Healthy Start Sites," Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education, p. 29 .