

Local Collaboration:

GETTING STARTED



While both WIC and Head Start serve children up to age five, many families drop off WIC when their child reaches age 1 or 2. The WIC and Head Start Better Together Collaboration Project is based on the belief that families can benefit from co-enrollment in both WIC and Head Start and that WIC and Head Start staff can better and more effectively serve families if they coordinate services and work together.

LEARN ABOUT WIC OR HEAD START

Learning more about what services each agency provides, the program's eligibility requirements, and enrollment process will help lay the foundation for understanding how you can work together to better serve families. Please review the WIC 101 or Head Start 101 tutorials in the WIC and Head Start Better Together Toolkit for more information about these programs.

WIC

The WIC Program provides nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, supplemental foods to families, and health care referrals. WIC serves pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants and children up to age 5 who are at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

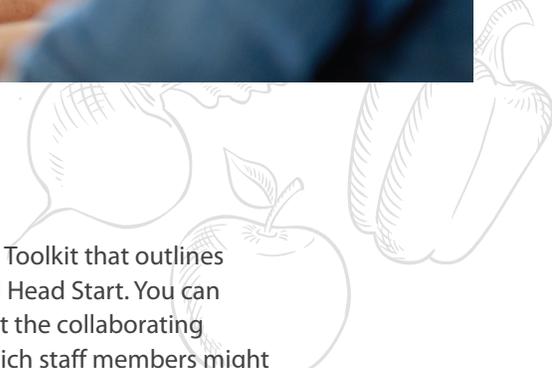
HEAD START

The Head Start and Early Head Start programs support school readiness through the mental, social, and emotional development of children from birth to age 5. In addition to educational services, the program provides children and their families with health, nutrition, social supports, and other community services. Head Start serves families with incomes at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.



"WIC and Head Start work with the same population; it only makes sense. We want to make sure that the families are benefiting from all that is offered to them and that they can access."

HEAD START STAFF



IDENTIFY AND CONTACT KEY STAFF AT THE COLLABORATING AGENCY

A chart is provided in the Better Together Toolkit that outlines the roles of key staff members at WIC and Head Start. You can use this chart to identify a main contact at the collaborating agency and to give you an idea about which staff members might be involved in collaboration activities. Please note that job titles may differ slightly at each local agency.



ASSEMBLE AN INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION TEAM

This team will be responsible for setting priorities for the collaboration and carrying out the activities to meet the collaboration goals. General goals for the collaboration might include:

- Establish an inter-agency referral process
- Establish a satellite site at Head Start
- Coordinate nutrition messages

Be sure to include a variety of staff members with different responsibilities within your agency on the team so you have all the key people necessary to meet the goals of the collaboration. Please see the key personnel chart in the Better Together Toolkit for an overview of key staff members roles.



TIP

Be sure to keep an up-to-date collaboration contact list. In the event of staff turnover, this list will ensure that lines of communication between the agencies remain open.

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MEET TO SHARE PROGRAM INFORMATION

You may consider arranging a presentation at one another's agencies to share information about your program. Topics to cover in these presentations include:

- An overview of program services
- Program eligibility requirements
- Your agency application/enrollment process
- Office locations
- Staff contact information

These agency presentations should be made for all agency staff that will be participating in collaboration activities. These presentations ensure the staff at each agency have accurate information about the other program and foster communication between staff at WIC and Head Start.



"Each opportunity to email, speak with or meet with the WIC staff has been great in strengthening our relationship and building a team that better serves our common clients."

HEAD START STAFF

TIP

Sample MOUs are provided in the Getting Started Resources section of the Better Together Toolkit!

DRAFT A LOCAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Once you've convened your team and gained a basic understanding of one another's programs, it is important to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize the collaborative partnership between local WIC and Head Start agencies. The MOU should outline the nature of the collaborative relationship between the two agencies and provide parameters for sharing participant information between WIC and Head Start.

SCHEDULE REGULAR COLLABORATION TEAM MEETINGS

It is important to maintain regular communication between WIC and Head Start. Plan to meet monthly or bi-monthly to discuss upcoming projects and events, follow-up on referrals made between the agencies, and set new goals. These meetings will help build and sustain the relationship between WIC and Head Start and maintain the collaboration as an agency priority.



For more information and resources visit the Better Together Toolkit at www.WICHeadStartBetterTogether.org