

WEST VIRGINIA  
**Early Childhood  
Planning** TASK FORCE

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## **Estimating Early Childhood Program Participation Rates**

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## Introduction

In order to estimate the participation rates in major early childhood programs, the number of children that might potentially receive services within each of the programs was determined using available demographic and prevalence data as well as data related to risk factors within the pre-natal to 5 yrs of age population. The number of children served by each program (FY 2012) was then compared to the potential number of children that are eligible and/or are likely to benefit from the program in order to determine a participation rate (or penetration rate) for each of the major programs making up the early childhood services system in West Virginia.

Since program participation is voluntary on the part of parents, it is unlikely that all young children would participate in early childhood programs even if program capacities were adequate to accommodate them and access issues related to transportation and program location could be addressed. It is also not reasonable to expect that all young children would participate or would necessarily benefit

from participation in every type of program for which they would be eligible since more than one type of program may serve the same target population. Given these complexities related to program participation, this analysis is only able to provide estimates of current participation rates for the major early childhood programs based on the number of children being served divided by the estimated eligible population. The analysis makes no attempt to determine what an acceptable or desirable participation rate might be.



## Methodology for Estimating Potential Program Participation

### Evidence-Based Home Visiting Programs

These programs include Early Head Start (EHS), Parents As Teachers (PAT), Healthy Families America (HFA), and Maternal & Infant Home Outreach Workers (MIHOW). It might be argued that all children prenatal to age 5 yrs could benefit from evidence based home visiting programs; however a reasonable estimate of those that would be most likely to benefit from such programs would be based on the number of children prenatal to age 5 yrs. experiencing one or more risk factors known to increase the chance of poor health, school, and developmental outcomes. The National Center for Children in Poverty estimates that in West Virginia 66% of the pre natal to age 5 population experiences at least one of these risk factors.

Using this estimate, the potential target population of pregnant women and young children for Evidence Based Home Visiting programs would be estimated at 81,422.

### Right From the Start

Right From the Start is a Medicaid program and only Medicaid eligible pregnant women and children under 1 year of age may participate in the program.

The number of potentially eligible is calculated as follows: Total births in 2010 multiplied by 2 yrs. multiplied by 58% of births covered by Medicaid.<sup>1</sup>

Using this estimate the potential number of pregnant women and children eligible for Right From the Start would be estimated at 23,746.

### Child Care

Children in families below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible for child care subsidies. The number of potentially eligible children is calculated as follows: Percent of children below 185% of FPL applied to population under age 6 yrs. of age.<sup>2</sup>

Using this estimate, the potential number of children under age of 6 yrs. eligible for child care subsidies would be estimated at 54, 668.

### Head Start

Head Start serves 3 & 4 yr old children living in households below the Federal Poverty Level. The number of potentially eligible is calculated as follows: Total 3&4 yr olds living in households multiplied by 28.8% of children under age 5 below FPL.<sup>3</sup>

Using this estimate the number of children eligible for Head Start would be estimated at 12,138

### Birth to Three

Children under age 3 yrs with developmental disabilities or developmental delays The WV Birth to Three Program estimates 16% of Children age Birth to Three qualify for Birth to Three services. The number of potentially eligible is calculated as follows: Population under 3 yrs of age multiplied by 16%.

Using this estimate the number of children eligible for Birth to Three services would be estimated at 9,720.<sup>4</sup>

### Universal Pre-K (4 yr. olds)

The estimated participation rate of 69% for 4-year-old Pre-K was compiled by the WV Department of Education by comparing the 2011-2012 WV Universal Pre-K 4-year-old and over enrollment and the 2012-2013 WV Kindergarten enrollment.<sup>5</sup>

### Pre-K Special Education (3 yr olds)

Pre-K special education services are provided to 3 yr olds with an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Prevalence rates for developmental disabilities have been established through various studies and the prevalence rate for children age 13 to 17 yrs. is generally estimated at 13% to 16% of the population. Using the lower end of these estimates, the number of 3 yr. olds potentially eligible for special education services is calculated as follows: Population 3 yrs. of age multiplied by 13%.

Using this estimate the number of 3 yr. old children expected to be eligible for Pre-K special education services is estimated at 2,739.<sup>6</sup>

## Estimated Participation Rates

The number of children served through each of the early childhood program types in FY 2012 was obtained from the applicable state agency program offices. When the estimated number of eligible children (based on the methodology outlined above) is compared to the numbers being served (as of 2012), a participation rate can be calculated for each of the programs. This data and the resulting participation rates are summarized in the table below.

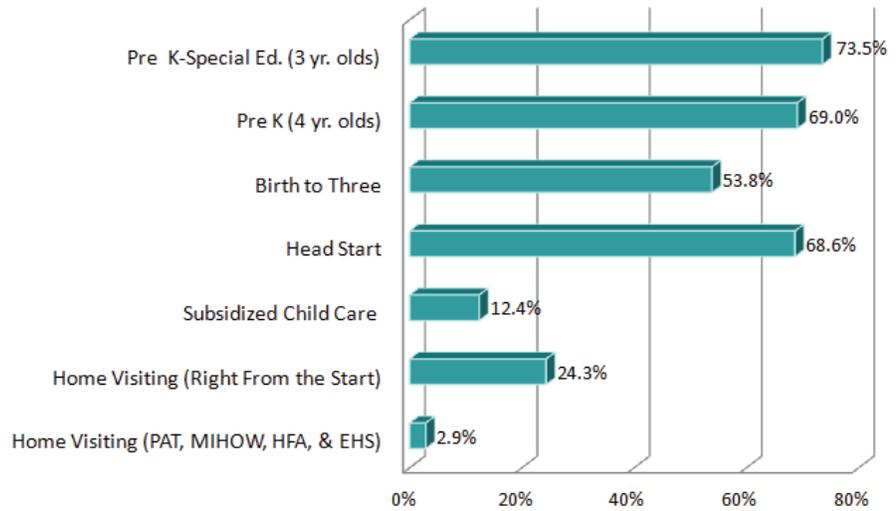
| Program  | Estimated Number Eligible | Number Served 2012 | Estimated Participation Rate |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Home Visiting</b><br>(Parents As Teachers, MIHOW, Healthy Families America, & Early Head Start) | 81,422                    | 2,324              | 2.9%                         |
| <b>Right From the Start</b>  | 23,746                    | 5,771              | 24.3%                        |
| <b>Subsidized Child Care</b>   | 54,668                    | 6,771              | 12.4%                        |
| <b>Head Start</b>  | 12,138                    | 8,331              | 68.6%                        |
| <b>Birth to Three</b>  | 9,720                     | 5,233              | 53.8%                        |
| <b>Pre K (4 yr. olds)</b>  | See narrative             | 12,835             | 69.0%                        |
| <b>Pre K-Special Ed.</b><br>(3 yr. olds)   | 2,739                     | 2,014              | 73.5%                        |





The Participation rate for each program is graphically depicted in the following chart.

### Estimated Percentage of Eligible Children Served FY 2012



### End Notes

1 Sources: WV Vital Statistics, and National Governor's Association, Issue Brief: 2010 Maternal and Child Health Update: States Make Progress Towards Improving Systems of Care. National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices, 2011.

2 Sources: National Kids Count Data Center and U.S. Bureau of the Census - American Communities Survey 2009-11 3 yr. estimates.

3 Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census-ACS 2009-11 estimates.

4 Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census - ACS 2009-11 estimates and expected prevalence figure used by State Birth to Three program.

5 WV Board of Education, West Virginia School Readiness Profile 2012, page 23.

6 Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census - ACS 2009-11 estimates.

Boyle et. al. Trends in the Prevalence of Developmental Disabilities in US Children, Pediatrics Vol. 127 No. 6, June 1, 2011.

Rosenberg et al. Pediatrics Vol. 121 No. 6 June 1, 2008.

