



HEAD START &  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022

# REWARDING STAFF, CENTERING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

ABCD Head Start & Children's Services began the 2021-2022 program year by returning to our typical, fully-in person program model of learning after two years of virtual and hybrid enrollment. While navigating the ongoing pandemic and the many challenges that it continued to present, children returned to classrooms five days a week, and wherever possible, family engagement was offered in-person. We were able to return staff to the classroom setting to support both children and teachers, such as our Intervention Support Specialists, Mental Health Specialists, Coach/Mentors, and Health and Nutrition Services Managers. We continued to prioritize the health and safety of the children, families, staff and our community, while also returning to as many pre-pandemic practices as possible.

One of the largest challenges we faced, and continue to face, is staffing. In order to provide the high quality care and services that our community deserves, we must have the appropriate staffing levels in place. ABCD Head Start is experiencing a staffing challenge that mirrors the national early education workforce shortage. The pandemic has exacerbated an already tenuous situation. Low salary standards for early educators and front-line human services workers across the nation is well-documented. Low salaries, in combination with the high demands of the sector, contribute to turnover and staffing vacancies. Staff at ABCD Head Start have displayed an incredible amount of passion, dedication and resilience in the face of unprecedented challenges, but continue to experience stress and burn-out, in large part due to the overall staffing shortage. Staff who provide the high quality care and support our families are used to desperately need the support of the community, legislators, government and funders to appropriately fund program services and support salaries that reflect their hard work and expertise.

While staffing challenges persist, a key strength of our program was clear: ABCD Head Start increased opportunities and instances of promotion and career growth for staff within the program. In the past program year, a significant number of employees were promoted from within. Eleven trainees were promoted to Assistant Teacher or Teacher positions, as a direct result of the investment and support provided by ABCD Head Start in obtaining their

qualifications for their new roles. Five Teacher Assistants were promoted to Teachers, and six Teachers were promoted as a result of advancing their level of education and obtaining a degree. One Center Director, four Education Supervisors, and two Family and Community Engagement Supervisors were promoted to these leadership positions from front-line positions such as Teacher or Family Advocate. Our new Director of Head Start has over twenty years of experience in all aspects of the program. We consider this a salient success and endeavor to continue to provide pathways for growth and promotion for our hard-working staff. While ABCD Head Start cannot solve the early education staffing crisis alone, we continue to take many steps to attract and retain talented staff who have a passion for changing the lives of children and families.

As we move into the next program year, ABCD Head Start continues to work towards hiring and retaining qualified staff and promoting practices that support their wellbeing. As always, the children and families of Head Start are the center of our mission, and we will continue to advocate on behalf of the workforce in order to ensure that our community is receiving the highest quality programming.



# WHO WE ARE

One of the core programs of President Lyndon Johnson's Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Head Start remains an exemplary family development program that each year serves more than a million disadvantaged children nationwide. In 1965, ABCD (Action for Boston Community Development) was designated as one of the program's original demonstration projects.

Since then, ABCD Head Start & Children's Services has served tens of thousands of children and families in Boston and the Mystic Valley area, offering comprehensive education, health, dental, nutrition and related services for children from birth to age five, as well as for pregnant mothers. Parent participation is a cornerstone of the program. In addition, we strive to meet each child's needs while reflecting the community's ethnic and cultural values.

In the 2021-2022 program year, ABCD Head Start centers, along with our partner programs (Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, Horizons for Homeless Children, Infants and Other People, John F. Kennedy Family Service Center, and Nurtury) had a cumulative funded enrollment of 2,289 across 165 classrooms. Together, we represented 27 centers and 6 family child care programs dedicated to providing services to pregnant women, children birth through age five, and their families:

## Funded Enrollment



## Cumulative Enrollment





## **Our Mission**

ABCD Head Start & Children's Services, a family development program, is committed to providing opportunities and services to the diverse low-income children and families of Boston and the Mystic Valley area. We support them with school readiness, self-sufficiency and success in life.

## ABCD Leadership

### BOARD OFFICERS

Sean K. Daughtry, *Chair*

Nancy Dickerson, *Vice Chair*

Marie Greig, *Vice Chair*

Edward Katz, *Vice Chair*

Rev. Dr. Florence King, *Vice Chair*

James Owens, Jr., *Vice Chair*

Patricia Washington, *Treasurer*

Julia Hardy Cofield, Esq., *Clerk*

Jennifer Williams, Esq., *Assistant Clerk*

### ABCD SENIOR STAFF

Sharon Scott-Chandler, Esq.  
*President and CEO*

Flossy Calderón  
*Director, ABCD Head Start & Children's Services*





## Leadership and Governance: ABCD HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL

Parents are an integral part of program planning by participating in meetings and providing feedback on the services we provide. Many parents serve as members of the Parent Policy Council. Policy council members are responsible for the direction of the agency's Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

### ABCD HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL MEMBERS

#### CHAIR

Ana Berreondo, *Allston/Brighton*

#### VICE CHAIRPERSON

Edugie Uzamah Isehenrien, *Dorchester HS*

#### SECRETARY

Beatrice Toussaint, *Savin St*

#### TREASURER

Jessica Frazier, *Harrison Ave*

#### MASSACHUSETTS HEAD START ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

Carmen Rondash, *JFK*

#### ABCD BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPRESENTATIVE

Marina Costa Fuscaldi, *Everett*

# SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

## CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Total Number of Families

1749

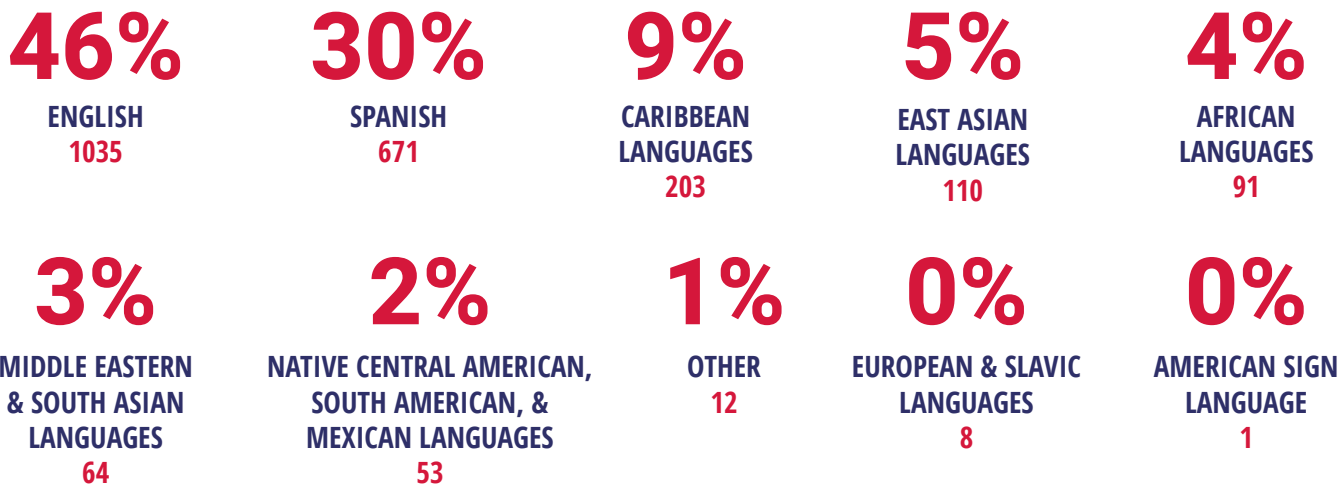
Total Number of Children

2248

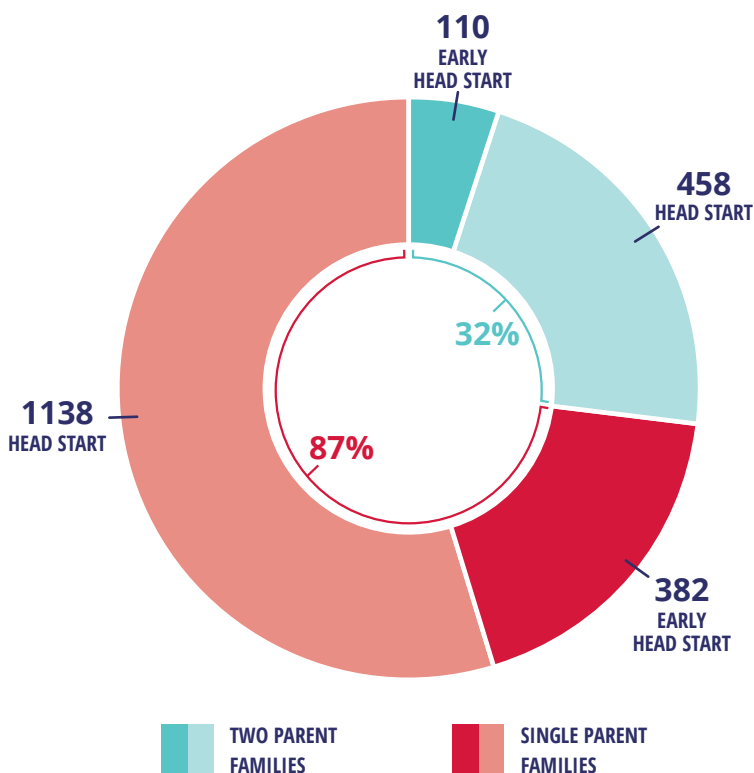
## Race and Ethnicity of Children

	AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE	ASIAN	BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	WHITE	BI-RACIAL/ MULTI-RACIAL	OTHER	UNSPECIFIED
NON-HISPANIC OR NON-LATINO ORIGIN	3	137	848	0	112	61	21	1
HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN	0	0	60	4	30	108	859	4

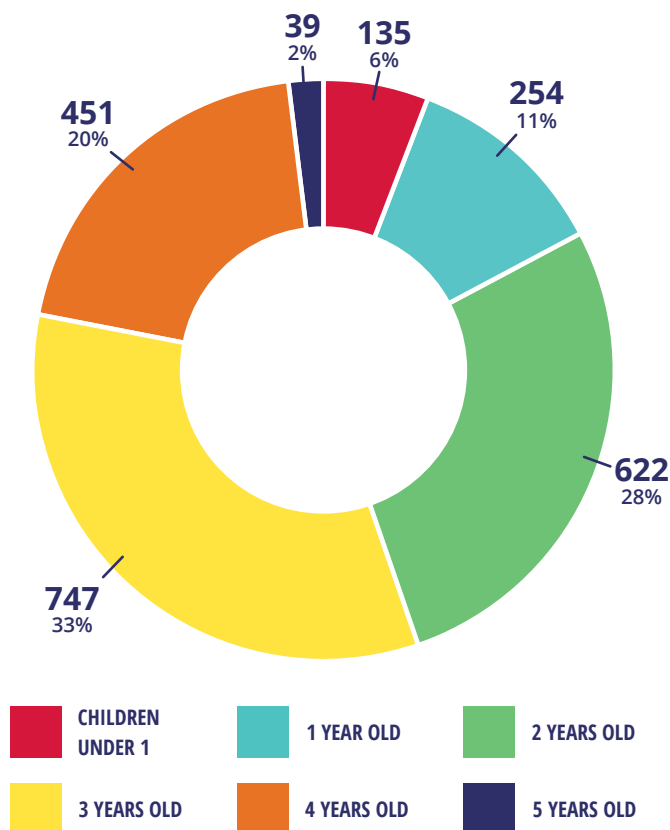
## Primary Language of Children



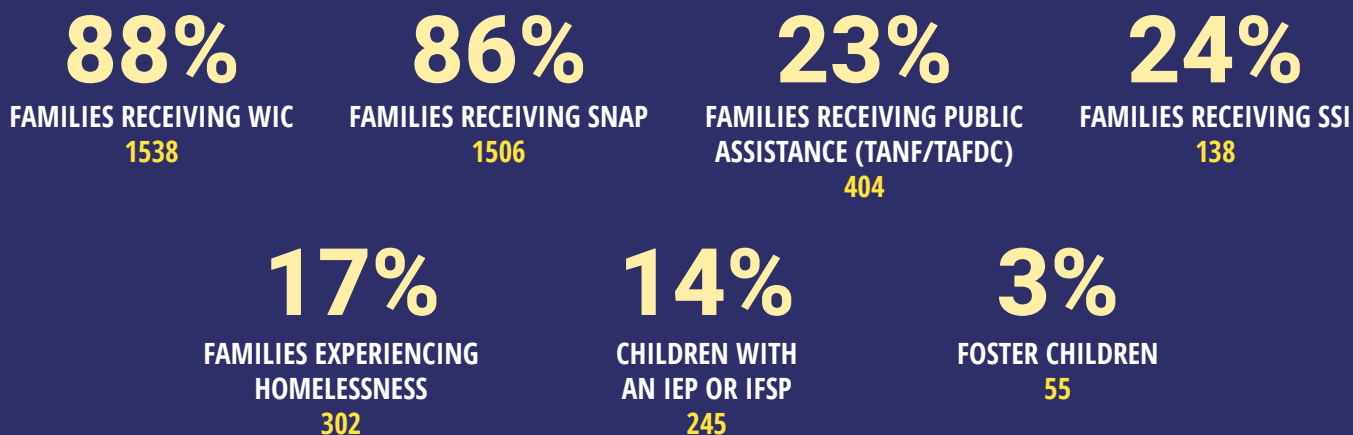
## Family Composition



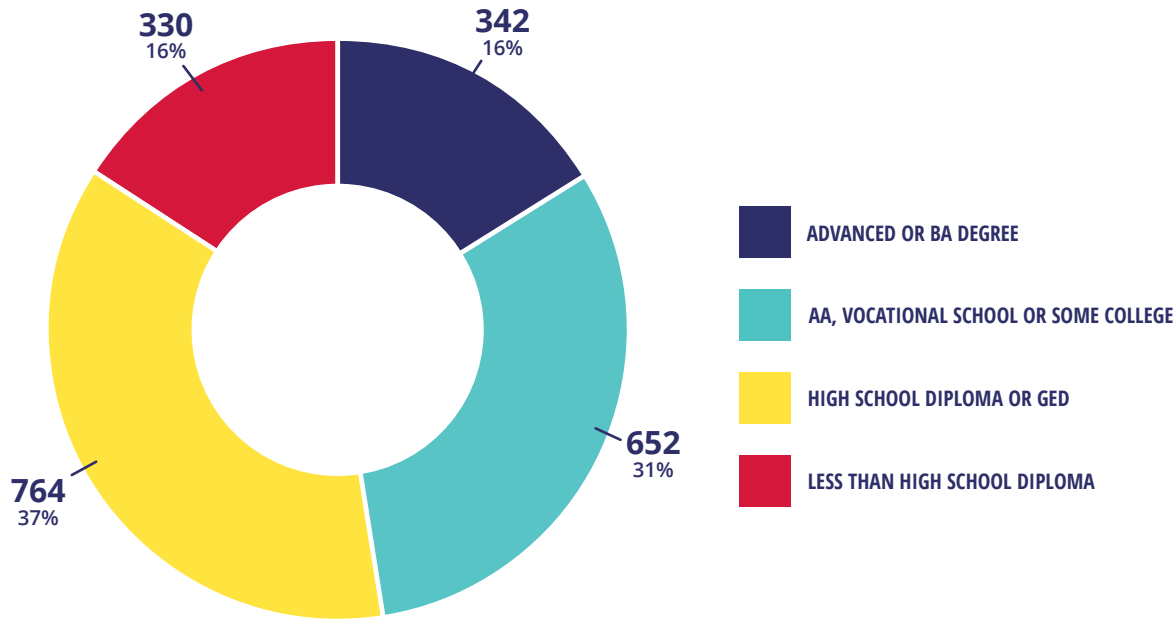
## Age of Children



## Family Needs



## Parent/Guardian Education Level



## Family Services Rendered

CLOTHING	1175	SUPPORTING TRANSITIONS BETWEEN PROGRAMS (i.e., EHS to HS, HS to kindergarten)	179
PARENTING EDUCATION	945	EDUCATION ON NUTRITION	172
HOLIDAY ASSISTANCE	973	ASSISTANCE IN ENROLLING INTO AN EDUCATION OR JOB TRAINING PROGRAM	170
EMERGENCY/CRISIS INTERVENTION (e.g., meeting immediate needs for food, clothing, or shelter)	716	HOUSING ASSISTANCE (e.g., subsidies, utilities, repairs)	122
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	702	ASSET BUILDING SERVICES (e.g., financial education, debt counseling)	114
PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN HEAD START	590	ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) TRAINING	99
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES	274	RESEARCH-BASED PARENTING CURRICULUM	67

## Family Employment Status at End of Enrollment

AT LEAST ONE PARENT/GUARDIAN IS EMPLOYED,  
IN JOB TRAINING, OR IN SCHOOL

**60%**  
1256

NO PARENT/GUARDIAN IS EMPLOYED,  
IN JOB TRAINING, OR IN SCHOOL

**40%**  
832

### Health

**98%**

OF CHILDREN WITH HEALTH  
INSURANCE AT END OF ENROLLMENT

2210

**97%**

OF CHILDREN WITH  
A MEDICAL HOME

2186

**83%**

OF CHILDREN WITH  
A DENTAL HOME

1870

**4%**

OF CHILDREN WITH A  
CHRONIC CONDITION

89



# SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

## STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

### Total Number of Educators

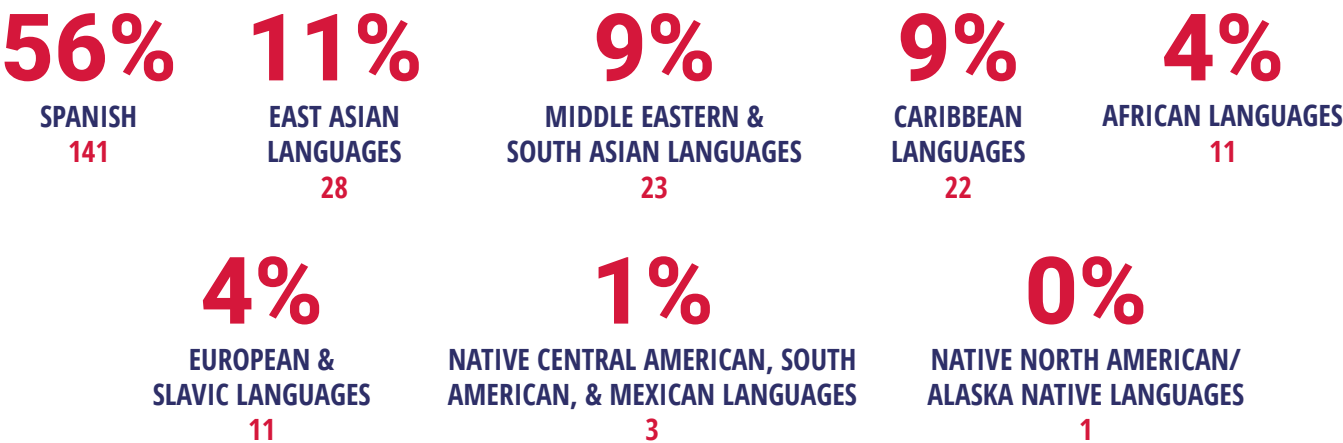
503

### Race and Ethnicity of Educators

	AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE	ASIAN	BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	WHITE	BI-RACIAL/ MULTI-RACIAL	OTHER	UNSPECIFIED
NON-HISPANIC OR NON-LATINO ORIGIN	0	32	93	0	41	3	6	1
HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN	1	0	4	4	24	9	97	6

### 222 Educators Proficient Languages other than English

### Primary Language of Educators



# Education Staff

## NUMBER OF TEACHERS

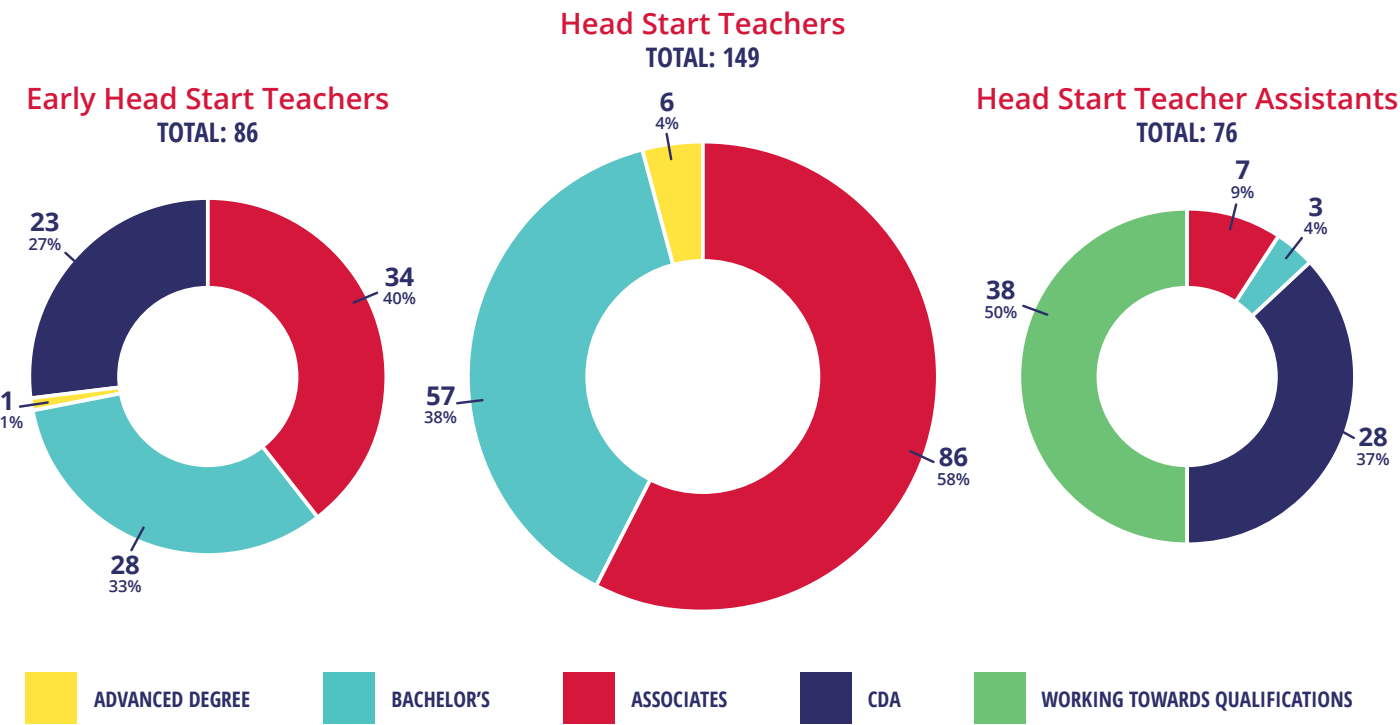


## NUMBER OF TEACHER ASSISTANTS



# 67 Education Staff Received Intensive Coaching

## Educator Qualifications



A portrait of Monica Feulo, a woman with long dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a black top. The background is a blurred indoor setting, possibly a hallway or library.

# STAFF PROFILE

**FROM HEAD START STUDENT TO PARENT TO DIRECTOR,  
MONICA FEULO FOUND HER HOME**

## **MONICA FEULO**

*Center Director, Head Start Hyde Park and Roslindale*

ABCD Head Start has always felt like home to Monica Feulo. The center director of two ABCD Head Start early education sites, she first came to know the program as a toddler: her mother enrolled her in ABCD Head Start in South Boston where one aunt was a teacher and another was a cook.

"I felt so loved, and I loved going every day," she said. All of her neighborhood friends also went to Head Start, so it felt like one big happy family.

In 1996, when she was 17, she would pick up her little sister at the ABCD Head Start she had attended. Soon, Monica was hired as an integrated aide working along her former preschool teacher, Diana Perry. Monica went on to earn a bachelor's degree in early childhood education from Fisher College and she is close to completing coursework for a master's degree. She has steadily risen through the ranks, becoming a teacher, an assistant director and, in 2018, a center director.

Reflecting on her 26 years with the organization, Monica adds, "I feel like I was never not involved."

Head Start is a federally funded early education and care program, a family development initiative that offers under-resourced families comprehensive services including nutritious, culturally responsive meals and snacks, health screenings, social, emotional, and developmental support, in addition to family services. And by encouraging parent engagement and fostering relationships, Head Start strengthens families and creates close-knit communities.

Monica can empathize with Head Start parents because she was one. Many have low-wage jobs with unpredictable schedules; many deal with unstable housing or homelessness; many have to navigate the systemic barriers of racism and bias. Despite these daunting challenges, Head Start parents are resilient, and they turn to the program as a hopeful and proven path to a better future. Case in point: Monica's daughter Marissa went to ABCD Head Start. Now 22, she's in college studying to become a nurse.

With her own experience in mind, as a center director, Monica continues to encourage parents to participate in ABCD's Head Start Education Trainee Program, which requires 25 classroom hours each week while earning the credentials to become teacher assistants. Like many other dedicated coworkers, Monica supports the parents to become ABCD employees. Some are now teachers, supervisors, and family advocates.

What keeps her going? She's inspired by her staff – "each and every one of them." She points to the leadership of Flossy Calderón, director of ABCD Head Start & Children's Services, as another motivator. "I do feel blessed in many ways," Monica said.



A portrait of Gloria Heckstall, a Black woman with short dark hair, wearing a black beanie with a snowman sticker that says "Ms. Gloria". She is wearing a gold chain necklace and a black and white patterned jacket. The background is a bulletin board with various papers and a computer monitor.

# STAFF PROFILE

**YOU GET WHAT YOU GIVE: MUTUAL CARING AND RESPECT  
HAVE SHAPED MISS GLORIA'S HEAD START CAREER**

## **GLORIA HECKSTALL**

*ABCD Head Start Family Advocate*

As a mother whose seven children attended ABCD Head Start, Gloria Heckstall brings deep insight and compassion to her role as a family advocate. Gloria started her ABCD journey at the Parent-Child Center in 1981 with her two sons Lenell, age 2, and Leon, 6 months. There, she and other mothers took parenting classes, participated in activities or simply enjoyed the quiet space while their children were in class. In 1986 she enrolled her son Robert at the ABCD affiliate St. James Educational Center in Roxbury. It was run by the late and beloved Rev. Cornelius Hastie.

Her experience as a Head Start parent “was wonderful,” she said, and as she got to know the teachers and staff, she was soon pursuing an associate’s degree in human services and a certificate in early childhood education at Urban College of Boston (UCB). In 1986, she joined St. James as a teacher’s aide.

In 2004, Gloria and her family endured an unimaginable tragedy when her 23-year-old son Leon was killed, the victim of street violence. Gloria felt lost, barely able to cope. But Rev. Hastie wouldn't accept her resignation. "He and ABCD gave me the strength to bounce back."

Her UCB instructor Nancy Daniels encouraged her to continue her education, and Gloria went on to earn a bachelor's degree in early childhood education from Endicott College.

She was promoted to teacher and enjoyed that role for ten years. At that point, she found herself wanting to explore new territory. Heading into summer break, she talked to her director about other positions, but nothing was available. But as summer came to a close, her director called to say the family advocate position had unexpectedly become available, and Gloria jumped at the chance.

In this role she covers a lot of ground. One day she's helping a mom manage her child's health screenings and the next she is guiding a parent with a job search. The responsibilities are varied, but they all contribute to the health, happiness, and stability of families.

During her time with St. James and ABCD – she now works at the ABCD Savin Street Head Start in Roxbury – she has seen changes for the better, but also for the worse. Like many major cities across the country, affordable housing is hard to come by in Boston. "Homelessness is on the rise. We have so many families in shelters," she said. She and other staff refer them to ABCD's Housing and Homelessness Prevention department and to other agencies to seek relief.

Even with today's challenges, Gloria seizes on the positive. Every day, the children welcome her with "Good morning, Miss Gloria!" "It makes my day," she said. And she is encouraged by the progress the children make. "They love coming to school!"

Gloria has high praise for ABCD's past president/CEOs, Robert M. Coard and John J. Drew – the latter a Head Start parent, himself. But she is excited about the future with one-time Vice President of Head Start Sharon Scott-Chandler having become ABCD's president and CEO in 2022, and Flossy Calderón now serving as director of ABCD Head Start & Children's Services. "They see it from a mother's perspective," she said.



# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



As the new Director of ABCD Head Start & Children's Services, I know that it truly "takes a village" to educate and raise children. Having worked at ABCD for twenty years, I have held many positions, ranging from Extended Day Manager, Center Director, Outreach & Policy Director to Deputy Director. These experiences help me understand how much expertise, passion and dedication it takes to make Head Start work.

We cannot be successful without the partnership of parents, and I am grateful to the families who choose to entrust their children to our care and work with us to improve our program services through Parent Committee, Policy Council, and volunteerism. I feel fortunate to be part of a dedicated and talented team of colleagues who work tirelessly and show so much strength, even in challenging times. I am proud of the many partnerships we have built over the years with community providers to ensure that children and families have access to resources and innovative support services. ABCD Head Start has deep ties to the Greater Boston community, and it is my hope that we can continue to grow and deepen these connections.

The exceptional services that we provide are built on a foundation of partnership, and only together can we succeed. As we move forward, we will continue to center the children and families we serve, while also prioritizing the needs of staff, as they are the people who truly make this program run each day. We hope that you will join us in our efforts to advocate for the betterment of the program and the future success of our staff. I am sincerely thankful for the opportunity to guide ABCD Head Start & Children's Services into the future, together with my colleagues, families and partners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Flossy".

**Flossy Calderón**

*Director, ABCD Head Start & Children's Services*





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CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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