

History & Overview

In 1964, the Federal Government asked a panel of child development experts to draw up a program to help communities meet the needs of disadvantaged preschool children. The panel report became the blueprint for Project Head Start.

Project Head Start, launched as an eight-week summer program by the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1965, was designed to help break the cycle of poverty by providing preschool children of low-income families with a comprehensive program to meet their emotional, social, health, nutritional, and psychological needs. Recruiting children age three to school entry age, Head Start was enthusiastically received by education, child development specialists, community leaders, and parents across the Nation. Head Start serves children and their families each year in urban and rural areas in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Territories, including many American Indians and Migrant children. A well-established, though still an innovative program, Head Start has had a strong impact on communities and early childhood program across the country.

The CRIHB Tribal Head Start Program is in its fifteenth year. CRIHB is the Grantee and headquarters for three center-based programs. The CRIHB Tribal Head Start program is administered by CRIHB and provides center-based services for 90 income-eligible three-five year old Indian children for the following three tribes: Cold Springs Rancheria in Fresno County, Elk Valley Rancheria in Del Norte County, and Lytton Rancheria in Sonoma County. An additional 20 children are served in Sonoma County at a fourth center-based program through a program modeled after Head Start but funded 100% by Lytton Rancheria.

The CRIHB Tribal Head Start Program provides children opportunities to participate in age-appropriate activities that are designed to meet a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical development. Staff and parents/guardians create a partnership to plan a program that emphasizes the development of school readiness and "social competence". "Social competence" corresponds to environment and later responsibilities in school and life. In addition, Head Start offers family members opportunities and support for growth and change through Family Partnership Agreements.

Our center-based programs are open Monday through Friday 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Children are in the classroom Monday through Thursday for 3 ½ hours per day; schedules may vary per class. To be eligible for Head Start services, a child must be at least three years old by the date used to determine eligibility for public school in the local community.