
Membership on our HSAC includes . . .

Nutrition specialists, health specialists, nurses, hygienists, dentists, mental health specialists, and early childhood specialists.

Our HSAC meets . . .

(3) times per year:

- December
 - March
 - May
-

For more information, contact:

Sarah Vanderhoof
Health & Nutrition Services Specialist
(603) 668-8010 ext. 6089
(603) 647-7188 (fax)
svanderhoof@snhs.org



Southern NH Services, Inc.

Child Development Program

40 Pine Street
Manchester, NH 03103
Phone (603) 668-8010

**Southern New
Hampshire Services, Inc.**

Child Development Program
Hillsborough & Rockingham
Counties

Health Services Advisory Committees

*Head Start cares about
the health of its children
and families*



What is Head Start?

Head Start is a comprehensive program for children from birth to age five and their families. The goal of Head Start is to bring about a greater degree of social competence in young children of low-income families. Social competence is defined as a child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with both the present environment and later responsibilities.

Key principles of Head Start include:

- *Comprehensive services.* To develop fully and achieve social competence, children and families need a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach to services including education, health, nutrition, social services, and parent involvement. The range of services available must also be responsive and appropriate to each child and family's unique developmental, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic experiences.
- *Parent involvement and family focus.* Head Start is family-centered and designed to foster a parents' role as the principal influence on their children's development and as their children's primary educators, nurturers, and advocates. Parents are encouraged to become involved in all aspects of Head Start, including direct involvement in policy and program decisions that respond to their interests and needs.
- *Community partnerships and community-based services.* Head Start programs are community-based, with models of service based on the unique needs of the diverse communities they serve.

- Based on these principles, Head Start embraces a comprehensive vision of the health of children and families. This vision supports wellness by encouraging practices that prevent, identify, treat, and reduce the impact of health problems on Head Start families and children.

What is a Health Services Advisory Committee?

The Head Start Program Performance Standards translate the Head Start vision into practices that are implemented in each community. The Program Performance Standards define the services that local programs are required to provide to enrolled children and families. As required by the Head Start Program Performance Standards, the Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) is an advisory group that brings together staff, parents, and local health care providers to talk about the planning, operation, and evaluation of the health services in each Head Start program.

Each HSAC determines how to best meet the needs of children and families in its community. The following are some of the ways different HSACs are supporting the wellness of Head Start children and families:

- Linking children to ongoing sources of continuous, accessible health care
- Ensuring that the learning environments in the home and at the Head Start center supports each child's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development
- Establishing and implementing policies and procedures for responding to medical and dental health emergencies

- Engaging parents in identifying and accessing health services and resources that are responsive to their interests and goals
- Helping programs establish ongoing collaborative partnerships with community organizations to make it easier for children and families to access health services that are responsive to their needs
- Developing long- and short-term goals and objectives for implementing services that meet the needs of the community
- Participating in the annual self-assessment of a Head Start program's effectiveness

Why Should You Join Your Local HSAC?

As a Head Start parent, joining your local HSAC allows your voice to be heard on the issues that are important to you in the area of health, including nutrition, medical, mental and dental care.

As a local health services provider, joining your local HSAC is a way of connecting with the members of your community to provide the best and most appropriate services to your clients. The HSAC provides you with a forum to communicate your views and concerns about issues that affect the services you provide.