



About the Oregon WIC – Head Start Collaboration

Over six thousand of Oregon’s WIC families are also Head Start families. Like WIC, Head Start helps families through education, nutritious food, and health care screening and referrals. Collaboration between WIC and Head Start only makes sense for our shared families.

In 2007, the Oregon WIC program surveyed local WIC and Head Start staff to find out how they were currently collaborating. Although time was identified as the major barrier to collaboration, almost everyone had an interest in improving how WIC and Head Start work together.

A focus group made up of WIC coordinators, Head Start Nutrition and Health Managers, WIC and Head Start Dietitians, and WIC and Head Start State staff was brought together to prioritize the areas identified in the survey as promising for further collaboration. The group felt the State could help facilitate a greater level of collaboration by simplifying the process for sharing participant data.

Data sharing between WIC and Head Start programs can be very time consuming for local WIC programs. To ease this burden, the State WIC program looked into creating a way to share data directly with local Head Start programs. The Oregon WIC program uses a centralized database. Data on each participant’s height, weight, hemoglobin and nutrition risks are entered into the database as part of every WIC appointment. As such, the State WIC program is able to extract individual participant data for multiple participants at one time, speeding delivery of this information to Head Start programs.

In 2009 the State WIC program began piloting “State WIC to local Head Start” data sharing agreements with Oregon Child Development Coalition and Southern Oregon Child and Family Council. Starting school year in 2011, the State WIC program is opening up the pilot to include all interested Oregon Head Start programs.

WIC and Head Start: Common Ground, Common Goals

The WIC and Head Start programs share common goals. In many communities, WIC and Head Start serve the same families. Working together can mean minimizing duplicative efforts on the part of families and staff.

Excerpt from the 1999 Federal WIC – Head Start Coordination Study conducted by USDA and USDHHS Head Start Bureau.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/WIC/FILES/wichdst.pdf>