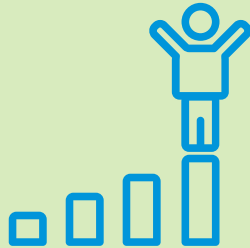


# THE **POWER** OF HEAD START



Head Start changes the lives of children and families. These first-hand accounts from parents, staff, and graduates are a testament to the power of Head Start. There are countless Head Start success stories to be shared—here is one.

**Fast Fact**



**11,134** children received special education and early intervention services

Source: 2021 Program Information Report

## Story submitted by: **Myra Acosta**

Director, Palm Springs Unified School District, Early Childhood Education Program

I am a single mother of two wonderful children: Jasmin, 18 and Daniel, 16. When my son Daniel was born, he did not pass his newborn hearing screening, so we began seeing a specialist. Daniel was diagnosed with cognitive delays and moderate to severe Autism at 3 years old. As a mother, I was devastated and sought refuge in my faith. I went to visit many different types of preschool settings including an Autistic class, special day class, and full inclusion. I chose to place Daniel in a full day Head Start program. Daniel began preschool with very few language skills and many obstacles due to his diagnoses. At Head Start, Daniel learned to speak and follow a routine which prepared him to learn.

Daniel entered kindergarten in a general classroom and continued his education in a general education setting. When Daniel was in third grade, we decided to conduct a full assessment, knowing that he had overcome many obstacles. To our surprise, Daniel scored 'gifted' and 'above average' in most areas of his assessment and he no longer qualified for special education services. I owe Daniel's success to Head Start and his amazing teachers who never gave up on him throughout many challenges.

Daniel is now a junior in high school, earning straight A's, taking AP psychology and preparing for college. Head Start changes lives! I truly understand the importance of early intervention for our students, and that is why today, I am the ECE director for the Palm Springs Unified School District Early Childhood Education Program.

Head Start prepares students for success. As Head Start requires, students are assessed using various tools such as 'Ages and Stages' and 'Desired Results Developmental Profile', which allow teachers to set individualized goals specific to every child's unique needs.

The Head Start program Daniel attended gave meaning and purpose to the African proverb "It takes a village to raise a child!" Head Start supervisors, teachers, teacher assistants, and many therapists worked with Daniel and I to help him become the amazing young man he is today. Despite all the challenges Daniel displayed, no one ever gave up on him!

**Head Start gives children from at-risk backgrounds the skills they need to be successful in school and life — supporting more kids, families, and communities on their path to success.**

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- Myra Acosta, Head Start parent & ECE Director

