



The Head Start Debates

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Are we failing the children most at risk? 52 of America's leading experts weigh in.

The future of Head Start depends on how well we learn from and apply the lessons from its past. That's why everyone involved in early education needs this timely, forward-thinking book from the leader of Head Start. The first book to capture the Head Start debates in all their complexity and diversity, this landmark volume brings together the research and personal experience of 52 top experts in a wide range of fields—including education, research, medicine, and social work. This powerful compilation of voices mines Head Start's 38-year history for lessons learned, turns a critical eye on where the program is headed, and offers readers distinct and often contrasting viewpoints on three major issues:

- **Goals.** Explore three crucial questions about the goals of the program: cognitive development vs. school readiness, short-term vs. long-term progress, and Head Start as an antipoverty tool vs. Head Start as a child development program
- **Effectiveness.** Investigate the impact of Head Start on children's literacy, cognitive skills, health, school readiness and success, and parent participation—and learn how research might be improved so outcomes can be assessed more accurately
- **Future directions.** Examine ways that Head Start might evolve to improve program quality, explore how to meet the child care needs of particular families, provide universal access, address administrative and funding challenges, and prepare children for lifelong learning

This compelling, urgently needed book will help readers understand the complexity of Head Start, shape future policy, and ensure that all young children will arrive at school ready to succeed.

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