



# Head Start & Early Head Start

High quality early education and support for children 0-5 and their families in Puerto Rico

The New York Foundling's Head Start and Early Head Start programs provide high-quality early education services and child development support for children ages 0-5. Our 43 specially designed early childhood centers operate in 5 municipalities (San Juan, Cataño, Vega Alta, Coamo, and Toa Baja), supporting 1,500 children and their families in underserved communities across Puerto Rico.

The Foundling has had a presence in Puerto Rico since 1973 and was one of the first organizations to provide Head Start and Early Head Start services on the island. Staffed by qualified teachers, social workers, nurses, and mental health professionals, our programming is designed to equip infants, toddlers, and young children with the experiences and skills to become lifelong learners, and to provide parents with holistic services – including health, nutrition, mental health, and parenting support – so they can best support their children.



## OUR EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM:

- Serves pregnant women, infants, and toddlers up to age 3
- Equips parents with education about early childhood development and provides support and connections to resources - promoting child-wellbeing and stronger family relationships
- Provides high-quality childcare designed to promote skill development and early education concepts, with an easy transition into our Head Start program for continuity of care



## OUR HEAD START PROGRAM:

- Serves children ages 3-5
- Uses either a Montessori approach or The Creative Curriculum in our classrooms to provide developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences in language, literacy, mathematics, social and emotional functioning, science, physical skills, and the creative arts
- Provides parenting workshops, trainings, and other activities to educate, engage, and strengthen families

**596 families have received continuous counseling support from The Foundling's mental health staff over the past school year.**

**In the 2022-2023 school year, 75% of students reached school readiness goals as they transitioned from Head Start to Kindergarten.**

**In the past school year, 112 families have participated in our School for Parents to learn positive parenting techniques.**



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Thousands of children and families have benefited from The Foundling's Head Start and Early Head Start services. Read some of their stories below:

## ILEANA AND LUCAS



Iliana and her son Lucas joined our Early Head Start program in Coamo, when Lucas was 1 year old. As a child with special needs, he needed extra support - which our centers are equipped to provide, as our staff have been trained in special education strategies.

Now at age 3, Lucas has transitioned into our Head Start Pre-K program where he will continue to learn and grow - with the same supportive team - until he is ready to begin school. "Early Head Start, Head Start, and the therapy he is receiving [elsewhere] have really helped him. It's positive all the time; we are always moving forward. He's not behind, and he hasn't gotten stuck. I've seen a lot of change," Iliana says.

## BIANCA AND KERMITT



Bianca, now a mother of three, first came to one of our Early Head Start Centers in San Juan when she learned she was pregnant with her first son, Kermit. There, she received pre-natal guidance and parent resources and support. Working in partnership with Head Start specialists, Bianca later learned that Kermit had mild attention deficit challenges. Kermit began to receive the services and help he needed to succeed in school.

Now 10 years old, Kermit is on the Honor Roll, and Bianca's two younger daughters are currently receiving support and services through Head Start as well. Thanks to The Foundling, Bianca's three children are thriving today—and she is too.

## ABOUT THE NEW YORK FOUNDLING



Since our bold beginnings in 1869, The New York Foundling has supported hundreds of thousands of our neighbors on their own paths to stability, strength, and independence. With an internationally-recognized and interrelated set of research-backed services, The Foundling works in partnership with children, families, and adults in New York and in Puerto Rico who are working to create transformational change in their own lives.



**"I love to be with the kids, with their families. I love their experiences, their stories, the things they learn... I don't see it like work, I see it almost like a way of life."**

- Marilyn Del Rio  
Head Start Teacher, John Cardinal O'Connor Center