Office of Head Start: Leading the Way: 45th Video

[Music]

Bernie Bradley: "I can remember it was like yesterday. I remember the first book I was given, which was great because I couldn't afford any books. Giving us books -- and sitting there behind our little desks and reading. I can remember that. It was just such a pivotal point in my life.

President Lyndon Johnson: Today, we're able to announce that we will have opened and believe operating this summer coast to coast some 2,000 child development centers. This means that nearly half of preschool children of poverty will get a head start on their future.

Teacher: Is that the same as this?

Students: Yes.

Polly Greenberg: From the absolute beginning, Head Start was never intended as just a preschool. The emphasis was on comprehensive services, nutrition, health screening, health care, social services. New careers for the parents with training and income. Helping people get out of the cycle of poverty and that includes energizing, giving people confidence that they can do this. And it's one step at a time.

Bernie: I was the only one to attend Head Start. And my sister, who's two years older than I am -- the huge difference it made. We have two people who grew up in the same house, in the same circumstances, and I was the person who excelled at school. I am the person who went on to college. I am the person that started my own business. I truly believe that I had a better opportunity for success than she did because I got to go to Head Start.

Joy Trejo: The children that we serve in Early Head Start range between zero to three. You'll see a lot of free play. You'll see a lot of the teachers verbally and physically interacting with the children and encouraging social interaction. We serve women who are pregnant, as well. A lot of it is prenatal education, not only what are things to avoid but what can you do to make sure that your child comes out healthy.

Teacher: A house? For who? For you or for your doggie?

Joy: In our Head Start classroom, we serve children three to five.

Teacher: Can I borrow your knife?

Joy: You'll see a lot more interactive play.

Teacher: Oh, thank you! Okay.

Joy: All of this to help them develop all of their skills and really reach their own developmental milestones, because our goal is to make sure that they arrive to kindergarten ready to learn. We also

have a home visitor teacher option. The goal is to really help that parent understand how to develop their child on a day to day, week-to-week basis.

Teacher: What's this number? Two. Two horses in the shade of a tree.

Yvette Sanchez Fuentes: You can find a Head Start program in every county in the United States. You can find them in large cities. You can find them in small rural communities, on tribal reservations, and in farm worker camps. And it meets the needs of those kids and those families every day.

Teacher: How can you tell what happens? Look at the picture.

Edgiton Farquharson: They're my kids -- one of them, my grandson. If I had known about Head Start like I know about it now, all the kids would have been Head Start babies. The camaraderie, the warmth; it is a breath of fresh air because you know your child is getting everything that they have. The teachers are giving it their percent. I'd like to have a motion to approve the report for hiring. Hirings are approved.

Polly: A very, very important element of Head Start was the concept of maximum feasible participation of parents. People have to be involved in determining what programs they need and in running them. You don't do things for people. You don't do things to people. If you do, they're still disempowered.

Edgiton: At first, you know, I could not speak in front of anyone. You need a strong father beside these children. It got rid of my shyness. I can advocate for someone just like I advocate for the kids.

Yvette Rodriguez: Our dream is that whatever we help them develop while they are here in Head Start, it's skills and -- and activities that they could carry on through the life of the children, through their education, and their career.

Mei-Hua Fu: We have children and family here.

Chef: This is a picture of the food pyramid, and it helps us know what the different types of food groups are.

Mei-Hua: The cooking workshop really is a great example of what kind of support family need.

Chef: We're going to make a recipe that uses food from all of these different food groups. Excellent!

Cynthia Quinteros: I don't know. Like, I guess, since I'm still a teenager, you tend to not want to play with your kid as much. No, you gotta press the button. Press the button.

Teacher: Good morning. How are you?

Cynthia: Good.

Teacher: Give him space. Gentle touches. Gentle touches; gentle touches.

Cynthia: I learned about the gentle touches technique, which is basically when a -- like, a kid -- like, they're fighting; they'll just tell them, like, "Angel, you have to use gentle touches." I see how they interact with him and it motivates you to want to play with them more. If it wasn't for Head Start, I

probably would have dropped out and been, you know, a single mother at home with nothing. My plans after high school is to become a registered nurse, so it will allow me to get even a higher education than high school.

Teacher: What color is our paper?

Children: Black.

Teacher: Black. And what are we going to do with the circles? Hold it.

Martha Reyes: [Speaking in Spanish] When Herman was little, he was speaking few words

Froilan Mendoza: He was immediately referred to our Special Ed department to be assessed, and it was found out that he had some speech and language delays.

Martha: [Speaking in Spanish] Through Head Start, we were able to obtain some occupational therapy for him. He has improved a lot. He can communicate with everybody without thinking he won't be able to do it.

Woman: [Speaking in Spanish] We are changing the dead plants for a live one.

Marshell Jones: They work long hours and they don't get to spend a lot of time with their children. We do hearing and vision screenings here. Last season, we had a little boy whose vision was so bad that it was -- we just couldn't believe that he was actually walking around. When he first came back into the center the day -- with the glasses, he was like, "Oh, my god! The letters are big!" And, you know, it's got to make you think, this child's been walking around for four years, or less, and could barely see.

Lourdes Villanueva: As a parent, you come in not knowing; I mean, you just go thinking that they're just gonna teach them something and keep them safe. But it was really much more than that I mean, they started inviting you to parent meetings, inviting you to parent trainings. And it was, you know, just one of those things that I felt that I was learning just as much as the kids were. I went back to night school and I finally got my GED. The executive director came to my graduation and said, "Okay, so when do you start college?" I'm like, "I just finished school; I thought I was done." And she's like, "Oh no, no, no mi'jita: When are you starting college?"

As parents, we learn to be advocates for our own kids. What I think that Head Start has done for my children is that they were able, all three of them, to finish school, go to college, and that they are contributing citizens I honestly believe that that has to do with the start that they had -- the Head Start.

Drumming and singing in Native language:

Robert Goslin: An activity that we do here at our early childhood center once a week is we have what we call a traditional Pow Wow. It brings families together to share, to visit, to dance together in our traditions.

Father: Well, "gaawe" is a favorite word.

Robert: It means?

Father: "No!" [Laughter] But also, at the same time, there's a lot of hugs.

Robert: As fatherhood coordinator, I will seek out dads and talk to them and encourage them to become involved in our program. And what kind of challenges are you dealing with now?

Father: Well, mostly just trying to keep up with him.

Robert: I can actually sit down with a dad and hold a conversation about their infant, the different stages that the infant is going through, and be able to help that dad work through some of those kinds of issues that may -- they may be having trouble with.

Sue Roberts: I had separated from my ex-husband at the time and we'd had to move into subsidized housing. A lot of depression issues. Jessica, at three years old, was spending a lot of time taking care of me. She thought that was her job, was to take care of me and help take care of her sisters. And it was Head Start that showed me I was good enough to take care of myself.

So I had all these people coming to me, our director and our parent involvement coordinator, saying, "Wow, you're a great person and you've got -- you've got a lot of skills," and it just boosted my confidence. Head Start is big on hiring parents, and I think that's why they're so compassionate, is because they know what it's like to be on the other end. If you are worried about getting food on the table, having heat in your house, the last thing you're thinking about is reading a book or brushing your child's teeth. The foundation that the kids are receiving -- a lot of the things they're not getting at home, family meals, and so these are things the kids are getting in Head Start.

Nancy Miller: Monday mornings a lot of the kids come in really hungry.

Teacher: [Speaking in Spanish] What do you like most about school?

Boy: [Speaking in Spanish] Going outside.

Teacher: [Speaking in Spanish] Going outside is your favorite part?

Boy: [Speaking in Spanish] When we go to the gym also.

Teacher: [Speaking in Spanish] The gym -- we do lots of things in the gym. We play; we ride bicycles. Could you pass me the milk, please? Okay. Thank you.

Nancy: They -- you know they're going home with a full tummy from school, and that's a good thing. And, you know, hopefully they're getting something at suppertime -- a good meal at suppertime, but a lot of these kids are in challenging situations at home.

Child: [Speaking in Spanish] A lot of food!

Teacher: What number is this?

Girl:...

Teacher: Very good. Let's do the four. Very good, very good!

Yvette Sanchez Fuentes: Head Start, for me, means giving kids and families an opportunity. For me it means that every child and every family, no matter the condition that they are born into, has an opportunity to make their dreams come true.

Polly: To me, Head Start means the community at all levels cares about you and your children. We are a giant family.

Bernie: I don't think I would be here today, where I am, and be as successful as I am had it not been for Head Start.

Edgiton: It's a place where I know my grandson is going to be nurtured. I know that any and all doors are open for him

[Music]