

# STRYVE ACTION COUNCIL

## STRIVING TO REDUCE YOUTH VIOLENCE EVERYWHERE

## Nurturing Children through Early Head Start

CDC's Division of Violence Prevention released [A Comprehensive Technical Package for the Prevention of Youth Violence and Associated Risk Behaviors](#), a collection of strategies based on the best available evidence for what works to prevent or reduce youth violence.

### WHAT IS EARLY HEAD START?

Quality early childhood education programs, like Early Head Start (EHS), is a strategy included in the youth violence technical package. Early Head Start programs provide family-centered services for low-income families with very young children. These programs promote child development and nurture healthy relationships between parents, caregivers, and children. Research has found that EHS programs increase the likelihood that children will experience safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments during their lives. Providing children with safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments is associated with their long-term academic success and health, including lower rates of behavior problems, aggression, violence, and crime.

### POLICIES INTO PRACTICE: GEORGIA

In 2015, [Georgia's Department of Early Care and Learning \(DECAL\)](#) was awarded 5 year, \$17.5 million grant from the Administration for Children and Families to serve as an [Early Head Start—Child Care Partnership \(EHS-CC Partnership\) grantee](#).

The federal Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grant combines funds with the federal Child Care and Development Fund to provide comprehensive, full-day EHS services throughout the year. As an EHS-CC Partnership grantee, DECAL delivers comprehensive EHS services directly to approximately 200 children under 3 years of age. EHS programs promote the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of infants and toddlers through safe and developmentally enriching caregiving. EHS programs also include health, early education, nutrition, mental health, and family support services. As the state lead agency for the [federal Child Care and Development Fund \(CCDF\)](#), DECAL also provides CCDF subsidies

that allow infants and toddlers to attend the state's other EHS-CC Partnership programs. To do this, DECAL revised state-level subsidy policies and implemented new procedures. By revising state-level subsidy policies and implementing new procedures, DECAL was able to serve 348 children from 2016-2017.

### EHS: FEDERAL POLICY, PERSONAL STORIES

One specific EHS-CCP program site funded by DECAL's grant is Our House Genesis, located in an Atlanta homeless shelter. The center provides a rich learning environment for 32 children enrolled in EHS, while offering emergency housing, education, and support services for their families. As one young mother explained:

**"I came to Our House in March of 2017. I had no job, no home, no support, two children, and nowhere to go. I knew I wanted to provide a better life for my children, but I was stuck between a rock and a hard place. Having peace of mind from knowing that my newborn child was in the safe and enriching environment of the childcare center allowed me to go out and search for a job. After six months and a lot of overtime at two different jobs, I have gotten a car, an apartment, and, most importantly, independence. If it were not for the support of Our House and its teachers, none of this progress would have been possible."**

Quality early childhood education can play an important role in helping children experience the safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments that serve as protective factors against youth violence.

For more on the [STRYVE Action Council](#) visit <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/stryve/actioncouncil.html> and <https://www.safestates.org/page/STRYVEAC>

---

The production of this fact sheet was supported by cooperative agreement number CE13-1307 from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the Safe States Alliance and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC.