

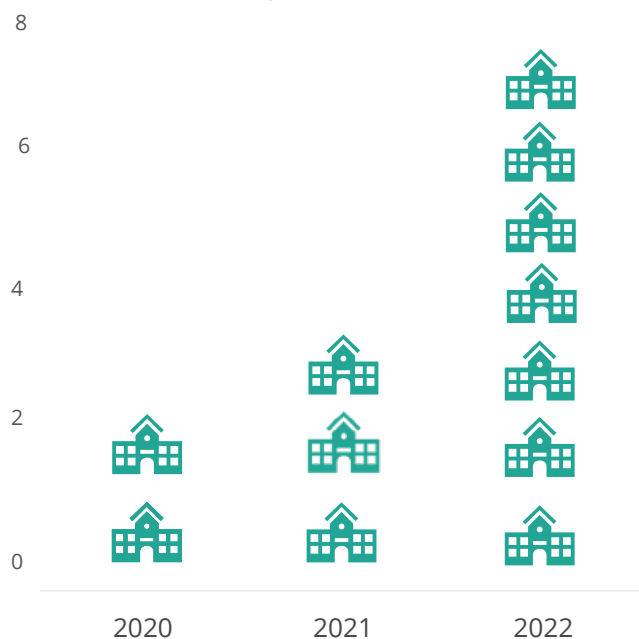
Streamlined training to help Head Start childcare centers receive TOP Star endorsement

Teaching Obesity Prevention in Child Care Settings (TOP Star) is a Utah-based program developed in 2013 by the Utah Department of Health and Human Services Healthy Environment Active Living (HEAL) program. The program was designed to help childcare providers implement healthy behavior practices in their facilities. TOP Star helps children of preschool age and younger learn healthy habits they can carry into adulthood. Early childcare and education facilities receive a TOP Star endorsement after staff complete training and facilities implement new policies and practices to improve nutrition, physical activity, and breastfeeding services, where applicable. More than 200 early childcare and education facilities in Utah have received a TOP Star endorsement; until recently, no early childcare and education facility that is a Head Start facility had been endorsed.

Head Start providers had their own curricula and recognized the value of the TOP Star program. They expressed interest in the TOP Star endorsement process. To streamline the endorsement process for Head Start facilities, the state TOP Star coordinator in the HEAL program created a team consisting of state Head Start coordinators and interns. The team conducted a strategy to identify content contained in both the Head Start and TOP Star curricula. Duplicative content was removed and a new product was built specifically for Head Start providers. The additional training required for endorsement was tailored to the specific needs of Head Start. The Head Start TOP Star training was released in December 2021. In 2022, 7 Head Start facilities were endorsed, more than doubling the counts for either of the two prior years (figure 1). More Head Start facilities are currently working toward endorsement by training at local health departments throughout Utah. For more information on TOP Star endorsement training visit <https://heal.utah.gov/top-star-providers/>.

Total Head Starts endorsed in the Teaching Obesity Prevention in Child Care Settings (TOP Star) training program in Utah, 2019–2022

Figure 1. TOP Star training endorsements for Head Start facilities increased from zero in 2019 to 7 in 2022.



Source: Utah Department of Health and Human Services
Healthy Environment Active Living (HEAL) program, 2022