

Reserving Slots

Director Khari M. Garvin: Hi, I'm Khari Garvin, the Director of the Office of Head Start. This is a "Home at Head Start" message. Today I am excited to talk with you about how you can reserve slots to be more responsive to children experiencing homelessness and children in foster care. First, let me tell you how this works, and then I want to share a couple of suggestions. A program can reserve up to 3% of its funded enrollment slots for children experiencing homelessness for 30 days. If a reserved enrollment slot is not filled within 30 days, the slot is then vacant, and the program has an additional 30 days to ensure it is filled with the next eligible child and family most in need of services on your waitlist.

Now, for most of you who do not have a full-year program, you can plan to keep the 3% of your slots available at the start of your enrollment year. This will give you more time to recruit and more time for outreach. And of course, throughout the program year, as a vacancy occurs, you can hold a slot for 30 days. Now let me say this: this is not a passive process. We should be actively recruiting to identify and encounter as many families as possible. In other words, during the time we are holding a slot, we are in an active process. You need to be recruiting children and families before, during, and after and not just waiting for a family to appear at your program to be enrolled.

The cycle goes: reserve, recruit, enroll. Reserve, recruit, enroll, got that? Ideally, we want to hold slots across classrooms, and we want to do this for three reasons. One, this is more responsive and convenient for families. Two, this will diversify the child's experience. And three, this will bring more balance to the teaching experience. This takes some planning, but it is worth it, Head Start! Our families and children need us to go that extra mile. They will benefit so much from a Home at Headstart.

Narrator: For more information about reserving slots, recruitment selection, and enrollment, please visit <https://bit.ly/3J8N0UK>. Produced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.