



# ANNUAL REPORT

Head Start/Early Head Start of Fayette County

A National Center of Excellence

2023-2024

Private

Industry

Council

OF WESTMORELAND/FAYETTE, INC.



# Head Start/Early Head Start of Fayette County

Annual Report 2023-2024

## WHO WE ARE

### The Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette, Inc. (PIC)

PIC was awarded the Head Start grant for Fayette County in 1994 and has been responsible for the operation and growth of the Head Start programming since that time. PIC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, which operates employment, education, and training programs in Westmoreland and Fayette counties in southwestern Pennsylvania. PIC has strategically located offices throughout both counties to assist children and parents, youth, adults, dislocated workers, and the economically disadvantaged in attaining educational achievement, supporting their family growth, and obtaining and retaining employment. The organization works every day to achieve its mission of building tomorrow's workforce in southwestern Pennsylvania through early childhood development, employment and training, education, and business services.

PIC operates over two dozen programs through an organizational structure of three divisions - Early Childhood Development, Education, and Workforce Development. A fifteen-member Board of Directors governs PIC. PIC employs full-time and part-time professionals, who provide quality services, strive to exceed goals, and achieve objectives set forth for each division.

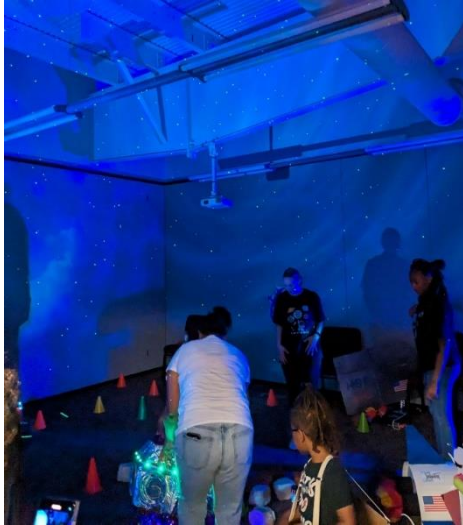
### Presently, PIC:

- ✓ Administers Early Childhood Development programs in Fayette, Beaver, Westmoreland, and Allegheny Counties, including Head Start, Early Head Start including Early Head Start Childcare Partnerships, and PA Pre-K Counts.
- ✓ Operates various in-school, out-of-school, and afterschool youth programs.
- ✓ Provides training and accredited education programs through its private licensed school, the Education and Technology Institute (ETI).
- ✓ Provides business services in customized job training, labor market information, job listings, and assessments.
- ✓ Provides services in job search assistance, job training, job placement, job coaching, assessments, and career counseling.



## The PIC Mission Statement

Building tomorrow's workforce in southwestern Pennsylvania through early childhood development, employment and training, education, and business services.



## We support this mission by:

Providing assistance to employers to meet their workforce needs

Identifying and removing employment barriers for individuals and families

Committing to a holistic approach in education, empowerment, and lifelong learning



## Our Vision

Strengthening the economy by improving the quality of life in southwestern Pennsylvania



## Head Start/Early Head Start Mission Statement

We, at Head Start/Early Head Start of Fayette County, are committed to Educate, Encourage, and Empower our families and children.



# What is Head Start and Early Head Start?

## Head Start

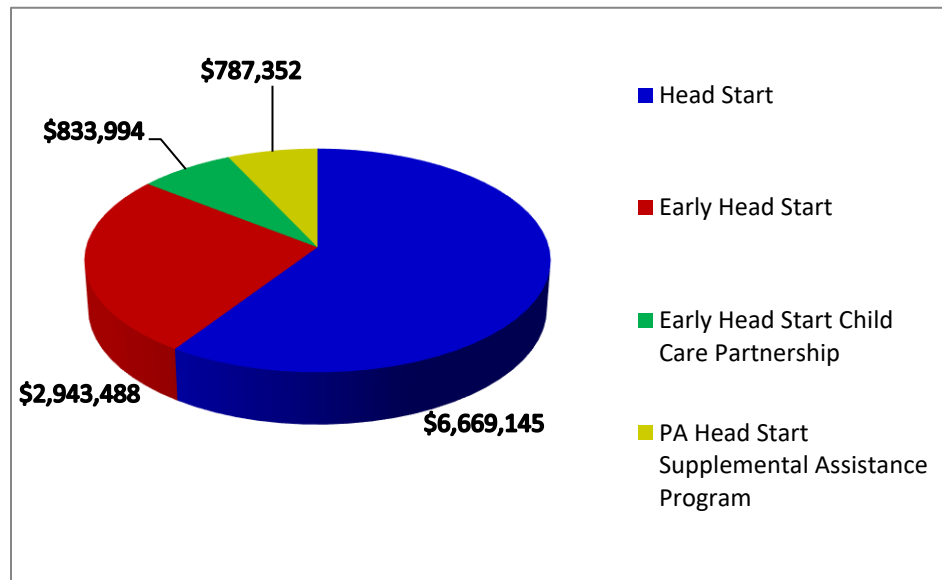
First funded in 1965 as a summer program, Head Start offers educational, health, social/emotional and family services to at-risk families. PIC has administered the Head Start Program in Fayette County since 1994. Operated by both state and federal funding, PIC was mandated to provide comprehensive services to 491 children, age's three to five, and their families throughout Fayette County during the 2023-2024 program year. Of the 491, 360 children were provided services in a classroom setting through federal funding, with ninety-five (95) children funded through the PA Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP). The other 36 children were serviced in a home-based setting which offers comprehensive services in the child's home with two monthly socialization experiences for children age's three to five.



## Early Head Start

PIC has also administered the Early Head Start (EHS) program in Fayette County since 1997. During the 2023-2024 program year, 276 participants were to be served throughout Fayette County. All Early Head Start funding is federal. The Fayette County Early Head Start program offers comprehensive home-based services with at least two monthly socialization experiences for pregnant women and children birth to three years of age. In addition, PIC expanded its services during the program year to include 40 center-based slots funded through the federally funded Early Head Start Childcare Partnership (EHS CCP) program. Our agency is a sub-recipient for the EHS CCP through COTRAIC (Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center, Inc.) who is the grantee. The program offers center-based comprehensive services to families with a child enrolled at a partnering childcare center.

The breakdown of funding for these programs is shown below:



## Service Areas

### Program Design and Management

- ✓ To develop and implement a planning system that establishes goals that supports the programs' mission to positively impact the children, families, and communities we serve.
- ✓ To ensure the establishment of a policy group and well-functioning governing body that shares responsibility for overseeing the delivery of high-quality services to children and families in accordance with Head Start legislation, regulations, and policies.
- ✓ To establish dynamic and cohesive management systems that utilize data to support continuous improvement and foster commitment to providing the highest level of services to children and families.
- ✓ To ensure recruitment and selection of well-qualified staff and to provide training and professional development for staff, parents, consultants, and volunteers.
- ✓ To assure Head Start facilities, materials, and equipment support programming standards for children ages birth to five and pregnant women and support their individual needs.
- ✓ To continue to utilize technological resources and provide training that will strengthen program design and management functions, address children's computer-based skills needed for school readiness and support special learning needs.
- ✓ All staff have been provided with technology for teleworking, when directed.
- ✓ Utilize 2 Preschool S.T.E.M classrooms in Fayette County, at the following locations: Connellsville Area School District's Connellsville Township Building and the PIC Lemont Furnace building.

### Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

- ✓ Continue ongoing communication with local schools to exchange information about children and align services for early learning, health, and family engagement.
- ✓ Provide families education, training, resources, and experiences that advance their own learning related to family and financial literacy, strategies for balancing schedules, oral health, substance abuse awareness/prevention, and state and federal school attendance guidelines.
- ✓ Encourage families to participate in leadership roles in their community, including in parent engagement in their child's education and in the programs administrative and managerial decisions.
- ✓ Continue to strengthen the relationship building process among staff, families, and community partners to support family well-being.
- ✓ Further strengthen families' understanding of how parents and other adult family members affect a child's education and success in school.
- ✓ Strengthen collaborative relationships with community partners providing support to low-income families, with a particular emphasis on programs addressing economic self-sufficiency.
- ✓ Ensure families have access to resources to further their career/education/personal development goals through the grantee's single point of contact center (PA CareerLink): job fairs, Dad's Matter, youth programs, workforce development, job preparation, HS/EHS, etc.
- ✓ Continue to use data to revise parent and staff training to support achievement of family outcomes and strengthen areas that are in need.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for social connections with peers that will be supported at PIC (Parents Impacting their Child's Success) Meetings, parent training, family engagement events, and day-to-day volunteering.
- ✓ Encourage families to support their child's school readiness by engaging in home visits, conferences, parent-child family activity events, parent group meetings and in the classroom.

- ✓ Identify ways to better help homeless families within the HS/EHS programs acquire their own permanent housing by collaborating with community agencies and participating in Fayette County Housing and Homeless Partnership (LHOT).



### **Child Development and Education**

- ✓ Continue to provide opportunities for individualized learning by developing activities that enhance children's school readiness in the areas of cognition, language approaches to learning, social/emotional skills and physical development and health.
- ✓ Continue to establish School Readiness goals that are aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework birth to five, PA Early Learning Standards, and expectations of the school districts and parents.
- ✓ Continue to strengthen families' understanding of child development and ability to address the social-emotional developmental needs of their children.
- ✓ Continue to combat obesity and support healthy eating and physical activity through age appropriate and purposeful movement activities and healthy food choices.
- ✓ Provide professional development activities and practiced based coaching to promote behavioral management, productivity and instructional learning formats.
- ✓ Provide professional development to staff in utilizing technology to enhance the learning environment.
- ✓ Continue to express the importance of sending your child to school every day and the value of participating in scheduled home visits and conferences with parents/legal guardians.
- ✓ Continue to strengthen collaborations with school districts to support smooth, successful transition into school age programming.

### **Child Health and Safety**

- ✓ Educate families on the importance of well childcare, proper nutrition, immunizations, and follow up care for identified health, oral health, and developmental needs.
- ✓ Perform hearing, vision, developmental and behavioral screenings on all children.
- ✓ Address the individual health/nutritional/developmental needs of each child, in partnership with the family, through direct service, and in collaboration with medical providers, community agencies, and educational entities.
- ✓ Assist families in accessing medical and dental care and follow-up by providing available listings of facilities and resources, making referrals to medical facilities when needed.
- ✓ Provide nutrition services that are culturally and developmentally appropriate and that supplement and complement those of home and community.
- ✓ Educate pregnant women on the importance of healthy lifestyle choices, pre-natal care, and the nutritional value of breastfeeding.
- ✓ Provide educational support services to parents that encourage families to establish habits that nurture healthy development and promote life-long well-being.
- ✓ Identify high-risk pregnancies and make referrals to program's consultants, as well as offer resources.
- ✓ Educate families on the importance of creating a substance-free environment for themselves and their children.
- ✓ Educate staff on the signs/symptoms of trauma and Adverse Child Experiences and ways to support children and their families.

- ✓ Promote staff wellness by making mental health and wellness information available and offer Family Wellness Consultant's consultation services to all staff regarding personal and professional challenges that may affect their job performance.
- ✓ Provide ongoing information to staff and families on current health issues including how to access medical, dental and community services.

## How We Serve

### Center-Based

We have eight (8) sites located throughout Fayette County. Each location has classroom space for our three to five-year-old's, with age-appropriate room design, developmental toys, and furnishings, as well as state-of-the-art playground equipment, dedicated transportation, and on-site kitchen facilities. The classrooms operate five (5) days per week for six (6) hours per day. Children who attend class at a Head Start facility will be served three (3) meals per day, breakfast, lunch, and a snack.



### Home-Based

A dedicated instructor visits the home weekly for forty-six (46) for an hour and a half (90 minutes). During these visits, the instructor meets with both the parent and the child to complete screenings and develop individual plans to set goals for the child and parent. The parent and instructor develop home activities to support the child in identified areas of need based upon the child's developmental age. The child is engaged in age-appropriate activities to support language, gross and fine motor skills, daily health practices, self-help skills, and cognitive skills, as well as social emotional development. In addition, at least twenty-two socializations where the parent and child are invited to socialize with other enrolled families.

Early Head Start also services pregnant women by assisting them to access comprehensive prenatal and post-partum care. A dedicated instructor visits the pregnant woman weekly for ninety minutes, with additional support by the school nurse and the program's consultants. The care includes obtaining prenatal care and access to dental treatment. In addition, a wellness assessment/profile and nutrition assessment/profile are completed on the pregnant woman. A newborn visit occurs once the baby is born to monitor the baby's height, weight, and head circumference as well as the overall appearance. A post-partum survey is also completed on the mother for post-partum depression. During the visit, transition of the baby into early childhood services is discussed with the parent(s) to support them in choosing the most appropriate option to meet their needs.

### Early Head Start- Child Care Partnerships

In addition to receiving quality center-based services from the partnering childcare provider, a coordinator visits the childcare weekly to complete observations on the children. The coordinator works with the childcare staff to ensure high quality care and learning is taking place. The coordinator also completes monthly home visits with the family to complete family partnership plans and offer comprehensive services to the entire family.

## Who We Serve

Head Start serves families with children 3 to 5 years of age. Early Head Start serves pregnant women, infants, and toddlers 3 years of age and under. Both programs serve families that meet financial guidelines at the



poverty level, are determined to be homeless under the McKinney Vento Act, have children with verified disabilities, are caring for children through foster care, or who have other identified “risk” factors.

## **We Provide...**

- a program tailored to each child's individual needs based upon parent and staff input.
- books and language tools to develop early reading skills to promote school readiness.
- opportunities and environments to develop and support strong self-image.
- positive environment, positive behavioral changes, and social and emotional interactions.
- good, nutritional food choices and an example of healthy eating and living.
- instruction for parents on nutrition, health, child development, and mental health.
- opportunities for parents and children to have social interaction with others.
- tools for parents to learn to become their children's first teacher.
- a school readiness plan that provides information that is needed to ensure children are ready for school, their families are ready to support their children’s learning and schools are ready for our children.

## **Head Start then and now...**

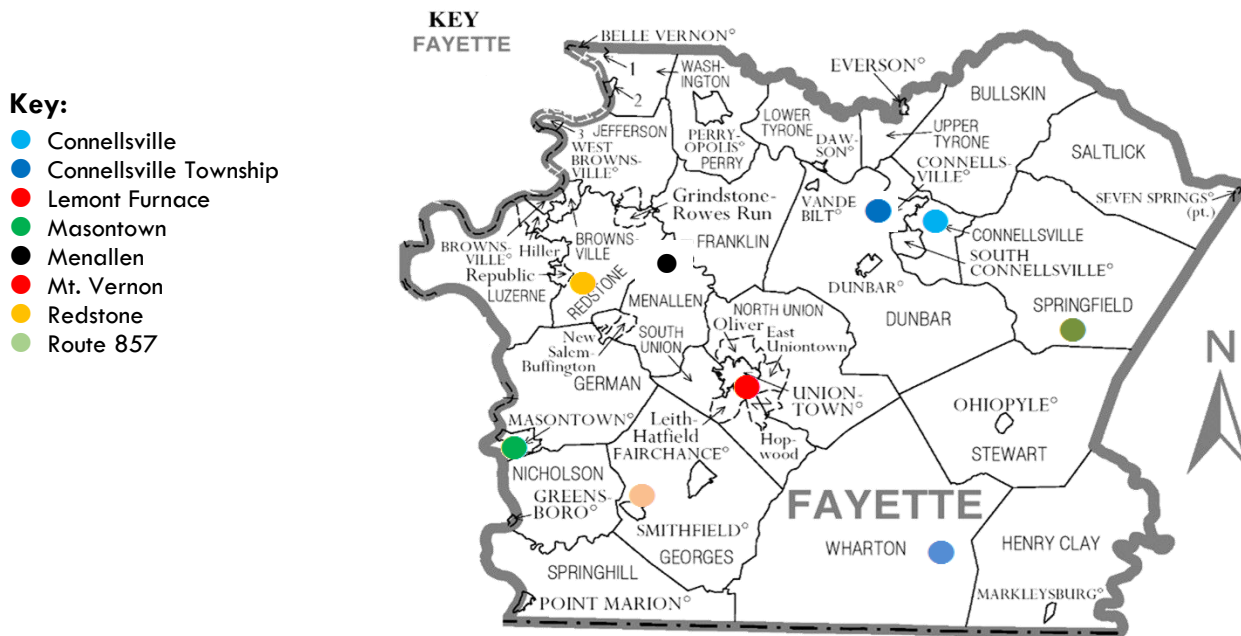
The National Head Start Program is now 54 years old; it was first funded in 1965 as a summer program by President Lyndon Johnson. The program now provides educational services and family support delivered by approximately 1,600 public, private, nonprofit or for-profit agencies across the U.S. Federal oversight is within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the Administration for Children and Families. The Head Start program serves about 1 million children and pregnant women in urban, suburban, and rural communities throughout America. Head Start services are provided in centers, family childcare homes, or in the family's own home. Each of the Head Start programs is organized into 12 regions by geographic location. Our program is part of Region III, which is headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



# Fayette County Head Start/Early Head Start Program Centers, Facilities, Service Areas, and Recruitment Areas

During the 2023-2024 program year, Head Start/Early Head Start of Fayette County served a cumulative total of 1,037 children under 5 and pregnant women eligible for Head Start, Early Head Start, or Early Head Start-Childcare Partnership services in Fayette County. The following map and chart depict the center locations and number of children served in each.

2023-2024



HEAD START CENTER		HEAD START HOME BASED		EHS HOME BASED	
Site	#Served	Area	#Served	Area	#Served
Connellsville (3 classrooms)	60	Connellsville	12	Connellsville (5)	84
Connellsville Township (2 classrooms)	40	Lemont Furnace	12	Mt. Vernon/Nemacolin (6)	96
Lemont Furnace (5 classrooms)	100	Redstone	12	Masontown (2)	24
Masontown (2 classrooms)	40	<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	Mill Run (1)	12
Menallen (1 classroom)	20			Redstone (5)	60
Mt. Vernon (4 classrooms)	75			Rt. 857 (1)	12
Redstone (4 classrooms)	80	<b>CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIP</b>		Smithfield (2)	24
Rt. 857 (2 classrooms)	40	<b>Area</b>	<b>#Served</b>	Washington Twp. (1)	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>455</b>	Little Blessings	6	<b>Total</b>	<b>276</b>
		ABC School	10		
		PIC Kid Zone	6		
		Hopwood Childcare	7		
		Kwalia's Daycare	8		
		Little Legends	2		
		<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>		

## Head Start/Early Head Start Performance Indicators 2023-2024

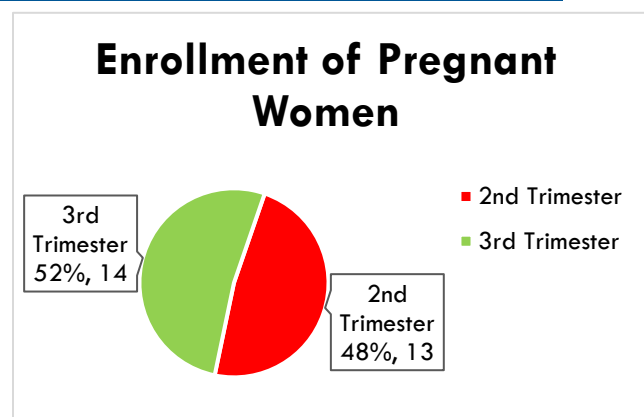
ENROLLMENT			
	Head Start	Early Head Start	Child Care Partnership
Total number of Children Served	594	385*	53
Total number of Families Served	440	328	45
By Eligibility			
Income below 100% of federal poverty	92	79	28
Receive Public Assistance	390	278	17
Foster Child	17	9	8
Homeless	28	18	0
Over Income	69	28	0
Total Number of Children Served by Race			
White	415	298	29
Black/African American	71	42	8
Bi-racial or multi-racial	98	59	15
American Indian/Alaska Native	2	2	0
Asian	0	0	0
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3	1	1
Unspecified/Other race	5	10	0

\*This number excludes pregnant women

HEALTH SERVICES				
	Head Start		Early Head Start	
Up to date on Preventive and Primary Health Care	351	59%	153	39.74%
Number with a dental home	508	85.5%	228	59.22%
Number received preventative dental care (preschool only)	565	95.11%		
Number receiving dental treatment	17	21%	0	0%
Up to date on immunizations	566	95.28%	338	87.79%
Funded enrollment reported as children with a disability	142	23.9%	51	13.24%
Children with Health Insurance	593	99.83%	385	100%

TRANSITION SERVICES		
	Head Start	Early Head Start
Total number of children receiving transition services	594	385
Total number of children transitioned	212	84
Total number of children/families invited to participate in the Kindergarten visits	212	
Number of school districts involved	9	
Number of schools involved	23	
Number of school districts partnering in professional development	9	

Early Head Start Pregnant Women Services			
Total number of pregnant women	27	Facilitating access to substance abuse treatment	27
Received prenatal care	26	Breastfeeding education	26
Received postpartum care	14	Fetal development education	26
Mental Health interventions	0	High risk pregnancies	22
Substance abuse education	25	Received a professional dental exam	3



## Program Design and Management

To provide leadership development and parent involvement opportunities, the program sponsors a variety of parent-led activities. The Policy Council assists the Grantee's Board of Directors in providing governance to the Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The Policy Council is comprised of parents (no less than 51%) and community representatives (no more than 49%).

The following were members of the 2023-2024 Policy Council:

<b><u>DELEGATES</u></b>	<b><u>COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES</u></b>
<b>CONNELLSVILLE/ CONNELLSVILLE TOWNSHIP/MILL RUN</b> Kira Berquist Whitney Huffine	Kellie Jo Gavran Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration
<b>LEMONT FURNACE</b> Jaime Umbel – Chairperson Taryn Blaho – Vice Chairperson	Dr. Jo Ann Jankoski Penn State University- Fayette
<b>REDSTONE/MENALLEN</b> Jennifer Sulvester Frannie Kino	Christine Smith ELRC (Early Learning Resource Center)
<b>MT VERNON</b> Amanda Tomovchik -Treasurer Charles Tomovchik	Dr. Elaine Barry Penn State University- Fayette PIC Board of Directors Liaison
<b>MASONTOWN/RT. 857</b> Prophecy Burk Brittany Harned	
<b>Childcare Partnership</b> Joyce Prentice Lacey Matthews Jaquana Bryant	

## About Our Program Staff

During the 2023-2024 program year, PIC employed 154 qualified staff to administer and deliver services in Head Start/Early Head Start of Fayette County.

Head Start classroom teachers with an Early Childhood Education or related degree (AS, BA or graduate):	100%
Head Start home visitors with an Early Childhood Education or related degree (BA or graduate):	100%
Head Start classroom aides with/or working on an Early Childhood Associate Degree, Early Childhood Certificate or Child Development Associate (CDA):	100%
Early Head Start home visitors with an Early Childhood Education degree or related degree or degree with CDA:	100%

To provide an incentive for regular full-time employees to grow professionally, the corporation has a tuition reimbursement policy that will pay one-half tuition for undergraduate/graduate level courses. In addition, to support entry level positions and to support the ability for parents to enter the workforce the corporation offers 100% reimbursement for the CDA credential.

Head Start of Fayette County utilizes the Practice-Based Coaching (PBC) model which is a research and experience-based initiative developed by the Office of Head Start for the use of supporting teachers in their efforts of offering effective teaching practices. In program year 2023-2024 all staff received some form of coaching to sustain and focus on professional learning experiences. The program will be implementing the PBC model in the EHS Childcare Partnership Program in the upcoming program year.

## Child Health and Safety

### Health/Disabilities Services

During the 2023-2024 program year, Head Start and Early Head Start served 193 children with disabilities. This figure represents 23.9% of the Head Start children enrolled and 13.24% of the Early Head Start children enrolled, which exceeds the 10% Federal Regulations mandate.

Head Start/Early Head Start Children with Disabilities Program Year (2023-2024)		
	Head Start	Early Head Start
Number of Children with a Determined Disability	142	51

Head Start Diagnosed Disabilities	
Health Impairment	0
Emotional Disturbance	0
Speech or Language Impairments	50
Intellectual Disabilities	0
Hearing Impairment Including Deafness	1
Learning Disability	0
Orthopedic Impairment	0
Specific Learning Disability	0
Autism	12
Traumatic Brain Injury	0
Non-Categorical/Developmental Delay	79
Multiple Disabilities	0
Deaf-Blind	0
Visual Impairment, Including Blindness	0

Children with disabilities and their families receive all comprehensive services provided by Head Start/Early Head Start of Fayette County, as well as Early Intervention support services individualized for the child's special needs and the family's needs.

Early Intervention services may include speech, occupational, hearing, vision, and physical therapies to address diagnosed concerns, as well as special instruction for those diagnosed with developmental delays. Early Intervention services are provided through Intermediate Unit #1 or Intermediate Unit #7 for children aged three to school-age and by Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration for children birth to age three.

During the 2023-24 program year, all services for Head Start classroom children were provided in-person. For the Early Head Start and Head Start Home Based children, services were provided at the child's home.

Mental health consultation services are provided through Behavioral and Learning Support. The Family Wellness Consultants (FWC) observes and provides classroom and home support/training to staff and families. The FWCs assist in creating a physical and cultural environment that promotes positive social emotional functioning. The FWCs addresses parent and staff referrals, refers children and family members for evaluation and/or services as the need is determined. Mental health services can include individual and family counseling, classroom support, and in-home services.

When it is identified that children are receiving services from another agency, Head Start/Early Head Start of Fayette County obtains written parent permission to initiate procedures to obtain pertinent client information and for the Family Wellness Consultants to monitor services. The program collaborates with these agencies to provide services that best meet the needs of the family.

## **Child Development and Education**

### **Curriculum**

The *Creative Curriculum Sixth Edition* is used as the curriculum of choice in both the classroom and home-based options of the Head Start program. The Head Start Home Based option also uses, *Great Kids Inc. 's Growing Great Kids Preschool Curriculum*. The Early Head Start program currently uses *Partners for a Healthy Baby* as their primary curriculum and the *Creative Curriculum Infants, Toddlers and Twos Third Edition* as a supplemental curriculum. The *Partners for a Healthy Baby Curriculum* is a research-based, practice-informed curriculum used in evidence-based programs across the nation that achieved positive outcomes.

*Partners for a Healthy Baby Curriculum* was created to fill the need for a comprehensive home visit that provided a clear focus on the systematic approach to planning and conducting visits. The *Creative Curriculum* focuses on approaches to learning, social emotional, cognitive, physical, language, literacy and mathematic development of children ages birth to five. It also assesses the science, social studies and arts domains and English acquisition for those children that are determined to be dual language learners (in Spanish only). The classroom schedule is designed per the *Creative Curriculum* guidelines to assure a variety of teacher-directed versus child-directed activities. Also, the curriculum allows for a combination of activities throughout the day including small group, large group, table time, reading time, music time, movement time, gross motor time (indoor and outdoor), and free choice times. The same guidelines are followed for Head Start socializations, as well adapting the activities for children birth to three in the Early Head Start program. The *Growing Great Kids (GGK)* research-based curriculum is a strength-based partnership approach to building nurturing parenting skills while reaching developmental outcomes for preschoolers. *GGK* focuses on secure

attachment relationships, strong self-esteem, curious minds capable of creative and critical thinking, proficient receptive and expressive language and communication, cooperative peer relationships, age-appropriate impulse control, habits foundational to making healthy life choices, and social and academic building blocks for school success.



## Head Start and Early Head Start of Fayette County School Readiness Goals and Outcomes for 2023-2024:

The Head Start Approach to School Readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning and schools are ready for children. All Head Start and Early Head Start programs are required to establish school readiness goals, across the five areas listed in the *Head Start Early Learning Framework: birth to five and align with the PA Early Learning Standards. The five areas are:* language & literacy development; cognition; approaches to learning; perceptual, motor, and physical development; and social & emotional development.

	CENTRAL DOMAINS				
	APPROACHES TO LEARNING	SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	LANGUAGE AND LITERACY	COGNITION	PERCEPTUAL, MOTOR, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
▲ INFANT/TODDLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Cognition	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
● PRESCHOOLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Mathematics Development	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
			Literacy	Scientific Reasoning	

Below are the goals established by the School Readiness Committee for Head Start and Early Head Start children for the program year 2023-2024:

**Social Emotional:** Children will develop confidence in their own skills and positive feelings about self, as well as consistent, positive interaction through secure relationships with familiar adults.

**Gross Motor:** Children will demonstrate effective and efficient use of large muscles for movement and position, and demonstrate control, strength, and coordination.

**Fine Motor:** Children will use hands for exploration, play, and daily routines, and demonstrate increasing control, strength, and coordination of small muscles.

**Language:** Children will attend to, understand, and respond to communication and language from others and understand and respond to increasingly complex communication and language from others.

**Literacy:** Children will attend to, repeat, and use some rhymes, phrases or refrains from stories or songs, and demonstrate awareness that spoken language is composed of smaller segments of sound.

**Approaches to Learning:** Children will develop the ability to show persistence in actions and behavior and persist in tasks.

**Cognitive:** Children will use memories as a foundation for more complex actions and thoughts.

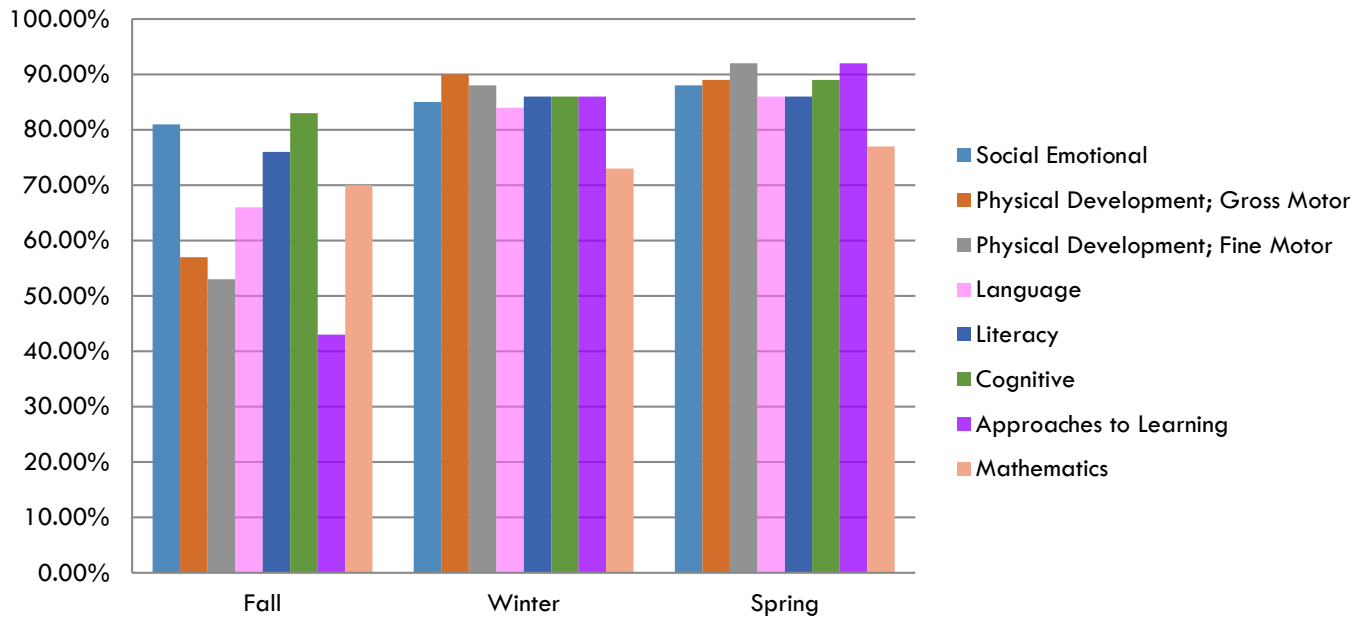
**Math:** Children will develop sense of number and quantity, counting and cardinality (the number of elements in a set or other grouping as a property of that grouping).

The charts below show the progress of children in the Head Start and Early Head Start programs from fall 2023 to spring 2024 encompassing seven domains of the GOLD Assessment that are aligned with both state and federal guidelines. Each column reflects the percentage of children meeting the established school readiness goal in each domain. The percentage is obtained by aggregating the information from the skill level of each child (as assessed utilizing the *Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment tool*.) The goal is to have children in our program display consistent gains in the established school readiness goals, as well overall in each domain from fall to winter and winter to spring. Research studies show it is normal for children to regress in skill development. Regression in skill area for young children is a normal pattern in children mastering a skill. Regression occurs due to a variety of environmental and physical factors such as illness, absence from school, family situations, change or instability due to moving or crisis. In Early Head Start the School Readiness Committee members determined that the regression throughout the year is due to the fluctuation of the age of the children on each caseload from newborn to transitioning 3-year-olds. Often a three-year-old may be replaced with an infant or toddler, which could cause a significant increase in scores of aggregated data. The program, therefore in this age group, closely monitors individual children's progress or regression and refers children for further evaluation if improvements in school readiness skills are not achieved. These outcomes provide evidence that the curriculums utilized by our program (the *Creative Curriculum, Growing Great Kids, and Partners for a Healthy Baby*) has a significant and positive impact on children's overall development, as well as their readiness for school age transition.

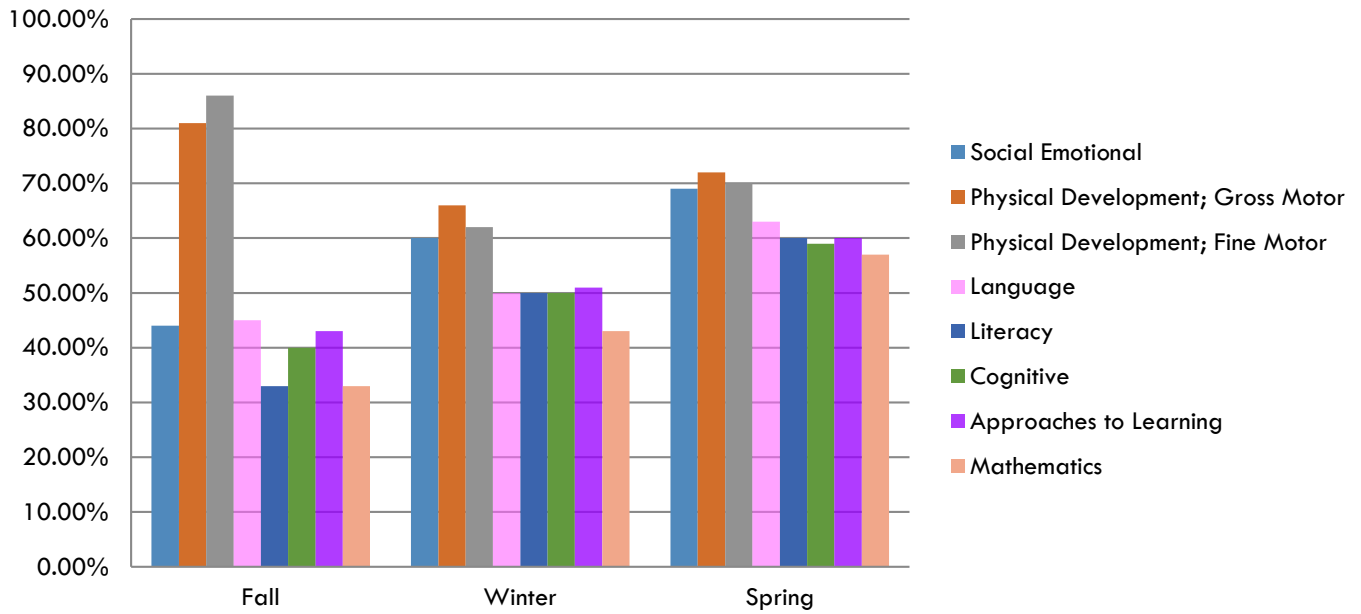




### Fayette Early Head Start (Birth to 3) 2023-2024 Progress in SR Goals per Domains



### Fayette Head Start (3 yrs. - 5 yrs.) 2023-2024 Progress in SR Goals per Domain



## Transition

*Early Head Start:* Early Head Start had 78 children that aged out of the program in 2023-2024 per the Program Information Report. Of these children, 78 transitioned to Head Start services. The following materials were provided to all EHS families transitioning out of Early Head Start services.

- My Book about Preschool
- Helping Your Child Get Ready for Preschool
- Starting your Child in Pre-School Booklet for Parents
- The Night Before Preschool Storybook



*Early Head Start* staff continued to utilize two tools to assist with preparing families for their child's transition to preschool. The tools included the Transition Survey and the Transition Checklist. The survey helped staff to understand what parents knew about transitioning to preschool, how to go about identifying a quality early learning program and what challenges they faced with enrollment and location. Once the child completes their transition to preschool, Early Head Start utilizes the Transition Follow-Up tool. The Transition Follow-Up helps support families in a successful transition to their chosen preschool. It includes a visit to the preschool and contact with the parent once the transition has occurred.

*Early Head Start* also services pregnant women. Once the pregnant mom delivers, she is asked if she would like the newborn to transition into Early Head Start. The pregnant woman and newborn receive a two-week follow-up visit from the assigned school nurse. A post-partum questionnaire is completed 6-8 weeks after delivery. The questionnaire is then reviewed by the health team member to plan for any needed services or referrals.

*Head Start:* 212 Head Start children who would be attending kindergarten in the fall participated in a variety of transition activities in the spring, including virtual tours of their transitioning elementary school. Parents are encouraged to attend transition activities and are offered additional transition information during Head Start outings and parent/teacher home visits and conferences year-round.

Head Start management and staff engaged with 9 school districts, 23 elementary schools, in promoting school age activities in the early learning childhood environment.

Transition activities provided for all families throughout the 2023-2024 program year included:

- Asking parents to sign a permission form to share information with the school district in which their child attends and permission to monitor their child's progress.
- Conducting conferences/home visits to discuss transition information such as:
  - Kindergarten registration dates/times
  - Documents necessary for kindergarten registration
    - Transition activities to complete at home
    - Dates of PTO/PTA meetings
    - Kindergarten registration packets to complete prior to attending registration day
- Providing classroom/home-based activities that support transition
- Holding transition conferences for children with Individualized Education Plans (IEP)

- Held in February with Intermediate Unit 1 and 7, school district representatives, and parents.
- Schedule observations for parents of alternative classrooms.
- Attend school-age MDT (Multi-Disciplinary Team)/IEP meetings if requested by parent and/or school districts.
- Additional meetings are scheduled for newly added children, children with new IEPs and for children who may need additional evaluation or alternate classroom services.
- Providing backpacks to transitioning children and families containing:
  - Books for children
  - Resource Pamphlets
  - Transition activity calendars (Kindergarten, Here I Come)
  - Brochures
  - Other items such as pencil and pencil boxes, crayons, alphabet cards, scissors, and printing workbooks
- Holding transition meetings with schools and families upon request
- Preparing and distributing “Health Report Cards”. These report cards tell the school district the child’s health status (physicals, dentals, immunizations, and information if the child has a current IEP and/or is receiving mental health services).
- Preparing and distributing “Education Transition Reports.” These reports were sent to kindergarten teachers county-wide and provided important information regarding pre-k skills the children mastered upon leaving our program and prior to entering kindergarten. The list of skills assessed in the report aligned with the PA Early Learning Standards, the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and the program’s child assessment tool, Teaching Strategies GOLD.

To assist in evaluating our work of transition, the “School Readiness Teacher Checklists” are sent to principals/kindergarten teachers each fall. The returned checklists provide the program with valuable insight and feedback of our transitioning children in their ability to demonstrate mastery of pre-kindergarten skills (per Office of Head Start and PA Early Learning Standards). The program utilizes the results, with the intent of improving quality of services, to develop and carry out new ideas/strategies assuring we are sending children to school districts prepared to learn the next level of developmentally appropriate skills. For the 22/23 program year 208 checklists were sent out (with parent signed permission) to the following school districts or private schools:

Albert Gallatin  
 Belle Vernon  
 California  
 Brownsville  
 Connellsville

Frazier  
 Laurel Highlands  
 Uniontown  
 Southmoreland

143 checklists were completed and returned as of December 2024 from a total of 18 elementary schools within and outside of the county. Of the 143 checklists returned, 4 checklists were not completed due to the child no longer being enrolled in that district or being cyber schooled. Information from the returned surveys were analyzed and calculated into the report on the next page.

## SCHOOL READINESS CHECKLIST

Pre-Kindergarten Readiness Skills	Demonstrated this skill upon
• Recognizes and names some upper and lowercase letters (1.1 PK. B)	79%
• Recognizes Rhyming words (1.1 PK. C)	60%
• Answers questions such as who, what, when, where, why, and how after reading a story (1.2 PK. B)	78%
• Describes pictures in a book using details (1.3 PK. G)	83%
• Attempts to reproduce own name and/or simple words with most letters correct (1.4 PK. F)	76%
• Follows two-step directions (1.5 PK. C)	82%
• Rate counts to 20 (2.1 PK. A. 1)	73%
• Names numerals up to 10 (2.1 PK. A. 1)	71%
• Describes objects in the environment using names of shapes (2.3 PK. A. 3)	88%
• Recognizes difference between living and non-living (3.1 PK. A. 1)	84%
• Sorts objects according to shape, color, or other attributes (3.2 PK. A. 1)	95%
• Follows established rules and routes (5.3 PK. F)	81%
• Uses inside and outside vices (5.3 PK. F)	85%
• Responds with empathy to other's who are upset (5.3 PK. F)	91%
• Recognizes safe and unsafe practices (10.3 PK. A)	88%
• Engages in gross motor games (10.4 PK. A)	96%
• Uses scissors to cut a straight line (10.5 PK. A)	73%
• Uses writing and drawing instruments with pincer grasp (10.5 PK. C)	82%
• Expresses feelings that are appropriate to the situation (16.1 PK. A)	88%
• Shares and takes turns (16.2 PK. A)	91%
<b>Parent Involvement/Partnerships for Learning</b>	Most of the time
• Parent sends excuse if child is absent	89%
• Parent signs off on papers as required	92%
• Parents assure homework is completed & returned (meets assignment time frames)	85%
• Parent is receptive when teacher discusses concerns (i.e., attends conferences, returns phone calls, answers notes sent home, returns child's work folder)	92%
<b>Special Education Services</b>	
Child has current I.E.P.: 23	



## Transition Activities

On August 16, 2023, students entering kindergarten for the 2023-2024 school year were invited to attend “Splashing Into Kindergarten,” held at Private Industry Council’s Lemont Furnace Head Start Center. Laurel Highlands and Albert Gallatin school districts joined together with Fayette County Head Start/Early Head Start for the event to assist children that are transitioning to kindergarten from preschool programs in our county with a flawless transition to kindergarten. Children who transition successfully have a greater chance of demonstrating satisfactory performance, not only in kindergarten, but through grade school. The team planning the event consisted of staff and management members from HS/EHS and representatives from Laurel Highlands School District. Students and families were able to participate in several water themed activities that included: a duck pond, fishing game, bubble pictures, fishbowl toss, outdoor water table, a sprinkler, and bubble machines. The activities planned incorporated the programs school readiness goals to promote the development of skills in cognitive, fine motor, gross motor, approaches to learning, and social emotional. We also had areas with activities such as sidewalk chalk and connect 4 where families could mingle and engage with their children. All enjoyed popcorn and snow cones for refreshments. Students were provided with a make and take activity of making their own boat activity from Laurel Highlands. Also in attendance was a representative from the Private Industry Council to educate families on the programs provided for youth and adults, such as CareerLink, Drome Camp, and Dad’s Matter. In attendance we approximately had 150 attendees from approximately 57 families.



## Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

The Parent, Family and Community Engagement service area provides a vehicle for parents/families and the community to volunteer and be involved in the Head Start and Early Head Start programs. In the 2023-2024 program year HS/EHS had a total of 1,536 volunteers participating in program activities; 922 were HS/EHS parents.

	Head Start	Early Head Start	TOTAL
Total volunteers for the program year	983	553	<b>1,536</b>
Number of volunteers who are current/former HS/EHS parents	593	329	<b>922</b>

Some of the activities planned during the program year for families by staff or parent groups were EHS and Home-Based socializations, Health Fairs in August and October, a Literacy Event in November, and a Math Event in the spring. In addition, our annual Munch, Mingle and Move Event occurred in person and our Annual Parent Training Event occurred in-person and virtually for enrolled parents/guardians and family members.

Parents, families, and community members are encouraged to participate and volunteer in several areas of the programs throughout the year. Participation can be by providing input for menus; completing surveys for different service areas such as in the PFCE area on parent trainings, the community assessment, and the self-assessment; attending socials; attending meetings; planning curriculum; making donations for classroom crafts and activities; helping with bulletin boards; and assisting in the classrooms.

The Parent, Family, and Community Engagement service area also supports parents in identifying and meeting their own goals monthly, nurturing the development of their children, and accepting the role of their child's first teacher. In addition, parents are updated on their child's progress at a minimum of three (3) times per program year.



## Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA)

According to the US Census Bureau as of July 1, 2023 there were 123,915 residents living in Fayette County, PA. 4.4 % of which were children under the age of five living in Fayette County.

Recruitment of families continued year-round and occurred through various mediums, including several community sponsored events. Our largest means of recruiting is pre-applications obtained through community events and parent call-ins. The program also incorporated utilizing USPS to have direct mailers sent to residents of the county.

Families submitting applications were deemed eligible for HS/EHS by two factors: age/pregnancy and income. HS/EHS must follow the Federal Poverty Guidelines at 100% to determine a family income eligible. The second factor in determining eligibility is age (children ages 0-3 EHS and 3-5 HS) or pregnant women. In addition to child's age/pregnant women and family income, factors identified from the annual Community Assessment are used to ensure the neediest are prioritized for services. These include, among others, referred for services by a child welfare agency (CYS), children under age 1 referred due to low birth weight, children being cared for by individuals that are not their biological parents, children whose parents are incarcerated and children who parent/s are in substance abuse/treatment counseling and single-female head of household.

Selection of children to enroll was made by way of Community Assessment results which in turn provide for the Selection Criterion and ERSEA policies approved by the Policy Council and Board of Directors. The use of this criterion ensured the neediest or most at-risk children were given the opportunity to participate in HS/EHS programming. HS of Fayette County did maintain 97% enrollment throughout the 2023-2024 program year due, while EHS maintained 100% enrollment.

Programs are required by Head Start regulations to monitor attendance and maintain a minimum average attendance rate of **85%**. An attendance analysis is completed when the rate drops below the requirement to see if the program can alleviate the attendance problem. Excuses are collected from families for days their child is absent from school. Absences from home visits are also documented. The average attendance for 2023-2024 by month appears on the chart below. This chart does not include missed home visits.

PY 2023-2024		
	HEAD START	EHS CCP
August	N/A	74.86%
September	84.58%	86.05%
October	74.95%	84.42%
November	71.34%	83.3%
December	74.37%	78.76%
January	72.02%	83.06%
February	74.96%	83.47%
March	75.00%	83.2%
April	76.79%	84.95%
May	75.54%	84.6%
June	57.50%	85.79%

## **Transportation Services**

Fayette County Head Start has a fleet of buses used to transport children to the centers located throughout Fayette County. In addition to our bus fleet, we also contract with Mlaker and Rittenhouse to transport children to the centers. Bus runs are established before children begin classes and families are notified of their child's bus stop location and the times for pick-up and drop-off. The buses are equipped with five-point harnesses "BESI" seats and children are buckled into the seats for safety. In addition, buses have a child tracking system called ZONAR. This system tracks when a child enters the bus and then again when they depart the bus. This is done for each bus run daily both going to school and then when returning home from school. This is a safety measure to assist with ensuring "No Child is Left Behind". Our buses also have a trained bus monitor that rides the bus to assist children with buckling and ensuring "No Child is Left Behind". The drivers all hold a Commercial Driver License (CDL) and are trained on Head Start's emergency procedures. Fayette County Head Start strives to provide safe and reliable transportation services to the families we service.

## **Program Highlights**

### **Child Development Associate**

For the 2023-2024 program year HS/EHS of Fayette County continued offering the Child Development Associate credential class. Participants attended class twice a week virtually. To date, Twelve staff have completed the CDA class.

### **Family Development Credential (FDC)**

The FDC program is a professional development course and credentialing program for family workers to learn and practice skills of strength-based family support with families. The FDC emerged in 1994 from a research-policy collaborative between the Cornell University College of Human Ecology's Department of Human Development, New York State's (NYS) Council on Children and Families, NYS Department of State, and the New York City Dept. of Youth and Community Development. In 2010, the FDC program moved to University of Connecticut's Center for Culture (UConn), Health & Human Development (CHHD), which issues the credential and administratively oversees the program. Dr. Claire Forest remains director. In 2014, National FDC joined UConn's Department of Allied Health Sciences, where the Family Development Credential is jointly issued by CHHD and the Center for Environmental Health & Health Promotion (CEHHP). The family workers take 90 hours of training, prepare a Skills Practice Portfolio documenting their new abilities with guidance from an FDC portfolio advisor, and pass a standardized test. In the 2023-2024 program year, two staff from HS/EHS completed the course. A total of 72 staff members have received this credential since 2014.

### **ORAL HEALTH SERVICES**

The program partners with Cornerstone Care Community Health Center and Golden-Onsite Dental to provide dental exams to our children during health fairs, family events and at classroom sites. Golden-Onsite Dental provided dental exams to children during the Munch, Mingle and Move Event. Cornerstone Care schedules days for the dentist and assisting staff to go to our sites to provide "knee to knee" dental examinations including prophylaxis and topical fluoride varnish. During the 2023-2024 program year, six dental clinics were held, and 80 children received dental services.





February of each year is considered “National Children’s Dental Health Month. The event is sponsored by the American Dental Association (ADA) to raise awareness about the importance of oral health. UMPC’s Registered Dental Hygienist provided dental education presentations for the Head Start classroom children and their families. UPMC provided bags to go home to each Head Start classroom child. Also provided were materials to participate in the presentation, toothbrush, and soapy tooth with sparkles.

**Head Start/Early Head Start of Fayette County Hosts a Veterans Celebration**

Head Start and Early Head Start of Fayette County enrolled families were invited to a “Veterans Celebration” held at the Lemont Furnace Head Start center on November 9, 2023, from 4:30-6:30 PM. The event’s activities were in collaboration with PIC’s Veteran’s programs.

Artwork filled the hallways that was made by all our HS/EHS of Fayette County enrolled children and families to display in appreciation of our veterans. Prior to the event, the HS/EHS staff and families made a Veteran Honor Wall that was displayed in the entry way of the office. Staff and families were able to provide pictures, names, ranks, and branches of service for their veteran friends and family members to be added to the wall display. The event started with the Pledge of Allegiance. A representative from PIC spoke about the AgVets and Veteran Employment Program grants to share information on how veterans are eligible, how to apply, and what opportunities are available through the programs. Veterans were given the opportunity to share funny stories about their time in the service. Children that were in attendance decorated cards to give to the veterans that were also in attendance. All that were in attendance were offered refreshments of slider sandwiches, chips, cookies, and a drink. 9 veterans that were in attendance were honored during opening and closing remarks.

In attendance were 8 families; 33 adults, 8 Head Start children, 5 Early Head Start children, and 12 siblings.



**Head Start/Early Head Start of Fayette County Hosts The Colors of HS/EHS Literacy Event**

Head Start and Early Head Start of Fayette County enrolled families were invited to “The Colors of HS/EHS” held at the Uniontown Mall on November 16, 2023. The event’s activities were focused on the book “The Colors of Us” for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

One hundred eighteen HS/EHS staff members were present and eager to celebrate with the children and families the many cultures of the world that are discussed in the storybook. Families were greeted by staff at the doors with a bag that was filled with the book “The Colors of Us,” activity sheets from WQED, multicultural crayons, a loom with yarn, a multicultural instrument for the preschoolers, and a multicultural baby doll for the infants and toddlers. The families were then able to participate in various activities. The activities included musical instruments, Colors of Apples, multicultural dress up, face stick masks, sand sensory play, block play, decorating umbrellas, tribal masks, faces, hands, and feet, interactive maps, multicultural dancing, basket balance, chopsticks sensory play, self-portraits, and the reading of the story “The Colors of Us.” Two activities were food experiences. Our registered dietician consultant Judy Siebert attended our event and demonstrated the use of the air fryer to make English muffin pizzas with various cheeses from around the world. The other food experience was with some of our classroom staff, where we received a donation of flavored teas to have a tea party. Our School Nurses were on site to share information about proper handwashing and to complete hearing and vision sensory screenings.

Lastly, families were offered a light refreshment of mango salsa and guacamole with tortilla chips, hummus with cucumbers, carrots, and various breads, pepperoni, salami, various cheeses, pretzels, tropical fruits, and water.

We were joined by several community agencies at The Colors of HS/EHS. The Private Industry Council’s Youth programs, Dads Matter, and ETI were present, along with a representative from PA CareerLink. Fayette County Behavioral Health, Community Action, WIC, and the United Way of Southwestern PA also joined in for the event. Families were also able to participate in a Mandarin experience from activities of a Beijing opera mask and a lantern craft from the Mandarin teacher from California Area School District. Two student volunteers were present from Southmoreland School District that assisted with a helping hand craft. Golden Onsite Dental were able to complete 15 dental screenings for children during the event. Emma Martin’s Studio of Dance performed three cultural dances and Independent Dance Crew performed two cultural dances for the children and families.

In attendance were 65 families; 101 adults, 54 Head Start children, 29 Early Head Start children, and 33 siblings. There were also 2 families that attended that were shopping in the mall. Feedback from the families, included statements from parents such as “Best event yet!” “Great job y’all!” “This was fantastic,” “We love HS events,” and “Absolutely better than I could imagine.”

### **Head Start/Early Head Start “Buggin Out for Math” Program Event**

HS/EHS enrolled families were invited to “Buggin Out for Math” held at Uniontown Mall on March 26, 2024. The event’s activities were focused on the book “The Hotel for Bugs” and our math school readiness goal.

HS/EHS was joined by the Carnegie Science Center for their presentation of “Amazing Bugs,” along with community agencies and programs from the Private Industry Council.



Families were able to participate in the following activities: paint blot butterflies, grasshopper and inch worm crawl, spider web plate lacing, ant picnic, mosaic shape bugs, sensory bin, caterpillar counting, insect sorting, bug balance, insect measuring, pom-pom caterpillars, making slime, bug shadow matching, bug patterns, bee shape matching, number sequencing puzzles, bug race game, size sequencing puzzles, catch the bugs with number identification, and spider toss. Our school nurses were on site to share information about proper handwashing. Families were also offered light refreshments of ants on a log of celery, fresh vegetables, fresh fruit, honeycomb snack mix, mozzarella cheese bugs, dirt pudding dessert, and sparkling water and frozen berries infusion for drinking.

Prior to the event families, classrooms, and home visitors were tasked with making a hotel room for bugs to display at the event. The room could have been any part of a hotel, such as a room, pool, or gym. This activity went along with the book “The Hotel for Bugs” that was read at the event for families.

Each Head Start aged family in attendance was provided with a book “The Best Bug Parade”, bug catching kits, and an inch worm fidget toy. Each Early Head Start aged family in attendance was provided with a book “How Many Bugs in a Box,” a stuffed animal bug catching kit, and an inch worm fidget toy.

In attendance were 102 families; 188 adults, 86 Head Start children, 46 Early Head Start children, 32 males, and 74 siblings. There were also 3 families that attended that were shopping in the mall that attended. Feedback from families, included statements from parents such as “loved it,” “thank you!,” and “we had a great time.”



### **Munch, Mingle and Move 2024**

Head Start/Early Head Start of Fayette County held their 18th annual Munch, Mingle, and Move Event on May 23, 2024, at the Private Industry Council building in Lemont Furnace, Pennsylvania. The event is based on educating families on good health/nutrition habits. The 18th annual event was “MMM is out of this world” with an Outer Space theme. The Private Industry Council also took the time to celebrate 30 years of Head Start/Early Head Start education services. This year we had 81 families that consisted of 125 adults, 110 enrolled children and 14 siblings attended the Munch, Mingle, and Move event.

The day started with families arriving at 10:00 am either by Head Start buses/vans or by transporting themselves to the Private Industry Council building. The families were welcomed by our staff at registration where they signed in and completed a pre-survey. Each family received a bag with a pamphlet describing

the history of Head Start/Early Head Start and PIC's mission in the last 30 years of Early Childhood education, as well as a welcome letter and a map of activities. The bag also included a plastic straw cup, astronaut space stress ball, pamphlets on nutrition and a story book entitled "Moon Cheese is the Best Cheese." The families then were able to explore the activities, community agencies and have photos taken at the photo booth. Families were able to make a Rocket Ship Box car to use in our Rocket Race room or use ones that staff designed. Several costume characters were wandering through the building (such as Buzz Light Year, Aliens and Astronauts), much to the delight of the families. There were 32 community agencies and 18 different activities for the families to explore.

Community agencies this year included the Federal Bureau of Investigation completing fingerprinting for identification as well as Golden Onsite Dental providing families the opportunity of having a dental exam. Twenty families were given a dental exam with it being the first time for several of the children. Other agencies attending were representatives from insurance companies, and staff from organizations that can provide services to our families.

Some of the activities included moon rock cleaning where children learned how to properly brush their teeth and a maze that taught children to stay safe while traveling. Families were able to complete craft activities with ones that showed kiddos the importance of stress relief with cosmic playdoh and sun safety with sun catchers. Our littler visitors were able to enjoy a crawling baby area. Families were able to try watermelon salsa, dehydrated tropical fruit and a tropical fruit salad featuring mango and papaya. A grazing table style lunch was provided and served that included a ham or turkey sandwich, bananas, oranges, cheese sticks, a variety of pickles, cereal, trail mix and water.

The event was over at 2:00 pm. When families were done at the event, they filled out a post survey and names were drawn for donated items from the community vendors. The prizes were given to the staff to deliver to the enrolled families that attended.

Pre- and post-survey responses below showed positive results:

**HOW MANY CUPS OF WATER SHOULD A CHILD DRINK A DAY? 4 CUPS**

- Pre-Survey: WRONG – 22% RIGHT – 78%
- Post Survey: WRONG – 13% RIGHT – 87%

**HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU BRUSH YOUR TEETH? 2 TIMES**

- Pre-Survey: WRONG –1 % RIGHT –99 %
- Post Survey: WRONG –5 % RIGHT – 95%

**WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS A GROSS MOTOR ACTIVITY? CRAWLING**

- Pre-Survey: WRONG – 46% RIGHT –54 %
- Post-Survey: WRONG – 38% RIGHT – 62%

Ninety-nine percent of the families said they would attend another event and would refer another family to attend. In addition, some of the activities families noted as their child enjoying most were the Rocket Races, Moon Rock dental brushing activity and the safe traveling maze. Several families also indicated they were happy that the FBI provided a picture of their child along with their fingerprints as well as the photo booth. Some comments by families were "Best day ever!" "Friendly staff, we had a blast!" "My son loves

all these activities!” Several post – surveys included a Thank you from families and noting they look forward to coming back next year.

Thank you to all who participated in this event! See you next year.



## **Overview of Findings for 2022-2023 FA1 Review**

From April 24, 2023, to April 26, 2023, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted a Focus Area One (FA1) monitoring review of Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette, Inc. Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

### ***Key Performance Areas:***

#### ***Program Design and Management***

- Program Design
  - The grant recipient's program design and structure takes into account community strengths and needs.
- Program Management
  - The grant recipient has an approach for providing effective management and oversight of all program areas and fiduciary responsibilities.
- Program Governance
  - The grant recipient maintains a formal structure for program governance that includes a governing body and a policy council.

**Summary Results** - The grant recipient utilized data to design services that met the needs of families in the catchment area. The recipient determined program locations by looking at the community assessment and identifying areas with higher levels of need. When program information showed a drop in enrollment for home-based services, the recipient reduced the number of home-based slots available due to limited interest from families, especially expectant mothers. The recipient also conducted surveys to obtain feedback about the attributes parents wanted in the program. In response to participant feedback, classroom hours were increased in one location, double sessions were converted to full days, and transportation was provided in select areas. Ongoing data analysis helped the recipient plan services responsive to the community's needs.

#### ***Designing Quality Education and Child Development Program Services***

- Alignment with School Readiness
- The grant recipient's approach to school readiness aligns with the expectations of receiving schools, the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF), and state early learning standards.
- Effective and Intentional Teaching Practices
  - The grant recipient has strategies to ensure teaching practices promote progress toward school readiness.
- Supporting Teachers in Promoting School Readiness
  - The grant recipient has an approach for ensuring teachers are prepared to implement the curriculum and support children's progress towards school readiness.
- Home-based Program Services
  - The grant recipient has strategies to ensure home-based program services help parents to provide high-quality learning experiences.

**Summary Results** - The grant recipient implemented professional development opportunities to build a culture of safety. The program elevated its approach to safe learning environments by collaborating with public schools to develop and practice crisis and safety plans. All staff participated in extensive training on identified strategies to prepare for a variety of emergencies. In response to recent threats of school violence, procedures to ensure safe learning environments were expanded to include crisis and safety plans. Staff were also trained in classroom and home fire safety practices, providing fire extinguishers for families and sharing information with parents. The recipient and school officials helped ensure staff were prepared for high-risk events to help keep children safe.

### ***Designing Quality Health Program Services***

- Child Health Status and Care
  - The grant recipient has an approach for ensuring the delivery of high-quality health services.
- Safety Practices
- The grant recipient implements a process for monitoring and maintaining healthy and safe environments and ensuring all staff have complete background checks.

### ***Health Services Summary***

The grant recipient ensured families had access to needed health services. Program data showed that a significantly low number of enrolled children had completed lead and hemoglobin tests. In response, the recipient purchased testing equipment, and members of the Health Services Advisory Committee assisted in certifying the program's nurse to conduct lead and hemoglobin testing. The nurse completed the testing and shared the results with each child's primary care physician. By offering these screenings onsite, the recipient helped to enhance health services and improve children's health and wellness.

### ***Designing Quality Family and Community Engagement Services***

- Family Well-being
  - The grant recipient has an approach for collaborating with families to support family well-being.
- Strengthening Parenting and Parent-Child Supports
  - The grant recipient has an approach for providing services that strengthen parenting skills.

**Summary Results** - The grant recipient designed services to address family needs. Data from the community assessment and parent surveys showed that transportation was a concern for many families. This barrier significantly limited participants' access to needed services, especially in communities with limited resources. The recipient supported families by offering to bring parents and their children grocery shopping, to child and youth services, and to appointments with social service agencies, dental and medical providers, and therapists. These efforts helped ensure that community and healthcare resources were accessible to children and families.

## ***Developing, Effective Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) Strategies and Fiscal Infrastructure***

- Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance
  - The grant recipient enrolls children or expectant mothers who are categorically eligible or who meet defined income-eligibility requirements.
- Enrollment Verification
  - The grant recipient maintains and tracks enrollment for all enrolled participants.
- Fiscal Infrastructure, Capacity, and Responsiveness
  - The grant recipient has a budget development and revision process that includes stakeholders and appropriate approvals, and ensures continuous alignment with program design, goals, and objectives.
  - The grant recipient's fiscal staff have the qualifications needed to provide oversight of the grant.

**Summary Results** - The grant recipient modified its ERSEA systems to reflect languages other than English. Community assessment data and input from the policy council showed a significant increase in the number of families whose primary language was not English. In response, the recipient translated written communication, documents, and the enrollment application into Spanish and other languages. Information on the website was also translated, and staff had access to real-time interpretation resources, making the application process more accessible. In addition, policies were updated to specifically address bilingual and dual language learners. These strategies helped to ensure the inclusion of families whose home language was not English. The grant recipient implemented strategies to ensure the stability of its financial services. With multiple open positions and an aging workforce, the finance team changed its structure to reduce the impact of staffing changes. The recipient put key team members into positions that ensured the department had the leadership necessary to supervise accounting staff. These employees understood all accounting responsibilities and internal processes, offering the experience to lead the finance team successfully. A succession plan was also developed to prepare for upcoming retirements. These efforts supported the recipient's fiscal stability.



# Community Assessment Summary

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The Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) programs have provided early childhood education opportunities and comprehensive support for low-income children and families since 1965 (HS) and 1994 (EHS). This report examines the needs and strengths of children and families served by the Private Industry Council Head Start and Early Head Start program of Fayette County (HSFC).

## Overview of the Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette

HSFC is administered by the Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette, Inc. (PIC), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Greensburg, PA. Since its inception in 1983, PIC has been an advocate for economically disadvantaged families and individuals in southwestern Pennsylvania (the Pittsburgh region).

PIC is dedicated to building tomorrow's workforce in this region through early childhood development, employment and training, education, and business services. The organization supports this mission by:

- Providing assistance to employers to meet their workforce needs.
- Identifying and removing employment barriers for individuals and families.
- Committing to a holistic approach in education, empowerment, and lifelong learning.

PIC administers over two dozen programs in three divisions: Early Childhood Development, Education, and Workforce Development. As a result, the agency can holistically serve families' needs from cradle to career. PIC became the grantee of the Head Start of Fayette County in 1994 and Early Head Start in 1997. The program is part of the Early Childhood Development Division, which also includes the Head Start/Early Head Start of Fayette County, the PA Pre-K Counts Partnership, Early Head Start Child Care Partnership program.

PIC is governed by a 13-member board of directors (board). It expanded its board from 12 members in 2013, after designation as the grantee for the HSFC program. The board members represent Fayette and Westmoreland counties, where PIC maintains the majority of its programming.

The goal of HSFC is to promote school readiness and enhance social and cognitive development through the provision of health, educational, nutritional, social, and other necessary services with the objective that the families and their children will be healthy, confident, and better prepared to succeed in life. The EHS program is committed to serving low-income families with infants and toddlers. Our goal is to promote healthy outcomes and enhance the development of very young children, and support healthy family relationships.

HSFC offers classroom-based options to best serve the needs of the families in the area. Federal funding supports 396 slots per year. State funding supports an additional 95 slots per year.

### **HSFC Program Participants**

There has not been a significant change in data since the last Community Needs Assessment. In Fayette County there are 6,591 children aged 0 to 4 years<sup>1</sup>. The poverty rate for the child population under four in Fayette County is 22.7%<sup>2</sup>.

In Westmoreland County there are 15,699 children aged 0-4 years. The poverty rate of 15.9% indicates there are 2,452 children living in poverty under age four years.

The service area is becoming more diverse and disparities between children that are members of underrepresented racial-ethnic groups and their white peers are emerging. The child population is much more diverse than the adult population in both Fayette and Westmoreland County. For example, in Westmoreland, 92.95% of the adult population is white, compared to 13.74% of the child population under four years who live in poverty. In Fayette County the trend is the same, where 90.83% of adults are white, while just 15.74% of children under four living in poverty are white. The second largest racial-ethnic group is black/African American children which represent about 3.32% of the child population under four in Westmoreland County and 5.84% of the child population in Fayette County. Among children under four living in poverty, children of some other race (including Hispanic/Latino) represent nearly 46.36% of the population in Fayette County and about 38.12% in Westmoreland County.

### **Poverty, Race, and Primary Community Challenges**

Both Fayette and Westmoreland, like many other places throughout the nation struggle with racial inequality which is reflected in the community assessment data. In Westmoreland County, the median income of white families is \$65,790, compared to a median income of \$30,742 for black/African American families. In Fayette County, the median income of white families is \$52,151 compared to \$26,557 for black/African American families. The lack of income impacts the resources

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<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau. Population Under 18 Years by Age 2022. Table B09001.

<sup>2</sup> United States Census Bureau. Fertility 2021. Table S1301.

available to children, impacts housing and health, and places undue stress on parents which can impact parenting behaviors.

Families experiencing poverty face a range of challenges, including employment and housing instability. The poverty rate for families is 9.89% in Westmoreland County and 16.07% in Fayette County. The poverty rate for children under four in Fayette County is 22.7%, compared to 15.9% for Westmoreland County children under four years. 10.8% of Westmoreland County households are in poverty with single female-headed households rating at 54.2% of total households versus single male-headed households at 10.2%. 16.9% of Fayette County households are in poverty with female-headed households representing 54.6% versus single male-headed households which rate at 12.8%.

## Poverty Rates

Report Area	Total Population	Population in Poverty	Population in Poverty, Percent
Report Location	1,852,659	206,914	11.17%
Allegheny County, PA	1,214,621	134,916	11.11%
Beaver County, PA	165,585	17,573	10.61%
Fayette County, PA	124,503	20,012	16.07%
Westmoreland County, PA	347,950	34,413	9.89%
Pennsylvania	12,568,252	1,482,811	11.80%
United States	321,897,703	40,661,636	12.63%

Population in Poverty, Percent



Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.  
Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-21.



[View larger map](#)

Population Below the Poverty Level, Percent by Tract, ACS 2017-21



Health disparities are also a factor impacting child and family outcomes in the service area. Both Westmoreland and Fayette County have high rates of health insurance coverage, but limited access to health care due to lack of providers that accept public insurance. In Westmoreland County, only 2.6% of all children under eighteen do not have insurance and in Fayette County 4.25% of all children under eighteen do not have health insurance, but 25% of children in both counties are enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP.

Some of the most concerning outcomes are in regard to maternal child health. In both counties, the rates of child death are highest for black/African American children. In fact, the rate of black child deaths is twice that of the rate found for all children as a whole. The rate of infants born with a low birthweight is also greater for black/African American children at 15% in Fayette County and 13% in Westmoreland County, compared to a rate of 9% for Fayette County and 7% for Westmoreland County as a whole. As such, developmental issues may be a factor later on in their preschool years and beyond.

- 3-

## Early Care and Education Landscape

As seen in the last Community Needs Assessment, the early and education landscape is changing rapidly with expansion of state preschool (Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts) and the changing employment needs of families. When at least 85% of all children are served, it is typically assumed that an early childhood system has reached universal access. In Fayette County it is estimated that the current capacity for preschool slots reaches 100% of all preschoolers in poverty. The rate of access to early care and education for infants and toddlers is much lower at just 21% of all infants and toddlers in poverty.

In Westmoreland County, the same trend is illustrated. It is estimated that the current capacity for preschool slots reaches 100% of all preschoolers in poverty, indicating universal access to preschool has been achieved. For infants and toddlers, almost 25% of children living in a family with a low income can be reached. While the early care and education system is meeting the needs of preschoolers, the counties can still benefit from continued expansion of EHS Child Care Partnership programs.

## Strengths and Needs

**Program Level Strengths:** The community survey respondent cohorts identified teachers, staff, and the ability to support children's development as key strengths of the program. Program data also noted that despite challenges in health, the program was able to ensure that children were up-to-date on their immunizations, health and dental exams, and that all children had a medical and dental providers.

**Systems Level Strengths:** PIC is an established community partner that delivers a diverse array of services. This facilitates information sharing and ensures that families are connected with the resources they need. Many families and board members that completed surveys noted the agency's history and partnerships as a strength.

## Challenges

*There is still a significant number of families in both counties that have a low income and racial disparities in income when data is disaggregated by race.*

*Households headed by single mothers are also more likely to live in poverty and are represented at a high rate among family types. A significant number of births are to mothers that are unmarried which will exacerbate this problem in the coming years.*



# Fayette County, PA

Quick facts for the area's early childhood education landscape

## Population

Total Population: **129,443**

Population in Poverty Ages 0-4: **22.7 %**

Head Start Eligibles: **751** (470 Enrolled / 281 on Waitlist)

Early Head Start Eligibles: **461** (392 Enrolled / 69 on Waitlist)

## Children enrolled in Preschool

**40.77%** of children ages 3-4

## # of Children in Poverty:

**10,025** or **16.9%** of households

Poverty Rate for Children Under Age 18: **42.27%**

## Family Composition

Children Aged 0-4

Years: **6,591**

Number of Female

Householders: **3,809**

Percent Female

Householders in poverty: **54.6%**

Per capita income: **\$28,874**



## Unemployment Rate

Fayette County: **2,094**

Pennsylvania: **211,028**



## Access to Transportation

People w/o vehicle: **7.78%**

People w/10- 30 min. commute: **47.36%**



## Housing Cost Burden

Renters Spending over 30% of income: **42.5%**



## Low Birthweight Babies

**851**



Percent of Population with High School Diploma as highest level of education:

**47.9%**



## Child Food Insecurity

**73.4%** receive free lunch

**78.6%** free or reduced lunch eligible



# Financials

## Budget vs Functional Expenses

### July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

	Budget	Head Start	Early Head Start	PA State Head Start	FC EHS CCP I	FC EHS CCP II	FC EHS CCP III	CACFP	Total
Wages	6,673,319.83	3,490,393.09	1,874,741.09	439,552.27	50,788.33	169,545.58	60,999.48	0.00	6,086,019.84
Fringe Benefits	1,752,007.12	1,022,964.63	481,480.51	116,065.24	13,701.93	46,275.41	17,986.85	0.00	1,698,474.57
Rent	347,900.00	237,571.00	72,873.59	45,750.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	356,194.59
Utilities/Telephone/Internet	193,196.61	138,257.81	48,313.50	16,034.40	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	202,605.71
Postage/Shipping	6,250.00	1,770.48	692.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,462.97
General Office Supplies	76,226.00	93,760.46	43,956.94	1,408.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	139,125.41
Program Supplies	258,184.53	208,116.23	63,662.55	9,877.02	184.19	1,740.75	42,080.00	0.00	325,660.74
Insurance	90,021.00	59,460.27	25,861.39	1,916.66	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	87,238.32
Local Travel	102,514.00	63,052.93	85,755.07	1,279.82	535.00	2,309.58	0.00	0.00	152,932.40
CTR/Audit/Fiscal/Legal Services	76,950.00	39,113.68	15,960.84	1,775.86	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	56,850.38
Memberships	1,500.00	0.00	2,936.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,936.25
Health/Disabilities	71,500.00	54,630.00	12,720.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	67,350.00
Food/Nutrition	85,550.00	272,280.38	4,746.42	41,947.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	318,974.65
Transportation/Vehicle Main	462,600.00	339,274.55	1,507.74	52,740.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	393,523.09
Parent Services	30,346.00	34,572.07	5,437.52	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	40,009.59
Contracted Services	386,005.00	337,096.96	89,702.02	48,786.65	42,245.61	92,744.97	40,042.39	0.00	650,618.60
Training/Technical Assistance	161,483.00	89,154.72	27,569.10	0.00	0.00	10.72	27.51	0.00	116,762.05
Publications/Advertising/Printing	42,000.00	36,018.74	19,208.98	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	55,227.72
CACFP Expenses	273,182.92	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	273,182.92	273,182.92
ARP Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	19,005.28	0.00	19,005.28
COVID Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,816.00	0.00	4,816.00
	11,090,736.01	6,517,488.00	2,877,126.00	777,134.58	107,455.06	312,627.01	184,957.51	273,182.92	11,049,971.08

- 55.08% Of the expenditures were for wages for the Director, Assistant Director, Management Team, Classroom Instructors, Classroom Instructor Aides, Homebased Instructors, Integrated Service Aides, Bus Drivers, Family Service Workers, Data Operators, School Nurses, ERSEA Specialists, Nutrition Specialist, Clerks, BANAs and P/T Classroom Aides.

- Another 15.37.% covered benefits for the staff including FICA, Unemployment Comp., Worker's Comp., health, dental, vision, 401(k), life insurance, STD and LTD.

- Insurance costs include: Child Liability, Commercial Property, Comprehensive General Liability, Commercial Vehicle, Director and Officers Liability, Commercial Umbrella, Computerized Business Equipment, Blanket Employee Dishonesty, Sexual Abuse/Sexual Molestation and Professional Liability

- The Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette, Inc., receives Federal, State, and Local funds. During the Fiscal Year July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 of over \$29,000,000. As a result, PIC is required to have a yearly Single Audit completed by an independent auditing firm.

- The CPA Firm of DeBlasio & DeBlasio Associates will prepare and finalize the Single Audit for the fiscal year July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. The audit will be presented to the PIC Board of Directors for their review and approval. Then the audit will be submitted to all the funding agencies.

- The audit will be available for review at the PIC Administrative Office, 219 Donohoe Road, Greensburg, PA 15601, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

**Related Revenues/Expenditures  
July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024**

Grant/Source	Funding Source	Time Frame	Grant/Budget Amt.	Actual Expenditures	% of Expenditures
Head Start Base Grant/Training & Technical Assistance	U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services	July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024	6,517,488.00	6,517,488.00	100.00%
Early Head Start Base Grant/Training & Technical Assistance	U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services	July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024	2,877,126.00	2,877,126.00	100.00%
PA State Head Start	PA Dept. of Education & Public Welfare	July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024	777,134.58	777,134.58	100.00%
Fayette County EHS CCP I	COTRAIC	September 1, 2023 - August 31, 2024	112,405.00	107,455.06	95.60%
Fayette County EHS CCP II	COTRAIC	September 1, 2023 - August 31, 2024	348,442.00	312,627.01	89.72%
Fayette County EHS CCP III	COTRAIC	March 1, 2023 - February 29, 2024	184,957.51	184,957.51	100.00%
Child and Adult Care Food Program	PA Dept. of Education - Division Food & Nutrition	July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024	273,182.92	273,182.92	100.00%
<b>Total</b>			<b>11,090,736.01</b>	<b>11,049,971.08</b>	<b>99.63%</b>

**FEDERAL IN-KIND MATCH REQUIREMENT**

			Required Match	Actual Match	
Non Federal Match	Local Sources	July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024	2,161,761.00	2,161,761.00	100.00%
Non Federal Match	Local Sources	March 1, 2023 - February 29, 2024	17,777.00	17,777.00	100.00%
Non Federal Match	Local Sources	September 1, 2023 - August 31, 2024	115,213.00	115,213.00	100.00%

- The Fiscal Year for the Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette, Inc. runs from July 1 to June 30.
- The Federal Grant Year for the Fayette County Head Start and Early Head Start Programs ran from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.
- Expenditures and funding for this report are based on the time period of July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 unless otherwise noted.
- For Program Year 2023 - 2024, 99.63% of the funds were spent.
- In-Kind Match funds are required. These in-kind contributions come from volunteers, donations of supplies, space, and parents' time.

