

Community Action's Early Head Start & Head Start 2017 Annual Report

Program Year: August 2016- August 2017



About Us

Community Action Head Start provides comprehensive child development and family engagement services to low-income children and their families. Both Early Head Start, serving pregnant women and children ages birth to 3, and Head Start, serving children ages 3 to 5, ensure that enrolled children receive adequate nutrition, medical and dental care, social/emotional interventions appropriate to their age, and a developmentally appropriate education.

The programs emphasize the involvement of parents in the lives of their children through home visits, parent leadership councils, and social events. Head Start programs ensure that our community's children in greatest need receive the care and education necessary to meet the developmental milestones, necessary to successfully enter kindergarten and most vulnerable prepare for a lifetime of productive learning. Comprehensive development services include, but are not limited to:

- **Early Learning** - Teachers facilitate individualized learning experiences to promote children's readiness for school and beyond. Through planned and spontaneous instruction, relationships with adults, and play, children grow in language and literacy, early math and science concepts, and social and emotional development.
- **Health** - Children receive health and development screenings, nutritious meals, oral health and mental health support. Programs connect families with medical, dental, and mental health services, ensuring children receive appropriate services.
- **Family well-being** - Programs support and strengthen parent-child relationships and engage families around children's learning and development. Parents and families are supported in achieving their own goals, such as housing stability, continued education, and financial security.

What is school readiness?

The Office of Head Start (OHS) defines school readiness as children ready for school, families ready to support their children's learning, and schools ready for the children who enter their doors. Children's school readiness is measured by the skills set out in the five domains of the [Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework](#):

- Language and Literacy
- Cognition
- Approaches to Learning
- Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
- Social and Emotional Development

Families are engaged in their children's learning and development and are poised to support the lifelong success of their child. Head Start recognizes that parents are their children's primary teachers and advocates. Schools become ready for children when Head Start programs, parents, and schools work together to promote school readiness and engage families as their children make the transition to kindergarten.

Children & Families Served

Program Option	Funded Enrollment	Total Children and Families Served	Average Monthly Enrollment
Early Head Start	268	317	100%
Head Start Center-based	119	133	100%
Head Start at Wahoo Public Schools	34	39	100%
TOTAL OR AVERAGE	421	489	100%



Medical & Dental Exams

Program Option	Funded Enrollment	Percentage that Received Medical Exams	Percentage that Received Dental Exams
Early Head Start	268	81%	66%
Head Start Center-based	119	84%	89%
Head Start at Wahoo Public Schools	34	97%	86%
TOTAL OR AVERAGE	421		



School Readiness

Community Action's Early Head Start and Head Start School Readiness Goals were developed by the Community Action Early Head Start and Head Start School Readiness Committee, which built objectives that are fully aligned with the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework* and *Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines*. Facilitated by the Early Childhood Education Coordinator, the Committee is comprised of educators, program managers, Policy Council representatives, parents, and community members from all Early Head Start and Head Start program options.

Current School Readiness Goals:

Language and Literacy

- Children will use and comprehend language for conversation and communication.
- Children will demonstrate an understanding of print.
- Children will demonstrate an appreciation of books and engage with books every day.

Cognition and General Knowledge

- Children will apply math knowledge and skills to everyday routines.
- Children will use scientific skills and methods.
- Children will understand the relationship between people and the world around them.

Physical Development and Health

- Children will develop coordination, balance, spatial awareness, and strength needed for age-appropriate fine and gross motor activities.
- Children will demonstrate and practice healthy and safe habits.

Social-Emotional Development

- Children will engage in positive relationships and interactions with others.
- Children will develop a sense of self and confidence in their abilities.

Approaches to Learning

- Children will use initiative, curiosity, and persistence to learn about their world.
- Children will demonstrate sustained attention and cooperation when working with varied materials, activities, and information.

Information regarding children's developmental growth and progress towards meeting School Readiness Goals is shared with parents and the community via Policy Council/Committee meetings, Board meetings, Parent Committee meetings, and at home visits and conferences with families. The School Readiness Committee meets throughout the year to share and analyze collected assessment data from a variety of sources in order to identify trends within and across program options and plan corresponding professional development activities.



School Readiness

Early Head Start and Head Start Family Educators and Teachers track children's progress through ongoing child assessment using, Teaching Strategies GOLD. GOLD is an assessment system specifically designed for early childhood, comprised of 36 objectives that are predictive of school success and aligned with the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework*, *Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines*, and the *Common Core Standards*. In the 2016-2017 program year, the program compiled information from GOLD after each checkpoint period (October, February, May) to examine trends among children in the key areas of development (social-emotional, physical, language and cognitive), as well as key areas of content learning (math and literacy). The vast majority of children ended the year meeting developmental milestones. Results from the final checkpoints are listed in the tables below.

Early Head Start 2017 Final Checkpoint		
	Percentage of Children Meeting/Exceeding Widely Held Expectations	
Area of Development	Early Head Start Home-Based	Early Head Start Center-based
Social-Emotional	92%	95%
Gross Motor	92%	94%
Fine Motor	94%	100%
Language	84%	78%
Cognitive	94%	96%
Literacy	76%	70%
Mathematics	72%	71%

Head Start 2017 Final Checkpoint		
	Percentage of Children Meeting Exceeding Widely Held Expectations	
Area of Development	Head Start Center-based	Head Start at Wahoo Public Schools
Social-Emotional	87%	86%
Gross Motor	94%	88%
Fine Motor	94%	89%
Language	78%	83%
Cognitive	86%	88%
Literacy	79%	88%
Mathematics	68%	80%



Family Engagement

In the 2016-2017 year, Community Action launched a new model of Family Engagement with the opening of our two full-year centers. A range of staff came together to support family engagement as it happens each day in our every interaction. Families started the year able to attend the open house and check out the new facilities. As the year went on, families participated in parent teacher conferences, home visits, and many activities. Family Engagement Specialists partnered with families to set and achieve personalized goals. Library family night was a family favorite. Parents left with library cards as well as new books to keep. At the Family Wellness Festival, families visited many booths operated by both Head Start and others in the community to learn about healthy habits. Families attended Learn and Play Family Days, where they were invited to spend time in their child's classroom, learn about various topics, and provide feedback about our programs. This year also marked the start of our Incredible Years® Parenting courses. Parents had the opportunity to complete this 14 week parenting course to better support their parenting practices. Classes were held in both English and Spanish.

In our home-based program, Family Educators engaged families at each weekly home visit, where they coached parents to promote their child's healthy development and partnered with families to set goals. The team also supported monthly playgroups and activities with big hits being the pumpkin patch activity as well as the Cultural Fair. Families also had the chance to dig in the dirt within our home-based garden and were able to enjoy the fruits and veggies they helped grow at playgroups and events.



Health

In 2013, Community Action piloted a project within Early Head Start and Head Start called Growing Great Beginnings after receiving a grant from the Community Health Endowment of Lincoln. This grant allowed us the opportunity to partner with Children's Center for the Child and Community (then Teach a Kid to Fish) to create a nutrition education curriculum and coaching model. This model continues to be implemented within the home-based program option today. Family Educators complete weekly home visits with Nutrition and Wellness lessons geared to work with the child (birth to 3) and their family. Family Educators identify families who want and need more goal-directed support, and this is where the Nutrition and Wellness Coach offers her knowledge and expertise in the home. This curriculum and coach support model is best suited for intense in-home work with families, though when the centers opened, there became need to adapt interventions to serve those children and families as well. In 2017, Community Action applied for and received a grant from Children's Hospital and Medical Center to focus on providing nutrition education interventions with the 255 children and their families enrolled at our centers. So far, children and families in our centers have participated in the "the great apple crunch" event as part of the National Farm to School Network promotion, and two Parent Workshops focused on reducing sugar intake and self-care (a Yoga instructor was brought in to teach children and families simple poses they could try at home).

Monthly food exploration activities continue to occur in classrooms with a seasonal eating focus. The Nutrition and Wellness Coach facilitates these activities using the farm to school curriculum as a guide. Partnerships with local hunger relief organizations, such as Produce from the Heart, are being established to source the fruits and vegetables used during food exploration activities. In the spring of 2018, Community Action will partner with Leadership Lincoln to install a raised bed garden at the Street Head Start Center. This garden will support efforts to promote the importance of daily fruit and vegetable intake and give the children and families' the opportunity to learn the process of growing their own food and taste test produce grown. Also in the spring of 2018, children and families will have the opportunity to part-take in the annual Family Wellness Festival, which provides hands-on education and information about community resources.



Mental Health

Early Head Start (EHS) and Head Start (HS) promote mental wellness for children and families in the home and classroom by integrating mental health consultation into education, health, and family engagement services. Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants from the UNL Clinical Psychology Training Program assist child development and family engagement staff to understand child and family mental health needs and to build skills that address those needs effectively. Consultants collaborate with parents and staff to increase capacity to promote self-regulation and problem-solving skills in children, address challenging behaviors, support parents experiencing depression or other mental health problems, and help families cope with the impact of family violence or substance abuse. Mental Health Consultants conferred with EHS/HS parents and staff, participated in team reviews of family needs and service plans, joined Family Educators for home visits, and provided psychological assessments and referrals for community services for child and family social, emotional, and behavioral health needs during the 2016 – 2017 year. The Consultants reviewed mental health screenings to identify specific child or family needs. In addition, they provided staff or parents trainings. Mental Health Consultation addressed challenges such as sleep problems, separation anxiety, and behavioral problems at home. Consultants helped families with goals such as improving parent-child relationships, developing routines, setting limits for children, and increasing praise and positive reinforcement.

Program wide, Early Head Start and Head Start mental health professionals consulted with staff three or more times for 110 children and consulted with 21 parents about their child's behavior or mental health. They also facilitated 11 referrals for mental health services in the community.



Community Strengths and Needs

In 2016, Community Action partnered with University of Nebraska Omaha Support and Training for the Evaluation of Programs (UNO STEPS) to complete a comprehensive Community Strengths and Needs Assessment. Through review of secondary data and targeted collection of primary data from current and eligible families, the Community Assessment Team identified the following key trends:

- Lancaster County has approximately 4,308 families below poverty level with children under 5
- Saunders County has approximately 246 families below poverty level with children under 5
- Early Head Start and Head Start serve approximately 9.3% of eligible children in the service area
- Eligible families in Saunders County were more likely (76%) to be single parent households than those in Lincoln (50%)
- Overall, the racial and ethnic representation of Early Head Start and Head Start enrollment is reflective of the racial and ethnic representation of all families below the poverty level in the service area
- Lincoln has greater racial and ethnic diversity than Saunders County and Rural Lancaster County
- In the service area, children in families with incomes above the poverty level were 2.5 to 5.9 times more likely to be enrolled in “nursery school” than those with incomes below the poverty level
- In Lancaster and Saunders Counties, 19% and 21% of families experience food insecurity, respectively
- Lincoln has the lowest rate (77%) of high school graduation among householders of families eligible for Early Head Start and Head Start
- The highest rates of families without an employed adult occurred within Early Head Start
- Lincoln has the greatest linguistic diversity, with 12% of households speaking a language other than English at home
- Accessibility of safe, affordable housing is a crucial concern for eligible families
- Within the service area, Lincoln has the highest rate (53.1 per 10,000 children) of child removals to foster care
- Eligible families report access to medical care as a high concern
- Communication, cohesion, and resiliency strengths were commonly noted among enrolled families
- Many social services are available in Lancaster County, although waitlists are often lengthy
- Saunders County has fewer formal programs available

Review & Financial Audit

The program was reviewed in July 2014 by the Administration for Children and Families Office of Head Start. At this time, it was determined that Community Action had corrected the deficiency given to the agency in June 2014 related to the following requirement (s): PART 1304 - Program Performance Standards For Operation Of Head Start Programs By Grantees And Delegate Agencies 1304.52 Human Resources Management. Following its July 2014 onsite review, Administration for Children and Families Office of Head Start closed the previously identified finding and determined that no further corrective action was required. Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties' consolidated financial statements were audited by independent auditors in December 2017. Due to annual expenditures of greater than \$750,000 in federal funding, the audit was conducted in compliance with the requirements of U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2 CFR 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. The Head Start Program was tested as a major program. The audit contained no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. A copy of the results is available at: harvester.census.gov.

Revenues	\$
Head Start	2,247,155
Early Head Start	4,313,105
USDA	189,102
Child Care	42,645
Agency Support	179,230
Community Funding	985,940
Donations	293,622
Total Revenues	\$8,250,800
Expenditures	\$
Delegate Costs	334,302
Salaries & Fringe	4,023,866
Indirect	1,166,226
Travel	26,382
Equipment	493,073
Supplies	506,871
Contractual	620,636
Other	1,079,443
Total Expenditures	\$8,250,800

