

# Community Action's Early Head Start & Head Start 2018 Annual Report

Program Year: August 2017- August 2018





# 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 most vulnerable children receive the care and education necessary to meet developmental milestones necessary for entering kindergarten. 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 children. 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               | 361                                | 100%                       |
| Head Start Center-based            | 119               | 148                                | 100%                       |
| Head Start at Wahoo Public Schools | 34                | 39                                 | 100%                       |
| <b>TOTAL OR AVERAGE</b>            | <b>421</b>        | <b>548</b>                         | <b>100%</b>                |



# Medical & Dental Exams

| Program Option                     | Funded Enrollment | Percentage that Received Medical Exams | Percentage that Received Dental Exams |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Early Head Start                   | 268               | 72%                                    | 59%                                   |
| Head Start Center-based            | 119               | 80%                                    | 76%                                   |
| Head Start at Wahoo Public Schools | 34                | 90%                                    | 74%                                   |
| <b>TOTAL OR AVERAGE</b>            | <b>421</b>        |  |                                       |



# 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.

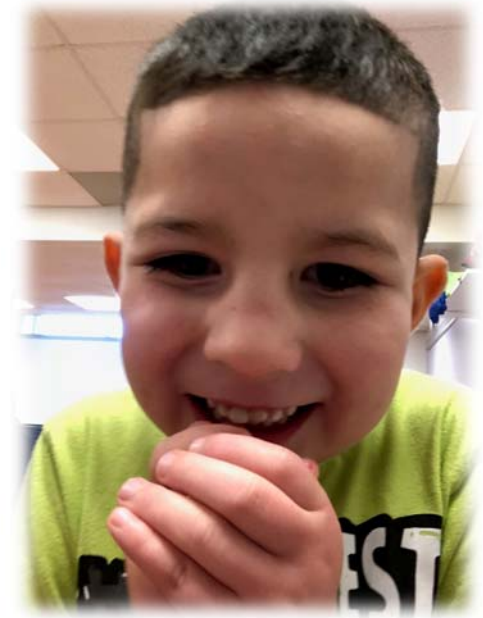
### **Social-Emotional Development**

- 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 toward 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 2017-2018 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 and Head Start 2017-2018 Final Checkpoint |   |
|--|---|
| Area of Development  | Percentage of Children Meeting/Exceeding Widely Held Expectations |
| Social-Emotional   | 88%   |
| Physical   | 91%   |
| Language   | 92%   |
| Cognitive  | 90%   |
| Literacy   | 91%   |
| Mathematics  | 92%   |



# Family Engagement

In the 2017-2018 year, Family Engagement at Community Action continued across the centers and our home-based program. In the centers, the beginning of the year was marked by the annual open house welcoming all new families and getting them ready for the first day of school. As the year went on, families were able to continue to engage in many meaningful ways. Increased focus was placed on our homeschool connection activities to foster learning across multiple settings for children. Families had the opportunity to participate in parent teacher conferences, home visits, Learn and Play Family Days, and other events. Many of the events that were favorites last year were repeated, including the Family Nights at the library and the Family Wellness Festival. Our Incredible Years® parenting courses continued, providing learning opportunities to even more families. We also had a robust group of parents participate in our Policy Council, one of our governing bodies, to approve policies and program decisions.

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 some new events including visiting the Capitol Building and the Agricultural Center at the university. The home-based garden grew and parents took an active role in deciding what to plant, harvesting, and tasting the produce at parent committees and socialization events.



Complete Children's Health, a local healthcare provider, sponsored our 2018 Head Start Family Wellness Festival. They were also among many providers to have a booth at our event to share information about services with families.



Many cucumbers and other vegetables were grown and harvested in the new raised bed gardens at our K Street Head Start Center in the summer of 2018. The gardens were utilized to teach children where their food comes from, and produce grown was used for food experiences and tastings offered to children and families.



# 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 utilized 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 promoting 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 partnered with Leadership Lincoln to install raised bed gardens at the K Street Head Start Center. Community Action also received a grant that, in part, allowed us to install raised garden beds at our Health 360 Center. These gardens and the support from our partnership with UNL Extension support us in promoting the importance of daily fruit and vegetable intake and provide children and families' the opportunity to learn the process of growing their own food.

With a goal to serve healthier food (with fresh, unprocessed ingredients) to children in our centers, Community Action participated in multiple conversations with Community Health Endowment of Lincoln, Food Bank of Lincoln, and other local agencies to strategize a solution. Community Action and the Food Bank of Lincoln were invited to apply for funding from Community Health Endowment in the spring of 2018. The proposal, in part, called for the construction of a 5,000 square foot commercial kitchen to be used to prepare hot, nutritious meals for children in our Head Start centers and others across the city of Lincoln. The proposal was funded, and Community Action will begin construction of the kitchen in the fall of 2018. It is anticipated that it will be fully operational by the spring of 2019. This is just one more step in our efforts to give our children — who face the greatest risk factors for obesity and other health concerns — access to the food and services they need to achieve optimal long-term health.



Community Action Executive Director, Vi See, and Community Health Endowment President and CEO, Lori Seibel, with a sketch of the initial floor plan of the kitchen.



# Mental Health

Early Head Start and Head Start 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 with understanding child and family mental health needs and provide support with addressing 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 and/or substance abuse. Mental Health Consultants conferred with Early Head Start and Head Start 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 2017 – 2018 year. The Consultants reviewed mental health screenings to identify specific child and/or family needs and also provided staff or parents trainings. Mental Health Consultation addressed challenges such as sleep problems, separation anxiety, and behavioral problems at home. Consultants supported 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 84 children and consulted with 23 parents about their child's behavior or mental health. They also facilitated 8 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 (*includes up-dated data where available*):

- Lancaster County has approximately 4,334 (44%) families below poverty level with children under 5.
- Saunders County has approximately 324 (47%) 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
- Within our service area, there is a 20-year difference in life expectancy.
- From 2005 to 2015 Lincoln's non-white population has increased by 87% with the increase of immigrant and refugee populations.
- Of the 41,760 students enrolled at Lincoln Public Schools, 3,094 were ELL immigrants and refugee students.
- 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.
- Housing is a concern for our enrolled families – 44% of all renting households in Lancaster County pay 30% or more of their income on housing with many families moving in together to avoid homelessness.
- In Lancaster and Saunders Counties, 31% and 54% 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; among children aged 5-17 living in poverty, 31% speak a language other than English.
- The vast majority of adults (54%) living in poverty are in the workforce, but are under-employed.
- 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.
- Many social services are available in Lancaster County, although waitlists are often lengthy.
- Saunders County has fewer formal programs available than Lancaster County.





# 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](http://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            |
| <b>Total Revenues</b>     | <b>\$8,250,800</b> |
| 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          |
| <b>Total Expenditures</b> | <b>\$8,250,800</b> |

