

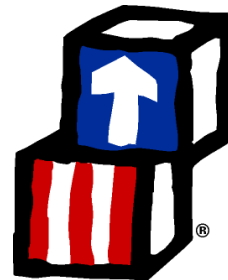


Head Start Annual Report

2021-22

Mission: Achieving educational excellence for all learners through strong partnerships, service and leadership.

Educational Service Unit 13 Head Start Programs
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Director's Report

The year brought about many changes to the program. One of the major shifts in the program was that several location changes were made due to an opportunity to consolidate three locations into one. This new location is the Early Learning Center, which houses three Early Head Start classrooms, one Head Start classroom, and the EHS Home-Based program. The Gering Head Start classroom at Lincoln Elementary was closed and the enrollment slots were converted into 16 EHS enrollment slots with the approval of the 2020-2021 continuation grant. In addition, a new partnership was formed with Gering Public Schools, which moved 18 Head Start enrollment slots into the partnership.

The majority of our Head Start classrooms operated 7 hours a day, Monday through Thursday. Enrollment in our Home-Based EHS program was difficult due to continued concerns with COVID-19. However, our center-based programs and partnerships remained fully enrolled throughout 2020-21, and maintained in-person services with additional precautions in place. Parents were given the option of remote services for their children in both center-based and home-based options. However, less than five families chose this option.

In response to positive COVID-19 cases in the classrooms, short-term closures occurred and families were provided remote services during those times. The packets contained materials and supplies for home learning. Classroom teachers, Family Advocates, and Home Educators provided parent engagement opportunities via Zoom and continued to provide read-aloud stories and music and movement time on YouTube for families to access during quarantines. Family Advocates maintained contact with families to provide needed supports. Ready4K text messaging curriculum continued with all parents, which has proven to be an outstanding family engagement tool that delivers three short, developmentally appropriate activities geared towards

the age of the child each week. In May, the program provided summer enrichment backpacks to children transitioning to kindergarten in the fall. Despite the impacts of COVID-19, the program tackled the challenges and continued to meet the needs of families, employees and the community.

The program participated in a Focus Area One (FA1) review with the Office of Head Start (OHS) in April 2021. The FA1 review allows OHS to understand how programs are progressing in providing service in the five-year grant cycle. The report includes the performance measures used to understand grantee progress towards program goals. Based on the information gathered during this review, ESU 13 Head Start was found to have met the requirements of all applicable Head Start Program Performance Standards, laws, regulations and policy requirements.

The review summary highlighted the program's response to community needs, including increased efforts to support mental health and healthcare access for families, staff, and children enrolled in the program. Reviewers noted that the program provided innovative responses to support families with continued enrollment and learning opportunities throughout the pandemic. Program investment in staff was indicated through accessibility to professional development, a focus on staff wellbeing, and on-going support to reinforce teacher's skills in preventing challenging behaviors, understanding trauma, handling stress, and building resilient classrooms.

Our Head Start program promotes School Readiness through its offering of comprehensive services in education, health, family support, and special services. Each of these component areas support children's future successes in school and daily living. The support that Head Start receives from community and public school partners enhances the wrap-around services that make Head Start unique and accessible. Dedicated staff, community partners,

Policy Council and Board of Education continue to make a positive difference in the lives of children and families in the communities that we serve.



The Head Start Program

Head Start Programs provide comprehensive child development and family support 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 3-5, ensure that enrolled children receive adequate nutrition, medical and dental care, social/emotional learning opportunities and interventions, and a developmentally appropriate education. The program also places substantial emphasis on the involvement of parents/guardians in the education of their children through home visits, parent leadership positions (Policy Council, Parent Committees, etc.) and family engagement events.

Head Start programs ensure that children who qualify for the program receive the care and education necessary to meet their developmental milestones, are ready to enter school, and are prepared for a lifetime of productive learning. Head Start services are delivered through home-based prenatal and infant/toddler early education, center-based infant/toddler early childhood education, center-based preschool, and public school preschool partnerships. Children

receiving center-based services also receive regular services in their home through teacher and family advocate home visits. Head Start and Early Head Start focus on the parents as the primary teachers and strive to promote that message through child and family education.



Families by Income

Category	Head Start		Early Head Start		Program Total	
	# Children	% Children	# Children	% Children	# Children	% Children
Foster	16	7%	1	1%	17	22%
Public Assistance	8	4%	7	7%	15	5%
Income <100% Poverty	126	58%	72	71%	198	62%
Income 100%>130% Poverty	36	17%	12	12%	48	15%
Over 130%	15	7%	4	4%	19	6%
Homeless	17	8%	5	5%	22	7%
Disabilities	47	22%	17	17%	64	20%
Total Children Served	218		101		319	

Total Children Served

	Total Cumulative Enrollment	Funded Enrollment
Head Start	218	202
Early Head Start	101	84

Funded Enrollment by Center and County

Cheyenne County	
Sidney Public Schools	20
Morrill County	
Bayard Public Schools Partnership	10
Scottsbluff County	
Bridgeport Head Start	18
Early Learning Center Preschool	18
Gering Public School Partnership	18
Home Base Early Head Start	20
Minatare Public Schools Pre-Start Partnership	10
Mitchell Public Schools Tiger Cub Preschool Partnership	12
Scottsbluff Pubic Schools Bear Cub Partnership	20
Scottsbluff Pubic Schools Roosevelt Partnership	26
Tri-Community Preschool–Morrill Partnership	20
Northfield Head Start	30
Western Nebraska Child Development Center Early Head Start	40
Early Learning Center Early Head Start	24
Total	286

Audit Report

Educational Service Unit No. 13 (ESU 13) is the grantee organization for the Head Start programs, receiving federal funds from the Administration of Children and Families through the Department of Health and Human Services. An independent audit of the financial statements and activities of ESU 13 is conducted annually. The results of that audit can be found on the website for the Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts, www.auditors.state.ne.us.

2020-2021 Budget

FEDERAL SHARE						
	Head Start		Early Head Start		TOTAL	
	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual
Personnel	\$1,315,538	\$954,770	\$780,353	\$896,331	\$2,095,891	\$1,851,101
Fringe Benefits	\$293,823	\$211,817	\$187,905	\$214,071	\$481,728	\$425,888
TTA	\$26,931	\$26,931	\$23,356	\$23,356	\$50,287	\$50,287
Supplies	\$28,700	\$37,177	\$ 17,300	\$67,929	\$ 46,000	105,106
Contractual	\$338,901	\$356,518	\$ 0	\$0	\$338,901	\$356,518
Other	\$148,154	\$139,620	\$54,351	\$138,647	\$202,505	\$277,523
Indirect Costs	\$64,807	\$141,642	\$33,091	\$104,401	\$97,898	\$246,043
Total	\$2,216,854	\$1,868,475	\$ 1,096,356	\$1,444,735	\$3,313,210	\$3,313,210

Non Federal Share	\$790,039
Administrative Costs	14.53%



Family Outcomes

Head Start and Early Head Start Family Advocates and Home Educators work directly with families in their homes utilizing the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

Framework. The framework focuses on 7 outcome areas including family well-being, parent-child relationships, families as lifelong educators, families as learners, family engagement in transitions, family connections to peers and community, and families as advocates and leaders. Staff utilize a strength-based approach while identifying family needs and parent education interests.

At least 87% of families who had a child enrolled in the program at any point of time during the 2020-2021 school year, received family services based upon their interests and needs. Referrals to additional community resources were provided to 38% of families. 24% of families who had a complete assessment showed growth throughout the year.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the program did see a decrease in family employment, finances, and family wellness. As with the previous year, employment and financial concerns continued as well as limitations for health services, ultimately impacting financial and health/mental wellness in families. The program continues to focus on providing extra support in the area of family well-being including increased training and resources for staff and families we serve, in order to support ongoing challenges and instability that many people in our community have faced throughout the pandemic.

Families set family goals that they would like to work on and achieve during the school year. Family goals are intended to empower families to move forward in their lives by highlighting their interests and desires for betterment of self and family. 38% of families completed their goals, and 50% of families made progress toward their goals that they had set with their family advocate or home educator.

The Head Start program offers many opportunities for parent education, social gatherings, and peer support. Examples of these events include center family gatherings,

socializations, as well as mother and father engagement events. These events will target valuable information as identified by parents' interests including examples such as child safety, family literacy, budgeting and asset development, adult education, mental health and stress management, family nutrition, and behavior supports. The program strives to offer other opportunities for parent education through Circle of Security and Love and Logic parenting courses as available. In addition, Family Advocates and Home Educators share information from The Pyramid Model Parent Modules with families during engagement events. Many of these opportunities were offered virtually during the year due to COVID-19 restrictions, although some in-person events began to occur towards the end of the school year. Individual opportunities for growth are provided during private interactions with family advocates, home educators and/or teachers through home visitation and parent-teacher conferences.

Services provided to children and families:

- 30 families received mental health services or resources
- 42 families were provided with adult education or ESL resources
- All families received parent education in some format
- 15 families received asset building services
- 2 homeless families acquired housing
- 181 fathers/father figures participated in father involvement activities
- 64 children received early intervention or special education and related services
- 190 individuals volunteered in our Early Head Start/Head Start programs, 154 were current or former Head Start/Early Head Start parents. The program experienced an extreme drop in volunteers during the 2020-2021 school year due to COVID-19 restrictions in our buildings in order to keep staff and children safe and healthy.

Screening Summary



ESU #13 Head Start and Early Head Start programs partners with community providers to coordinate dental screenings and exams, hearing screenings, vision exams, and speech screenings. The program completes vision acuity tests, social-emotional, and developmental screenings.

Per 1304.14, subpart b of the Head Start Performance Standards, Head Start programs must ensure that a minimum of 10% of the total funded enrollment is filled with children eligible for services under IDEA. For the 2020-21 school year, 22% of Head Start children enrolled were on IEP's and 17% of Early Head Start children enrolled were on IFSP's.

2020-21 Screenings	Head Start	Early Head Start
Hearing	100%	93%
Vision	97%	94%
Speech	94%	n/a
Social-Emotional	100%	93%
Developmental	94%	93%

2020-21 Exams	Head Start	Early Head Start
Physical	52%	84%
Dental	41%	71% (screening only)

*Some exams were not completed due to COVID-19

Curriculum

Head Start programs utilize research-based curriculums that focus on the children's strengths, interests, and individual needs. Early Head Start center-based classrooms use Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Two's. Home-Based EHS program uses Parents as Teachers which is intended to support children's learning within their home and routines. Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers and Second Steps Social and Emotional Curriculum are used in all Head Start classrooms.

Children learn best when they are actively engaged and involved in interaction with people and materials in their environment. Some key objectives for children and/or parents in our program are to have fun and:

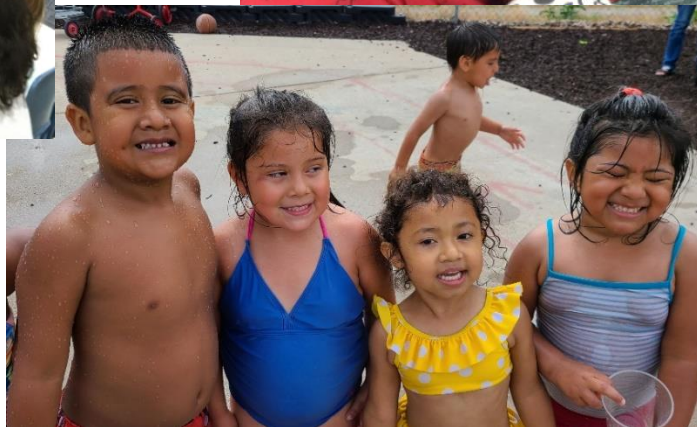
- To develop a positive self-image, to include becoming secure and independent
- To learn how to get along with peers
- To have a wide range of experiences
- To communicate his/her ideas to both adults and other children
- To develop and coordinate large and small muscles
- To express in a variety of creative areas: art, dramatic play, music & literature
- To develop in visual perception and auditory discrimination.

School Readiness

The Office of Head Start defines school readiness as "children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life." The program's School Readiness Goals are aligned with the Head Start Domains, Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines, Creative Curriculum, Teaching Strategies GOLD, Nebraska Kindergarten Standards, and Nebraska Department of Education

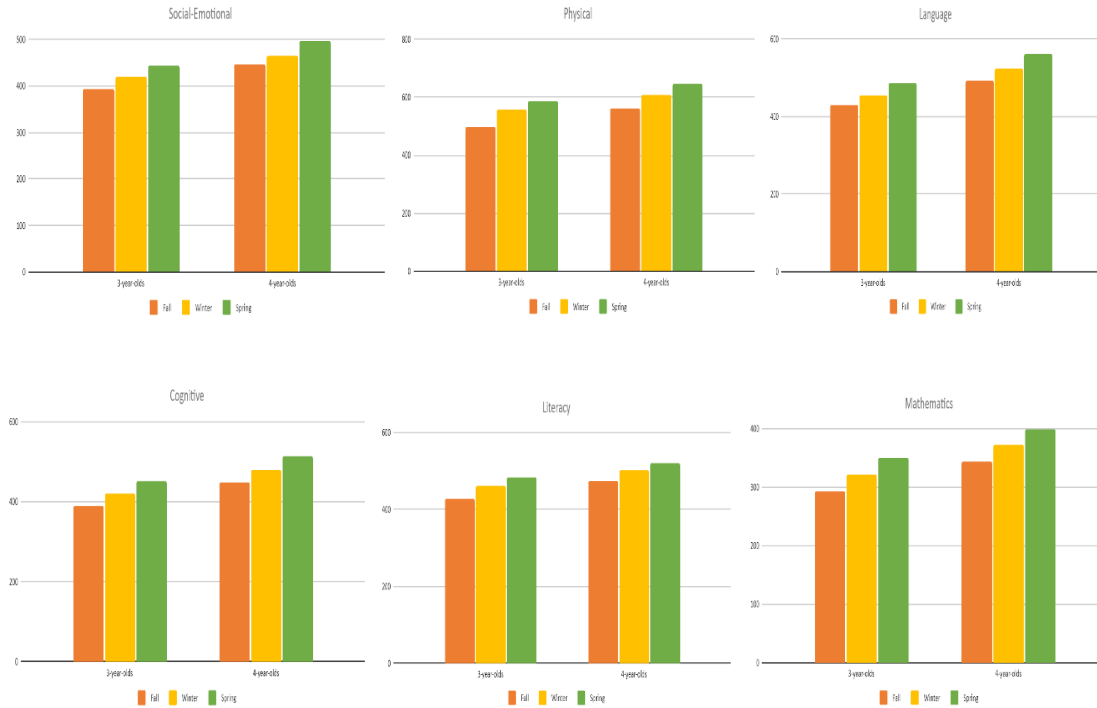
Rule 11. Annually, ESU 13 Head Start Management Team collaborates with local school district administrators and teachers by requesting their feedback on school readiness goals. Policy Council and Board of Education review the School Readiness plan throughout each year and are invited to make suggestions for possible revisions.

Teachers work directly with children and families to promote children’s progress toward school readiness goals. Parents are encouraged to give input into their child’s education by setting and reviewing individual goals throughout the year during home visits and parent teacher conferences. Progress on the children’s goals is monitored through child observations and anecdotal records collected on a daily basis by teachers. The corresponding data is documented into Teaching Strategies GOLD, our online assessment system. Aggregated data from child outcomes completed from fall 2020 to spring 2021 showed progress in all developmental domains as shown below.



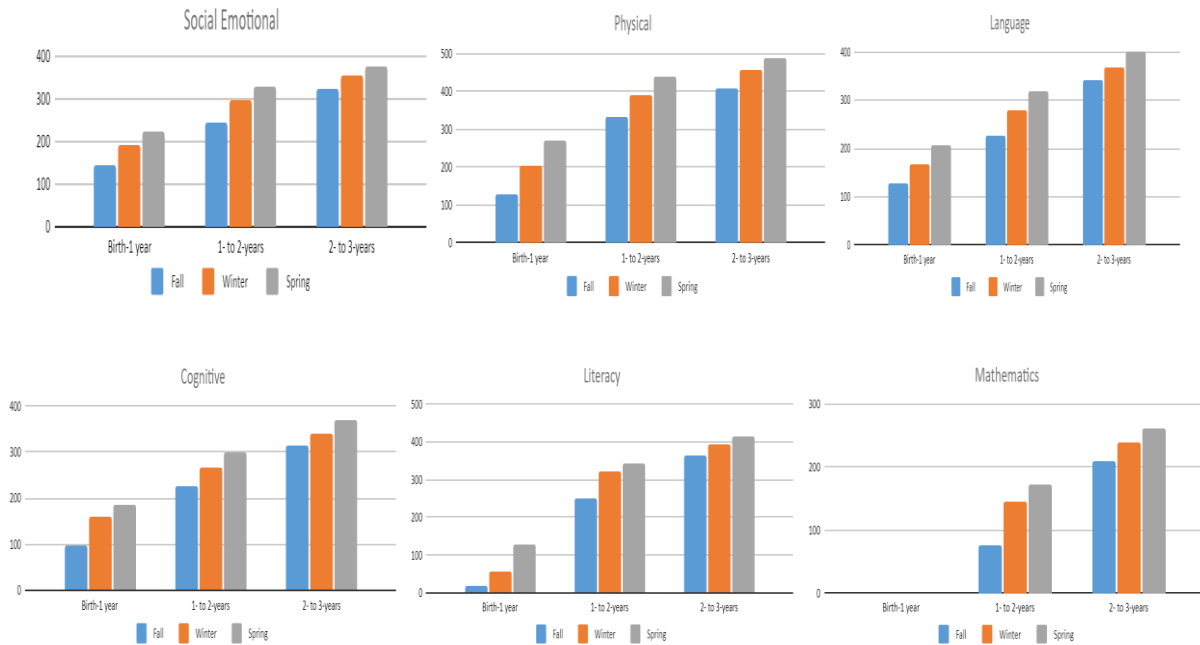
Head Start Program Totals 2020-2021

Teaching Strategies GOLD



EHS Teaching Strategies GOLD

Fall to Spring 2020-2021



Kindergarten Transition

When a child enters the preschool program, care is taken to place the child in a classroom that best meets the child and family needs. Continuity of care is important and the overall goal is that children remain with the same primary caregivers throughout their enrollment until they transition from EHS to HS or HS to kindergarten.

When transition occurs, the program collaborates with parents and school districts to implement strategies to support successful transitions for children and families to the new location. 116 children successfully transitioned to kindergarten for the 2020-21 school year. The program shares upcoming kindergarten transition activities held by the public schools and supports families with meeting requirements necessary for kindergarten registration. Kindergarten transition backpacks were provided to children to support summer learning.

Policy Council

The Policy Council is a group of HS and EHS parents and community members who help lead and share in the decision-making process regarding quality programming for themselves and their children. Policy council members are elected at each site annually by the parents of children enrolled in the program. The Policy Council has a minimum membership of 18 members. The program offers Governance training at the beginning of each new school year and as new members are elected. The council meets monthly and reviews program reports and policies, receives updates, and provides input into the program. The program would like to thank the 2020-21 Policy Council Members for their leadership and dedication to ESU 13 Head Start.