

NEBRASKA
esu13
serving the panhandle



**Head
Start**



2022-2023
Annual Report

The Head Start Program

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

The Educational Service Unit 13 Head Start program offers comprehensive child development and family support services tailored to low-income children and their families. Early Head Start (EHS) serves children from birth to three years old, while Head Start (HS) focuses on those aged three to five, all within enriching center-based care and educational environments. This program ensures that enrolled children and their families have access to essential services such as proper nutrition, social and emotional learning opportunities, as well as developmentally appropriate education. Through strategic community partnerships, our program extends its support to children and families by facilitating access to crucial services. These include essential health and dental care, crisis-response assistance, asset building opportunities, and mental health care.

The Head Start programs employ research-based curricula designed to capitalize on each child's unique strengths, interests, and specific needs. Aligning with 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, the program's School Readiness Goals are set to provide a holistic educational foundation.

“Through strategic community partnerships, our program extends its support to children and families by facilitating access to crucial services.”

Emphasizing parent and guardian involvement in their children's education, the program encourages regular home visits facilitated by family advocates and teachers. Additionally, parents have opportunities to take on leadership roles through participation in the Policy Council and Parent Committees. The Policy Council comprises HS and EHS parents as well as community members, elected annually at each site, contributing to decision-making processes to enhance program quality.

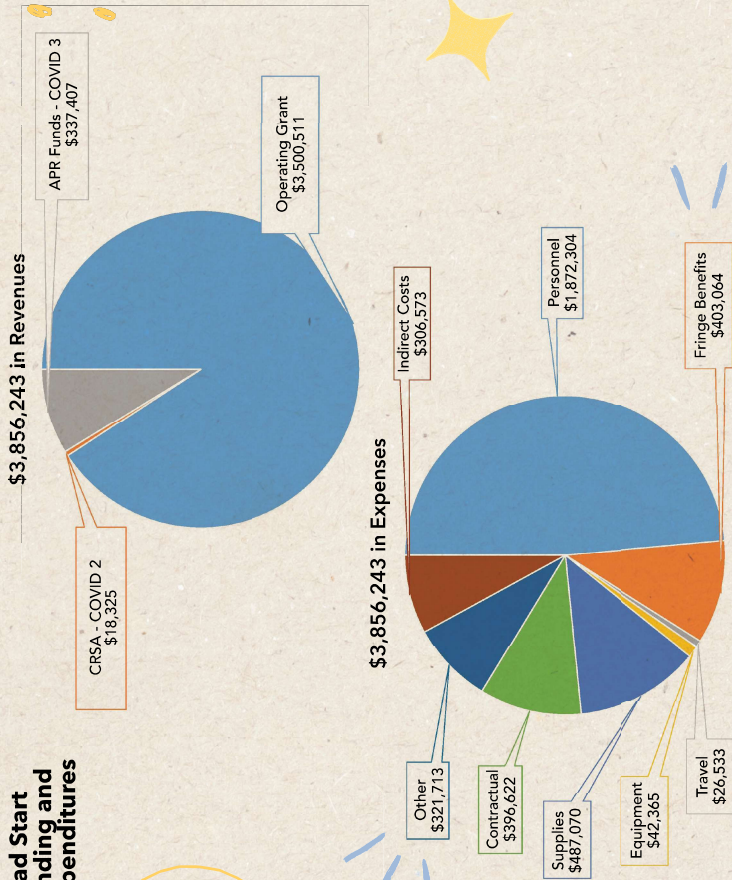


Teachers play a pivotal role in children's development and progress towards school readiness goals by engaging directly with children and families. Parents are actively encouraged to contribute to their child's education by establishing and reviewing individual goals during home visits and parent-teacher conferences. Children's progress is meticulously monitored through observations and anecdotal records, and the corresponding data is accurately documented in Teaching Strategies GOLD, an online assessment system.

The Head Start programs guarantee that enrolled children receive the necessary care and education to achieve their developmental milestones, ensuring they are well-prepared to enter school and embark on a lifelong journey of productive learning. The program collaborates closely with parents and school districts, devising effective strategies to support smooth transitions for children entering kindergarten. As of the conclusion of the 2022-23 school year, a total of 114 children were age-eligible to transition to kindergarten. The program actively engaged with families, sharing information about kindergarten transition activities hosted by public schools, and assisting families in fulfilling the requirements essential for kindergarten registration.



Head Start Funding and Expenditures



Educational Service Unit No. 13 (ESU 13) is the grantee organization for the Head Start programs, receiving federal funds from the Administration for 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.

Service Locations

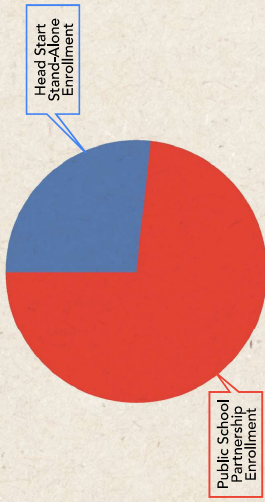
Head Start Location <i>(serving children ages 3-5 years)</i>	Early Head Start Locations <i>(serving prenatal moms and children ages birth-2 years)</i>
Bridgeport	Home-Based
Western Nebraska Child Development Center 1 Head Start and 5 Early Head Start Classrooms	
Early Learning Center 1 Head Start and 3 Early Head Start Classrooms	
Head Start Public School Partnerships	
Bayard, Gering, Minatare, Mitchell, Morrill, Scottsbluff, and Sidney	



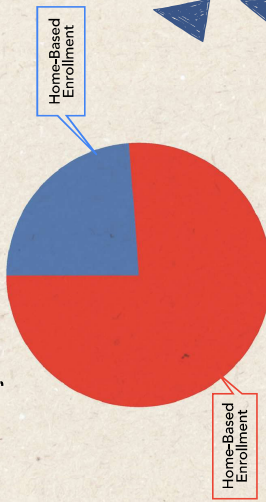
Enrollment and Eligibility



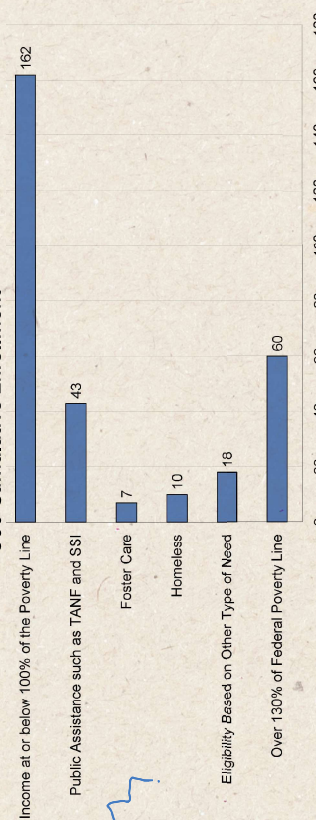
Head Start Funded Enrollment



Early Head Start Funded Enrollment



HS/EHS Eligibility



Enrollment in the home-based program had consistently been low for a number of years. Following a thorough community assessment, it became evident that there was a pressing need for center-based infant/toddler services in the Bridgeport area. In December 2022, the program received approval to reduce Early Head Start slots from 84 to 72, discontinuing the home-based program and reallocating funds towards setting up an infant/toddler classroom in Bridgeport. Significant work was undertaken to prepare the playground and classroom. During this transition, we continued to support children and families in their home setting for the rest of the school year. The new classroom opened in August 2023.

Recent Review Results

In November 2023, our program underwent thorough reviews in Focus Area Two (FA2) and CLASS with the Office of Head Start (OHS), and we are presently awaiting the results of these evaluations.

“ We are committed to maintaining these high standards as we eagerly anticipate the outcomes of the recent FA2 review. ”

Prior to this, in April 2021, our program actively participated in a comprehensive review in Focus Area One (FA1) with OHS. The FA1 review provided a valuable platform for OHS to gain insights into the strategies employed for service provision, focusing on how we effectively meet the unique needs of the communities within our service area.

During the FA1 review, ESU 13 Head Start demonstrated compliance with all relevant Head Start Program Performance Standards, laws, regulations, and policy requirements. We are committed to maintaining these high standards as we eagerly anticipate the outcomes of the recent FA2 review.

Highlights of the FA1 Review:

- Response to community needs, including increased efforts to support mental health and healthcare access for families, staff, and children enrolled in the program.
- Innovative responses to support families with continued enrollment and learning opportunities.
- Investment in staff:
 - Accessibility to professional development
 - A focus on staff wellbeing, and
 - Ongoing support to reinforce teacher's skills in preventing challenging behaviors, understanding trauma, handling stress, and building resilient classrooms.

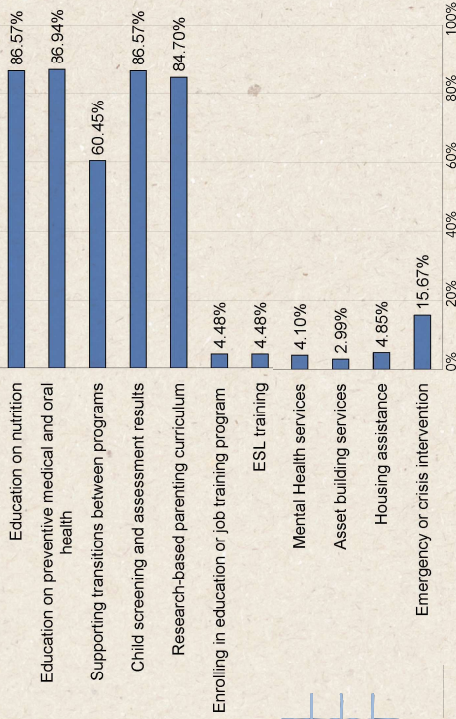




Parent Involvement Activities

The Family Advocates of the Head Start and Early Head Start programs engage directly with families within the comfort of their homes, employing the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework. This personalized approach allows for a deeper connection with families as they collaboratively establish family goals to pursue throughout the school year. These goals serve as empowering milestones, reflecting the families' aspirations and ambitions for personal and familial growth. By focusing on their interests and desires, we strive to support families in advancing and enhancing their quality of life.

Family Services Received



The Head Start program is committed to enriching the parent experience by providing a multitude of opportunities for education, social connections, and peer support. We organize various events, such as center family gatherings and dedicated engagements for both mothers and fathers. These gatherings are thoughtfully tailored to address specific interests and concerns identified by parents, encompassing vital topics like child safety, family literacy, budgeting, asset development, adult education, mental health, stress management, family nutrition, and behavior supports.

One standout tool we've integrated is the Ready4K text messaging curriculum, which has proven to be highly effective in promoting family engagement. This innovative tool delivers three short, age-appropriate activities each week, aiding parents in fostering their child's development in meaningful and engaging ways. We are continuously dedicated to providing avenues for learning, support, and connection that empower parents to thrive in their important roles.

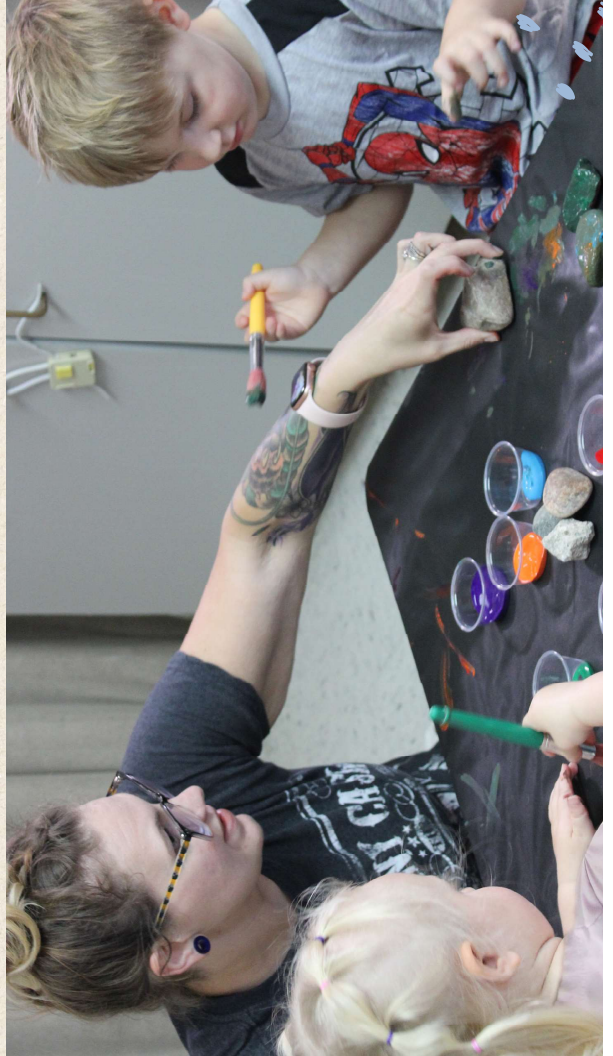
Moreover, our program offers parent education through specialized courses such as Circle of Security and Love and Logic parenting courses. These courses equip parents with valuable insights and effective strategies to enhance their parenting skills. During home visits and engagement events, our dedicated Family Advocates also share essential knowledge from the Growing Great Kids Curriculum and The Pyramid Model, providing valuable resources to families.

Health and Disabilities

ESU #13 Head Start and Early Head Start programs were dedicated to fostering a holistic approach to children's health by actively collaborating with community providers. Through these partnerships, we ensured thorough and comprehensive health assessments for all enrolled children. This encompassed crucial dental, hearing, vision, and speech screenings.



In addition to these essential health assessments, our program conducted comprehensive social-emotional assessments and developmental screenings. These evaluations played a fundamental role in understanding each child's overall well-being and development. Moreover, they enabled us to tailor appropriate interventions and support as needed, ensuring that every child received the care and attention necessary for their growth and success.



Additionally, in alignment with regulations and our commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, ESU #13 Head Start and Early Head Start programs diligently worked to provide services to a minimum of 10% of children with disabilities. This commitment is a testament to our dedication to serving all children, irrespective of their unique abilities and needs, to ensure equal access to educational and developmental opportunities.

“ These evaluations played a fundamental role in understanding each child's overall well-being and development. ”



2022-23 Screenings	Head Start	Early Head Start
Hearing	100%	99%
Vision	100%	93%
Speech	100%	n/a
Social-Emotional	100%	98%
Developmental	100%	93%

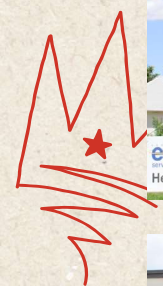
2022-23 Exams	Head Start	Early Head Start
Physical	71%	76%
Dental	55%	61%

2022-23 Disabilities	Head Start	Early Head Start
	28%	17%



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UNL Panhandle Research &
Extension Center**

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Scottsbluff, NE
(308) 633-3712
Fax: (308) 633-5228



Bridgeport

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Bridgeport, NE
(308) 262-0507



Early Learning Center (ELC)

1720 Portal Place
Scottsbluff, NE
(308) 632-1999



**Western Nebraska Child
Development Center (CDC)**

3118 17th Avenue
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(308) 635-3231

