

Head Start 2023-2024 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 delivers comprehensive child development and family support services designed for low-income children and their families. Early Head Start (EHS) caters to children from birth to age three, while Head Start (HS) focuses on those aged three to five, providing enriching, center-based care and educational experiences. The program ensures access to critical services, including proper nutrition, social-emotional learning, and age-appropriate education. By leveraging community partnerships, the program further supports children and families with essential services such as health and dental care, crisis assistance, asset-building opportunities, and mental health care.

The Head Start programs utilize research-backed curricula tailored to each child's unique strengths, interests, and needs. In alignment 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, the program's School Readiness Goals are set to offer a comprehensive educational foundation.

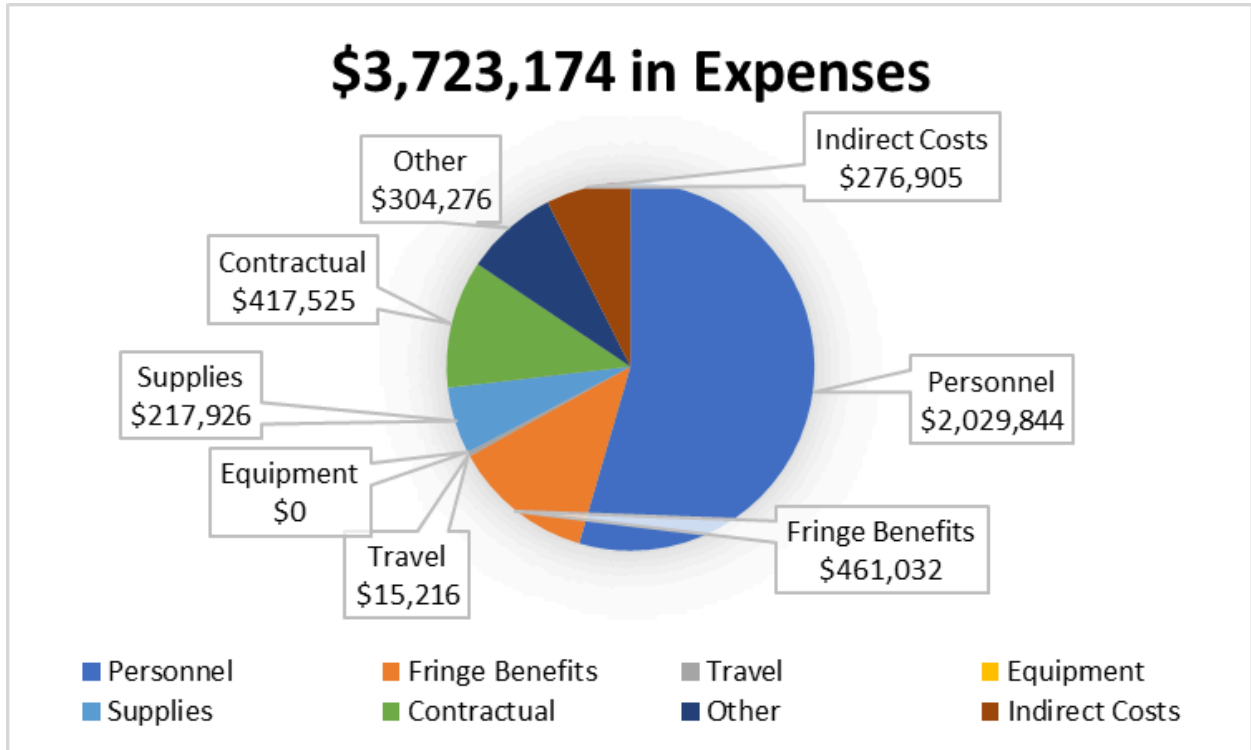
The program places strong emphasis on parent and guardian involvement in their children's education, encouraging regular home visits conducted by family advocates and teachers. Parents are also given leadership opportunities through participation in the Policy Council and Parent Committees. The Policy Council, made up of HS and EHS parents alongside community members, is elected annually at each site and plays a key role in decision-making to

improve program quality.

Teachers are central to children's growth and progress toward school readiness goals, working closely with both children and families. Parents are actively involved in their child's education by setting and reviewing individual goals during home visits and parent-teacher conferences. Children's progress is carefully tracked through observations and anecdotal records, with the data systematically recorded in Teaching Strategies GOLD, an online assessment platform.

Head Start programs ensure that enrolled children receive the care and education needed to meet developmental milestones, preparing them for a successful start in school and a lifelong journey of productive learning. The program works closely with parents and school districts to develop strategies that support a smooth transition into kindergarten. By the end of the 2023-24 school year, 115 children were age-eligible for kindergarten. The program actively partnered with families, providing information on kindergarten transition activities hosted by public schools and assisting them in meeting the requirements 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

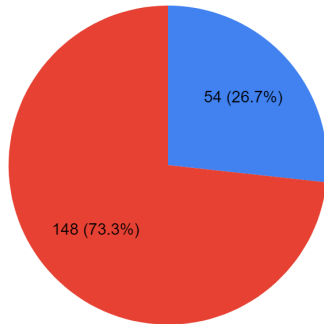
Head Start Location (serving children ages 3-5 years)	Early Head Start Locations (serving children ages birth-2 years)
Bridgeport <i>1 Head Start and 1 Early Head Start Classroom</i>	
Western Nebraska Child Development Center <i>1 Head Start and 5 Early Head Start Classrooms</i>	
Early Learning Center <i>1 Head Start and 3 Early Head Start Classrooms</i>	

Head Start Public School Partnerships

Bayard, Gering, Minatare, Mitchell, Morrill, Scottsbluff, and Sidney

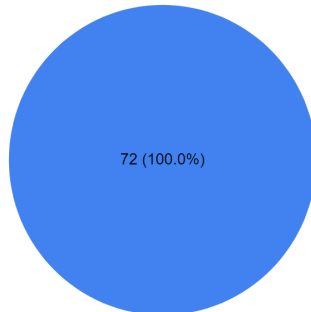
Enrollment and Eligibility

Head Start Funded Enrollment



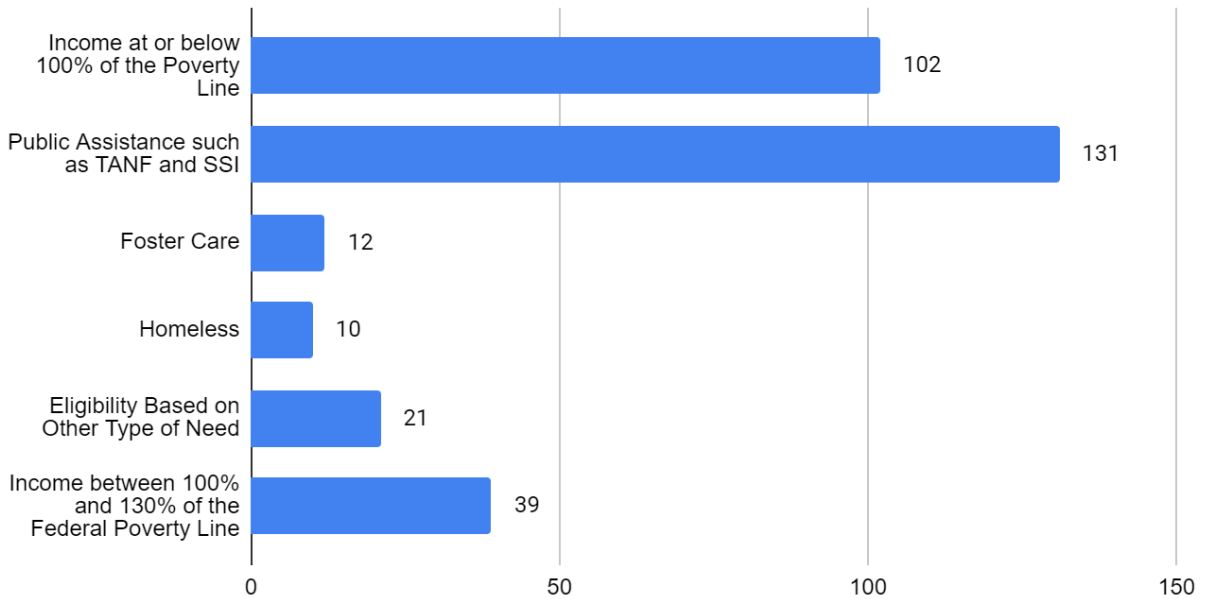
● Head Start Stand-Alone Enrollment ● Public School Partnership Enrollment

Early Head Start Funded Enrollment



● Center-Based Enrollment

HS/EHS Eligibility 315 Cumulative Enrollment



In August 2023, the program opened an Early Head Start classroom in Bridgeport at our existing center. This classroom served 8 infants and toddlers in the 2023-2024 school year. The program remained fully enrolled with 274 children throughout the program year.

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 any findings were resolved in June 2024.

Highlights of the FA2 Review: The program fosters effective governance through strong collaboration between staff, the governing body, and the policy council, ensuring oversight and clear program direction. By using research-based curricula and appropriate screening and assessment tools, the program supports individualized progress for each child. Well-structured learning environments and responsive care nurture healthy development, while a positive atmosphere, supported by mental health services, enhances children's social and emotional

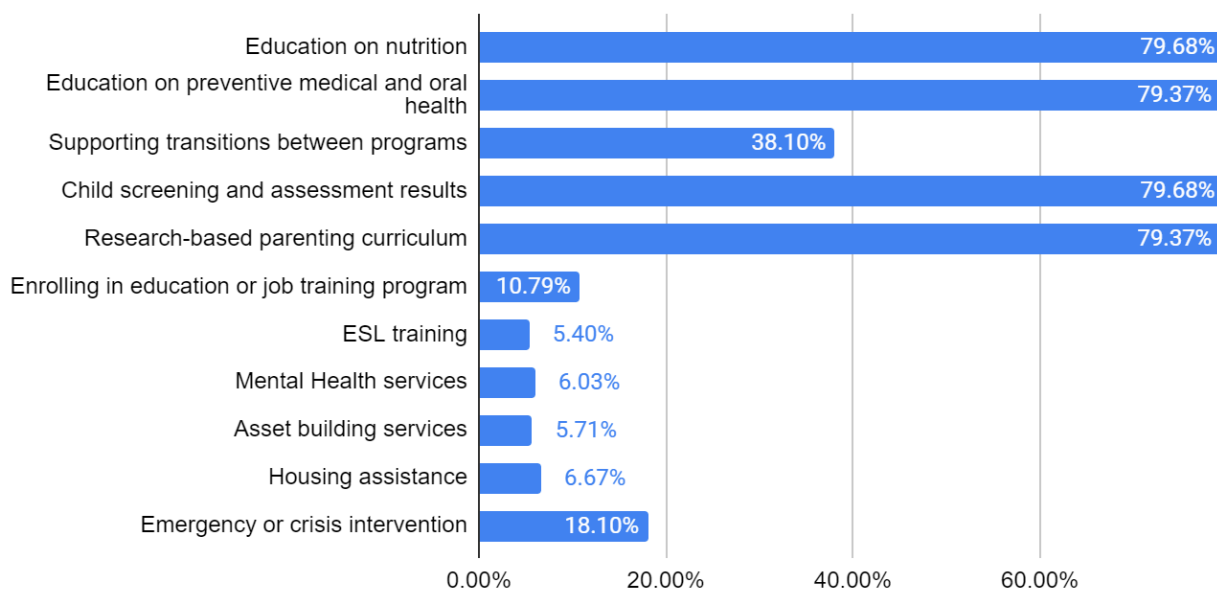
well-being. Nutrition services are tailored to meet the unique needs of each child. Staff actively engage families through partnerships that focus on goals and parenting education, while community collaborations strengthen support services. Financial transparency and compliance are maintained through robust oversight, and clear processes for eligibility and enrollment prioritize vulnerable children.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System, or CLASS, is a tool looking at three domains and ten dimensions of teacher/child interactions and measures those observed interactions on a seven point scale. ESU 13 Head Start met quality thresholds in all areas.

Parent Involvement Activities

Family Advocates in the Head Start and Early Head Start programs work directly with families in their homes, using the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework. This personalized approach fosters stronger relationships as families and advocates collaboratively set meaningful goals for the school year. These goals reflect the families' aspirations for personal and family growth, serving as empowering milestones. By centering on their unique interests and ambitions, we aim to support families in improving and enriching their quality of life.

Family Services Received



The Head Start program is dedicated to enriching the parent experience by offering numerous opportunities for education, social connections, and peer support. We host a variety of events, including center family gatherings and specialized activities for both mothers and fathers. These gatherings are thoughtfully designed to address parents' specific interests and concerns, covering important topics such as child safety, family literacy, budgeting, asset development, adult education, mental health, stress management, family nutrition, and behavior support.

Additionally, we provide parent education through courses like Circle of Security, equipping parents with practical insights and strategies to strengthen their parenting skills. During home visits and engagement events, Family Advocates also share key resources from the Growing Great Kids Curriculum and The Pyramid Model, offering valuable support to families.

One particularly impactful tool we've adopted is the Ready4K text messaging curriculum, which promotes family engagement by sending three short, age-appropriate activities

each week. This innovative approach helps parents foster their child’s development in fun and meaningful ways. We remain committed to providing learning, support, and connection opportunities that empower parents to thrive in their vital roles.

Health and Disabilities

ESU #13 Head Start and Early Head Start programs prioritize a holistic approach to children's health by partnering with community providers to ensure comprehensive health assessments for all enrolled children. These assessments include essential dental, hearing, vision, and speech screenings. Additionally, the program conducts thorough social-emotional and developmental evaluations, which help assess each child's well-being and guide necessary interventions. In line with regulations and a commitment to inclusivity, the program ensures that at least 10% of enrolled children are those with disabilities, reinforcing its dedication to providing equal educational and developmental opportunities for all children.

2023-24 Screenings	Head Start	Early Head Start
Hearing	100%	100%
Vision	100%	100%
Speech	100%	n/a
Social-Emotional	100%	100%
Developmental	100%	100%
2023-24 Exams		
Physical	79%	85%
Dental	75%	86%
2023-24 Disabilities	28%	14%