

Start Early

Head Start/ Early Head Start Network



Annual Report 2021

Contents

Directly Operated Programs	1
Grantee: Start Early.....	1
Educare	2
Healthy Parents and Babies	9
Delegate and Partners	17
Casa Central – Delegate Agency	17
Children’s Home + Aid - Delegate Agency	25
Children’s Place Association – Partner Agency.....	28
Family Focus.....	33
First Step Child Care Center – Partner Agency	52
One Hope United - Delegate Agency	57
One Hope United Waukegan - Delegate Agency	58
SGA Youth Services –Delegate Agency	64
Start Early Grantee.....	70
Highlights from Start Early.....	77
Summary of Audit Findings.....	77
Summary of Information Required by the Secretary.....	77

General Information

Directly Operated Programs

Grantee: Start Early

Program Number: 05-CH6100-000

Address: 33 West Monroe, Suite 2400, Chicago, IL 60603

Phone Number: (312) 922-3863

Fax Number: (312) 346-2981

Head Start Director Name: Claire Dunham

Head Start Director Email: CDunham@startearly.org

Agency Web Site Address: www.startearly.org

Agency Type: Grantee

Agency Description: Start Early is a Head Start/Early Head Start grantee which provides services through directly-operated, partner, and delegate programs throughout the city of Chicago and the south suburbs.

Educare – Directly-Operated Program

The Educare Center is a program to prepare young, at-risk children for school by implementing the approaches and practices that science tells us are necessary to help young children grow up safe, healthy, and eager to learn. This unique program provides education and care for 165 children ages 6 weeks to 5 years old. Educare offers specialized supports for children and their families, including arts, intensive math and language, and many parent education opportunities. The center is the original site of a national network of Educare schools developed through a partnership between the Ounce of Prevention Fund and the Buffett Early Childhood Fund.

Healthy Parents and Babies – Directly-Operated Program

The Healthy Parents and Babies program has 78 program slots allocated to providing services for pregnant women, young parents, and children aged birth through 3 years old. The program philosophy is based on providing relationship-based, family-centered, child-focused programs for pregnant women, children, and families through home visits and doula services that begin as early as in a woman's pregnancy, if possible.

Site Location

Educare Center

5044 S. Wabash Avenue

Chicago, IL 60615

Healthy Parents and Babies

33 W Monroe St. Chicago, IL 60603

Community Areas Served: Grand Boulevard, Kenwood, Washington Park, Brighton Park, Humboldt Park, McKinley Park.

Directly Operated Programs

Educare

Name of Agency: Start Early
 Program Number:
 Program Name: Educare Chicago
 Address: 5044 S. Wabash Avenue
 Phone Number: 773-924-2334
 Fax Number: 773-285-9749
 Director Name: Angela M Lampkin
 Director Email: alampkin@startearly.org

Agency Web Site Address: www.educarechicago.org
 Agency Type: Licensed Early Childhood Program

Agency Description

Educare Chicago is a birth to five Head Start/Early Head Start early childhood program founded in 2000 by Start Early. This state-of-the-art school on Chicago’s South Side serves low-income infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families. By providing research-based, high-quality services to young children and their families, Educare helps break the cycle of unequal access to resources and historic under-investment and serves as a model for learning and innovation in the field nationwide.

Site Locations

5044 S. Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60615

Community Areas Served

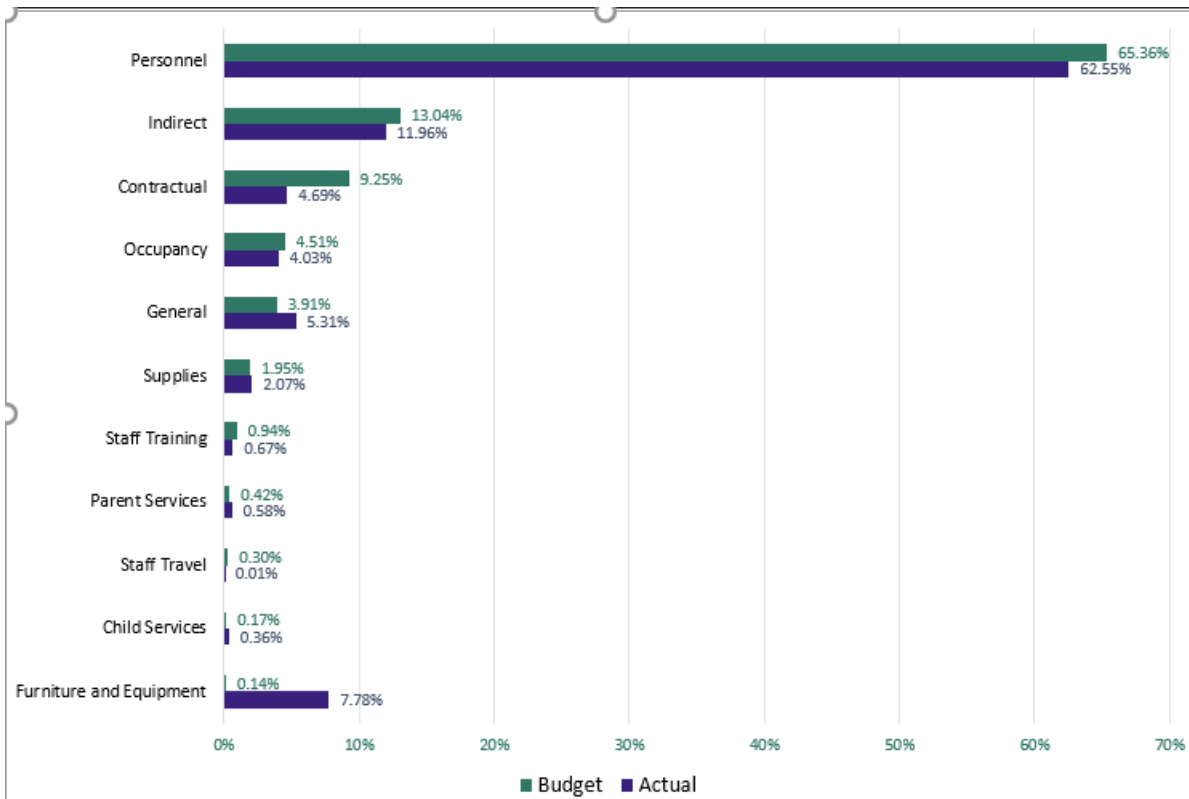
Educare Chicago resides on the south side of Chicago. The families we serve generally live in the neighboring communities surrounding Educare Chicago. These communities include Fuller Park, Grand Boulevard, Kenwood, Oakland, Washington Park and New City.

Overall Program Budget FY21

Total Public and Private Funds received: \$ 7,039,858

Public Funds		Private Funds	
Source	Amount	Source	Amount
Federal	\$4,879,590	Individuals, Corporations, Foundations, etc.	\$383,358
State	\$635,252	In-kind	\$2,994
Local School District	\$1,138,664		
Total Public	\$6,653,506	Total Private	\$386,352

2021 Budget and Actual Expenditures



Summary of 2021 Community Assessment
 Children and Families Served in 2020-2021
 Educare Funded Enrollment

	Head Start Enrollment	Early Head Start Enrollment
Center-based Program	81	64
a. 5 days per week	81	64
1. Full-day enrollment	81	64
2. Part-day enrollment	NA	NA
b. 4 days per week	NA	NA
1. Full-day enrollment	NA	NA
2. Part-day enrollment	NA	NA
Home-based Program	NA	NA
Unallocated Slots	0	0
Total:	81	64

Site

Total Children Served: 104

Total Families Served: 97

Average monthly enrollment (as percentage of funded enrollment): 82 (57%)

Number of Eligible Children in Community, Ages 0-5	49,310
Percentage of Children Served in Agency	0.21%

Health

Percentage of enrolled children who received medical and dental exams:

	Received Medical Exams	Received Dental Exams
	64	51

Parental Involvement in Educare Chicago

Community Assessment Summary

Start Early (formerly known as the Ounce of Prevention Fund) is a champion for early learning and care from a child’s very first moments in order to provide the opportunity for every child to thrive in school and life. Start Early advances quality early learning for families with children, before birth through their earliest years, to help close the opportunity gap. Educare Chicago is a directly operated program of Start Early providing center-based services for children 6 weeks through five years old.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had profound effects on all aspects of community and family life. Its effects permeate all parts of this update. Hard data and numbers are not yet available on how the pandemic and subsequent economic impact has affected poverty, unemployment, child health, homelessness, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, food security and any number of other things including the availability of early childhood programs. Where possible information was gained from non-profit reports such as the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, from the state agencies, from news articles and other sources chronicling the pandemic and its effects on community and family life.

Despite the pandemic, Educare families were resilient and found many strengths within the community. These strengths included:

- Parents exhibited strength, resilience and creativity in combating the COVID pandemic and switching to virtual services.

- Resources in the community including churches.

- Program staff continued to be helpful, providing resources and referrals

- Schools provided technology for children that needed services during the pandemic

- Services and support from Early Intervention and Special Education continued instead of being cancelled and that was a strength

- The virtual modality helped strengthen parent's commitment and empowered them as the primary provider, showing resiliency and creativity and playing bigger roles in the therapy sessions

- Families that live in high crime areas in the past had a difficult time getting therapists to come to their homes, but now therapists from all over the state have been reaching out to families in all areas because they can service them over Zoom or other online platforms

Homelessness

The May 2020 Chicago Coalition for the Homeless’ annual study, using 2018 census data, reported that 76,998 Chicagoans were homeless in 2018. While this number represents a decrease from the number of homeless Chicagoans in 2017 (86,324 in 2017), the number represents an increase of people living on the streets or in shelters, a troubling trend with shelters a potential current venue for COVID infection. Homelessness is expected to climb dramatically during the economic downturn triggered by the COVID pandemic.

The community areas below are Start Early recruitment areas with elementary schools that have homeless student enrollment higher than 5%. Table 1B in Appendix B shows that Englewood, West Englewood, Humboldt Park, Uptown, Edgewater and Rogers Park have high percentages of homeless students. Englewood, West Englewood and Humboldt Park along with Washington Park also have more schools with enrollment percentages higher than 5%.

Nicholson Elementary – 144 homeless students (32%) – Englewood and West Englewood
Faraday Elementary – 53 homeless students (26%) – Humboldt Park
Parker Elementary – 88 homeless students (21%) – Englewood, West Englewood
Melody Elementary – 53 homeless students (16%) – Humboldt Park
Courtenay Elementary – 42 homeless students (15%) – Uptown, Edgewater
Gale Elementary – 31 homeless students (15%) – Rogers Park

Birth Rates

A March 2021 editorial in the New York Times by two economists predicted a drop in births by 8% or 300,000 fewer births in 2020 and into 2021 due to the COVID pandemic. Historically, when the labor market is weak, aggregate birthrates decline; when the labor market improves, birthrates improve. The Covid-19 pandemic has propelled the country into an economic recession and a major restructuring of work and social lives. Some of the decline might be temporary but the longer and more persistent the income losses, the more likely that many of the drops in birth will last for a few years.

Poverty

The COVID pandemic affected many aspects of society worldwide. One area of big impact has been the loss of thousands of businesses, job loss and a resultant economic recession. All of these factors have contributed to economic hardships for families and children. Precise numbers of children that have become poorer as a result of the pandemic are not yet obtainable.

The year between 2017 and 2018 saw decreases in child poverty in every Chicago community. The years between 2018 and 2019, however, saw just the opposite – most of the community areas in this report saw increases in child poverty. The Chicago young child poverty rate in 2019 was 26% and in 2018, 23%, an increase of 11%. The following community areas had poverty rates (less than 100% of the federal poverty level) at 40% or higher in 2019:

Englewood – 50%
West Englewood – 50%
Washington Park – 46%
Woodlawn – 45%
New City – 42%

Extreme Poverty

Many of the community areas with high percentages of young child poverty also had high percentages of children in extreme poverty (below 50% of poverty). The following community areas had extreme poverty levels at or above 15%.

Englewood – 22%
West Englewood – 22%
Washington Park – 21%
Woodlawn – 20%

Unemployment

New unemployment figures for Chicago community areas were not available and the most recent census data would have reflected 2019. Since 2019, the COVID pandemic has seen large increases in unemployment. The rate jumped in April 2020 to a level not seen since the 1930s and nationwide, the

unemployment still stood at 6.2 in February 2021. The rates were higher for Black and Latinx workers, 9.9% and 8.5% respectively since February 2020, compared to 5.6% for White workers. Unemployment has also risen faster among workers born outside of the United States, including individuals who are now U.S. citizens. Latina women fell into the deepest unemployment at the height of the job losses last spring, going from 12.4 million workers in February 2020 to 9.4 million in April 2020, a 24% drop.

The majority of jobs lost have been in industries that pay low average wages, with the lowest paying industries accounting for 30% of all jobs but 55% of the jobs lost from February 2020 to February 2021. Low paying industry jobs were down 11.2% compared to 5.1% in medium wage industries and 3% for high wage industries.

Crime

While violent crime has been decreasing in many Chicago neighborhoods for the last few years, the first quarter of 2021 has seen more gun violence than in the past 4 years – 131 killings so far in 2021, a 34% jump over the same period a year ago. The last year also saw 760 people killed as neighborhoods struggled with school closures, unemployment and shortages of resources in poorer communities as well as the unrest following George Floyd's death. Chicago has not been the only city experiencing a spike in gun violence and deaths; Detroit, New York, Philadelphia, as well as smaller cities such as Grand Rapids and Milwaukee, both Democrat and Republican led areas, have also experienced an increase in gun violence.

In addition to the gun violence and homicides, Chicago has also experienced a large increase in carjackings this year, continuing from an increased trend in 2020. More than 370 carjackings have occurred in the city through mid-March 2021, the most seen here during the same period in any year since 2001.

Early learning programs like Educare Chicago continue to be a need on Chicago's Southside. Educare Chicago is a Circle of Gold rated program through Illinois' quality rating and improvement system, ExceleRate. Educare provides services to address educational, health, and social services needs experienced by children and families living in poverty. Educare is a safe haven for children that supports developmental and school readiness skills while partnering with families to walk side by side with them to provide the necessary supports to be self-sufficient while providing the encouragement and resources for families to advocate for their needs.

Parent Education Activities

Parent Committee Meetings

Educare Chicago had an active Parent Committee. Our Parent Committee President was also the Policy Council Chair and the parent representative for the Start Early Board of Directors. The Parent Committee met on the following dates: September 22, 2020, October 27, 2020, December 15, 2020, January 26, 2021, April 27, 2021, and July 27, 2021.

Other Special Gatherings or Activities

While operating in a pandemic, Educare Chicago provided virtual learning experiences for families and children every Friday. Additionally, six families participated in the Lullaby Project, a partnership with Carnegie Hall where parents collaborated with professional musicians to write songs for their children. Two of our parent's songs were featured in a virtual conference hosted by Carnegie Hall.

Family Support Specialist continued to use Educare's parent curriculum, Parents As Teachers, to support parent's understanding of their child's development. Family Support Specialists provided 25 PAT experiences this school year. 165 parents participated in these activities.

Male Involvement

During the 2020/2021 school year, Educare had a total of 17 dads/father figures involved in a variety of program experiences. 15 dads participated in the Family Assessment and Family Goal setting process. 17 dads participated in Child Developmental Activities. Two dads participated in Program Governance, and 10 dads participated in Parent Education Workshops.

Health

Educare Chicago has an onsite Health Specialist and an onsite nurse. While operating in a pandemic, lots of support was provided to ensure children, staff, and families were healthy to receive in person services. The health team trained several staff to support the health screening and daily health check process. This process was instrumental in mitigating the spread of viruses and other illnesses within the program. Lots of health education and follow up was provided for children and families in quarantine, as well as, to stress to families the importance of ensuring children were up to date with well child exams, immunizations, and health follow up. Educare Chicago struggled with health and dental benchmarks. Some health providers provided limited services during the pandemic and families felt uncomfortable taking their children to medical appointments during high transmission rates of COVID 19.

Mental Health

Educare Chicago has two Mental Health and Wellness Consultants. Services were offered to children, families, and staff during the 2020/2021 school year. The Wellness Consultants conducted virtual classroom observations and participated in case consultations for children. The Wellness Consultants facilitated workshops on stress, led mindfulness exercises, and provided one-on-one consultation to families. Additionally monthly opportunities to participate in family and mom support groups were offered to parents.

Community and Social Services

Other Community-related Education

During the 2020/2021 school year, Educare limited onsite programming due to community transmission rates of COVID 19. Resources were shared with families during virtual parent meetings, along with the Family Service Team providing community referrals based on needs identified by the families. Last school year 100% of families served accessed referral services. Educare provided a total of 360 services ranging from parenting education, postpartum care, nutrition education, and assistance in enrolling in school or job training.

Additionally, Educare maintained its relationship with LIFT. LIFT's mission is to partner with families to break the cycle of poverty. LIFT provides families with a counselor/mentor who works with them to establish goals. The mentor provides resources and coaching supports to assist families with achieving their goals. Twenty Educare families participated in LIFT during the 2020/2021 school year. Additionally, LIFT was an active community partner on the Policy Council.

Education and Literacy

Educare faced many challenges to support children's learning while operating in a pandemic.

Enrollment was a challenge along with daily school attendance. Parents were reluctant to enroll their children in early learning programs. Parents choosing virtual learning options struggled with balancing their other responsibilities with being consistent with virtual learning in the home, and finally children missed a lot of school due to school closures and quarantines due to COVID exposures. Despite the challenges, Educare maintained its commitment to children and families. During the Spring Checkpoint, children birth through met or exceeded the following developmental expectations as measured by Teaching Strategies Gold:

Social Emotional:	82.76%
Physical:	84.37 %
Language:	82.26%
Cognitive:	85.49%
Literacy:	86.15%
Mathematics:	82.54%

Kindergarten Readiness

Educare’s mission is to close the persistent achievement gap. While operating in a pandemic, families took on a major role in being their child’s first and primary teacher. Educare supported families by providing virtual learning experiences that consisted of daily small group interactions facilitated by a teacher in partnership with the parents. Educare teachers prepared individualized lesson plans with asynchronous developmental activities for parents to do with their children. Additionally monthly learning kits were provided to ensure parents had the resources at home to implement the activities.

Special Efforts to Prepare Children for Kindergarten

To support learning in the home, Educare provided families with the learning app, ReadAskChat and access to Hatch/Ignite web based educational computer games. ReadAskChat is a web-based application for families to use at home that provides developmentally appropriate children’s literature supported by age-appropriate extension activities with follow-up open-ended conversation starters that promote language, communication skills, and higher order thinking. In September of 2020, Educare held an orientation for families to learn more about the app, and how the app supported children’s learning and development. Carolyn Saper, the app creator, facilitated the event while providing families with hands-on opportunities to review some of the stories and to practice some of the extension activities. 63 families registered for the ReadAskChat app. 132 stories were read. This was an average of 5 stories per user. Families used the app for an average of 8 times per week for an average of 11 minutes. Families completed an average of two extension experiences per story.

In August of 2020, Educare purchased a new computer system for preschool children called Hatch Ignite. This system provided web-based educational games children could access at home and at school. The Hatch system individualized activities as children played the games to scaffold learning. The system provided additional supports for home and school to extend learning opportunities to ensure children mastered developmental skills. Additionally, as children played the games, developmental data synced to Educare’s assessment system Teaching Strategies Gold. This provided teachers with needed information to determine children’s developmental progress. Hatch recommends each child play learning games on Hatch for at least 30 minutes per week. According to Hatch, each child plays for approximately 715 minutes/ per school year to reach kindergarten readiness as measured through the Hatch Ignite system. On average our preschool children played 398.75 minutes. Educare had 46 preschool children enrolled. Of the 46 preschool children enrolled, 19 children are transitioning to kindergarten for the 2021/2022 school year. As of June 2021, our kindergarten bound

children showed strengths in Science and Technology, Language and Communication, and Self-Care within the physical domain. A small percentage of k-bound children also showed strengths in alliteration. Two of the 19 children were consistent with using the Hatch system. These two children accumulated the most time using the system and showed the most progress on the system. As of June 2021, one child has exceeded K-bound expectations in Science and Technology, Social Emotional Development, Language and Communication, Physical Development, Concepts of Print, Alliteration, and Listening and Comprehension

Transition Activities to Promote Kindergarten Readiness

Educare establishes an annual Transition Plan to support children and families transition from Early Head Start to Head Start and from Head Start to elementary school. The plan is facilitated by a school-based Transition Committee. Our plans begin with establishing individualized Transition Plans with families of children turning 30 months in Early Head Start and at the beginning of the school year for K-Bound families. Our Family Support Specialist meet with K-Bound families to assist them with enrolling in public school through a process called Go CPS. This past school year, Educare hosted a virtual Charter School Meeting to allow parents to learn about Charter School options. K-Bound students also participate in Kindergarten Corner. Each preschool classroom provides a time for the K-Bound children to do kindergarten readiness experiences in a small group to provide children with additional opportunities to master the developmental skills necessary to be prepared for kindergarten. Finally, classrooms invited former Educare parents and children to come speak with K-Bound children and families about their kindergarten experience.

Summary of Audit Findings

Educare had an annual licensing visit by the Illinois Department of Children and Families in January of 2021. There were no findings from this audit. The City Health Department conducted backflow line inspections. Educare received a finding for missing documentation. The finding was corrected and now documentation is attached to the backflow line location. The Fire Marshall also conducted an audit. The findings and corrections are listed below:

Kickstand door stoppers need to be removed from all doors – COMPLETED

Repair closers on laundry room, hallway water closet, and boiler room doors – COMPLETED 1/11/21

Emergency lighting needs repair in Educare Staff Lounge and Sensory Room – COMPLETED

Nozzles on the servery stoves were repositioned so they are directly over all burners – COMPLETED 1/11/21

Purchase a Type K fire extinguisher for the servery – COMPLETED

Implement Monthly Fire Inspection Checklist - COMPLETED

There were no findings in our Fiscal Year 2020 financial audit. The audit for Fiscal Year 2021 is in progress.

Summary of Information Required by the Secretary

The Start Early Board of Directors and Policy Council were given brief summaries and links to all Program Instructions and Information Memorandu

Healthy Parents and Babies

General Information

Name of Agency: Start Early

Program Number: 773-373-6830

Program Name: Healthy Parents & Babies

Address: 4859 S. Wabash Ave. Chicago, IL. 60615

Phone Number:

Fax Number:

Head Start Director Name: Diana McClarien

Head Start Director Email: dMcClarien@startearly.org

Agency Web Site Address: www.startearly.org/babies

Agency Type: Early Head Start Home Visiting/Doula

Agency Description:

Healthy Parents and Babies – Directly-Operated Program

The Healthy Parents and Babies program has 78 program slots allocated to providing services for pregnant women, young parents, and children aged birth through 3 years old. Children, pregnant women, and their families are served through home visits that begin as early in a woman's pregnancy as possible and from birth through age three. The program staff works closely with parents to help them meet their children's growth and development needs, prenatally to have a healthy birth and provide early attachment activities such as skin to skin and breast feeding as well as to achieve their own goals.

Site Locations

Hayes

4859 S. Wabash Ave

Chicago, IL 60615

Community Areas Served

Grand Boulevard

Hyde Park

Kenwood

Washington Park

Brighton Park

Humboldt Park

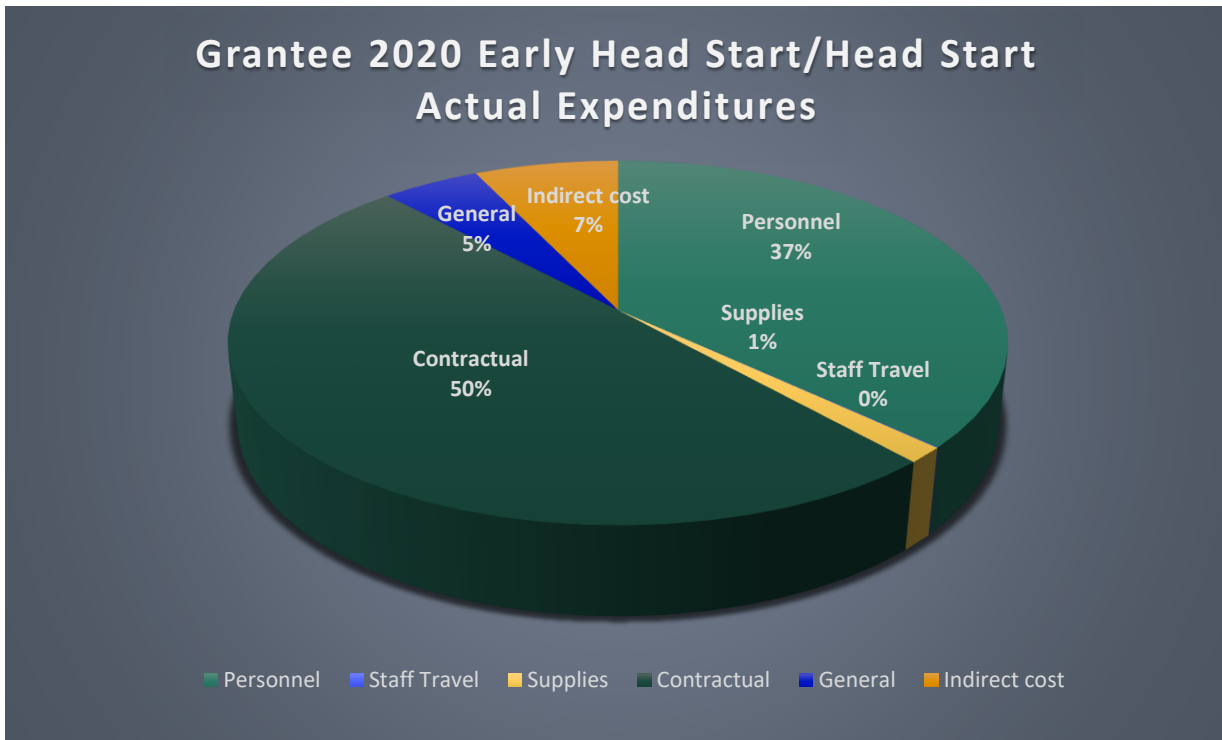
McKinley Park

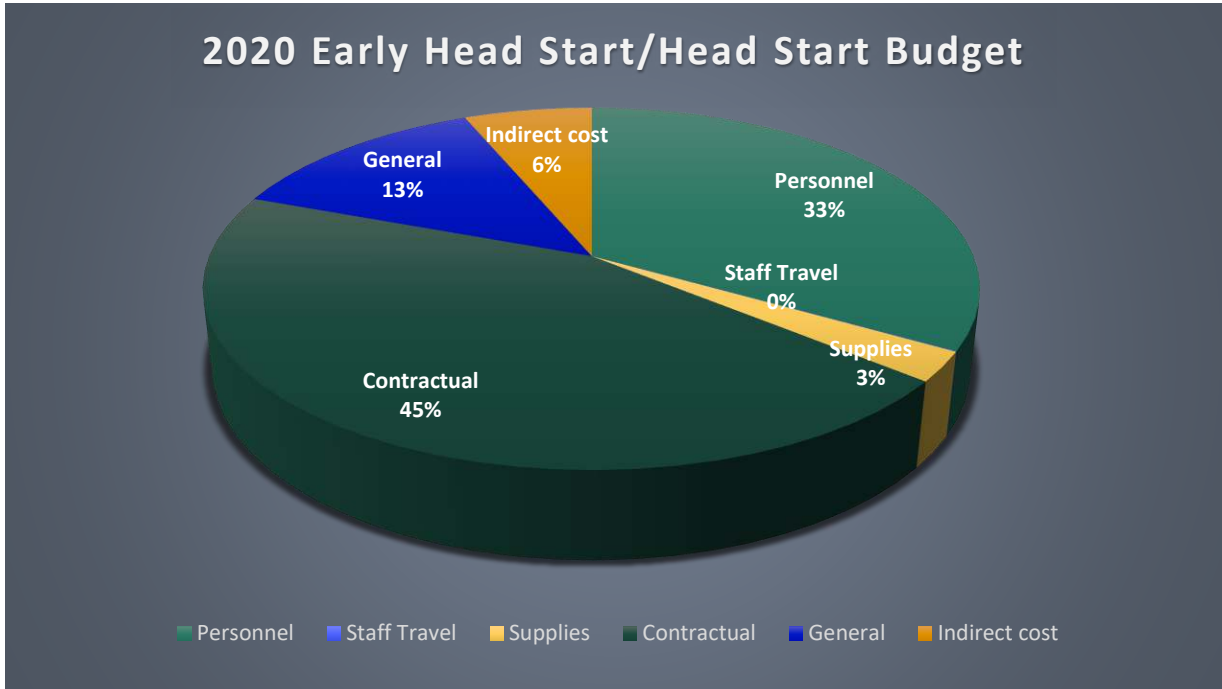
Overall Grantee Budget 2020

Total Public and Private Funds received: \$ 20,128,881

Public Funds		Private Funds	
Source	Amount	Source	Amount
Federal	\$18,177,798	Individuals, Corporations, Foundations, etc.	\$338,348
State	\$1,612,735	In-kind	
Local School District			
Total	\$19,790,533	Total	\$338,348

2020 Budget and Actual Expenditures





Summary of your most current Community Assessment
Children and Families Served in 2020-2021

Grantee Funded Enrollment

	Head Start Enrollment	Early Head Start Enrollment
Center-based Program		
a. 5 days per week		
1. Full-day enrollment		
2. Part-day enrollment		
b. 4 days per week		
1. Full-day enrollment		
2. Part-day enrollment		
Home-based Program		78
Unallocated Slots		
Total:		78

Site:

Total Children Served: 69
Served: 147

Total Pregnant Women Served: 78

Total Families

Average monthly enrollment (as percentage of funded enrollment):

Number of Eligible Children in Community, ages 0-5	1,175
Percentage of children served in agency	

Health

Percentage of enrolled children who received medical and dental exams

	Received Medical Exams	Received Dental Exams
	51%	41%

Parental involvement in Directly Operated, Delegate and Partner Agencies

Community Assessment Summary:

The Community Assessment outlines the strengths and needs of the communities as they relate to Head Start eligible children and their families. This year our community assessment is a combine update for both the base grant and the Waukegan Early Head Start grant under Start Early Grantee. This 2021 update of the community assessment covers all the Start Early Chicago community areas. COVID-19 pandemic has had profound effects on all aspects of community and family life. Its effects permeate all parts of this community assessment update. Hard data and numbers are not yet available on how the pandemic and subsequent economic impact has affected poverty, unemployment, child health, homelessness, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, food security and any number of other things including the availability of early childhood programs. Where possible information was gained from our families and community partners, non-profit reports such as the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, from the state agencies, from news articles and other sources chronicling the pandemic and its effects on community and family life.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions Healthy Parents & Babies provided our families, community partners and community virtual network groups with a survey monkey questionnaire regarding community strengths and challenges.

Healthy Parents & Babies strengths in our communities identified by our families, community partners, and community virtual network groups.

Mental Health:

Parents exhibited strength, resilience, and creativity in combating the COVID pandemic and switching to virtual services

Resources in the community including churches

Diverse Learners/Disabilities:

Services and support from Early Intervention and Special Education continued instead of being cancelled and that was a strength

The virtual modality helped strengthen parent's commitment and empowered them as the primary provider, showing resiliency and creativity and playing bigger roles in the therapy sessions

Early Education:

Parents found the program teachers and the programs to provide a wide kindergarten readiness curriculum, were flexible with zoom meetings, and creative about keeping the children engaged. Children were able to be flexible and change to meet the school's demands.

Health

Programs provided safety measures, resources, and education on COVID and referrals and work with families as they connected with health care providers. Racial injustice and health inequities have been brought to the forefront.

Social Services

Programs were also able to help families get rent support and unemployment and stimulus checks have helped families. Parents and community partners cited many resources available in the community.

Housing

A halt to evictions has helped families even though rent might be in arrears. Mortgage, rental support, and utility support has been accessible.

Prenatal Services

Doula services have also expanded to video visits and coaching virtually. During COVID pregnant families were still able to have access to prenatal care virtually or were seen in person if they were high risk or in their 3rd trimester. Recruitment of Early Head Start children not served, 0-2 in many communities the supply of early childhood programs that serve infants and toddlers continues to be insufficient but does meet the needs in other communities. The *proposed* recruitment areas had more eligible children not served in Early Head Start Brighton Park – 179 eligible infants and toddlers not served by Early Head Start.

Healthy Parents & Babies survey questionnaire with parents, community partners, and virtual community network groups identify challenges in their communities. Below is a summary of the results:

Mental Health

Parents acknowledged that more people have identified that they were stressed, depressed or feeling isolated due to current life events: COVID, job loss, working from home, e-learning with children and remaining under stay-at-home orders or quarantine have contributed to strained mental health in families.

Diverse Learners/Disabilities/Early Education

On-line visits, while keeping the family and child involved in services, was not completely successful; children were easily distracted, families were challenged with the technology and having the right devices, meetings were shortened and sometimes not well planned.

Health

There will be a need to catch up on health appointments and routine medical and dental care when issues of safety are adequately addressed.

Nutrition

Prices are too high at grocery stores and parents found prices rose during the pandemic

Social Services

Lack of enough devices in families with multiple children sometimes caused parents to not show up for virtual workshops because their children were using the device – or their work schedule did not permit attendance; also lack of access to the internet or outdated devices proved problematic for families getting virtual services

Prenatal Services

Medical appointments were virtual and not fully beneficial in detecting serious concerns
Doula and other supports to pregnant and prenatal women were not able to provide in person support in labor and delivery during the pandemic
Parent Education Activities

Due to COVID-19 all program activities moved to our virtual platform:

Parent Committee Meetings:

Monthly Parent Meetings

Other special gatherings or activities:

Fall Harvest

Day of the Young Child

Spring Festival

End of the Year Celebration

Male Involvement:

Twice yearly male involvement events

In individual and whole group socializations

Parent Trainings

Health

Health Education training infant/toddler immunization

Oral Health

Health Advisory Committee meetings

Pedestrian Safety

Healthy and Safety Best Practice During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Importance of the COVID-19 Vaccine

Healthy Nutrition Training

Mental Health

Mental Health Referral

Individual Mental Health Sessions

Wellness Orientation

The Importance of Self-Care

Pre and Postnatal Edinburgh Screening

ASQ and ASQ-SE developmental Screening

Child Abuse and Neglect Training
Socialization Observation
Stress Management

Parent Trainings
Community and Social Services
Virtual Community Partners Networking Meetings
Spare your Share
Chicago Furniture Bank
Other Community-related Education

Education and Literacy
Bernie's Books
Parents as Teachers
Kindergarten Readiness

Special Efforts to Prepare Children for Kindergarten

Healthy Parent & Babies continue to provide three checkpoint period (Fall, Winter, and Spring) during the COVID-19 Pandemic using our virtual platform to observe and obtain observations from family's. The children's developmental skills are assessed using High Scope COR. This assessment tool assesses the whole child and is proven to best prepare children for school success. This assessment tool meets the needs of the diverse communities, and children and families that we serve. Through this process each child's skills are assessed and observed which informs the next step for individual lesson planning and transition plans. Socialization plans are also developed based on each child's individual growth and developmental needs. This process also allows us to analyze the data and monitor our growth from each checkpoint, which also informs our school readiness goals.

Data from our checkpoints shows that our children has met or partially met the school readiness goals set by EHSN and the programs improvement goals. COR Advantage assessment system is appropriate for home visiting and is aligned with our program goals, as well as the school readiness goals. We will continue to work with our children and families to support the school readiness goals by encouraging more family participation in virtual and in-person home visits, individual and whole group socializations, and other program events virtually. The virtual platforms being utilize has been an improvement in our parent participation and family engagement during visits and socialization. Our site improvement goals for the area of education, we have been continuing to make progress.

Transition Activities to Promote Kindergarten Readiness

Healthy Parents & Babies provide individual transition plans to supports and outlines each child's growth, development, and areas to provide support. The plans are monitored monthly and revised during Initial Home Visits, Parent Conference, and Second Home Visit. HP&B works closely with local CFC's to ensure each child with special needs has a transition call to facilitate their transition over to Chicago Public Schools. We also host an annual Transition Celebration for children who will be transitioning to a 3 -5 Pre-K program options. The families review their individual transition plans and reflect on their progress and areas of continual support. Families are offered support with the enrollment process into Chicago Early Learning Network, or Head Start 3-5 program options. Families are provided with resources to support them in their transition, with Healthy Parents and Babies resource directory, Start Early Affiliates, and the preschool checklist.

Summary of Audit Findings
Summary of Information Required by the Secretary

The Ounce Board of Directors and Policy Council were given brief summaries and links to all Program Instructions and Information Memorandums

Delegate and Partners

Casa Central – Delegate Agency

ProgramNumber: 007

Program Name: Casa Central – Early Learning Academy

Address: 1343 North California Avenue, Chicago, IL 60622

Phone Number: 773.645.2300

Fax Number: 773.645.1432

Head Start Director Name: Mary Reynolds, LCSW, I/ECMH-C

Head Start Director Email: mreynolds@casacentral.org

Agency Web Site Address: <http://www.casacentral.org>

Agency Type: Social Service Agency / Non-Profit (Non-CAA)

Since 1954, Casa Central has been transforming lives and strengthening communities, with a special focus on Hispanics. Our network of social services propels a diverse population of all ages toward self-sufficiency and a higher quality of life. The agency's Early Learning Academy provides Head Start and Early Head Start services to children, ages birth to five, and their families. The program serves 84 Head Start and 120 Early Head Start children and their families in both home- and center-based settings, and specializes in preparing children for entry into Kindergarten or Head Start with an emphasis on social-emotional development, literacy enhancement, and math comprehension.

The Center-Based Early Head Start and Head Start program option, which includes child care collaboration, provides full-day early learning services in six classroom settings (two Early Head Start, four Head Start) for children ages two – five. All classrooms are also part of our partnership with the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services Preschool for All and Prevention Initiative programs, which support increased staff credentialing and licensing and the maintenance of smaller teacher:child ratios to ensure high-quality, individualized services for all children.

The Center-Based program uses the research-based Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies GOLD developmental assessment tools to support quality education and ensure that programming meets the needs of all children in the program. Each Head Start classroom has two teaching staff, with two staff who float between the classrooms, and each Early Head Start classroom has two teaching staff, with one staff who floats between the classrooms; these teaching professionals are overseen by a Site Director and an Education Coordinator.

The Center-Based program is in the Gold Circle of Quality as part of ExceleRate Illinois. ExceleRate Illinois is a statewide quality recognition and improvement system designed to make continuous quality improvement an everyday priority among early learning providers. The program establishes standards for helping young children develop intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally. It provides a framework for early learning professionals to identify opportunities for improvement, increase their skills, and take steps to make positive changes. Gold Circle programs like Casa

Central's have met the highest quality standards in three areas: learning environment and teaching quality; administrative standards; and training & education. Furthermore, the program holds Awards of Excellence in Preschool Teaching & Learning and Infant/Toddler Services.

The Home-Based Early Head Start and Head Start program serves hard-to-reach populations (including, for example, teen parents and immigrant families) within the comfort of each family's home. The Home-Based program uses the research-based Parents as Teachers curriculum, as well as the High Scope/COR Advantage developmental assessment tools. In the Home-Based program option, families are assigned to a Parent Educator for weekly 90-minute home visits and bi-monthly group socialization activities with other participating families. The program is overseen by a Site Director and two Education Coordinators.

Across both the Home- and Center-Based program options, the Early Learning Academy provides a safe, nurturing environment, and addresses the comprehensive content areas of Early Head Start and Head Start programming, including ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance); Health and Nutrition; Education; Disabilities and Wellness Promotion; and Parent, Family & Community Engagement. Led by the Head Start Director/Vice President of Children's Services, the program-wide content-area staff include an ERSEA Coordinator, Nurse/Health Manager, Family Development Coordinator, Disabilities & Wellness Promotion Coordinator, Wellness Promotion and Nutrition Consultants, and a Systems Manager who manages data and supports continuous quality improvement activities across program options and content areas.

In order to holistically support participating families, each family is assigned to a Family Development Specialist. Led by the Family Development Coordinator, each Specialist works closely with the family, helping families set and achieve goals, connect with community resources, and ensure that children are healthy, able to fully participate in program services, and equipped to thrive in Kindergarten and beyond. The Family Development Specialists use the evidence-based Parents as Teachers curriculum as a tool to connect with families, as well as other strategies and approaches. Specialists partner with the program's Nutrition Consultant to complete nutrition assessments and individualized nutrition plans for children identified as in need of nutritional support. Furthermore, the Family Development Specialists collaborate with families and the program's Nurse/Health Manager to ensure that children have comprehensive medical examinations including screening for lead, tuberculosis, and hemoglobin levels; are up-to-date on their immunizations; are connected with primary healthcare providers who serve as a medical home; have pediatric dental exams; and are connected with dental care providers who serve as a dental home.

The Early Learning Academy has partnerships with local healthcare providers to ensure that children have current immunizations and physical examinations and that they have had hearing and vision screenings. These partnerships do not supplant a medical or dental home, but rather provide additional supports and resources to families. The program has additional partnerships with service providers in the community in order to ensure comprehensive supports to families; these include service providers in areas such as domestic violence, housing, and financial literacy.

2020 was a year unlike any other, due in large part to the COVID-19 pandemic. In March of 2020, Casa Central's Early Learning Academy, in accordance with the State of Illinois and City of Chicago guidelines, closed for on-site and in-person operations on March 21, 2020. What began as a two week Shelter-in-Place turned into many months of virtual services and supports for children and families.

Our Home-Based program option provided fully virtual services throughout the remainder of 2020, continuing to use the Parents as Teacher curriculum and effectively engaging parents/caregivers and their children through Zoom, WhatsApp, Facetime, and other virtual platforms. Parent Educators and Family Development Specialists provided no-contract drop-offs of learning materials and resources at families’ homes, such as books, art supplies, fine motor manipulatives, and more, in order to support children’s continued learning and development. Similarly, the Center-Based program shifted temporarily to a virtual platform, using Zoom and ClassDojo to connect with children and families for remote Circle Time and individualized learning. In July of 2020, under reduced COVID attendance limitations and with all necessary safety protocols in place, the Center-Based program option resumed in-person, on-site, full-day services (7:30am-5pm) for children and families, while continuing to offer virtual learning opportunities for children whose families were not ready or willing for them to return to on-site programming.

In Chicago, Black and Latino residents, including the folks that Casa Central serves, have been over-represented in the city’s total number of COVID-19 cases and deaths. The pandemic also had a compounding economic impact, causing unemployment rates to soar, more than tripling for the Latino community in Illinois at 12% in 2020, and more than 14% for Black Illinoisans, according to data collected by the Heartland Alliance. A recent AP-NORC poll found that about 6 in 10 Hispanic or Latino households say they are still facing the impacts of income loss from the pandemic, about 5 in 10 Black households say the same, compared to 4 in 10 white households. Located in and serving communities with the highest COVID infection rates, Casa Central stepped up during 2020 to provide social and educational services to children and families by working on the front lines to serve the most vulnerable and neediest populations.

DURING THE 2019 - 2020 PROGRAM YEAR (SEPTEMBER 1, 2019 – AUGUST 21, 2020)

CASA CENTRAL’S EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY:

Enrolled 261 children

Provided comprehensive Early/Head Start services to 238 families.

Served 51 children with disabilities and diverse learning needs and their families, including

Pr191 families vided supportive case management and information/referral services for emergency/crisis support such as food, clothing, or shelter; mental health services; health education; parenting education and support; domestic violence; and other social services. TO HELP FAMILIES NAVIGATE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AS SAFELY AS POSSIBLE, CASA CENTRAL

Distributed \$9,180 in direct assistance , via Target gift cards, to families at the onset of the pandemic to support them with meeting basic household needs

- Distributed 115 food boxes to families
- Provided diapers and wipes to more than 100 households
- Distributed reusable and disposable masks to 200 families to support them with having

- adequate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)
- Distributed [75 household cleaning and hygiene kits](#) (soap, disinfectants, etc.)
- Distributed winter coats and other [seasonal clothing to more than 50 children](#)
- Provided [more than 500](#)
- Provided developmentally [children's books](#) home libraries for families’
- appropriate [toys to more than 200 families](#)
- Distributed [250 backpacks and school supplies](#) to help families
- adjust to remote learning, including [40 Wi-Fi-enabled tablets](#)

Primary Community Areas Served:

Hermosa, Humboldt Park, Logan Square, and West Town

Summary of most recent community assessment

Each year, Start Early (formerly known as the Ounce of Prevention) supports Casa Central in conducting a community assessment in order to outline the strengths and needs of the communities served by the Early Learning Academy and ensure that programming remains responsive. The update to the community assessment was published in May of 2020; it includes new data which, in accordance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards, is used for program planning purposes.

There is a sizeable percentage of the population served with limited English proficiency, indicating continued need for Casa Central’s bilingual (English/Spanish) approach.

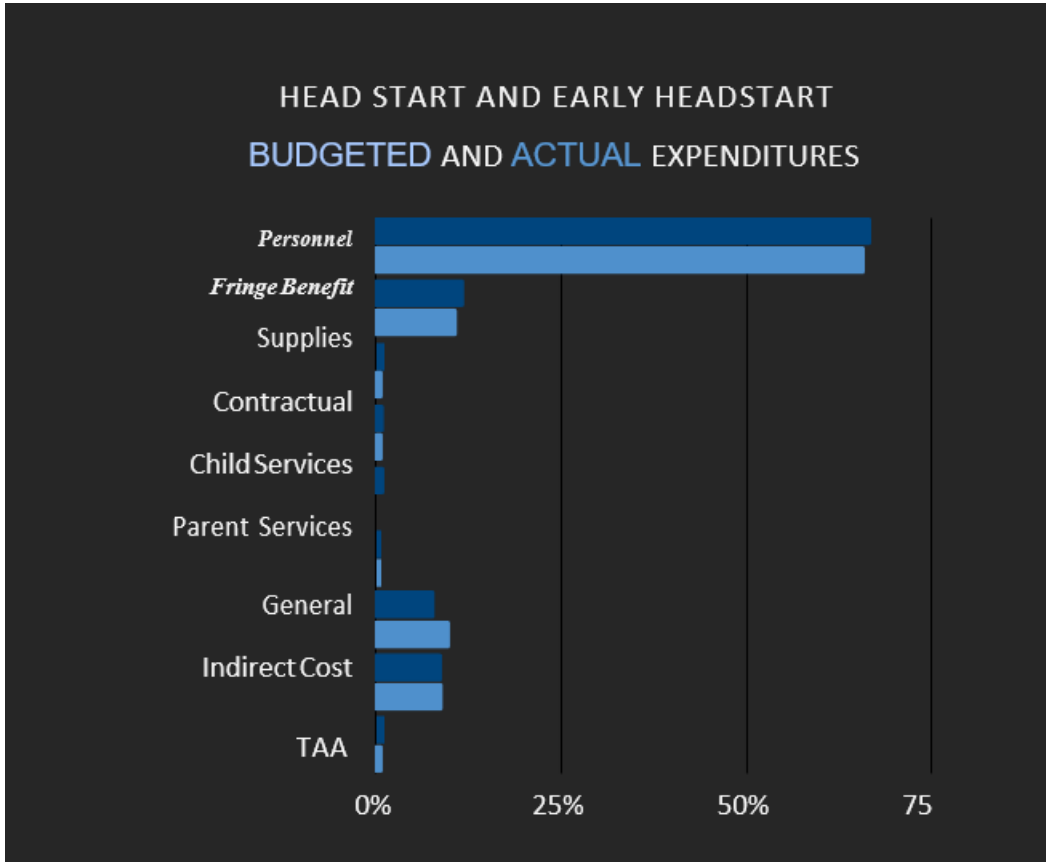
Pre-K expansion grants are well underway, and many more children ages 3-4 are being served by Preschool for All and Chicago Public Schools-based free preschool; this means there are fewer and fewer Head Start-eligible children in our community who are not already connected with other programming. Although the population of children in the Early Head Start age range decreased in Casa Central’s primary community areas, there still remains very limited access to both center- and home-based Early Head start programming for income- eligible children ages birth – three.

At the time of the publication of the Community Assessment, the COVID-19 pandemic was just beginning; since the publication of the Community Assessment, additional data has become available related to the pandemic’s disproportionate impact on the Latinx community throughout 2020.

Overall Delegate Budget 2020

TOTAL PUBLIC FUNDS RECEIVED: \$1,854,868

Public Funds	
Source	Amount
Federal	\$1,854,868
Total	\$1,854,868



Children and Families Served	Head Start Enrollment	Early Head Start Enrollment	
CASA CENTRAL, FUNDED ENROLLMENT			
Total Children Served: <u>261</u> Total Families Served: <u>238</u>	Center-Based Program Option		
	a. 5 days per week		
	1. Full-day enrollment	68	16
	2. Part-day enrollment	0	0
	b. 4 days per week		
	1. Full-day enrollment	0	0
	2. Part-day enrollment	0	0
	Home-Based Program Option		
		12	108
	Unallocated Slots	0	0
Total:	84	120	

Number of Income-Eligible (below 100% Federal Poverty Level) Children in Casa Central's Recruitment Area <small>(Hermosa, Humboldt Park, Logan Square, and West Town Communities; 2018 estimates from the May 2020 Community Assessment, Tables 3, 4, 7 & 8)</small>		Percentage of Eligible Children in Casa Central's Recruitment Area served by Any Head Start/Early Head Start Program	
Early Head Start, ages 0-2	Head Start, ages 3-5	Early Head Start	Head Start
1,850	1,783	9% (167 out of 1,850 eligible children)	57.2% (1,019 of 1,783 eligible children)
		<i>Prevention Initiative Programs</i>	<i>Preschool for All and Child Parent Center</i>
		17.8% (329 of 1,850 eligible children)	78.2% (1,395 of 1,783 eligible children)

Health Services

The Office of Head Start announced to Head Start Grantees and Delegates that the 2019-2020 Program Information Report (PIR) was not required. The Office of Head Start wanted to eliminate the reporting burden of the PIR as well as remove any confusion on how certain elements of the PIR could be collected and interpreted when programs were closed due to COVID-19.

As such, the data on the following table was drawn from the 2018-2019 PIR (Program Information Report) and reflects key indicators related to children's health status. Comprehensive, updated information in this area will be available as part of the 2020-2021 PIR.

	Early Head Start	Head Start
Child has health insurance by end of program year	97.1%	96.7%
Child has medical home by end of program year	98.5%	98.6%
Child has dental home by end of program year	79.4%	96.7%

Child has a complete and up-to-date physical exam	66.2%	71.8%
Child has a complete and up-to-date pediatric dental exam	71.3%	89.7%
Child's immunizations are up-to-date	88.2%	97.2%

Children and Parent Engagement

Casa Central encourages frequent parent involvement and communication. From January – mid-March of 2020, we promoted an open-door policy for parents to visit the program at any time and volunteer within their child’s classroom. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, parents were not able to visit classrooms for the remainder of 2020, but through 2-way communication via ClassDojo and other mechanisms, in- person and virtual home visits, and parent conferences to address individual child development and how parents can support learning at home, the program continued encouraging robust parent engagement.

Health and Nutrition:

Wellness Promotion (Mental Health): Parents received training in mental health and wellness in early childhood and how mental health can impact school readiness and success. Parents also received training and resource materials about managing stress, self-care, and tending to their own mental health and wellbeing. Additionally, parents received training and supports related to developmental screening and the referral processes to the Chicago Public Schools and Illinois Early Intervention System for children identified as needing further assessment for special needs services. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Casa Central’s Mental Health/Wellness Promotion Consultants were available and provided training and 1- 1 support to families to support their wellbeing during this difficult time.

Education and Literacy:

Math and literacy continue to be a primary focus for Casa Central’s Early Learning Academy in order to prepare children for success in Head Start, Kindergarten and beyond. Parents receive orientation to our curricula (Creative Curriculum in Center-Based and Parents as Teachers in Home-Based), and participate in home visits and parent conferences with staff members to learn more about their children’s developmental progress in these areas.

Throughout the pandemic, teachers prepared individualized lesson plans for children’s at- home learning to support parents with continuing to serve as their children’s first and most important teachers, promoting children’s continued development in spite of the incredibly challenging circumstances.

Community and Social Services: At parent meetings, held virtually throughout most of 2020, featured speakers shared information on specific topics parents indicated as being of interest via the participant engagement survey. These speakers are from local community service providers and inform parents of resources available, how to access services, and eligibility requirements.

Parent Committee Meetings: Each program option has a Parent Committee and elects officers and representatives that take on an active role in the program’s Policy Committee and the grantee’s Policy Council. The program Policy Committee met monthly. This year, they participated in training on Head Start and the role of committee members in interviewing and hiring staff; fiscal management of the program, including monthly budget reviews and program amendments; participated in the annual Self-Assessment and reviewed the Quality Improvement Plan and changes made; reviewed the 2020 Community Needs Assessment and Selection Criteria and recommended changes; and supported the program with all aspects of implementing remote/virtual services and planning for our return to in-person/on-site services, ensuring that parent voice and perspective was represented.

Kindergarten Readiness: Kindergarten Readiness activities included a focus on literacy, language, and math skills in classrooms and virtual learning. Each program option worked with a local education advocacy group that came to the programs to talk to parents in the fall (virtually) about educational options in the Local Education Agency (LEA): program types, eligibility, and application process. They also distributed school district catalogs.

Special Efforts to Prepare Children for Kindergarten: Children transitioning to kindergarten from our Center-Based program option are in classrooms with a certified teacher, via a partnership with the local LEA, and the focus of the training for teachers from the partnership is to ensure the skills (cognitive and social-emotional) needed for kindergarten are present and acquired in the activities that the children participate in.

Each child receives regular developmental assessments utilizing the Teaching Strategies GOLD/COR Advantage assessment tool, which regularly evaluates each individual’s progression regarding academic, fine and gross motor, and social emotional growth based on expectations for their age. Teaching Strategies GOLD is utilized throughout the City of Chicago as a respected tool to accurately analyze a child’s preparedness for entering kindergarten based on whether they are “meeting” or “exceeding” expectations for their age level; COR Advantage is used because of its particular applicability and utility in home-based settings. Teachers and Parent Educators complete checkpoints three times a year to review each child’s progression and utilize the information to engage parents in the child’s learning and set individual learning goals for each child based on their strengths and areas of concentration. The final/spring 2020 checkpoint (May 2020) was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but all other checkpoints during 2020 were successfully completed and indicated that, although there were definitely challenges, children were still making progress developmentally.

Transition Activities to Promote Kindergarten Readiness:

For children with special needs, in the past, we have worked with local schools to ensure that the parent and child have visited the school and classroom they will be placed in the fall. When possible, the Head Start teacher, Disabilities/Wellness Promotion Coordinator and/or Family Development Specialist will visit the new school, as well. For all children, a file with their most recent screenings is provided to the parents to take to the new school. The 2020-2021 school year started off very differently for children transitioning to Kindergarten, with the Chicago Public Schools starting out the year with fully remote/virtual learning. The challenges surrounding virtual learning for kindergarten students were immense, not only for children served by Casa Central, but for children across the City of Chicago. Our program worked with families of transitioning children to ensure they had resources for affordable Wi-Fi and laptops or other devices for their children to use upon beginning virtual Kindergarten in the fall of 2020. We provided hands-on technical support and assistance for families throughout the course of our time working with them remotely, increasing everyone’s comfort levels with virtual service

delivery platforms.

Other special gatherings and activities: Each program option hosted activities designed for parents and children, including mostly virtual events due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including male involvement activities; literacy events; and seasonal celebrations. Each program option also celebrated children's transitions from Early Head Start to Head Start and Head Start to Kindergarten in August of 2020 with "drive-through" transition celebrations, in accordance with all COVID- related safety protocol.

Summary of Audit Finding

There were no financial audit findings at Casa Central, a delegate agency of Start Early (formerly known as the Ounce of Prevention Fund), for FY2020

Children's Home + Aid - Delegate Agency

Program Number: 312-424-0200

Program Name: Children's Home & Aid

Address: 125 S. Wacker Drive, 14th Floor, Chicago, IL
60606

Phone Number: 312-424-0200

Fax Number: 312-424-6800

Head Start Director Name: Dawnielle Jeffrey

Head Start Director Email: DJeffrey@childrenshomeandaid.org

Agency Web Site Address: www.childrenshomeandaid.org

Agency Type: Nonprofit Organization

Agency Description

For 138 years, Children's Home & Aid have shown up for Illinois families. We are in the places where it's proven to be the most effective: at home, in the classroom, and in the community. We are an agency that puts families at the center of every decision and believe that communities where we all work, play, and live together can be strengthened through data-informed, collaborative and preventative solutions. Our offices are located across Illinois and serve nearly 30,000 children and families each year in over 65 counties, linking them to a network of resources. Children's Home & Aid partners with Start Early to provide quality Head Start & Early Head services for 146 children in families.

Site Locations

Mitzi Freidheim Child & Family Center

1701 W. 63rd Street

Chicago, IL 60636

VIVA Home Visiting Program

100 N. Western Ave

Chicago, IL 60512

Community Areas Served

Englewood, West Englewood, New City, Humboldt Park, Hermosa, Logan Square, and West Town

FY20 Financials & Early Head Start

JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

Revenues

Government	\$ 57,556,566
Contributions	\$ 5,621,212
Service Fees	\$ 1,722,856
Foundations & Trusts	\$ 1,196,789
Investment Income & Other	\$ 552,325
Total Revenues	\$ 66,649,748

Revenue above does not include non operating gains on investments of \$119,472

Expenses

Program	\$ 55,998,054
Management & General	\$ 9,010,799
Fundraising	\$ 1,962,531
Total Expenses	\$ 66,971,384



Revenue for the Early Head Start and Head Start programs was \$10,425,053, of which \$778,274 and \$9,646,779 came from private and public sources, respectively. The budgetary expenditures of these programs included staff compensation and benefits, professional fees, supplies, occupancy and other expenditures in support of the provision of client services.

The financial results of the agency’s Early Head Start and Head Start programs are included in the agency’s audited financial statements for the year ending June 30, 2020. For more information, please see the complete audited financial statements at childrenshomeandaid.org.

Children’s Home & Aid’s child welfare services include partnering with foster parents and relatives to provide safe, secure and nurturing homes for children when they are separated from their biological families. We recruit, license and train foster parents for their critical role in the child’s recovery from trauma.

The Every Child Campaign

In 2020, we successfully completed our \$58.5 million Every Child Campaign, one of the largest fundraising campaigns ever undertaken by an Illinois human services agency. Led by former Board chair Liz Connelly and a committee of dedicated volunteers, the campaign engaged thousands

of generous donors in a mission of helping every child and every family in Illinois to thrive. With your help, the Every Child Campaign launched several new initiatives, including:

Power of Fathers Initiative, a collaborative award-winning program that helps fathers to be more actively engaged in their children's lives.

Jerri Hoffmann Child & Family Center, a state-of-the-art early childhood learning facility constructed in

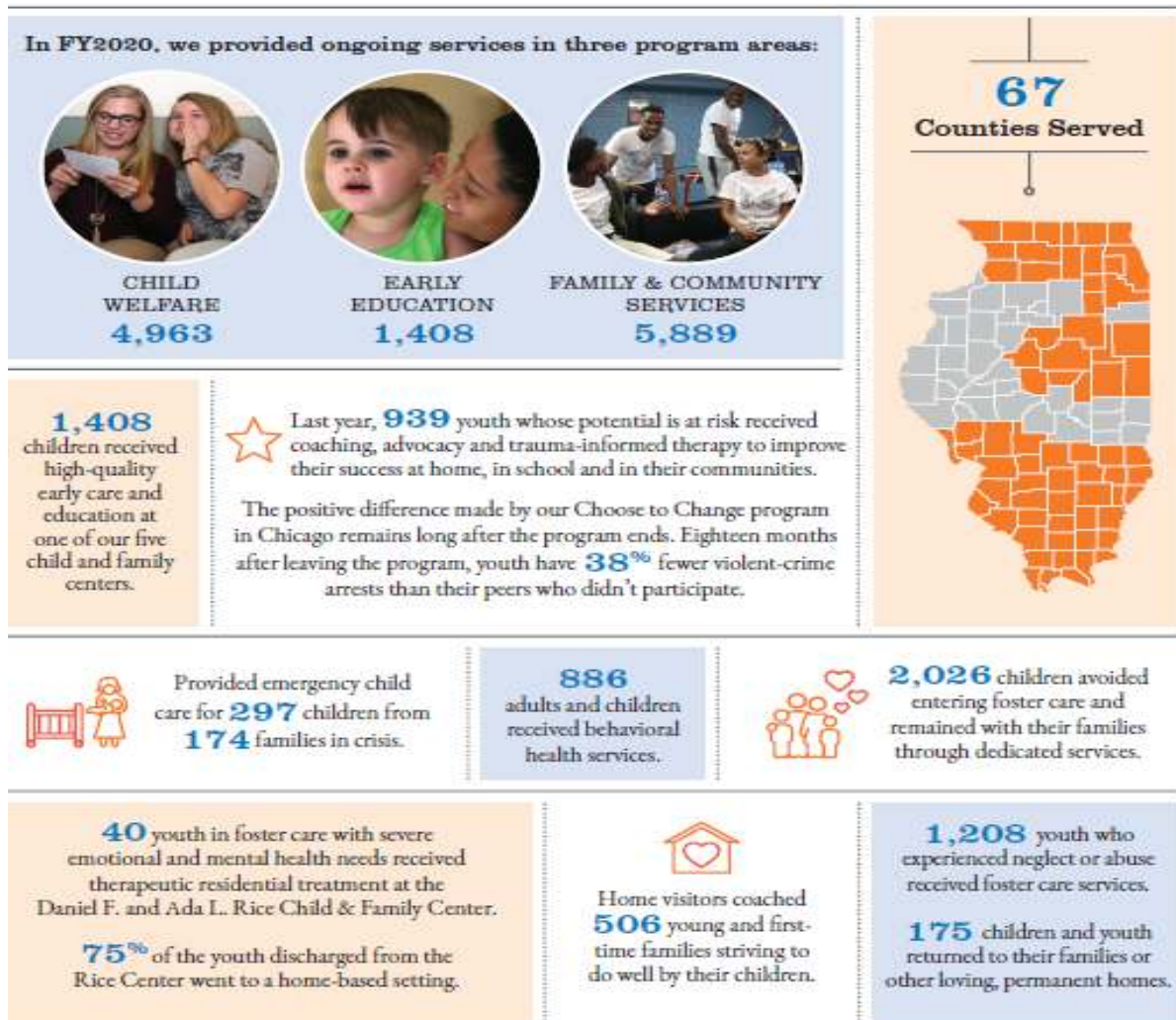
Carpentersville which doubled the number of children receiving high-quality educational services.

Ahlquist Center for Policy, Practice & Innovation, where we incubate innovation and advocate for effective state and federal public policies to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and families.

FAMILY CARES Center, part of our Children's Mental Health initiative which provides services in the safe and familiar environment of a school to help children and families impacted by trauma to heal.

Choose to Change program to reduce violence in Englewood, working with the most vulnerable teens through counseling and mentorship to inspire positive change.

Children, Youth & Families served by Children's Home & Aid: 27,750



Children’s Place Association – Partner Agency**Program Number:** 05CH8456/03**Program Name: Place Association:** Arthur E. Jones Early Childhood Care and Learning Center and Home- Based Early Learning Program**Address:** 700 N. Sacramento, Suite 300, Chicago, IL 60612-1046**Phone Number:** 773-395-9193**Fax Number:** 773-395-4486**Head Start Director Name:** Porsche Snowden**Head Start Director Email:** psnowden@childrens-place.org**Agency Web Site Address:** www.childrens-place.org

Agency Type: Nonprofit. Center-based Head Start/Early Head Start, home-visiting Early Head Start
Agency Description: Children’s Place Association has 133 Head Start/Early Head Start-eligible slots. Children’s Place provides comprehensive support services to children and families affected by illness and poverty. Programs include 24-hour nursing for medically complex children, mental health counseling, case management, summer camp, foster care and adoption, emergency assistance, supportive family housing and early education services that include a Home-Based program and the Arthur E. Jones Early Childhood Care and Learning Center. The Early Learning Center serves 0-5-year-old children with age-specific classrooms, degreed teachers and specially trained aides, an onsite nurse, nutritious meals, transportation and a secure, private playground. The Home-Based program serves 0-3-year-old children, providing developmental and emotional screenings, nutrition education and assessments, monthly infant health checks by a Registered Nurse, advocacy, referrals and group socialization. The Center-based programs includes Head Start and Early Head Start programming, and the Home-Based program provides Early Head Start programming.

Site Locations:

Early Learning Center	Home-Based Early
Learning Program 1800 N. Humboldt Blvd.	3543 West Chicago Ave
Chicago, IL 60647	Chicago, Il 60651

Community Areas Served:

Both programs supported by the Ounce operate out of Humboldt Park on Chicago’s West Side. While a large percentage of Children’s Place client families live near our program facilities, we serve children from across Chicago due to our capacity and experience in serving infants, toddlers and children living with illness or disabilities.

While Children's Place Association's catchment area is the entire city, the annual Community Assessment conducted by the Ounce of Prevention and Children's Place evaluates the areas surrounding/adjacent to the Early Learning Center since a large percentage of children served come from these areas. Some, such as Logan Square and West Town, are undergoing gentrification, but pockets of poverty remain; others face ongoing issues of high poverty rates and racial disparities. Humboldt Park had a high economic hardship index, high rates of unemployment and child poverty and increased crime rates.

According to data from the most recent Assessment conducted in June 2019, child poverty remains high in Humboldt Park, at 44%, and 21% of children live in extreme poverty in this community. The rate of Temporary

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) receipt was 66%. Limited English proficiency was present in 14% of the households and 30% of adult residents did not have a high school degree. The violent crime rate increased 4% from 2016 and was 19.5 per 1,000 persons. While the unemployment rate had decreased from 14% in 2016 it remained high, at 12% in 2017. Parents of children in Children's Place Early Head Start and Head Start programs experienced more unemployment than those in other Ounce programs. The percentage of families that have at least one parent employed was considerably lower than the average for all Ounce-supported Head Start programs.

Poverty rates for children in the evaluated communities varied greatly by race/ethnicity, with African American and Hispanic children having the higher rates than White children. (The exception was Hermosa, where poverty percentages were similar for all racial groups.) The majority of children served by Children's Place early education programs are African American and Hispanic. Approximately 44% of children served by the Early Learning Center are Black, 44% Hispanic, 6% multiracial, 1% Native American, 1% Asian and 5% White. In the Home-Based program 90% of families are Hispanic, 9% African American and 1% Asian.

Per US Census data, the poverty level begins at annual incomes of \$12-25,000 depending on family size; in our last fiscal year, FY 2019, 86% of Early Learning Center client families made annual incomes below the federal poverty level, and 53% of Home-Based client families did. A significant portion of families made considerably less: 52% of families served by the Early Learning Center made annual incomes of \$10,000 or less and 35% subsisted on annual incomes of \$5,000 or less. In the Home-based program 31% of families made annual incomes of \$10,000 or less and 22% made annual incomes of \$5,000 or less.

Children's Place specializes in serving families and children with special needs. More than half of the children served in the Early Learning Center, 69%, in FY 2019 had an illness or disability; furthermore, 14% had a parent living with a disability or medical condition. In the Home-Based program, 4% of children had a disability or medical condition and 4% had a parent living with a disability or medical condition. More than 21% of children in the Home-Based program have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and receive early intervention services.

Please see below for additional information from the most recent Community Assessment.

Total Public and Private Funds received: \$2,366,862

Public Funds		Private Funds	
Source	Amount	Source	Amount
Federal	\$1,153,750	Individuals, Corporations, Foundations, etc.	\$119,00
State	\$1,094,112	In-kind	
Local School District			
Total	\$2,247,862	Total	\$119,000

Summary of your most current Community Assessment

Children and Families Served in 2019

Grantee Funded Enrollment

	Head Start Enrollment	Early Head Start Enrollment
Center-based Program		
a. 5 days per week		
1. Full-day enrollment	41	32
2. Part-day enrollment		
b. 4 days per week		
1. Full-day enrollment		
2. Part-day enrollment		
Home-based Program		60
Unallocated Slots		
Total:	41	92

Site:

Total Children Served: 156 Total Families Served:

129 Average monthly enrollment (as percentage of funded

enrollment): 83%

Number of Eligible Children in Community, ages 0-5	4,297
Percentage of children served in agency	52%

Health

Percentage of enrolled children who received medical and dental exams

	Received Medical Exams	Received Dental Exams
Children’s Place Association	EHS 94% HS 90% 92%	EHS 60% HS79% 70%

Parental involvement in Directly Operated, Delegate and Partner

Agencies Community Assessment Summary:

Each year, the Ounce of Prevention Fund supports Children’s Place Association in conducting/updating a community assessment outlining the strengths and needs of the communities served by the Children’s Place Early Learning Center and Home-Based early education program. The most recent community assessment was completed in June 2019, it includes new data for 2017 which, in accordance with Head Start Performance Standards, is used for program planning purposes.

As part of the Community Assessment, Children’s Place client parents and community partners identified additional issues and needs in focus groups. Although the participating parents and community partners cited many strengths and resources in their communities, they also identified challenges and needs. Also, parents were often unaware of many of the resources community partners cited as strengths.

Children’s Place parent focus groups and community partners identified a number of strengths, they also could identify challenges and needs in their communities: more bilingual services, more services on the east side of Humboldt Park, and more educational experiences in the community such as at the park or after school programs. Community partners also noted that the communities had high concentrations of asthma and continued stigma associated with mental health services.

Parent Education Activities

Parent Committee Meetings:

Parent meetings are offered monthly. Parents participate in the planning of these meetings and suggest topics of interest, as noted above. A Parent committee also has a representative that attends our monthly Parent Policy Council Meetings. During that meeting, the representative provides an agency update that was discussed in a previous parent meeting. The representative then gathers the information discussed at the Grantee Parent Policy Meeting and shares it with the parents at the following parent meeting.

Other special gatherings or activities:

Parents participate in socialization events every month. They are also offered the opportunity to participate in field trips with the children, a holiday party and end of the year celebration.

Male Involvement:

Children's Place hosts a quarterly Father/Male Figure Involvement Night to encourage male participation in our program and provide an engaging, fun and educational event specifically for the fathers/male figures.

Health:

The Early Learning Center's Nurse and Family Support Specialists (FSS) for both the Center and Home-Based program train parents on Children's Place health and medical policies and procedures, and about the importance of medical and dental exams for children. The Nurse works with parents to make sure all health documentation is kept up to date. FSS support the Nurse in helping families obtain documentation and assist families with scheduling necessary appointments and finding medical and dental homes.

Mental Health:

Parents participate in the annual meeting for planning mental health education. Parents recommend training topics for the monthly parent meetings, Pastries with Parents meetings, and socialization events. Parent also receive wellness trainings and support if needed. Play Therapy is available for those children in need through partnership with the Juvenile Protective Association, a leader in child mental health.

Community and Social Services:

Parents are provided with a variety of different resources at parent meetings, parent-teacher conferences, family assessments and throughout the year. Children's Place maintains numerous community partnerships within the local community and surrounding neighborhoods to help support parents with resources for needs identified.

Other Community-related Education:

Children's Place offers trainings throughout the program year on topics in which parents express interest. For example, in the past year parents received training about autism, cooking classes, transition to kindergarten/school and other subjects.

Education and Literacy

Parents work with teachers and other staff in planning their children's school readiness goals for the year. They also participate in parent teacher conferences and home visits with the teachers throughout the school year.

Program outcomes for 2018 show significant progress in the area of literacy: in the fall, 10% of children were below national literacy expectations, 44% were meeting and 44% were exceeding the national expectations. By the spring only 4% of children were below expectations, 35% were meeting and 59% were exceeding the national expectations.

Overall, our language scores could be better. We looked closer at Objectives 8a, comprehends language and 8b, follows directions. For comprehending language, 76% of children scored meet or exceeds while 87% scored meets or exceeds for follows directions. We associate these objectives with receptive language. For expressive language, we looked at Objectives 9a, uses an expressive

vocabulary, 9b, speaks clearly, 9c, uses conventional grammar, and 10a, engages in conversation. Scores in the meets/exceeds ranged from 73% to 88%. We see the highest below percentages in objective 10b uses social rules of language at 28%. Over all the children are progressing in this goal.

Literacy: Overall our literacy scores were great, this area happens to be one of the highest this check point. We looked closer at Objectives 16a, identifies and names letters, 18b, uses emergent reading skills, 17a, uses and appreciates books and 17b, uses print concepts. We were happy to see that 91% of children meet/exceeds in this area of development. Teachers have been increasing story time to help the children recall events in sequence.

Kindergarten Readiness

Special Efforts to Prepare Children for Kindergarten:

Staff, parents and teachers meet at the beginning of the school year to develop school readiness goals, which assists staff in preparing children for kindergarten. Teachers and staff create individualized plans for children based on their goals and follow up with parents throughout the year during parent-teacher conferences

Transition Activities to Promote Kindergarten Readiness:

Teachers meet with parents to prepare transition plans for children going to kindergarten. Parents are offered the opportunity to visit kindergarten with support from a classroom or FSS staff in order to prepare children, and themselves, for the transition.

Summary of Information Required by the Secretary

The Ounce Board of Directors and Policy Council were given brief summaries and links to all Program Instructions and Information Memorandums.

Family Focus

Program Number: 05CH8456/05

Program Name: Hyde Park

Address: 5467 S. University

Phone Number: 773-643-0452

Fax Number: 773-643-0620

Head Start Director Name: TeeNeka N. Jones

Head Start Director Email: teeneka.jones@family-focus.org

Agency Web Site Address: www.family-focus.org

Agency Type: Non-Profit

Agency Description: Social Service

Site Locations

Hyde Park Preschool Center 5467 S. University Ave, Chicago IL 60615

Community Areas Served

Hyde Park, Kenwood, Washington Park, Woodlawn

Overall Grantee Budget 2020

Total Public and Private Funds received: \$ 1,035,280

Public Funds		Private Funds	
Source	Amount	Source	Amount
Federal	22,578	Individuals, Corporations, Foundations, etc.	219,579
State	1,996,290	Private Grants	262,671
City of Chicago	2,892,358	Annual Dinner	12,430
		Special Event Fundraising	20,254
		Private Tuition	155,646
		Tuition Co-pay	364,700
Total	4,911,226	Total	1,035,280

2020 Budget and Actual Expenditures

2020 Expenses	Actuals	Budget
Personnel	80.08%	78.16%
Staff Travel	0.65%	1.09%
Furniture and Equipment	0.00%	0.21%
Supplies	4.00%	3.77%
Contractual	6.30%	3.26%
Child Services	2.03%	3.03%
Parent Services	0.00%	0.17%
Occupancy	5.73%	8.74%
General	0.96%	0.44%
Staff Training	0.26%	1.14%

Summary of your most current Community Assessment

Children and Families Served in 2019

Grantee Funded Enrollment

	Head Start Enrollment	Early Head Start Enrollment
Center-based Program	37	24
a. 5 days per week	37	24
1. Full-day enrollment	37	24
2. Part-day enrollment	0	0
b. 4 days per week	0	0
1. Full-day enrollment	0	0
2. Part-day enrollment	0	0
Home-based Program	0	0
Unallocated Slots	0	0
Total:	57	24

Site:

Total Children Served: 67

Total Families Served: 64

Average monthly enrollment (as percentage of funded enrollment): 100%

Number of Eligible Children in Community, ages 0-5	2403
Percentage of children served in agency	6%

Health

Percentage of enrolled children who received medical and dental exams

	Received Medical Exams	Received Dental Exams
	Medical HS=61% EHS=38% Total =52% (numbers from August 2021 PIR)	Dental HS=66% EHS=62% Total 64% (numbers from August 2021 PIR)

Parental involvement in Directly Operated, Delegate and Partner Agencies

Community Assessment Summary:

Executive Summary

- The pandemic and subsequent economic recession permeates almost every section of this report
- Numbers and data, particularly from the Census Bureau, were not often current enough to reflect the effect of the pandemic on many sections of this report
- Reports from agencies chronicling the pandemic and news stories were used to provide as much up-to-date information as possible

Strengths in Communities Identified by Focus Groups

- The focus groups found that the COVID-19 pandemic dominated all the discussions – it was difficult to think about strengths before the pandemic hit and the conversations focused on the world “as we now know it.”
- From all the focus groups, “family, provider, and community resilience continue to shine through” with flexibility and creativity; families supported one another, families supported friends, co-workers supported one another and agency cooperation was manifest. Everyone “just kept pushing through.”
- The programs were a needed and welcome source of support to families for information, resources, continued child education and many other services helped with the family's stability and well-being
- In addition to the program services, parents and community partners saw the way service providers in communities adapted to be responsive to family needs – “there were new discoveries every day on how to effectively meet a family's need” and the availability of all these community resources “let the families know they were not alone during this hard time.”

Status of Illinois' Early Childhood Programs

- With the enforced closure of child care in 2020, participation in the CCAP subsidy program remained down from February through November of 2020, especially for infants and toddlers.
- Participation for pre-school children was better although centers bore the brunt of the decrease
- Preschool for All, MIECHV home visiting programs and referrals to the Early Intervention services had also declined.
- interviews with parents by Action for Children found that parents were hesitant to return their children to early childhood programs because of health and safety issues
- But lack of child care also caused stress and challenges for those parents who were essential workers and had to miss work because of no child care
- Every Child Ready Chicago (ECRC) is a public-private partnership with the aim to align the prenatal-to-five systems and supports serving Chicago children and families

Homelessness

- In 2019, a count of the homeless found 1,105 family households
- The U.S. Department of Education during the 2017-2018 school year showed that an estimated **52,978** public school students experienced homelessness over the course of the year, mainly in doubled up housing
- Studies by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia and the Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey found the COVID pandemic has exacerbated the already existing housing burden on renters
- The American Rescue Plan recently passed by Congress includes rental assistance but may not keep families and children from shelters and doubling up with other families

Recruitment of Early Head Start and Head Start – Births and Birth Rates

- Birth rates can help predict changes in the population of children birth through age five in Illinois
- The birth rate has fallen from 56 births per 1,000 women in 2010 to 51 per 1,000 in 2016-2018
- Most counties in Illinois show declining birth rates; the only counties with increasing births are outside the Chicago area and surrounding counties
- Historically when the labor market is weak, aggregate birthrates decline; when the labor market improves, birthrates improve. The Covid-19 pandemic has propelled the country into an economic recession and may predict a further decline in births

Recruitment of Early Head Start and Head Start – Children Not Served, 0-2

- In many communities the supply of early childhood programs that serve infants and toddlers continues to be insufficient but does meet the needs in other communities
- Hyde Park, Kenwood and West Town have more programs for infants and toddlers than there are eligible children

- The other current recruitment areas continue to have eligible infants and toddlers that are not served by either Early Head Start or Prevention Initiative programs
- When center and family child care is subtracted from the pool of eligible children, six current recruitment community areas remain with unserved eligible children
- The *proposed* recruitment areas had more eligible children not served in Early Head Start, Prevention Initiative or in child care

Recruitment of Early Head Start and Head Start – Children Not Served, 3-5

- While efforts to expand preschool have stalled in the state and in the city due to the pandemic, economic recovery and President Biden's Build Back Better Recovery Plan, if passed and funded, will likely see these expansions continue
- Looking at just Chicago, the number of Preschool for All funded slots already exceeds the number of eligible preschoolers
- Four current recruitment community areas had eligible children that were not served in Head Start or in Preschool for All – Fuller Park, Hermosa, New City and Oakland; the number of children not served in Fuller Park and Oakland is largely the result of no programs operating in those two community areas.
- When center and family child care is subtracted from the pool of eligible children, only Oakland remained as a community area with eligible preschoolers that were not served by Head Start, Preschool for All and center and family child care
- Four proposed community areas had a substantial number of eligible preschoolers after subtracting the numbers served by Head Start and Preschool for All: Albany Park, Austin, West Lawn and West Ridge
- When center and family child care slots were subtracted from the pool of eligible preschoolers, more programs existed than there were eligible preschoolers
- The number of children eligible for Head Start may increase in the next year or two as a result of the unemployment and economic recession due to the pandemic

Recruitment of Early Head Start and Head Start – High Priority Children

Disabilities, Birth through Age Two

- Information from the Chicago Public Schools from September 20, 2020 indicated that 984 children aged birth through 3 had an Individual Education Plan (or more properly an Individual Family Service Plan), which accounted for 30.8% of all enrolled children in that age group
- All of the CFCs in Chicago exceeded the national percentage of Child Find for infants under one year and for infants and toddlers birth to age three, which means they are screening more infants and toddlers and ensuring more infants and toddlers are identified with disabilities with ensuing services that are provided as early as possible

Disabilities, Ages Three through Five

- According to the Chicago Public Schools, on the 20th day of school year 2020-2021, 1,541 students aged four had an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 16.2% of 4-year-old students

Disabilities and COVID

- From February through September 2020, screenings for children birth through age two have dropped by 68% and referrals have dropped by 58% due to the pandemic
- Children with special needs likely found their provision of services greatly disrupted due to the pandemic; some services were likely ended during Shelter in Place while others changed the modality to virtual
- While all the requirements of an IEP or an IFSP still needed to be met, changes were made to a Remote Learning Plan (RLP) but such services can be very difficult to implement remotely
- CFCs, schools and parents have worked together to continue to provide services to special needs children but the challenges have been difficult to overcome

Child Abuse and Neglect

- Although not current data, the overall child abuse and neglect rate in Chicago between 2015 and 2019 rose by 31% from 10.8 per 1,000 children in 2015 to 14.1 per 1,000 children in 2019
- Some communities not only had high rates but saw large increases in the rates between 2015 and 2019
- Englewood, Washington Park, West Englewood and Grand Boulevard were among the top ten current recruitment community areas with the highest rates of child abuse and neglect
- South Shore, West Garfield Park and North Lawndale showed the highest rates among the *proposed* recruitment areas
- Generally, the *proposed* recruitment areas showed decreases in child abuse and neglect except for West Garfield Park, which showed an increase

Substitute Care

- Most community areas had small numbers of children in substitute care, not enough to reliably calculate a rate per 1,000 children
- Morgan Park, Englewood, West Englewood, Near West Side and Humboldt Park had the highest rates of substitute care
- Despite high rates, all the current recruitment areas showed large decreases in substitute care between 2015 and 2019
- The *proposed* Start Early recruitment areas also had small numbers of children in substitute care
- Austin, North Lawndale and South Shore had the highest rates of substitute care for the *proposed* recruitment areas

- South Shore showed a substantial decrease but Austin and North Lawndale showed increases

Child Abuse and Neglect/Substitute Care and COVID

- Children lost access to concerned adults outside the family during shelter in place as well as to mandated reporters
- Despite efforts by the Department of Children and Family Services in asking teachers and other mandated reporters to be extra vigilant, calls concerning child abuse and neglect dropped during the pandemic
- Anecdotal information from the Illinois Head Start Association, reports an increase in child abuse and neglect

Teen Birth Rate

- In 2019 the U.S. teen birth rate was 16.7 births per 1,000 teens, down 4% from 2018 when the rate was 17.4 births for every 1,000 adolescent females aged 15-19
- The birth rates for teens declined for nearly all groups in 2019: down 2% for non-Hispanic Black, 6% for non-Hispanic White, and 5% for Hispanic teens

Poverty and Extreme Poverty

- Most of the community areas in this report saw increases in child poverty
- The Chicago young child poverty rate in 2019 was 26% and in 2018, 23%, an increase of 11%
- Englewood, West Englewood, Washington Park, Woodlawn and New City had 40% or higher of children, birth through age five in poverty
- North Lawndale, Austin, East Garfield Park and West Garfield Park, *proposed* recruitment areas, had more than 40% of their children, birth through age five in poverty
- Many of the current recruitment community areas with high percentages of young child poverty also had high percentages of children in extreme poverty (below 50% of poverty): Englewood, West Englewood, Washington Park, Woodlawn
- The same was true of the *proposed* recruitment areas – North Lawndale, Austin, East and West Garfield Park, all with high poverty at 100% also had high levels of extreme poverty (50%)

Poverty and COVID

- The American Rescue Plan expands the child tax credit and could reduce child poverty by about 40%
- Currently the plan is only for one year but if renewed and made permanent could replicate a similar policy in Great Britain that reduced child poverty by half
- The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimated that in Illinois 2,543,000 (89%) children will benefit from the expansion of the child tax credit; of those, 153,000 children under 18 will

be lifted above the 100% of poverty line and a further 338,000 will be lifted closer to the 100% poverty line and out of extreme poverty

Health

Uninsured

- An estimated 120,000 Illinois children were uninsured in 2019, a 46% increase since 2016; Latinx children had the highest rate of uninsured at 5.6% compared to all other children at 4.0%
- The increase in the uninsured came just before the COVID pandemic started, leaving more children without health care insurance
- The American Rescue Plan has a special enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act and has allowed 5,300 people to sign up since February, 2021 and an extension to August will allow thousands more Illinoisans to sign up

COVID and Communities at Risk

- The city of Chicago has created a Chicago COVID-19 Community Vulnerability Index that takes several factors into account in determining a Chicago community area's vulnerability to the pandemic
- The index and rankings of Chicago community areas ranged from 4 (the lowest) to 64 (the highest)
- A high score correlated with high rates of COVID hospitalizations and mortality, low socioeconomic status and high mobility during COVID (unable to shelter in place, likely due to occupation)
- Residents of high vulnerability community areas have been almost 3 times as likely to have died from COVID-19 as low vulnerability community areas and the top 10 community areas account for 25% of all COVID-19 deaths
- Of the top 15 high vulnerability community areas, 7 were majority Latinx and 8 were majority Black
- Of the current recruitment areas, West Englewood, New City, Englewood, Humboldt Park and Hermosa all had indexes of 50 or more and were considered high risk
- Of the *proposed* recruitment areas, North Lawndale, South Lawndale, Archer Heights and Austin all had indexes above 50 and were considered high risk

Child Health and COVID

- While inequities existed in health care for high-risk groups prior to COVID, the pandemic has exacerbated these differences and reflects the disparities prevalent in the adult population;

nationally there has been a disproportionately higher infection rate occurring in Latinx children than in White or Black children

- Other child medical concerns related to COVID include curtailment of active or ongoing medical treatment, physical and other therapies and health monitoring such as for asthma; wellness checks were put on hold while the Shelter in Place order was in place and have been slow to resume
- Additionally, children were falling behind on vaccinations for chicken pox and measles among others, which could lead to future additional illnesses and medical problems

Lead in Illinois

- Illinois has more service lines made of lead than any other state and Chicago has more than any other city
- Mayor Lightfoot started a small pilot program to target low-income neighborhoods and replace just 650 of Chicago's 400,000 lead service lines this year
- President Biden's proposed Build Back Better Recovery Plan includes \$45 million in funds to replace lead pipes; even if the \$45 million for lead pipe replacement remains in the plan and is funded, Chicago remains behind most U.S. cities

Perinatal and Child Health Indicators

- The Illinois Maternal and Child Health (Title V) Program recently published a new infant mortality data report that outlines factors contributing to the inequities in infant mortality for Black and White infants

Social-Emotional Health

- Mothers, especially Black, Latinx and single mothers, have borne a great deal of stress during the pandemic; the stress and mental health crises that many mothers face is seen and felt by their children
- A positive consequence of the pandemic is resultant smaller class sizes that have contributed to a decrease in behavioral challenges of the children and made it easier for teachers to handle behavioral difficulties
- The Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership devoted their annual report to the Governor on the effects of the COVID-19 virus on children's mental health and on the effect of structural and persistent racism, overtly recognized as never before this past year, to the mental health of children
- Both the Lake and Will County Health most current health reports noted mental health needs in their communities

Nutrition

Food Insecurity

- Food insecurity remains a major concern for families already experiencing poverty and is a growing concern for many families negatively impacted by the economic consequences of COVID-19
- The Census Bureau’s Household Pulse Survey found that between 7 and 10 million children live in a household where children didn’t get enough because the household could not afford it
- In Illinois, the percent of adults reporting that children in their household were not eating enough because the household could not afford food was 17%
- In Chicago, the Greater Chicago Food Depository, which also covers Cook County, reported that in their 41-year history, the Depository has never seen a hunger crisis greater than the one caused by the COVID virus
- Perhaps an additional consequence of the pandemic and school/early education closures is increased obesity of children because they have less time to exercise and may not be eating as healthily as they would have at school or early education centers

SNAP Benefits

- SNAP benefits in Illinois increased by 16% between February and May, 2020
- The American Rescue Plan passed by Congress and signed by President Biden in March, 2021 includes expansion of the SNAP program
- Although data updating Child SNAP receipt from 2015 to 2019 was obtained, the values were virtually the same as between 2014 and 2018 and do not reflect the increases seen with the COVID pandemic
- Nevertheless, from that data SNAP receipt decreased in almost all the current recruitment community areas, Washington Park and Morgan Park showing the only increases
- Fuller Park, West Englewood and Woodlawn, in the current recruitment areas, showed the highest receipt of SNAP, between 71% and 99%
- North Lawndale, West Garfield Park and South Shore showed the highest SNAP receipt for the *proposed* recruitment areas, also between 71% and 99%
- SNAP was one of the public assistance programs included on changes to public charge by the Trump administration; on March 9, 2021, the United States Department of Justice filed motions to dismiss the Trump public charge rule, which ended a two-year legal battle and invalidated the rule nationwide

Unemployment

- Unemployment rates have been higher for Black and Latinx workers, 9.9% and 8.5% respectively since February, 2020, compared to 5.6% for White workers
- Unemployment has also risen faster among workers born outside of the United States, including individuals who are now U.S. citizens

- Latina women fell into the deepest unemployment at the height of the job losses last spring
- The majority of jobs lost have been in industries that pay low average wages, with the lowest paying industries accounting for 30% of all jobs but 55% of the jobs lost from February, 2020 to February, 2021
- When family members are considered, as many as 38 million people in February, including nearly 10 million children, lived in a family where at least one adult did not have paid work in the last week because of unemployment or the pandemic
- While the economy has improved from last spring, the gains, like the losses, have not been spread evenly with significantly fewer Black and Latina women working, fewer than any other demographic; women are lagging behind men across race and ethnicity
- Workers in the lowest quarter of earners lost almost 8 million jobs from 2019 to 2020, while the highest wage earners actually gained jobs
- When jobs re-open, the groups hurt the most, single mothers of color especially those with a high school diploma or less education, have the hardest time getting back to work
- When the pandemic hit, the unemployment rate in the Chicago-Joliet-Naperville region rose to 10.4% in September, 2020 and has since fallen to 7.4% in February, 2021

Immigrant Families

- While threats to immigrants have eased recently, it may take time for immigrants to feel comfortable accessing needed health care and other services due to fear of deportation by the government
- Immigrants, particularly women, often work in low wage-earning jobs and industries which have been hardest hit with lay-offs and unemployment
- Immigrants, even those who are now U.S. citizens have seen job losses without the gains that U.S. born citizens might be experiencing

Chicago Unrest

- The death of George Floyd in late May in Minneapolis sparked several marches and demonstrations in cities across the county including the Chicago area
- By June 2, the National Guard had been activated in at least 28 states and dozens of cities, including Chicago, had imposed curfews to stop the looting, arson and violence
- Most of the protests have been peaceful, however. Between May 26 and August 22, 2020, 93% of protests were peaceful and nondestructive
- Nevertheless, police in many cities reacted with unnecessary violence
- Mr. Floyd's death came during the coronavirus pandemic that saw Americans ordered to stay in their homes and saw unemployment rise to levels not seen in years
- The pandemic clearly revealed many inequities in American systems from health care to employment
- The confluence of all these factors forced people to pay attention, less able to look away and be distracted by other things

- A poll for ABC suggested that 74% of Americans felt that the killing of Mr. Floyd was part of a broader problem in the treatment of Black Americans by police
- The protests and inequities the COVID pandemic laid bare, have generated a societal accounting for the racial injustice in the United States leading to numerous legislative proposals at all levels of government to combat police misconduct, systemic racism and police brutality

Crime

- The first quarter of 2021 has seen more gun violence than in the past 4 years – 131 killings so far in 2021, a 34% jump over the same period a year ago
- The last year also saw 760 people killed as neighborhoods struggled with school closures, unemployment and shortages of resources in poorer communities as well as the unrest following George Floyd's death
- Chicago has not been the only city experiencing a spike in gun violence and deaths; Detroit, New York, Philadelphia, as well as smaller cities such as Grand Rapids and Milwaukee, have also experienced an increase in gun violence
- In addition to the gun violence and homicides, Chicago has also experienced a large increase in carjackings this year, continuing from an increased trend in 2020

Property Crime

- Between 2015 and 2019, many Chicago community areas saw decreases in property crime
- Of the current recruitment areas, Fuller Park, again as in the last few years, had the highest property crime rate at 115.3 (115.3 offenses per 1,000 residents) followed by Englewood at 61.3
- The lowest property crime rate for the current recruitment areas was in Brighton Park at 12.8 (12.8 offenses per 1,000 residents)
- In the *proposed* recruitment areas, Near North Side had the highest property crime rate at 66.5 (66.5 offenses per 1,000 residents); the lowest was in West Elsdon at 15.1
- Most of the *proposed* recruitment areas saw increases in property crime but a few saw decreases

Violent Crime

- Between 2015 and 2019, most current Start Early recruitment communities saw a decrease in violent crime
- Fuller Park, like with property crime, had the highest violent crime rate of 57.9 (57.9 offenses per 1,000 residents) as they have for the last several years; Edgewater had the lowest crime rate at 3.0 (3 offenses per 1,000 residents)
- In the Start Early *proposed* recruitment areas, most saw increases in violent crime
- West Garfield Park had the highest violent crime rate at 46.4 (46.4 offenses per 1,000 residents) and Garfield Ridge the lowest at 2.3

Domestic Violence

- In 2019, there were 67,600 incidents of domestic violence or 60.4% of all offenses, the highest percentage of offenses out of all offenses
- the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership found that calls to domestic violence hotlines had increased significantly during the COVID pandemic
- However domestic violence shelters had less capacity due to social distancing and used hotels as shelter places.
- Anecdotal information from Head Start and early care and education programs were also seeing increases in domestic violence

Challenges in Communities Identified by Focus Groups

- Families will need lots of support in the months and year ahead
- There is concern and stress around the city “returning to normal” when certain families and populations are still facing the same struggles with health concerns, unemployment, and adequate schooling and childcare
- There is a need for community partners to come together to share resources and partner together soon. Parents need to know what resources are available to them
- Among the needs and challenges families and communities face:
 - Support with issues related to grief and loss, violence and trauma, and continued support around emotional recovery (mentioned most frequently)
 - Affordable housing in neighborhoods that are safe for children and families (also mentioned frequently)
 - Health insurance and equitable health resources for Black and brown communities
 - Support in the hospital during labor for pregnant mothers
 - Computer and technology accessibility (tablets, iPads or laptops; high speed internet) and literacy
 - Economic development plan for helping organizations and families recover from pandemic and helping people back to full employment
 - Protection from the ending of COVID-19 related protections such as evictions, student loan payments, utilities being shut off
 - Information about vaccines for themselves and their children and about resources and remedies available
 - Funding for programs that provide resources and services to children and families

Proposed Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered as an initial point of departure for further questions, strategizing and planning. Many of the recommendations from last year would also be applicable.

- Program staff summarized their focus group discussions and formulated needed and highly relevant recommendations. The recommendations should all be implemented
- While the expansion of universal pre-K has been stalled by the pandemic, efforts will re-start sooner or later; Build Back Better has provisions for universal pre-K if passed and funded.

These efforts have implications for Head Start programs (less so Early Head Start programs); keep abreast of efforts and of communication about these efforts by the Office of Head Start and strategize accordingly

- The table in Appendix B that lists the percentage of homeless students is a resource for locating homeless families
- Analysis of the current and proposed Chicago community areas on number of children in poverty and number of children served in other early childhood programs revealed eligible infants and toddlers that were not served in most communities
- The same analysis showed that competition for preschool children continues with few current and proposed community areas that have many unserved eligible children
- Programs are encouraged to keep close contacts with their local Child Family Connections office for referral of infants and toddlers with disabilities and to help coordinate and provide any virtual services
- As soon as is safe, allow therapists from Early Intervention to provide their services at the program site
- The local Child and Family Connections could also provide referrals for children turning three and aging out of Early Intervention but still in need of services
- Program staff may need to be acutely vigilant and aware of any child abuse or neglect that might have occurred during the enforced Shelter in Place orders and isolation
- Head Start and Early Head Start programs can provide a valuable service by ensuring that any missed well-child visits, vaccinations and other needed health services that were delayed or did not occur during the Shelter in Place order and families not accessing services for health and safety reasons
- Start Early's Head Start and Early Head Start programs have always been diligent in ensuring children are tested for lead. Given the recent findings on the number of lead pipes in Illinois and the Chicago area, that persistent diligence needs to continue
- The pandemic, economic recession and job uncertainty has created tremendous stress for families, particularly mothers. Use existing relationships with mothers and parents to sensitively talk about what keeps them up at night; use the mental consultant to discuss concerns and make referrals if needed
- With increases in food insecurity due to the pandemic, referrals to food banks and any other food resources the program can provide may be needed now more than ever
- Program staff should also ensure that families are enrolled in SNAP if needed and know how to access their local WIC agencies
- Many of the parents that the Start Early Head Start and Early Head Start programs serve might be the parents who have been unemployed due to the pandemic and may be having difficulty finding employment again. Staff can assist with referrals
- Programs should reassure immigrant families as much as possible that they can safely access needed services such as Early Intervention and other disability services, health and mental health and nutrition services. Staff should continue to provide support and referrals, when necessary, to immigrant families. They continue to be under stress and may not be accessing needed services

- While the American Recovery Act has provisions to help families stay in their homes, programs may find more families needing housing after being unable to pay rent or mortgages. Access to affordable housing will still be difficult but offering any referrals and support will help
- Program staff should be vigilant for possible domestic violence that may have occurred during the forced isolation
- Staff should continue to provide the needed services parents appreciate and noted in their focus groups – mental health consultant, nutritionist, health referrals, disability referrals and any other social service needs.

Parent Education Activities: 8 PAT Activities were conducted virtually via YouTube videos

- October – Fall Tree, Nature Walk & Fall Creations
- November – Thankful Turkey, Thankful Paper Chains and Shake/Rattle/Roll
- February – Bouquet of People You Love, Feeling and Sorting Hearts
- March – 3D Rainbow, Rainbow Activity
- April – Foam Rain Cloud, Musical Eggs
- May – Pizza Food Experience, Flowerpot Activity
- June – Summer Collage
- July – Summer Fireworks, Catch Butterfly Activity

Parent Committee Meetings:

Parent Meetings were organized and facilitated by the Site Director. The topics of the meetings have included:

- Parent Orientation/Pedestrian Safety/TSG-Creative Curriculum/ Referrals and Screenings (9/17 & 9/15, 2020)
- What is Mental Health? / Options for Knowledge (10/13 & 10/15, 2020)
- The benefits of good attendance & Preparing your child for success in school/Preparing your child for preschool/kindergarten Transitions (11/17 & 11/19, 2020)
- Safety Training/Health Insurance (12/15 & 12/17, 2020)
- Mental Health A Typical Behavior (1/19 & 1/21, 2021)
- Importance of Physical Activity/Importance of Medical and Dental (2/16 & 2/18, 2021)
- Nutrition/Parent Curriculum (3/16 & 3/18, 2021)
- Mental Health-Childhood Violence (4/20 & 4/22, 2021)
- Behavior Health (5/18 & 5/20, 2021)
- Kindergarten Readiness/Transitions (6/15 & 6/18, 2021)

Other special gatherings or activities: UIC Workshops were conducted virtually

- October – Who I Am With Money & Book Sharing
- November – Savings & Teaching the ABC's
- December – Choosing Credit & Creating Home Literacy Centers
- January – What Happens If I Don't Pay & Math at Home
- February – Money Services & Children's Writing
- March – Tracking Spending & Parents and Teachers Get Together

- April – Spending Plans & Parents and Homework
- May – Credit History and Score & Talking Leads to Learning

Other Special Activities:

- April - Universal Smiles Dental Van
- September – Back-to-School Jam

Male Involvement:

- Family Focus hosted a Fatherhood Conference on June 16th

Health

- Starting Program Year 20-21 during the pandemic, we wanted to make sure that all children’s health requirements were current. We reached out to our healthcare facilities whom we have cooperative agreements, to see those who might be facing challenges with getting exams.
- Due to COVID-19, health services such as hearing/vision and dentals were not performed in the 1st 45 days. Children did not receive onsite dental exams until June 2021. Some children were screened for hearing/vision in May 2021. Children 12 months+, received vision screenings via Plus Optix.
- Ongoing monitoring was done by Health Coordinator of medications, action plans, and health requirements.
- Throughout the year, the Health Coordinator completed HGB screenings.
- The Nurse Consultant performed BP and lead assessments for missing or expired screenings. Nurse also conducted classroom observations.
- Health Coordinator conducted spring heights and weights.
- Nurse Consultant reviewed health histories and Nutrition Consultant reviewed nutrition histories. Individual health plans were completed for those that were overweight, underweight, chronic conditions, and anemia

Mental Health

- Mental health services were provided throughout the school year for staff and families.
- Mental Health Consultant did virtual classrooms observations and provided feedback to teachers.
- Mental Health Consultant had specific office hours on when staff members can reach out to for services.
- The Mental Health Consultant provided several trainings for parents/guardians during monthly parent meetings. Parents/Guardians are informed that individual consultations are available as well.

Community and Social Services Other Community-related Education:

- This year we had Universal Smiles mobile dental team provide professional quality preventive dental care to children one-year and older. The services provided were dental examinations, dental cleanings, fluoride treatments, dental sealants, and oral health education

- Friend Family Clinic allowed us to recruit by having a table for us at the clinic and speak to clients with children. We also have a referral process with them to refer families for physicals and lab work.
- UIC Fast Parent program provide free trainings for parent and fathers that was giving to parents and encouraged to participate.
- Cradles to Crayons provide clothing and other needed items to our families that were in need. They also donated 100 back packs for our children going to kindergarten and for our Back-to-School Jam events.
- Excel Academy has referred their students to Family Focus for childcare services and we have referred our young parents to their academy to finish high school.

Education and Literacy:

- Education services offered- Developmental screenings; quarterly assessment based on teacher/family observations of the child; group and individual planning based on the needs and interests of children; daily routines and transitions that support attachment and development; home/school connection activities to promote parent involvement in children's education. Families receive 2 formal visits per year (2 home visits; 2 family conferences) to discuss their child's development and planning.
- Literacy services offered Diverse, multicultural books in classrooms; daily reading for group and individuals; materials labeled with pictures and words; songs, nursery rhymes, and fingerplays used for routines and transitions; visual schedules posted in classrooms
- Conscious Discipline services offered Teachers incorporated "I Love You Rituals" and the "Safekeeper Ritual" during their group times and throughout the day. Teachers created family boards to help with hellos/goodbyes and used visual schedules to support daily routines/transitions. Coordinators did monthly trainings and provided coaching/modeling on how to implement strategies in the classroom. Classroom materials such as CD books, I Love You Ritual cards/CDs, posters, etc were provided by the Grantee to support implementation. Coordinators reviewed with teachers how to use the materials in the classroom. Conscious Discipline overview given to parents during parent meeting, along with reviewing the Conscious Discipline website for resources during the parent session.
- EHS Transitions Transition forms begins to be filled out when the child turns 30 months of age. Transition form is reviewed and updated at least quarterly with activities that classroom teachers are doing and what families are doing at home to support transitions. Classroom books of the HS classrooms were made for EHS classrooms for children to see what their new environments would look like. HS teachers made welcome videos for EHS children to view before their transition. EHS children visited HS classrooms when the classrooms were empty.

Kindergarten Readiness

Special Efforts to Prepare Children for Kindergarten

Transition Activities to Promote Kindergarten Readiness

Parents were given Family Portal and activity information, activities for Kindergarten were input for children transitioning, transition plans were created for each child.

Home Activities: Practice kindergarten skills; Explore pencils, crayons, and child-size scissors.;

Practice saying full name and how you get to and from school.; Hang up a coat, go to the toilet, and wash hands without help.; Follow simple rules and take turns.

Children were given opportunities to recognize self as a unique individual having own abilities, characteristics, emotions, and interests. Children learned about belonging to family, community, and other groups.

Children were given opportunities to demonstrate recognizing number of objects in a small set. The ability to understand the relationship between numbers and quantities. Children learned to compare numbers, associate a quantity with written numerals up to 20, and begin to write numbers.

Child developed knowledge and skills that help promote nutritious food choices and eating habits.

Children increased their knowledge of personal safety practices and routines.

Daily activities were provided to encourage phonetic and phonological awareness, nursery rhymes, reading stories that incorporate rhymes, beginning sound activities and clapping, demonstrating knowledge of alphabet by naming letters out of sequence, writing letters, and identifying letters in their names.

Comprehending read aloud, reading books 3 times a day so that children can properly understand and articulate information read, recall information, discuss information, and ask and answer open ended questions related to books read.

Children are given learning experiences that enhances their problem-solving skills, i.e. “How do you think we can make this better” supporting their ability to make good choices and understanding the consequences when they do not.

Summary of Audit Findings

2020-006 Allowable Costs (Repeat Finding) Early Head Start and Head Start Program – 93.600
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Award Numbers – 33334, 33369, 25EHS, 22HS

Criteria or specific requirement – An entity may only charge to a federal award allowable costs. Adequate source documentation should be retained to support amounts and items reported in order to ensure compliance with allowable cost requirements.

Condition – Certain amounts selected for testing did not agree with supporting documentation. In all instances of amounts sampled, portions charged to the grant were less than the actual amount expended per the supporting documentation.

Questioned costs – None.

Context – 21 out of the 40 expenditures charged to the grant that were selected for testing within the months of November 2019 and May 2020 had amounts that were less than the actual amount expended per supporting documentation. For personnel-related expenditures, amounts charged to the grant had been computed without fully and properly reconciled substantiation behind such computation, resulting in certain allowable personnel-related deductions and benefits to be improperly excluded and inconsistent with source documentation.

Effect – Mismatch between expenditures charged to the grant and actual expended amounts has resulted in the Society being unable to fully and properly reconcile its grant vouchers to the general ledger and the Society’s financial reporting system. As a result, the Society did not fully recoup eligible expenditures that were allowed to be charged to the grant.

Cause – The Society did not have any procedures in place to review the preparation of allowable costs

charged to the grant.

Identification as a repeat finding – 2019-006

Recommendation – We recommend that the Society implement policies and procedures to ensure that expenditures charged to the grant are consistent with source documentation and that accurate and timely reconciliations be implemented and reviewed such that program-related expenditures align with the Society’s financial information.

Views of responsible officials and planned corrective actions – Historically, the Society’s accounting platform was not structured to capture the data necessary to perform specific allocations of certain benefit costs like medical insurance by participant. The vouchering process used an allocation of total costs to estimate reimbursable expenditures. The historical estimating process used to allocate costs to the Society’s grants and contracts was reviewed and allowed by both government and independent auditors. The Society has implemented the necessary changes to its general ledger structure to produce a detailed allocation of expenditures agreeing directly to source documents to assure that maximum allowable contract reimbursement is accomplished.

Summary of Information Required by the Secretary

The Ounce Board of Directors and Policy Council were given brief summaries and links to all Program Instructions and Information Memorandums

First Step Child Care Center – Partner Agency

Program Name: First Step Child Care Center, Inc.
Address: 22025 Governors Hwy, Richton Park, IL 60471
Phone Number: (708) 747-3000
Fax Number: (708) 747-5000
Head Start Director Name: Ellie Giberson
Head Start Director Email: egiberson@fs3c.com

Agency Web Site Address: firststepofrichtonpark.com
Agency Type: For-Profit

Agency Description:

First Step Child Care Center is a for-profit child care and early learning center which facilitates the development of the whole child through carefully designed experiences that tap into the child’s natural curiosity and developmental readiness. We know that every child’s emotional well-being is vitally important to their development, and our warm and loving staff provide a stable, nurturing environment where children can thrive. All our learning experiences are individualized to meet each child where they are in their development. Our teaching and administrative staff are dedicated to continual research and professional learning in child development and the best practices in early childhood education.

First Step Child Care Center has been providing a safe and nurturing environment in Richton Park, IL

since 1999. This family-owned business cares for children from 6 weeks to 5 years of age. We are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and are a Gold Circle Center with the Illinois ExceleRate System for child care centers.

Community Areas Served

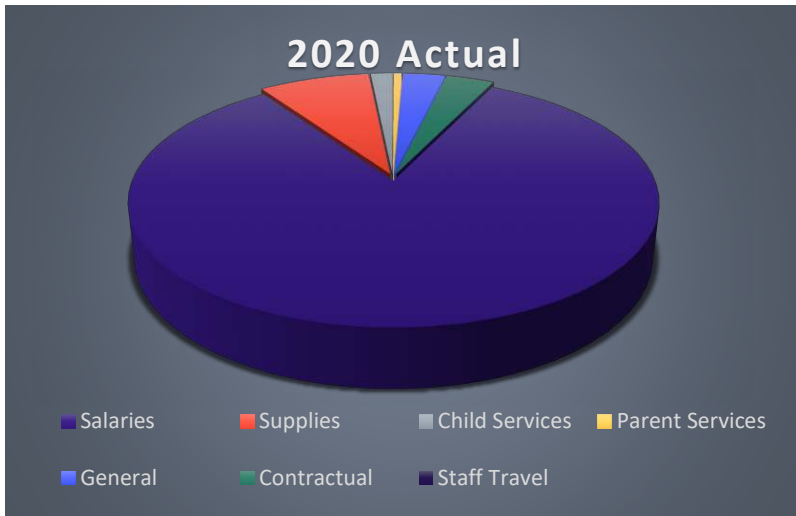
Crete
 Park Forest
 Richton Park
 Matteson
 Steger
 University Park
 Chicago Heights

Overall Grantee Budget 2020

Total Public and Private Funds received: \$ 1,232,0003

Public Funds		Private Funds	
Source	Amount	Source	Amount
Federal	\$905,913	Individuals, Corporations, Foundations, etc.	
State		In-kind	\$326,090
Local School District			
Total	\$905,913	Total	\$326,090

2020 Budget and Actual Expenditures



Summary of your most current Community Assessment
Children and Families Served in 2020

Grantee Funded Enrollment

	Head Start Enrollment	Early Head Start Enrollment
Center-based Program		
a. 5 days per week		
1. Full-day enrollment	58	47
2. Part-day enrollment		
b. 4 days per week		
1. Full-day enrollment		
2. Part-day enrollment		
Home-based Program		
Unallocated Slots		
Total:	58	47

Site:

Total Children Served: 105 Total Families Served: 65

Average monthly enrollment (as percentage of funded enrollment): 51%

Number of Eligible Children in Community, ages 0-5	1052
Percentage of children served in agency	10%

Health

Percentage of enrolled children who received medical and dental exams

	Received Medical Exams	Received Dental Exams
	80%	82%

Parental involvement in Directly Operated, Delegate and Partner Agencies

Community Assessment Summary:

Parents contribute to our community assessment survey annually. Their input about the strengths and challenges in the community, both for their family and specifically for their Early/Head Start child, are valuable parts of the Community Assessment we put together annually. This input helps us plan for future recruitment, community partnerships, and program offerings that can mutually benefit our families and our center.

Parent Education Activities

Our Parent Committee meetings are held on the first Monday of every month, providing an opportunity for families to connect, share their experiences and get involved in the operations of the program. Parents are encouraged to be active participants in the decision-making process and their input is invaluable to planning at First Step. Staff changes, curriculum changes, fiscal reports, and policy decisions are presented to our Parent Committee for consultation. In 2020, we started using a virtual platform for our meetings due to the COVID pandemic. While virtual attendance dropped, our dedicated parents continued to influence our decision-making as we navigated the ever-changing requirements of the pandemic.

While the pandemic put a halt to our in-person family events, we continue to offer virtual family activities for our families. From Male Involvement activities like Fitness with Dad and Building Butterfly Houses, to family activities like Skittles Science and Stories and Snacks, families continued to spend quality time with their child and their child’s classmates.

We value the ability and opportunities to help our parents learn more about their child’s development, and we continue to offer virtual events that facilitate this learning. We provide monthly virtual Parents as Teachers activities, which offer opportunities for parents and children to come together for age-appropriate learning activities with other parents and children. Activities are facilitated by our Family Support Specialists and utilize simple materials found in every home. We also offer periodic trainings focused on wellness, nutrition, health, and safety.

Health

In 2020, our focus shifted to helping families navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges the pandemic created around routine healthcare. We provided ongoing education and resources about immunizations, well-child visits, and oral health, and utilized community partners to help secure needed services. We also brought greater focus to learning activities for the children around nutrition, exercise, and hygiene as we worked hard to keep everyone healthy.

Mental Health

Both the pandemic and the events in our world in 2020 caused a great deal of stress, fatigue, and trauma in the lives of everybody. Our children, staff, and families were no exception. We continued to utilize our Wellness Consultant in 2020, with an intense focus on recognizing and responding to signs of stress and trauma in young children. We started a staff wellness program that incorporated trainings and activities designed to help them deal with everything affecting them, including the new stresses of caring for children in light of the pandemic.

We introduced a wellness program to our children, staff, and families in 2020 called Conscious Discipline. This focuses on helping adults to recognize their own emotional states of being, so they can help young children begin to regulate their emotions. Using fun tools like puppets, books, and activity boards, children learn to create a safe and supportive classroom community as they build developmentally appropriate social skills.

Community and Social Services

Our Family Support Specialists consult individually with families to identify their needs and work diligently to assist them in accessing services they need. The COVID-19 pandemic brought many new challenges to families, and we worked with many community partners to help families navigate these new challenges. This has led us to focus on the partnerships we have in the community, and to work on developing others that we see a need for.

Education and Literacy

The education of your child is one of our top priorities. First Step Child Care Center uses Creative Curriculum, which aligns with the Head Start Framework and the Illinois State Learning Standards and Guidelines. Creative Curriculum focuses on creating a learning environment that fosters a child's growth in all developmental areas, using play, small group activities, and whole-class instruction. Special attention is given to the development of literacy and mathematic skills by incorporating opportunities to develop these skills throughout every transition, activity, and learning center. The curriculum supports the use of Teaching Strategies, which is used to assess children's growth and development as they learn. Utilizing all these tools and continually evaluating our children's needs as well as our practices, we seek to respond to the data in order to meet the child's individual needs.

We value and recognize parents as their child's very first teacher. Our desire is to partner with the parents to prepare children for future academic and social success. Quarterly conferences offer our Head Start families an opportunity to ask questions about the program, give voice to their concerns and provide input on the individual needs of their child. Parents and teachers work together to create goals for each child, which teachers reference when planning classroom activities and experiences. Observations are gathered weekly to help teachers assess each child's progress towards meeting these goals.

Kindergarten Readiness

Special consideration is given to those children entering Kindergarten the next year. Parents and teachers work together to ensure the child is learning all the skills they will need for a successful transition to kindergarten throughout the entire school year. In 2020, we celebrated 23 Head Start children who completed our program and transitioned to the various local schools in our communities.

Because of the pandemic, we were not able to take these children to visit their new schools like we usually do, but we provided several other transition events to help them prepare for their new experiences. Each family received a bag of books and activities to work together on at home. Classrooms took a virtual web-based tour of a typical Kindergarten classroom and watched videos about riding a school bus, going to assemblies, eating in a cafeteria, and other activities that may be new to them. We also helped families prepare for the transition by holding a virtual event with a local Kindergarten teacher who provided additional information for families.

One Hope United - Delegate Agency

Program Name: One Hope United

Address: 514 W. 31st Street

Phone Number: 312-949-4045

Fax Number: 312-949-1168

Head Start Director Name: Rosanne DeGregorio

Head Start Director Email: rdegregorio@onehopeunited.org

Agency Web Site Address: www.onehopeunited.org

Agency Type: Private/Public Non-Profit

Agency Description

Founded in 1895, One Hope United is a multistate nonprofit that helps children and families build the skills to live life without limits. We serve over 10,000 children and families each year through education centers, child and family services, counseling, and residential programs. With our evidence-based and trauma-informed practices, we empower children and families to see and create a future where, regardless of their past, they can reach their full potential.

One Hope United Child Development Centers cater to the individual needs of each community, child and family in our care. We nurture children's growth and partner with parents to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners. Our curriculum-based programs focus on preparing students to succeed when they enter kindergarten.

Program Description

The One Hope United Head Start Centers include the Bridgeport Child Development Center I & II. The programs have been providing the community with the highest quality of early education and care for over 40 years.

Our teachers use The Creative Curriculum® to plan intentional, individualized learning experiences for children, including children with special needs. Our classroom environments include learning centers such as; blocks, dramatic play, art, library, discovery, sand and water, music and movement, and computers.

Children are engaged in activities that promote math, science, cognitive, social-emotional, physical, language and literacy development. Through active involvement with the environment, children learn to understand the world around them as they develop essential school-readiness skills and lay the foundation for a love of learning. The Head Start Centers partner with the Start Early, (formerly known as the Ounce of Prevention Fund) to provide Head Start services for 3- to 5-year-olds. The Head Start

model provides a nurturing environment that supports the healthy growth and development of each child in the

1 context of the child’s family, culture, and community. The center also partners with the Department of Children and Family Services to provide Preschool for All Programs that create a seamless transition for children from preschool into the public school system.

COVID-19 Health & Safety procedures have been developed to protect our children, families and staff that align with CDC, Local Public Health Departments and the Governor’s Restore Illinois Guidance for child care centers.

Overall Grantee Budget 2020 – Head Start

Total Public and Private Funds received*: \$ 3,731,483		Private Funds	
Public Funds			
Source	Amount	Source	Amount
Federal	995,614	Individuals, Corporations, Foundations, etc.	185,537
State	1,812,759	In-kind	65,573
Preschool For All		672,000	
Total	3,480,373	Total	251,110

One Hope United Waukegan - Delegate Agency

Program Number: 05CH010774-301
 Program Name: Waukegan Early Learning Center
 Program Address: 1500 Sunset Ave., Waukegan, IL 60087

Agency Address: 514 W. 31st Street
 Phone Number: 312-949-4045
 Fax Number: 312-949-1168

Head Start Director Name: Rosanne DeGregorio
 Head Start Director Email: rdegregorio@onehopeunited.org
 Agency Web Site Address: www.onehopeunited.org
 Agency Type: Private/Public Non-Profit

Agency Description

Founded in 1895, One Hope United is a multistate nonprofit that helps children and families build the skills to live life without limits. We serve over 10,000 children and families each year through education centers, child and family services, counseling, and residential programs. With our evidence-based and trauma-informed practices, we empower children and families to see and create a future where, regardless of their past, they can reach their full potential.

One Hope United Child Development Centers cater to the individual needs of each community, child and family in our care. We nurture children’s growth and partner with parents to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners. Our curriculum-based

programs focus on preparing students to succeed when they enter kindergarten.

Program Description

The program partners with the Start Early, (formerly known as the Ounce of Prevention Fund) to provide Early Head Start services, both center-based, and home-based, for children 6 weeks to 3 years. The Early Head Start model provides a nurturing environment that supports the healthy growth and development of each child in the context of the child’s family, culture and community.

In the center-based program, teachers utilize the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos which provides a unique “learn by doing” approach that allows children to explore and understand the world around them. The home-based program includes a weekly 90 minute home visit as well as socialization activities that provide opportunities for children and parents to meet and engage in a variety of learning experiences. Parent Educators utilize the Parents as Teachers Curriculum to partner with parents in helping their children grow up healthy, safe and ready to learn.

COVID-19 Health & Safety procedures have been developed to protect our children, families and staff that align with CDC, Local Public Health Departments and the Governor’s Restore Illinois Guidance for child care centers.

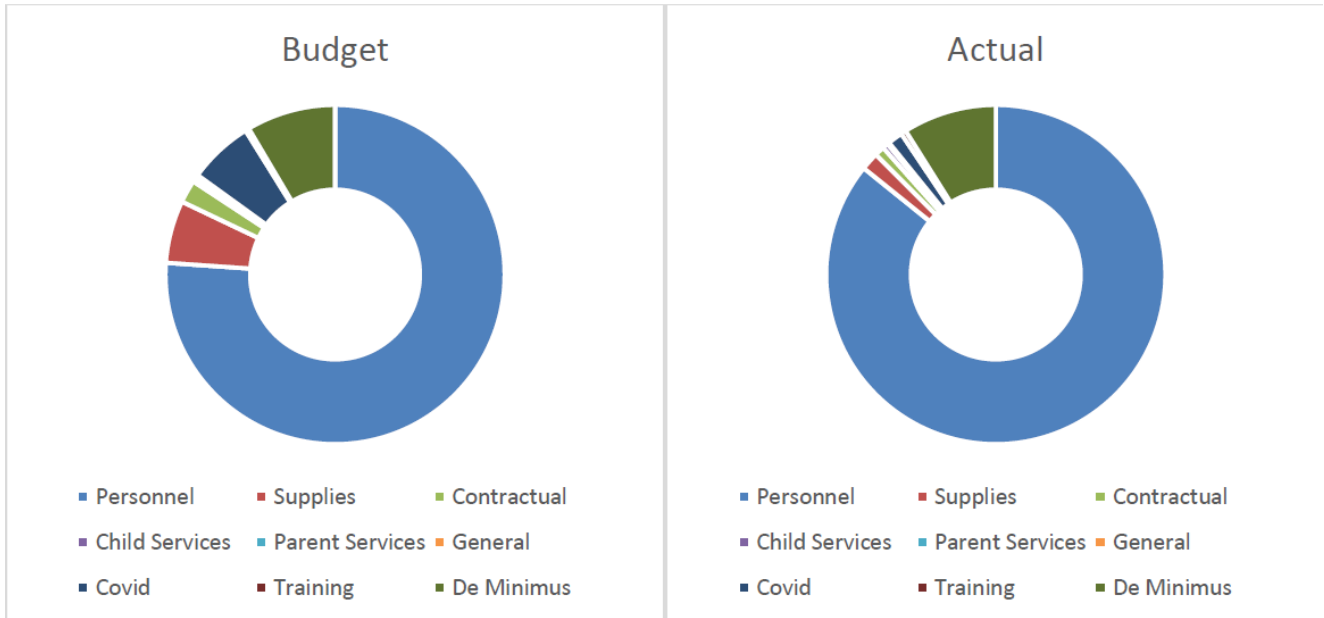
Overall Grantee Budget 2020– Early Head Start

Total Public and Private Funds received*: \$1,391,778

Public Funds		Private Funds	
Source	Amount	Source	Amount
Federal	769,675	Individuals, Corporations, Foundations, etc.	60,473
State	356,293	In-kind	205,337
Local School District	0		
Total	1,125,968	Total	265,810

*based on grants awarded in 2020, actual amounts received were lower due to center closures in response to Covid-19.

2020 Budget and Actual Expenditures



Summary of your most current Community Assessment Children and Families

Served in 2020

Grantee Funded Enrollment

	Head Start Enrollment	Early Head Start Enrollment
Center-based Program		
a. 5 days per week	0	32
1. Full-day enrollment	0	32
2. Part-day enrollment	0	0
b. 4 days per week	0	0
1. Full-day enrollment	0	0
2. Part-day enrollment	0	0
Home-based Program	0	38
Unallocated Slots	0	0
Total:	0	70

Total Children Served: 71

Programs moved to virtual learning when both center and home-based options closed for in-person services on March 18, 2020, as a result of the Governor’s orders to close child care programs and schools due to the pandemic.

Programs offered a hybrid model when center-based programming reopened on July 13, 2020. Home-based children continued to attend virtually and 28 EHS children returned to center-based

care. The office of Head Start did not require a Program Information Report (PIR) for 2019-2020 program year therefore health and family data is not available for this annual report.

Number of Eligible Children in Community, ages 0-2	2659
Percentage of children served in agency	3%

Community Assessment Summary: Key Findings

Demographic Key Findings

In the Lake County municipalities, Waukegan, North Chicago and Park City remain moderately high for children in poverty and Beach Park low in percentage of children aged 0-5 living in poverty.

The municipalities in Lake County saw mainly decreases in children living under 100% of poverty. North Chicago, Park City and Waukegan all saw decreases while Beach Park saw an increase. Lake County, as a whole, and Waukegan Township also saw an overall increase. North Chicago had the highest percentage of children living under 100% of poverty but Park City had the highest percentage of children living in extreme poverty (under 50% of poverty).

Waukegan’s race/ethnicity composition of the 0-5 children in Waukegan was 16% Black with 46% living in poverty, 66% Hispanic with 31% in poverty, and 22% Other Race children with 20% living in poverty.

Education Key Findings

Most municipalities in Lake County and Waukegan Township, Beach Park and North Chicago had their highest percentages for adult education in the category of some college/AA degrees while Park City and Waukegan’s highest were in high school diploma. The majority of the parents in the Waukegan Early Learning Center program had a high school degree or GED.

Disabilities Key Findings

In 2019-2020 the Waukegan Early Learning Center served 15 infants and toddlers with disabilities, 21% of funded enrollment. In Lake County, there were 804 children with an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) according to Early Intervention data for 2018-2019. The Early Head Start program has a relationship with the local CFC (Child and Family Connections) and works closely together to assess, evaluate, and provide services to children.

The unfortunate news is the decrease of screenings and referrals as a result of the COVID pandemic. Starting in February through September 2020, screenings have dropped by 68% and referrals have dropped by 58%.

Health Key Findings

This past year has had a major and negative effect on children's health, family life and education. While inequities existed in health care for high-risk groups prior to COVID, the pandemic has exacerbated these differences. Other medical concerns related to COVID have also surfaced such as curtailment of active or ongoing medical treatment, physical and other therapies and health monitoring such as for asthma. Wellness checks were put on hold while the Stay at Home order was in place and have been slow to resume.

Social Service Key Findings

In Lake County, the lack of capacity to respond in mental health crises, the gap in a trained mental health workforce and limited funding contributed to the need for more mental health services. Mental health was seen as having the most impact on the county and should be given priority when identifying and building systems.

Mothers, especially Black, Latinx and single mothers, have borne a great deal of stress during the pandemic. Either they have left the work force or work from home while simultaneously caring for children and overseeing their child's education or, if essential workers, have faced the issue of closed or reduced child care and education options. The stress and mental health crises that many mothers face is seen and felt by their children.

Waukegan Township, Park City and Waukegan all saw increases in unemployment between 2018 and 2019. Lake County, Beach Park and North Chicago all saw decreases.

- Waukegan Township – from 7% in 2018 to 8.4% in 2019, an increase of 20%
- Park City – from 9% in 2018 to 10.5% in 2019, an increase of 24%
- Waukegan – from 6% in 2018 to 8% in 2019, an increase of 28%

Unemployment has been greatly impacted by the pandemic.

Parental involvement

The program uses the four planned times of family engagement, starting with the initial home visit to identify family goals, strengths, and necessary services and other supports by gathering information aligned with the Parent, Family and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework. In addition to the initial home visit, a mid- year home visit and two parent teacher conferences are provided to discuss their child's progress and goals. All home visits and conferences took place virtually after March 2020.

Parent Committee and Policy Committee Meetings

Closure due to the pandemic has made regular parent meetings more challenging as programs struggled to find ways to engage families virtually. Parent Committee Meetings took place via Zoom. Parent surveys were utilized to engage parent input regarding technology needs, returning to in-person services, and annual family surveys to provide feedback on the program, etc.

- Elections are held in the fall to determine parent representatives to lead the Parent Committee and Policy Committee.
- Monthly Policy Committee Meetings took place over Zoom allow opportunities for parents across all sites to meet and work together with center leadership to discuss program plans, goals and progress

towards the goals. They assist by reviewing and approving staff hires and terminations, program budgets and amendments to the budget, and providing input into program plans and policies.

Parent Education Activities

Health

- ✓ Pedestrian Safety
- ✓ COVID-19 updates
- ✓ Transitioning
back to in-
person learning
- ✓ Summer Safety – Nurse consultant
- ✓ Dental Health

Mental Health

- ✓ Transitions and Routines - MHC
- ✓ Conscious Discipline
- ✓ Preparing yourself
and your child for the
move to a new center
– MHC & staff

Education and Literacy

- ✓ Learning Genie –
Virtual Lending
Library
- ✓ Virtual Learning – Child & Family Expectations and In-Kind
- ✓ Review of Head Start Outcomes

Nutrition

- ✓ Serving Food Safely - Nutritionist

Community and Social Services

- ✓ Health Service Advisory Committee Meeting
- ✓ Community Assessment Focus Group

Family Events

- ✓ Virtual Week of the Young Child
- ✓ Weekly check in's with families

Family “give-aways”:

- ✓ Activity bags with supplies and take-home activities



- ✓ diapers and food give-aways
- ✓ gift cards

SGA Youth Services –Delegate Agency

SGA YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

A Start Early- Early Head Start/Head Start Partner Agency

Program Name: SGA Youth and Family Services

Agency Address: 11 E. Adams, Suite 1500 Chicago, IL 60603

Phone Number: (773) 321-9232

Fax Number: (773) 475-7454

Head Start Director Name: Betty Diaz Head Start Director Email: bdiaz@sga-youth.org Agency Web

Site Address: www.sga-youth.org

Agency Type: Social Service Agency/ Not-for-Profit

SGA Youth & Family Services supports the emotional and social development of Chicago area children, adolescents, and young adults by providing fee-free therapy, case management, and other supportive services for individuals and their families. SGA’s mission: SGA helps children, families, and communities facing great challenges to realize their potential. SGA’s vision is to lead the evolution of services to transform challenged neighborhoods in the greater Chicago area into healthy communities. SGA Youth & Family Services partners with Start Early to provide comprehensive Early Head Start and Head Start home based services to families. The agency services 120 Early Head Start and Head Start eligible children.

Site Location:

SGA Home Visiting Office 3501 W. 48th Place Chicago, IL 60632

Community Areas Served:

Brighton Park McKinley Park New City

OVERALL GRANTEE BUDGET 2020

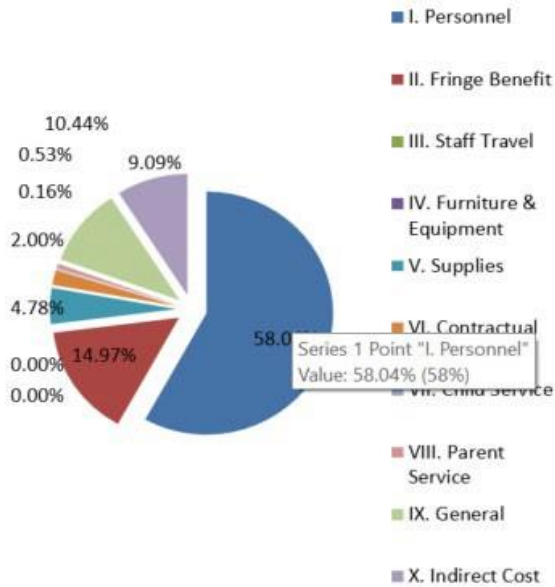
Total Public and Private Funds Received: \$1,535,779

Public Fund		Private Funds	
Source	Amount	Source	Amount
Federal	\$ 1,102,870	Individuals, Corporations, Foundations, etc.	\$ 148,580
State		In-Kind	\$ 284,329
Local School District			
Total	\$ 1,102,870	Total	\$ 432,909

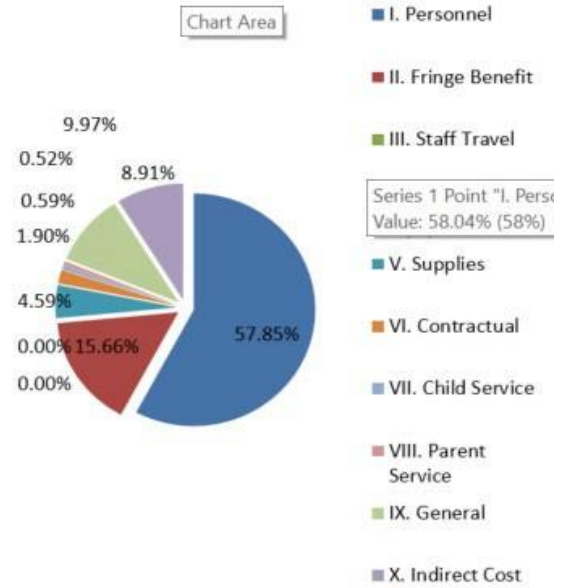
2020 BUDGET AND ACTUAL EXPENDITURES

2020 Budget and Actual Expenditures

Budget



Actual



Children and Families Served

Grantee Funded Enrollment

	Head Start Enrollment	Early Head Start Enrollment
Center-based Program		
a. 5 days per week		
1. Full-day enrollment		
2. Part-day enrollment		
b. 4 days per week		
1. Full-day enrollment		
2. Part-day enrollment		
Home-based Program	36	84
Unallocated Slots		
Total:	36	84

Site:

Total Children Served: 121 Total Families Served: 107 Average

monthly enrollment (as percentage of funded enrollment): 88%

Number of Eligible Children in Community, ages 0-5	3,162
Percentage of children served in agency	4%

Health

Percentage of enrolled children who received medical and dental exams

	Received Medical Exams	Received Dental Exams
SGA	50%	58%

Community Assessment Summary:

Status of Illinois' Early Childhood Programs

- Preschool for All, MIECHV home visiting programs and referrals to the Early Intervention services had also declined.
- Interviews with parents by Action for Children found that parents were hesitant to return their children to early childhood programs because of health and safety issues
- But lack of childcare also caused stress and challenges for those parents who were essential workers and had to miss work because of no childcare

Recruitment of Early Head Start and Head Start – Children Not Served, 0-2

- In many communities the supply of early childhood programs that serve infants and toddlers continues to be insufficient but does meet the needs in other communities
- Our recruitment areas had more eligible children not served in Early Head Start, Prevention Initiative or in childcare

Recruitment of Early Head Start and Head Start – Children Not Served, 3-5

- Looking at just Chicago, the number of Preschool for All funded slots already exceeds the number of eligible preschoolers
- Four current recruitment community areas had eligible children that were not served in Head Start or in Preschool for All – Fuller Park, Hermosa, New City and Oakland; the number of children not served in Fuller Park and Oakland is largely the result of no programs operating in those two community areas.
- The number of children eligible for Head Start may increase in the next year or two as a result of the unemployment and economic recession due to the pandemic

Health

Uninsured

- An estimated 120,000 Illinois children were uninsured in 2019, a 46% increase since 2016; Latinx children had the highest rate of uninsured at 5.6% compared to all other children at 4.0%
- The increase in the uninsured came just before the COVID pandemic started, leaving more children without health care insurance

Child Health and COVID

- While inequities existed in health care for high-risk groups prior to COVID, the pandemic has exacerbated these differences and reflects the disparities prevalent in the adult population; nationally there has been a disproportionately higher infection rate occurring in Latinx children than in White or Black children
- Additionally, children were falling behind on vaccinations for chicken pox and measles among others, which could lead to future additional illnesses and medical problems

Social-Emotional Health

- Mothers, especially Black, Latinx and single mothers, have borne a great deal of stress during the pandemic; the stress and mental health crises that many mothers face is seen and felt by their children
- A positive consequence of the pandemic is resultant smaller class sizes that have contributed to a decrease in behavioral challenges of the children and made it easier for teachers to handle behavioral difficulties

Immigrant Families

- While threats to immigrants have eased recently, it may take time for immigrants to feel comfortable accessing needed health care and other services due to fear of deportation by the government
- Immigrants, particularly women, often work in low wage-earning jobs and industries which have been hardest hit with lay-offs and unemployment

Parent Engagement & Family Activities

PARENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS: Our home-based program has a parent committee who elects officers each year to represent and take on roles within our program policy committee. Representatives are also elected from our Early Head Start and Head Start program to represent on behalf of SGA in Start Early's Parent Policy Committee. Each elected officer and representative play a crucial role as advocates for our programs and representatives of all participating parents of our home-based program. Both SGA's and Start Early's Parent Policy Committee meet once a month to review Head Start Policy updates and changes and gain insight to program deliverables and review of program expenditures. Parents participate in annual training on topics such as Head Start 101, self-assessment processes, agency procedures and program planning, standards of conduct, selection criteria, and personnel policies and procedures.

HEALTH: SGA has a nurse consultant who assists the family support team in obtaining well child exams. Family Support Specialists track and monitor well child exams and dentals and make

continuous efforts to contact parents to inform them of submission of well-child exams documentations or of upcoming exam that will be needed. The nurse consultant is also registered in I-Care to get immunization information for the children in the early and head start programs. The nurse also facilitates parent workshops around immunization and health. SGA's nutrition consultant monitors children's nutritional assessments. One-on-one sessions take place for children identified as under or over-weight. A nutritional plan is completed for all children over or under-weight. Meal Plans, information and resources are provided to parents. Nutrition consultant also facilitates parent workshops. One of the parent workshops focused on helping parents understand how to appropriately read food labels, to make educated decisions when purchasing groceries. We want to support our families in providing healthy and nutritious meals for their families. Parents were able to ask our nutritionist questions in regard to certain ingredients listed and nutritionist provided information and tips on how to avoid sugars, high sodium, and unhealthy fats. Due to COVID-19, SGA was not able to offer onsite Hearing and Vision assessments. Program continuously provided families with resources to assure their children were being assessed in a timely manner. Program increased contact with parents to follow up on needed resources throughout our virtual service delivery model.

Although SGA was not able to provide the assessment directly for the children, through the strong community connections, we were able to assure 80% of the children had a completed hearing and vision screening.

Mental Health:

This year SGA Early and Head Start programs are working with an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant that is available to meet with parents and provide workshops. The Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant is fully bilingual. Our Mental Health Consultant conducts socialization observations and provides feedback to staff on how they can continue to support families and children. Our Mental Health Consultant is available to meet with families for 3 sessions to provide mental health services. Our partnership with St. Anthony's Hospital is helpful in providing any additional mental health services needed. This year, SGA highly focused on assuring we were able to provide the needed resources to our staff and parents in regard to mental health. As COVID-19 brought on many changes it also brought on many emotions. Our Mental Health Consultant was able to provide weekly support and check-ins with staff to help navigate changes that were occurring and enhance their skills in supporting their families and children during this pandemic. Our mental health consultant provides continuous parent workshops on topics such as information relating to COVID-19, COVID-19 vaccinations, CDC updates and mandates, and stress management.

Community and Social Services:

Internally SGA has a program called WIOA that provides youth opportunities to find employment as well as obtain a credential or GED. SGA also partners with One Summer Chicago, to offer employment and internship opportunities to youth and young adults ages 14 to 24. We have referred families to these programs from our early and head start programs.

Below is a list of partnerships:

Dr. Linares- Medical Services

Smile Lee Faces (Dentist Andrea Lacayo) - Dental Services Instituto del Progreso Latino- Adult Education Programs

DCFS Recruitment Resource Department- Crisis Training/Resources Telpolchalli School- Education

Services-Children Home + Aid- Education Programs Healthy Parents and Babies- Doula Services
Latino Resource Institute of IL- Counseling Services/Latino Services Fussy Baby Network
Logan Square Neighborhood Association- Resources for families Brighton Park Community Council
Universidad Popular- Counseling/ Education Services Chicago Lawn Public Library- Literacy
Workshops
Community Wellness Program of St. Anthony Hospital- Behavioral Referrals/Wellness Promotion
Sinai Outreach Coalition Connectivity Network- Behavior and Wellness Promotion
Ideas Magicas, LLS- Mental Health Services
CFC Agencies/CPS/LEA- Early Intervention Services Heartland Human Care Services- Domestic
Violence Services Davis Health & Wellness Clinic with UIC- Medical Services

Education and Literacy:

This past year, families were able to complete virtual home visits and socialization groups utilizing different platforms including but not limited to Zoom, WhatsApp, Google Duo, Messenger, and FaceTime due to COVID-19. Parent Educators focus on encouraging parents to complete weekly developmentally appropriate activities to help children meet or exceed their goals that included problem solving, pretending, alphabet knowledge, building relationships, reading, counting, patterns, physical and personal self-care during virtual home visits and socializations. Parent Educators individualize and modify the activities from the Parents as Teachers Curriculum by including activities based on IFSP and IEP goals during virtual home visits and socialization groups to meet the needs of children with disabilities. Program also utilizes the COR Advantage

Assessment tool to track child's progress towards school readiness goals. This assessment is completed three times a year. Child and program outcomes are shared with parents after each checkpoint period. Parent Educators work with the parent and child's outcomes to modify lesson planning to focus on areas where the child may need more focus on. The goal is to assure the child is developing at a school-ready level by the age of 5. Program also assures that at each virtual home visit and socialization group a book is read to the child. Parent educators continue to incorporate literacy activities during their individual virtual home visits. This past year SGA hosted two book fairs for families. Parents were able to receive various books in their home language to build a home-library and encourage language/literacy development in their home. For the "Dia del Nino/Day of the Child", program hosted a literacy event with the theme of the story, "We are Going on a Bear Hunt". Children learned to develop memory and language skills, creative thinking and enjoyed the art, movement, and literacy activities of that day. Program also assures that at each home visit and socialization a book is read to the child. Parent educators continue to incorporate literacy activities during their individual home visits. These literacy activities continue to emphasize the importance of reading to children to foster literacy and word development.

Kindergarten Readiness

Special Efforts to Prepare Children for Kindergarten:

SGA's Early Head Start & Head Start programs utilized the research-based Parents As Teachers curriculum in its work with infants, toddlers and their families. This model emphasizes the importance of the parent as the child's first teacher and the home environment as a nurturing space for infants and toddlers to learn and grow through nurturing play and self-care routines. The E & HS programs screen all children for developmental delays and provide appropriate referrals and interventions to help children "get on track" once they enter pre- school and kindergarten. Early detection of developmental

delays is one of the best ways to help prepare children for school. Finally, the E & HS programs help support the social-emotional development of infants and toddlers by working with parents to set appropriate boundaries and positive discipline techniques to teach children self-regulation and control. This past school year the mental health consultant provided training on the development of social emotional skills in children.

TRANSITION ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE KINDERGARTEN READINESS:

SGA provides group socialization activities to help children integrate and interact with other infants and toddlers and teach them to work in a shared environment. Children utilize the skills they are learning in their home visits and incorporate them in a group setting. Parents are provided an opportunity to network, gain additional resources, and observe their children in a social setting. Program also provides an informational session for parents of transitioning children called “Options for knowledge”. Parents gain an understanding of what they should expect and prepare for as their children transition from Head Start to Kindergarten.

SUMMARY OF AUDIT FINDINGS

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REQUIRED BY THE SECRETARY

The Ounce Board of Directors and Policy Council were given brief summaries and links to all Program Instructions and Information Memorandums

Start Early Grantee

New Initiatives for Early Childhood in Illinois

- With a new executive administration, many initiatives and plans are moving forward for young children in Illinois
- Three initiatives were recounted: Preschool Development Grant, Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) Renewal, the Prenatal to Three Initiative (PN3) report, and the Governor’s Early Childhood Education and Care Agenda
- Many of the goals and objectives are geared toward expanding programs for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, improving quality and strengthening the workforce
- Many of the goals and objectives will help strengthen all programs for young children but they may also pose challenges to recruitment and enrollment of Early Head Start and Head Start programs as they expand

Homelessness

- Precise counts of homeless young children were not obtainable and this report follows recommendations that counts of homeless students in public schools is the most precise guide to the number of homeless in a community
- Information from the Chicago Public Schools for the top ten elementary schools with enrolled homeless students provided information on the Chicago community areas that might have high population of homeless families including those with young children

Here is the list from 2019:

- KIPP Ascend Primary – 171 homeless students (Brighton Park, North Lawndale, South Lawndale)
- KIPP Bloom Primary – 158 homeless students (Auburn Gresham, Englewood, Greater Grand Crossing, Washington Park, West Englewood)

- Nicholson STEM – 133 homeless students (Auburn Gresham, **Englewood**, Greater Grand Crossing, **Washington Park, West Englewood**)
- Chalmers School of Excellence – 127 homeless students (**Bridgeport, Brighton Park**, Lower West Side, **McKinley Park, Near West Side**, North Lawndale, South Lawndale)
- Howe School of Excellence – 111 homeless students (Austin, West Garfield Park)
- KIPP One Primary – 105 homeless students (Austin, East Garfield Park, **Humboldt Park**, North Lawndale, West Garfield Park)
- Parker Elementary Community Academy – 73 homeless students (Auburn Gresham, **Englewood**, Greater Grand Crossing, **Washington Park, West Englewood**)
- Genevieve Melody Public Elementary School – 71 homeless students (Austin, East Garfield Park, **Humboldt Park**, North Lawndale, West Garfield Park)
- Montessori Englewood – 69 homeless students (Austin, Auburn Gresham, Chicago Lawn, **Englewood**, Gage Park, **West Englewood**)

Recruitment of Early Head Start and Head Start – Unmet Needs of Eligible Children

- Analysis of all the Chicago community areas and several municipalities in the south Cook and Will and Lake Counties found several community areas and municipalities that could be fruitful recruitment areas for infants and toddlers
- The analysis also revealed community areas and municipalities that might not be as fruitful for infants and toddlers
- The Ounce Early Head Start program through One Hope United remains the only Early Head Start program in Lake County. Even accounting for child care, Waukegan and North Chicago still have a number of eligible infants and toddlers
- The number of other early childhood programs and child care slots in Chicago and the county municipalities can provide more services than there are eligible children in some communities
- The analysis also revealed Chicago communities and municipalities that could be fruitful for recruitment of preschoolers into Head Start and areas that might not be fruitful

Recruitment of Early Head Start and Head Start – High Priority Children

Disabilities

TABLE 9 Part C, Early Intervention Services July 2017 – June 2018		
Child and Family Connections Lake County, Chicago and Southern Collar Counties	Number of Children with an IFSP	% of IFSPs with Initial Evaluations, Assessments and Meeting within 45 Days
CFC #2 – Lake County	666	97.9%
CFC #8 – Southwest Chicago	1,099	98.3%
CFC #9 – Central Chicago	1,215	96.5%
CFC #10 – Southeast Chicago	988	98.5%
CFC #11 – North Chicago	2,468	99.8%

CFC #12 – South Suburban	1,491	98.7%
CFC #15 – Will, LaSalle, Grundy & Kankakee Counties	1,582	95.2%

- Accurate counts of eligible children with disabilities was not available nor was an updated report from the Bureau of Early Intervention
- Information from the 2019 Community Assessment was repeated for this report
- Updated information on the number and percentage of children in the Chicago Public Schools for young children was included
- New information on disabilities for the county municipalities was not obtained

TABLE 10 Potential Special Education Eligible Children				
CFC	Head Start Program	Potentially Special Education Eligible	Number of Potentially Eligible with Documented Transition Meetings	Percent of Potentially Eligible with Documented Transition Meetings
#8 SW Chicago	SGA Head Start	664	296	61%
#9 Central Chicago	Casa Central Children’s Home + Aid (Viva) Children’s Place One Hope United (Bridgeport I & II) SGA	762	209	68%
#10 SE Chicago	Children’s Home + Aid (Englewood) Educare One Hope United (Bridgeport I and II)	571	393	95%
#11 North Chicago	Children’s Place One Hope United (Edgewater)	1,481	314	31%
#12 South Suburbs	First Step	960	673	82%
#15 LaSalle, Will, Grundy, & Kankakee Counties	Additional south suburban areas	1,166	673	82%

Child Abuse and Neglect/Foster Care

- Rates of child abuse and neglect increased for many communities in Chicago between 2017 and 2018
- Specific information on child abuse and neglect and substitute care at the municipality level was not available

Teen Birth Rate

- The teen birth rate nationally continues to decrease year by year

- Most community areas in Chicago and in the municipalities also saw decreases in the teen birth rate between 2017 and 2018
- A few communities saw increases
- The only available information on teen births for the municipalities is through the census data, which is an undercount from a count of vital statistics; nevertheless, it provides a guide to areas with high teen birth rates

Poverty and Extreme Poverty

- Child poverty has been decreasing the last year or two and the rates continue to decrease – from 12.3% in 2017 to 11.8% in 2018
- Poverty rates for infants and toddlers also decreased but they still remain the group with the highest poverty rates – 17.8% compared to 16.9% for preschoolers and 15.6% for older children (6-17)
- The Chicago young child poverty rate in 2018 was 23% and in 2017, 28%, a decrease of 16%.
- Poverty decreased for children 0-5 between 2017 and 2018 for every Chicago community area.
- Still, many community areas had poverty rates at or higher than 25% and most of those communities also had high rates of extreme poverty
- Unlike Chicago, not all the municipalities saw decreases in child poverty between 2017 and 2018
- Several municipalities in the south suburbs had higher percentages of child poverty than seen in the Chicago community areas
- As with Chicago, municipalities with high rates of child poverty also had high rates of extreme poverty

Health

- Since the enactment of the Affordable Care Act, enough evidence has accumulated to show that the expansion of Medicaid has improved the health of poor Americans
- Unfortunately, the number of uninsured children and individuals continues to rise, until the COVID-19 virus, despite low unemployment and a strong economy
- In 2017 the percentage of uninsured people was 7.9% and in 2018, 8.5%
- Between 2016 and 2018, the number of uninsured children increased by 400,000
- In Illinois, the percent of uninsured rose from 7.8% in 2017 to 8.1% in 2018
- The percentage of uninsured in Chicago actually dropped slightly from 10.9% in 2017 to 10.7% in 2018

Perinatal and Child Health Indicators

- The Chicago community areas had information on low birth weight, prenatal care, infant mortality and elevated lead blood levels
- A few community areas in Chicago had low indicators on two or more of the four perinatal and child health indicators
- Perinatal health indicators were only available at the county level for the municipalities

Oral Health

- Information on good oral health during pregnancy and the child's first six years was provided

Asthma

- No updated information was found for asthma

Social-Emotional

- Information on a Kindness curriculum was included, where children behaved more altruistically, had a better attention span, better grades and showed a higher level of social competence

Nutrition

- SNAP receipt continued to decrease for most community areas
- Census data was available for SNAP receipt for the county municipalities and only available for households with children under the age of 18
- Several municipalities saw increases rather than decreases in SNAP, perhaps coincident with the high rates of poverty in some of the municipalities
- SNAP was included in new regulations on public charge that was to go into effect in October, 2019. But a federal court judge has stopped implementation of the new regulations and they are not currently in effect

Unemployment

- A few Chicago communities saw small increases in unemployment; most saw decreases
- Despite the decreases, several communities still had unemployment of 20% or higher
- Census data provided unemployment information for 2018 for the municipalities
- Several municipalities saw increases in unemployment and a few had unemployment at 20% or higher
- Lake County municipalities all had decreases and all had unemployment less than 10%
- New information for Chicago on children that would be income eligible for the child care subsidy but ineligible because of non-working parent or parents was provided; some of these families might be eligible for Early Head Start or Head Start and might be receptive to home-based services
- The same information for municipalities through the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map provided information on number of parents not working but without the filter of income eligibility; still some of the families might be eligible for Early Head Start or Head Start services and receptive to home-based services

Immigrants

- Immigrants continue to face threats of deportation and additional challenges in obtaining health care and public services
- In 2018, one in seven adults in immigrant families reported avoiding public benefits
- Nearly half of community health centers report that during 2019 immigrant patients did not enroll in Medicaid and nearly 40% of health centers report that parents declined coverage for their children
- Although the federal government changed the rules for public charge decisions that would include regular Medicaid, SNAP, many federal housing programs, and TANF, which was scheduled to go into

effect on October 15, 2019, an appeals court judge blocked the new regulations from going into effect in January, 2020

Language and Foreign Born

- Several communities in Chicago had communities with substantial percentages of both Spanish speaking households and Other language households
- Municipalities in Cook and Will County had few households with limited English proficiency
- Waukegan and Park City had substantial percentages of Spanish speaking households with limited English proficiency
- The communities with high percentages of foreign born did not tend to be communities with high percentages of poverty or high numbers of challenges other communities face

Crime

- The Chicago Department of Public Health collects information on feelings of safety during the day and at night; few had enough information to analyze but the few that did stood out from the other areas
- The Chicago Department of Public Health also collected information on how safe community members felt in their parks, playgrounds and walking paths. A few communities had less than half the residents who felt safe in their communities
- Many Chicago community areas saw decreases in property crime between 2014 and 2018
- Conversely many community areas saw increases in violent crime between 2014 and 2018
- Crime rates do not necessarily equate to feeling safe; Fuller Park with high property and violent crime rates had a safety percentage of 84% and the Loop also with the highest property crime rate had an 88% feeling of safety
- Crime statistics for the municipalities from the Uniform Crime Report were available for 2018 and for 2017
- Compared to many Chicago community areas, municipalities experience less crime and report less crime overall.
- Most of the municipalities with information saw decreases in the property crime rate between 2014 and 2018
- Between 2014 and 2018, most of the municipalities with information also saw decreases in violent crime

Domestic Violence

- A research report on domestic violence in Chicago was documented in the 2018 Community Assessment. Fuller Park had the highest rate of domestic violence of all Chicago community areas and Englewood, Washington Park and West Englewood were in the top tier of community areas with the highest rates of domestic violence. No new information was available.¹
- Chicago Safe Start is a city resource for children 0-5 who have witnessed violence; centers can be accessed through <https://safestartcenter.wordpress.com/tag/chicago-safe-start/>.
- The City of Chicago Domestic Violence Help Line is 1-877-TO-END-DV, ^(T)1-877-863-6338 or ^(T)1-877-863-6339 (TTY).

Challenges in Communities and Municipalities

- Several measures of challenges in communities such as poverty, homelessness and unemployment were recounted in the report; in each case, the communities with the highest (or lowest) percentage or rate were listed
- The Chicago Health Atlas had additional measures – economic hardship, child opportunity and food insecurity
- Altogether 16 measures for Chicago communities were tabulated to create profiles for each Chicago community using the lists of highest (or lowest) percentages or rates
- West Englewood appeared the most often and had the most challenges; other communities with many challenges were Greater Grand Crossing, North Lawndale, West Garfield Park, Englewood and New City

Those communities with 8 or more factors were (Ounce recruitment areas in purple):

- **West Englewood** – 13 factors (schools with high homelessness and ever homeless, high child abuse and neglect rate, high rate of teen births, high 100% poverty, high extreme poverty, low perinatal and child health indicators, high SNAP receipt, high unemployment, unsafe at night, high violent crime, high economic hardship, very low child opportunity, food insecurity)
- **Great Grand Crossing** – 10 factors (schools with high homelessness, high child abuse and neglect rate, high rate of teen births, high 100% poverty, high extreme poverty, low perinatal and child health indicators, high SNAP receipt, high unemployment, high violent crime, high economic hardship)
- **North Lawndale** – 9 factors (schools with high homelessness and ever homeless, high child abuse and neglect rate, high rate of teen births, high 100% poverty, high extreme poverty, high SNAP receipt, high economic hardship, very low child opportunity, food insecurity)
- **West Garfield Park** – 9 factors (schools with high homelessness, high rate of teen births, low perinatal and child health indicators, high SNAP receipt, high unemployment, high violent crime, low neighborhood safety, high economic hardship, very low child opportunity)
- **Englewood** – 8 factors (schools with high homelessness, high child abuse and neglect rate, high rate of teen births, low perinatal and child health indicators, high unemployment, high violent crime, high economic hardship, very low child opportunity)
- **New City** – 8 factors (schools with high homelessness, high child abuse and neglect rate, high rate of teen births, high 100% poverty, high extreme poverty, high percentage of households with limited English, high economic hardship, very low child opportunity)
- Fewer measures were available for the municipalities – 7 in all
- Similar profiles were constructed for the municipalities; Riverdale, Dixmoor, Dolton, Harvey and Markham had the most challenges in the Cook and Will municipalities
- In Lake County, Waukegan and North Chicago had the most challenges

Summary of Annual Review Findings

On August 28, 2020, the Administration for Children and Families published the Head Start Designation Renewal System (DRS) final rule in the Federal Register. This final rule revises the conditions for determining whether a Head Start grant will be subject to an open competition under the DRS. Grantees that met one or more of the prior DRS conditions will only be required to compete after the effective date of the rule if they also meet one or more of the revised conditions.

Earlier this year, Ounce of Prevention Fund in Chicago, IL received a notice of competitive status for Grant No.05CH8456. **This grant is no longer subject to competition because it does not meet any of the revised conditions in the DRS final rule. This grant is now eligible to receive a new non-competitive 5-year grant award.**

Highlights from Start Early

Summary of Audit Findings

Summary of Information Required by the Secretary

The Ounce Board of Directors and Policy Council were given brief summaries and links to all Program Instructions and Information Memorandums.

ⁱ Connecting to Safety and Stability: Domestic Violence Needs Assessment of Chicago. Heartland Alliance. Available at www.heartlandalliance.org/research.