

2023-2024

**Early Head Start
Annual Report**

A Year in Review



OFFICE OF HEAD START

An Office of the Administration for Children & Families



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SUMMARY

The 2023-2024 program year concluded the 2019-2024 5-year project period. Over the past five years, the program concentrated on three primary goals: expanding the selection pool of eligible children within the community, strengthen teacher motivation and self-efficacy through peer training and coaching, and establishing a comprehensive wellness program to foster healthy lifestyle choices among parents, children, and staff. These goals resulted in several key advancements. First, an online application was launched, simplifying the application process. Second, teachers were empowered to become peer trainers. Third, a curriculum focused on stimulating healthy habits in children was implemented. Fourth, supportive breastfeeding environments were created at partner sites. Finally, families received education on healthy lifestyle practices.

While consistently delivering comprehensive services to over 1,200 infants and toddlers, the program achieved two notable accomplishments in 2023-2024. Notably, the program served the highest percentage of children with a diagnosed special needs. To ensure partners were equipped with the knowledge and structure for offering services in a setting that is developmentally and age-appropriate, the program required all partners to obtain Best Practices in Inclusive Early Childhood Education (BPIECE) certification. Professional Development Days then provided teachers with training on resources for children with developmental concerns, benefits of an environment that accepts all children, laws related to special needs, and personal beliefs and values regarding people with special needs.

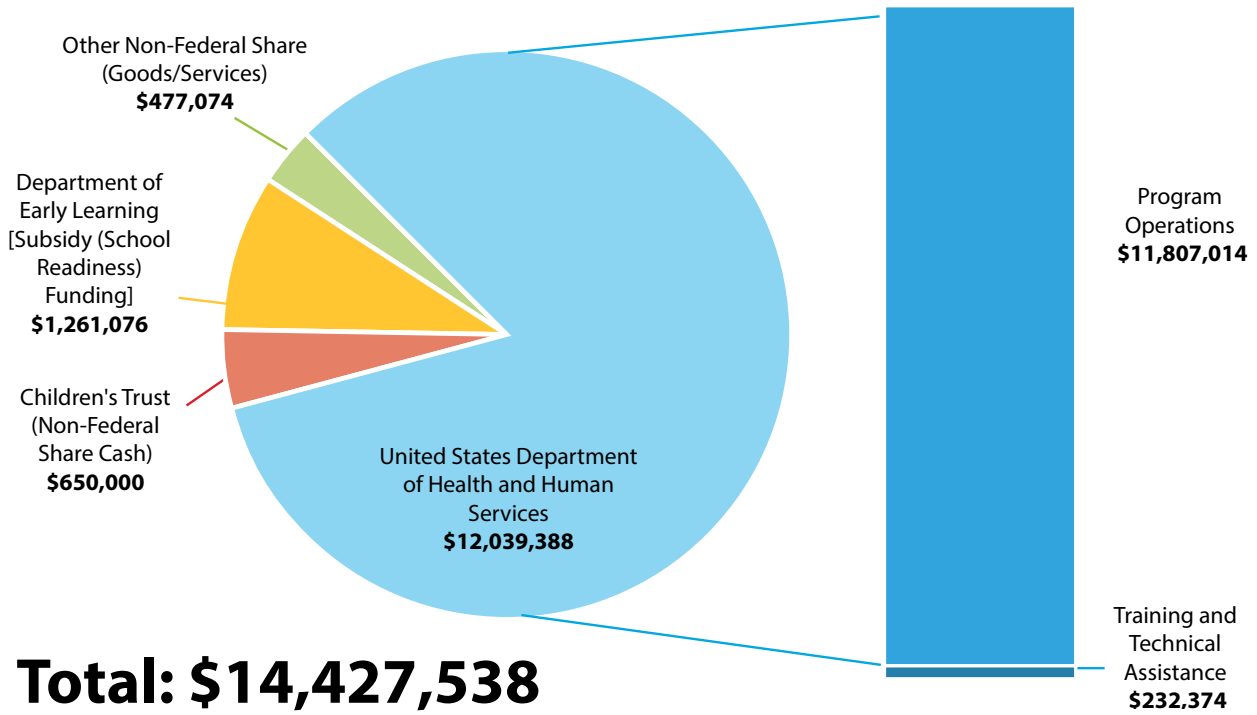
Secondly, the provision of services for pregnant mothers in 2023-2024 is worth noting. The program was focused on supporting expectant mothers by providing information conducive to a healthy pregnancy and delivery. For approximately four months, mothers participated in a series of trainings that included risks of smoking, alcohol, and drugs; fetal development pre and postnatal depression; nutrition; labor and delivery; postpartum recovery; infant care and sleep practices; curriculum overview; breastfeeding and brain development. In addition to the trainings, expectant mothers participated in center visits and received two home visits, including a pre-transition visit and a post-natal visit two weeks after delivery.

Within the pages of this 2023-2024 annual report, you'll find a snapshot of how we impacted the lives of children and families, the challenges we encountered, and the achievements we realized.

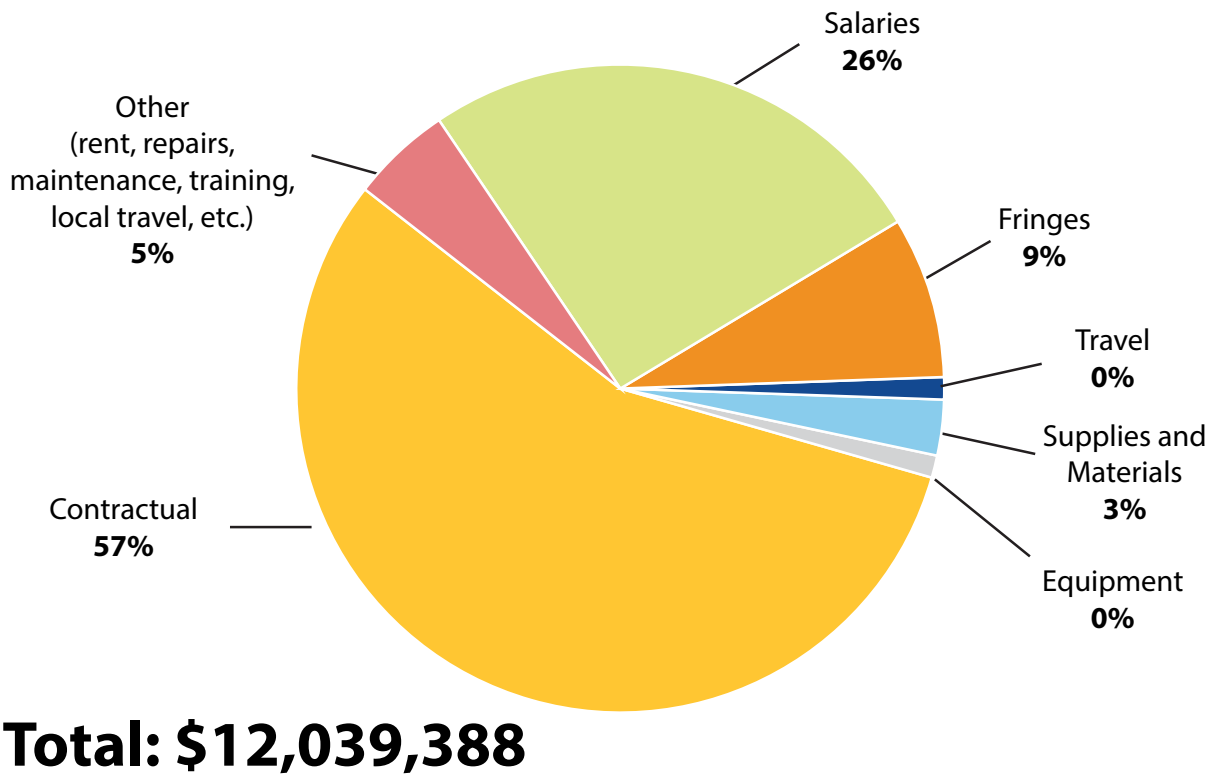




2023-2024 FUNDING

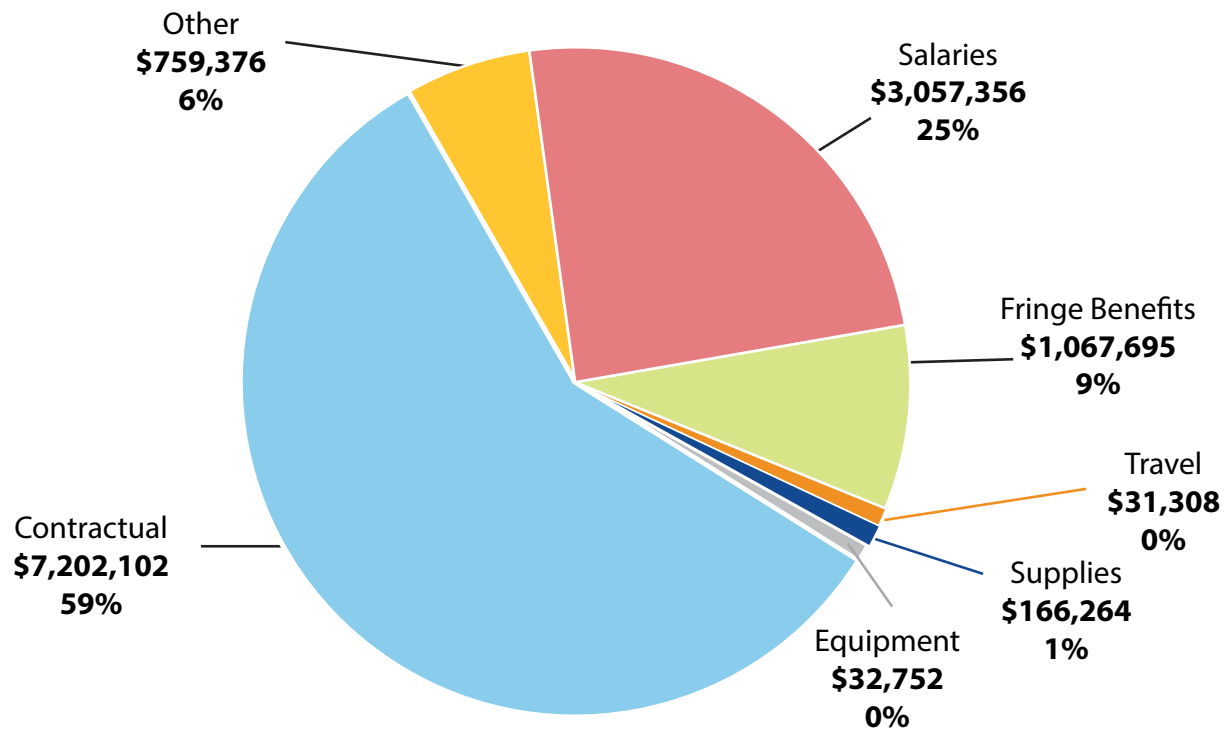


2023-2024 EXPENDITURES





2024-2025 PROPOSED BUDGET



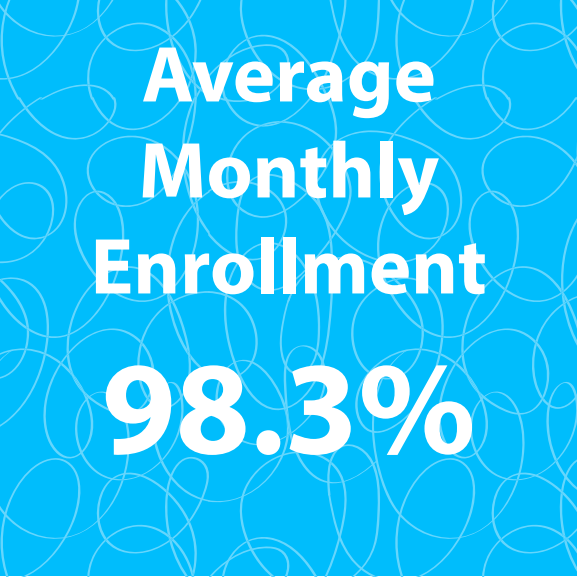
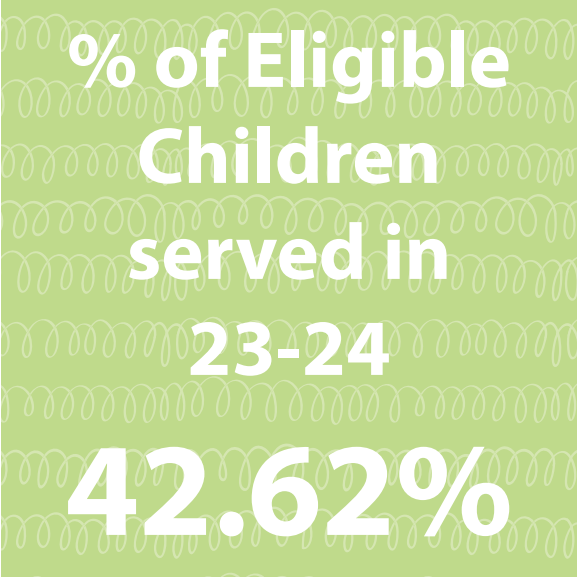
Total: \$12,316,853





PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

The Early Head Start Program provides services in nine high-poverty areas in Miami-Dade County: Hialeah, Homestead, Florida City, Liberty City, Little Havana, Miami Gardens, Opa-Locka, North Miami, and Perrine. The program recruits year-round to expand community awareness, encourage families to apply for services, and ensure the neediest families in the community are selected. To certify a fair selection, the program develops and implements a selection plan that uses a point system to enroll the families most in need of the program. As vacant slots become available, families with the most points are enrolled in the program. The point system is evaluated yearly to consider changes impacting the community.

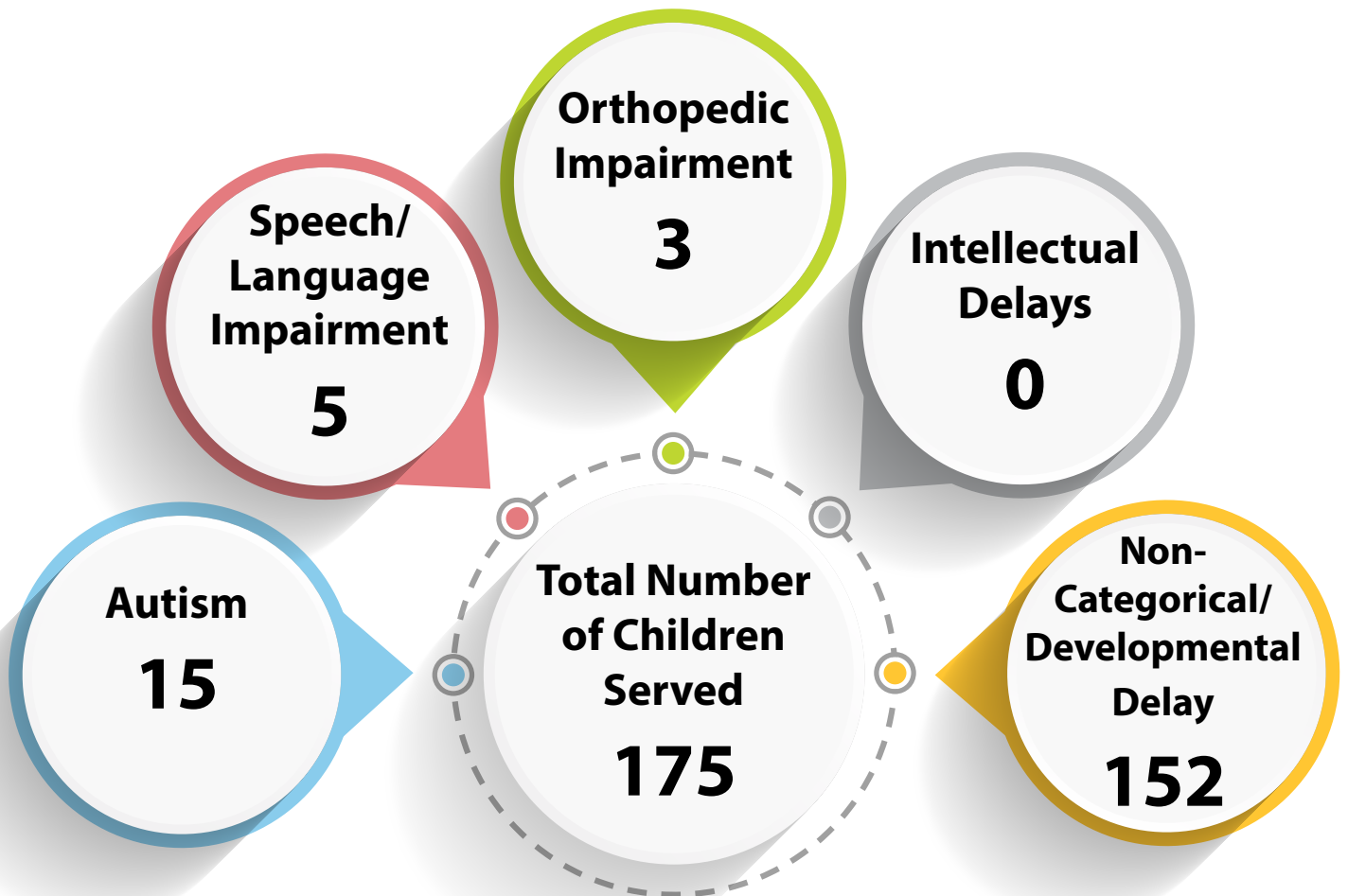




SPECIAL NEEDS

The Early Head Start program reserves a minimum of 10% of enrollment for children with identified special needs. For the year 2023-2024, the program served 175 (23%) children with special needs. Children who enter the program are identified as needing services through an online developmental screening called Ages and Stages Questionnaire®, 3rd Edition. In partnership with the local Part C agency, Early Steps, and with parental consent, children are referred for an in-depth evaluation to determine eligibility. Children who meet the criteria for intervention receive an Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP) detailing the type and amount of intervention services to be received. The Early Head Start program works closely with families to make accommodations and support the implementation of the plan. Children can also enter the program with services in place through insurance providers. Services are provided in a setting that accepts children of all abilities, delivering support within their natural environment while teachers play a supportive role in the progression of the children's development. To further strengthen special needs services, the program required all partners to obtain the Best Practices in Inclusive Early Childhood Education (BPIECE) certification.

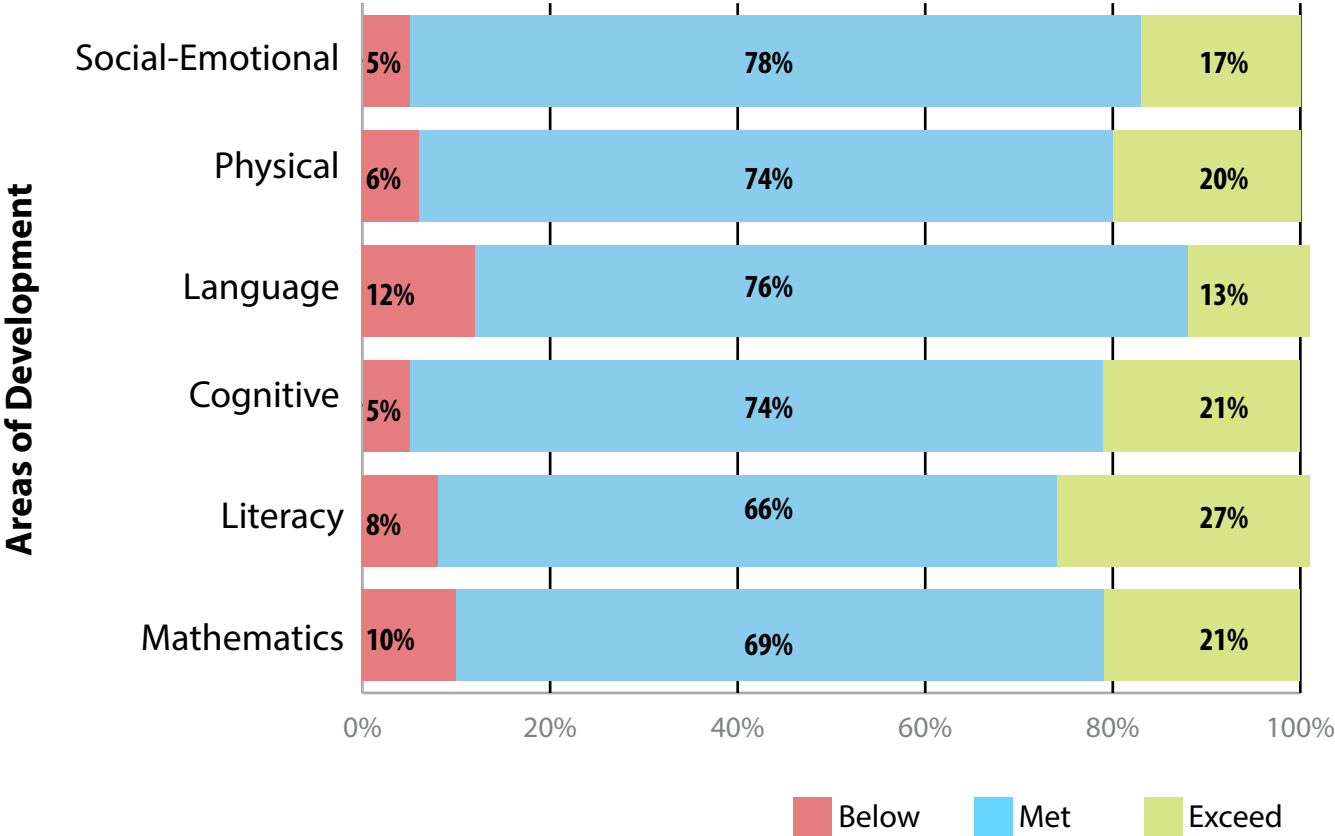
Number of Children with Identified Special Needs





CHILD OUTCOMES

During the 2023-2024 program year, the program focused on encouraging positive teacher-child interactions and relationships. This was achieved through coaching sessions to support best practices and by providing Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tool training to improve responsive caregiving. The program offered program-wide classroom management training and collaborated with local early intervention programs, like Early Steps and Family Central, to provide resources and strategies that empower teachers to support children’s developmental milestones and assist their families. Coaches continued to review data from the ongoing assessments with teachers and provided strategies to support children’s development. Finally, the program continued its partnership with the Miami Children’s Museum, in training 10 new teachers on the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) Integration program supported by a peer coach from a previous cohort. The STEAM program is designed to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to create rich, hands-on learning opportunities that align with the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Two’s.





FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

During the 2023-2024 school year, the program offered various activities to engage parents and solicit their suggestions for meeting the needs of their child or strengthening the program.



Transition Meetings

Parents participate in collaborative transition meetings with staff to plan the child's move to a three-year-old classroom. To ensure a seamless and stress-free transition, the family services staff begins meeting with parents six months before the child turns three years old.



Nutrition Training

- Celebrating Nutrition Month
Parents learned about different nutrition topics such as food groups, infant feeding, introduction to solids, and weaning from the bottle
- Picky Eaters
Parents learned how to work with picky eaters. Strategies were given for helping children build a healthy relationship with food.



Parent Orientation

This initial activity explains the program to parents and shares information on available services; the importance of parent engagement is emphasized.



Parenting Curriculum

The program's parenting curriculum is ReadyRosie. Ready Rosie is a family engagement and early learning resource that has been shown to have positive impacts on family behaviors and child outcomes. It helps strengthen the connections between school and home with high-quality resources. Families receive weekly a 1-minute video appropriate for the child's developmental age. The video discusses the child's milestones and provides interactive learning activities that parents can do with their child.



Screenings

Parents play an important role in their child's developmental and social-emotional screening. Once a child has been selected for enrollment, parents are asked to complete the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, 3rd Edition (ASQ®-3) and the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, 2nd Edition (ASQ®:SE-2). Teachers review the results with parents. If concerns are present, teachers discuss the next steps with parents.



Home Visits and Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents stayed abreast of their child's progress through home visits and parent-teacher conferences. Parents were able to see their child's developmental progress and how to continue supporting him/her in his/her growth with activities at home.



Parent Committee Meeting and Policy Council

Parent Committee and Policy Council are ways for parents to be a part of the decision-making process and support the school and program in making positive changes



Consultations

The program content experts provided consultation to parents based on their child's needs. Consultations included but were not limited to how a child is supported socially and emotionally, addressing children's eating habits and other nutrition concerns, health concerns, and navigating early intervention services.



Family Goal Setting

Family services staff work with parents to identify a goal and set a plan of action to accomplish their goal(s). Monthly meetings are held with family services staff to check in on the progress of the goal(s) and to provide any resources that may be needed.



Curriculum Overview

Parents are introduced to the curriculum used in the classroom and the daily routines. Parents gain a greater understanding of objectives for development and learning. Parents learn how meaningful and engaging activities in the classroom support their child's development.



Self-Assessment

Parents and other early learning stakeholders work with staff to identify strengths in the program and opportunities for improvement. Parents are encouraged to make recommendations to strengthen the program.





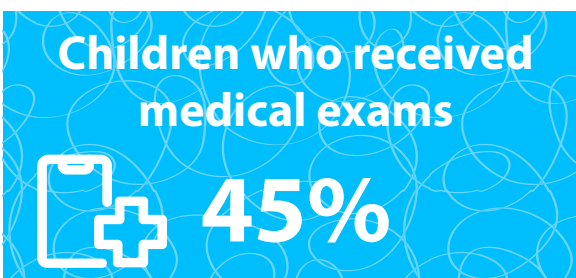
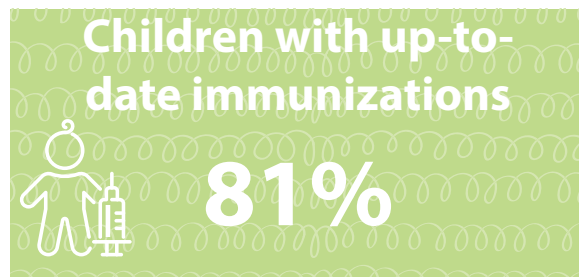
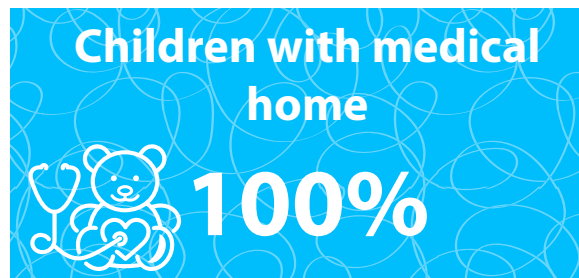
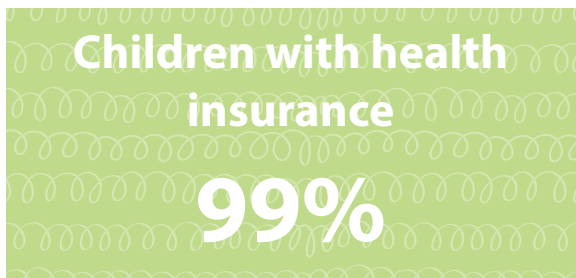
HEALTH SERVICES

The Early Head Start Program prioritizes the health and well-being of children by educating parents and guardians on the importance of medical and dental care. Through information sharing and community resource connections, families are empowered to understand their children’s health needs and champion for them effectively.

Children from low-income families often encounter obstacles in obtaining routine medical care and maintaining a continuous relationship with healthcare providers. Research indicates that children in underserved communities frequently experience unmet healthcare needs due to financial constraints, lack of access, and gaps in resources (Newacheck et al., 1998). To address this, Early Head Start family services staff connect parents to medical and dental homes for their children, ensuring access to ongoing, comprehensive care. Family services staff also monitor children’s health records to confirm that children receive regular medical and dental services.

Despite ongoing efforts, educating families about the importance of early dental care remains a challenge. One way the program ensures children receive dental care is by partnering with the Florida Department of Health which offers dental exams through the Seals on Wheels Mobile Dental Program. Through dental education and services, the program cultivates parental awareness that would likely not exist had the child not enrolled in the program.

Below is how the program has impacted children’s health in 2023-2024:



Reference:
Newacheck, P. W., Hughes, D. C., Hung, Y., Wong, S., & Stoddard, J. J. (1998). The unmet health needs of America's children. *Pediatrics*, 105(4), 989-997. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.105.4.989>



NUTRITION SERVICES

Early Head Start childcare partners maintain a consistent practice of providing enrolled children with meals and snacks that fulfill two-thirds of their daily nutritional requirements. These meals are created to be culturally and developmentally appropriate. In addition to providing nutritional needs, mealtimes are intended to nurture learning and socialization. Infants benefit from being held during bottle feeding, while toddlers participate in family-style dining. To ensure safety, some elements of family-style dining, specifically communal food sharing and child-led table preparation and cleanup, were temporarily paused. However, essential components like shared meals between teachers and children, and engaging in supportive conversations remained constant, contributing to the children's overall development. Below are the annual meals served during the 2023-2024 program year:

Month	Breakfasts Served	Lunches Served	Snacks Served
August 2023	14,070	14,166	14,199
September 2023	12,730	12,842	12,852
October 2023	13,823	13,885	13,958
November 2023	10,168	10,229	10,137
December 2023	10,444	10,564	10,485
January 2024	11,832	11,777	11,761
February 2024	12,431	12,524	12,440
March 2024	11,874	11,952	11,895
April 2024	13,505	13,610	13,535
May 2024	14,009	14,107	14,039
June 2024	11,627	11,440	11,352
July 2024	12,213	12,306	12,233

SPECIAL DIETS



During the 2023-2024 program year, 29 children had food allergies, with some experiencing multiple allergies. The program created special diet menus and made dietary substitutions to ensure each child met two-thirds of their daily nutritional needs. Dairy (21) and eggs (7) were the most common allergens.

Breakdown of Food Allergies

Bananas	1
Chicken	1
Turkey	1
Dairy	21
Eggs	7
Peanuts	2
Sweet Potatoes	1
Tree Nuts	2



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Social-emotional development is a cornerstone of children’s success both in school and in life. To ensure children start with a strong foundation, every child entering our Early Head Start program undergoes screening for social-emotional concerns using the Ages and Stages Social-Emotional Questionnaire®, 2nd Edition (ASQ:SE-2). For those identified with social-emotional concerns, referrals for mental health consultations are promptly made. This proactive approach is designed to enhance children’s emotional well-being while also reducing challenging behaviors.

Consultations:

Over the course of the 2023-2024 school year, the consultations provided by the program helped address concerns early, ensuring that children received the support they needed at critical stages of development. The following consultations were provided in 2023-2024:

Type of Consultation	Number of Consultations
Consultations with staff	216
Consultations with parents regarding their child’s social-emotional needs	186

Targeted training:

Recognizing the pivotal role caregivers play in children’s social-emotional growth, the program prioritized equipping staff with effective strategies. The program provided targeted social-emotional training sessions for teachers and parents, including:

The Pyramid Model Training

The training emphasized proactive strategies for supporting children’s healthy development and preventing challenging behaviors. Teachers explored the root causes of these behaviors, learned effective response techniques, and discovered how to integrate multiple approaches for intentional and preventative classroom practices.

Understanding and Managing Challenging Behaviors

By understanding the underlying causes of challenging behaviors, caregivers learned to recognize them as important messages about a child’s needs, emotions, and environment. Teachers gained practical tools to prevent and effectively respond to these incidents.

Conscious Discipline

This training helped teachers understand anger and rage in both children and themselves. It provided practical strategies for self-management, de-escalating intense situations, teaching children self-regulation, and facilitating recovery and healing after emotional events.

Mental Health Training

In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, the program provided mental health training to parents. The training highlighted the importance of mental health for both parents and their children. Parents gained knowledge about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs), and their potential to positively influence children’s future well-being and resilience.





FINANCIAL AUDIT RESULTS

**EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF MIAMI-DADE/MONROE, INC.
 SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND QUESTIONED COSTS - FEDERAL AWARDS PROGRAMS AND
 STATE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024**

SECTION I – SUMMARY OF AUDITOR'S RESULTS

Financial Statements

Type of auditor's report issued: Unmodified

Internal control over financial reporting:

Material weakness(es) identified? ___ Yes X No

Significant deficiency(ies) identified that are not considered to be a material weakness(es)? ___ Yes X No

Noncompliance material to financial statements noted? ___ Yes X No

Federal Awards and State Financial Assistance

Internal control over major federal programs and state projects:

Material weakness(es) identified? ___ Yes X No

Significant deficiency(ies) identified that are not considered to be a material weakness(es)? ___ Yes X No

Type of auditor's report issued on compliance for major programs Unmodified

Any audit findings disclosed that are required to be reported in accordance with the Uniform Guidance or Chapter 10 650, *Rules of the Auditor General*? ___ Yes X No

Identification of major programs:

CFDA/CFSA Number	Name of Federal/State Program or Cluster
93.575, 93.596	Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Cluster
93.558	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
48.108	VPK State General Funds

Dollar threshold used to distinguish between Type A and Type B programs:

\$ 3,000,000 Federal
 \$ 1,740,440 State

Auditee qualified as low-risk auditee? X Yes ___ No

FEDERAL REVIEW RESULTS

Performance Summary

Service Area	Applicable Standards	Grant Number(s)	Primary Review Finding Status(s)	Timeframe for Correction	Follow-up Compliance Level
Classroom Exploration - Effective and Intentional Teaching Practices	1302.45(a)(1)	04HP000226	ANC	N/A	Corrected

The program successfully addressed the non-compliance as reported on October 25, 2021

Follow-up Corrected

Timeframe for Correction: N/A

The grantee provided support for effective classroom management and positive learning environments, supportive teacher practices, or strategies for supporting children with challenging behaviors and other social, emotional, and mental health concerns. The program strengthened its policies and procedures, training, and monitoring to ensure teacher-child ratios were maintained and to mitigate the risk of child safety incidents.

The program strengthened its active supervision and classroom management, and teacher-child ratio policies and procedures to clarify staff's knowledge of teacher-child ratio requirements. A review of the policies and procedures regarding classroom ratios and group sizes stipulated teachers must ensure all children remain under their supervision, and under no circumstance would a child be left alone. A review of the active supervision and classroom management procedure found new strategies were designed to encourage effective and proactive supervision.

In an interview, the director of child development and education support services stated the effective teacher practices policy was reviewed and revised to promote using transition activities to provide ample time to transition. The effective teacher practices procedure confirmed the directive for staff to implement supportive and responsive transition activities for children. A review of the onboarding-child care partners policy and procedure for new employees found revisions included the requirement for staff to implement the Pyramid Model to promote social-emotional development and prevent challenging behaviors.

Training was provided to improve staff's understanding of appropriate teacher/child interactions, child-safety incident prevention, staff wellness, and challenging behaviors. A review of training documents found child care partner staff completed the trainings. In an interview, the Early Head Start director stated an outside source provided training to teachers on conscious discipline and stress management. Additionally, a review of Region IV Head Start Training and Technical Assistance agendas and training documents found program staff were provided technical assistance in the areas of ongoing educational monitoring and staff wellness.

The program enhanced its monitoring of program and partner staff. The Early Head Start director stated the program's education team monitored partners' weekly staffing plans. The plans provided the education team with an understanding of how partners staffed their centers. A review of staffing plans, daily Early Head Start Staff coverage forms, and regulatory monitoring visit forms found a platform for continuous monitoring and analysis of teacher staffing patterns to ensure sufficient classroom coverage and correct staff-child ratios were maintained.

The Early Head Start director stated the child care partner involved in the incident decided not to renew its contract and was no longer a partner as of August 1, 2021.

The grantee provided support for effective classroom management and positive learning environments, supportive teacher practices, or strategies for supporting children with challenging behaviors and other social, emotional, and mental health concerns. This area of non-compliance is corrected.

----- End of Report -----

