

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

Belknap-Merrimack

Head Start * Early Head Start * Child Care



Program Overview - Enrollment

Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties, Inc. provides center-based Head Start services for 198 children, ages 3 and 4, and their families. Head Start services are provided at five sites, located in Concord, Laconia, Franklin, and Pittsfield. In our Early Head Start program, our full enrollment is 151 and we provide services for pregnant mothers and children up to 3 years and their families. Center-based Early Head Start options are provided in our Concord and Laconia sites, where we also offer wrap-around childcare for Early Head Start and Head Start families. The home-based Early Head Start option provides services to pregnant women and families with children up to age 3 across Belknap and Merrimack counties with. The program was able to keep 4 of the 7 Early Head Start classrooms this year. The program was able to open 11 of the 13 Head Start classrooms. Due to ongoing staffing challenges, the program was forced to keep several classrooms closed. The program's home-based services were able to maintain approximately 75% of its enrollment due to staff vacancies. Our combined enrollment for the 2023-2024 year was 285.

The Head Start program has maintained providing 1020 annual hours of planned classroom operation for 45% of the children enrolled in the Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties Head Start program. The Belknap-Merrimack County Head Start program has adjusted the school calendar in order to provide the additional year-round center-based classrooms at our Laconia and Concord sites. Our program is prioritizing hiring qualified staff and enrolling children in order to meet full enrollment.

Budget Breakdown

Our agency 2024 audited revenues and expenditures for HS/EHS program year 2024 were as follows:

<i>Revenues</i>		<i>Expenditures</i>	
US Department of Health & Human Services	\$ 4,994,633	Personnel	\$2,740,210
		Fringe	964,571
		Travel	48,002
Non-Federal Share	963,374	Non-Federal Share	963,374
	<u>\$ 5,958,007</u>		<u>\$5,958,007</u>

Proposed Budget for 2025

Personnel	\$3,054,836
Fringe	895,309
Travel	54,131
Training and Tech. Assistance	70,601
Non-Federal Share	<u>\$1,014,279.80</u>
	\$5,089,156.80



Dental and Medical Care Status

Experienced health and family services staff work to ensure that the children enrolled in Belknap- Merrimack Head Start and Early Head Start have both a medical and dental home within their community. By the end of the 2023-2024 program year, nearly 100% of all Head Start children identified having a medical home and 100% identified as having a dental home, with preventative services provided by a dentist. For Early Head Start, 100% of all children, center-based and home-based, identified having a medical home, and for those children aged 1 year and older, 100% had received professional dental care provided by a dentist, within a dental home. We can also report that nearly 100% of our Head Start and Early Head Start children were insured with either NH Medical or private insurance.

Education is provided to families regarding the benefits of oral health care, nutritious meals and snacks, and a variety of other health topics and concerns. Families are encouraged to establish a dental home by one year of age and to continue with routine exams every 6 months. All children receive an annual nutrition assessment and concerns are discussed with the WIC Registered Dietician. All pregnant mothers also receive a nutrition assessment and are provided individualized recommendations from the WIC Registered Dietician.

Two Health Services Coordinators, one of whom is an RN, provide health education and information to families, and help ensure a safe classroom for all children, including those with special health care needs. Our Health/Nutrition Specialist is a nutritionist who oversees the requirements of the Health and Nutrition programs.

Mental Health

The program contracts with a licensed MSW/LICSW to provide almost 100 hours per month of assistance and support to families and staff. Duties include home visiting, observations, facilitating parent groups, professional development activities and providing staff with support. We also implement a comprehensive social emotional program comprised of both Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports and The Pyramid Model. Direct social emotional instruction occurs daily in all of our classrooms and is facilitated weekly at home visits.

Family Engagement

The mission of Belknap-Merrimack Early Childhood programs is to partner with families to prepare children for success in school and life. Starting at enrollment staff encourage family participation in all aspects of the program. There are a variety of family engagement opportunities:

- Classroom Volunteer
- Great Guy Events
- Health Services Advisory Committee
- Home and Center Visits
- Parent Committee Meetings
- Policy Council
- Parent Trainings
- Parent Teacher Conferences
- Read-A-Thons
- School to Home Connections
- Socialization (Early Head Start Home Based)
- State Parents Association
- Wonderful Women Event

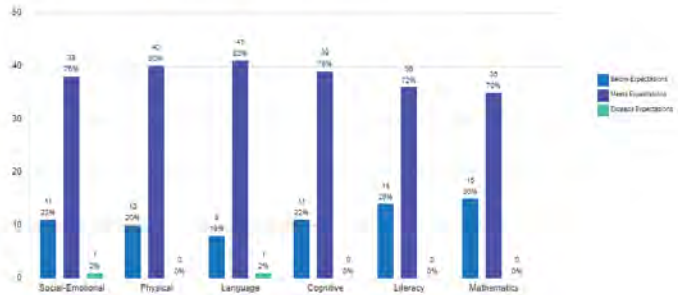
School Readiness and Child Outcomes

Our Head Start classrooms serve 198 three and four-year old children in multi-aged group settings. Children have the opportunity to attend our program for one or two years prior to entering kindergarten. Our staff provide children with experiences to support their success in achieving school readiness. Our program has created School Readiness Goals for children and families that align with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. The Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework describes the skills, behaviors, and knowledge that programs must foster in all children and is grounded in a comprehensive body of research about what young children should know and be able to do to succeed in school. It is comprised of 5 domains: Approaches to Learning, Social Emotional Development, Language and Literacy, Cognition and Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development, and can be achieved through implantation of our curriculum.

Each of our Head Start programs uses the Creative Curriculum, developed by Teaching Strategies, in conjunction with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. We also draw from other programs such as The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, I Am Moving I Am Learning, Personal Safety, and Picturing America.

Three times per year, data is collected using our assessment tool TS Gold. Fall, winter, and spring outcome data collected is used to drive instruction both individually and program wide. The data collected on each child allows the teachers to individualize their instruction and learning experiences for that child and measure growth. Programmatically the data is used to inform staff training needs and program strengths as well as for ongoing assessment of systems and continuous improvement.

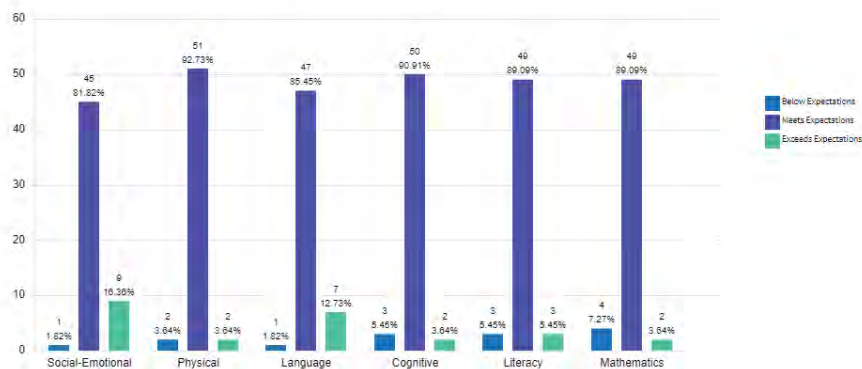
New Hampshire Department of ED - Belknap-Merrimack Head Start
Fall 2023/2024 - Widely Held Expectations



New Hampshire Department of ED - Belknap-Merrimack Head Start
Winter 2021/2022 - Widely Held Expectations



New Hampshire Department of ED - Belknap-Merrimack Head Start
Spring 2023/2024 - Widely Held Expectations



Head Start to Public School Transition Activities

Our program plans for a variety of transition activities to help children and families move from Head Start to kindergarten. These activities include:

- ▶ Visits to the public school by individual Head Start centers
- ▶ Visits from the kindergarten teachers to our centers
- ▶ Spring Parent Information Night for Head Start parents
- ▶ Kindergarten screening and enrollment information given to families
- ▶ Transition information packets from Head Start given to each exiting family



We served on the team that developed and proposed school readiness definitions and indicators for adoption by the State of NH Department of Education and the Early Childhood Community.

Early Head Start Program

The Early Head Start (EHS) program provides services for 151 prenatal women, infants and toddlers in Belknap and Merrimack Counties through either a center-based or home-based program option, which is individualized based on family need. The program's EHS center-based childcare sites in Laconia and Concord are NAEYC accredited. The ongoing staffing shortage continues to impact families enrolling in our program and being able to maintain teaching staff for our classrooms.

The child development and education approach for the center-based EHS program is based on the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos, and aligns with the Head Start & Early Learning Outcomes Framework. The Creative Curriculum is used as a framework to provide a curriculum for children that focuses on the development of secure relationships; an understanding of the child's family and culture; the development of trust and security; the opportunity to explore a variety of sensory, motor and literacy experiences with support from EHS staff and family members.

The home-based EHS curriculum is based on the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program. The PAT program is designed for home visiting programs serving families with children birth to three. The PAT curriculum emphasizes parents as the principal architects of their child's development. Children and their families participate in weekly 90-minute home visits year-round. During the year families are offered opportunities to participate in group experiences called socialization. Socializations provide children with an array of experiences that promote development in a group setting. The prenatal curriculum is based on the Partners for a Healthy Baby program. EHS provides comprehensive, high-quality home visitation services that support and strengthen the relationship between infants, toddlers, and their parents. This relationship provides the foundation from which young children develop the social competence necessary for success later in school and life.



Our EHS program uses the Teaching Strategies GOLD child assessment system in tandem with the 5 essential domains of school readiness: Approaches to Learning, Social Emotional Development, Language and Literacy, Cognition and Perceptual, Motor and Physical. The GOLD system helps teachers and home visitors observe and document children's development and learning over time and supports, guides and informs planning and instruction. It provides child outcomes information on both an individual and large group basis. Outcomes data is collected and analyzed 3 times a year, Fall, Winter and Spring.

Additional Information

- * Our Head Start/Early Head Start program currently employs 75 individuals, 8 of whom are currently or were previously enrolled in our program.
- * All of our classrooms at our Concord and Laconia sites are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
- * 53% of our teachers in HS have a Bachelor's degree or higher in ECE.
- * 37.5% of our teachers in HS have an Associate's degree in ECE.
- * 55% of EHS Teachers have an Associate's degree, Bachelor's Degree, or advanced degree.
- * 45% of EHS Teachers have a CDA credential, equivalent course work, or are enrolled in a credentialing program.
- * 8% of our teacher assistants in HS have a CDA or equivalent.
- * 38% of HS Teachers assistants are working on completing their (Child Development Accreditation (CDA).
- * 100% of our Family Service Workers have Bachelor's degrees.
- * 100% of our Early Head Start home visitors have a CDA credential, or equivalent course work as part of an Associates, Bachelor's, or advanced degree.
- * 19 children with IEPs and 16 children with IFSPs were enrolled in Head Start/Early Head Start in 2023-2024.
- * The program served 36 dual language learners in Head Start and 56 dual language learners in Early Head Start during the 2023-2024 program year.
- * Over 374 individuals volunteered time to our program, 261 of whom are current or former parents of our Head Start/Early Head Start program.
- * The program has a full time EHS Education Coach and a full time HS Education Coach.



Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties, Inc.

**Head Start/Early Head Start/Child Care
PO Box 1016, Concord, NH 03302-1016**

For more information, call 603-225-3295 or 1-800-856-5525