



**NORTHWEST ARKANSAS**

**HEAD START &  
EARLY HEADSTART**

Annual Report  
2021 - 2022



*The Mission of Northwest Arkansas Head Start is to enable children and their families the opportunities for*



# Table of Contents

Message from Chief Executive Officer	4
Program Governance	6
Financial Report	7
Program Goals	8
Self-Assessment	9
Sites at a Glance	10
Reviews and QRIS	11
Children at a Glance	12
School Readiness	13
Child Outcomes	14
CLASS	15
Staff & Credentials	16
Health Services	16
Parent, Family, and Community	18
Community Needs Assessment	20

# Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Dear Community,

I am pleased to present to you Northwest Arkansas Head Start's 2021-2022 annual report. In this document you will find that the past year has been full of moments worthy of celebration. We have pushed through the obstacles created by the emergency health pandemic and continued to focus on our goals and our growth. We identified many opportunities for success throughout the 2021/2022 year and we took action on those opportunities. This was a year of rebuilding and returning to pre-pandemic strategies as much as possible. This year we continued to grow and develop as an agency who serves our communities in many ways. Let us reflect back on the 2021-2022 year and identify some of what was accomplished. The governing bodies, the health services advisory committee, the dedicated employees, the parents of enrolled children, and our community partners all worked together to continuously work toward the mission of Northwest Arkansas Head Start. Together we formed a united team focused on providing high quality comprehensive services to families living in poverty, families experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, children with disabilities, pregnant women, and teen parents in Benton, Carroll and Madison Counties.

Northwest Arkansas Head Start came together as a united team to support the enrolled children and families in creative ways. We returned to some of the time-honored traditions, and we tried new things as part of our continuous quality improvement journey.

Northwest Arkansas Head Start participated in more recruitment events in the local communities during the 2021/2022 year than ever before. The active involvement in the communities was led by the newly created marketing committee. The marketing committee focused on efforts to recruit new staff, as well as recruiting new families, to the program. The efforts of the marketing committee were evident in the number of applications being received. Due to the large number of applications coming in from families, Northwest Arkansas Head Start made budget adjustments to onboard a full-time application specialist. The active involvement in the community also led to the health services advisory committee growing from 4 active participants to over 25 active participants. The growth of the health services advisory committee was crucial as the COVID-19 response plan evolved.

As Northwest Arkansas Head Start focused on recovering from the emergency health pandemic, it was our goal to serve children and families in person when it could be done so safely. During this year, families were able to begin entering our facilities again. The face to face interactions with both children and families is something we know to cherish. The parents at Northwest Arkansas Head Start are actively involved with our program. The Policy Council established quorum 100% of the time during the 2021/2022 school year. The COVID-19 response plan was continually updated by the Policy Council and Board of Directors, in alignment with CDC guidance, throughout the year.

The Policy Council and Board of Directors reviewed and approved many grant applications and allocated funding toward employee COVID-19 incentives to include a sign-on bonus, COVID-19 vaccine and booster incentives, and retention pay for employees who were working during the emergency health pandemic. The Policy Council and Board of Directors also approved the agency

participating in the T.E.A.C.H program which supports employee's furthered education. The Policy Council and Board of Directors were quick to respond and make decisions to drive this agency forward.

The agency had many areas of growth that were only possible due to the dedication of the employees. During the 2021/2022 school year we had 2 employees become internal CPR/1<sup>st</sup> aide trainers, all managers and Center Directors participated in leadership training, 8 employees were internal CLASS observers, all managers became PDR trainers, and 3 employees completed the National Head Start Association's data credential certification.

During the 2021/2022 school year the newly created wellness committee focused on employee wellness. This committee is made up of employees from across the entire agency. The wellness committee organized an employee wellness day where the employees came together and focused on their well-being. The Policy Council and Board of Directors has been committed in making employee wellness a priority.

During the 2021/2022 school year the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact staffing and enrollment, but comprehensive services continued to be provided to all enrolled children and pregnant women. The agency began being able to accept SNAP as an eligibility criterion. This allowed Northwest Arkansas Head Start to reach and serve additional families. Upon the approval of SNAP as an eligibility criterion, the agency made rapid adjustments to make this effective as quickly as was possible. The marketing committee also made rapid adjustments to begin advertising this newly updated information. This was made possible through the assistance of the Tyson intern who spent time learning the enrollment, recruitment, and marketing strategies. The continued support of Tyson has been so valuable to Northwest Arkansas Head Start.

Providing in-person services with families being able to safely enter the facilities has been exciting for Northwest Arkansas Head Start. I would like to continue to express my gratitude to our employees and our community. This has been an exhilarating year for each of us in unique and various ways. We would not have been able to continue our mission without the enduring support from you. Thank you for your ongoing support of Northwest Arkansas Head Start!

Kind Regards,

**Susan Templeton**

Head Start Director

Chief Executive Officer

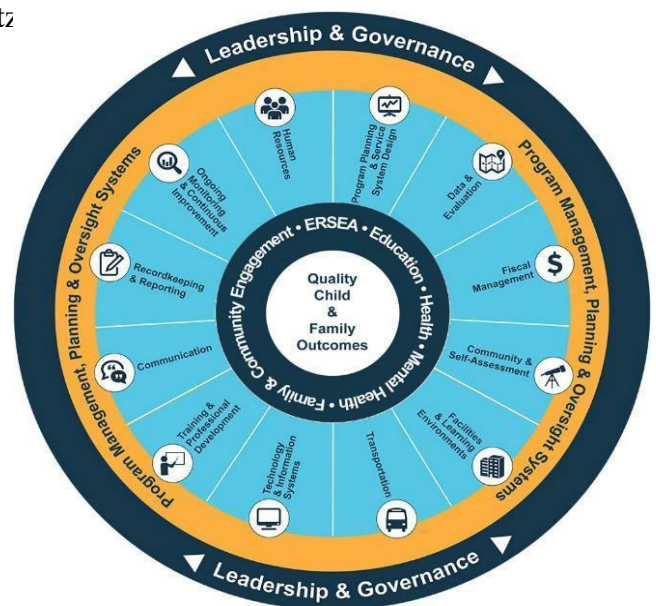
# Program Governance

## Board of Directors

Chariperson: Marie  
 “Lulu” Burkhauser  
 Vice Chairperson: Loren  
 Kern  
 Secretary: Chelsey  
 Herrold  
 Fiscal: Maria Vazquez  
 Attorney: Michael Martz  
 II  
 Past Parent: Claudia  
 Ortiz  
 Education: Rebecca

## Policy Council

- Austin Argumedo- Bentonville
- Nelly Nolasco- Bentonville
- Doresly Lopez- Green Forest
- Monica Trejo- Rogers Hallie Martin
- Martha Alaniz- Rogers Hallie Martin
- Milagro Marinero- Rogers Arkansas Street
- Maria Galicia- Rogers Arkansas Street
- Sierra McHugh- Gentry
- Alexa Medina- Homebase
- Wendy Aldana- Bentonville
- Maria Carranza- Bentonville
- Perla Roa- Rogers Hallie Martin
- Heidy Martinez- Rogers Arkansas Street
- Melanie Stayton- Rogers Arkansas Street
- Dulce Gonsalez- Homebase



## Finances at a Glance

An independent audit, completed for the year ending December 31, 2021 by Landmark, resulted in a clean unmodified opinion.

The Audit provides assurance that the financial statements are free of material misstatements and also reviews the internal control over financial reporting for compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and agreements. No deficiencies or instances of noncompliance were found.

Northwest Arkansas Head Start funding is documented below. Note that the funding budget periods are awarded for dates that diff from the school year calendar.

<b>2021 Public and Private Funds Expended</b>			
<b>Public</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Head Start/Early Head Start</b>	\$4,208,652.00	<b>Community Donations</b>	\$17,572.00
<b>USDA-CACFP</b>	\$171,418.00	<b>United Way</b>	\$18,576.25
<b>DHS Operational Grant</b>	\$127,500.00	<b>Parent Funds</b>	\$78.00
<b>DHS Better Begin/BLOCK</b>	\$11,250.00	<b>In-kind</b>	\$1,152,033.00
<b>DHS Covid Fund</b>	\$120,500.00	<b>Carroll County Grant</b>	\$1,000.00
<b>American Rescue Funds</b>	\$93,396.85		
<b>Covid 19-23</b>	\$12,915.60		
<b>Total Public</b>	<b>4,745,632.45</b>	<b>Total Private</b>	<b>1,189,259.25</b>
<b>2022 Public and Private Funds Expected</b>			
<b>Public</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Head Start/Early Head Start</b>	\$4,007,914.00	<b>Community Donations</b>	\$4,447.82
<b>USDA-CACFP</b>	\$170,000.00	<b>Parent Funds</b>	\$2,700.80
<b>DHS Sustainability</b>	\$345,000.00	<b>In-Kind</b>	\$1,001,979.00
<b>DHS Covid Funding</b>	\$4,500.00		
<b>American Rescue Funds</b>	\$251,195.15		
<b>Covid 19-23</b>	\$73,763.40		
<b>DHS Quality Improvement</b>	\$226,500.00		
<b>Total Public</b>	<b>\$5,078,872.55</b>	<b>Total Private</b>	<b>\$1,009,127.62</b>

### Explanation of Budgetary Expenditures

The 2022 budget is based upon normal Head Start/Early Head Start funding, along with CRRSA, DHS Covid, and Better Beginnings funding. It also includes estimated community donations, parent funds, in-kind expenditures.

# Program Goals

Northwest Arkansas Head Start and Early Head Start's long- and short-term program goals are for the grant period of 2019-2024. Eight goals have been identified that include outcomes for children and families. The areas include school readiness; health and nutrition services; support for special populations; and effective parent, family and community engagement. There were no modifications to our program's long- and short-term goals since last year.

## Goal #1

Improve School Readiness for Head Start Children

## Goal #2

Expand the recruitment strategies and to build upon increasing enrollment of families experiencing homelessness and children in foster care.

## Goal #3

Work in collaboration with the health care community and Northwest Arkansas Head Start and Early Head Start families to improve ongoing continuous health care.

## Goal #4

Support positive social-emotional development and mental health wellness for Northwest Arkansas Head Start.

## Goal #5

Expand support for dual language learners and focus on the development of the home language.

## Goal #6

Provide high quality services to children and families.

## Goal #7

Improve Facility Quality (Including Playgrounds)

## Goal #8

Expand program services based on needs of the community as identified through the community assessment.



# Self-Assessment

## Northwest Arkansas Head Start Self-Assessment Results 2020-2021

Component	Strengths	Weaknesses	Improvement Plan
<b>Program Design</b>	How information is presented and explained to the Board of Directors and Policy Council so that decisions can be made and the Governance training provided to members were seen as strengths.	None-found	
<b>Healthy and Safety</b>	The health policies and procedures were seen as a strength.	None-found	
<b>Family Engagement</b>	Detailed policies and procedures, exceeding family needs, and providing parents with the strength and opportunity to advocate for their children were seen as strengths.	None-found	
<b>Fiscal</b>	The Chief Fiscal Officer's knowledge of the financial systems and the documentation she provided were seen as strengths.	The Chief Fiscal Officer's agency New Staff Orientation and Training record was incomplete. There were several listed trainings where the "date completed" section of the form was blank.	Completed training has been updated on The Chief Fiscal Officer's agency New Staff Orientation and Training record.  The CEO will ensure the timeliness and completion of the Chief Fiscal Officer's agency New Staff Orientation and Training record.
<b>ERSEA</b>	The eligibility verification process and the waitlist system of eligible children was a strength.	There was not a policy on the agency serving 10% of children which may be above the income threshold.	The ERSEA manager will update the Allowance Policy and Procedure to include the agency serving 10% of children that may be above the income threshold.  Have updated policy approved by the Board of Directors and Policy Council.
<b>Education/ Human Resources</b>	The self-assessment questions were answered effectively. The documentation supported the systems in place. The systems were seen as a strength.	None-found	

## Sites

Sites	Full Year Classrooms	Part Year Classrooms	Funded Enrollment
Bentonville Head Start and Early Head Start	6	0	EHS: 32 HS: 37 Pregnant Women:2
Benton County Home-based Early Head Start	4	0	EHS:4
Gentry Head Start and Early Head Start	2	0	EHS: 8 HS: 20 Pregnant Women:1
Green Forest Head Start and Early Head Start	3	0	EHS: 16 HS: 17 Pregnant Women:1
Madison County Home-based Early Head Start	4	0	EHS: 4
Rogers Arkansas Street Head Start	0	3	HS: 57
Rogers Hallie Martin Head and Early Head Start	4	0	EHS: 24 HS: 37 Pregnant Women:2
Siloam Springs Adair Early Head Start	3	0	EHS: 24 Pregnant Women:2

# Reviews and QRIS

## Head Start Federal Review

No federal review took place in program year 2021-2022 school year.

### **INFORMATION MEMORANDUM**

TO: All Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Monitoring Process for Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees  
INFORMATION:

Sec. 641A of the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 requires the Office of Head Start (OHS) to implement ongoing monitoring of all programs receiving federal funds. In FY 2022, OHS will resume on-site monitoring reviews and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®) reviews.

On-site reviews will begin in January 2022; as local conditions allow. While on-site, monitors will follow U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) health and safety guidelines. Further, OHS is committed to partnering with grantees when preparing for on-site reviews to maintain a safe environment for children, families, and staff within the program. If local conditions do not allow for an on-site review, OHS reserves the right to conduct an off-site review.

Upon request, grantees are required to submit an accurate calendar of availability. The availability information is used to schedule monitoring reviews and visits by Regional Office staff. As changes in program availability occur, grantees must update their calendars. OHS is unable to accommodate requests to reschedule reviews in program year 2021–2022.

In addition to outlining the status of monitoring reviews in FY 2022, this Information Memorandum reiterates updates to the CLASS® condition within the Designation Renewal System (DRS), including the creation of quality thresholds for each domain of the CLASS®.

### Arkansas Better Beginnings Quality Rating Scale

Early Head Start /Head Start Center	Center Star Level
Siloam Springs Adair	3
Gentry	3
Green Forest	3
Rogers Hallie Martin	3
Rogers Arkansas Street	3
Bentonville	3

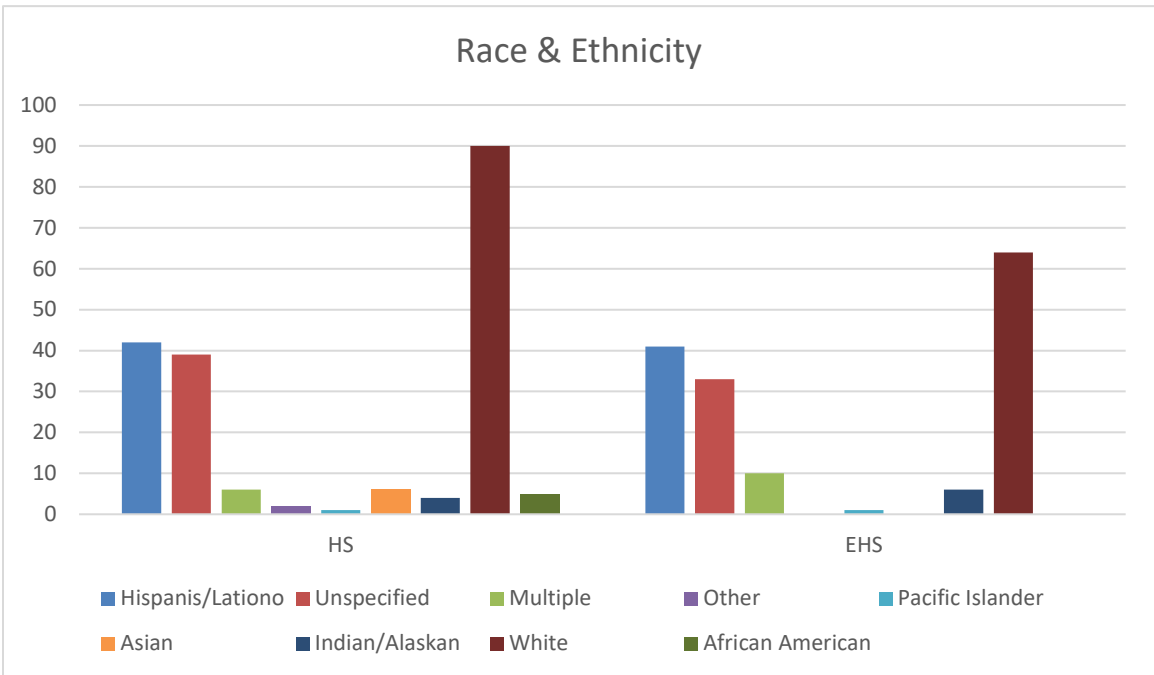
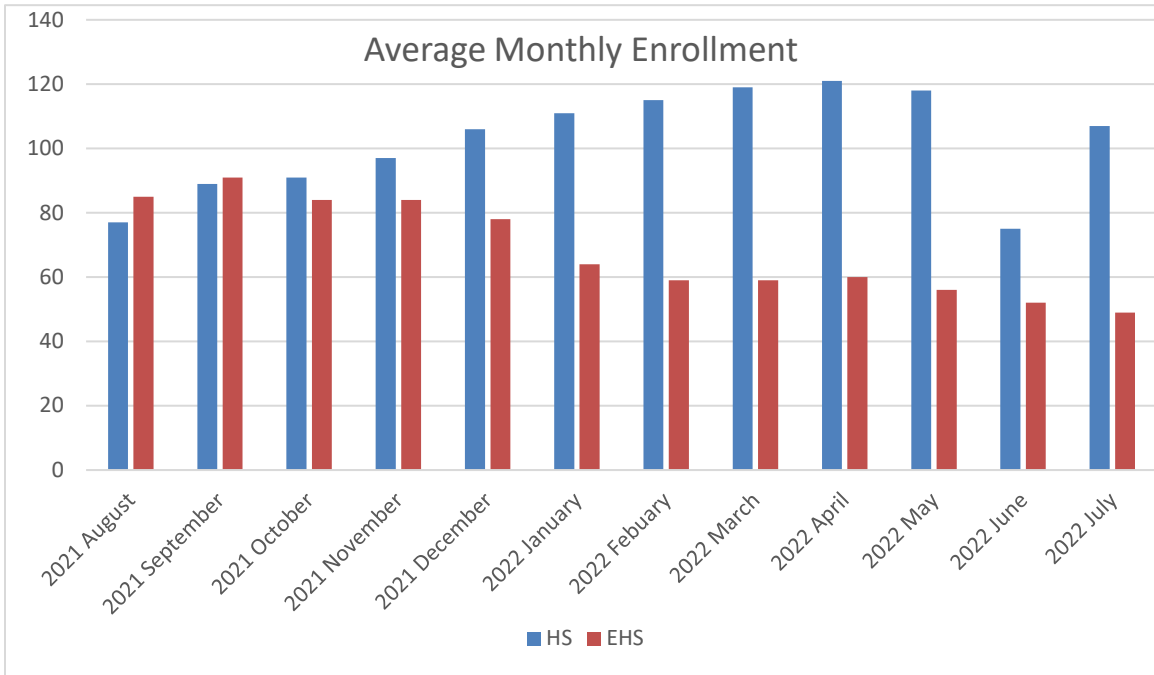
### Arkansas ITERS- Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale

Early Head Start	EHS Score (1-7 rating)
Siloam Springs Adair	5.81
Gentry	6.09
Green Forest	6.19
Rogers Hallie Martin	5.42
Bentonville	Not observed

# Children at a Glance

❖ *The total cumulative enrollment for preschool children is 151*

❖ *The total cumulative enrollment for infant and toddler children is 115*



# School Readiness

Northwest Arkansas Head Start's purpose is to help create a strong foundation for each child's future success in school and in life. We utilize a comprehensive, generational approach, focusing on both the child and the family. School Readiness is defined as meeting or exceeding the current standard developmental level (widely held expectation) for a particular age group. The impact of poverty on a child's development is statistically significant; it is our goal that each child enrolled in Northwest Arkansas Head Start progresses towards meeting and exceeding the widely held expectation for their age.

## Curriculum

Northwest Arkansas Head Start utilized the Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies Gold to assess and support development in all six essential domains of school readiness identified by the National Education Goals Panel.

The program uses the Partners for a Healthy Baby curriculum in the Home-Based program.

## Individualization

Individualized learning plans are developed for each child with parent input and used daily to plan classroom activities.

## Children Who Participate:

- Gain experience in solving problems and following directions
- Explore writing and recognizing numbers and letters
- Learn to communicate thoughts and feelings
- Experience using books to get information
- Gain confidence in doing things for themselves
- Experience a positive, exciting learning environment
- Develop a positive sense of self, regulate their own emotions/behaviors and develop and maintain positive relationships.

## Child Outcomes

Teaching Strategies GOLD is our child assessment tool. Teaching Strategies GOLD is a seamless system for assessing children from birth through kindergarten. Extensive field tests have shown it to be research-based, valid and reliable. The assessment tools are aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework Birth to Five; the Arkansas Child Development & Early Learning Standards Birth through 60 Months; Head Start PFCE Framework; The Arkansas Guide for Promoting Family Engagement; as well as the Common Core Standards. Teachers use thirty-six objectives in Teaching Strategies GOLD to report the children's skill levels for the selected criteria. That data in this report includes only finalized checkpoint level. The Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system measures the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are most predictive of school readiness. The tool has thirty-eight objectives, including two objectives related to English language acquisition. Thirty-six objectives are organized into nine areas of development and learning. The first four are major areas of child development: Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, and Cognitive. The content learning that is usually identified in early learning standards is organized into the following five areas: Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, and The Arts. The objectives in the tenth area, English Language Acquisition, help teachers follow a child's progress in acquiring receptive and expressive skills in English.

During the 2021-2022 school year the agency as a whole's percentage of children meeting and exceeding the widely held expectations improved in several developmental levels.



# CLASS

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is a research-based observation tool used to help teachers and schools improve the quality of classroom interactions.

- CLASS helps observers structure observations by providing a common lens for observing classrooms (the CLASS lens). The CLASS also provides a common language for discussing effective teaching.

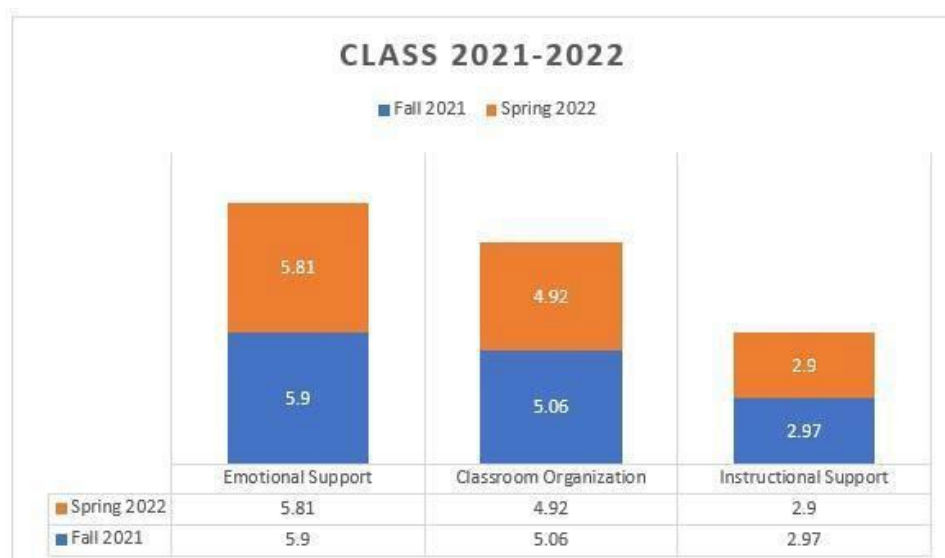
## CLASS Report

Fall 2021/Spring 2022

All Head Start Classrooms have been observed twice this school year, except Hallie Martin Head Start 2. This year Center Directors, the Education Coach, Education Manager and other reliable Component Managers completed all the CLASS observations.

A CLASS team was created this year to focus on more individualized CLASS training and coaching of Head Start teachers and teacher assistants. This CLASS team consists of the Family and Community Manager, Education Manager, and the Program Design Manager.

After the Fall 2021 CLASS observation, the CLASS team sat down together to review the scores and score sheets to determine which classrooms needed to focus on the Emotional Support Domain, the Classroom Organization Domain, or the Instructional Support Domain. We met once a month as a group from September-June to learn about CLASS, set CLASS goals, and practice those goals in the classroom. Each teacher watched videos from the CLASS Video Library and recorded learning points to incorporate into their classrooms. The Spring 2022 CLASS observations occurred and the CLASS team has reviewed the scores and seen the progress made in classrooms who had retained staff. Several new staff were also observed for the first time in the Spring. After each observation, results were shared with teaching staff and strengths and areas for improvement were identified.



Northwest Arkansas Head Start employed 76 staff members in the three counties served. Of the 76 staff members, 23 of them were current or former Head Start parents.

There were 6 employees working on their CDA credential during the 2021-2022 school year.

### Practice Based Coaching

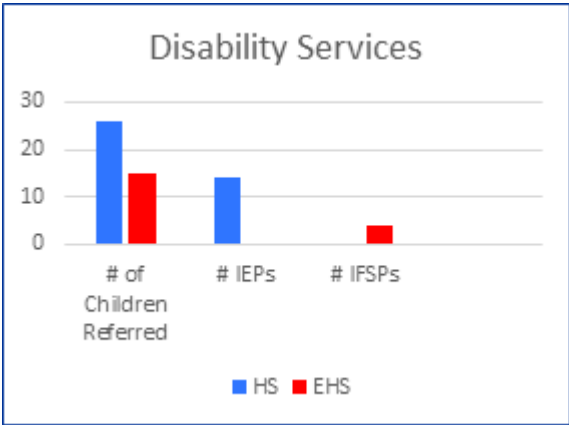
The Education Manager and Coach collected and analyzed a variety of data, including individual needs assessments filled out by teaching staff, to determine which staff members could benefit from intensive coaching. 28 education and child development staff received intensive coaching in the 2021-2022 school year. Coaching visits were carried out throughout the year with individuals working toward and achieving carefully selected goals and working with coaches to develop action plans. Staff not selected for face to face coaching participated in the coaching program by viewing videos and receiving individualized resources and guidance. As a result, our staff are better equipped than ever to fully prepare our children for kindergarten.

### Staff Wellness

The Wellness Committee consists of the HR manager, the Health Manger, a staff member from each center, the Pregnant Mom Specialist and the Home Based educator. The committee meets twice a year and any additional times as needed. The committee also attends the Health and Services Advisory Committee meetings. The purpose of the Wellness committee is to identify needs or concerns in nutrition, medical, mental, and physical health but not limited to those. The committee will also plan and implement activities that will help our organization's staff improve health and wellness. The Committee has since contributed to the ideas for Wellness activities during Agency Professional development days, creating resource packets for families/staff who are affected by Covid-19, reviewing the Employee Wellness survey and making suggestions, and recommending/encouraging staff wellness with water filters and adult seating options in facilities for staff.

## Disability & Mental Health Services

Head Start requires that at least 10% of all opportunities available be for children with disabilities. During the 2021-2022 program year, 8.3% of the children enrolled in Head Start had an IEP and 4.1% of Early Head Start had an IFSP and received disability services.





Northwest Arkansas Head Start has had a commitment to health and wellness. Promotion and prevention activities are central to the program’s requirement to provide comprehensive services to support children’s healthy growth and development. Today, a growing body of research demonstrates that healthy growth and development are critical for school readiness and later learning (1). Recent studies suggest that high-quality early childhood health and nutrition services provide the foundation for lifelong wellness (1).

(1) National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness

*There were 10 pregnant women who received prenatal health care services in the 2021-2022 school year.*

*There were 10 pregnant women with an ongoing source of continuous, accessible health care in the 2021-2022 school year.*

100% of EHS children had a medical home

95% of HS children had a medical home

96% of EHS children have a dental home

92% of HS children have a dental home

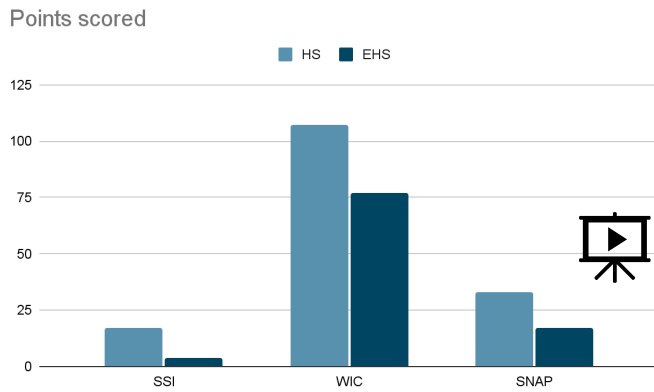
## Health Services Advisory Committee

All Head Start and Early Head Start programs are required to establish and maintain a Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) to support children’s healthy development. Northwest Arkansas Head Start’s HSAC is composed of local health providers who represent a wide variety of local social services agencies. These include mental health providers, Early Intervention therapists, nurse practitioners, nurses, nutritionists, and other medical professionals. Head Start staff and parents also serve on the HSAC. Our Health Services Advisory Committee has provided assistance with developing policies and procedures that help us maintain a safe and healthy environment for children, families, and staff. The 2021-2022 HSAC had a total of 37 members who attended meetings.

# Parent, Family and Community

Parent and Family Engagement in Head Start/Early Head Start consists of building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong relationships between parents and children, and ongoing learning and development for both parents and children.

The Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework is a roadmap for progress in achieving the kinds of outcomes that lead to positive and enduring change for children and families. The PFCE Framework was developed in partnership with programs, family experts, and the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. It is a research-based approach to program change that shows how an agency can work together as a whole across systems and service areas to promote parent and family engagement and children’s learning and development.



## Ready Rosie: Parent

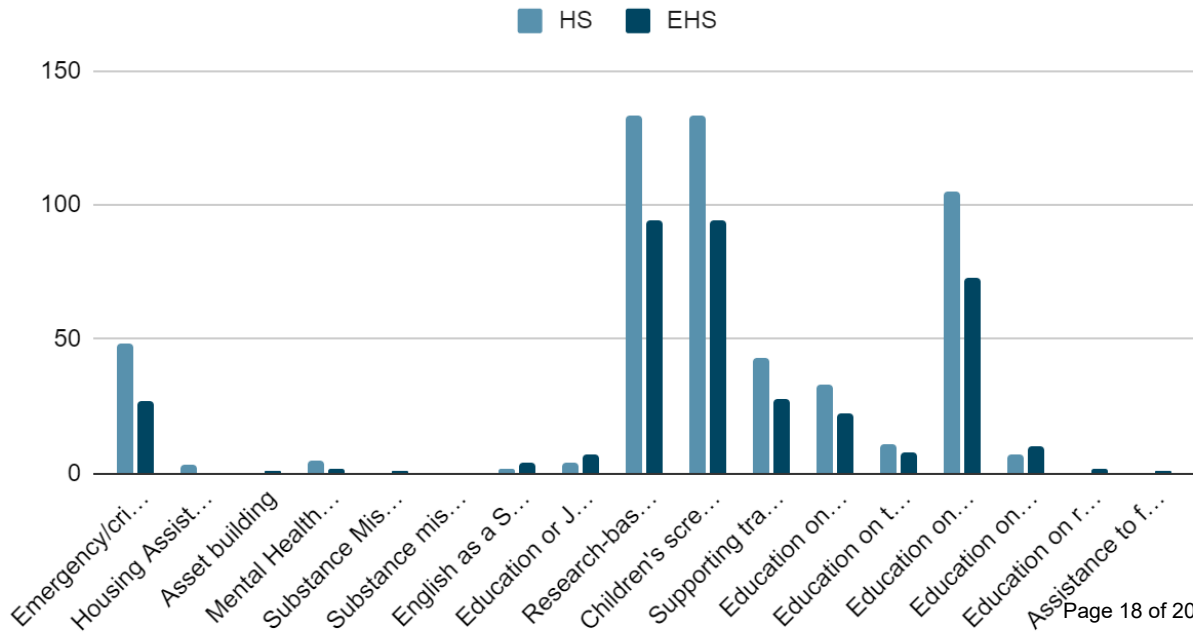


Participants

128=Parent/Guardian

1,360= Videos Viewed

## Points scored



Northwest Arkansas Head Start had 232 Early Head Start volunteers and 305 Head Start volunteers in 2021-2022.

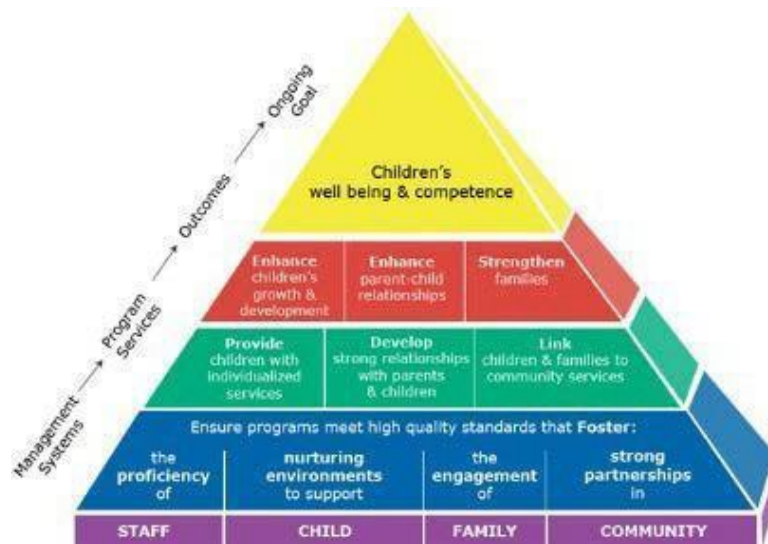
## Community Partners and Resources

NWA-HS/EHS has established formal service exchanges and referral agreements with several community partners that improve service quality and increase access. For example, we have established a partnership with a neighboring Head Start program for shared trainings and other services which shows how we currently extend our resources.

Shared service delivery models are also in place for health services. For example, Arkansas Children's Northwest Hospital comes to our sites to provide preventive oral health services. Other agencies in the community regularly utilize our standardized referral process to increase efficiency and reduce duplication. Shared service models address mental health, nutrition, oral health, and family services.

For example, through our partnership with HARK, a family liaison is assigned to families that receive referrals to services and they work with the family partnership coordinators to walk families through the community-based services system. Often, collaborations lead to additional resources for families

Collaborations often extend to the three-county area.



## Community Needs Assessment

Slots are allocated based on the needs identified in the community assessment. Based on the community assessment, not only are slots allocated to geographic areas where large concentrations of eligible children live, but the program selection criteria are also designed so that it uses a point-based ranking system which is turned into the selection criteria that is used to identify the children with the highest needs. The selection criteria is updated annually and approved by the board of directors and policy council. The community assessment is created every five years and updated annually to identify significant changes in the area. The data is then analyzed to alert the program that changes to the program services and options are necessary to meet the needs of the population.

As a result of our management team analyzing the 2019-2024 Community Assessment data, Northwest Arkansas Head Start has positioned programs throughout the three counties to serve the neediest populations of Early Head Start children, pregnant women, Head Start Children, and families. Our families are now receiving more support with social services referrals, pre-employment and job training needs to become self-sufficient. Networking with community partners has increased and our Health Advisory Committee has become aware of chronic health concerns of children, parents and our community. Our agency is working diligently with community partners to alleviate barriers to resource utilization. The Community Assessment will continue to be an important process to involve our stakeholders in solving problems and developing goals to effectively serve children, families and our local communities.

Poverty Rates <sup>1</sup>			
Rates	Benton	Carroll	Madison
Median Income	\$76,887	\$53,366	\$47,862
Family Poverty	5.9%	10.5%	12.0%
Poverty Families with Children Age 0-17	10.9%	24.7%	22.7%

<sup>1</sup>2021 Poverty and Median Household Income Estimates - Counties, States, and National Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program Release date: December 2021"