

Head Start

Annual Report

2023-2024



Community Action
Council for
Lexington-Fayette,
Bourbon, Harrison,
and Nicholas
Counties, Inc.



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This document is the annual report for program year 2023-2024 for Community Action Council for Lexington-Fayette, Bourbon, Harrison, and Nicholas Counties, Inc.'s Head Start programs. This report is inclusive of Regional Head Start Preschool [04CH011199], South Central Head Start Preschool [04CH012798], Regional Early Head Start [04CH011199], South Central Early Head Start [04CH012798], Early Head Start-Community Care Partnership programs [04HP000575], and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (known to the agency as AgriGrow Head Start) [90CM009852].

This report aims to share programmatic data, outcomes, and transparent financial information with the public. It is available on the agency's website, www.commaction.org.

Head Start parents, the agency's board of Directors, the agency's Head Start Policy Council, and other key stakeholders have been made aware of the publication of this document via email. Physical copies are available upon request, several of which will be sent to elected officials for their review.

In accordance with privacy protections, the agency has been granted express permission by the individuals featured or their legal guardians to use photographs and personal stories, whole or in part, in the publication of educational or advertising materials, and for any other lawful purpose, including publication and public distribution.

Welcome, Readers!

Welcome to Community Action Council's Head Start Annual Report for program year 2023-2024. I am excited to share with you the accomplishments that our children, staff, and families have achieved this year. I hope the information and stories shared in this report will give you a glimpse of the hard work and dedication that goes into delivering the high-quality programming that we have come to be known for.

Head Start is celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2025. As we reflect on its legacy of life-changing results for Kentucky and the nation, it's important to remember that, at its heart, Head Start is about coming together as a local community to strengthen our families.

Head Start is one of the powerful ways that federal dollars are invested back into our local communities. The needs of local people shape the program, and the tools to build their own success are made available to them. We have seen that when the public sector, private sector, and engaged community residents come together with a shared vision and a common goal, growth and prosperity follow.

Head Start has become a pillar in our communities, and we hold sacred the trust you have placed in us to care for and educate your children, help you get back to work, improve your family's health, build the strong bonds that keep children safe and ready to learn, and account for every dollar spent in the process.

I am proud to be part of the Head Start legacy, and grateful for the continued support of our elected officials, community partners, donors, volunteers, staff, and families that allows us to stand beside families as they build their future success.

Together, we have made Head Start a pillar of the community and the cornerstone of early childhood education in our region. We look forward to creating new and innovative opportunities to work with you to help families move forward.

Jessica Coffie

Director of Child Development



SNAPSHOT OF OUR HEAD START PROGRAMS IN 23-24

	Regional Head Start	Regional Early Head Start	Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership	South Central Head Start	South Central Early Head Start	AgriGrow Head Start	Total
Target Population	Children aged three to five and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children from birth to age three and their families Pregnant women 	Children from birth to age three and their families	Children aged three to five and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children from birth to age three and their families Pregnant women 	Children of farmworkers, from birth to age five, and their families	
Counties Served	Fayette, Harrison, Nicholas, Scott	Fayette, Bourbon, Harrison, Nicholas, Scott	Fayette, Scott	Clark, Estill, Garrard, Jackson, Laurel, Madison, Powell, Rockcastle	Clark, Estill, Garrard, Laurel, Madison, Powell, Rockcastle	Fayette, Bourbon, Jessamine, Madison, Pulaski, Warren, Woodford	
Total Children Enrolled	443	511	184	587	184	275	2,184
Total Pregnant Women Enrolled	-	68	0	-	2	-	70
Number of Funded Slots	384	417	128	515	146	253	1,843
Average Monthly Enrollment	92%	100%	100%	100%	100%	74%	95%
Total Families Enrolled	418	465	158	546	169	227	1,983
Estimated Population Eligible for Head Start	2,072	4,257		1,442	2,526	1,888	12,391
Percent of Eligible Population Enrolled with Head Start	19%	13%		36%	6%	13%	15%

SNAPSHOT OF OUR HEAD START PROGRAMS IN 23-24

2,184

children educated

320,497

meals & snacks
provided

\$41,745,079
total budget

1,843

families assisted

More About Our Families...

- 95%** with health insurance
- 98%** with a medical home
- 80%** up to date on EPSDT well-child schedule
- 99%** up to date on all possible immunizations
- 97%** with a dental home
- 47%** receiving a dental exam in the past year
- 16%** qualifying under IDEA



About Our Head Start Programs



School Readiness & Kindergarten Preparation

Community Action Council for Lexington-Fayette, Bourbon, Harrison, and Nicholas Counties, Inc. (the Council) offers home-based and center-based education through five child development programs funded through the federal Office of Head Start. The Council's Head Start programs promote comprehensive school readiness for eligible children by providing high-quality education, health, social, and family programming.

Each program offers a stimulating and age-appropriate learning environment, a curriculum backed by empirical research, and an integrated family engagement strategy designed to prepare children to succeed in school. Head Start instructors boost children's language and social abilities and work with families to develop children's innate curiosity and problem-solving skills through open-ended questioning. Much of this work is done through play-based learning centered around the child, in which each child's interests and imagination take the place of a rigid curriculum; through this process of exploration and discovery, children learn lifelong skills such as autonomy, self-motivation, and critical thinking.

Head Start's two-generational approach ensures that programming does not focus on children in isolation but on all family members in their efforts to create a healthy environment for the child to grow. Accordingly, the Council's Head Start program operates as an economic development vehicle for families by promoting increased educational attainment, job skills development, employment opportunities, and higher wages. In this way, the program strengthens families and the community.



Studies have demonstrated that when Head Start is made available in communities with insufficient capacity to meet their constituents' needs, children who participate in the program, on average, graduate from high school at higher rates, enroll in more years of post-secondary education, earn higher wages, and are less likely to have some ongoing health problems like high blood pressure than children from similar circumstances who did not participate. Additionally, a recent study by Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman notes that each public dollar spent on high-quality child development programs such as Head Start offers an annual return on public investment of 13% to the economy.

In operating Head Start, the Council considers the evolving needs and resources of the community as a whole. The Council believes that by investing in early childhood development and affording all children the opportunity to grow to their full potential as individuals and as members of society, the entire community stands to reap future rewards.



Prep Academies

The Council's 18 direct-managed Head Start locations are known as Prep Academies. This designation signals the Council's commitment to excellence and professionalism in preparing families successfully for school and future life. Prep Academies feature enhanced play spaces, varied educational materials, and state-of-the-art technology to support early learning.

Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Enrollment

One of the lesser-known aspects of Head Start is that we reserve at least ten percent of our slots for children with or suspected of needing IFSPs or IEPs. 20 USC 33 outlines the "Education of Individuals with Disabilities," also known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This federal law makes available a free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children.

1302 Subpart F of the Head Start Program Performance Standards ("Additional Services for Children with Disabilities") states, "A program must ensure enrolled children with disabilities, including but not limited to those who are eligible for services under IDEA, and their families receive all applicable program services delivered in the least restrictive possible environment and that they fully participate in all program activities." This is in coordination with 45 CFR 1302.14 (b)(1) which states that each Head Start program "must ensure at least 10 percent of its total actual enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA, unless the responsible HHS official grants a waiver."

Children qualifying under this law face various educational and other obstacles, ranging from limited funding to address their needs to schools that are unable to meet their individual needs and abilities. For parents of qualifying children, Head Start offers direction to help them better navigate the opportunities and challenges that will appear in their children's education.

DIRECT-MANAGED CENTERS

- Prep Academy at BCTC
- Prep Academy at Berea
- Prep Academy at Bourbon County
- Prep Academy at Chrysalis House
- Prep Academy at Garrard Educational Center
- Prep Academy at Harrison County Community Center
- Prep Academy at Laurel County
- Prep Academy at Lebus Child Development Center
- Prep Academy at Madison County
- Prep Academy at Nicholas County
- Prep Academy at Powell County
- Prep Academy at Red Mile
- Prep Academy at Richmond
- Prep Academy at Russel School
- Prep Academy at Scroggins Park
- Prep Academy at South Lexington
- Prep Academy at Terrace Park Child Development Center
- Prep Academy at Winburn





EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PARTNERS

Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start Partners

- Booker T. Washington Elementary
- Brite Beginnings
- Campus Kids Early Learning Center
- Cardinal Valley Elementary
- Family Care Center
- James Lane Allen Elementary
- MegaMinds Educare
- Nicholas County Elementary
- William Wells Brown Elementary

South Central Head Start Preschool Partners

- Bowen Elementary
- Clark County School District
- Clay City Elementary
- Garrard Education Center
- McKee Elementary
- Sandgap Elementary
- South Irvine Elementary
- Stanton Elementary
- Tyner Elementary

Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships

- Brite Beginnings
- Kids Empowerment Learning Academy (KELA)
- Campus Kids Early Learning Center
- Growing Together Preschool
- MegaMinds Educare

AgriGrow Head Start

- Bluegrass Community Action Partnership
- Community Action of Southern Kentucky
- Lake Cumberland Community Action Agency

Annual Community Assessment



Over the last year, the Council worked alongside more than 20,000 individuals through more than 40 federal, state, local, and foundation-funded initiatives that are consistent with its purpose, mission, and current strategic plan. We help Central Kentuckians gain economic stability and promote a better understanding of public policy and community decision-making processes that affect the quality of their lives.

To ensure we are meeting the true needs of our constituency, we conduct an annual Community Assessment that identifies the strengths and needs of the region, focusing on demographic information, prevalent economic factors, challenges, and issues preventing participation such as transportation. The assessment enables us to identify emerging trends and respond effectively to changing community needs.

This year's Community Assessment was conducted between October 2024 and January 2025. Among the concerns that rose to the top are diminished opportunities for affordable housing, finding affordable childcare, the expense of maintaining a household, weak community infrastructure, lack of education among adults, lack of a living wage, and several others.

The Council's Head Start programs have evolved and expanded over the decades, making central Kentucky Head Start programs among the best in the nation. As a Head Start provider, the Council is dedicated to understanding and addressing the educational, health, and economic needs of its children and families. Research shows that economic struggle in adulthood is closely linked to early childhood learning and development outcomes. As such, the Council is committed to providing children with the least access to quality care with environments conducive to learning. The Council also focuses on ensuring that parents can make progress toward their own educational and employment goals, even as they become more involved in their children's education.

Quantitative and qualitative data gathered through the assessment process show that Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start program eligibility continues to exceed current enrollment throughout the Council's designated region. The Council aims to continue to strengthen its Head Start program network to fill early childhood education gaps and provide the level of comprehensive and quality programming for which Head Start is known.



Based on the information presented in its Community Assessment, the Council's 2025 recommendations for its Head Start programs are as follows:

1

Lead conversations and efforts that address pay parity in the early childhood education workforce to combat shortages and enhance teacher training, recruitment, and retention.

2

Prepare for the potential introduction of universal Pre-K by increasing collaboration among early childcare providers throughout the State and ensuring the integration of the Head Start model into the foundation of this expanded early childhood education initiative alongside the state's top early childhood leaders and elected officials.

3

Elevate family education through the development and implementation of family learning collaborations designed to assist families in applying the knowledge gained through Head Start in their homes.

4

Prioritize the psychological well-being of Head Start children, families, and staff through improving teacher-to-child ratios, increasing teacher pay, and developing new and innovative programming to address such needs, especially in rural communities.

5

Pursue opportunities to increase the total number of Early Head Start (EHS) slots throughout the service area through expansion or conversion.

6

Continue to upgrade existing facilities and build new facilities to provide state-of-the-art learning environments, ensuring greater access to high-quality, indoor and outdoor learning spaces.

7

Engage fathers as the first teachers and lifelong educators of their children through the enhancement of fatherhood involvement programming.

8

Provide tailored support assisting mothers to pursue and advance their careers and increase their earning potential.

From Inspired Parent to Inspiring Teacher



Mother of three Natorria Walker has a unique perspective on the Council's Head Start programs. Not only have all three of her children experienced Head Start with the Council, but she is also one of our newest faces in the classroom, joining us as a Head Start teacher this year. Natorria says that having been both a parent and a teacher, she feels like she is better able to connect with parents and help them understand how Head Start can best assist their family.

Ms. Torri, as the kids call her, has always felt called to care for others. As the youngest of four children herself, Natorria was surrounded by nieces and nephews from a very young age. "I've always had a love for children," she said. She began studying early childhood education in high school, which led her into the childcare field at age 17.



“ It can be a very [nerve-wracking] thing starting your child in care when they can barely communicate ”

A few years and one daughter later, Natorria went back to school to expand on her passion for caring for others and entered the medical field. Things were going well for her, and she was able to expand her family with the addition of a son.

When her son turned two, Natorria began to reflect on her family's experience with Head Start. "It can be a very [nerve-wracking] thing starting your child in care when they can barely communicate," she said. "But instantly, everyone here became like family."

Natorria points to the communication from staff members and the support her son received as major factors that made her comfortable as a parent. Her son's teachers used a balanced approach, talking both about achievements and areas for improvement, to help Natorria receive the best resources for her son. He was tested for a suspected speech delay, but when that was not found to be an issue, play therapy was suggested, and it has been beneficial in helping him grow in the way that is best suited for him. "No matter what it is – if you are in need of anything – [the teachers] are going to find a way," Natorria said.

Her experience with the Council inspired her to return to her true passion and what she really enjoyed doing—caring for children. “Community Action is going to go out of their way to help you, and I’ve always appreciated that, so I wanted to be a part of it,” she said. As Ms. Torri the Early Head Start teacher, Natorria feels she is back in her element.

“We don’t just watch the children. With Community Action, we’re teaching them. We are teaching each child something,” Natorria said. She has a greater appreciation for the work teachers do to manage different learning speeds, languages, and individual needs, and has been able to connect with her personal experience as a parent to help other parents take full advantage of all that Head Start has to offer.

Natorria’s son is headed into kindergarten now and her youngest daughter is working her way through Early Head Start. Their time with Community Action Council’s Head Start programs has shaped their family’s success and given Natorria a way to fulfill her calling.

“Community Action is going to go out of their way to help you, and I’ve always appreciated that, so I wanted to be a part of it”



To see Natorria’s official interview and learn more about Head Start and family issues, visit the Council’s YouTube page at

www.youtube.com/lexcommaction

or download our Head Start-focused podcast **Look Who’s Talking** on the podcatcher of your choice.





HAPPY
60TH
BIRTHDAY,
HEAD START!

It's Head Start's diamond anniversary and we're celebrating six decades of family successes!

60 YEARS *of* RESULTS
HEAD START | *Since 1965*

Community Action Council has provided Central Kentuckians with the means to achieve successful lives through Head Start for more than half a century. Six decades of uninterrupted, high-quality early childhood education has given families countless opportunities to pursue employment and career growth, increase school readiness, and become thriving and self-sufficient members of the community.

Our Head Start programs have remained steadfast in a commitment to delivering innovative programming to families. Head Start was founded on the belief that hard work, growth, and opportunities for success are what build the American Dream. We hope you'll join us in wishing for another 60 years of federal investment in true American values.

Use the QR code to sign the birthday card!
Share what Head Start means to you,
your family, or your community!





Delivering Your Message to Washington

The Council conducts a yearly community survey to learn directly from local people what they need to be successful and increase their economic mobility. Topping the list of employment-related needs is childcare. Plus, the number of households in our constituent counties that have signed on asking Congress to fully fund Head Start is among the highest in the nation.

You spoke, and we listened! The results show that Central Kentuckians are asking for investments in childcare and early childhood education that can keep them on the job, and they trust in their local Head Start providers to deliver it.

In September 2024, agency staff attended the National Head Start Association's (NHSA) Fall Leadership Institute, and we took your message to Washington, D.C.

The Fall Leadership Institute provides Head Start leaders and experts with the opportunity to engage in professional development that challenges them to innovate for excellence and take to Capitol Hill to meet with their members of Congress.

**You SPOKE.
We LISTENED.**

The Fall Leadership Institute provides Head Start leaders and experts with the opportunity to engage in professional development that challenges them to innovate for excellence and take to Capitol Hill to meet with their members of Congress.





Representatives from the Council met with staffers from Senator Mitch McConnell, Representative Andy Barr, and Representative Thomas Massie's offices to discuss the mandate we have from you—their constituents—to uphold Head Start and increase its reach.

We let them know that nearly half of Kentucky's children live in childcare deserts, which is keeping an estimated 200,000 parents out of the workforce. We reminded them that over a billion dollars in economic activity is lost in the state every year due to a lack of childcare. We showcased the trust you have placed in us to deliver high-quality programming that results in roughly 90% of children exiting our programs ready for kindergarten. We invited them to examine our financial transparency and careful stewardship of funds demonstrated through clean, yearly audits and maximized leverage of private sector investments. We also showed them how you are delivering a return on the investment of Head Start through increased workforce participation, job skill training, and educational attainment.

We appreciate the trust that you continue to show in our agency and your willingness to help us show our representatives that Head Start matters to you, your job, and the stability of your family.



Calling **ALL** Families!

Looking for **affordable**, **award-winning** care close to home? Check out Community Action Council's Head Start! ***We're more than childcare.*** We deliver early childhood education and growth for the whole family!

What Your Family Can Look Forward To:

- Kindergarten-Readiness Rates of **90% or More**
- Safe, **Education-Focused** Environments for Your Children
- Fun Family Engagement Nights and Activities
- Support for Your Tough Parenting Moments
- Special Programming **Just for Dads**
- Support for Building Personal Resilience for the Whole Family
- AND **MUCH** MORE!



What Parents Are Saying:

[Head Start] has allowed me to feel safe and comfortable with my daughter attending the center. She gets very excited when she sees her teachers, and that is a huge relief for me.



[Head Start] has allowed my child to really flourish and grow. His behavior is better every day! And I owe a lot of that to my son's teacher! She has been wonderful with him.

Head Start has helped our family grow so much, not only by providing childcare so that we could both work but also by providing the school readiness that our child needed so badly. Hanging out with other kids and learning how to share, be nice, sit down and read a story... it has all benefited my child so much, and I will forever be grateful.



ENROLL TODAY!

To learn more and apply, visit our website at

www.commaction.org

Give us a call at **859-233-4600**

or email Kesha Richardson at

kesha.richardson@commaction.org

Don't wait! Spots are limited!

Head Start Builds!



New Prep Academy at Powell County

We're excited that the fresh, new Prep Academy at Powell County will be ready for classroom setup in August 2025!

This 10-classroom facility, located near Stanton, will educate Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start children. It will also have a commercial kitchen, multipurpose space, and administrative offices to handle the needs of our students and families.

Health & Safety Enhancements

Since we directly manage 18 centers, we stay busy making updates. This year saw us install new playgrounds at the Prep Academies at Scott County, Chrysalis House, and Red Mile, build a new fence around the Early Head Start playground at the Prep Academy at Red Mile, and receive funding for bulletproof glass and an enhanced security fence at the Prep Academy at Winburn.

Keeping our students safe while they exercise and learn is one of our highest priorities!



Training Facility Coming to Southeast Lexington

Progress is being made on the renovation of our soon-to-be training facility in southeast Lexington, just off Man O' War Boulevard. The multi-phase project will bring the area state-of-the-art spaces to host agency-wide training sessions and community events!

The facility will also become home to Isabel's Boutique, a clothing closet filled with gently used professional attire made available to help women reach their career goals and achieve economic security for their families.



The Prep Academy at Palmer Complex

We've targeted early 2027 as our move-in date for the Prep Academy at Palmer Complex, to be located on Dr. Zirl Palmer Lane in Lexington's East End. Dr. Palmer earned economic success as the owner of the first African American drug store in Lexington.

Construction will begin in 2025 and continue through 2026 to bring the 9,000-square-foot facility to life. We're excited about our plans to have a dedicated playground for our students and bring a new garden and fruit trees to the East End through this project.



Enhancing Development Through Therapeutic Play



One of the lesser-known aspects of Head Start is that we reserve at least ten percent of our slots for children with or suspected of needing IFSPs or IEPs, regardless of family income. In recent years, 15 to 17 percent of our students have qualified under this criterion.

Early intervention plays a crucial role in the long-term effectiveness of therapies and in helping children and families find the best path forward for them as they progress through education and life.

Play therapy is an effective way to support children with enhanced developmental needs, and it is one of our favorites! Through play therapy, young children not only get to have fun and take the lead on deciding how to play, but they also work on having positive social interactions, developing coping techniques, expressing themselves, and expanding cognitive and memory development. Play therapy can be especially helpful for enhancing language development as it gives children a way to communicate and process life experiences.

“ It has been a rewarding experience to be a part of their journey towards healing and resilience ”

Lena Bergman, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), frequently provides play therapy to children in our centers and gives teachers tips to further assist the child's growth in the classroom. She said, "I have witnessed firsthand the impact of our play therapy on these children as they develop communication skills, emotional regulation, and personal growth. It has been a rewarding experience to be a part of their journey towards healing and resilience."

The professional development that Lena has offered to staff has been invaluable to them as they navigate the differing needs present in their classrooms. She said, "The staff at each center have been open to building relationships with me, allowing me to share my expertise in identifying and addressing [potential] concerns. The overwhelmingly positive feedback I received from staff and teachers indicated that they were able to apply the information provided and further develop their skills in supporting students in need."

We are grateful for the extra layer of support that Lena and our community-based partner brings to our teachers, parents, and students. Therapeutic play builds skills that can last a lifetime and makes a tremendous difference in the lives of the families at our centers.



For your reference: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law that makes available a free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children. This is further enshrined in 1302 Subpart F of the Head Start Program Performance Standards and 45 CFR 1302.14 (b), both of which require Head Start programs to abide by IDEA law.

Making Room for Dad

Fathers and male family members have an important role in early childhood development. Research shows that strong bonds between young children and the men in their lives can positively impact a child's language, cognitive, and emotional regulation skills. If we want our children to have every benefit possible, we need to make sure that dads know they are welcome at Head Start. And our Head Start Fatherhood program has been doing just that by delivering programming tailored to the needs and experiences of men.

Following the huge turnout we saw last year, the Council hosted a second annual "Cuts with Dad" event. The crew from Cut'n Up Barbershop and other local barbers volunteered their time and talent to get our dads and dudes looking sharp. Fathers helped their sons learn about haircuts, barbers, and barbershop etiquette, and everyone got a little boost of confidence. Soon, the fatherhood initiative will bring fathers and daughters together to help men learn more about styling their daughters' hair to help them get ready for school. Events like these empower dads to better care for their kids, be role models to them, and build stronger parent-child bonds.



Another well-liked opportunity for men to gather and talk as parents is the "Chop It Up" father's group that meets monthly at the Prep Academy at South Lexington. After dropping their children off in the morning, fathers and grandfathers meet up to have breakfast and talk about things that matter to them. Dads have gathered with agency staff to share their thoughts and concerns about things like discipline at home, the stress of parenting, and health needs. Family Engagement Specialist Lawrence Williams, who has been working with the initiative, said, "Giving [fathers] a space to be without judgment and where they can be with other men who are in the same circumstances really lets them open up about what is going on in their lives."

“March Dadness” capitalizes on Kentucky’s basketball fever to bring dads out for some guy time. With March Madness tournament games on the screen, food, games, and music, dads come together to get to know one another, meet some of our male staff members, and learn more about other programs and opportunities available to them. March Dadness helps fathers to build a wider network in the community and meet other men who are just as invested in their children’s development.

To learn more and grow their skills, staff supporting the fatherhood initiative attended the 14th Annual Fatherhood Conference put on by the South Carolina State Head Start Association in April. They learned new ways to engage fathers with their children and with programming, the challenges particular to men’s health, and even a few ways to help fathers better care for their children. Staff will be using this new information to deliver even better opportunities to fathers and children in the coming year.

“ Events like these empower dads to better care for their kids, be role models to them, and build stronger parent-child bonds ”



We see a lot of moms in Head Start, which is wonderful! But we also want to make sure that dads and important male family members know we want to see them too! When fathers take an active role in their child’s education and development, they bring the skills and love that are unique to dads. Ensuring that fathers feel welcome at Head Start is just one way that we are building strong family bonds that support children from all sides.



For your reference: Information Memorandum ACF-ACF-IM-18-01: Integrating Approaches that Prioritize and Enhance Father Engagement encourages all programs within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to prioritize fatherhood programming.

Dinner, Dancing, and Daisy

Springtime is the perfect time to get out of the house and shake off the winter blues. Head Start families in Madison County celebrated the change of seasons with a Daisy Dance in April, featuring guest of honor Daisy Brown of Champion Therapy Center. Families left their cabin fever behind and gathered at the Prep Academy at Richmond for dinner, dancing, and a dose of Daisy's mind-boosting information and fun.

Prioritizing the psychological health of our children, families, and staff has been at the forefront of our work in recent years. Making sure that everyone has access to the knowledge, skills, and tools they need to be their best ensures that classrooms are safe, students are ready to learn, and families can take full advantage of the opportunities created for them. To achieve this goal, we've deepened our partnership with Champion Therapy Center, and Daisy and her staff have become regular visitors to our centers.

As the guest of honor at the spring family dance, Daisy was given the floor to share information about her work. She let folks know about the options for family and one-on-one counseling, education, and skill building available to families with no out-of-pocket costs to them. She reminded the grownups that it's important to take care of themselves and their own well-being so they can be the parents they want to be for their children. Daisy mingled with guests, answering questions and building relationships within the community.

Site director of the Prep Academy at Richmond, Patricia Haymond, has been overjoyed about the changes that Daisy's team has helped to facilitate in the center. Champion Therapy Center's Porscha Thomas regularly visits the center to check in with staff, children, and families. "We have seen such success from having these visits. It has really transformed our team for the better," Patricia said.





Patricia points to the multi-faceted work and thoughtful perspective that Porscha brings to staff and families. She has helped teachers learn how to better manage child behavior and their own stress levels, which ensures that the learning environment can remain safe and productive for everyone. Porscha has observed children in class and helped teachers refine their approach to students, made recommendations for different toys and activities that have helped children thrive, and helped children to receive important early interventions. She has even helped center staff to come together as a team and feel supported by one another in their work.

“Our work is not just important; it’s often labor-intensive and emotionally taxing,” says the Council’s Executive Director, Sharon Price. “It’s important to us that we do whatever we can to help our staff be and feel their best. We are serious about creating a mindset at Community Action Council that encourages self-care and mutual support.”

At the Daisy Dance, staff encouraged parents to fully take advantage of the transformative assistance available to them so that children have safe and healthy environments at school and at home.

For your reference: 1302 Subpart D of the Head Start Program Performance Standards refers to “Family support for health, nutrition, and mental health” and states that Head Start programs “must provide ongoing support to assist parents’ navigation through health and mental health systems to meet the general health and specifically identified needs of their children.” Further, Information Memorandum (IM) ACF-OHS-IM-24-01 from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) emphasizes the need for Head Start programs to integrate mental health support into services. The IM states that Head Start programs may use “mental health promotion,” “prevention services and supports,” and “access to mental health treatment” to meet the expectation.



Expanded Service to Farmworker Families

The economy of our region and Kentucky, in general, runs in part on the agricultural industry. From raising various crops and livestock to keeping the state's signature equine industry globally competitive, Kentucky relies on farmworkers to meet market demands. And those families need safe and educational spaces for their children, especially during the planting and harvesting seasons.

The Council's AgriGrow Head Start program provides essential agricultural workers with the opportunity to continue their critical work while providing their children with the highest standards of care and education. The Council operates farm family programming across the state and in partnership with three other Community Action agencies.

In 2024, we were excited about the opportunity to expand the number of children we could accept into the program! Through a highly competitive grant process, we secured an additional \$792,000 for the children of farmworkers in Kentucky. The grant allows us to enroll 42 more children and ensures a modest amount of training and technical assistance for relevant staff.

The Council can now educate 259 children whose parents work in agriculture across eight counties. We provide this opportunity to 149 children and their families in our Prep Academies in Fayette, Bourbon, and Madison counties. Partner agency Community Action of Southern Kentucky reaches 48 children in Warren County. Our partner, Lake Cumberland Community Action Agency, cares for 32 children in





Pulaski County—and is requesting to educate eligible children in Russell County, too. Thirty children are educated through Bluegrass Community Action Partnership in Jessamine and Woodford counties.

The Council's Director of Child Development, Jessica Coffie, said, "Our farmworker families are dedicated parents who want the best for their kids. They work long, hard hours in harsh conditions to deliver food and other resources to the rest of us. Ensuring their children are safe and developing their minds and bodies in healthy ways helps parents to be their best selves at home and in the fields."

We are proud to deliver all of Head Start's benefits to our essential farmworkers, and we are excited to reach even more families in the coming year. Our economy and our food systems depend on these parents, and they know they can depend on us.

For your reference: Community Action Council's AgriGrow Head Start program, formerly known as the agency as Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, is operated under the laws for Migrant or Seasonal Head Start programs as outlined in the federal code of regulations. 42 USC 105, Subchapter II, section 9837b (a)(2) (A) states, "The Secretary shall award, upon submission of a written request, a collaboration grant to each State and to each national administrative office serving Indian Head Start programs and migrant or seasonal Head Start programs to facilitate collaboration among Head Start agencies (and Early Head Start agencies) and entities that carry out activities designed to benefit low-income children from birth to school entry, and their families." Further, 45 CFR 1302.1 states, "This part implements the statutory requirements in sections 641A, 645, 645A, and 648A of the [Head Start] Act by describing all of the program performance standards that are required to operate Head Start Preschool, Early Head Start, American Indian and Alaska Native and Migrant or Seasonal Head Start programs.



Give Your **Passion** a **Purpose**: Join the Head Start Staff!



Do you want to make a **difference** in the world?

Are you passionate about helping children
become **strong**, healthy, and **resilient**?

Do you strive for **excellence**?

*Then we want to
talk to you!*



We Embody Excellence By:

- Consistently working to increase employee **compensation**
- Caring for our employees' **well-being** through generous benefits packages that offer gym memberships and behavioral health co-pay reimbursements
- Being named a Head Start **Program of Excellence** by the National Head Start Association
- Providing continued **professional development** opportunities to staff
- Becoming a **trusted pillar** of our communities
- Always going **above and beyond** for the families that walk through our doors
- Delivering high-quality education in safe and **caring** environments

Your Passion Can Create Excellence!

Join Us!

Ready to embark on a rewarding career with Head Start?

Check out our open positions at

www.commaction.org/careers

and apply today!

Excellence in Action: **Rose Hampton**

Around 2,000 children join our Head Start programs every year. Keeping everyone as safe and healthy as possible is a massive undertaking, which is why we are so grateful to have the amazing family nurse practitioner Rose Hampton on our side. Her dedication to family care and great attitude are a big part of what helps us excel.

When it comes to preschool-age children, we typically think of filing shot records and patching up scraped knees on the playground, but Rose's work reaches even further. Rose works to protect and preserve the health of children across eight counties through illness prevention and early detection, toxic lead screenings, home visits, emergency care, required staff medical exams and screenings, staff and parent education, and ensuring compliance with all the federal health regulations required of Head Start programs. She is one busy person!

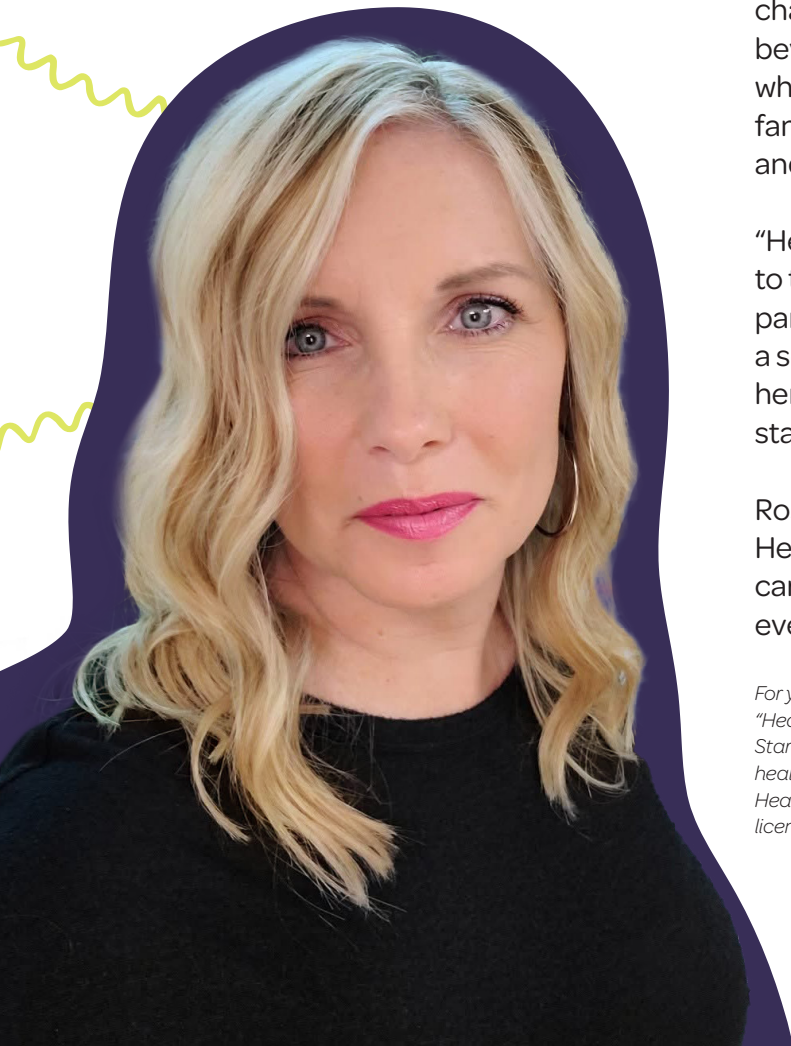
With 20 years of experience as a nurse and as a certified American Red Cross instructor, Rose is passionate about health education and being proactive for families. She regularly provides training on CPR, blood-borne pathogens, and First Aid and helps parents better understand allergies, preventative care, and much more.

The agency's Environmental Health and Safety District Manager, Braxton Price, has witnessed Rose's exceptional work first-hand. She said, "Rose is not only an exceptional nurse but also a compassionate champion for children and families. She goes above and beyond to ensure every child receives the care they need, whether it's through routine health screenings, educating families on important health topics, or providing comfort and reassurance to little ones who need it."

"Her dedication, kindness, and unwavering commitment to the well-being of our children make her an invaluable part of our team. Rose's warm and caring nature creates a sense of trust and safety for both families and staff, and her expertise ensures that our program meets the highest standards of care."

Rose is an asset to Community Action Council and Head Start. She is an accomplished professional and a caring practitioner who regularly goes above and beyond everyone she meets. We are lucky to have her!

For your reference: 1302 Subpart D of the Head Start Program Performance Standards, "Health and Mental Health Programs and Services," outlines the requirements for Head Start staff to collaborate with parents to "provide high-quality health, oral health, mental health, and nutrition services" to children. Further, 45 CFR 1302.91(e)(8)(i) states that Head Start programs "must ensure that health procedures are performed only by a licensed or certified health professional."



In Memoriam: *Frances Blackford*

Beloved Head Start teacher Mrs. Frances Blackford passed away in November 2024. Frances was a dedicated and exceptional teacher who made an immeasurable impact on the children and families she worked alongside. Any parent would have been proud to have her teach their child, as she prepared them not only for kindergarten but for life itself.



Frances worked for Community Action Council in a blended preschool classroom alongside Fayette County Public Schools at Williams Wells Brown Elementary for more than 15 years. Her passion for teaching and her kindness touched the lives of many, and though we are deeply saddened by her loss, we can take comfort in knowing that her legacy will live on through the countless children and families she helped guide.



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Kiarra Clouse, SCHS Head Start Preschool Home-Based
Stevie Rogers, SCHS Head Start Preschool Center-Based
Beverly Ishmael, Regional Head Start Preschool Home-Based
Amanda Biller, Regional Head Start Preschool Center-Based
Alexis Peachey, SCHS Early Head Start Home-Based
Samantha Creech, SCHS Early Head Start Center-Based
Juliana Villegas, Regional Early Head Start Home-Based
Ashlee Vogelsang, Regional Early Head Start Center-Based
Laura Sanchez, AgriGrow Head Start Preschool
Emily De Leon, AgriGrow Head Start Preschool
Da'jure Jones, Early Head Start CCP
Katie Miller, Early Head Start CCP



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Juanita Webb, Child Care Council of Kentucky, **Chair**
Leandra Forman, Food Chain
Amy Win, First Steps
Dr. Stephanie Gusler, University of Kentucky Center on Trauma and Children
Mattie Morton, Exhilarating Inc.

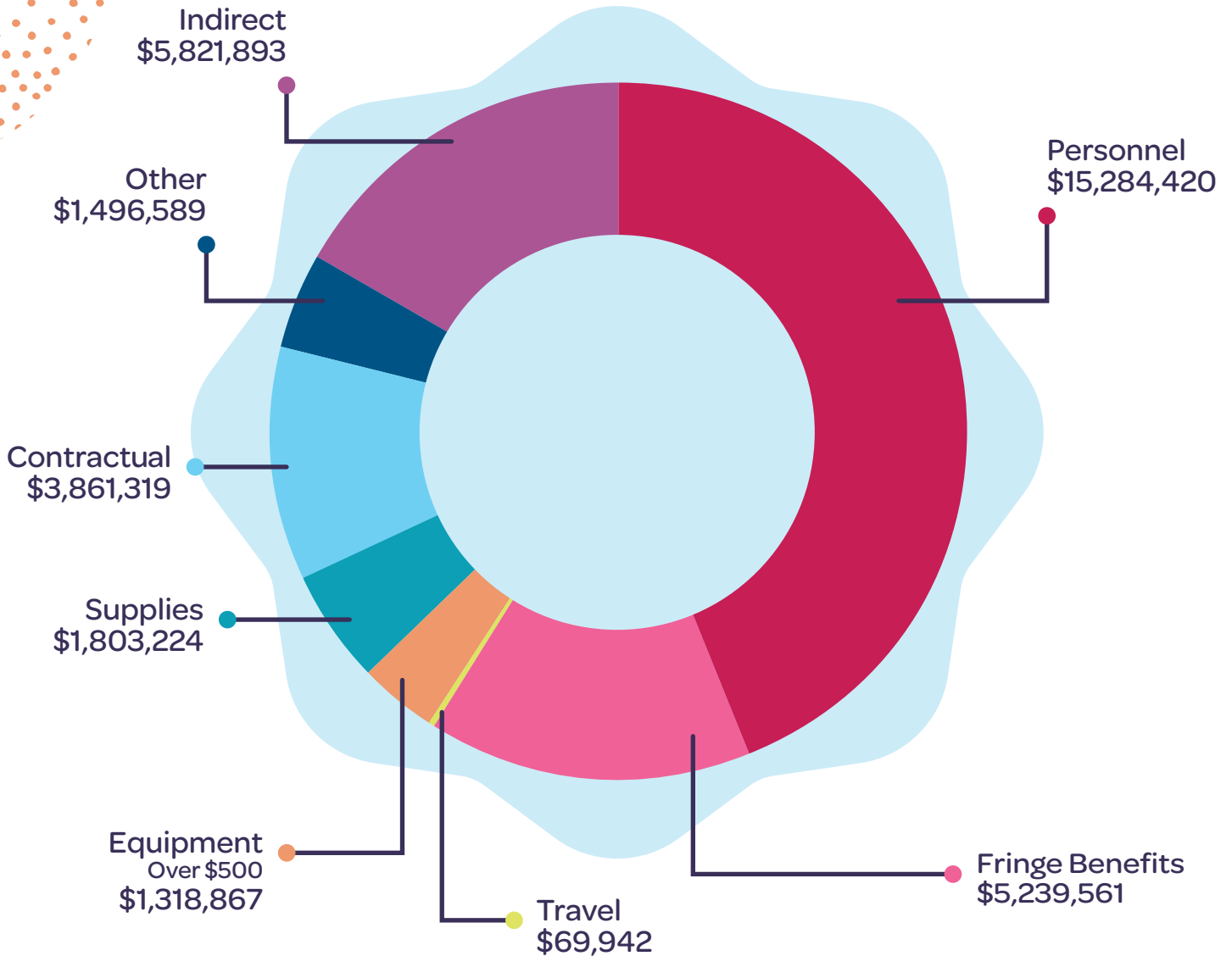
Ambassadors

Laura Puente, Bluegrass Community & Technical College











FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Summary of Expenses All Head Start Programs FY 2023-2024






FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Proposed Budget All Head Start Programs FY 2023-2024

Personnel		\$16,699,484
Fringe Benefits		\$6,473,232
Travel		\$136,316
Equipment Over \$500		\$391,402
Supplies		\$2,681,966
Contractual		\$3,970,408
Construction		\$1,695,383
Other		\$5,611,380
Indirect		\$4,085,508
Total		\$41,745,079

Summary of Revenue All Head Start Programs FY 2023-2024

Federal Funds		\$38,597,641
In-Kind/Non-Federal Match		\$3,453,880
Total		\$42,051,521

Results of the Most Recent Financial Audit

The Council is subject to the Single Agency Audit Act and is audited on an annual basis. The auditor's report presents an unmodified opinion on the consolidated financial statements of the Council and its Affiliates. The independent auditor's published opinion states that, in the most recent completed audit for the fiscal year 2023-2024, the Council was found to be in compliance in all material respects with the requirements applicable to each of the Council's major programs.

2023-2024 Monitoring Events

Community Action Council's most recent monitoring report, dated November 2024, determined that original findings have been closed, requiring no further action.



Annia Royo
Assistant Director of
Child Development



Celeste Presley
Head Start Project Manager



Elizabeth Carter
Office Manager



Jason Hale
Associate Director of
Child Development



Jessica Coffie
Director of Child
Development



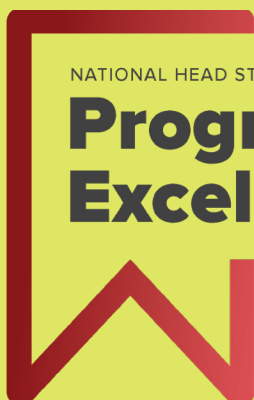
Jonas Cooper
Assistant Director of
Child Development



Kesha Richardson
ERSEA Director



Laura Sheffield
Associate Director of
Child Development



NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION'S

**Program of
Excellence**



Learn More About Us!