



# Head Start and Early Head Start Annual Report 2019-2020



**FSW**  
FAMILY SERVICES  
OF  
WESTCHESTER

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## MESSAGE FROM FSW'S PRESIDENT & CEO, POLLY KERRIGAN

I am incredibly honored to lead and serve Family Services of Westchester and to continue the work that we have done to advance FSW's impact throughout Westchester County, NY since 1954.

When I joined the agency back in 2000, FSW had a budget of \$8 million. Since then—thanks to our insightful board, our creative and hard-working staff, our dedicated community partners, and the determined efforts of former Presidents Tom Sanders and Susan B. Wayne—we have grown in breadth and depth to our current budget of just over \$23 million.

In March 2020, we were catapulted into reimagining our programs due to the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Governor Cuomo mandated a Stay-at-Home order and “social distancing” was imposed, forcing a shift in our program operations. We embraced the opportunity and designed innovative new program models that adhered to the social distancing mandate while simultaneously providing essential services and helping individuals, children, and families with unprecedented needs.

### Building Stronger Community Ties

As President and CEO, I will continue to devote my time and energy to advancing the programs and services that truly make a difference in the lives of the people we serve.

Working with Lisa Copeland, FSW's Board Chair, and the entire Board of Directors, I am dedicated to strengthening community ties. I'm also fortunate to know first-hand how much energy and vision our FSW staff brings to crafting their inspired responses to our community's needs, especially in a pandemic.

### Resiliency to Combat the Effects of Trauma

I am especially excited about our use of Trauma Systems Therapy (TST) and our focus on resiliency, which is an individual's capacity to overcome adverse childhood experiences, two innovative approaches to mental health that FSW has refined and expanded over the past decade. As many clinicians know, TST is an evidenced-based model for treating children and adolescents who have experienced trauma such as abuse, neglect or the toxic stress associated with poverty. We are proud to offer this effective intervention model to our clients.

### Holistic Care to Reduce Health Care Costs

Our staff has been trained to use the TST approach with children, and we are now applying the model in FSW's mental health clinics.



***“In these critical times, we  
must be innovative but  
resilient in our approaches to  
meeting the unmet needs of  
so many of our vulnerable  
Westchester residents.”***



I'm also inspired by our efforts in raising public awareness regarding the impact of trauma on our population as well as the capacity of an individual to overcome traumatic events coupled with resiliency. Building resiliency is a promising mental health strategy with broad applications for a range of issues. In addition to treating trauma and promoting resiliency in children, we can also extend some of the model's techniques to helping other vulnerable populations such as older adults, veterans, immigrants and the formerly incarcerated.

### **Turning Toward the Future**

While we have seen encouraging initial success, we know there is still more to be done. As an organization with more than 65 years of history, serving over 30,000 annually, with 50+ programs and services, FSW must always remain focused progressing forward. This is made possible with your help and support.

During these critical times, we must be innovative, but resilient in our approaches to addressing the unmet needs of so many of our vulnerable Westchester residents. For this reason, I will be working closely with our various stakeholders to build and expand FSW's presence in Westchester County. We know that the mental health and social services sector is radically changing its service delivery models and we must be ready to embrace those changes.

### **Thank You for Your Support**

As we embark on this new journey together, please be assured that as we move forward, FSW will continue to be a national leader in the provision of holistic approaches to care. We are also thrilled to announce that in the upcoming months we will have several opportunities for you to get involved and participate with us.

Thank you for your support and please feel free to contact me at [pkerrigan@fsw.org](mailto:pkerrigan@fsw.org) to share your thoughts and ideas as we continue making a difference in our community.

Regards,



Polly Kerrigan, LCSW  
President and CEO



## **MESSAGE FROM FSW'S DIRECTOR OF EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS, CAROL ROBINSON, MSED**

It is both an honor and a privilege to lead Family Services of Westchester's Early Head Start and Head Start programs as the Director of Early Education Programs. This past year has been met with both unexpected challenges and perseverance as we worked to minimize the life altering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 virus altered our program's structure and design, as well as our administrative practices and procedures, yet strengthened our relationships with our community partners and stakeholders. On behalf of the senior leadership team of Family Services of Westchester, we express sincere gratitude to our teachers, policy council, support staff, governing body, and community partners. Without you and your flexibility and ability to come together, we would not have been able to adapt to the unforeseen challenges of a living and working through a global pandemic.

### **Quality Early Childhood Education from The Start**

The first five years of a child's life are their most important. These early childhood years shape the many facets of that child's development, throughout their preschool years and beyond. Guiding children through these formative and exciting phases in their lives, is a journey in which we collaborate and partner with the families we serve.

Through our administration of quality early education services, we are fortunate to serve a diverse group of children and families. Our children and families represent a variety of cultural backgrounds, speak a multitude of languages, and live throughout the City of White Plains. Their individual life experiences inspire a culturally rich program climate. From our dual language classrooms to our parent involvement efforts and activities, we maintain mutual respect between our program and our children and families. Our policy council works in conjunction with program administration to keep the parent prospective at the table and continuously works towards stronger partnerships between the programs and the families served, past, present, and future.

### **Self-Care: The Cornerstone of Early Education**

Every year, prior to the start of the new school year, FSW Early Head Start and Head Start program staff, gather at our in-service training. This year's in-service was done virtually via a video conferencing platform. We continued last year's theme, *Maintaining Positive Program Climates for All*. Staff and stakeholders were invited to participate in virtual wellness and fitness activities such as mental health workshops and yoga.

Positive program climates are the cornerstone of quality early childhood education, especially during a public health crisis. Positive climates promote growth, foster stronger bonds within the program's ecosystem, and aid in maintaining the mental health of all staff and stakeholders.

The 2019-2020 academic year proved to be one of our most challenging. With the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, we shifted our in-person learning model for our Head Start and Early Head Start programs to a remote learning model. Using this model, we adhered to state guidelines and were able to continue delivering quality early childhood education services to our children and families.

To further support our children and families, we partnered with the White Plains School District to create a first responder classroom to serve children of first responders to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our team faced these new challenges in stride and with grace. We continued to be guided by our team quote, “Coming together begins the journey; working together creates the markers of our progress; staying together charts our course toward success”.

Thank you for your support and please feel free to contact me at [carol.robinson@fsw.org](mailto:carol.robinson@fsw.org) to share your thoughts and ideas as we continue we continue making a difference in our community.



Regards,

Carol L. Robinson, MEd



## Board of Directors

2020-2021 FSW Board of Directors

**Chairperson:** Lisa Copeland

**Vice Chair:** Donna Prummell

**Vice Chair:** Jeff Smith

**Treasurer:** Douglas J. McClintock

**Secretary:** Alec Cecil

**President/CEO:** Polly Kerrigan

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Leah Sills

Brandon Steiner

Nicholas Wolff



## **Program Overview**

Family Services of Westchester (FSW) received authorization from the Administration of Children and Families (Department of Health and Human Services) to provide Early Head Start/Head Start (EHS/HS) for White Plains, New York as of January 5, 2004. Since then, FSW's early education programs have expanded to six (6) sites. These sites include:

### **THE ROCHAMBEAU CENTER**

The Rochambeau center is located on the lower level of Rochambeau Alternative High School. This site houses seven (7) classrooms of FSW's Head Start Program. In addition to Head Start, we house two other programs here: Universal Pre-Kindergarten and the Prime-Time special education integrated preschool program.

### **THE SLATER CENTER**

The Slater Center is located in a White Plains community center named after the Reverend Thomas H. Slater and is directly across the street from Bethel Church. The center serves many of the residents from Brookfield Commons Public Housing (formerly Winbrook Public Housing) and the surrounding neighborhoods.

### **THE BETHEL CENTER**

The Bethel Center resides in a church located directly across the street from the Slater Community Center and next door to the Winbrook Public Housing building.

### **THE NORTH STREET CENTER**

The North Street Center is located on the grounds of First Baptist Church. The child care program is housed in a separate facility. At this location, we house two Early Head Start classrooms and share the space with our Prime-Time Preschool program.

### **THE EASTVIEW CENTER**

The Eastview Center is located in the Eastview Middle School which houses three (3) FSW Head Start classrooms.

### **THE PRIMETIME CENTER**

Our PrimeTime program is a special education program for preschoolers that offers a comprehensive range of evaluation and special education services. Prime Time serves children 3 to 5 years old. Our leadership staff work closely with Prime Time to identify and develop action plans to assist children who are experiencing challenges. The Head Start team works together in a coordinated approach to support children and families throughout the evaluation process.

## Year in Review 2019-2020

### FSW Head Start Goes to Washington

In January 2019, FSW Director of Early Education Programs, Carol Robinson, and FSW Early Education Manager, Danielle Jernigan, attended the National Head Start Conference in Washington D.C. During the conference, they met with representatives from Head Start programs from across the country. The pair attended workshops and forums to keep abreast with the ever-changing Head Start policy and procedures landscape. They also participated in the National Head Start Lobby Day, where they met with elected officials including, U.S. House of Representative, Congresswoman Nita Lowey (pictured below).



### Changes to Our Program Design

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our program design shifted from an early childhood center-based learning model to an early childhood remote learning model. Family engagement and outreach activities were conducted by virtual contact. Families were assisted by various staff members and were provided technical assistance so that they could access the virtual program activities. Family advocates and teachers hand-delivered packages of educational materials and various food products. Drive-through outposts for distribution of diapers, educational materials, including technology devices were created for parents. The goal was to ensure that families receive necessary supplies and equipment so that they would continue feel supported by our team. Policy council meetings were held through virtual platforms to provide stakeholders with updates and regarding changes related to t COVID-19.



## PROGRAM GOALS

	b. Measurable Objectives	c. Year One Progress/Outcomes	d. Challenges
<p>Goal 1:</p> <p>The overall goal of the Family Services of Westchester (FSW) Early Head Start and Head Start (EHS/HS) program is to provide research-based, developmentally appropriate education that represents diversity and ensures all EHS and HS children progress in all learning domains to meet the school readiness expectations for kindergarten.</p>	<p>Objectives 1A:</p> <p>FSW will implement Word Start - a literacy curriculum for dual language learners that uses nursery rhymes to promote early literacy in a community partnership with Word Start Foundation.</p> <p>Parents will be engaged in Word Start after school activities - dual language literacy development using illustrated nursery rhymes and coloring.</p>	<p>Year One Progress/Outcomes 1A:</p> <p>The Word Start Curriculum was implemented. Teachers received training and technology such as, laptops, books, pre-recorded music, and visual aids to facilitate curriculum lessons and activities.</p> <p>Parents received training, as well as at home instructional packages and other resources, to be able to assist their children's dual language literacy development at home, in-person and during remote learning.</p>	<p>Challenges 1A:</p> <p>Due to COVID-19 and the mandated New York State and Westchester County stay-at-home orders, the Word Start Curriculum delivery had to be altered to an at-home remote learning model as the only means of instruction via the curriculum's mobile app.</p> <p>Some parents experienced difficulties assisting their child with the at-home remote learning model due to lack of internet connectivity and varied levels of aptitude and comfort with new technologies.</p>

	FSW will implement the CAPE - Community Adventure Play Experience in partnership with Sarah Lawrence College to prepare 100% (staff trained for implementation in June 2019).	Teachers received the CAPE - Community Adventure Play Experience in partnership with Sarah Lawrence College. Collections of recyclable materials were collected during Fall 2019 for scheduled Spring 2020 CAPEs.	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and New York State and Westchester County stay at home orders, all CAPEs were cancelled due to high case numbers and hospitalizations related to the COVID-19 outbreak and inability to maintain social distancing during the activities.
Goal 2: Use Technology to develop an efficient record system that increases productivity.	<p>Objectives 2:</p> <p>Family Advocates, teachers and staff collecting data for intake forms will have access to laptops and computers and will have training to use COPA, TSG, and HELP.</p> <p>100% of all intake forms for enrolled children will be entered into COPA.</p> <p>FSW's EHS/HS data to be communicated through COPA to the various managers</p>	<p>Year One Progress/Outcomes 2:</p> <p>Family advocates, teachers, and staff received laptops and COPA, TSG, and HELP access to facilitate the collection of data for intake forms.</p> <p>The goal was met and 100% of all intake forms were entered into COPA.</p> <p>The goal was met. Data pertaining to the children, their families and health records were placed in COPA was easily accessible to the various managers.</p>	<p>Challenges 2:</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, teachers and staff worked remotely. Teachers and staff reported difficulties with internet connectivity while working from home.</p> <p>Staff reported the data entry was time consuming and additional help could lead to faster entries.</p> <p>None to report.</p>

	<p>Staff collecting intake documents have access to a desktop computer.</p> <p>Family Advocates and staff collecting data will be given Laptops as needed.</p>	<p>All staff collecting intake documents had access to a desktop computer.</p> <p>Family Advocates and staff were given laptops as needed.</p>	<p>Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NYS &amp; and Westchester stay-at-home orders, staff had limited access to a desktop computer at work sites.</p> <p>Staff were given laptops for them to work at home.</p>
<p>Goal 3: Use Data to Influence Planning and Impact Learning</p>	<p>Objectives 3: 100% of student assessment data is entered in COPA, TSG and HELP by Teachers and support staff.</p> <p>Education manager will monitor assessment data &amp; help teacher develop an education plan for each child.</p>	<p>Year One Progress/Outcomes 3: 100% of student assessment data for fall 2019 was entered in COPA, TSG, HELP by teachers and support staff</p> <p>Education manager monitored assessment data and assisted teachers to develop education plans during in-person model of instruction. Due to COVID-19, education plans were altered to fit the remote learning model of instruction and to include the development of remote learning activities for each child.</p>	<p>Challenges 3: Due to COVID-19 pandemic, no assessment data was entered for spring 2020 due to a switch to a remote learning model of instruction and lack of in-person observations due to stay at home orders.</p> <p>Due to NYS rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, there was an adjustment period in the transition from in-person learning to a remote learning model.</p>

	<p>Lesson plans will be developed to help each child achieve learning goals.</p> <p>Education Staff will use assessment data in lesson planning for individual children while incorporating family interests and goals.</p>	<p>Lesson plans were developed to help children achieve learning goals.</p> <p>Education staff begun developing lesson plans for individual children using assessment data, family interests and goals.</p>	<p>Lesson plans were initially developed for in person learning experiences. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, lesson plans had to be altered to remote learning experiences and to include materials easily accessible in the home.</p> <p>Due the change from in-person instruction to the remote learning model of instruction, family interests and goals, shifted from individualized lesson plans to adjusting their children to remote learning.</p>
<p>Goal 4:</p> <p>Management team will use technology to monitor and update records to maintain compliance</p>	<p>Objective 4:</p> <p>Managers will review COPA reports to determine accuracy.</p>	<p>Year One Progress/Outcomes 4:</p> <p>The management team used technology to monitor and update records in COPA to maintain compliance and accuracy of input and files.</p>	<p>Challenges 4:</p> <p>Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, updates were less frequent due to a priority shift to bring all sites online for remote learning.</p>
<p>Goal 5:</p> <p>Support Family Engagement and its Impact on School Readiness</p>	<p>Objective 5A:</p> <p>All centers will schedule a "Back to School Night" for Parents.</p>	<p>Year One Progress/Outcomes 5A:</p> <p>This goal was met. All centers scheduled and had their "Back to School Night" for parents.</p>	<p>Challenges 5A:</p> <p>Due to scheduling conflicts, 35% of parents were unable to attend.</p>



	<p>Objective 5B: Each teacher will plan a minimum of 1 family engagement activity that supports school readiness monthly.</p>	<p>Year One Progress/Outcomes 5B: This goal was met. Teachers used social and emotional themes for their monthly family engagement activities that supported school readiness.</p>	<p>Challenges 5B: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers had to alter in-person activities to activities that can be done at home with materials easily accessible in the home.</p>
	<p>Objective 5C: Teachers collaborate with Parents and Family Advocate to plan and discuss each individual family's goals and interest connected to school readiness, at the beginning of the school year and track progress quarterly.</p>	<p>Year One Progress/Outcomes 5C: At the beginning of the school year (fall 2019), goals were established between parents, teachers, and family advocates.</p>	<p>Challenges 5C: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, tracking of quarterly progress of school readiness was suspended due to lack of in-person instruction, observation and classroom interactions between children and staff.</p>
	<p>Objective 5D: Survey parents and identify parents preferred way of family engagement in child and school activities.</p>	<p>Year One Progress/Outcomes 5D: Parents were surveyed during the intake process by family advocates.</p>	<p>Challenges 5D: Due to COVID-19, in-person activities were suspended. Parent engagement was limited to remote activities, such as, supporting children with curriculum themes.</p>

<p>Goal 6: Provide staff development to improve staff capacity to meet the needs of children and families</p>	<p>Objective 6A: Staff training on cultural diversity will be conducted twice a year at pre-service and mid-year.</p> <p>Objective 6B: The Mental Health Specialist will train teachers in using the Second Step Curriculum and guide in classroom implementation.</p>	<p>Year One Progress/Outcomes 6A: All Early Head Start and Head Start staff were trained on cultural diversity during mid-year in December 2019. Additional training was also provided in February 2020.</p> <p>Year One Progress/Outcomes 6B: The Mental Health Specialist trained teachers in using the Second Step Curriculum and guided them with the implementation of the curriculum in the classroom.</p>	<p>Challenges 6A: Due to scheduling conflicts, we were unable to book the diversity trainer in August 2019 for our pre-service.</p> <p>Challenges 6B: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to remote learning, the classroom implementation of the curriculum was suspended.</p>
<p>Goal 6: Support parent wellness and mindful parenting</p>	<p>Objective 6: Mental Health Specialist, Health Manager, Family Engagement Manager and Education Manager will present parent wellness/mindfulness workshops and activities that</p>	<p>Year One Progress/Outcomes 6: Parent workshops on the topics of wellness/mindfulness were held during in-person parent committee meetings. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, parent workshops were moved online and presented on virtual meeting platforms.</p>	<p>Challenges 6: Due to scheduling conflicts, some parents were not able to attend in-person meetings. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and unreliable and limited internet connectivity, some parents were</p>

	will further reinforce the “Second Step Social and Emotional curriculum activities from the classroom implementation within the family.		unable to attend entire virtual parent meetings.
Goal 7: Support child and family wellness to promote fitness	Objective 7: Mental Health Specialist in collaboration with health manager to provide parents with Nutrition Training and healthy lifestyle/fitness activities	Year One Progress/Outcomes 7: The “I’m Moving & I’m Learning” curriculum was implemented. Information and at-home activity kits were sent home at its inception. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the curriculum moved from in-person instruction to online instruction.	Challenges 7: Due to the change in environment, instruction times were shortened to assist children and parents in the transition from in-person to remote learning.
Goal 8: Support Child Wellness	Objective 8: Will continue to implement the Second Step curriculum that promotes emotional self-regulation. Emotional well-being activities are incorporated in all daily routines.	Year One Progress/Outcomes 8: The Second Step Curriculum was implemented in the yearly curriculum as a part of daily classroom routines.	Challenges 8: Due to COVID-19, the delivery of the Second Step Curriculum moved from an in-person learning model to a remote learning model. The instruction times were shortened to assist children and families with the transition between the models.  Due to COVID-19, the delivery of the “I am Moving, I am Learning” moved

	<p>“I am Moving, I am Learning” curriculum will be implemented in classroom curriculums and routines.</p>	<p>“I am Moving, I am Learning” curriculum was implemented in the yearly curriculum as a part of daily classroom routines. Staff received training on the curriculum.</p>	<p>from an in-person learning model to a remote learning model. The instruction times were shortened to assist children and families with the transition between the models.</p>
	<p>Incentivize attendance at “Eat Smart, Head Start” regular classes enrichment program for parents conducted by Cornell Cooperative extension.</p>	<p>The “Eat Smart, Head Start” initiative was organized and scheduled to run in Spring 2020. Due to COVID-19, partner groups were unable to run the scheduled program.</p>	<p>Due to COVID-19, in-person initiatives were suspended for health and safety purposes.</p>
	<p>Expand the “Eat Well, Play Hard” first year piloted initiative from two centers (Slater &amp; Bethel) to all 5 centers to educate and encourage children, parents, and staff about the importance of eating more fruits and vegetables.</p>	<p>The “Eat Well, Play Hard” initiative was organized and scheduled to run in Spring 2020 due to added seasonal availability of fresh fruits &amp; vegetables and warmer temperatures to encourage outside play. Due to COVID-19, we were unable to run the scheduled program.</p>	<p>Due to COVID-19, in-person initiatives were suspended for health and safety purposes.</p>

Goal 9: Staff Wellness	Objective 9: The Mental Health Specialist and the Health Manager will plan and conduct monthly staff wellness activities, including a mindfulness workshop, relaxation techniques, self-care activities, etc.	Year One Progress/Outcomes 9: Our Mental Health Specialist and Health Manager planned and conducted monthly staff wellness activities, including a mindfulness workshop, relaxation techniques, and self-care activities. Due to COVID-19, workshops and activities were held via virtual conferencing platforms.	Challenges 6: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and unreliable and limited internet connectivity, some staff members were unable to attend entire virtual staff meetings.
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## **SERVICE AND RECRUITMENT AREA**

Family Services of Westchester (FSW) received authorization from the Administration of Children and Families (Department of Health and Human Services) to provide Early Head Start/Head Start (EHS/HS) in White Plains, New York as of January 5, 2004. During 2019- 2020, Family Services of Westchester's Head Start and Early Head Start program was funded to serve 194 income-eligible preschool-aged children and families and 40 income-eligible expectant mothers, infants, toddlers and children and their families residing in White Plains, NY in zip codes 10601, 10603, 10604, 10605, 10606 and children with disabilities from 21 local school districts.

FSW's EHS/HS works closely with the White Plains community, taking the lead in assessing and meeting the needs of HS/EHS children and their families. Located in five (5) New York State Office of Children and Family Services (NYSOCFS) licensed childcare centers in White Plains, NY, and of all our programs provide the same level of high quality and standards. Below are descriptions of the various programs FSW provides to children and their families.

Our service area has expanded. Specifically, we expanded our special needs program at Prime-Time Center into our Center for All Ages building. This center houses 2 self-contained classrooms with the capacity for 12:1:2. These additional classes are not funded by Head Start and contribute to our non-federal share. There has been no change to the recruitment area.

### **Evidence of Need in Service Areas**

Parents and families in the above-mentioned zip codes are often priced out of quality early childhood education due to the high cost. The socio-economic status of the parents and families limit the options for quality early childhood education within the area. The families we serve qualify for local and state social services via their household incomes and live below the poverty line. Our program meets this important need, allowing families access to quality and affordable options. Our program supports our hard-working families while they continue to further their own education and career goals.

### **Partnership Slots**

FSW currently partners with the White Plains School District (WPCSD). This year, the WPCSD awarded us 100 half -day Universal Pre-K (UPK) slots. For the upcoming grant cycle, the WPCSD has agreed to continue to fund the 100 half-day \ UPK slots.

### **Needs of Children and Families**

Most of the families we serve speak a language other than English. Out of the 234 EHS/HS children, approximately 75% of them have a home language other than English. Understanding that this can be a barrier to academic achievement and proliferate economic inequality, one of the recommendations from this year's Community Assessment included finding ways to improve the limited English proficiency of our children and families. Our program prioritized professional development to build expertise of HS/EHS teachers to guide dual language

development. Another recommendation was to identify partners to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) and high school equivalency services to parents of children enrolled in our program.

A **second need** is to increase access to high quality, affordable childcare, especially for infants and toddlers. One of the suggestions is to try to expand the center-based program to full day, year-round. It was also recommended to partner with the Department of Social Services to receive contracted subsidy dollars, but the application requires that the child be a US citizen, documentation of income (many families get paid in cash), place of residence, and expenses. For undocumented families, these requirements, along with language barriers, will prevent their application for assistance.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, parents expressed a shift in their needs regarding high quality childcare. Parents expressed the need for additional information and guidance to assist their children in the transition, from in-person instruction to a remote learning model of instruction in a home.

A **third need** is for the expansion of mental health services for young children as there is presently limited capacity. Through the Community Assessment, it was revealed that child mental health utilization rates among Medicaid recipients in the county has risen. We identified the need for Trauma Screening of children. Our children, in general, experience trauma due to lack of stable housing, domestic violence, food insecurity and the uncertainties associated with the immigration status of parents. The trauma screening needs of children and families began to be addressed strategically in the fall of 2020, with funding provided by the Head Start Quality Improvement Funding.

A **fourth need** is that children in Head Start programs are disproportionately affected by disabilities, and Early Intervention services in the county are not effective for all participants. In Westchester County, 5.8% of children have a disability and only 2.1% of children under age three are served by the Early Intervention Program; 22.7% of Head Start children have an Individualized Education Plan and 13.6% of Early Head Start children have an Individualized Family Service Plan. There is a wide-ranging need for bi-lingual therapists and unfortunately there are a limited number of them in Westchester County.

A **fifth need** is the shortage of public housing options forcing low-income families to pay very high rent or choose over-crowded housing. Finally, the **sixth need** is nutrition education and services related to healthy lifestyles and opportunities for physical activity. As the obesity rate continues to increase, so does the need for healthy, affordable nutrition options to be made available.

## Program Option(s) and Funded Enrollment Slots

This year, the WPCSD awarded us 100 half -day UPK slots and these slots were combined with Head Start to meet our community match. For 2019-2020 there was no update or change to the chosen program option(s) and funded enrollment slots.

## Centers and Facilities

FSW's center-based EHS & HS programs for the 2019-2020 year are offered at five sites. In addition, we provide 20 EHS home-based slots. We added an additional Primetime site at CFAA. This site facilitates HS children transitioning to special needs services. This program is a part of our non-federal share.

Program Hours/Day Months/Year	SITE	# OF CHILDREN	TOTAL
EHS 6:30-Hour/12-Month Center-Based	North Street	Infants: 6 Toddlers: 14 (2 classes)	20
HS 6-Hour/10-Month	Rochambeau	112	112
HS 6-Hour/10-Month	Bethel	17	17
HS 6-Hour/10 Month	Slater	17	17
HS 6-Hour/10 Month	Eastview	48	48
		<b>Total HS</b>	194
		<b>Total EHS</b>	40
		<b>Total EHS/HS</b>	234

## COVID-19 Response Program Structure

As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and stay-at-home orders in New York State, the following changes to the program structure were made:

*Duration of the 2019-2020 School Year: Shift to Remote Learning Model*

For the duration of the 2019-2020 school year, all classes shifted from an in-person learning model to a remote learning model to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 and adhere to local stay-at-home orders, and there were closures of in-person learning facilities. All programs were shifted to a remote learning model. Technology for remote



learning in the form of tablets, were provided to families who expressed a need for devices. Materials for curriculum activities for remote learning were provided to all families.

Teachers and family advocates worked together and assessed the needs of the children and families to ensure that all were able to participate in remote learning. Families that needed electronic devices were identified by family advocates and teachers and tablets were made available to them. Thirty tablets were distributed to families, but many still experienced difficulties accessing reliable internet connections at home. The White Plains School District responded by providing families with wireless internet access.

For the 2019-2020 school year, Family Services of Westchester's center-based EHS and HS programs were offered an additional site, bringing our site total to six. Our 6<sup>th</sup> site provided services for children with special needs and the program is funded by the school districts throughout Westchester County. Our Head Start children who are observed by the teacher and mental health specialist have benefitted from the intervention of an interdisciplinary team.

#### *Staff Training*

Staff received training from the health manager and mental health specialist regarding health and safety measures during COVID-19 to assist families with maintaining their physical, emotional, and mental health during the time of remote learning. Staff meetings and development trainings were shifted to a remote model and held using various virtual conferencing platforms.

#### *Community Outreach*

We worked closely with families to create a strong partnership that is holistic and based on the goals and needs of the families to ensure that they are connected to the appropriate resources. Teachers and Family Advocates planned different types of activities. Workshop topics were planned for families, including, Immigration, Poison Control, Kindergarten transitions, EHS/HS transitions, Domestic Violence, Tantrums, Positive Parenting and Mindfulness, and Stress. Unfortunately, parent participation in different workshops, meetings, and activities decreased over the year. A plan was developed to survey families at the beginning of each year, to learn more about the best days, times, and topics of interest. The parent curriculum that is being used is The Nurturing Parenting Program. At each center, parents attend monthly group sessions, run by the Mental Health Specialists that are geared towards improving parenting practices. Through the generous support of the Junior League of Central Westchester, The Best Start Literacy Program has successfully continued through many years. The volunteers from the Junior League bring books and activities to the classrooms and at the end of each session, children can take books home to build their own home library.

Community outreach was provided by family advocates, classroom teachers and other staff members. Food boxes and diapers were provided to families who had expressed need for those items. Additionally, supermarket gift cards valued at \$250 were distributed to families who expressed need, courtesy of the FSW Junior Board.



### *Parent Engagement*

During the pandemic, we received donations from our community partner Bundles of Joy, in the form of 50 new men's shirts, and 40 bags of children's learning materials and clothing. The shirts were distributed to the fathers of the children enrolled in our EHS center based and home-based programs. The bags of children's learning materials and clothing were all distributed to EHS home-based and center-based families.

### *Early Head Start Socializations*

Socializations were held remotely through various video conferencing platforms. These virtual socializations followed the same in-person socialization routine. Parents were asked for their input regarding future virtual socializations.

### *Parent/ Teacher Conferences*

Parent teacher conferences were held virtually using various video conferencing platforms.



#### *Remote Learning During Summer 2020*

Our summer program ran from July 6, 2020 to August 14, 2020. Remote classes for 4-year olds were held to promote school readiness for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year. Furthermore, children and families were provided with remote mental health support services via our mental health specialist.

## Summer Program

HS 6-Hour/12-Month	Rochambeau	17	17
HS 6-Hour/12-Month- Summer Kindergarten Readiness due to COVID-19	Rochambeau	32	32
<i>Total Summer Program Enrollment</i>	<i>Rochambeau</i>		49

In response to the pandemic we provided a remote learning summer program designed to promote kindergarten readiness. We had an enrollment of 32 children for COVID-19 response and 17 children that were funded through our annual budget.

## Plans for Reopening for School Year 2020-2021

Beginning on September 8, 2020, EHS/HS began the transition from remote learning to in-person classes.

### *First Two Weeks of Classes*

For the first 2 weeks of classes in September, classes will be held in-person 3 days a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) to transition children and parents back to the routines of in-person programming. Tuesdays and Thursdays will allow teachers to assess and evaluate the classroom structure and reorganize materials based on the individual needs of the children.

*Third Week of Classes* will return to 5 days of in-person programming to accommodate parents who are working inside (remote work) or outside of the home. Classes will be run during a split schedule of morning and afternoon classes to maintain social distancing. The structure is temporary and flexible, due to the nature of the pandemic and is subject to change.

*Remote Option* - Parents will be offered the option of remote learning for their children. Through video conferencing platforms, children attending remotely will be incorporated in the classroom activities with their peers. All Early Head Start and Head Start children will have access to a program called “SeeSaw” that will facilitate distant learning. If we must suspend in-person classes, we will be fully equipped to service children and families remotely.

## Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance

Based on the Community Assessment, we have reached out to our community partners to help with the recruitment of the under-served population. To actively locate, recruit, and enroll vulnerable children, including children with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care, we communicate and partner with a local homeless shelter, the Early Childhood Parent Child Program at the Westchester Jewish Community Services,

Department of Social Services, the Family Justice Center, the Child Care Council of Westchester, and the White Plains Public Library. These agencies refer families with whom they come into contact, and who they determine may be eligible for Early Head Start and Head Start services. The importance of good attendance will continue to be emphasized to our families. Even though we maintained an overall rate of 88% attendance, we would like to set our goal to 95%.

Our in-house family advocates recruit children and families at local community events and follow up with referrals received from the Slater Center and other partner agencies. During the pandemic, our family advocates visited the Westchester County Department of Social Services and the Coachman Homeless Center to identify and assist families with children in need of Early Head Start and Head Start.

Family Services of Westchester actively recruit parents throughout the year and maintains a waiting list of interested parents and families. Our enrollment process is as follows:

- Parents fill out our pre-application.
- Based on the information provided on the pre-application, our selection points system criteria is used to determine parent/child eligibility for either Early Head Start or Head Start placement, which is based on federal guidelines, including the age of the child.
- After completion of the selection criteria points system, parents are notified of their eligibility and enrollment status of their child.
- Once eligibility has been determined, parents meet with an on-site family advocate and health manager to complete the enrollment process, which includes the gathering of documents needed for and related to enrollment.

## **Education and Child Development**

While there are no changes in the EHS/HS program, the assessment for all home-based children will change to the Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP) assessment. Even though the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment works well with the center-based children, we found that for the home-based children, it does not enable parents to play an active role in the assessment process. The HELP is a comprehensive, continuous, family-centered curriculum-based assessment process for infants and toddlers (ages 0-3) and their families. It is used for creating goals and tailoring developmentally-appropriate interventions to meet the specific needs of children.

Staff continue receiving training on the planned language approach to further support DLL children to increase their English language proficiency before entering kindergarten. Training will take place at our pre-service training with the support of our Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Specialist. As a follow-up with our T/TA specialist we will have an Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) training for all EHS/HS staff. The goal is to support our teachers with effective goals that will align with each family. We encourage and support our staff by providing the framework and using ELOF as an effective teaching strategy. As an additional follow-up, our coach, Ms. Cynthia Salinas-Roberts, will support teachers with effective teaching practices. The teachers chosen will work on strategizing and implementing goals. The PBC (Practical Based Coaching) involves our site coordinators/directors, education manager and our selected teachers. We support teachers with a needs assessment, observation, and follow-up for effective coaching.

To better support parents in their involvement with their child's education, we piloted a program known as the Parent Project, in which families who were strongly engaged and those who were not as engaged, were both identified. In response to our findings, a teacher and a Family Advocate visited the family's home and worked together on identifying a school readiness project based on the child and family's interest. The project could not happen last year due to the pandemic, but we are assessing the possibility of bringing back the project this year with an increased number of families participating.

We implemented WordStart Early Literacy Foundation for families and ran workshops in using nursery rhymes and music. Parents and Teachers attended these workshops. Teachers also received WordStart materials to distribute to parents so that they could incorporate the activities at home.

Through a partnership with Sarah Lawrence College we offered the program, Community Adventure Play Experiences (CAPE) for children and families. Staff were trained in facilitating CAPE with the children at our June 2019. Children engaged their imaginations, developed initiative, collaborated and problem-solved using recycled materials from their own communities."

**Outcomes report for the school year 2019-2020:**

**1-Year-Old Cohort Assessment Results**

Areas of Development	FALL 2019	WINTER 2020	SPRING 2020
Social-Emotional	30% of children either met or exceeded expectations	100% of children met or exceeded expectations	Due to COVID-19, individual assessments could not be completed due to the suspension of in person classes and observations.
Physical	40% of children either met or exceeded expectations	60% of children met or exceeded expectations	Due to COVID-19, individual assessments could not be completed due to the suspension of in person classes and observations.
Language	25% of children either met or exceeded expectations	40% of children met or exceeded expectations	Due to COVID-19, individual assessments could not be completed due to the suspension of in person classes and observations.
Cognitive	40% of children either met or exceeded expectations	50% of children met or exceeded expectations	Due to COVID-19, individual assessments could not be completed due to the suspension of in person classes and observations.

## 2-Year-Old Cohort Assessment Results

Areas of Development	FALL 2019	WINTER 2020	SPRING 2020
Social-Emotional	25% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	75% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	Due to COVID-19, individual assessments could not be completed due to the suspension of in person classes and observations.
Physical	40% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	78.95% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	Due to COVID-19, individual assessments could not be completed due to the suspension of in person classes and observations.
Language	45% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	55% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	Due to COVID-19, individual assessments could not be completed due to the suspension of in person classes and observations.
Cognitive	50% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	85% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	Due to COVID-19, individual assessments could not be completed due to the suspension of in person classes and observations.
Literacy	50% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	85% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	Due to COVID-19, individual assessments could not be completed due to the suspension of in person classes and observations.
Mathematics	25% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	35% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	Due to COVID-19, individual assessments could not be completed due to the suspension of in person classes and observations.



### 3-Year-Old Cohort Assessment Results

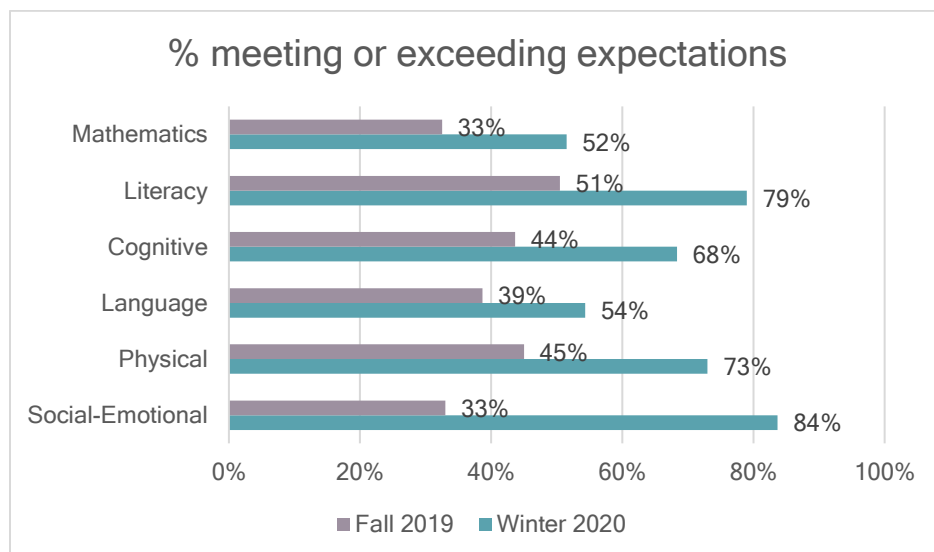
Areas of Development	FALL 2019	WINTER 2020	SPRING 2020
Social-Emotional	44.28% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	76.42% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	Due to COVID-19, individual assessments could not be completed due to the suspension of in person classes and observations.
Physical	55.19% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	80.19% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	Due to COVID-19, individual assessments could not be completed due to the suspension of in person classes and observations.
Language	45.85% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	68.40% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	Due to COVID-19, individual assessments could not be completed due to the suspension of in person classes and observations.
Cognitive	40.98% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	70.28% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	Due to COVID-19, individual assessments could not be completed due to the suspension of in person classes and observations.
Literacy	51.06% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	72.64% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	Due to COVID-19, individual assessments could not be completed due to the suspension of in person classes and observations.
Mathematics	39.65% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	67.93% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	Due to COVID-19, individual assessments could not be completed due to the suspension of in person classes and observations.

#### 4-Year-Old Cohort Assessment Results

Our 4-year olds are transitioning and preparing for kindergarten for the upcoming fall. Teachers are preparing our children for “Kindergarten Readiness” in all the six areas of learning development mentioned above. In Teaching Strategy Gold, we categorize their learning levels as either “Emerging” or “Accomplished”. All children learn differently and we strive for all to meet their goals. We continue to support our early learners to prepare them for the next exciting step of entering kindergarten.



#### Summary of Cohort Assessment Results



## **SCHOOL READINESS EFFORTS: HEAD START & SCHOOL READINESS**

School Readiness is a major national goal for all Head Start programs. Head Start expresses School Readiness as: “children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children.” They go on to clarify that it encompasses “children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life,” (Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, 2019).

School readiness at its foundation is a focus on the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of children. As early as two years old, literacy and mathematics development begin to be assessed. This is done to equip children with the tools necessary to be successful intellectually, emotionally, and socially as they move into their elementary education years and beyond.

At Family Services of Westchester, our early childhood programs adhere to Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework: Birth to Five. Supported by early childhood education research, the framework “describes the skills, behaviors, and knowledge that programs must foster in all children,” (Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, n.d.).

The framework is steered by 7 guiding principles that outlines Head Start’s stance on early childhood learning and teaching. The 7 principles are comprised of the following:

1. Each child is unique and can succeed.
2. Learning occurs within the context of relationships.
3. Families are children's first and most important caregivers, teachers, and advocates.
4. Children learn best when they are emotionally and physically safe and secure.
5. Areas of development are integrated, and children learn many concepts and skills at the same time.
6. Teaching must be intentional and focused on how children learn and grow.
7. Every child has diverse strengths rooted in their family's culture, background, language, and beliefs.

We incorporate these principles in our program’s policies and procedures (Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, n.d.). FSW values support Head Start’s goals in empowering and strengthening our community.

This report documents the development of children enrolled in FSW’s Early Head Start and Head Start programs during Fall 2019 to Spring 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to administer a school readiness report. Children who are 1-year-old, are assessed in the areas of social-emotional, physical development, language, and cognitive development. Children 2 to 5 years old, are assessed in the above-mentioned areas, as well as literacy and mathematics development.

To supplement our school readiness efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic and through our remote learning model, we implemented a supplemental program to provide instructional time that was lost during program closure and during the transition time between in-person and remote learning. Our program primarily focused on our cohort of children who were transitioning from our program into kindergarten, and the White Plains K-12 School district, with

whom we partner. Children with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) were also served by our summer supplemental program. Our program provided a learning environment that supported social and emotional learning which facilitates a successful transition to school. This was achieved in the classroom through consistent daily routines and provided logistical support to families by assisting them in obtaining and updating documentation needed for the transition.



## **SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

During program year of 2019-20 there were 50 children out of 194, or 26% of cumulative HS enrolled children, who were identified as preschoolers with a disability. Each of these children had an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Our program ensured the full participation of services and activities for enrolled children with disabilities. We followed each child's IEP and collaborated with parents to continue the program remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic and stay-at-home orders. Parents were able to provide updates or inquire about new or emerging behaviors with their child(ren) and kept teachers and other staff members updated with information about the child outside of the classroom to better aid instruction and the overall well-being of the child. Teachers followed IEP guidelines for classroom/remote learning lesson plans and activities which were geared toward differentiated instruction, which considers the various learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.) of the children enrolled.

### **Early Head Start**

During the Early Head Start program year, 2019-2020, 20% out of 40 enrolled children were identified with having a disability. Each of these children have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) through the County Department of Health Early Intervention services (EI). Teachers and the Head Start coordinators worked with families remotely.

## **TRANSITION**

### **Transitions to and from Early Head Start**

During the 2019-2020 school year, children in the center-based EHS/HS programs instituted a staggered schedule and the process has continued. Due to COVID-19, parents were contacted individually to discuss and make plans for the transition to the 2020-2021 school year.

### **Transitions from Head Start to Kindergarten**

Transitioning families and children to and from the program is an on-going process. At the beginning of each year, children in the center-based EHS/HS programs had a staggered start so that not all children attend on the same day. In the late fall, in conjunction with the WPCSD, informational sessions were held for all families who would have children entering kindergarten for the 2020-2021 school year. Parents and families learned about the choices of programs and schools in White Plains and the various school enrollment processes. Family Advocates assisted families to ensure that they were registered by the deadline, scheduled kindergarten tours, and scheduled and attended screenings. In early May, a transition meeting for all EHS families transitioning into Head Start was scheduled. This meeting gave families an opportunity to learn about the curriculum, family engagement, and health. Due to COVID-19, these meetings were conducted remotely.

### **Transitions between programs**

In early May, a meeting for all EHS families transitioning into Head Start was scheduled. This meeting gave families an opportunity to hear about the curriculum, family engagement, and complete health requirements. Due to COVID-19, parents were also contacted individually and remotely via a virtual meeting platform to discuss curriculum, family engagement and new and emerging health requirements.

### **Services to Enrolled Pregnant Women**

During the 2019-20 program year, we served three pregnant women. Our Health Manager facilitates access to ongoing care for enrolled pregnant women that do not have existing access to such care, through meetings between our expectant mothers and our family advocates, as well as through remote home visits. Bi-weekly meetings for children and parents in the EHS home-based model to help them socialize and gain information on topics pertinent to promoting good health, nutrition, child development, family planning, healthy marriages, dental care, etc. were conducted remotely. Informational topics such as the benefits of breast feeding, child development, building of self-esteem, positive discipline, good health and nutrition practices, SIDS prevention, and shaken baby syndrome, were presented.

EHS staff facilitates developmentally appropriate activities based on a best practice approach as parents and children engage in appropriate individual, small group, and large group experiences to help the parents feel more confident and comfortable in their role as primary caregivers. Due to COVID-19 these meetings were moved to a remote format.

## GOVERNANCE, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

### Governance Structure

FSW board members bring varied expertise to the organization. Several board members are skilled in fiscal management. Our board chairperson, Lisa Copeland, has a background in childhood education and development. Douglas J. McClintock, Esq., Board Member, brings extensive program governance experience. Susan Corcoran, a former FSW board member, acts as Pro Bono attorney to the organization. In instances where FSW must hire an attorney, for example, to provide recently mandated sexual harassment workshops, Ms. Corcoran has assisted in identifying attorneys who could provide the required services affordably. Currently, FSW's Board of Directors is comprised of fourteen (14) Westchester County community members who exercise effective oversight of the organization and ensure accountability for federal funds.

### Parent Committees

The Parent Committee meets monthly at each center and are *for parents and by parents* to discuss program events, up-date information, plan fund-raisers, encourage parent involvement, review issues and concerns, and become more connected to the program and each other. All parents with a currently enrolled child automatically become members of the Parent Committee. Staff support parents to ensure scheduled meetings are held, and supplies are available. Due to COVID-19, directors, advocates, and teachers facilitated parents' concerns remotely.

Policy Council members operate as the voice of parents; through a shared decision-making process with staff they assist in policy making decisions of the program. Policy Council works in partnership with the Program Director and Managers to review, approve or disapprove critical aspects of program including: 1) Planning: program philosophy, long and short term program goals and objectives; criteria for defining recruitment, selection and enrollment priorities; budgets, funding applications and amendments to funding applications; the annual self-assessment; 2) General Procedures: the composition of the Policy Council and how members are chosen; procedures describing shared decision-making; internal dispute resolution/impasse procedures; by-laws; parent/community complaint procedure; and 3) Human Resource Management: personnel policies and changes to those policies; decisions to hire or terminate the Program Director or any person who works primarily with the HS program. Parents make up at least 51% of the total Policy Council membership; they are elected by parents of currently enrolled children from the four center Parent Committees. Due to COVID-19, policy council meetings were held remotely via virtual meeting platforms. There were no changes in Policy Council during the school year of 2019-2020.

### Relationships

At Parent Open Houses in September, the function and importance of parent committee meetings and Policy Council are reviewed. Each October, there is an orientation session for parents to learn more about Policy Council in greater detail so they can make an informed decision whether or not they would like to be a member. Once Policy Council members were chosen from the individual centers and the officers elected, there is a training session to ensure that members are able to learn about the Performance Standards and will be effective in being able to review

policies and procedures, including budgetary decisions, eligibility, etc. The training for the Board of Directors is of similar nature.

As per our by-laws, members of Policy Council may not be staff members and may not be paid for any services they provide to Policy Council. There have been no exceptions. The policy council approves EHS/HS program policy statements prior to implementation. The council is part of the selection process in hiring all staff, managers, and directors.

### **Program Management and Quality Improvement**

Considering the unprecedented global pandemic, Family Services of Westchester's Head Start and Early Head Start Programs are cognizant of the effects of both the physical and mental health on the community. As such, we seek to invest in the quality improvement of our mental health services. We plan to do this through an expansion of staff and services to support the pillars of our program: children, families, and staff. The Head Start program will benefit from the expertise of the Mental Health Professional at Family Services of Westchester. Family Services of Westchester will facilitate Trauma Systems Therapy in collaboration with the New York University (NYU) Child Study Center. Trauma systems focuses on the child and all of the systems the child is a part of, such as, the family, school and larger community.

The Trauma Systems Checklist for Young Children (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, n.d.) looks at children who are showing symptoms, and then we can identify the changes that are needed, so children can feel safe and the families can understand what is causing their dysregulation. The Trauma Symptom Checklist for Young Children is a parent/caregiver tool that was developed to assess trauma related symptoms. This tool allows for an evaluation of symptoms of post-traumatic stress, anxiety, depression, and anger. The trauma evaluation tools will assist the mental health team to identify at-risk children and families who need referrals and follow-up to mental health services in a clinic and /or other therapeutic settings.

We fully embrace a trauma-informed approach to the emerging mental health needs of our children, parents, families, and staff, and it is important to have a clear definition of what trauma is, as well as its effects. Some effects of trauma can manifest in the guise of depression, anxiety, and/or aggressive behavior. It is only after we understand trauma that we can appropriately address it with the members of our Head Start community. Training in Adverse Childhood Experiences and Resilience and Trauma Systems Therapy will provide the knowledge and skill that is needed for a Trauma-informed workforce.

### **Parent Testimonial**

"When our son started school, it was a very special stage in his life and in ours. As parents, the first day was difficult leaving him, but the teachers received them with a lot of love, they called them by their name, and were so kind in the way they welcomed them to school. We knew that they were in good hands. Their professional attention was clear from the very first day. We thank the director, the teachers and therapists who have contributed to the progress of our son who every day learns new and important things for his personal development".





## **PROGRAM DEMOGRAPHICS**

### **Head Start**

#### *Children Served*

Family Services of Westchester's Head Start Programs currently and collectively serves 194 children.

#### *Enrollment by Age*

Family Services of Westchester's Head Start Programs currently and collectively serves 103 three-year olds and 97 four-year olds.

#### *Type of Eligibility*

Our families all meet Head Start Eligibility requirements and come from diverse backgrounds across White Plains, NY. They also meet the Head Start income guidelines and live below the federal poverty line. Additionally, we serve foster families, families on public assistance, families who are homeless, as well as, families who do not meet Head Start income guidelines.

#### *Primary Language Spoken at Home*

Spanish is the primary language spoken by our families at home, with 159 families reporting Spanish as their preferred language of communication within their homes. English was spoken by 33 of our families. French Creole was reported as the primary language spoken at home by 6 families. One or more Slavic languages was spoken by 2 of our families.

### **Early Head Start**

#### *Children Served*

Family Services of Westchester's Early Head Start Program currently and collectively serves 40 children.

#### *Enrollment by Age*

Family Services of Westchester's Head Start Programs currently and collectively serves 7 children under the age of 1, 16 one- year old and 21 two-year olds.

#### *Type of Eligibility*

Our families meet Early Head Start Eligibility requirements and come from diverse backgrounds across White Plains, NY. Our families also meet the Early Head Start income guidelines and live below the federal poverty line. Additionally, we also serve foster families, families on public assistance, families who are homeless, as well as, families who do not meet Early Head Start income guidelines.

### *Primary Language Spoken at Home*

Spanish is the primary language spoken by our families at home, with 40 families reporting Spanish as their preferred language of communication within their homes. English was spoken by five of our families.



## MEDICAL AND DENTAL

### MEDICAL

#### *Health*

The Health Manager works closely with the family advocates and health support staff to conduct a child intake questionnaire that includes the physical examination requirements, immunizations, hemoglobin, lead screening, vision and hearing screenings, tuberculosis risk assessment, a dental/oral examination and other health related screenings. The forms are reviewed during an individual intake meeting with the families, prior to their enrollment into the program. During this intake meeting, the Health Manager, family advocates, or support staff enters the child's information into COPA. The face to face meeting allows them to address any concerns that may arise prior to enrollment and help to ensure that the information is accurate.

As per the New York State Office of Family Services (NYS OCFS) requirement for day care, all of our children have a physical exam on file prior to entry into the program. All children for whom an immunization record was submitted were fully immunized according to NYS requirements. To date there were 194 (or 100%) enrolled in the Head Start program and 40 (or 100%) children in our Early Head Start program who received medical screenings. In both the HS and EHS programs the number of children who have been determined by a health care professional to be up to date on all immunizations appropriate for their age received 100% immunizations.

Most children (over 90%) in the program have health insurance coverage by means of local and state health care/insurance initiatives or through their parents' employer-based health insurance coverage. Parents, including pregnant women, have a similar rate of coverage through their qualifications for local and state health care/insurance initiatives, as well as, employer-based health care/ insurance.

The Health Manager and Education Manager participated on FSW's Health and Safety Team that was coordinated by FSW's Human Resources (HR) department to develop health and safety policies and protocols that follow recommendations from the CDC. Our Health Manager also developed *COVID-19 Responses Health and Safety Plan* that is specific to the needs of each site.

Beginning in September 2020, children will be dropped off by parents at the door of the building or the classroom. Children will receive temperature checks at sign-in by the Health Manager or designee. All universal health precautions will be implemented in accordance with OCFS regulations and guidance. Our Health Manager provides guidance and training to all staff both in-person and virtually. The Health manager is in contact with parents and continues to update children's health records.

#### *Nutrition*

FSW was able to secure grant funds that support nutrition education. The Health Manager, along with staff in our Head Start and Early Head Start program educate children, staff, and parents about healthy lifestyles and nutrition by implementing the "I am Moving, I am Learning" curriculum. As a supplemental enrichment program for parents,

the Cornell Cooperative extension offers “Eat Smart, Head Start” classes weekly. The objective of this program is for families to learn about good nutrition, plan healthier meals, and modify their lifestyles. “Eat Smart, Head Start” encourages adults to be role models for their children and engage the whole family in a healthy diet. Head Start also piloted the “Eat Well, Play Hard” initiative at two centers (Slater & Bethel) this past year to educate and encourage children, parents, and staff about the importance of eating more fruits and vegetables. In addition, nutritious meals are funded through the Federal Government Children and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and meals are provided by the White Plains City School District (WPCSD) Food Service. Even with our comprehensive programing, the battle over childhood obesity remains an area of significant concern.

During 2019-2020, 36 Head Start children were identified as overweight and 35 were identified as obese. Approximately, 76% of Head Start (HS) and 89% of Early Head Start families have access to and use the federally funded Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), which provides eligible families with nutritious foods to supplement diets, nutrition education (including breastfeeding promotion and support), and referrals to health and other social services.

### *Dental*

At the monthly parent committee meetings, families are educated about the importance of regular oral hygiene and dental care. Each year, we celebrate *Dental Day*. This past year Dr. Erica Fish, a local dentist, and her team screened approximately 57 children and Healthy Smiles screened 74 children at the centers.

To date there were 194 (or 100%) enrolled in Head Start program and 40 (or 100%) children in our Early Head Start program who received dental screenings.



### **HEALTH SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Health Manager organizes a Health Services Advisory Committee meeting twice a year. Providers from all over Westchester County meet to discuss Early Head Start and Health Related issues/concerns and health trends in the community.



## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

FSW Early Head Start and Head Start programs partner with over 30 organizations. Each of these organizations aids us in providing the best quality early childhood care as well as support for the families we serve. Below is a list of sponsors that worked with us during the past year.

Ashley Home Furnishings	Boy Scouts of America Troop 2005	Bronxville Reform Church Nursery School	Building our own Knowledge (BOOKS)	Bundles of Joy
Food Bank- Feeding Westchester	Girl Scouts of America	Hudson Valley Ballet	Junior League of Central Westchester	Lakeshore
Lehman College	Lions See	Morgan Stanley	New York City Poison Control	Nifty Knitters
Salvation Army	Sarah Lawrence College	Scarsdale Synagogue	Simon and Schuster	Soccer Shots
The Sharing Shelf	Toys 4 Tots	United Way	Westchester Country Club	Westchester Library System
White Plains Library	White Plains School District	Women's Club of White Plains	Word Start	FSW

The organizations that partner with us are each unique, but all share the same belief, that early childhood education is important. Below is a summary about each of our partners and how they used their business to make a difference in the lives of the children and the families we serve.

### *Ashley Home Furnishings*

Ashley Home Furnishing is a retail furniture store, and through their generous support, were able to provide beds to children between the ages of 3-18 for some of our neediest families. Ashley Home Furnishings understands the importance of providing a safe and comfortable sleeping space that promotes restful sleep for our children.

### *Boy Scouts of America Troop 2005*

The Boy Scouts of America Troop provided materials and labor to enhance the toddler playground at the North Street site. This provided a safe, updated play space and sand box for toddlers to use daily.

#### *Bronxville Reform Church Nursery School*

Bronxville Reform Church School provided “Thanksgiving in a Box” donations to many Head Start and Early Head Start families. Families received food products essential to creating a special holiday meal for their loved ones, who might otherwise not be able to afford the added expense of a holiday dinner.

#### *Building our own Knowledge (BOOKS)*

Building our own Knowledge (BOOKS) is an amazing team of 5 high school students. To support our literacy initiatives, these students created audio books for the children of the program. They held a book drive to assist us and the teens assembled 10 book bags with 6 to 8 books each. These book bags will be used as part of our centers’ lending libraries.

#### *Bundles of Joy*

Bundles of Joy is a not-for-profit charitable organization that provides essentials to babies, toddlers, and new parents in critical need. They donated clothing and other items for infants and toddlers in our home-based program. Through these efforts, our families received clothing and household items for their young and growing babies.

#### *Feeding Westchester*

Feeding Westchester is a not-for-profit food bank and provides bags of food containing non-perishables to all families in our programs monthly. Families participate in the distribution process.

#### *Girl Scouts of America*

The Girl Scouts of America provide flyers to recruit families for Head Start programs at parades and other local events. They help to raise awareness of Head Start and bring families to our programs for enrollment.

#### *Hudson Valley Ballet*

The Hudson Valley Ballet offers tickets to local ballet performances at no-cost to our families. They also offer classes for preschool children and their older siblings at no cost. Through this partnership, families get the opportunity to attend cultural events in the local area and broaden their children’s interests.

#### *Junior League of Central Westchester*

The Junior League of Central Westchester provides literacy projects to our students throughout the year, including books that can be used to build home libraries. Their support culminates with a large event in June, that includes entertainment, dinner, crafts, and books.

#### *Lakeshore*

Provides a family day at a local toy and learning store, including crafts and giveaways. Provides trainings and luncheons for staff, introducing new products and serves as a family engagement activity with a local business.



### *Lehman College*

Lehman College provides the oversight of the FDC program and allows our staff to attain their Family Development Credential as required by HSPPS to become a Family Advocate.

### *Lions See*

Lions See is a program that provides vision screenings for children in our programs and provides the families with options for follow up care. Through this partnership, we are able to meet the standards for Head Start screenings and assist children who may be in need of eyeglasses.

### *Morgan Stanley*

Teams of volunteers participate in field day type activities during the warmer months. These are corporate partners in the community who wish to “give back”.

### *New York City Poison Control*

Provides free, interactive workshops for staff and parents regarding safety at home and at school. Families also receive valuable safety information regarding medication and household items.

### *Nifty Knitters*

Nifty Knitters are a team of volunteers who knit hats and blankets for young children in the program for the cooler seasons. This ensures that families can keep their children warm on their way to and from the program. Through this program, the kids can build intergenerational relationships within the community

### *The Salvation Army*

Provides food baskets and toys for the holiday season for families in need. Families with food insecurity and those who may not be able to afford holiday gifts for their children are aided.

### *Sarah Lawrence College*

Provides college interns the opportunity to work at our centers as a field placement as part of their education at Sarah Lawrence College. The College students gain experience by working hands-on in the classrooms. We are assisting in growing the workforce in the field of early childhood education

### *Scarsdale Synagogue*

A team of teenagers selected our programs to volunteer and provide goods and/or services as part of their efforts to support education. Teams of adults visit our centers for “Feel Good Fridays” and bring bags of books to read to the children and make donations. This partnership promotes literacy, builds home libraries, allows children to hear a variety of stories. from different readers.

#### *Simon and Schuster*

A team of volunteers participate in field day type activities during the warmer months. Boxes of new early childhood books are shipped for use in programs and to distribute to families. This promotes literacy and joining with corporate partners in the community who wish to “give back”.

#### *Soccer Shots*

Soccer coaches provide motor skills training to classrooms on a rotating basis. They may offer scholarships to interested families. These are opportunities for family engagement and physical wellness.

#### *The Sharing Shelf*

Provides a full week’s worth of children’s clothing to families in need upon request. Ensures that children have winter coats and other items that are seasonally appropriate.

#### *Toys 4 Tots*

Provides toys for all children in our programs at holiday time in December. Allows all children in our programs to receive at least one gift for the holidays for families who might otherwise not be able to afford one.

#### *United Way*

Book drive targeting the preschool population helps families grow their home libraries and encourages literacy skills.

#### *Westchester Country Club*

FSW participates in their annual health and wellness fair for their employees and connects families in the community with FSW services. Through this effort, FSW has an opportunity to develop new partnerships with other community organizations.

#### *Westchester Library System*

Outreach coordinator from the library participates in Policy Council and at various events throughout the year. Encourages families to use the free resources offered by local libraries, including ESL classes.

#### *White Plains Library*

Offer space twice monthly for our home-based socialization program. A librarian comes monthly to read books in the classrooms at the Early Head Start Program. The library allows for a large space at no charge for our home-based families to socialize and participate in parent trainings.

#### *White Plains School District*

Collaborative approach to enrolling UPK children and assisting families in transition to kindergarten. Teachers participate in trainings together with school district staff. Middle schoolers assist in classrooms at various times of the day. Families become familiar with their local school district and learn about options for elementary schools.

Teachers and Head Start children benefit from additional help in the classroom and the middle school students have an opportunity to provide and learn the importance of community service.

#### *Women's Club of White Plains*

Knit and donate mittens for Head Start programs. This ensures that all of our children are able to have warm hands in the winter months

#### *Word Start*

Provides a literacy curriculum including books and audio and visual technology to be used at home and at school. Provides classrooms with monitors. Young children learn to read through music and nursery rhymes. Parents are provided with training and home-based activities



## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

At FSW's EHS/HS programs, we work closely with families to create a strong partnership that is holistic and meets the needs of families and empowers them to articulate their goals and access existing community resources. These partnerships are effective because they are based on the recognition and respect of each family's unique qualities and belief that parents are the first and best teachers and advocates for their children.

During 2019-2020, there were countless volunteers, many of whom were former HS/EHS parents. Moreover, Families participated in several workshops and special events such as: Eat Smart Head Start, Finance Workshop, CPS Training, Summer Games sponsored by Big Brothers Big Sisters, Junior League of Central Westchester, FSW Junior Board, Eat Well Play Hard, Nurturing Parent workshops, Policy Council, parent committee meetings. Parent workshops and socialization groups were held at the White Plains Public Library twice per month through the Early Head Start program. Parents also were involved in the Parent Committee Meetings which were held at each center every month. Our meetings have excellent attendance. Parents also participate in the classrooms and become involved in developing and creating projects with their children.



## FUNDING AND THE BUDGET

In 2019-2020, Family Services of Westchester, Inc., Head Start and Early Head Start, received funding from both federal and non-federal sources. Below is a summary of those funding sources.

### Non-Competing

#### *Head Start*

Federal Share	Non-Federal Share
\$ 1,897,696	\$474,424
Total HS Budget	
\$2,372,120	

#### *Early Head Start*

Federal Share	Non-Federal Share
\$ 509,211	\$127,303
Total EHS Budget	
\$636,514	

### Supplement- COLA and Quality Improvement

#### *Head Start*

Federal Share	Non-Federal Share
\$ 89,115	\$0
Total HS Budget	
\$89,115	

#### *Early Head Start*

Federal Share	Non-Federal Share
\$ 24,602	\$0

Total EHS Budget
\$24,602

#### Supplement- COVID-19 One Time

##### Head Start

Federal Share	Non-Federal Share
\$ 170,489	\$0
Total HS Budget	
\$170,489	

##### Early Head Start

Federal Share	Non-Federal Share
\$ 35,152	\$0
Total EHS Budget	
\$35,152	

#### Supplement – Summer Program 2020

##### Head Start

Federal Share	Non-Federal Share
\$ 110,901	\$0
Total HS Budget	
\$110,901	



**Budget Totals**

	Head Start	Early Head Start
Non-Competing	\$2,372,120	\$636,514
Supplement- COLA and Quality Improvement	\$89,115	\$24,602
Supplement- COVID-19 One Time	\$170,489	\$35,152
Supplement – Summer Program 2020		\$ 110,901
Total Budget		
\$3,438,893		

## REFERENCES

- Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center. (2019, November 5). *Head Start Approach to School Readiness - Overview*. Retrieved from Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/article/head-start-approach-school-readiness-overview>
- Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center. (n.d.). *Interactive Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five*. Retrieved from Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/interactive-head-start-early-learning-outcomes-framework-ages-birth-five>

