



# 2020-2021

Head Start and Early Head Start Program

# Annual Report



Family Services of Westchester Inc.

Accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA) and by the Better Business Bureau (BBB)

## HEAD START'S EDUCATION MISSION

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Head Start is more than a preschool program. It supports parents and families in their vital roles as the primary influencers on their young children's education and development by helping them sharpen their parenting skills and navigate the school system. In addition to providing a comprehensive top-quality preschool education, Head Start also provides health and nutrition education to its students and their families.

Head Start emphasizes cognitive and language development, social and emotional development, physical and mental health and parent involvement. Participating Head Start families establish a "medical home" where children receive ongoing routine health and dental care. In addition, parents have access to support programs that help the family move toward economic self-sufficiency.

## 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.

### **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.

### **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.

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.



**"IN THESE CRITICAL TIMES,  
WE MUST BE INNOVATIVE  
BUT RESILIENT IN OUR  
APPROACHES TO MEETING  
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WESCHESTER RESIDENTS."**

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

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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, design, and 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 living and working through a global pandemic.

### Quality Early Childhood Education

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.

We are fortunate to serve a diverse group of children and families through our administration of quality early education services. 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. We maintain mutual respect between our program and our children and families, from our dual language classrooms to our parent involvement efforts and activities. Our policy council work in conjunction with program administration to keep the parent perspective at the table and continue working 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 together 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 and foster stronger bonds within the program's ecosystem and aids 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, MSEd

# SHARED GOVERNANCE

FSW board members bring varied expertise to the organization. For example, our board chairperson, Lisa Copeland, has early childhood education and development background, while six board members are skilled in fiscal management. Moreover, board member Douglas J. McClintock, Esq., brings extensive program governance experience. The board of directors also comprises several attorneys, and Susan Corcoran, a former FSW board member, acts as a Pro Bono attorney to the organization. On occasion, in which FSW must retain an attorney, Ms. Corcoran has assisted in identifying attorneys who could provide the required services affordably. Currently, FSW's Board of Directors comprises twelve (12) Westchester County community members who exercise effective oversight and governance, fiduciary responsibility, and accountability for all private and government funding. A new member joined the board of directors during the 2020-2021 academic year.


**Chairperson:**

Lisa Copeland

**President/CEO:**

Polly Kerrigan

**Vice Chair:**

Donna Prummell

**Vice Chair:**

 Blakely Brodbeck  
 Leslie Chang  
 Ona Cohn

**Vice Chair:**

Jeff Smith

**Vice Chair:**

 Barbara Ellsworth-Robinson  
 Marcie Klein  
 Les Rosenberg

**Treasurer:**

Douglas J. McClintock

**Treasurer:**

 Leah Sills  
 Brandon Steiner  
 Nicholas Wolff

**Secretary:**

Alec Cecil

## POLICY COUNCIL

Policy Council members operate as the voice of parents; through a shared-decision making process with Staff. The members also assist in policy decisions for the program. Policy Council works in partnership with the Program Director and Managers to review, approve or reject critical aspects of the 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; and the annual self-assessment; 2) Developing General Procedures: determining 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; 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 comprise a minimum of 51% of the total Policy Council members, and they are elected by parents of currently enrolled children from the four center Parent Committees. As with most other meetings, policy council meetings were held remotely via virtual meeting platforms. There were no changes to the Policy Council members during the 2020-2021 academic year.

## PARENT COMMITTEES

The Parent Committee monthly meetings at each center are for parents and by parents to discuss program events up-to-date information, plan fundraisers, encourage parent involvement, review issues and concerns, become more connected to the program and each other.

All parents with a currently enrolled child automatically become members of the Parent Committee. Our Staff supports parents to ensure scheduled meetings are held and supplies are available. Parent meetings were held virtually during the 2020-2021 academic year due to COVID-19.

## RELATIONSHIPS

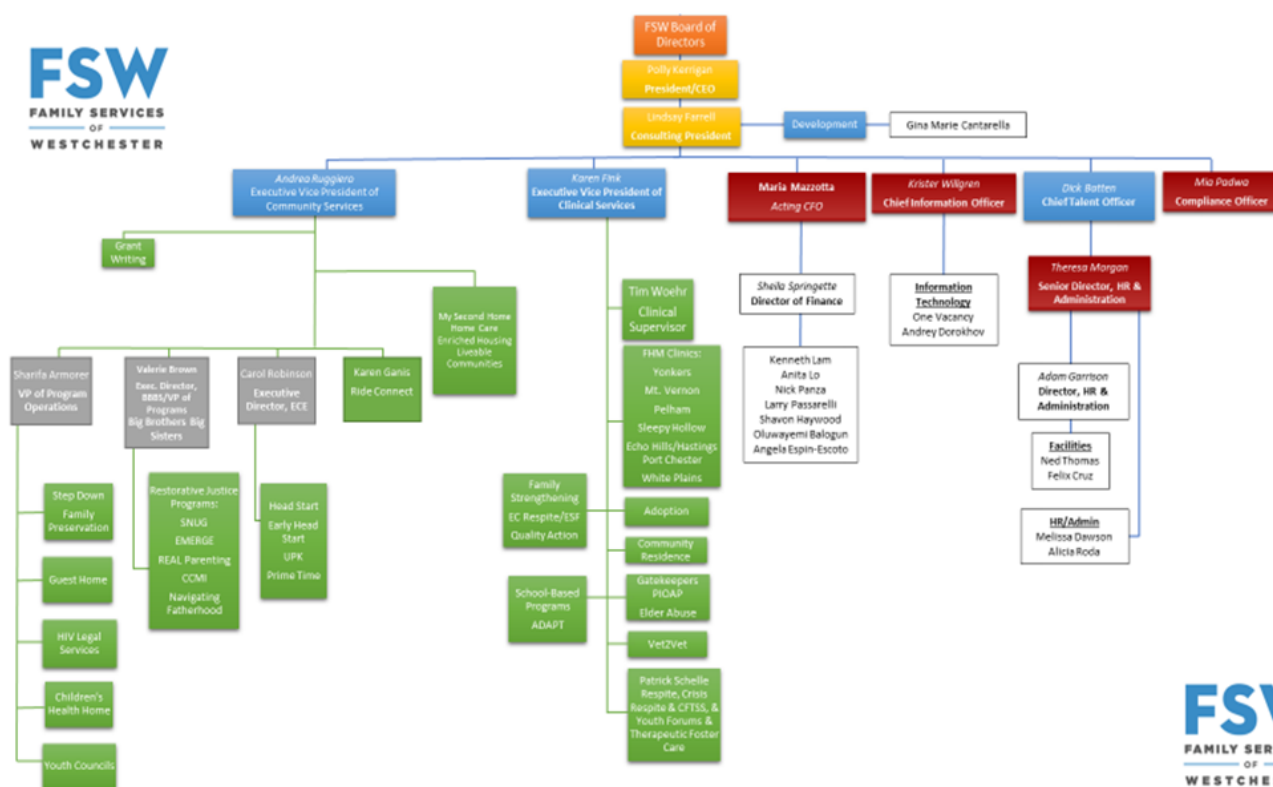
At Parent Open Houses in September, the function and importance of parent committee meetings and the Policy Council are reviewed. Each October, there is an orientation session for parents to learn more about the Policy Council in greater detail to make an informed decision about becoming a member.

After the Policy Council members are chosen from the individual centers and the officers are elected, there is a training session to ensure that members are knowledgeable and well-informed of the Performance Standards. In this capacity, they will be capable of reviewing policies and procedures, including budgetary decisions and eligibility. Furthermore, the Policy Council approves all EHS/HS program policy statements before their implementation and is part of the selection process in hiring all Staff, managers, and directors.

In addition, as per our by-laws, members of the Policy Council may not be staff members nor be compensated for any services they provide to the Policy Council. There are no exceptions.



# GOVERNANCE, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



*last year's*

# 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 has 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) FSW's Head Start Program classrooms. In addition to Head Start, we also have two other programs: Universal Pre-Kindergarten and the Primetime 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. It is also directly across the street from Bethel Church. The center serves many residents from Brookfield Commons Public Housing (formerly Winebrook Public Housing) and the surrounding neighborhoods.

## 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. We house two Early Head Start classrooms at this location and share the space with our Primetime Preschool program.

## THE BETHEL CENTER

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



## 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 works closely with Prime Time to identify and develop action plans to assist children experiencing challenges. In addition, the Head Start team works together in a coordinated approach to support children and families throughout the evaluation process.

## HS/EHS EXPANSION



*a year's overview*

# WHERE WE ARE NOW

Family Services of Westchester (FSW) is a proud provider of Early Head Start/Head Start of White Plains and upholds its commitment to the Head Start Program Performance Standards to foster holistic growth and the development of children. Despite the effects of COVID-19 this past year, we continued working with each child to develop their social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs which are critical for building a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing.

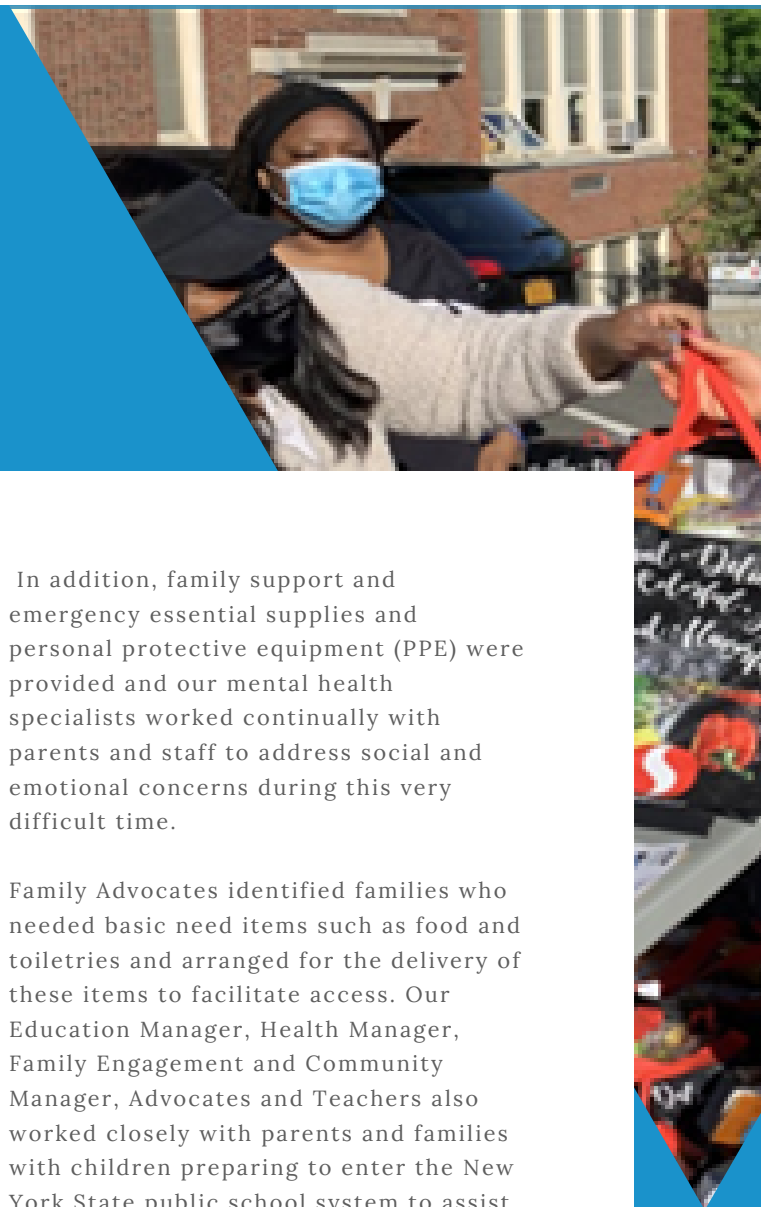
Family Services of Westchester is dedicated to ensuring high quality early education, continuity and consistency of the Performance Standards while embracing a family-centered approach. Although this has been a particularly difficult year due to COVID-19, we have persevered and withstood the repercussions of COVID-19. We transitioned to a remote learning model during the spring of 2020, and maintained the program's integrity by adhering to the EHS/HS Performance Standards, while frequently communicating with the HS Grantee Specialist for guidance and technical assistance.

Throughout the year, the Family Services of Westchester management team, as well as our community partners, joined forces to assist the Head Start and Early Head Start program in providing resources that would help sustain remote educational services for some students and transition to in-person services for others.

In addition, family support and emergency essential supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE) were provided and our mental health specialists worked continually with parents and staff to address social and emotional concerns during this very difficult time.

Family Advocates identified families who needed basic need items such as food and toiletries and arranged for the delivery of these items to facilitate access. Our Education Manager, Health Manager, Family Engagement and Community Manager, Advocates and Teachers also worked closely with parents and families with children preparing to enter the New York State public school system to assist them with this important transition.

Despite the unforeseen challenges that were encountered during the 2020-2021 academic year, we remained committed to the mission of Head Start and we served the children and their families by utilizing innovative strategies and new collaborations to ensure that everyone received the services and programs that were needed.



## CHANGES TO PROGRAM DESIGN

After over a year of the ongoing pandemic, we continue serving and empowering the children and their families by providing quality instruction and services while also infusing flexibility in our service delivery model. Full remote instruction early in the pandemic was transitioned to a hybrid model comprised of in-person and remote instruction during the 2020-2021 academic year. A number of students remained fully remote while others attended in-person for instruction. We made certain that all families were able to access technology and provided donations from our community partners when needed. Our partners and other donors generously provided tablets and laptops for those children who did not otherwise have access to technology.

For in-person instruction, we incorporated all CDC and New York State Department of Health safety recommendations and mandates, which included, extensive cleaning, social distancing and face coverings. For remote learning, the teachers utilized a popular educational virtual application, Seesaw, to provide activities remotely, which was very well received by both the children and their parents.

Families were able to use the app to receive activity assignments for their child and also as a method to communicate with their child's teacher. Seesaw was used daily and provided families with developmental age-appropriate activities to supplement and support remote learning. Furthermore, all teachers were able to continue utilizing Teaching Strategies Gold for implementing instruction, planning and assessment. Moreover, parents continued participating in Policy Council meetings through virtual platforms to provide stakeholders with updates and input regarding any updates or changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic, programs, services and instruction.



# PROGRAM GOALS

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## Goal 1:

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.

### Objectives 1A:

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.

Parents will be engaged in Word Start after school activities – dual language literacy development using illustrated nursery rhymes and coloring.

FSW will implement the CAPE – Community Adventure Play Experience in partnership with Sarah Lawrence College in order to prepare 100% (staff was trained for implementation in June 2019).

### Year Two Progress/Outcomes 1A:

The Word Start Curriculum was implemented in-person for the first time, following a year of virtual application due to the unprecedented pandemic. In the fall term, the children were assessed below the 45% level. By the spring term, the children met their expectations by 95%

During the pandemic months, home learning activities were assigned and parents helped to facilitate the continuous language and literacy development. Communication with parents was conducted using Seesaw, e-mails, and telephone calls and text messaging.

The teachers continue to support Word Start with families and there is an ongoing collaboration between the home and school environment to improve literacy development. Teachers received the CAPE – Community Adventure Play Experience in partnership with Sarah Lawrence College in 2019

We were unable to implement this objective this year due to COVID.

### Challenges 1A:

50% of all parents encountered difficulties connecting to the internet at home. Also, 20% of parents encountered difficulties using the Word Start App. Parents were supported by the teachers who also assisted with the navigation of the Word Start App to complete tasks.

Due to COVID-19 and New York State and Westchester County stay at home orders, all CAPEs were cancelled due to high infection numbers and hospitalizations related to the COVID-19 outbreak. Therefore, the implementation of this objective was not achieved during the 2020-2021 school year.

Sarah Lawrence College remained on remote status.

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## Goal 2:

Use Technology to develop an efficient record system that increases productivity.

### Objectives 2:

Family Advocates, teachers and staff will collect data for intake forms; will have access to laptops and computers; and will receive training in using COPA, TSG and HELP.

100% of all intake forms for enrolled children will be entered into COPA. FSW's EHS/HS data to be communicated through COPA to the various managers. Staff who collect intake documents have access to a desktop computer.

Family Advocates and staff who collect data will be given Laptops as needed.

### Year Two Progress/Outcomes 2:

Family advocates, teachers, and staff continue to use laptops and COPA, TSG, and HELP. These processes facilitate the collection of data for intake forms.

The objective was met and 100% of all intake forms were entered into COPA by FSW staff

The goal was met. Data pertaining to the children, their families and health records were placed in COPA were easily accessible to the various managers. We continue to update our database

All staff who collect intake documents, continue to have access to a desktop computer.

Family Advocates and staff continue to have access to laptops as needed.

### Challenges 2:

The program returned to in-person instruction during the fall 2020.

Staff needed additional time to enter data from its paper form into COPA. Parents are not able to input data into COPA's parent portal at this time due to limited internet navigation and access.

Staff reported that data entry was time consuming and additional help could lead to faster entries.

None to report.

## Goal 3:

### Use Data to Influence Planning and Impact Learning

#### Objectives 3:

100% of the student assessment data is entered in COPA, TSG and HELP by teachers and support staff.

The Education manager will monitor assessment data & help teachers develop an education plan for each child.

Lesson plans will be developed to help each child achieve learning goals.

Education Staff will use assessment data in lesson planning for individual children incorporating family interest and goals.

#### Year Two Progress/Outcomes 3:

100% of student assessment data for fall 2020 was entered in COPA, TSG, HELP by teachers and support staff

The Education manager monitored assessment data and assisted teachers in developing education plans for 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. In the fall TSG Assessments and CLASS observations were conducted

Lesson plans were developed to help children achieve learning goals. The Data from TSG and Seesaw was used in the planning process.

The Education staff began developing lesson plans for individual children using assessment data, family interests and goals.

#### Challenges 3:

Due to COVID-19, no assessment data was entered during the spring of 2020 due to an abrupt switch to a remote learning model of instruction and lack of in-person observations. In 2021, data was collected within a hybrid model utilizing strategies comprised of in-person, zoom meetings and Seesaw.

Due to NYS rapid response to the COVID-19 outbreak, there was an adjustment period during the transition from an in-person learning model to a remote learning model

Lesson plans were initially developed for in-person learning experiences. Due to COVID-19, lesson plans had to be altered to accommodate remote learning experiences while incorporating materials easily accessible in the home.

Due the change from in-person instruction to the remote learning model of instruction, family interests and goals, shifted from individualized lesson plans to one of adjusting and supporting children as they transitioned to remote learning. The program returned to in-person learning in the fall. However, some parents preferred that their child remain remote. The teacher provided synchronous instruction to both the in-person and remote students which proved extremely challenging.



## Goal 4:

Management team will use technology to monitor and update records to maintain compliance

### Objectives 4:

Managers will review COPA reports to determine accuracy.

### Year Two Progress/Outcomes 4:

The management team continues to use technology to monitor and update records in COPA to maintain compliance and accuracy of input of files.

### Challenges 4:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, updates were less frequent due to a shift in priority of bringing all sites online for remote learning. In 2021, updates are being maintained. It is challenging to advance to include staff data in COPA, and additional support is needed

## Goal 5:

### Support Family Engagement and its Impact on School Readiness

#### Objectives 5:

##### Objective 5A:

All centers will schedule a “Back to School Night” for Parents.

##### Objective 5B:

Each teacher will plan a minimum of 1 family engagement activity monthly, which supports school readiness.

##### Objective 5C:

Teachers collaborate with Parents and Family Advocates to plan and discuss the individual family's goals and interests related to school readiness at the beginning of the school year; and plan to track progress quarterly.

##### Objective 5D:

Survey parents and identify parents preferred way of family engagement as it pertains to child and school activities.

#### Year Two Progress/Outcomes 5:

##### Year One Progress/Outcomes 5A:

This objective was accomplished. All centers scheduled and had their “Back to School Night” for parents on Zoom.

##### Year One Progress/Outcomes 5B:

This objective was met. Teachers used academic, social and emotional themes for their monthly family engagement activities that supported school readiness.

##### Year Two Progress/Outcomes 5C:

At the start of the academic year, fall of 2020, goals were established between the parents, teachers, and family advocates. Parent goals continued to be monitored during the school year 2020-2021

##### Year Two Progress/Outcomes 5D:

Parents were surveyed during the intake process by family advocates.

#### Challenges 5:

##### Challenges 5A:

Due to scheduling conflicts, 35% of parents were unable to attend “Back to School Night”.

##### Challenges 5B:

Due to the COVID-19, teachers had to modify in-person activities and instead incorporate and reconfigure activities that can be accomplished at home with easily accessible materials.

##### Challenges 5C:

Due to COVID-19, school readiness quarterly tracking was suspended due to the lack of in-person instruction, observation and classroom interactions between children and staff. During the 2020-2021 academic year, parent goals shifted

##### 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. Parent engagement continues to be remote during the 2020-2021 school year

## Goal 6:

Provide staff development to improve staff capacity to meet the needs of children and families

### Objectives 6:

Objective 6A:

Staff training on cultural diversity will be conducted twice a year at pre-service and mid-year

Objective 6B:

The Mental Health Specialist will train teachers in using the Second Step Curriculum and guide in classroom implementation.

### Year Two Progress/Outcomes 6:

Year Two Progress/Outcomes 6A:

All Early Head Start and Head Start staff were trained on cultural diversity topics in August of 2021

Year Two Progress/Outcomes 6B:

The Mental Health Specialist trained teachers in using the Second Step Curriculum and guided them in implementing the curriculum in the classroom. The Mental Health Specialist continues to work with the teachers and children.

### Challenges 6:

Challenges 6A:

Trainer was identified and contracted but unable to conduct the training in-person and instead was conducted virtually in August 2021.

Challenges B:

Due to COVID-19 and the shift to remote learning, the classroom implementation was suspended. Classroom implantation resumed in fall 2021. Teachers and children needed additional support during the transition.

## Goal 6:

Support parent wellness and mindful parenting

### Objectives 6:

Objective 6 C:

The Mental Health Specialist, Health Manager, Family Engagement Manager and Education Manager will present parent wellness/mindfulness workshops and activities that will further reinforce the “Second Step Social and Emotional curriculum activities from the classroom implementation within the family.

### Year Two Progress/Outcomes 6:

Year Two Progress/Outcomes 6C:

Parent workshops on the topics of wellness/mindfulness were held virtually during the 2020-2021 academic year. All Parent Workshops were conducted via the Zoom platform during the 2020-2021 year. Parent workshops will continue on Zoom in the fall of 2021.

### Challenges 6:

Challenges 6C:

Due to COVID-19 and unreliable and limited internet connectivity, some parents were unable to attend virtual parent meetings in their entirety.

## Goal 7:

Support child and family wellness to promote fitness

### Objectives 7:

Mental Health Specialist in collaboration with Health Manager to provide parents with Nutrition Training and healthy lifestyle/fitness activities

### Year Two Progress/Outcomes 7:

The “I’m Moving & I’m Learning” curriculum was implemented and transitioned from remote to in-person during the 2020-2021 academic year.

### Challenges 7:

Due to the change from the home environment, instruction times were shortened to assist children and parents in the transition from the home environment to the classroom environment.



## Goal 8:

### Support Child Wellness -

#### Objectives 8:

Will continue to implement the Second Step curriculum that promotes emotional self-regulation. Emotional well-being activities are incorporated in all daily routines.

"I am Moving, I am Learning" curriculum will be implemented in classroom curriculums and routines.

Incentivize attendance at "Eat Smart, Head Start" regular classes enrichment program for parents conducted by Cornell Cooperative extension.

Expand the "Eat Well, Play Hard" first year piloted initiative from two centers (Slater & Bethel) to all 5 centers to educate and encourage children, parents and staff about the importance of eating more fruits and vegetables.

#### Year Two Progress/Outcomes 8:

The Second Step Curriculum was implemented in the yearly curriculum as a part of daily classroom routines.

"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.

The "Eat Well, Play Hard" initiative was organized and scheduled to run in Spring 2021 due to added seasonal availability of fresh fruits & vegetables and warmer temperature to encourage outside play. Due to COVID-19, The Cornell Extension could not facilitate the program this year.

#### Challenges 8:

In September of 2020 the delivery of the Second Step Curriculum transitioned to an in-person program from a virtual format. The challenge was helping children adjust and socialize appropriately to in-person interactions in the classroom environment.

COVID restrictions continue limiting our programming.

## Goal 9:

### Staff Wellness

#### *Objectives 9:*

The Mental Health Specialist and the Health Manager will plan and conduct monthly staff wellness activities, including mindfulness workshops, relaxation techniques, self-care activities, etc.

#### *Year Two Progress/Outcomes 9:*

Our Mental Health Specialist and Health Manager planned and conducted monthly staff wellness activities, including mindfulness workshops, relaxation techniques, and self-care activities. Due to COVID-19, workshops and activities were held via virtual conferencing platforms. In fall of 2021 in-person staff wellness resumed although some workshops are also provided virtually

#### *Challenges 9:*

Due to COVID-19 and unreliable and limited internet connectivity, some staff members were unable to attend virtual staff meetings in their entirety and some staff did not feel comfortable participating in in-person groups.

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# SERVICE AND RECRUITMENT AREA

During the 2020-2021 academic year, Family Services of Westchester's Head Start and Early Head Start program received funding to serve 194 income-eligible preschool-aged children and families and includes 40 income-eligible expectant mothers, infants, toddlers and children to families residing in White Plains, NY in zip codes 10601, 10603, 10604, 10605, and 10606. Additionally, children with disabilities from 21 local school districts were also eligible. However, due to the COVID pandemic, fewer than expected children were served. A total of 176 children were served during the 2020-2021 academic year, due to limited recruitment events and unprecedented family crises.

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 child care centers in White Plains, NY, all of our programs provide a superior level of quality and standards.

## EVIDENCE OF NEED IN PROPOSED AREAS

The parents and families we serve income levels are below the federal poverty line threshold, making them eligible for extensive social services and public assistance. They reside in the areas as mentioned earlier and zip codes. They are often priced out of reputable, high-quality early childhood education programs due to their high cost, dramatically limiting their options. Unfortunately, emerging research confirms that the economic effects of COVID-19 were most detrimental to people with low incomes and people of color. Our EHS/HS families' socio-economic difficulties were exacerbated beyond measure with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to a recent article in the Journal of American Academy of Pediatrics (June 2020), researchers reported that the pandemic had taken an economic toll on low-income families throughout the country. Families struggle to pay for necessities like housing, food, etc., medical care. In addition, the pandemic caused unparalleled psychological distress and warned that such stress could have long-lasting impacts on children. Additionally, statistics reveal inequities in the effects of COVID-19 among vulnerable populations, including racial and ethnic minorities, which is the specific population we serve.

Regrettably, the infection rates, severity of symptoms, job loss, food, and housing insecurity affected many of our families, forcing them to carry heavier burdens than ever before. Although our program helps fill the need for high-quality childcare while empowering parents to take a leadership role in their child's education, we recognize the unprecedented challenges our families are currently encountering as they navigate the COVID crisis. Therefore, we are working diligently in helping families secure basic and immediate needs such as food, mental health services, and other resources while also supporting the learning needs of their young children. In addition, although this has been a challenging year for parents to pursue educational and vocational goals for themselves. We continue assisting in these areas and encourage and support them to afford opportunities to further their education and vocational training to either gain, maintain, or advance their employment/education.

## 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 as a portion of our community match. Unfortunately, due to the effects of the pandemic, we were only able to fill 80 slots during the academic year. In addition, we were hampered by limited recruitment efforts, which were all virtual, in addition to uncertain and unstable family situations which hindered a parent's ability to enroll their child. Nonetheless, the WPCSD has agreed to continue funding 100 half-day \ UPK slots for the upcoming grant cycle, which we anticipate filling.

## NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Of the 216 EHS/HS children we served in our program during the 2020-2021 academic year, 180 children had a home language other than English. Recognizing that limited English proficiency can be a barrier to academic achievement and economic independence, one of the recommendations from the most recent Community Assessment emphasized the importance of developing strategies to improve the English proficiency of our children and their families. Consequently, our program prioritized implementing professional development opportunities to advance the expertise of HS/EHS teachers in guiding dual language development to support learning. A subsequent recommendation was to identify partners who provide English as a Second Language (ESL) and high school equivalency services to parents of children enrolled in our program.

The community assessment also identified a need for increased access to high-quality, affordable child care, particularly for infants and toddlers. One suggestion was to expand the center-based program to a full-day, year-round model. Additionally, a partnership with the Department of Social Services was also recommended. In this capacity, contracted subsidy dollars would be available. However, the application would require a child to be a citizen, and documentation of income, place of residence, and expenses would be necessary. Unfortunately, these requirements, coupled with language barriers, may impede or disqualify their application for assistance for families lacking legal status.

Moreover, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, priorities changed. Rather than seek help in securing quality child care, parents requested assistance and guidance on transitioning their child from in-person classroom instruction to a fully remote model of instruction. Given the abruptness of the situation, parents were propelled into a new and unfamiliar role which caused extreme anxiety and feelings of insecurity.

Additional issues, such as mental health services for children, were identified needs indicated in the community assessment before the pandemic. Unfortunately, the demand for such services currently far surpasses availability. Given the current crisis, children and their parents have endured trauma, complex family disruption, food insecurity, and lack of basic needs. The current capacity for mental health services is limited, and the demand continues to grow. Not surprisingly, the community assessment also indicated increased child mental health usage rates among Medicaid recipients, and we identified the need for a Trauma Screening process for our children. The children we serve regularly cope with traumatic experiences due to their families' food and housing insecurity, issues of domestic violence, and the uncertainties and fears associated with the immigration status of their parents. As a result, we implemented procedures to screen for trauma during the fall of 2020. With funding provided by the Head Start Quality Improvement Funding, a Family Advocate Support staff was hired to assist the mental health specialists and family advocates in conducting trauma screenings during the intake process. The staff person administered screenings using the researched-based, valid and reliable "Trauma History Screen Tool" and worked alongside the families in collaboration with the Mental Health Specialist and Family Advocate to assess and identify needs and refer to the appropriate services.

Another detail revealed by the community assessment indicated that children in Head Start programs are disproportionately affected by disabilities. Early Intervention services in the county are not effective for all participants. Only 5.8 percent of Westchester County children have a disability, and the Early Intervention Program serves only 2.1 percent of the county's children under age three.

However, 22.7 percent of Head Start children have an Individualized Education Plan, and 13.6 percent of Early Head Start children have an Individualized Family Service Plan. Furthermore, there is a tremendous need for bi-lingual therapists, and unfortunately, there is a vast shortage of qualified professionals.

Unfortunately, there is also an enormous need for public housing options. The community assessment indicated a shortage of adequate public housing, forcing low-income families to pay a much more significant than average percentage of their income on housing or choosing an over-crowded housing arrangement. Lastly, A predominant need within the population we serve is limited access to opportunities that promote physical activity and nutrition education. With the obesity rate increasing, there is a dire need for available and attainable healthy and affordable nutrition options.

#### **CHOSEN PROGRAM OPTION(S) AND FUNDED ENROLLMENT SLOTS**

"This year, the WPCSD awarded us 100 half -day UPK slots these slots were combined with Head Start in order to meet our community match." For the years 2020-2021, there was no update or changes to the chosen program option(s) and funded enrollment slots.

#### **CENTERS AND FACILITIES**

"FSW's center-based EHS & HS programs for the 2020-2021 year are offered at five sites. In addition, we provide 20 EHS home-based slots."

During the 2020-2021 academic year, we worked with three Prime Time classrooms located at FSW's Lanza Family Center for All Ages. The Prime-Time program facilitates the transition of HS children who have special needs and provides comprehensive services to accommodate any challenges that may be impeding their learning ability. In this capacity, they receive extra support to foster learning and development. This program is a portion of our non-federal share requirement. During the 2020-2021 academic year, four children were identified and evaluated as needing special education services and were therefore transitioned to the Prime-Time classroom.



Program Hours/Day, Months/Year	Site	# of Children	Total
EHS 6Hrs and 30Mins/12 Center-Based	North Street	Infants: 6 Toddlers: 14 (2 Classes)	20
HS 6hrs/10 Months	Rochambeau	96	96
HS 6hrs/10 Months	Bethel	16	16
HS 6hrs/10 Months	Slater	17	17
HS 6hrs/10 Months	Eastview	47	47
		<b>Total HS</b>	<b>176</b>
		<b>Total EHS</b>	<b>40</b>
		<b>Total EHS/HS</b>	<b>216</b>

### COVID-19 RESPONSE PROGRAM STRUCTURE

As the COVID-19 pandemic persists and vaccinations progress, we remain flexible in our program structure, pending the evolving directives and mandates enacted and recommended by Head Start, New York State, and the CDC.

### THE 2020-2021 ACADEMIC YEAR

#### *The transition from a Remote Learning Model*

A remote learning model was implemented in March 2020 as an immediate response to the sudden pandemic. For remote learning, technology and curriculum activities were provided to families to ensure that all children had access to resources to continue learning. Moreover, teachers and family advocates worked together to assess the socioeconomic needs of the children and families to ensure they had sufficient food and essential items, such as diapers and personal protective equipment, and learning tools for the children. In September of 2020, at the commencement of the 2020-2021 academic year, all classes slowly transitioned to an in-person learning model from the existing remote format.

Classes began reopening in accordance with New York State guidance and regulations. Families were offered the opportunity to return to in-person care or continue virtual enrollment.

Following the strict guidelines of the Office of Head Start, the governor, and other officials, the program implemented policies, procedures, and practices to make learning experiences and environments as safe as possible for children, families, and staff.

As a result, in the Head Start program, 147 children returned to the physical classroom on a part-time schedule, and 22 children remained remote. In January of 2021, a full-time, in-person option was introduced, in addition to the part-time, in-person option and the fully remote option. Subsequently, 97 children remained in-person, part-time, 48 began attending full-day, and 16 children remained remote. In March of 2021, 148 attended the in-person, full-day program, 38 attended in-person, part-time, and ten children remained remote. As the academic year concluded in June of 2021, 193 children attended in-person, full-day, and nine were remote. The Early Head Start Center-Based program began in September 2020 with 19 children attending in-person, part-time, while one child remained remote. By November 2020, all of the children were attending in-person, full-day. An additional 20 Early Head Start children were “home-based” and remained so throughout the entire academic year. Teachers either visited their homes or taught virtually.

## STAFF TRAINING

Staff received training from the health manager and mental health specialist on various topics related to health and safety measures during COVID-19 to assist families and children in maintaining their physical, emotional, and mental health during the period of remote learning. In addition, staff meetings and development training were conducted virtually utilizing various virtual conferencing platforms.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

We continued working closely with families to create a strong partnership, albeit much of our interactions were virtual, by phone, or socially distanced. We preserved our commitment to serving families based on their goals and needs and connected them to appropriate services and resources. We also offered comprehensive education, health, dental, nutrition, and related services for children from birth to age five and provided assistance and referrals for pregnant mothers. Parent participation and active involvement are essential components of the program, and although COVID limited us, parents participated in socially distant or virtual means.

Teachers and Family Advocates planned an array of activities. Workshops on various topics were prepared for the families. Different topics included: Poison Control, Kindergarten transitions, EHS/HS transitions, Domestic Violence, Tantrums and Challenging Behavior, Positive Parenting and Mindfulness, COVID Stress and Self Care, Sleep and Routine, Toilet Training, Budgeting and Finance, Effective Communication with Children, and Helping Children Express Emotion. Furthermore, the parenting curriculum we utilize, The Nurturing Parenting Program, coupled with active parenting groups, is facilitated by the Mental Health Specialists and held monthly virtually at each center. Overall, due to extenuating circumstances related to COVID, parent participation in our workshops, meetings, and activities decreased this academic year. However, our staff was dedicated to engaging families, and food boxes and diapers were provided to families with an expressed need for those items. Supermarket gift cards valued at \$50, courtesy of The Dunkin Joy Foundation, were also distributed to families experiencing food insecurity. In addition, parents received breakfast groceries for four consecutive weeks during May 2021, compliments from the Albertson Foundation and ACME supermarkets.

## PARENT ENGAGEMENT

In September of 2020, we received donations from our community partner “Kniffty Knitters,” They provided the children with 40 hats and 12 blankets. Furthermore, Bundles of Joy continues to support our families with much-needed and greatly appreciated donations of diapers. In addition, Apiary Café donated 50 books to the EHS/HS program, and Toys for Tots provided holidays gifts.

## EARLY HEAD START SOCIALIZATION

Socializations continued remotely through various video conferencing platforms. These virtual socializations followed the same in-person socialization routine in which there is a suitable environment with equipment and materials appropriate for children during the socialization. Although virtual, observing infants, toddlers, and twos in groups allowed parents to see and understand that children learn and develop differently. Parents were asked for their input in regards to future virtual socialization.

## PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences were held remotely using various video conferencing platforms.

## IN-PERSON LEARNING DURING SUMMER 2021

Our summer program ran from July 6, 2020, to August 13, 2021. In addition, in-person classes for the four-year-olds were held to promote school readiness for the upcoming 2021-2022 academic year. Children and their families were also provided mental health support services remotely via our mental health specialist.

## SUMMER PROGRAM

Head Start 6 Hours/12 Months	Site	# of Children
Head Start 6 Hours/ 12 Months	Rochambeau	17
HS 6 Hours/12 Months-Summer Kindergarten Readiness due to COVID-19	Rochambeau	30
<b>Total Summer Program Enrollment</b>	Rochambeau	47

We provided an in-person learning summer program designed to promote kindergarten readiness. As a result, we enrolled 30 children for the COVID-19 American Rescue Plan response and 17 children funded through our annual budget.

#### PLAN FOR 2021-2022 ACADEMIC YEAR

As of this writing, classes are scheduled to resume on September 13, 2021, and the current plan is to begin the academic year 100% in-person and full day. Should there be a spike in COVID infections or new guidance issued by the Office of Head Start, New York State, and the CDC, the plan is subject to change. All mandates issued by governing bodies will be adhered to for the safety of the children, their families, and our staff.

#### ELIGIBILITY, RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, ENROLLMENT, AND ATTENDANCE

As recommended by the most recent Community Assessment, we continue to collaborate and reach out to other community organizations to supplement our recruitment efforts. In addition, we strive to recruit families with limited access to services and live below the poverty level. Therefore, to actively recruit children in vulnerable situations such as those living with disabilities, experiencing homelessness, or being involved in the foster care system, we seek assistance from our various partners.

We regularly communicate with a local homeless shelter, the Early Childhood Parent-Child Program at Westchester Jewish Community Services, the Department of Social Services, the Family Justice Center, the Child Care Council of Westchester, and the White Plains Public Library.

These agencies refer underserved families with whom they interact to determine their eligibility for Head Start services.

Furthermore, our in-house family advocates actively recruit children and families at local community events and follow up with referrals from the Slater Center and other partnership agencies. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, our family advocates visited the Westchester County Department of Social Services and the Coachman Homeless Center in an active effort to identify & assist families with children in need of Early Head Start and Head Start services.

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

## EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The assessment for all home-based children has been changed to the Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP) assessment. The previous assessment, Teaching Strategies GOLD, did not enable parents to take an active role in the assessment process as we would like. The HELP is a comprehensive, ongoing, 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. Teachers used TSG to document their observations of the children and used the data to individualize instruction.

It was determined by the Education Manager and the T/TA Specialist that staff should participate in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) training. Consequently, the ELOF training occurred during Preservice 2020. Staff also participated in wellness workshops.

Additionally, we continued implementing the WordStart Early Literacy Program for families through a hybrid model of both virtual and in-person workshops by using nursery rhymes and music. Materials were distributed to both parents and teachers to accommodate the hybrid nature of the program's implementation.

**The following are outcomes complied in our outcomes report for the school year 2020-2021**



## 1 Year Old Cohort Assessment Results

	FALL 2020	WINTER 2021	SPRING 2021
Social-Emotional Development	80% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	100% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	100% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Physical Development	80% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	83.33% of children either met or exceeded expectations	83.33% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Language Development	60% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	60% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	70% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Cognitive Development	60% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	100% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	100% of children either met or exceeded expectations.

## 2 Year Old Cohort Assessment Results

	FALL 2020	WINTER 2021	SPRING 2021
Social-Emotional Development	20% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	89% of children either met or exceeded expectations	95% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Physical Development	68% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	88% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	95% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Language Development	56% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	68% of children either met or exceeded expectations	80% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Cognitive Development	78% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	80% of children met or exceeded expectations.	95% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Literacy Development	68% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	83% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	85% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Mathematics Development	63% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	66% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	75% of children either met or exceeded expectations.

### 3 Year Old Cohort Assessment Results

	FALL 2020	WINTER 2021	SPRING 2021
Social-Emotional Development	36% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	52% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	82% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Physical Development	50% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	71% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	92% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Language Development	37% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	49% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	73% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Cognitive Development	35% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	50% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	75% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Literacy Development	43% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	65% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	80% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Mathematics Development	39% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	60% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	78% of children either met or exceeded expectations.

### 4 Year Old Cohort Assessment Results

Our (4) year old's are transitioning and preparing for Kindergarten for the upcoming fall of 2021. Teachers are preparing our children for "Kindergarten Readiness," which refers to the six areas of learning development mentioned above. In Teaching Strategy Gold, we categorize their learning levels as either "Emerging" or "Accomplished ."All of our children learn differently, so there are children whose goals may not be met yet. We continue to support our early learners to prepare them for the next exciting step entering Kindergarten.

	FALL 2020	WINTER 2021	SPRING 2021
Social-Emotional Development	48% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	73% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	85% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Physical Development	40% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	54% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	80% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Language Development	55% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	78% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	85% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Cognitive Development	59% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	80% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	90% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Literacy Development	55% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	80% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	95% of children either met or exceeded expectations.
Mathematics Development	55% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	80% of children either met or exceeded expectations.	85% of children either met or exceeded expectations.



## HEALTH

Our Health Manager and Education Manager participated on the FSW Health and Safety Team coordinated by the FSW Human Resources department to develop health and safety protocols, policies, and plans that are in line with the recommendations of the CDC and New York State. Our Health Manager also developed COVID-19 Responses Health and safety plan specific to each site's needs. All children (100%) in the program have health insurance coverage utilizing 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.

As was done during the 2020-2021 academic year, when classes resumed in September 2021, children will be dropped off by their parents at the door of their building or classroom. They will receive temperature checks at sign-in by the Health Manager or designee. All Universal health precautions will be followed in accordance with OCFS regulations. Our Health Manager will provide guidance and training to all staff both in-person and virtually. In addition, the Health Manager will maintain contact with parents and continually update the children's health records.

## SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

During the 2020-2021 program year, there were 32 children out of 176 HS enrolled children who were identified as having a disability. Each of these children has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in which recommended supported services are indicated. Our program ensured full participation in program services and activities for enrolled children with disabilities by adhering to the recommendations of each child's IEP. In addition, our staff collaborated with the parents frequently, and parents were able to provide updates or inquire about new or emerging behaviors of their child(ren). The parents also informed teachers and other staff members of pertinent information related to their child when they were outside of the classroom to improve classroom instruction and the child's overall well-being.

Teachers diligently followed IEP guidelines for ensuring that classroom/remote learning lesson plans, adapted differentiated instruction and activities, accommodated each child's needs and individual learning style.

## EARLY HEAD START

During the 2020-2021 Early Head Start program year, Five of the 40 enrolled children were identified as having a disability. Each of these children has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) through the County Department of Health Early Intervention services (EI) to provide supportive services and programs. Teachers and the Head Start coordinators worked with the families remotely or in socially distant in-person meetings.

## TRANSITION

During the 2020-2021 academic year, children in the center-based EHS/HS programs partook in a staggered schedule, and the process is ongoing. In addition, parents were contacted individually to arrange a transition plan for the 2021-2022 school year with the ongoing pandemic.

*B. Transitions from Head Start to Kindergarten*  
Transitioning families and children to and from the program is an ongoing process. At the start of each academic year, children in the center-based EHS/HS programs have a staggered entrance so that not all children arrive on the same day. During the fall of 2020, in conjunction with the WPCSD, informational sessions were held for all families who have children entering kindergarten for the 2021-2022 academic year. During these sessions, parents and families learned of the many options for programs and schools in White Plains and their corresponding enrollment processes. Throughout the enrollment process, Family Advocates assist families to ensure that they are registered by the stated deadline and schedule kindergarten tours and screenings. Due to COVID-19, these meetings were facilitated remotely.

### *c. Transitions between programs*

A transition meeting for all EHS families transitioning into Head Start is scheduled in early May. This meeting allows families to learn and ask questions about the curriculum, family engagement processes, and health requirements. A transition meeting for all EHS families transitioning into Head Start is scheduled at the beginning of May. This meeting allows families to learn about the curriculum, family engagement, and complete health requirements. Due to COVID-19, parents were 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 2020-2021 program year, EHS served three pregnant women. In addition, our Health Manager facilitated access to ongoing care for the enrolled pregnant women who did not have existing access to such care. This was accomplished through meetings between the expectant mothers and our family advocates and virtual home visits.

Bi-weekly meetings were scheduled and conducted virtually for children and their parents in the EHS home-based model to socialize and gain information on topics pertinent to promoting good health, nutrition, child development, family planning, healthy marriages, dental care, etc. In addition, informational topics such as the benefits of breastfeeding, phases of child development, fostering self-esteem and confidence, implementing positive discipline strategies, good health and nutrition practices, SIDS prevention, shaken baby syndrome, etc., are also presented.

EHS staff facilitates developmentally appropriate activities based on the best practices 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. The meetings were conducted in a hybrid format: some were remote while others were in-person.

## TRANSPORTATION

There has been no change to transportation.

## PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

In light of the unprecedented COVID-19 global pandemic, Family Services of Westchester Head Start and Early Head Start Programs are intensely aware of its profound effects on physical health and mental health. Consequently, all staff received two Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) training to help bring awareness and learn how to identify behavior and symptoms related to traumatic experiences. We are dedicated to supporting the three pillars of our program community: children, parents and families, and staff. The Head Start program will benefit from the ongoing expertise and support provided by the mental health professionals at Family Services of Westchester. Furthermore, Family Services of Westchester will facilitate training in Trauma Systems Therapy in collaboration with New York University's (NYU) Child Study Center.

Trauma systems focus on the child and the child's systems, such as the family, school, and the larger community.

The Trauma Systems Checklist for Young Children (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, n.d.) examines children presenting with trauma symptoms and whether further treatment is needed so children can feel safe and families can understand what is causing their dysregulation. The Trauma Symptom Checklist for Young Children is a parent/caregiver tool developed to assess trauma-related symptoms. In addition, this tool allows for an evaluation of posttraumatic stress symptoms and symptoms such as anxiety, depression, and anger. The trauma evaluation tools will assist the mental health team identify children at-risk and families needing referrals and follow-up to mental health professionals.

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

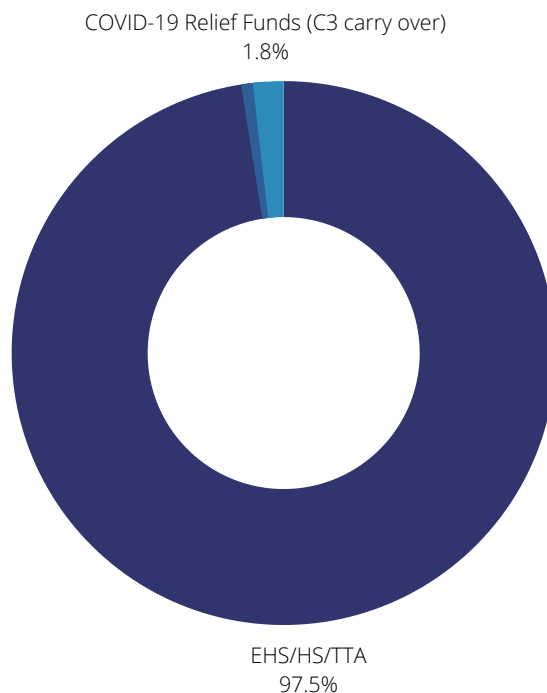
Beginning in September 2021, children will be screened for social and emotional development (ASQ-E) by the Mental Health Specialist and supported by the Mental Health Family Advocate.

# PROGRAM FINANCES

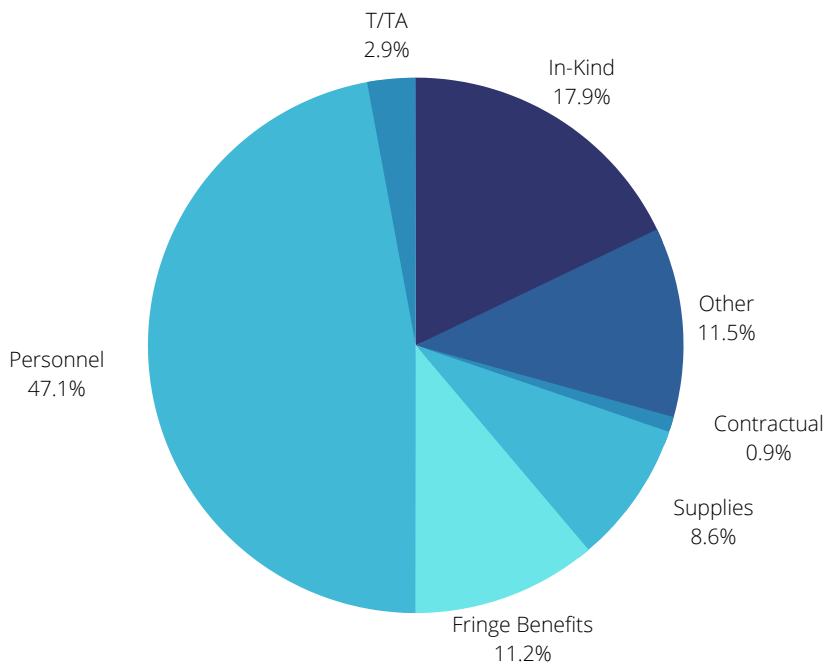
In the program year 2020-2021, the Family Services of Westchester, Inc. Head Start Program received a federal grant of **\$6,501,529** and in-kind contributions of **\$1,590,013**. The total Head Start budget for 2020-2021 was **\$7,950,065**.

The 2020-2021 Early Head Start Program received a federal grant of **\$905,488** and in-kind contributions of **\$226,372**. The total Early Head Start budget for 2020-2021 was **\$1,131,860**.

AGENCY SOURCE OF FEDERAL REVENUE	AMOUNT
Head Start/Early Head Start/Technical Assistance	\$7,594,201
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	\$53,785
COVID-19 Relief Funds (C3) (Carry Over)	\$141,477

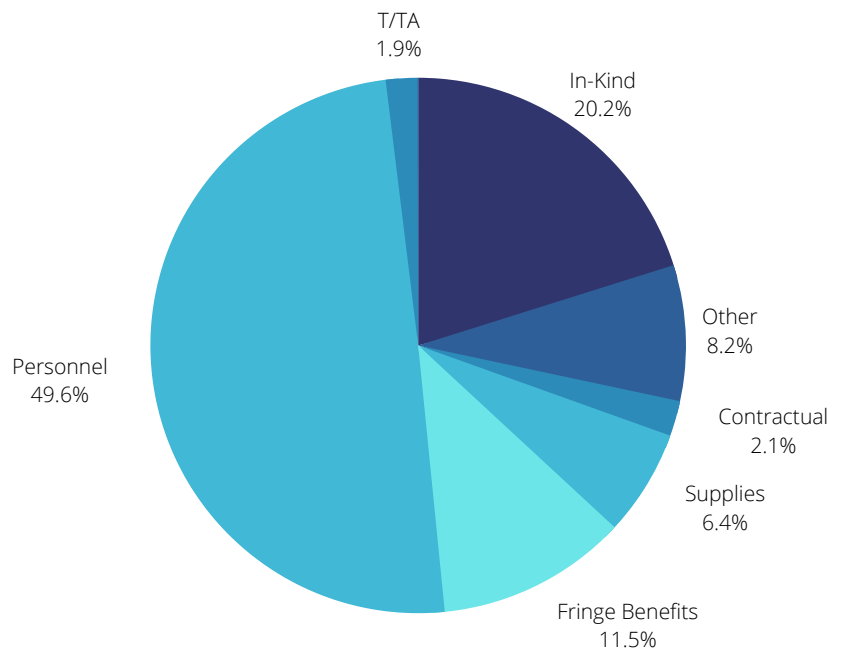


## BUDGET ALLOCATIONS



**EARLY  
HEAD START  
\$905,488  
ANNUAL BUDGET**

**HEAD START  
\$6,501,529  
ANNUAL BUDGET**



# PARENT TESTIMONIALS

## 2020-2021

I would like to give my appreciation to the program for giving my son the opportunity to learn and grow. The teachers and staff are amazing! My son comes and leaves happy and I can see why! I've seen improvement in my son's learning. Thank you! ~ Early Head Start parent of L.S.

My name is Yesica Pacheco. I have 2 children in the program, Angel and Josue Retuerto. This program has been a blessing for our family because it provided us with the security that our children were safe and loved while we were working. I love that everyone in the program is dedicated to the children, love them, and provide them with a safe environment. We love this program and are very happy. ~ Early Head Start North Street

I am Marlene Ramirez. My children are Joshua and Anthony Sayago and I had the privilege and honor to have them both in Early Head Start- a wonderful, nurturing and educative program. My children and my family had a wonderful experience; they learned to make friends, they were always happy and supported, provided with love. Words cannot express how thankful we are with all the support we got. With all my heart, thank you from the Sayago Ramirez family~ Early Head Start Home Based and North Street

As a parent who is a part of the Head Start program, my child really enjoyed his time there. He learned so many things from the Word Start program and yoga and other different activities provided by Rochambeau Head Start and UPK program. This summer he attended the summer program and really enjoyed learning about gardening, transportation, and weather. As a parent, I gained employment with Family Services of Westchester Head Start program. We are so happy to be a part of the community and all of the opportunities it has to offer ~ N.H. ~ Parent and employee ~ Rochambeau Head Start

My name is Micaela Cuenca. My daughter is Leslie Espiritu and we were at the Eastview Center Head Start program, the staff are wonderful, extraordinary human beings. The teachers focused on teaching children. Ms. Aurora is always helping us, the support group was always present for parents and children. My daughter was delighted with all her experiences and learnings. The time was hard due to the pandemic, but with the help of God we are still here; the whole group that gives us help to the community is very well organized and prepared to teach our children. And it is very pleasant for me that even after the program there and the summer classes so the children are more prepared and safe, for a new adventure in kindergarten. She learned to socialize, to lose fear of meeting new children. Thank you all for your great effort and time given to help us and our children who need to learn and grow. Thank you for all your help and may God continue to bless you by giving you strength and health to continue helping the community. ~ Eastview

My kids gained so much and were ready for kindergarten. As a family advocate, I am completing my goals set for myself when I met with my family advocate who was once a parent in the program, as well. We both volunteered in the classrooms and started as teachers and are now family advocates, encouraging other families to complete their goals. We support each other in going back to school for our Master's and Bachelor's degrees. ~ S.B. & P.T. ~Proud FSW employees, former Head Start parents ~ Rochambeau Head Start

Hello, my name is Vianey Perez. I am very thankful with the program for helping and supporting my son, Brandon. He learned so many new things during this time. Thank you to all the teachers ~ Early Head Start North Street

**We thank you for  
your continued  
support in our  
programs.**