



ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



FSW
FAMILY SERVICES
OF
WESTCHESTER

MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS, INSPIRING FUTURES

This past year has been one of growth, renewal, and continued commitment to the children and families we serve through our Head Start and Early Head Start programs. At Family Services of Westchester, we remain focused on addressing both long-standing and emerging needs in our communities. As families across Westchester face emerging rising economic pressures, housing instability, food insecurity and gaps in access to quality early education, our work has never been more urgent, or more impactful.

Head Start is more than early education, it is a comprehensive program that supports the whole child and their family. From health screenings and nutrition to family engagement and developmental support, our approach ensures that every child has the foundation they need to grow, thrive, and be ready for school and beyond.

Thanks to the unwavering dedication of our staff, the trust of parents and families, and the steadfast support of our partners and funders, we have continued to expand our reach. We now provide early childhood services in more communities than ever before, offering critical early learning opportunities in White Plains, Mount Kisco, New Rochelle, Port Chester, Mount Vernon, and Yonkers. Each site represents a promise kept to families: that we will meet them where they are, with care, compassion, and high-quality programming.

We are especially proud of the partnerships we have built with parents and guardians, our children's first and most important teachers. Together, we're laying the foundation for healthy development, school readiness, and a future filled with promise. This shared vision is what drives our work forward every day. Family Services of Westchester has been part of the fabric of Westchester since 1954. Through decades of change, we've remained a trusted resource, adapting to meet the evolving needs of our neighbors and communities. Today, as we look ahead, we are guided by the same principles that have always defined us: integrity, respect and a belief in the potential of every child and family we serve.

Thank you for walking alongside us on this journey. Your support strengthens our mission and helps ensure that every child in Westchester has the opportunity to thrive, and for this, we are deeply grateful.



Andrea B. Ruggiero

Executive Vice President
Community Health

PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

ABOUT US

Family Services of Westchester (FSW) is a private, non-profit, mental health and social service organization that has been serving and celebrating families in Westchester County since 1954. With a network of nearly 40 social service and mental health programs, FSW reaches thousands of individuals, children, and families each year, offering a lifeline to those facing unequal socioeconomic, health, and educational outcomes.

Our services are designed to empower the residents of our local communities, helping them achieve a higher quality of life. We are particularly proud to serve the youngest population in Westchester County through our Early Childhood Programs, providing an accessible, high-quality early childhood education that has the power to transform lives and inspire hope for a brighter future.

WHAT WE DO

At FSW, we recognize the magnitude of our responsibility, and we embrace it with the benefit of a dynamic network of Early Childhood Programs and an extensive list of vetted community partners. Together, we provide comprehensive early childhood services to eligible children from birth through age five, working in partnership with their families.

Our services are not just about providing support, but about creating a sense of community, uplifting and inspiring individuals, strengthening families, and fostering vital connections. We believe in the power of learning as a lifelong process and are committed to creating programs and services that embrace innovation and build a stronger, more inclusive community. We continually seek to redefine methods of serving communities, offering a wide variety of engaging and educational opportunities for everyone in each stage of life. We currently provide Early Head Start, Head Start, UPK, and a Special Education 4410 preschool program through the NYS Department of Education to children and families across multiple sites throughout Westchester.



EARLY HEAD START OVERVIEW

Early Head Start is a federally funded program that serves pregnant women and children from birth to age three in low-income families. The program provides early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services designed to nurture infants and toddlers during their most formative years.

FSW Early Head Start Services Include:

- **Center-Based and Home-Based Options:** Families can choose between weekly home visits or full-day, year-round center-based care. Both models provide individualized developmental support, parent education, and family goal planning.
- **Prenatal Support:** Expectant parents receive health education, prenatal care coordination, and postpartum support to promote healthy pregnancies, safe deliveries, and confident early parenting.
- **Infant and Toddler Education:** Using The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos, FSW's Early Head Start program nurtures children's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth through responsive caregiving and age-appropriate learning experiences.
- **Health and Development Monitoring:** Children receive regular developmental, hearing, vision, and health screenings. Families are linked to pediatricians, dentists, and early intervention services when needed.
- **Nutrition and Wellness:** Infants and toddlers receive balanced meals and formula as needed. Breastfeeding support is also available for nursing mothers.
- **Family Engagement:** Family Advocates work closely with caregivers to set personal and family goals, support self-sufficiency, and strengthen the parent-child relationship. Socialization events and parent workshops foster community and shared learning.
- **Inclusive Services:** Children with disabilities or developmental delays receive individualized support and services in coordination with early intervention providers.

Our Impact

FSW's Early Head Start program lays the foundation for lifelong learning, well-being, and family success. By providing nurturing relationships, safe environments, and critical early interventions, Early Head Start helps ensure children enter preschool healthy, secure, and developmentally on track.

HEAD START OVERVIEW

Head Start is a federally funded early childhood initiative that supports the growth and development of children from low-income families through a whole-child approach. The program focuses on preparing children for success in school and life by addressing their educational, health, nutritional, social, and emotional needs—while also strengthening the family unit.

FSW Head Start Services Include:

- **Programing:** Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m to 2:00 p.m.
- **Early Childhood Education:** Classrooms use the Creative Curriculum, aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, to foster learning across key domains: language, literacy, cognitive development, early math, science, and social-emotional skills.
- **Health and Development Screenings:** Children receive routine health, vision, hearing, and developmental screenings to ensure early identification of needs and connection to appropriate services.
- **Nutrition:** All children are provided with nutritious meals and snacks daily, following federal CACFP guidelines, and families receive guidance on healthy eating and wellness.
- **Family Engagement and Support:** Families are supported by Family Advocates who help them set personal goals, access community resources, and engage in school activities. Parents are also active decision-makers through participation in the Policy Council and parent committees.
- **Inclusion and Individualization:** FSW Head Start serves children of all abilities. Individualized services and inclusive practices ensure that children with disabilities and those needing additional support thrive alongside their peers.
- **Community Collaboration:** FSW partners with local school districts, health providers, and community agencies to support children's transitions into kindergarten and ensure continuity of care.

Our Impact

FSW's Head Start program empowers families, strengthens communities, and gives children the tools they need to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. Each child leaves Head Start more confident, curious, and ready to learn—making a lasting impact that ripples across generations.

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The FSW Board of Directors (BOD) is comprised of nine (9) Westchester County community members and two (2) Policy Council Members. Our two newly elected directors, Blakeley Lowry and Ally Gallin, as well as the entire board, are committed to ensuring effective oversight and governance of the organization. With Blakeley Lowry's 20 years of experience as a global public health professional and maternal mental health advocate and Ally Gallin's expertise in fiscal management and strategic planning, we have a dedicated team ready to lead. Our Board chairperson, Lisa Copeland, brings valuable experience in early childhood education and development. The Board also includes several attorneys. FSW affirms that there will be no changes to our governance structure.

POLICY COUNCIL

The Family Services of Westchester Head Start Program Policy Council comprises elected parents and community representatives. This council convenes monthly to review and approve program plans and policies. It serves as a vital link to Parent Committees and acts as the governance voice for parents of currently enrolled children. During the 2023-2024 program year, the Policy Council members remained unchanged. Meetings were held both in person and virtually throughout the program year.

GOVERNING BODY RELATIONSHIP

Oversight and review are essential for the success of the Head Start program. The Policy Council regularly analyzes financial statements, program summaries, enrollment reports, and guidance from the Secretary. Annually, they assess audits, strategic plans, and program reports. All decisions are then submitted to the Board of Directors, which reviews the documents for approval, ensuring effective program oversight. Our Head Start Director guarantees that all governing body and Policy Council members receive training on their responsibilities within 180 days of beginning a new term, with additional training provided as needed.



ENROLLMENT OVERVIEW

Family Services of Westchester operates both Head Start and Early Head Start services across multiple locations in Westchester County through center-based and home-based program options. Services are offered directly by FSW and through our dedicated delegate and partner agencies.

FUNDED ENROLLMENT AND PROGRAM OPTIONS

Program Type	Funded Enrollment	Center-Based	Home-Based
Head Start	1,095	1,095 (100%)	N/A
Early Head Start	96	76 (79%)	20 (21%)

All center-based enrollment slots meet or exceed the federal standard of 1,020 annual hours for Head Start preschoolers and 1,380 hours for Early Head Start infants and toddlers. FSW prioritizes full-day, full-year access to meet the needs of working families.

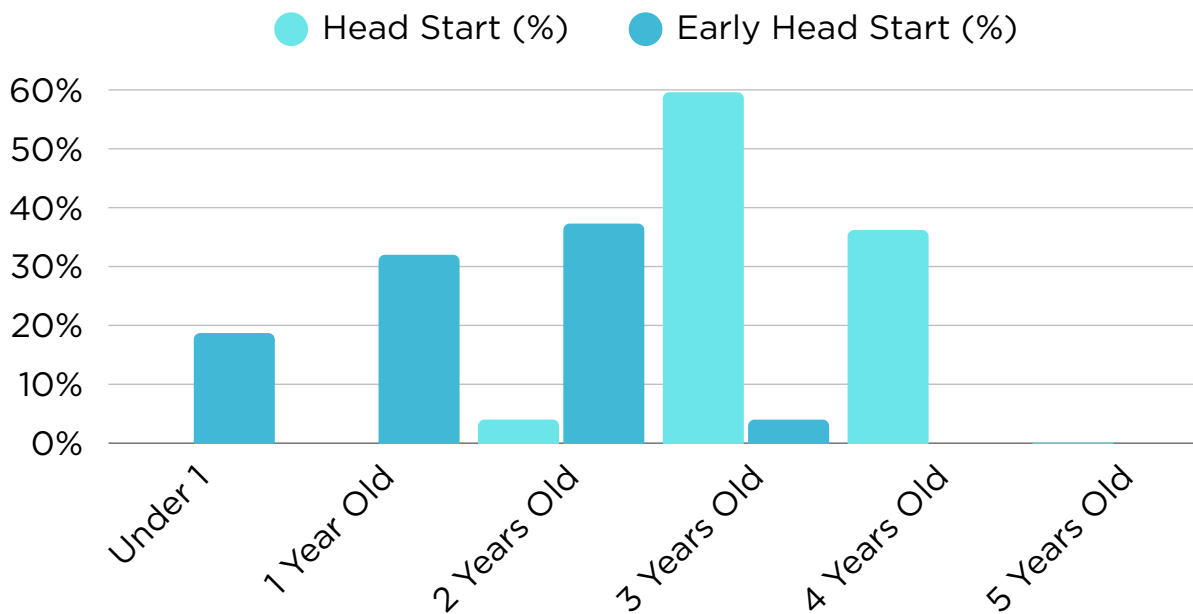
CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT

Cumulative enrollment reflects all children and families served throughout the year, including those who enrolled and exited mid-year.

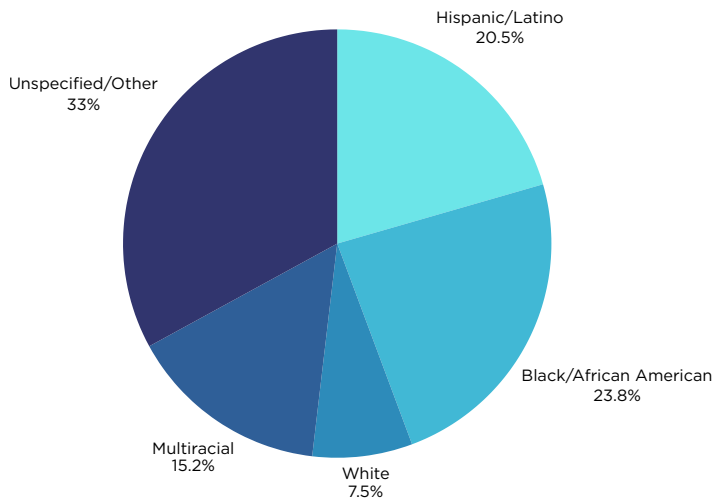
Program	Total Enrollment	Children	Pregnant Women
Head Start	745	745	N/A
Early Head Start	75	69	6

DEMOGRAPHIC OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Age Distribution

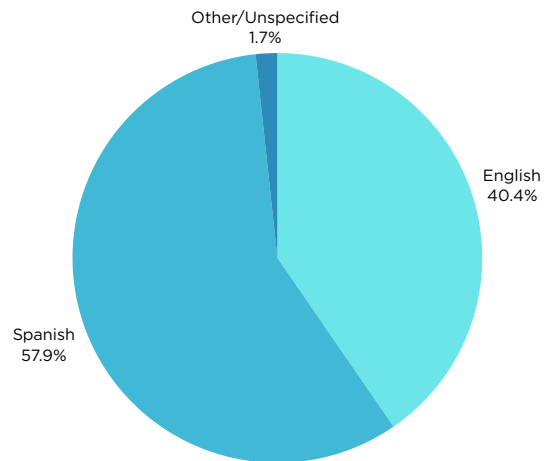


Ethnicity and Race



More than half of families identify as Hispanic/Latino. Racial diversity is reflected in the high percentage of multiracial, Black, and White families, and a significant portion of families did not report ethnicity or race.

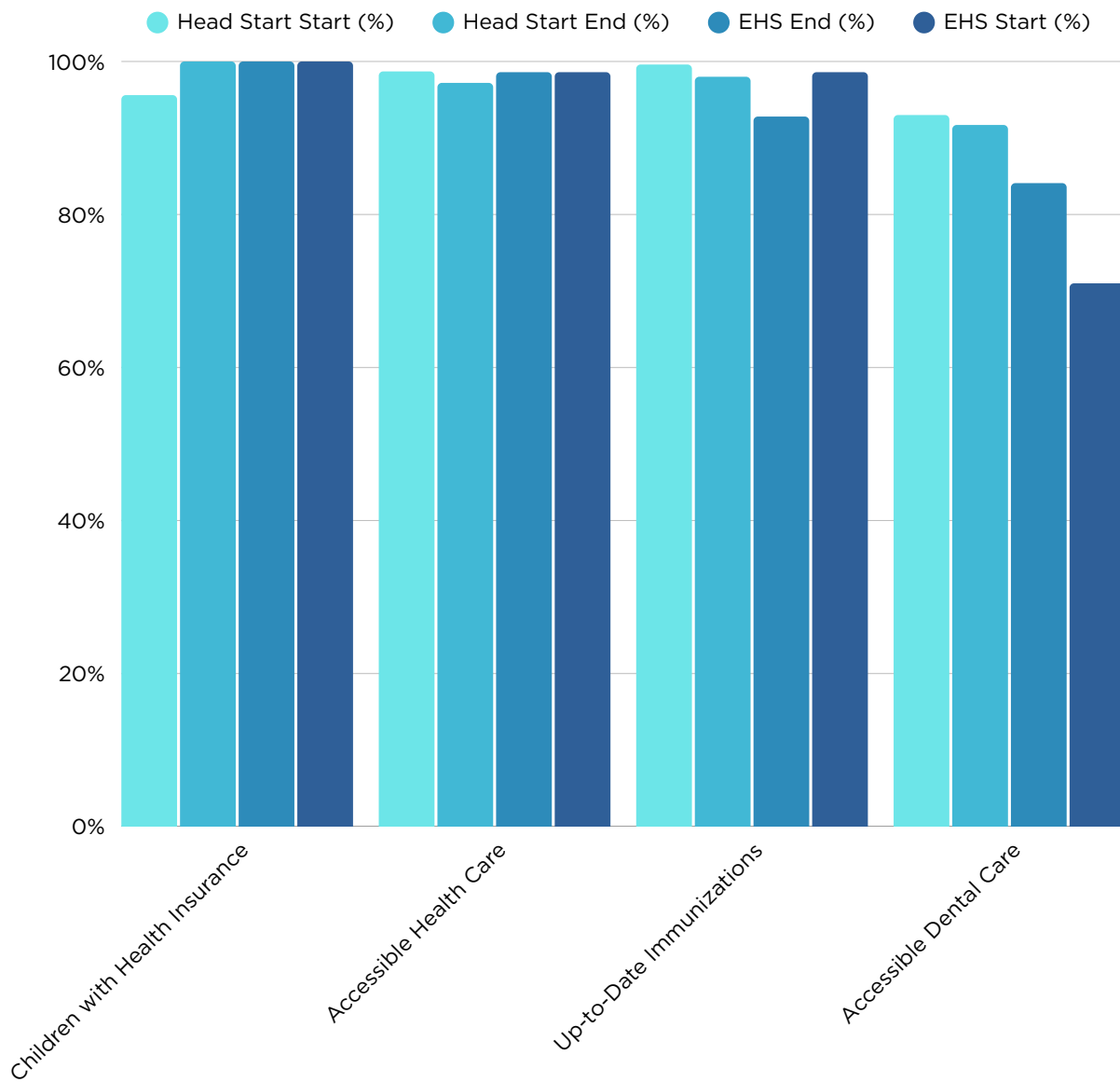
Primary Language



These figures highlight the bilingual and multicultural strengths of the families FSW serves.

HEALTH SERVICES

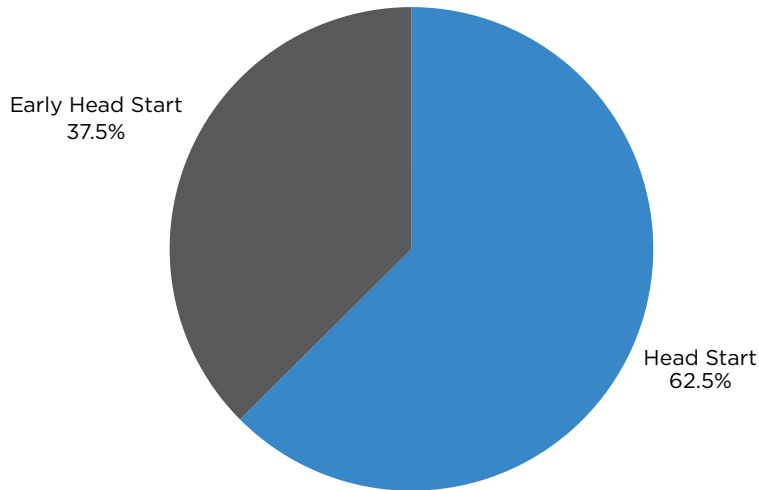
FSW prioritizes timely access to health care, immunizations, and dental services. Our partnerships with pediatric providers, dental clinics, and health specialists help ensure families are connected to ongoing care.



SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

FSW provides early identification and support for children with special needs through collaboration with the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) and Early Intervention (EI).

Children with Disabilities



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Mental Health Team conducted a self-assessment to align with Head Start Performance Standards, updating the Mental Health and Disabilities Service Plans for the 2024-2025 school year. To ensure consistent use of the Second Step social-emotional curriculum, the team provided training and created a usage calendar for teachers. They also trained staff on understanding IEPs and implementing Behavior Plans, which helped reduce challenging behaviors and supported classroom management.

Due to staffing shortages, the team collaborated with the Early Step Forward program to provide additional mental health consultation services, ensuring compliance with monthly service standards. They prioritized timely ASQ screenings to identify children needing interventions, maintaining compliance with IDEA enrollment standards.

Parent workshop attendance increased, and specific sessions for father engagement were held. A Staff Wellness Action Plan was also developed to enhance staff well-being, including a monthly wellness newsletter to promote self-care.

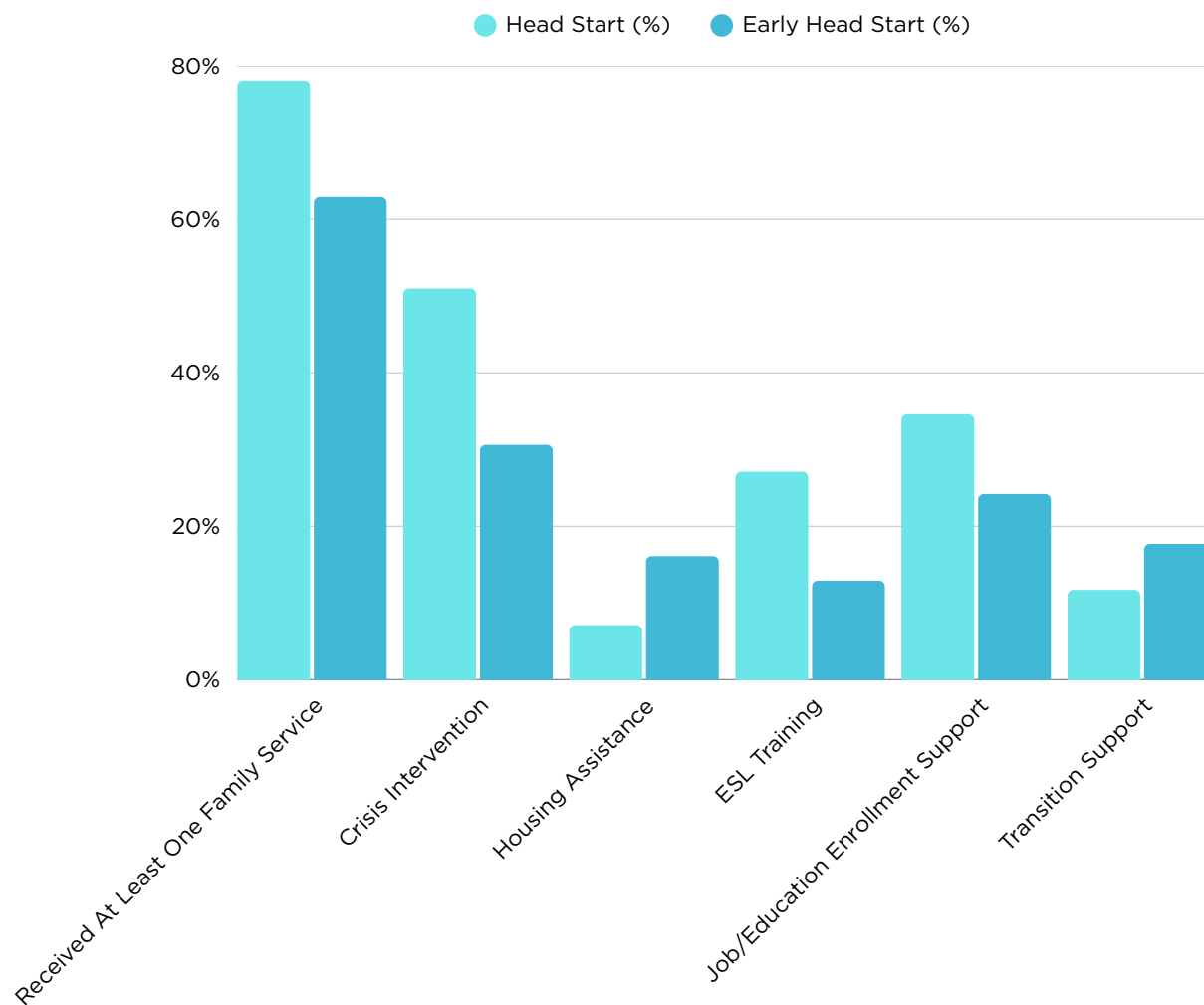
Overall, the Mental Health and Disabilities Team promoted a culture of social-emotional well-being for children and families, with ongoing assessments, counseling, and support for effective classroom management while remaining adaptable to meet diverse needs.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

FSW's family engagement model centers on partnership, empowerment, and responsive practices. We offered numerous family events and workshops, including:

- Fatherhood Initiative programs
- Nutrition and wellness education
- Parent series on mental health
- Goal-setting and case management through family partnership agreements

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

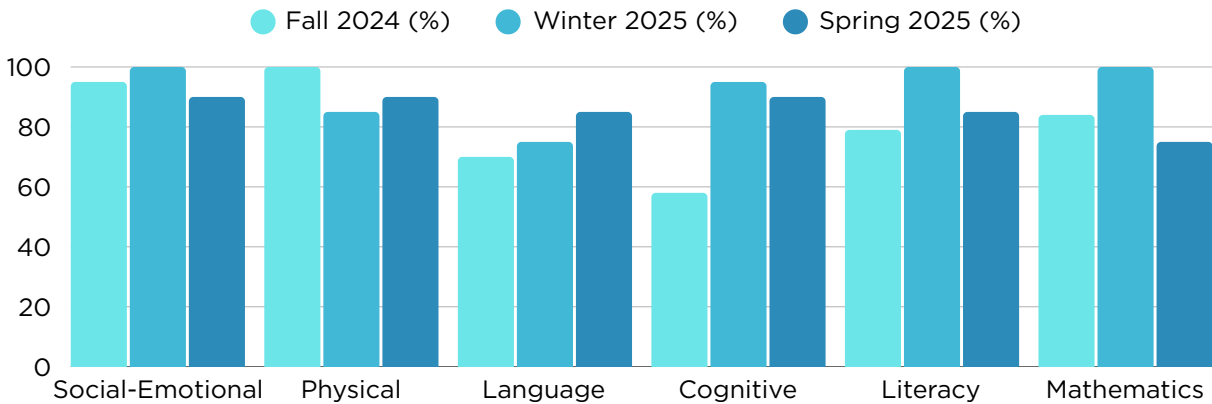


SCHOOL READINESS

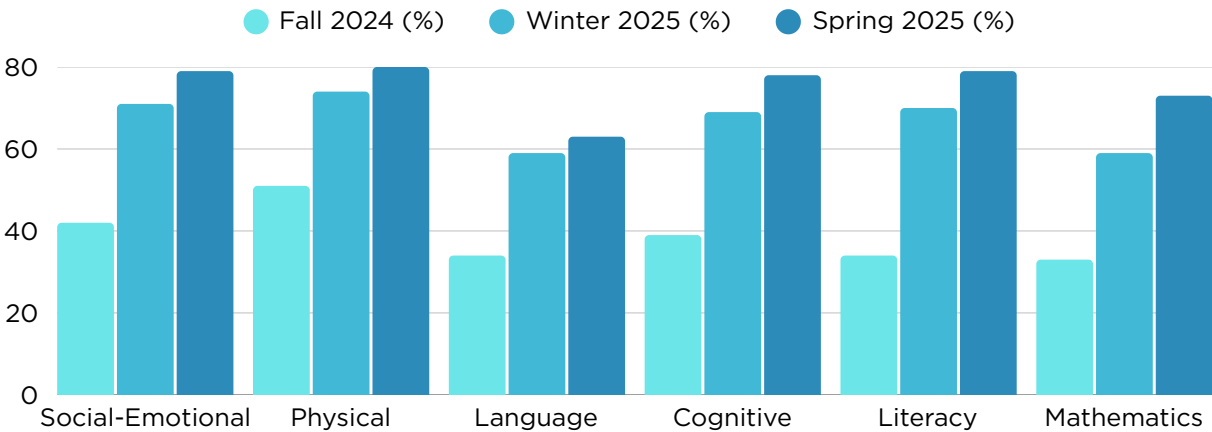
Family Services of Westchester’s Early Head Start (EHS) and Head Start (HS) programs continue to support school readiness through targeted instruction and data-informed practices. EHS outcomes remained high throughout the year, with notable growth in Language and consistent performance in Social-Emotional, Physical, and Cognitive domains. Slight declines in Spring Literacy and Math outcomes highlight the need for ongoing support in those areas.

The Head Start program showed meaningful progress across all domains. From Fall to Spring, children improved steadily in Physical, Cognitive, and Literacy skills. While Language remains an area of need, targeted interventions and curriculum enhancements have started to yield results. These trends reinforce the value of responsive instruction, collaborative planning, and enriched learning environments.

EARLY HEAD START OUTCOMES



HEAD START OUTCOMES



STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The Head Start program is committed to providing comprehensive professional development opportunities for all its staff members throughout the school year. These development sessions focus on content areas, including Education, Disabilities, Family Engagement, Health and Safety, Leadership, and Wellness. Workshops are strategically scheduled for both morning and afternoon sessions to ensure that all staff have the flexibility to participate according to their availability.

In addition to the workshops, the program actively offers a wealth of information regarding various educational pathways, including the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and Associate's, Bachelor's, and Master's degree programs. Recognizing the importance of mental health and wellness in the workplace, the organization successfully launched its first Self-Care & Wellness retreat in April, providing staff with an opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions and self-reflection.

Organizing professional development events is not without its challenges. One significant issue has been managing the capacity for workshops, as there are instances when specific sessions reach full capacity while others remain under-attended. In response, the professional development coordinator has developed a strategic approach by scheduling the same session multiple times throughout the day, offering staff more accessibility and the chance to participate in the sessions that interest them most.

The success of these professional development days is underscored by the valuable networking opportunities they create with various presenters. Participants not only receive crucial information and resources needed for planning future development sessions but also enjoy the feedback and support provided by presenters. This interaction fosters a collaborative spirit among staff and presenters, enhancing the overall learning experience.

In the past year, the professional development coordinator has successfully collaborated with educational institutions such as Grand Canyon University and the Childcare Council of Westchester. These partnerships allow for discussions about degree options and available resources for staff. Additionally, plans are underway to include topics related to health and financial well-being in the professional development offerings for the 2024-2025 program year.

The overarching goal of the Head Start program is to expand professional development beyond traditional workshops to incorporate a wider array of vendors and resources focused on education, mental health, and wellness. By doing so, the program aims to promote growth and support for every staff member in their respective fields. The initiative strives to transform professional development days into rich opportunities for learning and personal growth, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness and well-being of the entire staff.

AGENCY FUNDING

During the 2023–2024 program year, Family Services of Westchester received a total of \$16,156,861 in federal funding to operate its Head Start and Early Head Start programs. This included \$14,398,564 for Head Start and \$1,758,297 for Early Head Start. To fulfill the 20% non-federal match requirement, the agency secured \$4,039,216 in non-federal share contributions through volunteer hours, in-kind professional services, facility use, and community support.

The total program budget, combining federal and non-federal funds, was \$20,196,077. This funding supported high-quality, comprehensive early childhood services to 1,095 Head Start and 96 Early Head Start children.

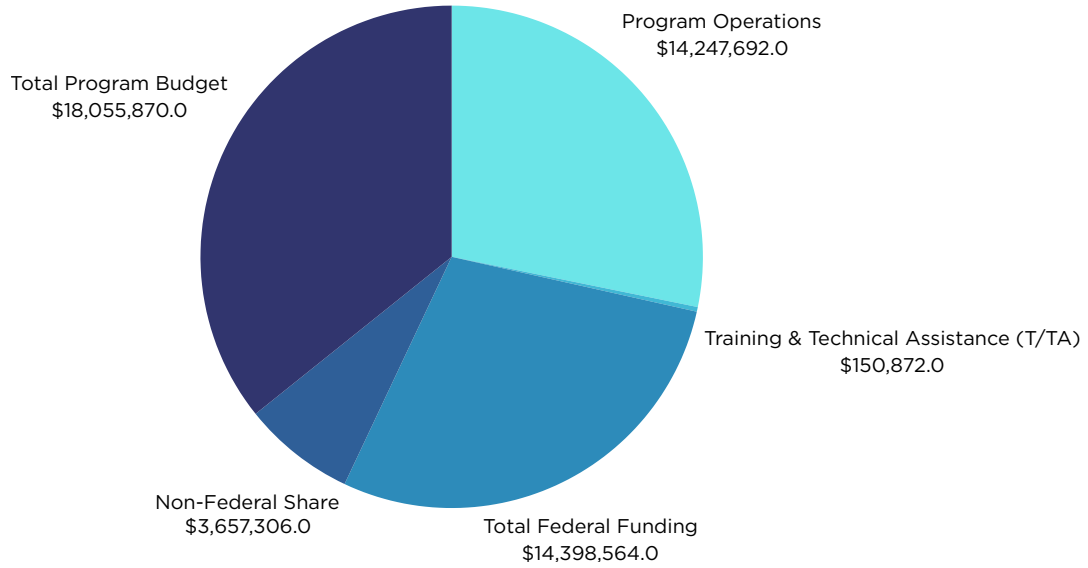
In addition to Head Start funding, FSW received \$260,000 from the White Plains School District to operate a Half-Day Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) program. While not part of the Head Start grant, this local funding helped increase access to early learning opportunities for preschool-aged children in White Plains and supported blended programming in accordance with district and state UPK standards.

FSW operated the programs directly and in partnership with multiple community-based organizations and delegate agencies. This collaborative funding model allowed the agency to serve over 1,191 children and families, strengthen workforce development, and maintain program quality while complying with all Head Start Program Performance Standards.

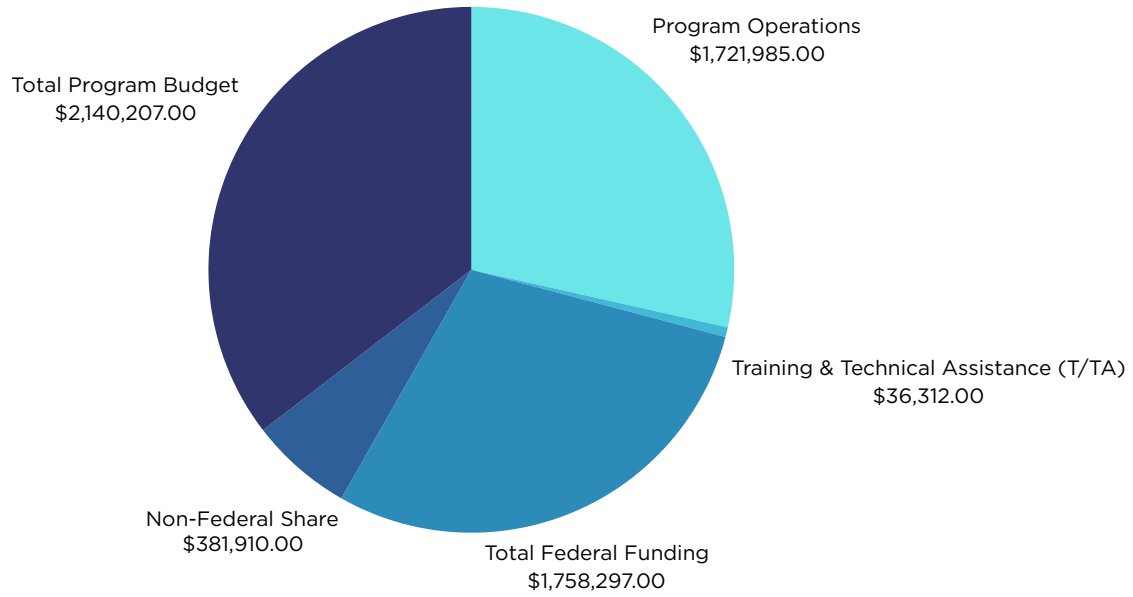
TOTAL AGENCY FUNDING

Program	Federal Funding Awarded	Non-Federal Share	Total Program Budget	Funded Enrollment
Head Start	\$14,398,564	\$3,657,306	\$18,055,870	1,095 children
Early Head Start	\$1,758,297	\$381,910	\$2,140,207	96 children
Combined Total	\$16,156,861	\$4,039,216	\$20,196,077	1,191 children

HEAD START FUNDING OVERVIEW



EARLY HEAD START FUNDING OVERVIEW



HEAD START & EARLY HEADSTART LOCATIONS

FSW-OPERATED HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START SITES

Site Name	Address	Phone
Mount Kisco Head Start	95 Radio Circle Drive, Mount Kisco, NY 10549	(914) 244-8825
The Ellen Farrar Center	114 East 4th Street, Mount Vernon, NY 10550	(914) 863-9010
Port Chester Head Start	17 Spring Street, Port Chester, NY 10573	(914) 452-0202
Eastview HS/UPK	350 Main Street, White Plains, NY 10601	(914) 422-2223
North Street Center EHS	456 North Street, White Plains, NY 10605	(914) 428-8225
Rochambeau HS/UPK	228 Fisher Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606	(914) 422-2420
Yonkers Children's Place	10 St. Joseph's Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10703	(914) 375-4102

PARTNER AND DELEGATE AGENCY SITES

Partner/Delegate Name	Site Name	Address	Phone
St. Peter's Child Care Center	St. Peter's Head Start & UPK Site	204 Hawthorne Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10705	(914) 476-2152
Collin Allen Child Development Center	Collin Allen Head Start & Early Learning	103 W 2nd Street, Mount Vernon, NY 10550	(914) 664-7005
Lois Bronz Children's Center	Head Start/UPK Site	30 Manhattan Avenue, White Plains, NY 10607	(914) 761-6134
Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester	Mt. Kisco EHS/HS Partnership	351 Main Street, Mount Kisco, NY 10549	(914) 666-8069

Acknowledgements

On behalf of Family Services of Westchester's Head Start and Early Head Start programs, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the families, staff, community partners, and supporters who make our mission possible each day.

To our dedicated Head Start and Early Head Start staff your passion, resilience, and commitment to early childhood excellence are the foundation of our success. Thank you for your tireless efforts to nurture, educate, and empower the children and families we serve.

To our parents and caregivers—thank you for trusting us with your children and for being active partners in their learning journeys. Your engagement and advocacy strengthen our program and help shape brighter futures.

We also acknowledge the unwavering support of our Policy Council, Governing Board, delegate and partner agencies, and the many volunteers who share their time and talents with our children and families. Your leadership and collaboration are essential to our continuous growth and impact.

A special thank you to our federal funding agency, the Office of Head Start, and our local partners and other community collaborators. Your financial investment and shared commitment ensure that every child has the foundation to thrive.

Together, we celebrate another year of progress and renewed purpose as we continue working toward our vision of strong children, strong families, and strong communities.

**Empowering Families,
Inspiring Futures -
Thanks To You**

