

# 2020

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START  
ANNUAL REPORT



— EPISCOPAL —

**Children's  
Services**

BELIEVE. ACHIEVE. SOAR.



## Dear Friends and Supporters,

There's something special about Episcopal Children's Services. We are an organization that rises to challenges and creates impact for thousands of children and families every year.

This year has been even more challenging, as COVID-19 has brought more demands for services and new needs. The harsh reality is that the children we serve are facing extreme challenges – poverty, trauma, disabilities, homelessness, and more. What makes our work even more important is that the stress of these challenges actually alters the brain architecture of these babies, toddlers, and preschoolers, making learning even more difficult.

Without intervention, the negative effects of these challenges will last a lifetime. That's why our Strategic Plan for 2020 – 2023 intentionally embraces bold goals because our work makes a difference – young children are making tremendous learning gains, parents are engaged in their child's education, and families are improving their financial stability.

We are proud to present this report showcasing the incredible impact of our work. We are so grateful for every friend, supporter, employee, and part of Episcopal Children's Services. It is only with your help and commitment that we can change the lives of thousands of children every year.



**Connie Stophel**  
*Chief Executive Officer*



**Vicki Adams**  
*Board President*





— EPISCOPAL —  
**Children's Services**  
BELIEVE. ACHIEVE. SOAR.

**2020-2023**

# STRATEGIC PLAN

An agency overview of our goals, strategy and roadmap.

## MISSION

TO CREATE OPPORTUNITY SO THAT THE CHILDREN WE SERVE CAN ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

### WHO WE ARE

Increase awareness of ECS brand in our local communities.



Strengthen the awareness of ECS services and programs to support the needs of the community.



### QUALITY ENHANCEMENT



Achieve CDA Gold Standard Status.

Implement Trauma-Informed System of Care.

Become a National Head Start Program of Excellence.

Ensure quality of all services meet the highest standards.

### PROGRAM EXPANSION



Continue to pursue agency growth and geographic expansion opportunities.

Expanding services to meet people where they are and address community needs.



### DEVELOPMENT



Increase non-federal match dollars.

Grow existing fundraising streams and identify new appeals to support ECS at all levels.

Strengthen and cultivate relationships and partnerships in new and existing grant areas.

### TECHNOLOGY



Enhance tools and systems to improve efficiency internally.

## VISION

ECS WILL BE A RECOGNIZED LEADER IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND A 501(C)(3) WITH A STRONG ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT THAT USES RESEARCH AND BEST PRACTICES TO HELP FAMILIES ENSURE THEIR CHILDREN ENTER SCHOOL READY TO LEARN.



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Vicki Adams**

**Board President**

*Clay County Sheriff's Office*

**Thabata Ford**

**Vice President**

*Wolfson Children's Hospital*

**The Reverend**

**Canon B. Wiley Ammons**

**Secretary**

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**Malachi Beyah**

**Head Start Policy Council Liaison**

*M & M Maintenance Plus, Inc.*

**Yared Alula**

*PGA Tour, Inc.*

**The Right Reverend**

**Samuel Johnson Howard**

*Bishop of Florida*

**Bob Ohrablo**

*Jacksonville Icemen*

**Sara Leutzinger Pomposo**

*Jacksonville Business Journal*

**Christine Smith**

*Baptist Health*

**Karen Estella Smith**

*Karen Estella Strategy & Communications*

**Susan Wildes**

*Florida Blue Foundation*

**Christian Winterbottom, Ph.D.**

*University of North Florida*

# RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE

Our approach to continuous improvement throughout our Head Start/Early Head Start Program results in well-deserved recognition for our parents, our community partners, and our staff. We are so proud of the many Head Start Heroes and Achieve Award winners who have elevated excellence to new levels to better the lives of the children and families we serve. Throughout this report, you will see the achievements of our Head Start Heroes and Achieve Award winners who were recognized locally. We want to take special notice of those who also won the highly competitive State and Regional awards below.

## REGION IV HEAD START ASSOCIATION WINNERS

These two individuals received the highest possible recognition for their successful accomplishments. After winning both the local and statewide awards, they advanced to the regional competition, where they have been honored for their work.



The **Humanitarian of the Year Award** celebrates an individual who utilizes their resources and leadership to achieve positive outcomes in their community and help Head Start/Early Head Start children and their families. **Dr. Rebecca Marcon**, most recently of the University of North Florida, has made numerous contributions as a leader, advocate, and researcher for early childhood education that have resulted in the most powerful impacts for our children, our staff and for the entire Head Start Program. For more than 20 years, she has provided compassionate and dedicated psychology interns to support our young students and their families, which culminated in over \$2,000,000 in contributions of non-federal match.

The **Achievement Award** celebrates exceptional performance in the delivery of services to children with disabilities and supporting parents in their role as advocates for their children. **Renee Santillo**, Child Development Manager for our HS/EHS program, is passionate in her work, creative in her approach and motivates others to join her in collaborative advocacy for children with disabilities. She has worked to develop Individual Classroom Plans to create inclusive classroom settings while supporting teachers in providing quality instruction. Every day, Renee shows her tireless dedication to supporting children with special needs.

## FLORIDA HEAD START ASSOCIATION WINNERS

Parents are their child's first, and most important, teachers. Both the parents who have been honored with the statewide awards have demonstrated a commitment to excellence and achieved positive outcomes for their families.



The **Beating the Odds Award** celebrates a Head Start/Early Head Start parent who has overcome significant challenges on the journey to self-sufficiency. **Nicole Everage** has shown courage and determination to overcome the many obstacles and hardships faced by a young mother with two young children who finds herself in incredibly difficult circumstances. She has overcome homelessness, purchased a car and is pursuing her dream to become a veterinarian - all while continuing to volunteer and support Monty and Hunter's education.

The **Parent of the Year Award** celebrates a Head Start/Early Head Start parent who has demonstrated the ability to serve as a role model for their children and to make a positive difference in the community. **Antoinette Brown** showcases what it means to be a committed parent through her dedication to her children's education. She is a role model to other parents as she is an excellent leader and active collaborator. Despite health challenges, she is present at every activity at the Baker center and serves as a Policy Council Representative.





## DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS,

2019/2020 was another successful year for Episcopal Children's Services Head Start/Early Head Start Program. It has truly been a year filled with challenge and opportunity — from the myriad of issues created by the COVID-19 crisis to the wonderful opportunity to grow through the award of a new grant to serve an additional 561 children in Alachua County.

In this report, you will read about the amazing achievements of our children as they grow and develop so that they enter kindergarten ready to learn. You will see how our parents and caregivers work so tirelessly to become successful advocates for their children. You will learn about the extraordinary strengths of our dedicated staff as they work so diligently to help our children and families become all they can be.

In times like these, I am reminded of the words of Horace Mann, considered the founder of public education in the United States, and the first president of my alma mater, Antioch University, who tells us, "Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity." Every day, I see so many victories - a child born with a disability who takes their first step, a single mom who learns English after moving here from Haiti, a family who gets their own apartment after experiencing homelessness, a new staff member who became a teacher because she was so inspired by her experience as a Head Start parent.

Our program is strong because of the commitment and dedication of everyone who supports our work including our Board of Trustees, Policy Councils, volunteers, staff, parents, and their wonderful children who are entrusted to our care. You are all AMAZING and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.



**Autumn Tomas**  
*Vice President*  
*Head Start/Early Head Start*



## POLICY COUNCIL OFFICERS

### REGION I

**Melinda Littles**  
*Chair*

**Doug Wilds**  
*Vice Chair*

**Melanie Rodgers**  
*Secretary*

### REGION 2

**Sharlene Singleton**  
*Chair*

**Ashley Williams**  
*Vice Chair*

**Nikitta Chalmers**  
*Secretary*

# SERVING THOSE MOST IN NEED

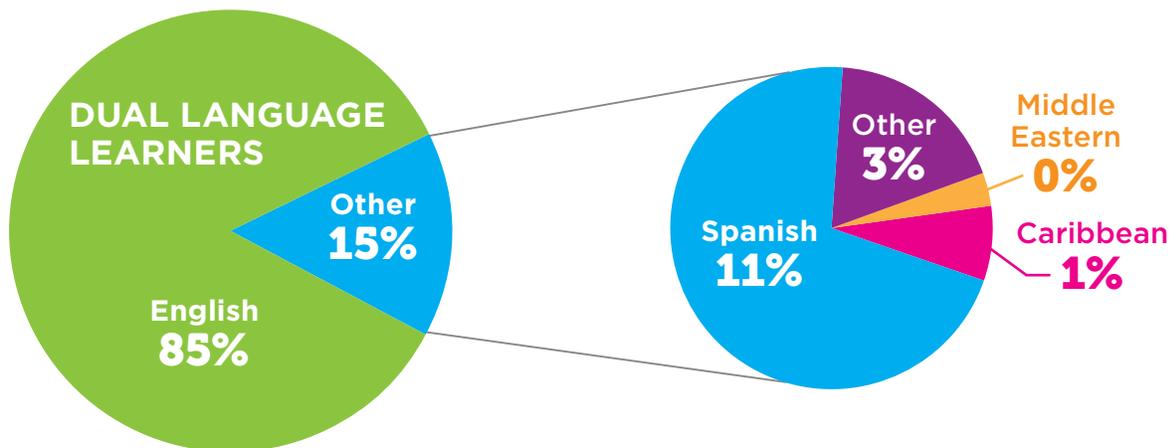
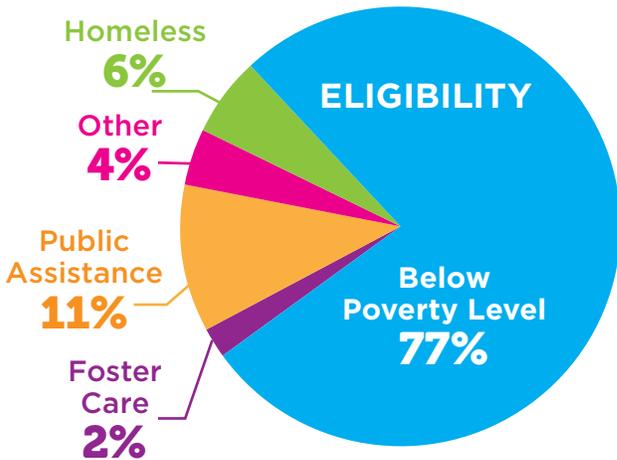
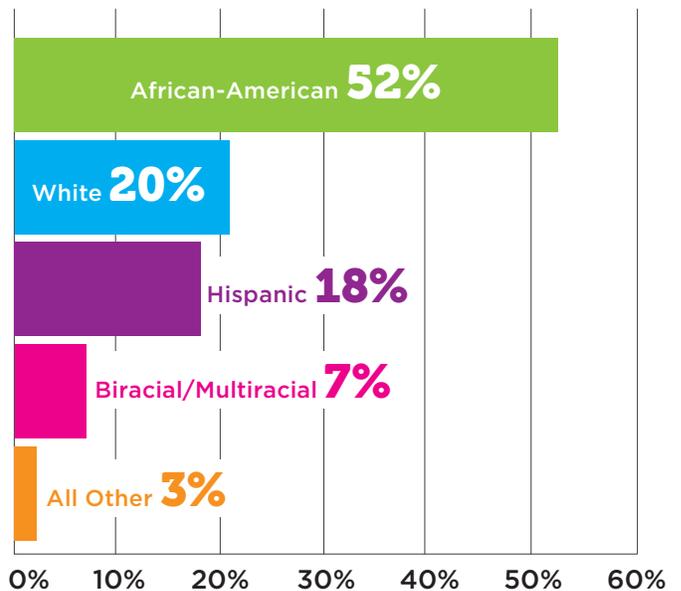


Early education makes sense for our community. When children enter school armed with skills and knowledge, they are more likely to graduate high school and attend college, be employed with a livable income, engage in healthy behaviors, and contribute to their community.



Our students are diverse in race and ethnicity, and speak many languages.

## Race/Ethnicity



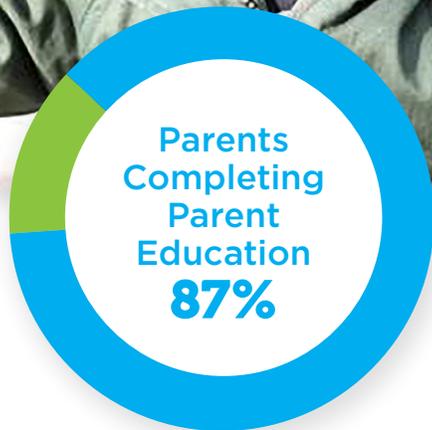


# HEAD START HERO

The **Ron Herndon Head Start Parent Scholarship** celebrates a Head Start parents who has mobilized other parents and community members to affect real change while also pursuing post-secondary education. Our nominee, **Sasha Reese**, is pursuing her bachelor's degree in nursing while raising three young children. Despite a challenging health condition, she works tirelessly in our Parent Engagement program as well as volunteering with the elderly and infirm.



Our parent engagement approach is designed to support family well-being and promote children's learning and development. By creating respectful and responsive partnerships between parents and staff, parent and family engagement promotes parents' role as their children's lifelong educators. We are committed to an inclusive environment for parents and caregivers that includes parent participation, leadership opportunities, support in their children's health and development, enhancement of parent-child relationship, opportunities for employment, and paths to improve financial well-being.



# HEAD START HERO

The **Father of the Year Award** celebrates an individual who utilizes their resources and leadership to achieve positive outcomes in their community and help Head Start/Early Head Start children and their families. **James Clemons** is a committed father who consistently goes above and beyond, is dedicated to service at the Clyatt House center and always shows kindness and respect. He demonstrates his love for learning with his own children as well as every child and parent at the center.

# PREPARING CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

## HEAD START HERO

The **Teacher of the Year Award** celebrates exemplary teachers who have strong long-range potential for leadership and the ability to inspire a love of learning in young children. **Elizabeth Velez-Marmol** is a model teacher at the Clermont Center who shares her excitement for education and her love for each of her students daily. She not only inspires her students to give their best, but she also mentors and supports other teachers and uses her language skills to support our Dual Language Learners.

### EDUCATION CREDENTIALS TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Early education is implemented by a strong team of professionals with extensive experience and credentials because of the importance of quality education.

Bachelor's or  
Advanced Degree

113

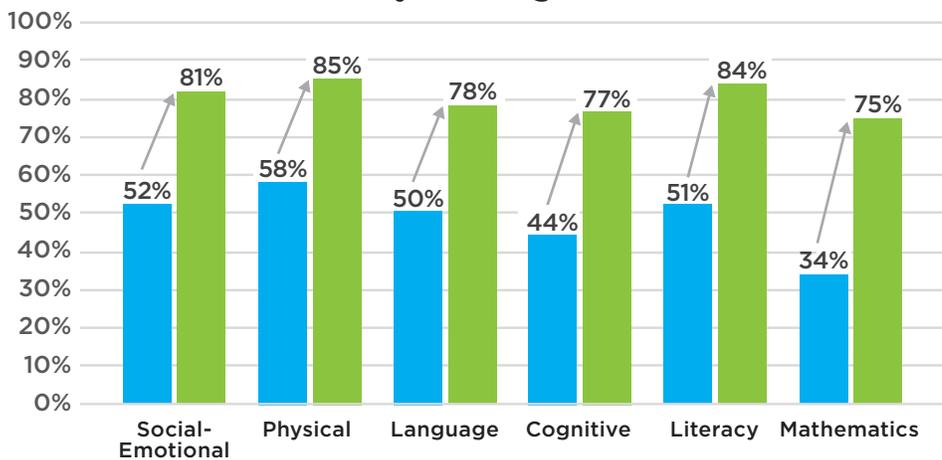
Associates  
Degree

77

Child Development Associate

261

Gains by Learning Domain



**Social Emotional Development** gives children the capacity to connect to others and learn about their world.

**Physical Development** encompasses more than height and weight – children develop perception, motor skills, and complex coordination.

**Language** allows us to communicate, and children need words and skills to express their thoughts and feelings.

**Cognition** provides the basis for problem-solving, mathematical thinking and scientific reasoning.

**Literacy** builds skills to recognize letters, phonetic sounds, and understand how printed words convey meaning.

**Mathematics** builds the foundation for algebraic thinking and geometry through counting, recognizing patterns, and understanding shapes.





## HEAD START HERO

The **Administrator of the Year Award** celebrates the important contributions of forward-thinking administrators to the long-term success of Head Start/Early Head Start programs and, ultimately, the children and families we serve. **Lori Gabel** readily shares her knowledge on the complexities of operating in a dual Center Manager/Family Advocate role in her work at the Trenton center. She excels at building relationships and community partnerships to bridge children's connections from the classroom to the world while continually supporting and enhancing the learning of our young students.

**We want every child to enter school ready to learn.** We utilize a framework of child development that is grounded in comprehensive research about what children should know and be able to do to succeed in school. Each learning domain has specific benchmarks for each age, so that teachers can create stimulating and effective learning experiences so that children progress across each key area of learning. We regularly assess our students to demonstrate our impact on learning gains, and the graph highlights the improvements made by our four-year-old students in this program year.



## HEAD START HERO

The **Aubrey Puckett Memorial Award** celebrates a Head Start alum (parent or child) who now works for a Head Start/Early Head Start program. Our nominee, **Maritza Alexander**, Director of Educational Operations, enrolled in Head Start as a young child, as her parents were committed to give their children the best opportunities in life. She has seen how Head Start made a huge difference in her life and is committed to giving those same opportunities to the children and families we serve.

# HEALTH AND WELLNESS



## Physical and Dental Health

Children must be healthy in order to learn, making health an integral focus of our Head Start/Early Head Start program.

Preventive care is crucial for our children's success and our Health team prioritizes ensuring our children have health insurance as well as ongoing accessible health and dental care

## HEAD START HERO

The **Sargent Shriver Excellence in Community Service Award** celebrates an individual's or organization's significant achievements through innovative community service to Head Start/Early Head Start. Our nominee, **Heart of Florida Health**, created an onsite portable health clinic at our Skylark location staffed with a doctor trained in Pediatric Medicine supported by a medical assistant. Their work has overcome barriers to quality health care faced by so many of our parents who were struggling to obtain well-child checks and immunizations.

## NUTRITION

Food insecurity for children was identified as a critical issue, with more than 1 in 4 young children without access to sufficient healthy food, and the pandemic will continue to increase those numbers, which highlights the importance of our nutrition program.

**96%**  
Children  
with Health  
Insurance



**61%**  
Children with  
Dental Homes



**93%**  
Children with  
Medical Homes



## HEAD START HERO

The **Staff of the Year Award** celebrates the significant contributions and extraordinary dedication of professional staff member in the fulfillment of the organization's mission and established goals. **Katherine Debrocq** demonstrates her commitment to high-quality nutrition, which is critical for child development.

She consistently demonstrates her ability to create comprehensive solutions, such as when she developed a system to support children with food allergies. Not only are children provided with safe meals, but she also ensures that each family receives one-on-one nutrition support to help their children at home.





## COVID-19

The pandemic created a host of challenges, but the Episcopal Children's Services team sprang into action with creative approaches to support our children and families. Our teaching staff quickly created virtual educational environments so our young learners would continue to grow and develop. Our mental health team proactively reached out to families, offering comfort, support, and care for emotional health needs.

As our centers were forced to close for a few months until we could safely re-open, our low-income families needed immediate assistance with diapers and wipes, which are both essential and expensive. Our community partners, including United Way, First Coast Relief Fund, and the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, rallied with generosity with funding to provide these needed supplies for our families in need. Our staff organized drive-up plans at our centers to safely distribute diapers for our children.

The Office of Head Start also responded with new funding so that we could offer summer learning for our children who were entering kindergarten for additional learning support.

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19, our enrollment remained strong. The new Duval grant began enrollment in August, 2019 and rose to 96% of funded enrollment by July, 2020 — and



the Central Florida, Lake, and Northeast Florida grants all averaged 100% of funded enrollment during the program year.

Of course, we could not do this work without the support of amazing community volunteers. Despite not being able to host volunteers in our center, our team creatively responded with virtual volunteer opportunities. One of our most popular volunteer opportunities was *ECS Reads* where volunteers read books for our children.



*Pictured Right: Tennikka Hughes from Action News Jax on ECS Reads*





Our annual Achieve Awards celebrate the extraordinary accomplishments of our top Volunteers, Teachers, Staff Members, Parents and Partners.

After a highly competitive nomination and selection process, our top achievers from across our service are chosen because of their commitment to excellence in supporting the lives of vulnerable children and families in our community.

Every one of these winners exemplifies the spirit of giving back and we are all grateful for their generosity and dedication.

## PARENTS OF THE YEAR

### **Skyler Bailey**

Ms. Bailey is committed to going above and beyond to ensure her children get the education they need. In addition to helping her children learn at home, she continues to progress in her journey to self-sufficiency, even while facing many challenges.

### **Antionette Brown**

Ms. Brown is a loyal and faithful volunteer who is committed to education. She is a leader who is always willing to serve, from creating booths for the fall festival, making curtains for classroom windows, and serving on the Policy Council.

### **James Clemons**

Mr. Clemons always demonstrates respect and kindness through his engagement in every center activity. Not only is he one of our most engaged fathers, but he is also committed to hard work through his perseverance to overcome life's challenges.

### **Jackeline Colon**

When Ms. Colon volunteers, her words and actions demonstrate a great work ethic for our children. Despite a busy work and family schedule, she demonstrates her value for education through numerous hours of service.

## STAFF OF THE YEAR

### **Demica Davis**

Demica is filled with a contagious joy that results in the donation of time, treasure, and talent from our community partners. She is fully committed to working with the community to bring needed resources to our children.

### **Lori Gabel**

Lori excels at building relationships to support and enhance children's learning. She is passionate about her work, which is evident in every conversation, and she works diligently to help parents support the learning gains of their children.

### **Davetta Williams**

Davetta inspires a love of learning in young children by inspiring a love of teaching with her staff. She ensures teachers have what they need to be successful so that intentional learning experiences are created for children and families.



### **Diana Williams**

Diana is committed to building the highest-quality program to serve our children and families, from developing a strong, comprehensive complete process for APPLE accreditation to building positive relationships with community partners.





Although the COVID-19 pandemic made a large gathering to celebrate our Achieve Award winners impossible, we still carried on by bringing the celebration to each winner individually!

### TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

#### Kristen Mooney

Kristen exemplifies the true spirit of teaching through her passion for creating new ways to help children learn in her classroom. She meets every child with love, friendship, fun, and she is a never-ending source of knowledge and joy.

#### Elizabeth Velez-Marmol

Elizabeth is an outstanding educator who inspires her students to do their best. They show their excitement for learning through their enthusiasm for their lessons, and she always is full of encouragement and praise for the children in her class.

### CHILD CARE PARTNERS OF THE YEAR

#### ABC Academy

ABC Academy's commitment to quality is seen in every aspect of the center – with a warm and welcoming atmosphere, children engaged in learning, teachers creating exciting activities for their class, and community members volunteering daily.

#### Lane Avenue Child Development Center

Lane Avenue CDC promotes the growth and development of all children and parents in their wonderful space for children's learning. Their knowledge of the needs of the community is instrumental in giving every child a fair chance in life.

### VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

#### Ernie Albert

Ms. Albert instills a love of reading through story time at her library, where our children are always eager to visit. She and her volunteer staff also teach valuable skills, including how to check out books for at-home reading.

#### Dr. Catherine Bridges

Dental care is crucial for our children and pregnant women. Dr. Bridges brings dental services to our centers, which puts children on the path to success because her preventive care reduces future dental problems.



#### Billivan Burton

Despite a demanding work schedule, Mr. Burton always makes time to launder all the blankets. Thanks to him, every child has a beautiful, clean blanket for their daily nap so that they are well rested and can continue learning.

#### Gail Werneburg

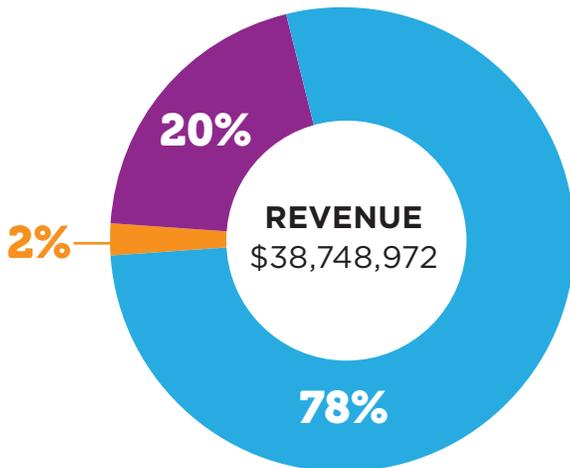
Ms. Werneburg is a faithful volunteer with an unwavering commitment to serving children. Her dedication has resulted in over 1,000 Head Start children being "adopted" for holiday gifts.

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

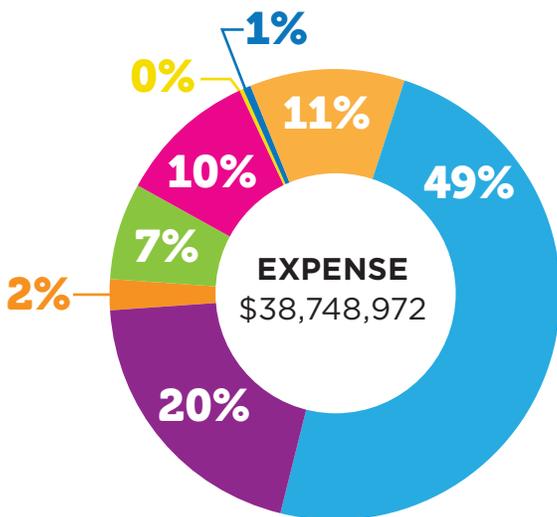
The Office of Head Start intentionally provides funding for only 80% of program operations. Episcopal Children's Services must demonstrate that community's commitment by raising an additional 20 cents for every federal dollar received.

Together, with our parents, volunteers, and community partners, we raised over \$7.5M in matching funds to support our Head Start/Early Head Start Program.

That's a small price to pay to ensure our community is preparing our youngest citizens to enter school ready to learn. When children succeed in school, they enter the workforce prepared to compete in the global economy.



- Office of Head Start, \$30,336,478
- Non-Federal Match, \$7,584,121
- Food Program, \$828,373



- Non-Federal Match, \$7,584,121
- Personnel, \$19,003,175
- Fringe Benefits, \$4,268,413
- Supplies, \$447,955
- Travel, \$145,964
- Contractual, \$3,683,161
- Other, \$2,787,810
- Food, \$828,373





## REVIEWS BY THE OFFICE OF HEAD START

Episcopal Children's Services is justifiably proud to present the results of our most recent Monitoring Review by the Administration for Children and Families. This Focus Area Two Review evaluated our performance and compliance with the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

Program Performance: Program Infrastructure, Oversight, and Improvement

100%

Program Performance: Service Delivery

100%

Education and Child Development Service Delivery

100%

Health Program Services Delivery

100%

Family and Community Engagement Service Delivery

100%

### HEAD START HERO

The **Edward Zigler Innovation Award** celebrates local program who have partnered to create high impact services to children and families. Together, with numerous local mental health providers, we created an in-house team of mental health professionals who provide support for effective classroom management, positive learning environments, mental health consultation for children and families, and education for parents and caregivers. This is a great demonstration of our approach to community engagement.





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