



Montgomery County Head Start Community Assessment 2025



APPROVED BY COMMUNITY ACTION BOARD AND HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL

November 19, 2024

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Finalized: November 19, 2024

Table of Contents

- I.** INTRODUCTION..... 2

- II.** METHODOLOGY 2
 - a. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS3
 - b. PIR DATA ANALYSIS WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS..... 3
 - c. STAFF SURVEY3
 - d. PARENT SURVEY..... 4
 - e. GOVERNING BODY..... 4

- III.** OVERVIEW: MONTGOMERY COUNTY HEAD START 4

- IV.** DEMOGRAPHICS 5
 - a. ETHNICITY, RACE, CULTURE AND LANGUAGE6
 - b. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FACTORS IMPACTING FAMILIES 7

- V.** OTHER CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND CHILD CARE PROGRAMS 10

- VI.** MONTGOMERY COUNTY HEAD START: FIVE YEAR TRENDS (2020-2024)..... 17
 - a. KINDERGARTEN READINESS 18

- VII.** PRIORITIES..... 21

- VIII.** COMMUNITY SUPPORT 21

- IX.** SUMMARY..... 26

- APPENDICES 27
- APPENDIX A: HEAD START 2020-2024 PIR DATA REPORTS28
- Appendix B: HEAD START CHILDREN SCHOOL READINESS OUTCOMES 35
- APPENDIX C: MCPS TEACHING STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS 36
- Appendix D: MCPS FAMILY SERVICES STAFF SURVEY RESULTS..... 38
- APPENDIX E: HEAD START PARENT SURVEY RESULTS 41
- Appendix F: HEAD START COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS 43
- REFERENCES AND END NOTES 44

I. INTRODUCTION

Montgomery County Community Action (CAA), an agency of the Office of Community Affairs under the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), was established in 1965. Since then, the Community Action Board, have been charged with the responsibility of recommending programs to improve the lives of the County's poor, the development of leaders within low-income communities, and the development of systems to increase their self-sufficiency, self-esteem and gain more control over their own lives.¹ Montgomery County government serves as the Head Start grantee (non-federal entity) agency and the Community Action Board (CAB) serves as the governing body.

Beginning in 1965, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has served as the delegate (sub-recipient) agency for the County's Head Start Program. As the grantee (non-federal entity), the county's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) provides oversight and direct services supports for the Head Start program. CAA administers, monitors and provides technical assistance to the delegate (sub-recipient) agency MCPS and Head Start families. MCPS Head Start services include education, disability, parent engagement and social services. DHHS' School Health Services team supports Head Start children and families' health and dental needs as well as provide income eligibility support/assistance for various programs. Early Childhood Services (ECS) provides social and emotional learning training and coaching for Head Start teaching teams and parents. School Readiness for all enrolled children and family self-sufficiency are priorities of the County's Head Start Program. To assure that the goals of the federal Head Start program are met, DHHS and MCPS coordinate an on-going monitoring system that follows the Head Start Act 2007, the revised Head Start Program Performance Standards (2024), and all other federal, state, and county requirements.

The Head Start Program is committed to serving children and their families who are deemed eligible under the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The Family Income Guidelines published in the Federal Register and updated annually reflect revised poverty data and determine Head Start eligibility for low-income families. These federal guidelines specify income limits for the designation of "poverty": in 2024, a family of four is limited to \$31,200 and a single mother with one child (a family of two) would be limited to \$20,440 under the federal poverty guidelines.

The Montgomery County Community Action Board (CAB) which advocates for policies impacting low-income people in Montgomery County, found the Federal Poverty Guidelines to be an inadequate measure of low-income conditions of need in terms of the ability of families to meet their basic living expenses because of the high cost of living in Montgomery County. It has adopted the *Self-Sufficiency Standard* as a more realistic assessment of examining a family's ability to meet its needs. The median family income (in 2023 inflation-adjusted dollars) in Montgomery County was \$133,556 according to the 2023 US Census American Community Survey. The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Maryland 2023² calculates the amount a family would need to live in Montgomery County at a basic needs level, incorporating *actual* regional and local cost variations, net effect of taxes and tax credits, and costs associated with employment, with no public or private assistance. The amount to live without public and private assistance, based on the Self Sufficiency Standard in 2023, for a family of four (2 adults, one preschooler and one school-age child) would be \$122,943 per year, or \$58.22 total per hour wages. A single mother and a preschooler would require \$116,864, substantially above the 2023 federal poverty line of \$20,440 for a family of two.

II. METHODOLOGY

In accordance with the revised federal Head Start Program Performance Standards 2024 (HSPPS) that require the grantee agency to conduct a comprehensive community assessment at least once over the five-

year grant period³, DHHS conducted its comprehensive Community Assessment in the FY2025 program year. The Community Assessment supports the County Head Start program's strategic planning process and the establishment of the five-year project period program goals. The Community Assessment includes the latest information on relevant data and trends in the County's Head Start service area. This includes demographic information about children and families eligible for Head Start services; strengths and challenges affecting the County's low-income families; other early care and education programs available in the County, data regarding the health, dental, nutritional and special education needs of the children; and resources in the community that may help address these needs.

a. Data Collection and Analysis

DHHS conducted research of County and State data sources for the following topic areas:

- Demographic make-up of Head Start eligible children and their families, including their estimated number, racial, ethnic and linguistic composition
- Number of children experiencing homelessness in the County
- Number of children in foster care within the County
- Number of children with disabilities and relevant resources provided to children by community agencies
- Other early care and education programs/services that may serve Head Start eligible children, including public funded state and local preschool programs and the approximate number of eligible children served
- Number of three-year-old children aging out of the county's Early Head Start programs
- Education, health, nutrition and social services needs of eligible children and families
- Prevailing social or economic factors that impact children and families' well-being
- Work, school and training schedules of parents with eligible children
- Resources in the community that are available to address the needs of eligible children and families

In addition, national, state and local agencies' publications and reports were examined, and information analyzed for the trends that are important for future Head Start and early care and education planning (see References).

b. PIR Data Analysis with Community Partners

On October 24, 2024, Montgomery County Head Start hosted a Community Assessment and Five-Year Project Grant Planning meeting with community partners that focused on a review and analysis of Montgomery County Head Start's annual Program Information Reports (PIR) over a five-year period: FY2020-FY2024 (see Appendix A). The planning meeting included alignment of the county's Head Start program with Montgomery County's ECE Initiative and County Executive Priorities: ***Thriving Youth and Families' Priority and Key Indicators*** for increasing the number of children in Montgomery County Ready for Kindergarten success. (See References)

Thriving Youth and Families

Getting all children off to a good start in life has innumerable long-term benefits for our community, including a stronger economy, lower poverty, and less crime. Children need healthy, supportive families, great schools, and caring communities.

c. Staff Survey

MCPS Head Start staff participated in a survey developed to assess and gain their input on the changes within families and the community that impact enrolled families and children and how the program can better support the needs of children and families (see Appendix D).

d. Parent Survey

Annually, MCPS Head Start facilitates a *Parent Satisfaction Survey* to assess parents' understanding of the importance of School Readiness and the type and frequency of school readiness activities parents share with their children. In addition, parents received the opportunity to share their experience with the Head Start program. (See Appendix E).

e. Governing Body

During the August 16, 2024, annual Policy Council (PC) executive committee retreat, the PC reviewed the community assessment summary and data report and discussed priority areas for meeting family needs. The Community Action Board (CAB) September 24, 2024, monthly meeting included an overview of the Community Needs Assessment process and timeline, identifying community strengths and challenges, and establishing priorities to support Head Start children and families.

III. OVERVIEW: MONTGOMERY COUNTY HEAD START

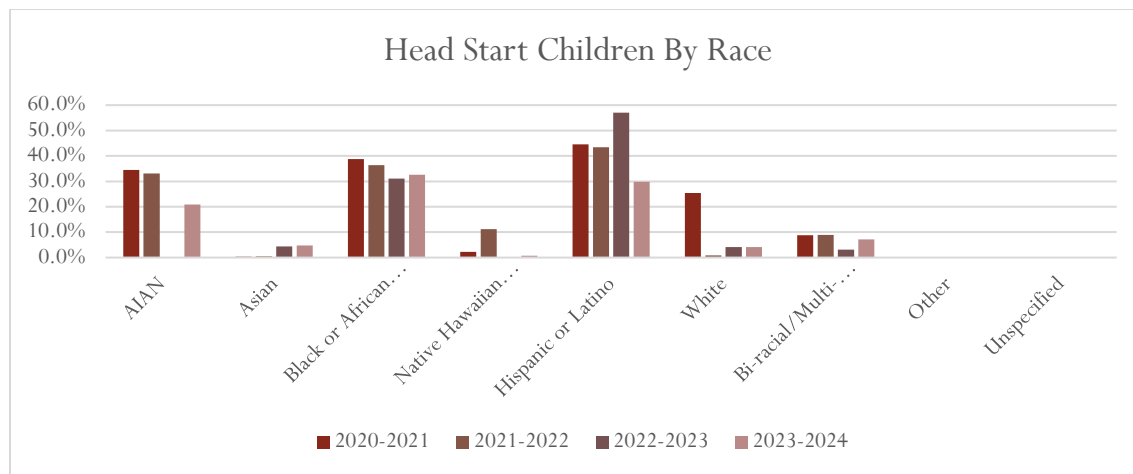
In the FY2024 program year, Montgomery County Head Start was funded to serve 648 children and their families. Montgomery County Public School's Head Start/Pre-K program provided direct services for a total of 713 Head Start-enrolled children and an additional 3,030 Pre-Kindergarten eligible children of which approximately 1,000 were also eligible for Head Start services. There are approximately 1,600 children eligible for Head Start living in the County. Montgomery County Head Start is currently serving 40% of all Head Start eligible children.

FY2023-2024	Number of Enrolled Children
Head Start 4-year-old enrolled children	623
Head Start 3-year-old enrolled children	90
Pre-Kindergarten enrolled	3030
Head Start eligible children enrolled in Pre-K	1000

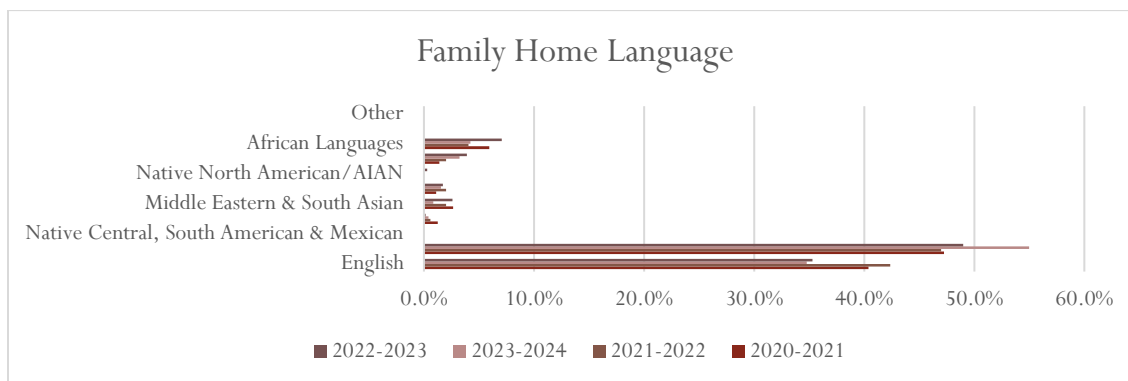
Montgomery County Head Start provides comprehensive services in a center- based option model. The program is in 30 Montgomery County Public Schools throughout the County with a total of 34 classrooms. During the 2023-2024 program year, 86% of children were enrolled in center-based full day classes (5 days per week, 6 hours per day) and 11% of children were enrolled in center-based part day classes (5 days per week, 3.5 hours per day).⁴

Montgomery County Public Schools is the largest school district in Maryland and the 17th largest school district in the nation. MCPS served 159,671 students in the 2023-2024 school year.

The racial and linguistic make-up of the children enrolled in Montgomery County Head Start has remained consistent over the past five years, with Hispanic/Latino families being the highest number of enrolled children and Spanish being the second highest primary home language after English. Montgomery County Head Start enrolled families include recent immigrants from Central and South America, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa.

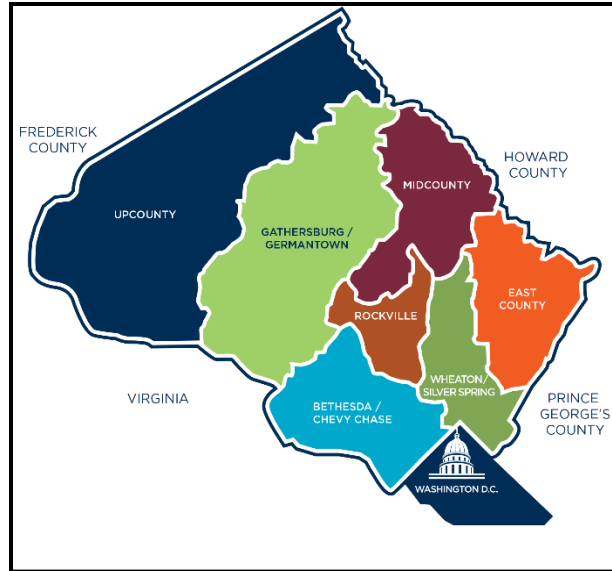


Head Start Children Primary Home Language



IV. DEMOGRAPHICS

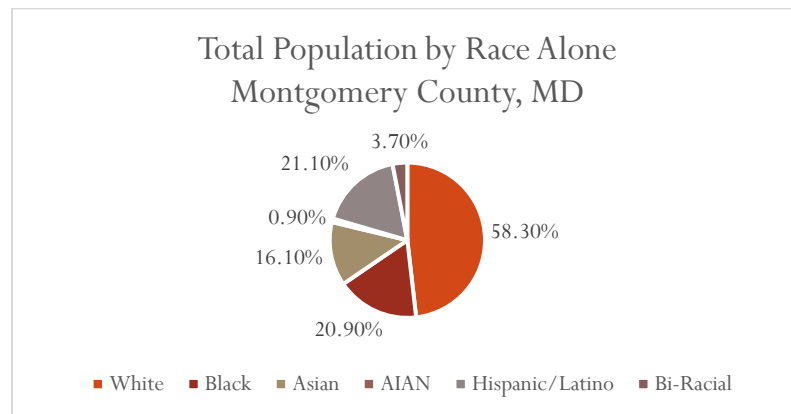
Montgomery County, Maryland, encompasses an area of 497 square miles adjacent to Washington DC's northwest boundary. The County is bounded on the west by the Potomac River and connected to Northern Virginia by the Capital Beltway. Prince George's County, Maryland, is to the east; to the northwest is Frederick County, Maryland, and to the northeast is Howard County, Maryland. A magnificent geography with extensive park and water areas, the County contains various types of communities, ranging from suburban to urban with some remaining rural areas.



As the most populous county in Maryland, Montgomery County is the home to an estimated population of 1,058,474⁵. Montgomery County's younger population is growing; over 22% are persons under 18 years of age, and 5.6% of the population are children under five years old. The largest source of population growth in the area was *births*, not domestic or international migration. Furthermore, this increasing rate of population growth is seen as ongoing in the future. It is projected to remain the most populous Maryland jurisdiction for the next 20 years or more.

a) ETHNICITY, RACE, CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

A pride of Montgomery County is the diversity of its citizenry.



*Source: [Montgomery County Community and Population Health Data Dashboard](#)

The 2024 *Healthy Montgomery Dashboard*, noted 32.7% of the total population in Montgomery County were foreign born. It is estimated that over half of the immigrants in the state of Maryland reside in Montgomery County. Asia and Africa are the two predominant regions of birth; 32.3% of the local immigrant residents indicate their region of birth as Asian, 19.7% as African, 14.3% as Latin American and 14.3% as European. Immigrants from different parts of the world tend to settle in different areas of the County: Asian immigrants are more likely to reside outside the Capital Beltway, or in the more suburban areas of the County, while Latin American and African immigrants tend to live within the Beltway: the more urban areas

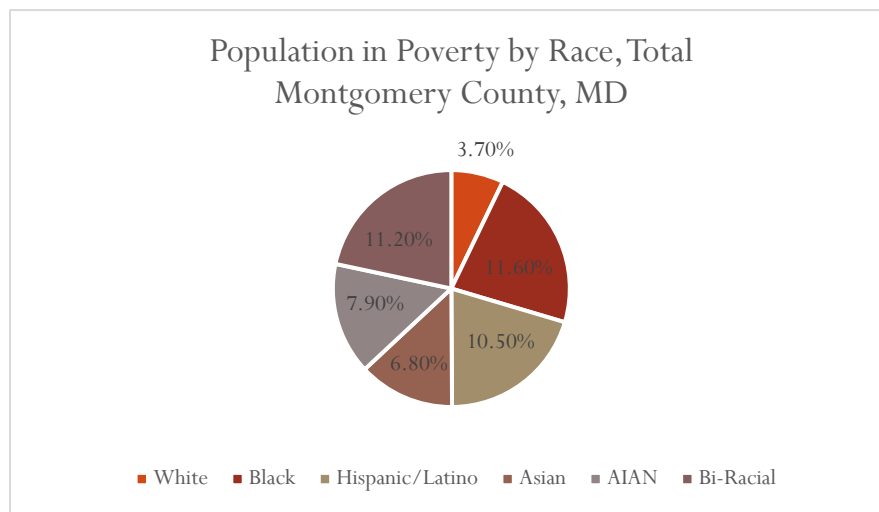
of the County.

The diversity of languages spoken throughout the County reflects the population. According to Montgomery County Public Schools, the 2023-2024 student speak over 162 languages.⁶

b) ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FACTORS IMPACTING FAMILIES

One of the wealthiest counties in the United States⁷, Montgomery County's average estimated 2023 median household income was \$133,566. 32% of all households have incomes above \$100,000; and the 30.9% who make less than half that amount and struggle to make ends meet in an expensive environment.

During this affluence, Montgomery County is also home to a substantial population of low-income families and children.



In 2022, while only 7.2% of people living in Montgomery County were in poverty, 29% of families living in poverty include children under 5. Among female-headed households living in poverty, 32% included a child under the age of 5.

This economic climate of wealth creates conditions that exert special stresses and hardships for low-income families, which are characterized by low-wages, underemployed and unemployed workers. The Self-Sufficiency amount required to live in Montgomery County in 2023 -- without public and private assistance -- for a family of four (2 adults, one preschooler and one school-age child) would be \$122,943 per year, or \$55.33 total per hour wages: approximately 4 times higher than the Head Start federal poverty level of \$31,200 for a family of 4.

Housing and Childcare Costs

In the entire Washington, DC Greater Metropolitan Area including Montgomery County, the average household has a higher income than the national average; several counties that rank higher in income nationally are in the Washington, DC suburban community. These regional high incomes bring inflated costs of rent and housing, transportation, food and clothing which cannot be easily abated by moving a short distance away. Lower income families spend a greater percentage of their income on housing and childcare than do wealthy families.

Housing costs in 2024: the median mortgage cost in the County was \$2,843 with 23.3% of residents paying 30% of their monthly income on mortgages. The average rental cost was \$1,957. 50.4% of County residents spending 30% of their monthly income on rent.

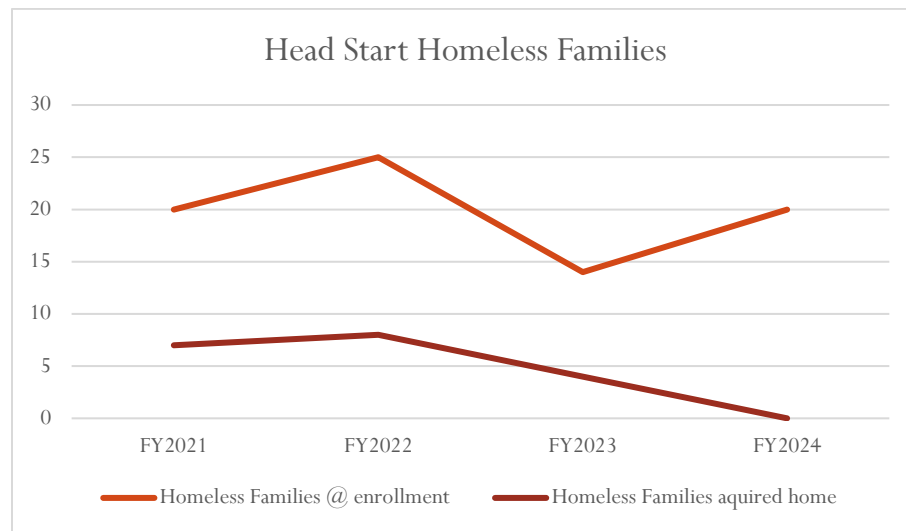
72% of children in Montgomery County live in households where both parents work.⁸ The cost for child-care for one pre-school child in a licensed day-care facility in 2023 for full-day, full-year was on average \$18,741.32, or about \$360.41 a week, in Montgomery County⁹.

Homelessness

Montgomery County is committed to making the experience of homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. In 2017, the county launched the *Inside Not Outside* campaign that includes a range of strategies including: homeless prevention, street outreach, temporary shelter, rental assistance and permanent housing with support.

The 2023 comparison of Montgomery County's homeless population to the *Homeless Point-In-Time* survey conducted January 27, 2022, homelessness increased 54% from the previous year. A total of 894 homeless persons were counted in Montgomery County.¹⁰ 269 were considered homeless families. 154 of the people counted were children.

The number of homeless children and families served by Montgomery County Head Start increased proportionally with the County's homeless statistics. Head Start's delegate agency, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) works in collaboration with MCPS' McKinney-Vento office for direct outreach opportunities to build partnerships with county homeless shelters in support of homeless families.

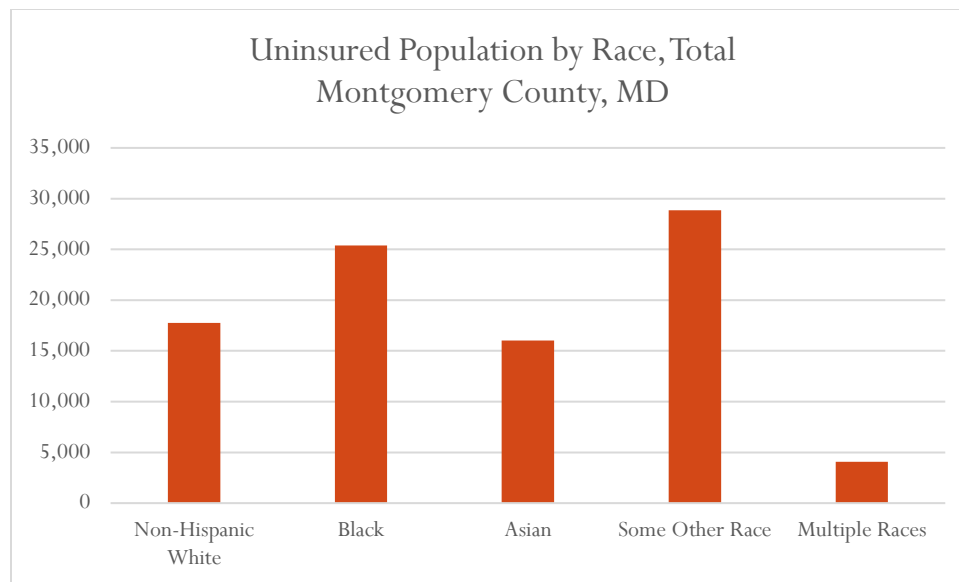


Foster Care

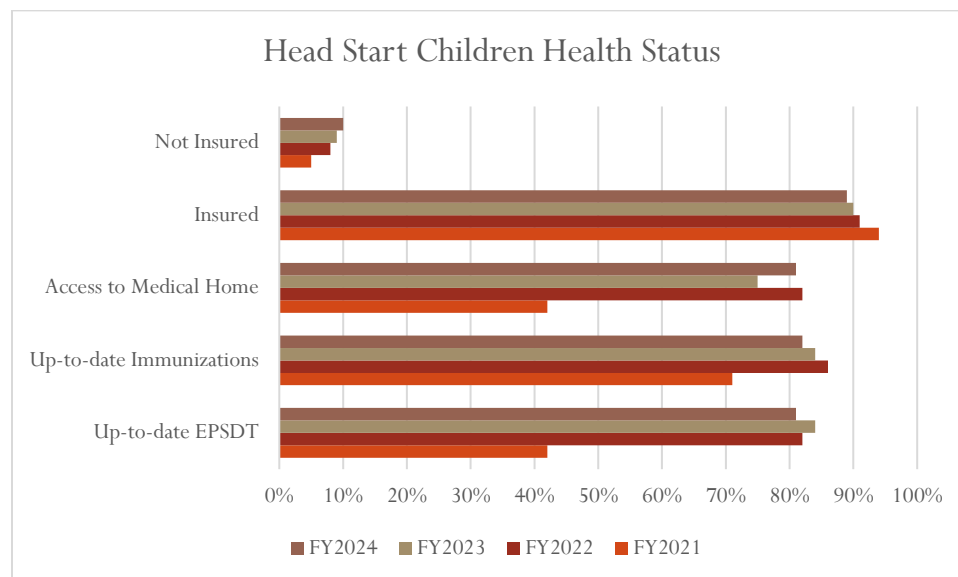
In 2024, an average of 400 youth in Montgomery County entered out-of-home care settings. 105 children (27% of the total) were 0-5-year-olds. These settings included both foster and kinship care with family. Of the 105 children ages 0-5, 36 were placed with relatives or kinship care.¹¹

Health and Well-Being

The lack of health insurance is considered a key driver of health status.¹² 7.3% of the County's population remained uninsured in 2023.



Montgomery County Head Start children fared better than the overall County’s uninsured children’s population. Because of Head Start’s mission to support children and families in a comprehensive services model including health services, most enrolled children had medical insurance and an identified medical home from 2020-2024.



Feeding America estimates that 14% of children in Montgomery County are food insecure.¹³ The data also reveals significant racial disparity in childhood food insecurity. While 4.5% of white children in Montgomery County are estimated to live in households with incomes below the FPL, that same measure for Hispanic or Latino and Black children is over 14%.

V. OTHER CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

County-Wide Regulated Early Childhood Programs and Education¹⁴

Program Type	Total # of Programs	Capacity
Family Child Care Providers	772	6121
Licensed Group Care*	497	33,830
8-12 Hour Child Care Centers	355	28,661
Infant/Toddler	165	2,756
Part-Day	59	N/A
Before/After School (School & Center-based)	296	23,933
Employer Sponsored centers	8	928
Nursery Schools	128	N/A
Kindergarten (non MCPS)	55	N/A
Early Head Start	3	221

**Note: numbers do not total because facilities may have more than one type of program.*

Montgomery County has over 400 licensed childcare centers and approximately 770 family childcare providers. Low-income families have difficulty using licensed providers due in part to their high cost of services. Montgomery County offers two sources of funding to assist families in gaining licensed family care: state Child Care Scholarships (CCS) and Working Parents Assistance (WPA). The federally funded Child Care Development Fund's Child Care Scholarships program, administered by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), helps limited-income families pay for childcare while parents work, attend school or job training. Families receive a voucher for each child needing care; a sliding scale, based on household income, is used to determine the amount of the voucher and the amount of the co-payment, which the parents must pay. The Working Parents Assistance program (WPA) is funded through County local resources. The WPA commits County funds with the goal of helping low-income parents meet the costs of childcare and allows more Montgomery County families to receive a childcare subsidy. WPA targets working families, providing financial assistance and assistance for the pursuit of child support. Parents may use the provided funding to purchase any type of care, including informal care.

In addition, Montgomery County through the Early Care and Education Initiative, provides grants to county early childhood education providers to fund affordable childcare for children birth to 3 years of age. EquiCare is a Subsidy Seats Grant Program for qualified licensed child care providers located in Montgomery County to cover the cost of quality child care funding for infants and toddler (age 6 weeks through 3 years) seats aligned with current trends for child care enrollment costs. The grant aims to enhance the availability of high-quality infant and toddler child care seats and address the needs of families that do not meet the eligibility criteria for current early childhood public programs.

Early Head Start programs. A companion program to Head Start, Early Head Start (EHS) is also a federally funded comprehensive health, education, parent engagement and social services program for low-income families with children birth to 3 years of age and pregnant women.

Sheppard Pratt Health Systems' Family Services, Inc. (FSI) located in Gaithersburg, promotes the resilience, recovery and independence of individuals and families across the life span through integrated mental and physical health, social services and education programs with a goal of strengthening

communities. FSI's early childhood programs promote early childhood health, education and development in the home, school and community. In 2024, FSI's Early Head Start program serves upper Montgomery County, offers both home-based and center-based child development services to 124 pregnant women and children.¹⁵

The Lourie Center for Children's Social & Emotional Wellness is a private, non-profit agency with a mission to improve the social and emotional health of young children and their families through prevention, early intervention, education, research and training. The agency's Head Start/Early Head Start program, provides comprehensive, year-round, child and family development services to 352 low-income families with children, prenatal to five years old in both Montgomery and Prince George's County. The Lourie Center EHS model provides services to families and children in home-based, center-based family childcare, and in EHS-Child care partnership sites. Services in Montgomery County include childcare center and family childcare partnerships and home-based models.

CentroNia is a private, non-profit educational organization that provides family support services and affordable, quality education, professional development to educators in a bilingual and multicultural environment for more than 2,400 low-income children and families. CentroNia EHS provides services to 144 children and families in the District of Columbia, and both Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties in Maryland. Currently, CentroNia provides both center-based and home-based services to 72 children in Maryland, 43 of which are enrolled children and families living in Montgomery County. CentroNia also has a contract with Montgomery County through DHHS for 20 pre-school age children in one full day classroom at its child development center.

CHALLENGES FOR EHS 3 YEAR OLDS

- In FY2024, Sheppard Pratt relinquished the federal EHS grant. The office of Head Start appointed the Community Development Institute (CDI) as the interim grantee recipient, forecasting a Notice of Funding Opportunity for FY2026.
- In FY2024, the Lourie Center transitioned from serving families in Montgomery County to providing all EHS services in neighboring Prince George's County, eliminating EHS care for approximately 45 families.
- 0 of the 35 CentroNia EHS three-year-old children transition to Head Start.
- MCPS Head Start three-year-old classes are limited. During the FY2024 school year, MCPS provided seven three-year-old Head Start part-day classes.
- MCPS Head Start three-year-old classes are in schools outside of the EHS families communities and families reside outside of MCPS transportation zones.
- EHS families make progress towards self-sufficiency, increasing their income which makes them ineligible for Head Start's federal poverty levels.
- 50-60% of three-year old's at FSI and 30% of three's at CentroNia do not continue in early care and education after aging out of EHS. Children fall back in language and social-emotional development.
- Teen parents may face dropping out of High School as their three-year old's age out of EHS while they are still in High School. With no childcare, parents are challenged with finishing school.

County-Wide Public Support Services

The Montgomery County **Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)** assures the provision of integrated services addressing the health and human services needs of County residents. DHHS provides crisis intervention services (including homelessness); disability services, housing benefits (including financial services, food, and energy); health services (including medical coverage, mental health/substance abuse; school-based and community health); early childhood services, and older adult services (including caregiver support).

School Health Services (SHS)

Under DHHS, School Health Services assures and promotes the health, safety, and well-being of students enrolled in all Montgomery County Public Schools. Basic services include: First aid/emergency care, medication and treatment administration, hearing and vision screenings, case management of students with chronic health conditions, health promotion/education, and linking students to health care providers and other resources.

Early Childhood Services

Child Care Support Services focuses on increasing the quality of early care and education programs available to young children throughout Montgomery County through technical assistance, consultation, and training for childcare providers. This program includes the development of strategies to increase the supply of quality early care and education programs and services.

Head Start Community-Based Program for Three Year Olds. Many of Montgomery County's Early Head Start eligible families struggle to afford high-quality early care and education and to ensure a full day of care. Many children aging out of their current Early Head Start program need to find a new care provider. To meet this need, Montgomery County Government is creating a Head Start community-based program. The program provides services throughout Montgomery County for a full-year (1,380 annual hours), full-day (6.5-hour school day). Participating childcare programs will collaborate as an Early Head Start childcare hub and receive wrap around services for staff and families including training, technical assistance and coaching support from the County's Early Childhood Services (ECS) program including Child Care Resource Center, the Infants and Toddlers Early Intervention Program and Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation. The Community Action Agency (CAA) provides family engagement services and supports.

Montgomery County Child Care Resource and Referral Center (MCCCRRC) works with parents, childcare providers, businesses, and community members to help promote the availability of and accessibility of high-quality childcare services in the County. Families who need childcare services are given free childcare referrals and information on evaluating quality childcare available; parents can call LOCATE by telephone to receive individualized counseling and referrals to childcare providers who might meet their needs. Training for childcare providers to establish and improve their programs is offered for free or at low cost, including training for the Maryland Child Care Credential, voluntary state program which recognizes childcare providers who go beyond the requirements of State licensing and registration regulations. Special recruitment efforts are targeted to providers who serve low-income families and immigrant communities.

ChildLink provides parents and caregivers with resources and information about services and linkages to programs that are available to assist them with their children, from birth to age five. It serves as an entry

point to services for young children, and functions as a triage system for assistance. Callers may receive simple referrals-such as referrals to Head Start- consultation on child development or parenting issues, or linkages and follow up for families presenting more complex or at-risk situations which would require early intervention services.

Children, Youth, and Family Services (CYF)

Under DHHS, the mission of Children, Youth, and Family Services (CYF) is to promote opportunities for children to grow up safe, healthy, ready for school, and for families and individuals to be self-sufficient.

Departments within CYF include:

- Child and Adolescent Services and Community Based Services
- Childcare Subsidy Programs and Office of Eligibility and Support Services
- Child Welfare Services
- Positive Youth Development

Below highlights some of the services and resources available for low-income families with young children provided by the various departments within CYF.

Child Welfare Services provides protective, rehabilitative, and supportive services for children who are maltreated and for their families. This program also provides supportive and financial help to relatives, foster, and adoptive parents. Investigations, protective services, kinship care, foster care, adoption, and in-home aide services are provided through this system. Family Preservation Services provide social services to families with children who are at risk of removal from home due to neglect or abuse.

Linkages to Learning is a program under DHHS CYF Child and Adolescent and Community Based Services. Linkages collaborates with MCPS and local public and private human service agencies to provide school-based prevention and early intervention services to students and families of elementary and middle school communities with the highest indicators of poverty. These integrated social, health, mental health and educational support services are designed to address the non-academic issues that may interfere with a child's success in school.

Child Care Scholarships are support for eligible low-income families who work or are in a work activity, and for families receiving Temporary Cash Assistance (TANF), and actively participating in job search or job preparation, or another work activity. In 2019, the Maryland State Department of Education increased the eligibility to serve families up to 300% of FPL.

The Income Supports Program serves low-income families and individuals facing significant challenges by providing basic resources of cash assistance, food supplements, and medical assistance. This program determines eligibility for: Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA); Temporary Disability Assistance Program (TDAP); Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA); Food Supplement Program (FSP); Community Medical Assistance (MA); and Refugee Medical Assistance. The Income Support Program also manages a required employment program for applicants and recipients of TCA.

Child and Adolescent School and Community Based Services include respite care, community empowerment efforts, single-parent family services, family services, youth services, and family outreach efforts. The program also provides for the coordination, planning and implementation of several key interagency initiatives among public and private agencies in the community to meet the needs of children, youth and their families.

Montgomery County Public Schools Division of Early Childhood, Title I Programs, and Recovery Program, support the County's Pre-K/Head Start program and the following early care support services:

Judith P. Hoyer Centers Early Child Care and Family Education Centers

Judy Centers offer a wide range of services to children age birth through kindergarten and their low-income families. The goal of Judy Centers is to support School Readiness. In Montgomery County, services are provided at Title I schools. Judy Centers use a "whole child" approach in addressing the many variables that can impact young children's readiness for kindergarten.

The Judy Centers were founded in Maryland and are named in honor of the foundational work in early care and education of the late Judy Hoyer, the wife of Maryland Senator Steny Hoyer. There is 83 Judy Centers throughout the state of Maryland. In Montgomery County, there are currently two Judy Centers administered by MCPS:

- Rolling Terrace Elementary School, Takoma Park
- Summit Hall Elementary School, Gaithersburg which also serves students and families at Washington Grove Elementary School

The County Judy Centers provide enrichment activities for preschool age children, parent-child activities for all families, and parent education and support for children to attend high quality childcare, and accreditation support for childcare, Head Start, Pre-K and Kindergarten classes. In FY2025 Montgomery County will open its third Judy Center.

The International Admissions and Enrollment (IAE) office facilitates the enrollment and placement of international students, foreign students, exchange students and students with more complex residency circumstances such as homelessness (McKinney Vento) and kinship care. IAE's multilingual staff provide families with a welcoming and supportive introduction to Montgomery County Public Schools and prepare parents with the information and resources they need to be engaged and supported partners in their children's education.

Disability Services

Montgomery County Infants & Toddlers Program (MCITP)

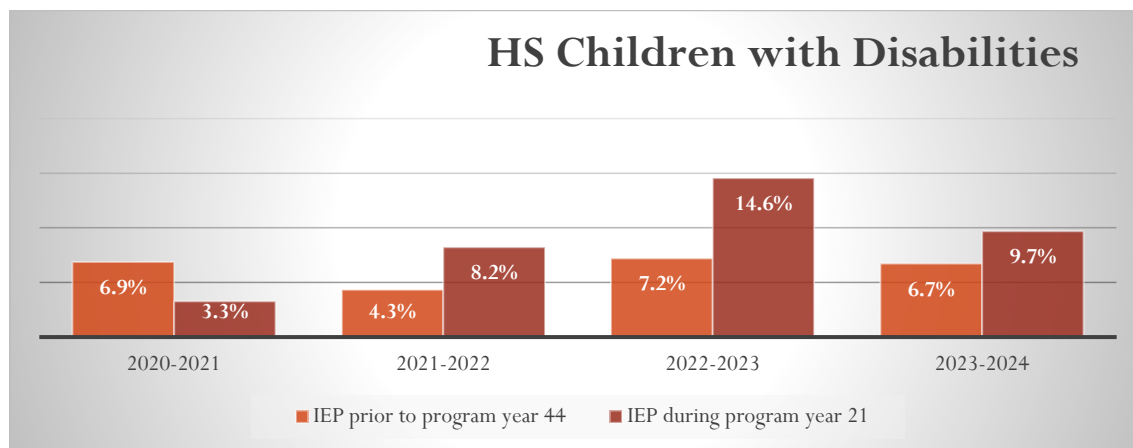
MCITP provides evaluation, assessment, family support and early intervention services to families with children birth to 5 when there is a concern about development, or when a developmental delay is documented. The services are delivered using a family-centered approach and are provided by staff employed by MCPS, DHHS and private community service providers. MCITP assists families with their child's developmental and special needs, serving children birth to three years old and their families who reside in Montgomery County if eligibility criteria are met. Children who are eligible for services receive ongoing early intervention services through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) designed to achieve outcomes determined by the early intervention team which includes the family as well as other providers. Early intervention services may include family centered interventions from a speech/ language therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, special educator, social worker, interim and on-going service coordinator, infant/adult mental health specialist, and psychologist.

Eligibility is determined by residency AND if the child exhibits either a 25% delay in at least one area of development (motor, language, cognition, self-help, social/emotional), or atypical development, or a high probability of delay due to a diagnosed medical condition.

Local Educational Agency (LEA)

MCPS serves as the County's Local Educational Agency (LEA) and maintains the requirements for Part B of the federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). MCPS is committed to promoting improved academic achievement for all students with disabilities. All decisions regarding the placement of a child with a disability in a special education service delivery model is made by the Individual Education Program (IEP) Team with consultation with parents.

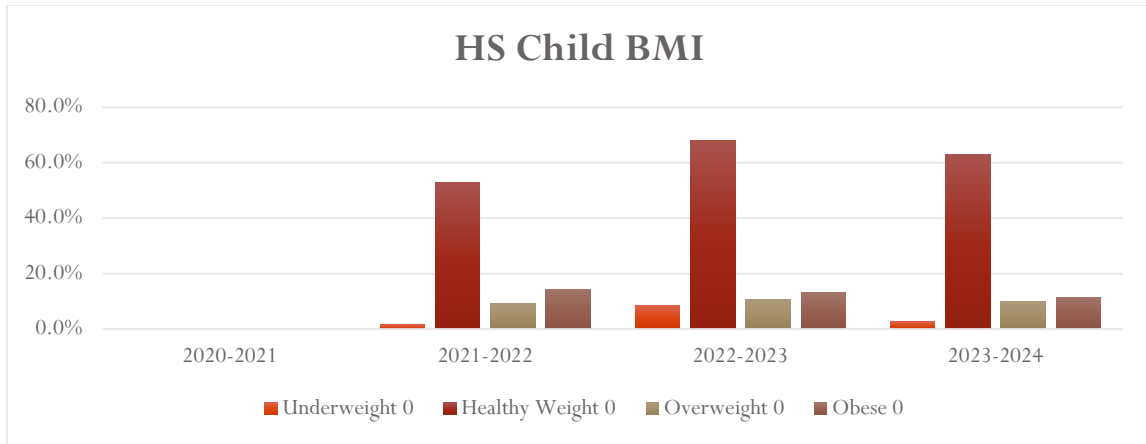
Over the past five years, at least 10% of Montgomery County Head Start's annual enrollment included children with disabilities.



Of the Head Start children with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) Non-Categorical/Developmental Delay remains the most consistent diagnosis. Typically, pre-school age children who receive individualized special instruction and attention can evolve overtime and “catch up” in their overall development.

During the prior five-year project period, Head Start children in need of continuing Mental Health support remain steady with 44% of enrolled children receiving at least one mental health referral during the program year. Of these 44%, 79% received three or more consultations and 57% consultations with parents. As in-person classroom experiences returned after the COVID-19 pandemic, Head Start classroom teachers acknowledged an increase in children with challenging behaviors. In response, MCPS added additional mental health supports by increase the number of school psychologists and social workers to support Pre-K and Head Start children and families.

Additional health challenges Head Start children are facing is in nutrition and diet. Approximately 20% of all Head Start children are clinically overweight and/or obese.



Preschool Special Education Programs (PEP)

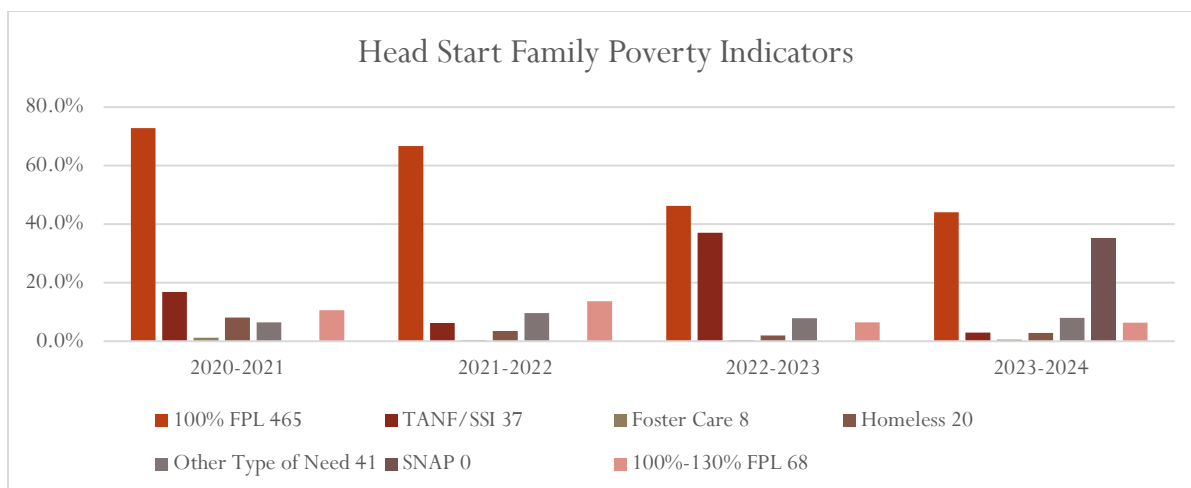
For children with more severe disabilities, MCPS' Preschool Education Program (PEP) provides a variety of preschool literacy –based educational and support services for children with disabilities, ages 3 to 5, with serious developmental delays, students with intensive needs, and the medically fragile. Children between three and five years of age may be eligible for PEP if they have a developmental delay or disability as determined through assessment, meet the criteria for one or more educational disabilities as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), and/or need special education services. A child is placed in PEP through a centralized special education placement process following assessment in any area of disability. Referrals for evaluation are usually through Montgomery County Infants and Toddlers Program (for children under the age of 3 years) or the Child Find Unit (for children between 3 and 5 years of age).

PEP services address the same early learning skills fostered in MCPS prekindergarten classrooms, and include art and music, with mandated services such as: speech, occupational and/or physical therapy, and parental involvement. Wherever possible, classes are taught collaboratively with MCPS Prekindergarten classes. Services range from itinerant in community preschools to five hours per day of intensive, low- ratio classroom programming for children with multiple severe disabilities.

The PEP programs also serve children with sensory disabilities, autism, or physical disabilities. These students usually require more specialized instruction and programming, including daily programs ranging from 2.5 to 6 hours daily. Mandated related services such as speech, occupational, and/or physical therapy, and parent involvement are included. Their classroom instruction addresses the special needs of the child, while supporting the same early learning goals as the Prekindergarten and Head Start program. Children participate in physical education, art, and music, and wherever possible, classes are taught with MCPS prekindergarten classes.

VI. MONTGOMERY COUNTY HEAD START: FIVE-YEAR TRENDS (2020-2024)

Between the 2020 and 2024 program years, the overall demographic makeup of children enrolled in Head Start remained consistent. At least 85% of enrolled families are between 100- 135% of the federal poverty guidelines. However, other than SNAP and WIC, most enrolled families did not receive other public assistance such as TANF and SSI. This may reflect a family's immigrant status and underemployment (aka "working poor"). Moreover, MCPS staff noted in a survey that three main changes in the community that enrolled Head Start families face are: (1) lack of affordable housing; (2) food insecurity; and (3) transportation. (See Appendix D).



During the five-year period, parents consistently indicated specific resources needed to support their families. Emergency or crisis intervention (such as food, clothing or shelter) were overwhelmingly requested by approximately 98% of families after COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately 31% of families requested English Language classes, and approximately 10% of families requested Parenting Education.

Families Identified Need During the Program Year (Total = 648)	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Emergency or Crisis Intervention	31%	48.6%	98.4%	95%
English (ESL) Training	6.4%	15.3%	31%	12.6%
Job Training	6.7%	7.8%	22.2%	6.6%
Parenting Classes	8.9%	10.5%	15.6%	10.7%

MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S VISION: A MORE EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE MONTGOMERY COUNTY

In 2019, Montgomery County's Executive established five priorities to support a more equitable and inclusive community for all county residents.¹⁶

In addition, Montgomery County's Council President, Council Members, County Executive, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), and Montgomery College (MC) have joined together in an initiative to increase the number of quality Early Care and Education (ECE) seats in a mixed-delivery system by certifying additional Family Child Care (FCC) providers, increasing resources to providers and families and identifying existing unused or underutilized classroom space in high need areas thus making quality early care and education more accessible to more families.¹⁷

Within the County Executive's Priorities, *Thriving Youth and Families* and *ECE Initiative*, Montgomery County Head Start identified the following strengths and needs of enrolled families.

County Executive's Priority 1: Thriving Youth and Families

Key Indicator II. Percent of Children Ready for Kindergarten

Montgomery County Head Start engages parents in developing and implementing the program's School Readiness Goals. In partnership with Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL), parents are encouraged to apply for library lending cards. MCPL hosts literacy activities for families with young children and provides literacy "backpacks" with books, an iPad and themed activity resources for a variety of learning topics. In addition, parents increasing requested resources and trainings to understand and support school readiness skills for their children.

AVERAGE TOTAL FAMILIES = 648	FY2021 Families Identified Need	Service Provided	FY2022 Families Identified Need	Service Provided	FY2023 Families Identified Need	Service Provided	FY2024 Families Identified Need	Service Provided
Involvement in Child Screening & Assessment	623	98.4%	683	100%	370	57%	300	46%
Transition to Kindergarten	623	98.4%	683	100%	420	64%	400	61%
Nutrition Education	623	98.4%	683	100%	200	30%	280	43%

Kindergarten Readiness

Ready for Kindergarten (R4K)

In FY2015, MSDE implemented a new comprehensive school readiness system that includes *Ready for Kindergarten: Maryland's Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System (R4K)*. R4K aligns with Maryland's more rigorous PreK-12 College and Career-Ready Standards and establishes higher benchmarks for all children. R4K's assessment for children- Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) system- builds on and advances the MMSR yet adding more rigorous assessment indicators. This change in the kindergarten readiness assessment system had a significant impact on assessment scores, lowering the overall percentage of pre-school children demonstrating foundational skills and behaviors needed for kindergarten by nearly 30% in year one baseline results.

Readiness Matters: The 2023-2024 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Report¹⁸, shares the school readiness results of Maryland's children – statewide, by subgroups, and for each of Maryland's 24 local jurisdictions. Based on the state's higher standards, the new baseline results for year two are:

- Nearly half of entering kindergarteners in school year 2023-2024 (44%) are demonstrating that they possess the foundational skills and behaviors that prepare them for the curriculum that is based on Maryland's new more rigorous kindergarten standards. Children demonstrating School Readiness has improved over time after a loss of 3 percentage points since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 50% of female students are demonstrating readiness compared to 38% of the male students.
- More than half of Asian kindergartners (53%), and white kindergartners (59%), are demonstrating this new level of readiness. African American (40%), and Hispanic (24%) kindergartners are below the state average of kindergarteners (44%) demonstrating readiness.

- 18 percent of kindergartners with disabilities, those learning the English Language (12%), and those from low-income households have fewer students demonstrating readiness than Maryland kindergartners.
- 50 percent of children who attended formal care demonstrated School Readiness while only 25% of children in informal care demonstrated School Readiness.

The 2023-2024 Montgomery County Head Start results comparison to county and state aggregated assessment data is as follows:

2023-2024 KRA COMPOSITE	MONTGOMERY COUNTY HEAD START	MONTGOMERY COUNTY AGGREGATED DATA	MARYLAND STATE AGGREGATED DATA
<i>Demonstrating</i>	86%	46%	44%
<i>Approaching</i>	10%	29%	32%
<i>Emerging</i>	4%	25%	24%

Maryland Early Learning Standards Revisions 2024

MSDE updated the statewide Early Learning Standards (ELS) from a birth – five model to a birth – 8 years old model. The revised Early Learning Standards includes:

- New age progression for children from birth to 8 years of age, incorporating the early childhood education years as birth to second grade.
- Simplified learning domains including Social and Emotional Development; Approaches to Learning; Language & Literacy; Early Cognition and STEAM; and Physical Well-Being and Motor Development.
- Child examples by age group for each of the domain indicators.
- In-practice teacher examples by age group for each of the domain indicators.

As of FY2025, the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) has not been updated to reflect the new ELS.

Maryland State Department of Education Quality Rating System: Maryland EXCELS

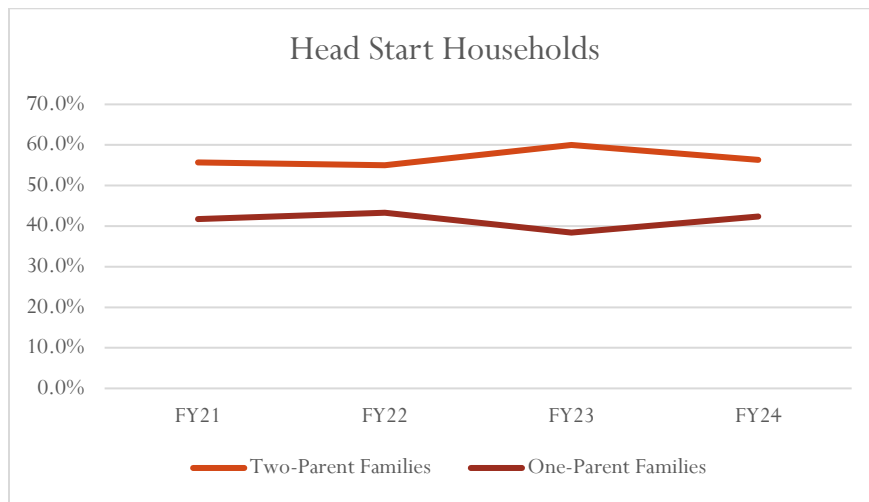
Maryland EXCELS is a quality rating and improvement system that awards ratings from 1 to 5 to childcare and early education programs based on nationally recognized standards and best practices. Maryland EXCELS gives programs and providers a road map that encourages and rewards those that improve their services offered to children and families, while providing support and incentives to programs that strive to make improvements. Maryland EXCELS provides information that families need to make informed decisions when choosing childcare and early education programs. Using a thorough but easy-to-understand rating system, Maryland EXCELS, sets a standard for increasing the availability of high-quality childcare and early education for children in Maryland.

In accordance with the federal Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) 1302.53 (b) Head Start programs must participate in its state or local Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS). MSDE requires all state early childhood programs that receive state funding to participate in Maryland EXCELS. By FY2024, Montgomery County all 34 Head Start classrooms and teachers published in Maryland EXCELS.

County Executive's Priority 1: Thriving Youth and Families

Key Indicator III. Life Expectancy and Gap

Over a five-year period, two-parent households continued to increase with over 50% of families enrolled in Head Start are headed by two-parents in FY2024.



Single parent households continued to increase in employment status. Two-parent households consistently reported at least one parent working and a steady decrease in the households with neither parent employed.

An analysis of Montgomery County Head Start's PIR Performance Indicator Reports from FY2020- FY2024 documents the efforts of the program's family engagement and social services components in meeting the needs of families. 95% of enrolled parents participated in developing a Family Partnership Agreement. MCPS Family Services staff support parents in establishing self-sufficiency goals for their families that often begins with parents identifying needs and/or barriers to meeting their goals.

Each year, MCPS offers a variety of activities for families. A center committee is convened monthly at each of the 30 elementary school locations that house Head Start classrooms. Committee meetings are designed to support parents in getting acquainted with each other and staff, provides parents with a venue to assist in planning the program and serves as a two-way communication vehicle between the school and the Head Start program. During the FY2023-2024 program year, monthly center committee parent education topics include Child Growth and Development; Language & Literacy; Health and Nutrition; Family Well-Being and Mental Health and Personal Safety. MCPS also hosted ESOL classes for parents, financial literacy and CAA's VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) services.

In accordance with the HSPPS, MCPS supports parents in facilitating the Head Start Policy Council. The Policy Council is a key stakeholder in the overall Head Start program governance system. Parents elect up to two members of the Policy Council to participate in CAA's governing board (CAB). These parent representatives are voting members of the CAB and give voice to legislative policies that the CAB advocates to support low-income families in the County.

The program governance structure for Montgomery County Head Start is a blend of both the federal HSPPS and Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Organizational Standards. Parent members of the policy council are elected to the CAA CAB. Both the CAB and PC's responsibilities include advocating on behalf of Head Start children and families. The PC supports the Head Start budget presentation to MCPS school board. The CAB support the Head Start budget presentation to the County Council. Members of the governing body are invited to participate in annual legislative advocacy days in Annapolis, Maryland's state capitol.

VII. PRIORITIES

The Montgomery County Head Start Policy Council's considers School Readiness a priority for County's Head Start/Pre-K program. Increasing parents' knowledge and understanding of:

- Child development;
- Key concepts of School Readiness including the central domains of learning outlined in the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework*;
- How to interpret child assessment data; and
- Strategies, resource and activities parents can use at home to support their child's development and readiness for kindergarten.

The Community Action Agency Board (CAB) considers developing a systematic approach to strengthening family self-sufficiency a priority for the County's Head Start families:

1. Immigration. The CAB advocates for the needs of immigrants living in the County and who make a large portion of the clients served by CAA- including Head Start eligible families.
2. Early Childhood Education. The need for high-quality affordable childcare remains an ongoing priority for the CAB. As the governing body for Head Start, this issue is of particular importance for board.
3. Food Security. Food Security is a longstanding priority issue for the CAB. The board has been active in the County's efforts to reduce food security and has advocated for numerous programs and policies that would reduce food insecurity for children, seniors and other vulnerable populations.
4. Financial Needs. VITA services, the Earned Income Tax Credit, financial education and other programs/services aimed at helping residents move towards self-sufficiency have been key priorities for the CAB.
5. Two-Gen. The CAB advocates for two-generation approaches to address poverty, like Head Start, pointing this strategy as best practice.

Montgomery County Head Start's five-year project period goals (2026-2030) are:

1. All Head Start parents and families are safe, healthy and have increased financial security; and
2. Beginning with transitions to parenthood, parents and families develop warm relationship that nurture their child's health, development and learning.

VIII. COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The momentum to strengthen and support families with young children in Montgomery County is high. The following are examples of local, regional and state-based organizations that are collaborating their efforts in early care and education.

Children's Opportunity Alliance

The Children's Opportunity Alliance (COA) is the Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity for Montgomery County. In this role, the organization convenes county government, community-based organizations, schools, the philanthropic community, local businesses, and families of children ages birth-5 to provide high-quality and accessible early learning opportunities for young children and their families. COA's mission is to connect our community to build an equitable, accessible, high quality, and sustainable early childhood system that narrows disparities and puts all young children on a path to reach their highest potential.

COA's foundational action plan goals are:

1. ***Families are meaningfully engaged.*** Families are valued and supported as their child's first teacher and strongest advocate.
2. ***Seamless access to high-quality programs.*** Young children and their families access a network of high-quality early childhood services that provide holistic support, mitigate disparities, and lead to lifelong benefits.
3. ***Fully prepared and supported workforce.*** The early childhood workforce is prepared, retained, and equitably compensated to offer high-quality experiences across all the settings linked to child and family well-being.
4. ***Coordinated and well-resourced system.*** A robust early childhood system where all elements are connected, aligned, and sustained to meet the needs of the early childhood community- now and in the future.

Montgomery Moving Forward / Nonprofit Montgomery

Nonprofit Montgomery is an alliance of leaders of nonprofit organizations serving Montgomery County. Nonprofit Montgomery's vision is to be a collective voice of nonprofits of all sizes and missions with government, philanthropic, and corporate partners. The organization's goal is to strengthen individual organizations, increase the visibility of their work, and advocate on behalf of nonprofits and the people they serve. *Montgomery Moving Forward* (MMF) is the organization's collective impact vehicle for change that brings cross-sector leaders from business, philanthropy, education/academia, government, and non-profits together to define a problem and embrace a common agenda.

In 2016, MMF launched its second focus issue: *Early Care and Education: A key building block for economic opportunity*. MMF's decision to embrace this issue was the result of a six-month community engagement process that gathered input from more than 500 residents and leaders. MMF's goal is to add value to the County's established early childhood initiatives, by fostering cross-section dialogue and advocating for alignment of all components of the system. MMF believes that a stronger, more equitable system will lay the foundation for more children to succeed in school, help reduce the achievement gap, and help build the workforce of the future.¹⁹

In January 2018, MMF issued a "call to action" for Early Care and Education in Montgomery County that envisions a coordinated, comprehensive system that will support two important goals: (1) attract and retain a talented workforce of today by supporting families with young children; and (2) ensure the skilled workforce of tomorrow by addressing the growing opportunity gap.²⁰ MMF's call to action includes six action steps that provide strategic direction for achieving the key outcomes. These independent strategies support a fully cohesive, coordinated ECE system.

In August 2023, MMF initiated research and stakeholder convening related to strengthening the ECE workforce. MMF's goal is to support the County's efforts in establishing a qualified, culturally responsive, and adequately compensated ECE (age 0-5) workforce providing childcare that is financially accessible for all families.

MMF's plan is to continue working with key stakeholders to develop messages that educate the local community about the importance of high-quality childcare and the importance of investing in the development and sustainability of high-quality childcare businesses staffed by a stable workforce. MMF will also work with ECE experts and the broader community to identify, advocate for, and implement public and private initiatives to strengthen the ECE workforce and ensure the viability of ECE businesses.

Montgomery County Early Care and Education Initiative

In an effort to support MMF's call to action, the County Council President and County Council members, the County Executive, the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and Montgomery College (MC) have joined together in an initiative to increase the number of quality Early Care and Education (ECE) seats in a mixed-delivery system by certifying additional Family Child Care (FCC) providers, increasing resources to providers and families and identifying existing unused or underutilized classroom space in high need areas thus making quality early care and education more accessible to more families.

Outcome 1 - Expand the availability of ECE seats for infants, toddlers and preschoolers by approximately 600.

Outcome 2 – Increase access to quality ECE to more children through increased utilization of Working Parents Assistance Program (WPA).

Outcome 3 – Ensure sustainability of existing family and center-based programs to reduce provider attrition and loss of available seats.

Outcome 4 - Establish a cross agency working group to immediately identify and resolve barriers to *expansion, access and sustainability* of quality childcare in the County, including but not limited to financing, services alignment, workforce supports, community engagement. The working group will explore the development and/or co-location of ECE programs in commercial, private, public, faith-based, and intergenerational settings. The work of this group will be guided by existing studies, plans and reports.

Outcome 5 – Monitor Kirwan Commission recommendations to ensure alignment and possible coordination with partners at the State level. (The Kirwan Commission's recommendation are legislated as The Maryland State Department of Education's "Blueprint for Maryland's Future").

As of FY2025, ECEI 's progress towards the established outcomes are as follows:

Equicare Grants. County funded subsidy Seats grant program for qualified licensed child care providers located in Montgomery County to cover the cost of quality child care funding for infants and toddler (age 6 weeks through 3 years). The grant aims to enhance the availability of high-quality infant and toddler child care seats and address the needs of families that do not meet the eligibility criteria for current early childhood public programs.

Community Development Financial Institution. Focus groups with family child care and center providers

around topics of expansion, quality improvement and funding.

Family Involvement Centers Evaluation. Evaluate the county's current Family Involvement Centers model for sustainability and potential expansion.

ECE Workforce and Compensation Study. Survey and evaluation the county's current ECE workforce compensation to address low wages and develop a strategy to increase compensation.

Cost of Quality Care Study. Conduct analysis of the complexities in the cost of quality care including child care subsidies, parent fees, ECE workforce compensation, facilities, transportation, costs of meals, etc.

Supply and Demand Study. Survey county's families with young children, family child care and centers to assess the supply and demand needs for ECE services within the county.

Shared Services Study. Proposal to assess the feasibility of developing a shared services hub to assist small business such as family child care and child care centers to bring ideas to scale and to provide best quality and sustainable businesses.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future was passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 2021 to transform public education in the state into a world-class education system. The Blueprint will increase state funding for education over the next 10 years, enrich student experiences and accelerate student outcomes, as well as improve the quality of education for all children in Maryland, especially those who have been historically underserved.

Blueprint Pillar I: Early childhood education.

- Expansion of full-day Pre-K at no cost for four-year-olds and three-year-olds from families with incomes up to 300% of federal poverty level (FPL) and for four-year-olds from families between 300% and 600% FPL using a sliding scale.
- Build capacity for new and current programs through supporting providers with tuition assistance, training, support of peer networks, and integration with the career ladder.
- Expand Judy Centers, Patty Centers, and the Maryland Infant and Toddlers Program to provide and coordinate access to education and support services for at-risk children ages 0-5 and their families.

The goal of Pillar I's expansion of Pre-K is by a mixed delivery model partnering public schools with community-based providers. A current challenge with the model is the teacher certification requirement to participate in the mixed delivery system that does not align with current family child care and center providers' teacher credential. MSDE's teacher certification process includes a semester of student teaching at the public schools. ECE workforce seeking certification would need to leave their place of employment for 3-4 months, without pay. ECE providers would need to find substitute coverage for members of their workforce during student teaching time.

Montgomery County Food Council²¹

The Montgomery County Food Council is an independent council formed and led by individual community members and representatives of local businesses, government, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions that broadly represent the food system both substantively and geographically.

The Food Council's mission is to bring together a diverse representation of stakeholders in a public and private partnership to improve the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of the County through the creation of a robust, local, sustainable food system.

In 2016, Montgomery County Council unanimously passed *Bill 19-16, The Strategic Plan to Achieve Food Security* that initiated the process for developing a Food Security Plan. The focus of the Food Security Plan is to:

- Greatly enhance the level of food security in the County;
- Link County dollars spent on food assistance to the needs identified in the plan; and
- Guide non-profits who support County residents with food assistance to seek food assistance grant funding from the county.

Healthy Montgomery²²

Healthy Montgomery is Montgomery County's community health improvement process. It is an ongoing effort that brings together County government agencies, County hospital systems, minority health programs/initiatives, advocacy groups, academic institutions, community-based service providers and other stakeholders to achieve optimal health and well-being for all Montgomery County residents. Healthy Montgomery's goals are:

- Improve access to health and social services
- Achieve health equity for all residents
- Enhance the physical and social environment to support optimal health and well being

Washington Region Early Care & Education Workforce Network²³

The Washington Area Women's Foundation is organized to ensure that economically vulnerable women and girls in the Washington (District of Columbia) region have the resources they need to thrive. In 2008, the Foundation launched the Early Care & Education Funders Collaborative (ECEFC). ECEFC is a collective of foundation and corporate investors dedicated to supporting systemic approaches that increase quality, capacity and access to early care and education in the Washington region. The Washington region includes: The District of Columbia, Montgomery and Prince Georges' counties in Maryland; and Alexandria and Fairfax counties in Virginia.

ECEFC's goals are to:

- Improve the quality of early care and education for low-income children ages zero to five
- Expand access to affordable early care and education options
- Support professional development for early care and education professionals
- Encourage and strengthen partnerships among stakeholders that support positive changes in the early care and education system

IX. SUMMARY

Five-year trends in Montgomery County demographics continues to indicate more growth in the overall population by the increasing numbers of births, international immigrants and migrants from other counties within the State of Maryland. As the current availability of Head Start and other community based early care and education services do not meet the County's current need, the gap in services will continue to increase. In addition, The Self-Sufficiency Standard of 2023 highlights the impact of the increasing gap in economic diversity between low-income families and those with more wealth. The inability of poor families to meet self-sufficiency will intensify, placing additional burdens on the County's social services structure.

The goal of the County's DHHS is to provide an integrative service delivery approach that addresses the social determinants of the County residents' health and well-being. Montgomery County has a wealth of resources available to support family self-sufficiency. As the Head Start grantee agency, aligning these resources and strategies would strengthen the efforts of multi-agency approach and increase the impact and benefit to families in need.

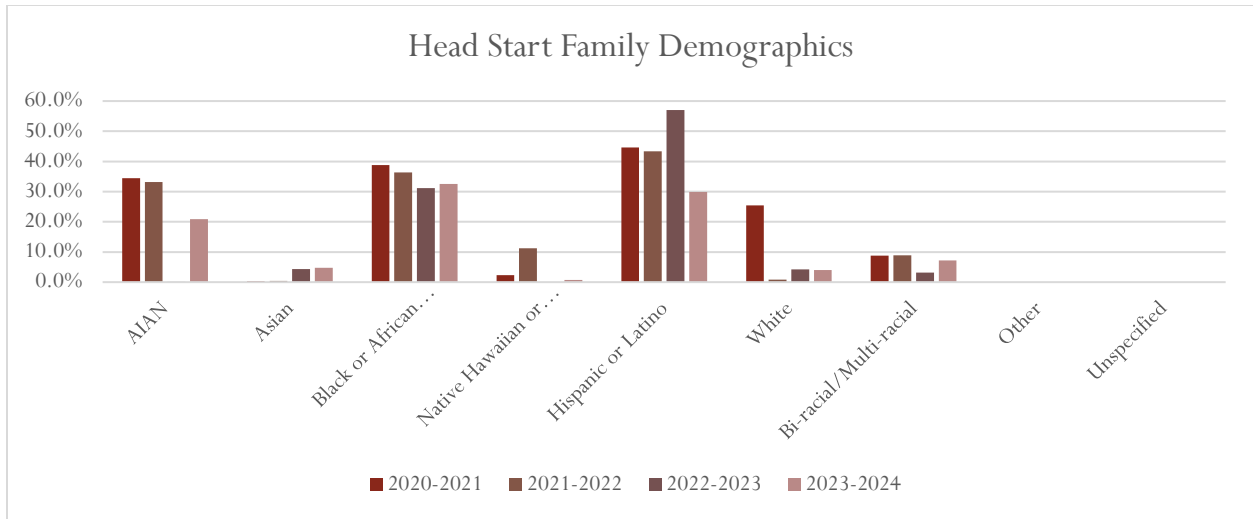
HEAD START PRIORITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Increase services to eligible three-year-old children, especially children aging out of the County's Early Head Start programs.
- Align the Head Start program's comprehensive services needs with the County's Early Childhood Services, Resource and Referral, School Health and other agencies within the County's Department of Health and Human Services.
- Support Head Start parents, children and staff's well-being with additional mental health and social - emotional resources and assistance.

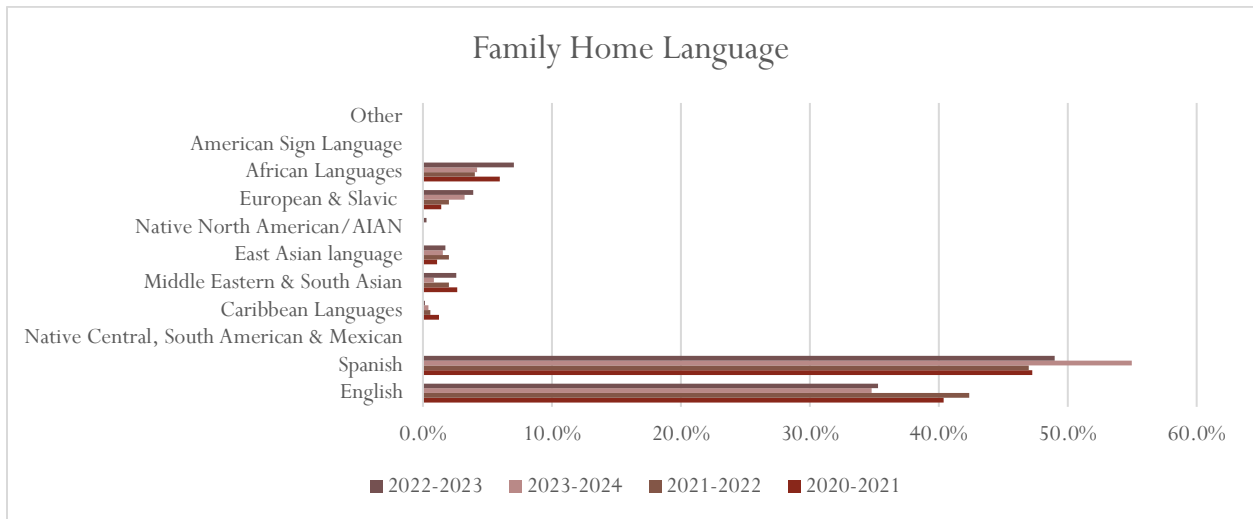
APPENDICES

Appendix A: MCPS 2020-2024 PIR Data Reports

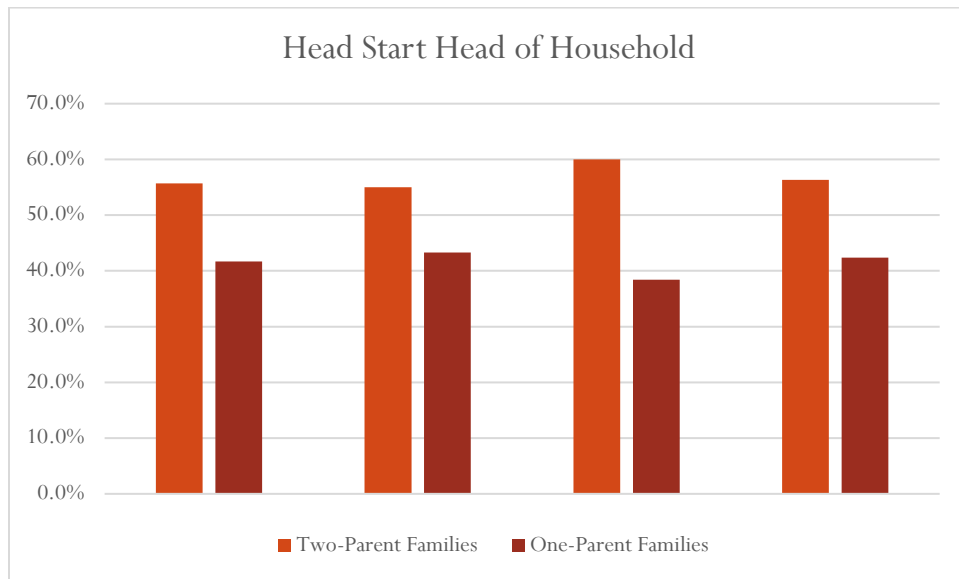
Head Start Family Demographics



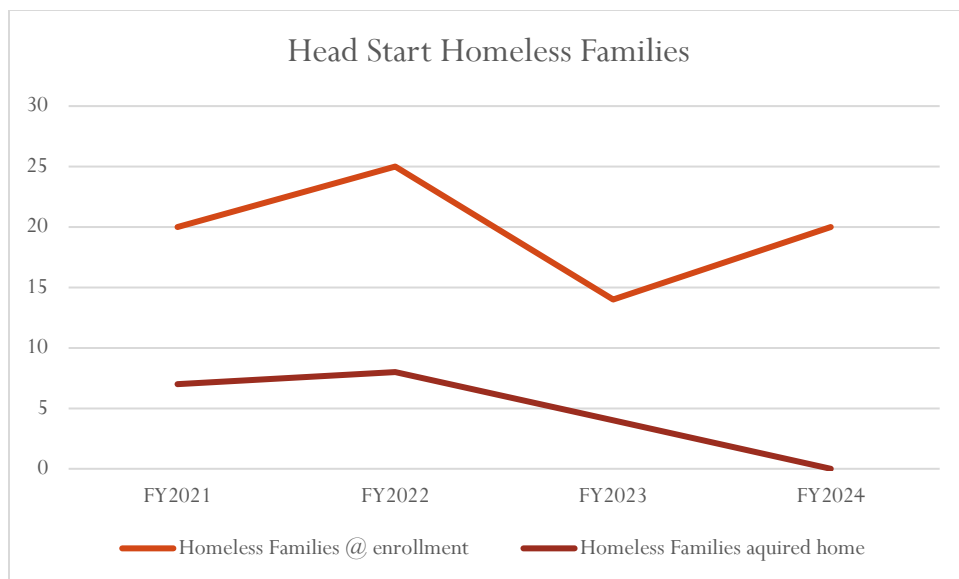
Head Start Children Primary Home Language



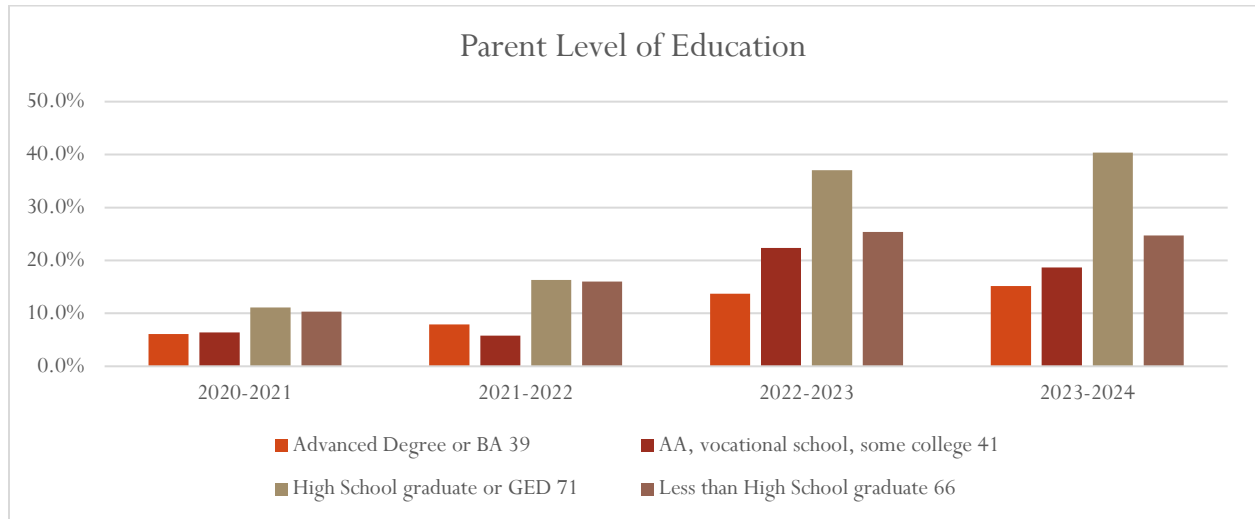
Head Start Head of Household



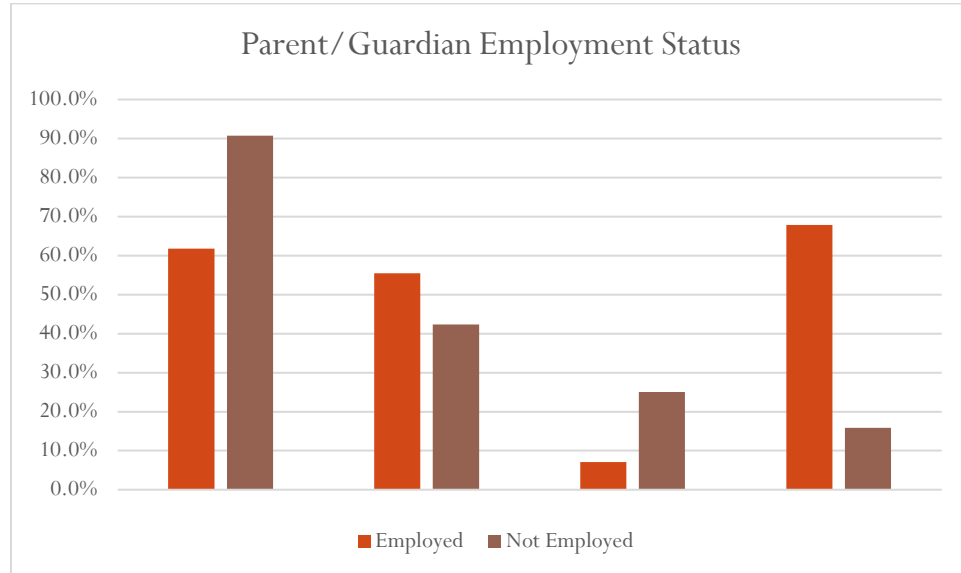
Head Start Homeless Families



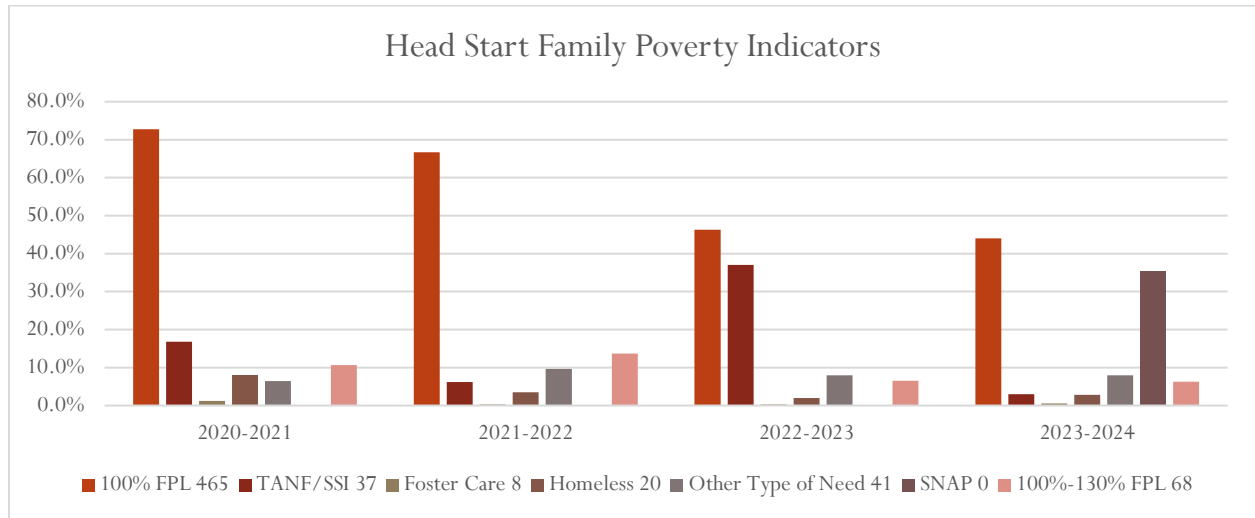
Head Start Parent Education Levels



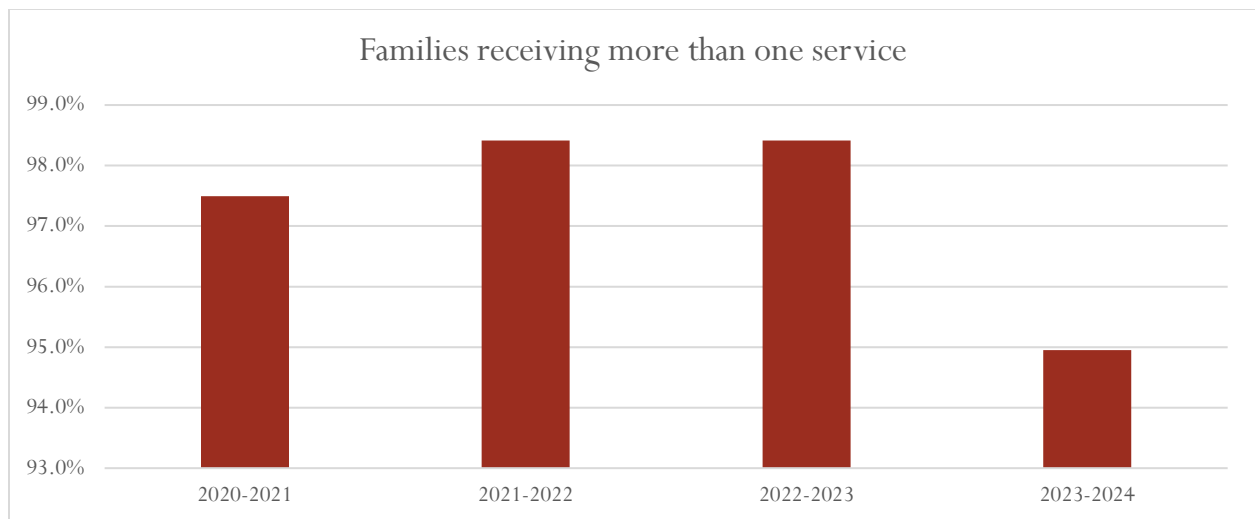
Head Start Parent/Guardian Employment Status



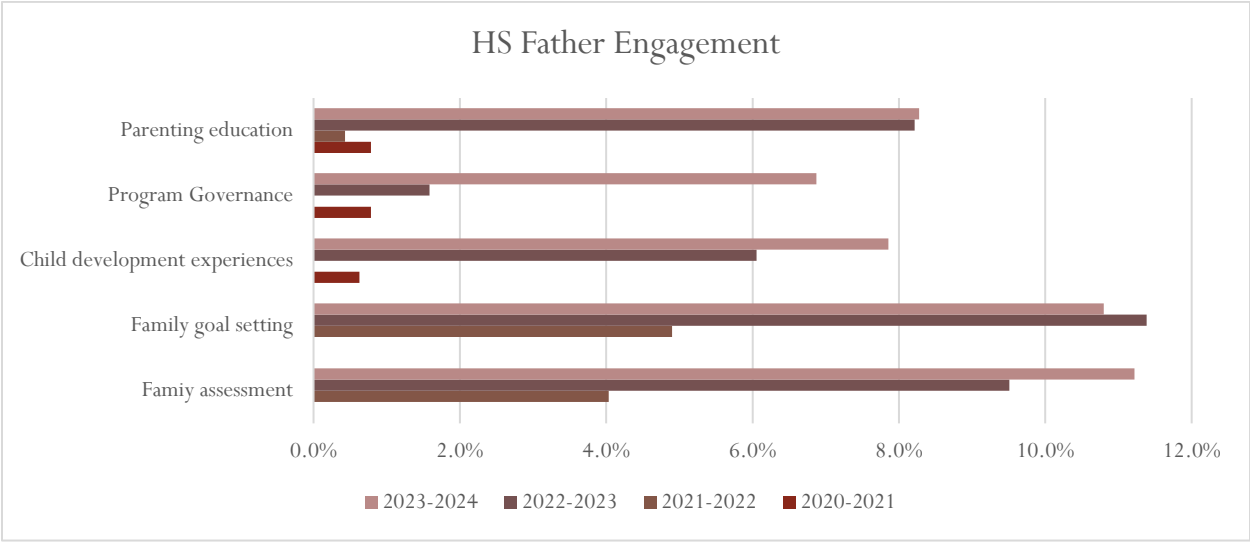
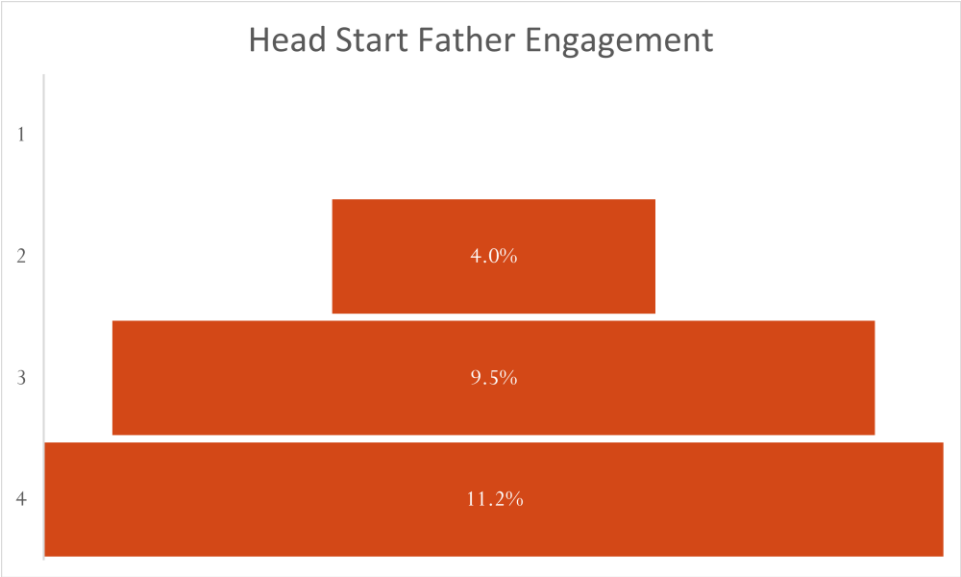
Head Start Family Poverty Indicators



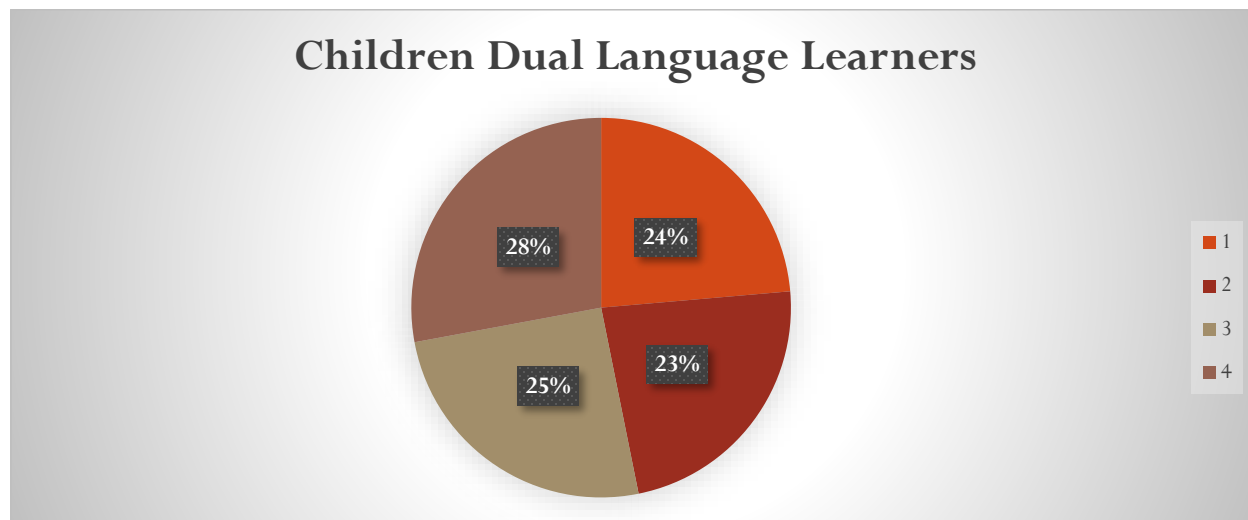
Families Identified Need During the Program Year (Total = 648)	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
Emergency or Crisis Intervention	31.6%	48.6%	98.4%	95.0%
English (ESL) Training	6.4%	15.3%	31.0%	12.6%
Job Training	6.7%	7.8%	22.2%	6.6%
Parenting Classes	8.9%	10.5%	15.5%	10.7%



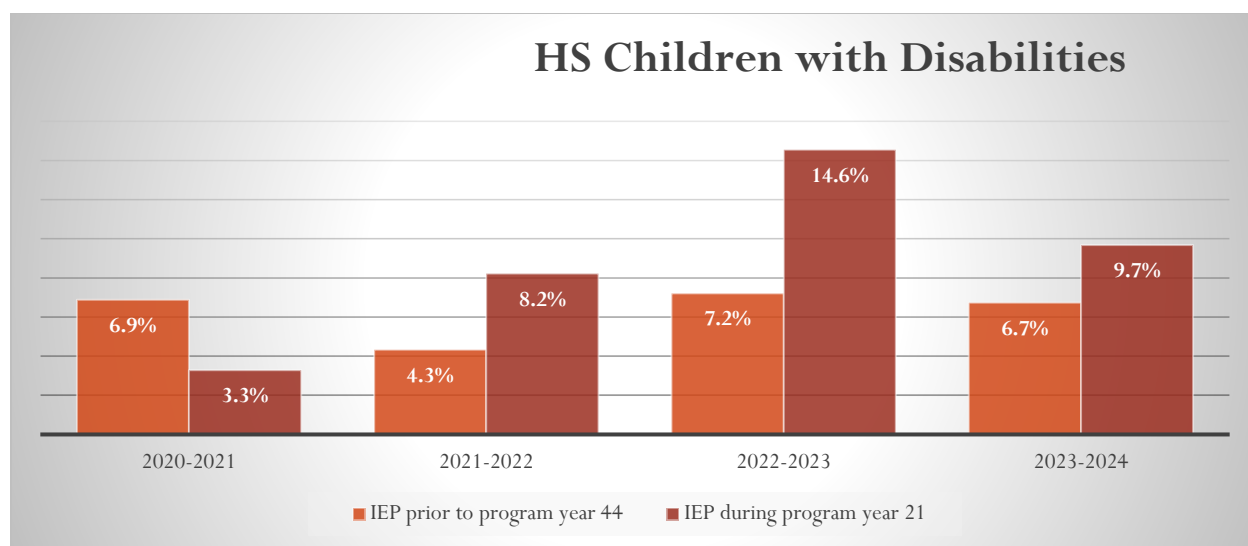
Head Start Father Engagement



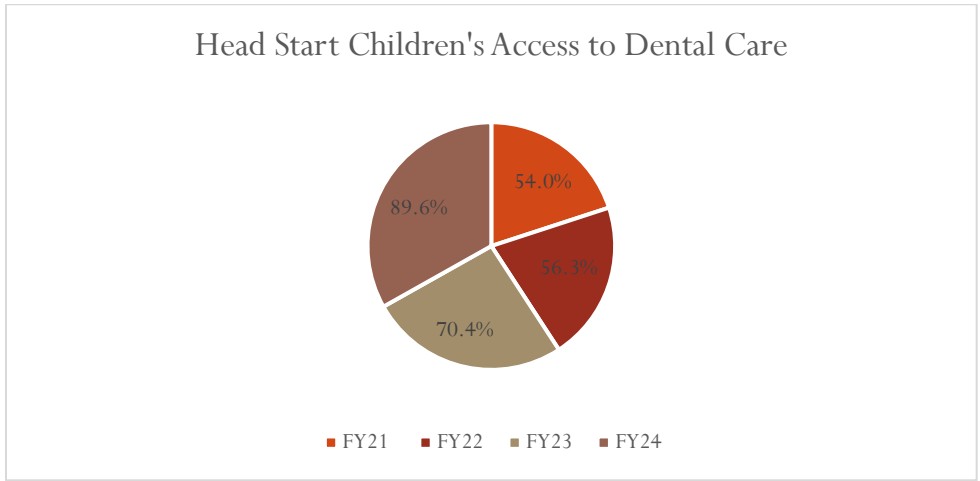
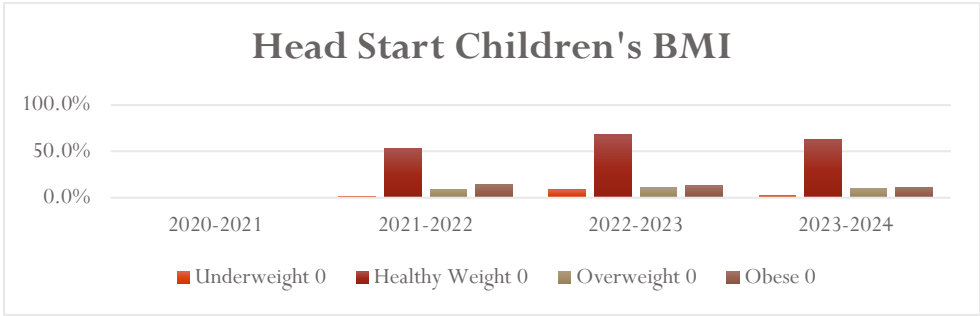
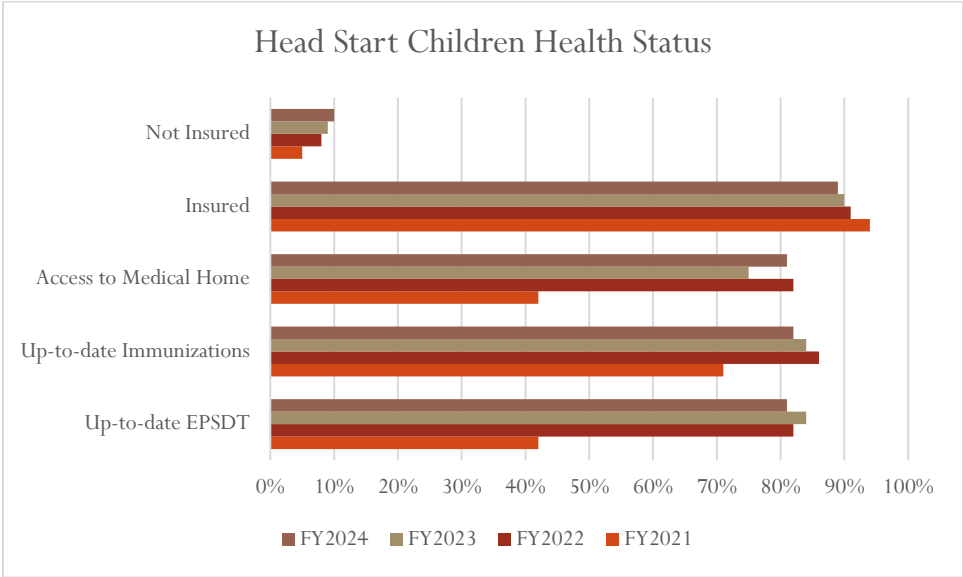
Head Start Children Dual Language Learners



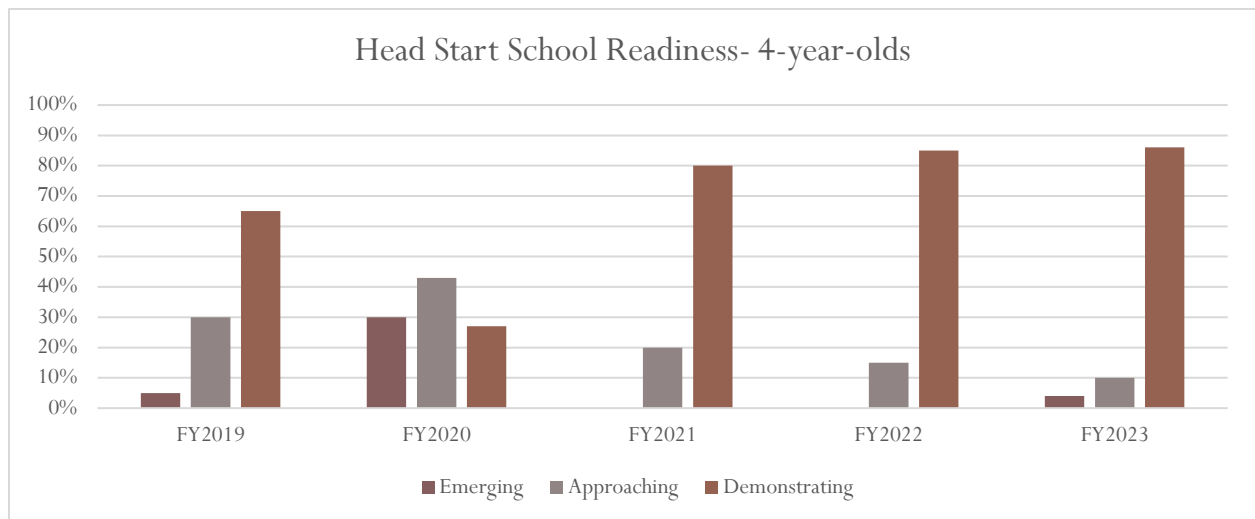
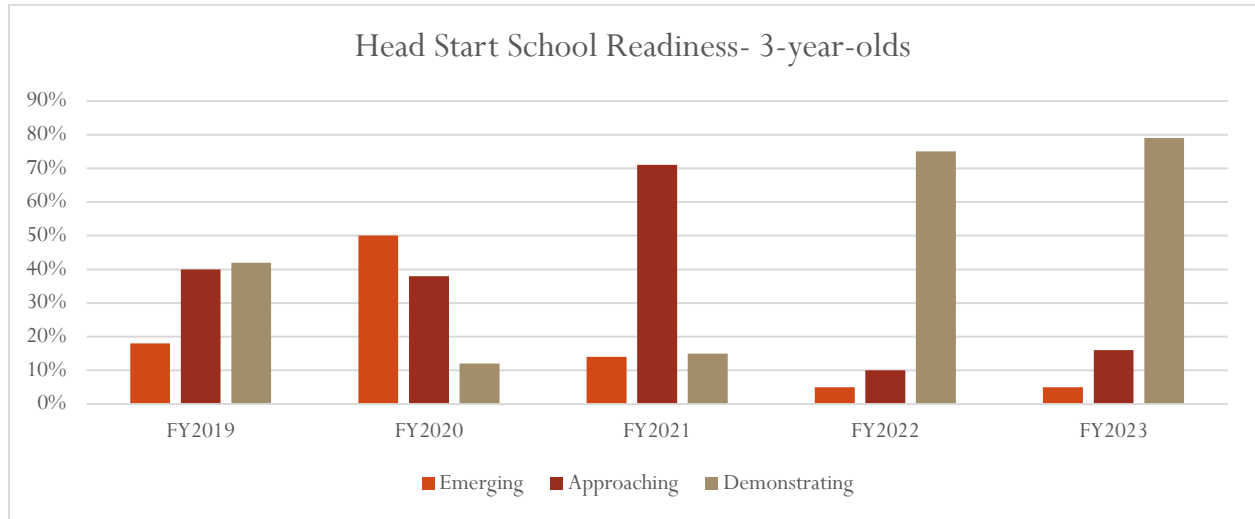
Head Start Children with Disabilities



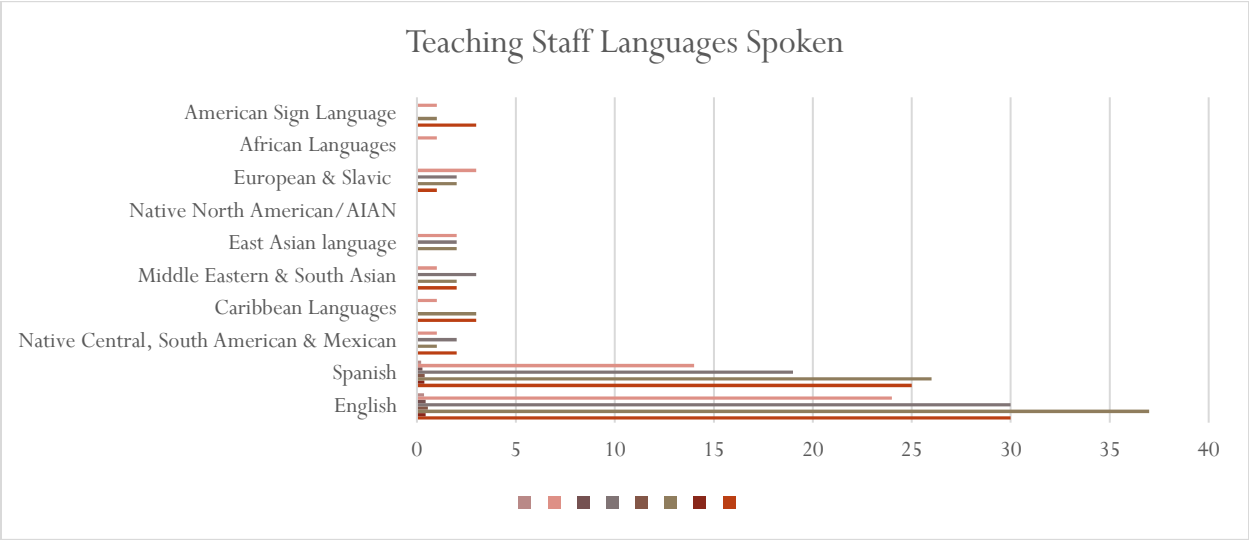
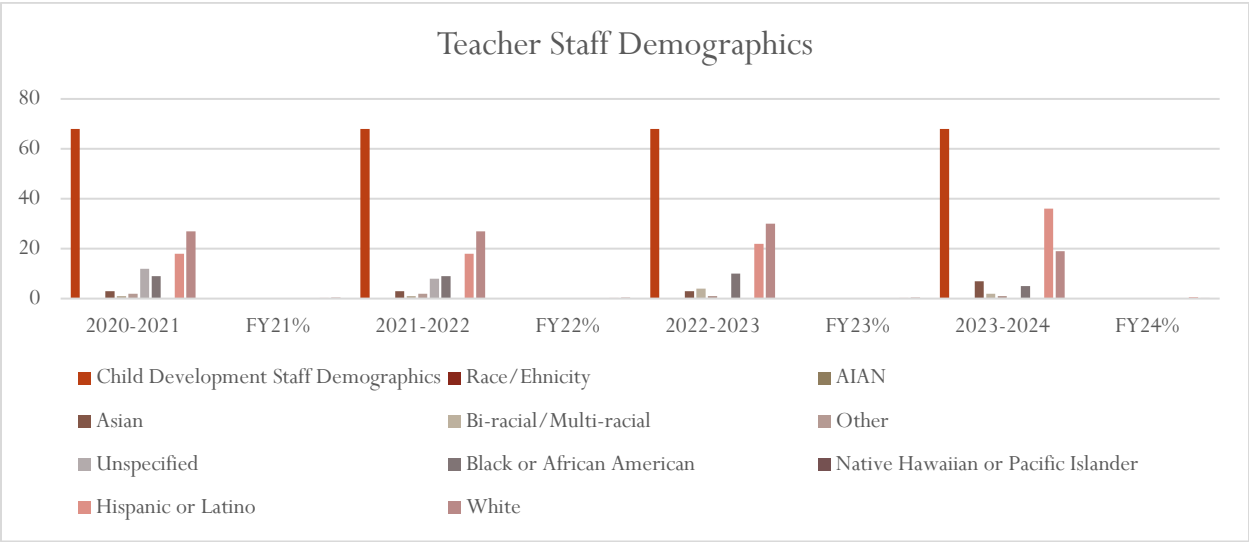
Head Start Children Health Status



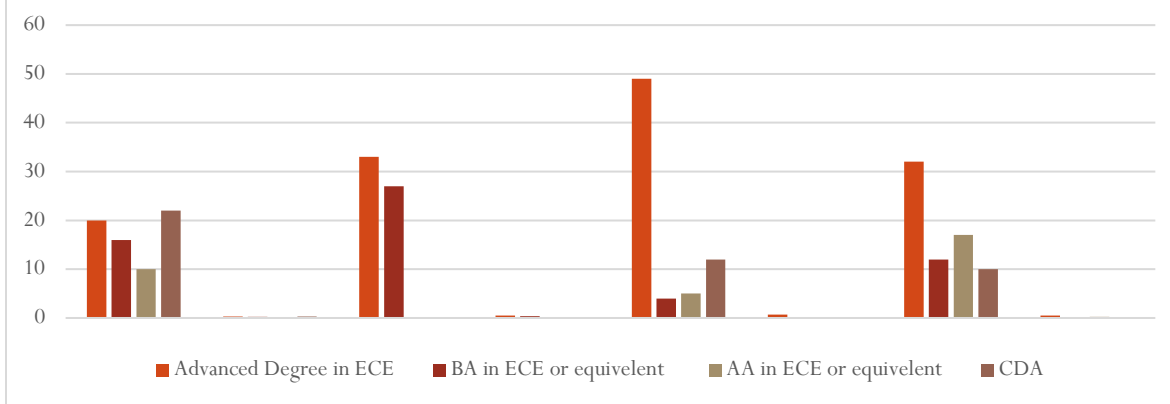
Appendix B: Head Start School Readiness Outcomes



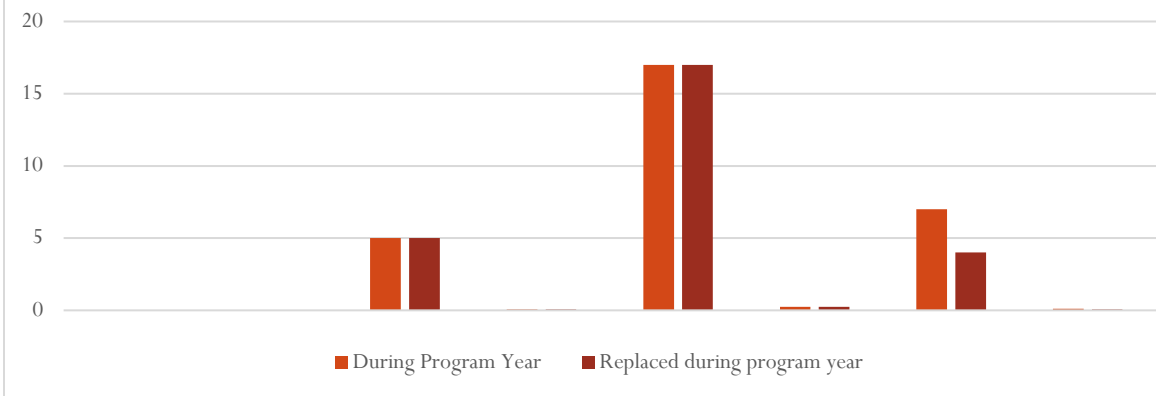
Appendix C: MCPS Teaching Staff Demographics



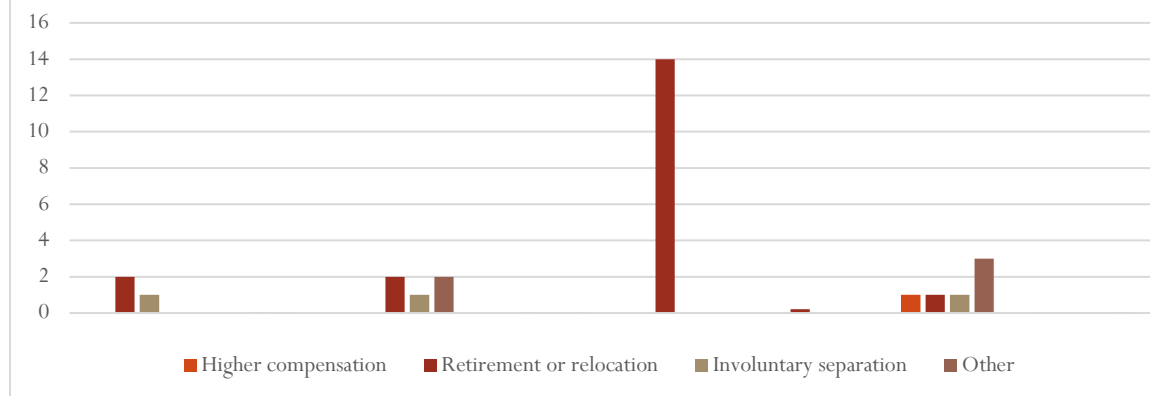
Teacher Credentials



Teaching Staff Turnover

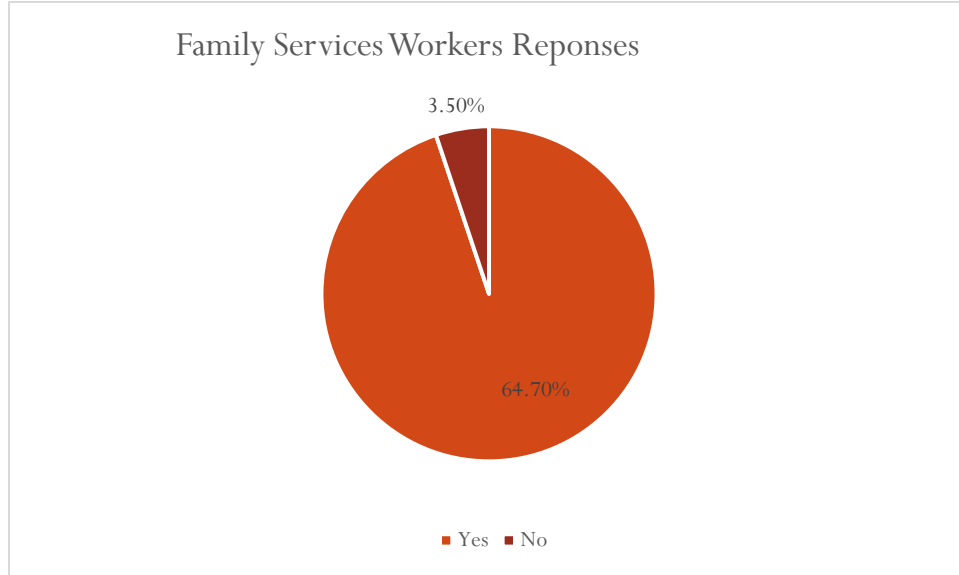


Reason for Teaching Staff Turnover



Appendix D: MCPS Family Services Staff Survey

Q: Are there underserved families in Montgomery County that we are not reaching?



FSW Staff Reflections

Family that does not have legal paper.

Although the data shows otherwise, it does not feel like we are reaching Black families as much as we used to.

The families that are on the benefits cliffs.

Yes, lots of families living in mobile homes are not having the opportunity because of how difficult it is for them to acquire proof of address. We should make the process a little ease for them.

I believe that there is a large population of Haitian immigrants that warrant more attention.

I also believe that there are still disparities for families in the East County area. While needs are being met, it seems that the religious community is meeting them and not the county.

Many migrants do not know about our program. Advertised it more on Television, social media.

The ones who qualify for our programs but are not age eligible for the programs (can't afford daycares / can't navigate technology or reach out for childcare vouchers, etc.).

No

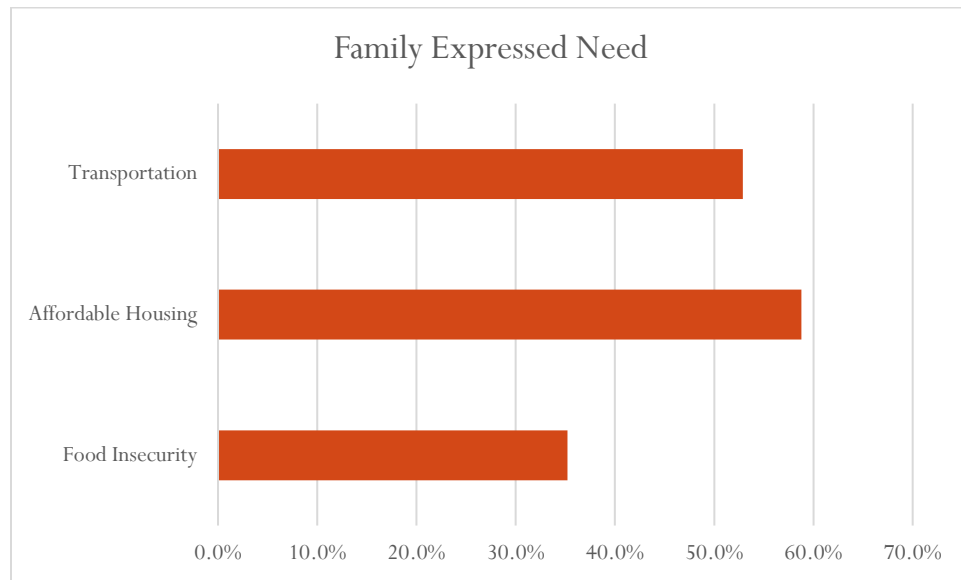
I believe so. Those who are new to the area coming from different states and new to the country.

Special education kids. some are underserved and don't know of any resources to help them.

Yes, upper Western Montgomery County.

Yes, some families who live in areas where we don't offer the program.

Q: Name three of the biggest needs families have expressed over the past five years.



FSW Staff Reflections

Child Care/Full Day Program/Transportation to School
Clothing, Food and After school activities
Different [Head Start] income requirements
Transportation
More full day options
Food, housing, and pick up and dropped off
Food, housing, employment
Housing concerns, lack of transportation, affordable childcare
Housing, Clothing, Mental Health
Housing, food and health insurance
housing, job assistance, language needs
Hungry, economic situation, housing
I believe transportation, lack of programs in their home school and housing.
In the past month: Families do not have education; families are waiting to someone help them.
Inflation, instability, social emotional
shelter, clothing, transportation
Transportation (#1!); food resources; housing
transportation to get to school, after school activities, after school child care
Transportation, Program requirements, lack of information.

Q: Are there aspects of the Head Start program that you would like to see changed? What's not going well? How should they change?

Full Day Program for all schools/Transportation for all.

More programs toddlers.

Increase parent participate as much in the workshops (child development. personal body safety).

The 10 months FSW need to start the same time as the teachers.

Yes, I would love to see a change in management, a fairer system, where equity, communication, respect among other things would be implemented, we are always participating in meetings about equity, respect, racisms, but the turnover from our department proves that none of it are being implemented and we continue experiencing unfairness.

More collaborative work with cluster PCCs/PPWs.

Better system for checking parent/guardians ID's during dismissal time.

Smaller caseloads. Too many families assigned to FSWS and several task to accomplish such process applications.

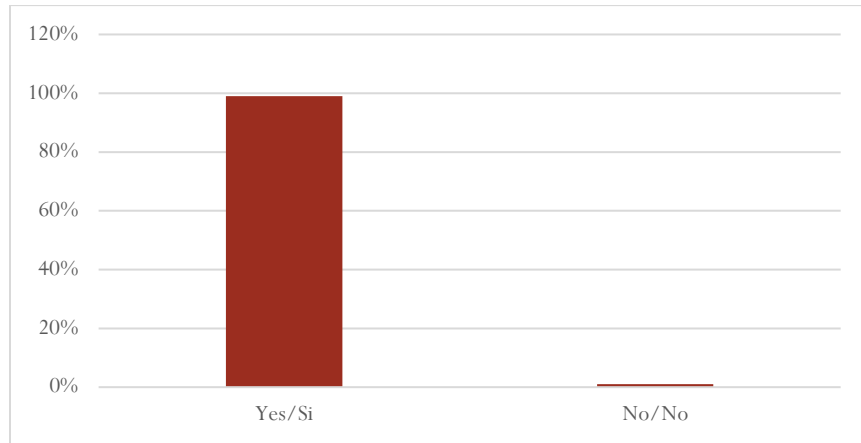
Better/more emotional intelligence, trauma-informed care, and de-escalation strategies training for classroom staff.

More available transportation.

Appendix E: MCPS FY2024 Parent Survey Results

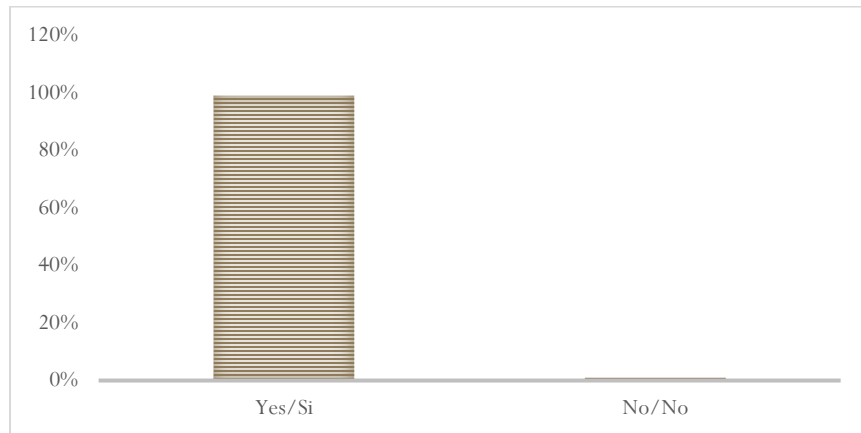
Q: Family Engagement activities, Policy Council Monthly Meeting speakers, and handouts were valuable to me.

Las actividades de involucramiento familiar, los presentadores en las reuniones mensuales de Concejo de Polizas y la información disponible fueron valiosas para mí.



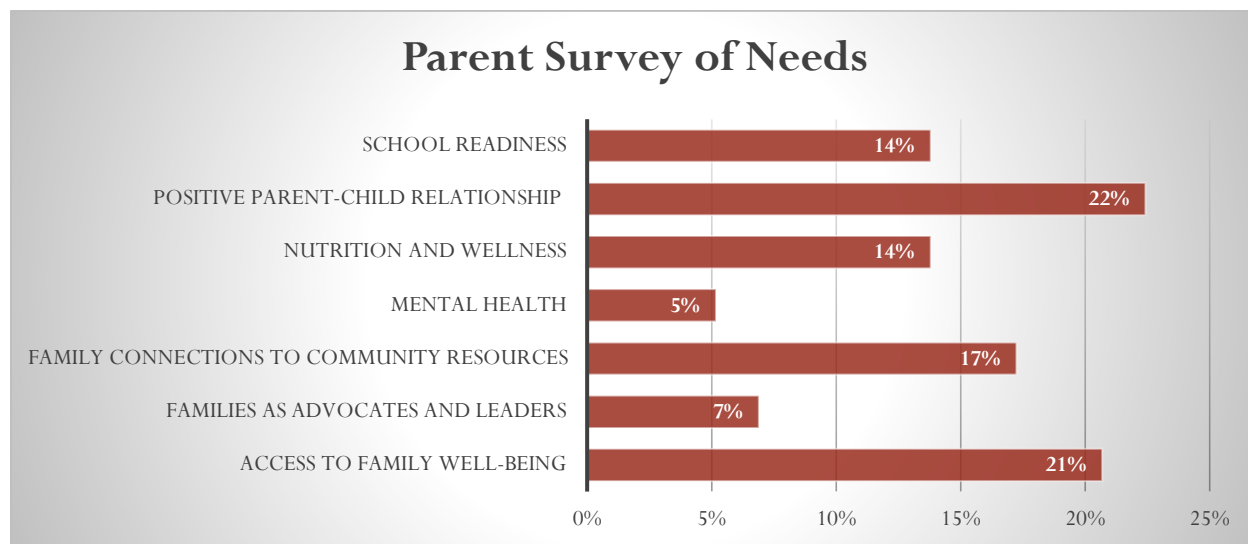
Q: Do you feel that Policy Council monthly meetings are respectful of your family's culture and ethnic background?

¿Siente que las reuniones mensuales de Concejo de Polizas respetan la cultura y el origen étnico de su familia?



Q: Please indicate if you would like more information about any of the following topics from the Parent Family Engagement Outcomes.

Por favor indique la informacion que desea conocer entre los resultados de Involucramiento de Padres y Familias.



Q: If you have a specific topic to be included in the Policy Council meetings, please let us know.

Si tiene un tema específico para incluir en las reuniones del Consejo de Políticas, háganoslo saber.

Talleres para padres para ser auto independientes

The enrollment process from A-Z please

No entre a todas las reuniones, pero alas que entré la traducción al español siempre fué muy mal.

El manejo de aparatos en los niños

Salud mental y Seguridad en las escuelas

Como hablarle a tu hijo sobre la comunidad LGBTQ+ ya que es un tema en el que como padres tenemos diferentes creencias y valores. Pero respetando a todos, como hablarle a tu hijo sobre un tema tan delicado? Sabiendo que es un tema bastante sensible!!

Como hablar a tu hijo sobre la comunidad LGBTQ+ ya que es un tema muy sensible y todos tenemos diferentes culturas y valores, siempre respetando a cada individuo!!

Nutrición y Bienestar

Me gustaria que l@s niñ@s de prekinder tuvieran 30 minutos para leer y 30 minutos para escribir todos los dias

Protección siempre para nuestro hijos

Ninguno

Nutrición y bienestar

Nutrición y bienestar

Inclusión de los padres en el idioma inglés para que ayuden a sus niños en la escuela

Bullying and dress codes

Let us know if there are any activities after school

Uso de Tecnologia Adecuado a los niños!

Appendix F: Community Partners Assessment Survey

HEAD START COMMUNITY PARTNERS	COMMON ASSESSMENT OF FAMILY NEEDS
Community Action Board (CAB)	Housing
Head Start Policy Council Executive Committee	Transportation
Community Partners Forum (N = 25 organizations)	Technology Literacy & Access
	Navigation support to access county services
	Affordable child care
	Mental health services for children 0-3/Bilingual
	Food
	Language services access

REFERENCES & END NOTES

REFERENCES

Additional data resources use to support the FY2024 Montgomery County Head Start Comprehensive Community Assessment:

Best Practices for Infant and Toddler Childcare Programs. Montgomery, Md. County Office of Legislative Oversight. Report 2018-6.

Developing an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Professional Development System in Maryland: A Gap Analysis and Strategic Plan. The Policy Equity Group, LLC. July 2019.

Healthy Montgomery Community Health Needs Assessment 2023.

The Judith P. Hoyer Early Care and Education Enhancement Program Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Report. Maryland State Department of Education.

Maryland Child Care Resource Network Child Care Demographics 2024. Maryland Family Network.

Maryland Ready: Maryland's Path to School Readiness and Success Prenatal to Age 8. Strategic Plan 2020-2025. Maryland State Department of Education.

Maryland Early Learning Standards 0-48 Months, January 2024. Maryland State Department of Education.

Montgomery County, Maryland Community Action Board Annual Report 2022-2023.

Readiness Matters: Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Reports, 2024. Ready At Five.

The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Maryland 2023. Diana Pearce, PhD. Director, Center for Women's Welfare. University of Washington School of Social Work. 2023.

Understanding the Two Generation Strategy for Supporting Families: A Conversation about Local Implementation Strategies. Administration for Children and Families. Casey Family Programs. Hagerstown, Maryland, October 18, 2016.

END NOTES

¹ Montgomery County, Maryland Community Action Board Annual Report 2022-2023, page 5.

² This standard is adopted by the CAB approximately every two years. For 2023, the standard was prepared by CAA staff and CAB in cooperation with the developer of the measure's algorithms for updating the levels.

³ Head Start Program Performance Standards 1302.11 (b) (1), (2) & (3)

⁴ Montgomery County, Maryland Government Head Start (2020-2024) PIR Performance Indicator Report.

⁵ [Montgomery County Community and Population Health Data Dashboard](#)

⁶ *Montgomery County Public Schools at a Glance. 2023-2024.*

⁷ <https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/>

⁸ <https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/>

⁹ *Maryland Child Care Resource Network Child Care Demographics 2024.* Montgomery County Report. (Maryland Family Network).

¹⁰ [Numbers - Ending Homelessness in Montgomery County MD](#)

¹¹ Montgomery County Child Welfare Services.

¹² Community Commons Report 2014.

¹³ [StrategicPlan2023_rev9signed.pdf](#)

¹⁴ Maryland Child Care Resource Network Child Care Demographics 2024. Montgomery County Report. (Maryland Family Network).

¹⁵ *Discovery Station Early Head Start Annual Report Program Year 2018.*

<https://www.sheppardpratt.org/files/resources/discovery-station-ehs-annual-report-2017-2018-revi.pdf>

¹⁶ https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OPI/Resources/Files/2019/MarcElrich_Transition_Team_Report.pdf

¹⁷ <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/CYF%20Docs/ECE%20Initiative%20Year%20One%20.pdf>

¹⁸ *Readiness Matters! The 2023-2024 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Report.* [2023-24 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Report | Division of Early Childhood](#)

¹⁹ <https://www.nonprofitmoco.org/programs/montgomery-moving-forward/>

²⁰ Montgomery Moving Forward call to action: Early Care and Education

<https://www.nonprofitmoco.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/MMF-Call-to-Action-Early-Care-and-Education-Jan2018.pdf>

²¹ <http://mocofoodcouncil.org/food-security-plan-and-food-action-plan/>

²² <http://www.healthymontgomery.org/index.php>

²³ <https://thewomensfoundation.org/ECEFC/>

