



Early Head Start Annual Report



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A MESSAGE FROM JESSICA SMITH, EARLY HEAD START SENIOR DIRECTOR

Dear friends and colleagues,

Health and safety continue to be our top priority as we navigate the world post-pandemic. Our Health and Safety Nurse Coordinator remains on top of COVID, and other health and well-being matters and has been a great resource for our families and staff. It feels good to safely be back together and to resume the activities we did prior to the pandemic. I love walking in classrooms and seeing children and teachers learning and playing together. It warms my heart to see Advocates and families greet each other and interact during socializations.

This summer, we participated in the Focus Area One of the Office of Head Start Monitoring Review Process. This was an opportunity for Maternity Care Coalition (MCC) to describe our program approach, validating compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards. This review also provided MCC with the opportunity to showcase our education, health, and family service models. The team worked together to pull data, work on documentation, and prepare for interviews to help the reviewer better understand MCC's Early Head Start (EHS) program and the needs of the communities we serve. I am happy to share that we passed this review with zero areas of noncompliance identified.

Over the last program year, we have worked on restructuring and expanding our Early Head Start Organization Chart. We have started to recruit for new positions and will continue to do so throughout the 2024-2025 program year. This new Organization Chart will allow staff to advance and will also provide more support for children, families, and staff. Organizing the team based on service delivery areas allows for more specialized support and collaboration within teams and a more streamlined workflow.

This program year, we celebrated Week of the Young Child with our children, families, staff, and community. Children, families, and staff participated in music and movement activities, healthy cooking activities, story time with local politicians and librarians, and ended the week with a family celebration. We continued to use our garden grant to provide indoor and outdoor classroom activities around growing and planting. Teachers and Advocates show children that we can bring the outside in and eat what we grow.

I am excited and optimistic for our 2024-2025 program year! I am confident we will continue to tackle challenges together and become better and stronger. I'm looking forward to continuing this journey with dedicated staff and committed families who, together, will help our children meet and exceed their goals!

Jessica Smith
Early Head Start Senior Director

EARLY HEAD START DATA AND STATISTICS

All of Maternity Care Coalition's data is collected through our ChildPlus Database. This data was collected throughout the year, from February 1, 2022, to January 31, 2023. We have sites in Philadelphia, Norristown, and Pottstown. All sites offer once-a-week home visiting for children and pregnant mothers. Philadelphia and Norristown have center-based children who come on-site and get visited four times a year. Our Early Head Start program is focused on child development, health, and family well-being. We offer various services for our families including distributing basic need items such as diapers, formula, and clothing, referring families to WIC and organizations specializing in housing, and offering weekly family socializations to enhance learning and parent-child engagement. The pregnant people MCC serves range in age from teenage to 45 year-olds, and the children range in age from zero through three year-olds.

100% of eligible children served

282 families received services through our Early Head Start program

316 children were enrolled in our Early Head Start program

64 pregnant women received services through our Early Head Start program

82% of EHS families lived below the federal poverty line

40% of EHS families were single-parent households

47% of single-family households were comprised of single mothers

72% of families received emergency/crisis intervention services

80% average monthly attendance of total funded enrollment 2021-2022





FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Our EHS program encourages parents and caregivers to take a leadership role in their children's learning and development. We strive to create opportunities for families to be involved and to support their growth. Studies have shown that children with active parent involvement are more likely to have long-term academic and career success, especially early in life. We are committed to involving parents' voices to shape our programs and policies. We offer numerous opportunities for parents to engage with their children's learning and impact their communities including membership on the parent committee, involvement in special task forces, and joining the Policy Council. Our goal for all families is that when they leave our program, they have found their voice and can advocate for the needs of the family.

Another goal is to ensure that each parent and caregiver feels empowered to take different leadership roles. During the pandemic, we started hosting Policy Council elections and meetings virtually to accommodate our families' needs. The Policy Council is a group of Early Head Start parents and community members who help lead and make decisions about MCC's EHS program. Policy Council members are elected by the parents of children enrolled in the program. Policy Council members are trained at the beginning of their year term so they are prepared for all their duties for the year.

We have continued that process since and had great success with parent participation and involvement. Our EHS Program gives Policy Council member a unique opportunity to be part of the hiring process. Policy Council parents participate in the interviewing process as members of the Personnel Committee, which is instrumental in hiring new staff members for the EHS program.

Additionally, we have found new ways to engage with the community through direct outreach, mail pieces, and social media. Our EHS team worked with MCC's Community Engagement Services team to reach new community members and support their needs. We increased awareness of our hiring and enrollment needs through advertisements and connections with community resources. This year, we were able to place billboards in all the communities that we service, as well as target marketing on social media. By intentionally engaging the community, we are meeting families where they are and supporting them every step of the way.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Our EHS children and families receive health and wellness support throughout their time in our program. Some highlights and accomplishments include:

- A Nutrition Consultant provides monthly nutrition-related activities for socializations and classrooms to allow children and families to explore new ideas for healthy eating.
- 99% of children acquired health insurance.
- 89% of children are up to date on immunizations. EHS participated in agency-wide initiatives to improve vaccination education and outreach, including staff training on how to meet the current vaccine hesitancies and tools for Advocates to support parents' questions about immunizations, especially COVID-19 and influenza.
- 100% of prenatal clients, regardless of immigration status, were connected to healthcare during their pregnancy.
- Though families are still impacted by the effects the COVID-19 pandemic had on the Philadelphia and Montgomery County healthcare system, we had a 10% increase in well-child visits, which validates all the efforts made by our staff to support parents in attending primary care appointments and addressing any barriers like transportation, language, health literacy, and childcare.
- Health Services Advisory Committee members have been involved in parent meetings to provide health education to families and support our program with updated approaches and policies to prevent communicable disease outbreaks such as COVID-19.
- This year, we focused on lead prevention initiatives in our centers and for families at home. We completed lead testing for our centers and provided information, support, and resources to children with elevated lead levels. We also focused on informing parents of the importance of lead screenings, so children were identified early to receive interventions.
- Over the last year, we have had no serious incidents in any of our childcare centers, and emergency and safety procedures were updated for our center-based sites. A Safety Committee was established as a part of safety planning for all MCC sites so we can continue to ensure that all EHS locations are safe for staff, children, and families.
- We received additional donated funds for garden maintenance and classroom activities for the children to enjoy the season changes of our outdoor playground space and gain experience with gross motor interactions. We also had a garden event to complete our Week of the Young Child festivities, where families gathered to enjoy activities, food, and fun.

Our goal is to continue supporting families in accessing quality healthcare while also meeting the ongoing health and safety needs of our communities in Philadelphia, Norristown, and Pottstown.



SCHOOL READINESS

An important indicator of our success is how well-prepared our EHS children are for preschool and kindergarten once they transition out of our program.

We model flexibility and adaptability to meet the needs of our families. Our staff uses education and community resources to work towards each family's individual goals. We accomplish this through providing linguistically and culturally appropriate services promoting literacy, physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development, and working with parents to cultivate healthy parent-child attachment and interaction.

We strive to approach our work through modeling flexibility and adaptability to meet the needs of our families. Our staff has access to education and community resources and utilizes them for each family's individual goals. Advocates and teachers collaborate to engage our children in meaningful educational opportunities so they can continue to thrive.

We understand that each family and child has unique strengths, challenges, and needs. Some of our school readiness outcomes include:

58% of children improved their communication skills

91% of children improved their approaches to learning

85% of children improved their social behavior skills

This year, our staff collaborated with the Head Start Region Technical Assistance to provide a three-series training for all staff to support social-emotional development. This training included Responsive Routines, Schedules and Environments, Promoting Positive Peer Interactions and Understanding Behaviors. This training allowed staff to understand their teaching practices better and support children with challenging behaviors.

EHS FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total public and private funds received for February 1, 2022 – January 31, 2023

FEDERAL SHARE: \$4,485,835

USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program: **\$44,978**

US Department of Health and Human Services EHS Program Base Operations: **\$4,070,013**

Training and Technical Assistance: **\$91,034**

American Rescue Plan Funds: **\$245,499**

CRRSA Funds: **\$33,311**

NONFEDERAL SHARE: \$1,073,897

Total Early Head Start Program: **\$5,558,732**

Percentage of Non-Federal Share Match: **20%***

Percentage of Administration: **15%**

*Only federal funds received from Training and Technical Assistance and US Department of Health and Human Services EHS Program Base Operations are used to calculate match percentage per program funding requirements.



