2020 Early Head Start
ANNUAL REPORT

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Letter from Senior Director

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As I write this annual letter, I’m aware that the goal is to reflect on our most recently completed Early Head Start (EHS) program year, which ended in January 2020. However, it is nearly impossible for me to disentangle the more recent events of 2020 that followed closely on the heels of the end of that cycle. So instead, I will try to bridge my reflections on the past with the events of these challenging times.

During the 2019-20 program year, our families faced a myriad of obstacles including food insecurity, access to health care, the opioid epidemic, racial inequity, unemployment, and housing challenges, to name a few. As 2020 continued and the page turned on a new program year, and with it the arrival of the coronavirus to our region, those challenges turned hills into mountains and rivers into oceans.

I’m consistently humbled by the members of our amazing EHS team and their ability to help families navigate those hurdles. EHS Leadership responds by providing a supportive foundation for team members while securing new relationships in the community and formalizing partnership agreements with agencies and individuals that can help our families. The EHS Advocates and Parent Engagement Associates respond by accessing our teams’ deep resources and putting them to work for each individual families’ goals. Our EHS Program Assistants, Nutrition Associate, Nursing consultants, and MCC Administrators work together to create the best environment and culture for our team to remain strong. Our EHS Teachers, child care partners, and Advocates don’t miss out on each opportunity to engage our children in meaningful educational opportunities, so they can continue to thrive while the adults around them find ways to sustain the family and gain ground toward a more stable future.

In essence, none of that changed from the previous year. It only grew more urgent. It required much more ingenuity and flexibility to continue to stay a step ahead of the difficulties. Maternity Care Coalition (MCC) now provides tablets with a year of data to all families who need it so that they can reach us virtually for home visits, education, and support. Our Policy Council members use these devices to participate in virtual meetings and continue their important contributions to our program’s leadership. Our team accesses the community relationships we’ve built to secure free diapers and formula to send to our families in safe, socially-distanced ways. Our EHS team currently does this incredible work from home offices while each of us manages our own obstacles brought on by the pandemic. But those challenges have only increased our determination to continue to work hard to advocate for EHS families. Some things will never change.

Toscha Blalock
Senior Director, Early Head Start Programs
2019 – 2020

100% Of eligible children were served

400 Families received services through our Early Head Start Program

421 Children were enrolled in our Early Head Start program

99 Pregnant women received services through our Early Head Start program

80% Of EHS families lived below the federal poverty line

43% Of EHS families were single-parent households

95% Of single-family households were comprised of single mothers

45% Of families received emergency/crisis intervention services

90% Average monthly attendance of total funded enrollment
Family Engagement

21% of our staff are former Head Start parents.

At our Early Head Start program, we encourage parents and caregivers to take a leadership role in their child’s learning and development. As studies have shown, children with active parent involvement, especially early in life, are more likely to have long-term academic and career success.

Our goal is to make sure each parent and caregiver feels empowered to take on this leadership role. To do this, we offer a variety of training and workshop opportunities and informative programming that reflects the needs and interests of our families. This past year, parents requested different training opportunities to meet their needs. Some of these requests included employment training such as Child Development Associate (CDA) training and job certification, and specific sessions that focus on parenting skills. Our EHS program hosted workshops that informed parents on these topics and referred them to community resources to help them gain access to employment services. One of the EHS workshops focused on healthy eating, where fathers helped prepare meals for mothers. To provide training workshops that adequately serve every parent and caregiver, we send out surveys throughout the year to gauge how we can improve our services.

Staying true to our commitment to reflect our community’s needs, we have numerous opportunities for parents to have a voice in their children’s learning and opportunities for advocacy through parent committees, special task forces, and the Policy Council. Recently, a parent from the South Philadelphia site earned her CDA certification and became a teacher. Prior to receiving her CDA, this parent volunteered at the center and became an active member of the Policy Council, where she served as president. We’re incredibly proud of all our parents for their efforts in taking a leadership role in their child’s early learning and development.
School Readiness

An important indicator of our success is how well prepared our Early Head Start children are for Preschool and Kindergarten once they transition out of our program.

We support parents and caregivers in developing goals to help prepare them for school-readiness and lifelong learning. These goals focus on each child's individual needs in the areas of Language/Literacy, Social-Emotional, Physical Development, Cognitive learning, and Arts.

We strive to guide our approaches through flexibility and adaptability when meeting the needs of our families. Advocates and teachers develop a partnership with parents to set attainable goals. We understand that each family and child is unique with their strengths, challenges, and needs.

- **87%** of children improved their communications skills
- **85%** of children improved their approaches to learning
- **92%** of children improved their social behavior skills

This year, the Education Team applied for a grant with the Dodge Family Fund. Upon being awarded the grant, all EHS Teachers participated in a formal Creative Curriculum Training to support the teachers' capacity to implement the curriculum to fidelity and provide individualized learning opportunities for children. In addition, each classroom received a Creative Curriculum Kit that included books to be shared with families to promote literacy at home.
Health & Well-being

The mental and physical health of every child and family is of our utmost priority. MCC’s EHS programs have made strides this year to improve the systems and education around our families’ health and overall well-being.

This past year, we served **99 pregnant mothers** through our Early Head Start program, and **100% of pregnant women received prenatal education on fetal development**. MCC takes a holistic approach to services for pregnant women. We provide educational opportunities for prenatal clients on breastfeeding, child development, substance use challenges, and other interesting subjects. We connect our clients to community resources and crucial prenatal health services with partner agencies within their communities.

16% of pregnant mothers enrolled were identified as high-risk

At the end of the 2019-2020 year, **86% of enrolled children had continuous dental care**, **95% had ongoing access to healthcare**, and **82% of children were up-to-date on all immunizations**.

Maternal mental health is an essential part of staying physically healthy and having the ability to care for children. **100% of our clients who requested support with mental health concerns were referred to our Mental Health Consultant and given access to appropriate services in the community**.

94% of children were enrolled in health insurance, **93% of which was through Medicaid and or CHIP**.
EHS Financial Information

Total public and private funds received for February 1, 2019 – January 31, 2020

**FEDERAL SHARE: Total $4,103,036**

USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program: $51,885  
US Department of Health and Human Services EHS Program Base Operations: $3,960,117  
Training and Technical Assistance: $91,034

**NON-FEDERAL SHARE: $1,028,776**

Total Early Head Start Program: $5,131,812  
Percentage of Non-Federal Share Match: 25%  
Percentage of Administration: 15%