



**COMMUNITY ACTION  
HEAD START &  
EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS**



# Access Opportunity Community

**HEAD START & EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS  
ANNUAL REPORT 2021**



# Director's Letter

Dear Families, Colleagues, Friends,

I am so pleased to share our 2020-2021 Annual Report with you. Through stories, quotes, pictures, and data we have tried to capture some of the essence of our work this year.

And what a year it has been! The relentless pandemic continued to threaten our security and health, and the well-being of our loved ones, and deeply disrupted our usual ways of living, working, being together, and imagining the future. We know that COVID-19 disproportionately impacted the youngest children and their families and those of us most vulnerable because of systemic racial and economic oppression. COVID also interrupted the continuity of child care for many families as centers struggled to stop the spread and ensure healthy and safe environments. This global crisis touched all of us on a most personal level as we experienced a multitude of strong emotions, with worry and fear our constant companions.

Yet when I reflect on this past year I am filled with gratitude, and respect, and deep affection for our Head Start and Early Learning Programs community:

- the unstoppable babies and toddlers and preschoolers who every day bring the excitement and joy and hope of growth in action;
- their resilient, creative, loving, and wise families;
- our dedicated, skilled, responsive, kind staff who through it all remained laser focused on our work of supporting and strengthening relationships as the foundation for healthy children and strong families;
- and our parent and community partners who supported, advised, and generously contributed to our mission.



So many of our staff found their work transformed this year. Some taught and visited with families virtually, others taught small cohorts with strict protocols; some raised their voices in legislative hearings and outreach to the Governor, others bonded with families over shared hardships. From the outside, our program was transformed. On the inside, our core mission, values, and relationship-based approach never wavered.

We are a program devoted to working in collaborative and reflective ways to support the development of strong, confident families and healthy children. Every day we strive to be a responsive, reflective, and relational organization, a system of care that understands that it is the quality of our listening and attention, the care with which we tend to our relationships, and our ability to recognize and repair disconnections and mismatches that are foundational to positive child and family outcomes. In the words of the great Dr. Jeree Pawl, we understand that "How you are is as important as what you do."

Please enjoy these pages, and thank you for your care, commitment, and partnership on behalf of the youngest children and their families in our vibrant and resilient communities.

With appreciation and respect,

Anat Weisenfreund

# Policy Council

## Head Start Parent Members

- Caitlin Bishop
- Anna Bowring
- Aleah Diemand (Vice Chair)
- Devin Dreisch
- Rebekah Fielding (Chair)
- Erica LaCouture
- Agustin Lorenzo
- Nir Mizrahi
- Crystalyn Osborne (Chair)
- Colleen Peet
- Christina Phillips
- Angela Smith-LaClaire

## Community Members

- Ashley Woodman  
*UMass Developmental Disabilities and Human Services*
- Ellen Cain  
*Community Action Board of Directors Liaison*
- Linda Gillespie  
*Zero to Three (Retired)*
- Martha Lees  
*Smith College Center for Early Childhood Education (Retired)*
- Severiana Rodriguez  
*Criterion Riverway Early Intervention*

“It was so great to hear about all of the hard work that Head Start was doing for families during this really challenging time. They were trying their best to deliver high quality content and resources, even remotely, which is a tall order for this age group. I appreciated the extent to which the leadership cared about their staff, as well as their families.”

- Policy Council Member

# Recognition of Excellence



The important and relational work of Head Start & Early Learning Programs did not go unnoticed this year! In March 2021, Anat Weisenfreund was honored with the National Head Start Association's 2020 BOLD Leadership Prize that "recognizes how Head Start uplifts our nation's most vulnerable communities through unparalleled bold leadership."



In June, Anat, our Touchpoints Site Mentor Dr. Jayne Singer, and KIT Consultant Alissa Marotto presented (virtually!) at the World Association for Infant Mental Health's 17th World Congress about how we have improved quality and reduced staff turnover through a trauma-informed approach. In the style of HS & ELP, both the BOLD Prize and this presentation were opportunities for further teaching and learning: about how important relationships are and about how many people across our community and our world share our mission and values for working with children and families.

# Mission & Goals



## Our Mission

We partner with families in all that we do and believe that parents are the experts on their children. Together, we build a solid foundation for resilient and resourceful caregivers; caring, confident, and curious children; and responsive, invested communities.

## Our Program Goals

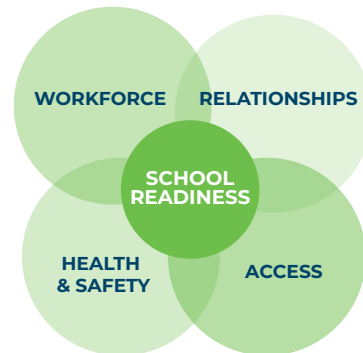
Strategic goals highlight our values and priorities and guide our work over the course of our five-year grant cycle. In 2020-2021, we reorganized and revised our program goals into four overarching areas of workforce, relationships, health and safety, and access—all in support of children and families being ready for school and for life.

**Workforce:** The program will recruit and retain a highly-qualified, reflective, and well-compensated workforce.

**Relationships:** The program will continue to build and nurture a relational and trauma-informed organization in service of healthy child development and strong families.

**Health and Safety:** The program will ensure the health and safety of all children and increase overall child, family, and staff health and well-being.

**Access:** The program will improve access to services in our program, agency, and community for the children and families who need them most.



### GOAL 1

#### WORKFORCE

*Recruit and retain a highly qualified, reflective, and well-compensated workforce*

- Increase compensation
- Apprenticeship program
- Increase and maintain the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of our staff
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Learning and Training
- Relational Supports: Reflective supervision, coaching, PD

### GOAL 2

#### RELATIONSHIPS

*Continue to build and nurture a relational and trauma-informed organization in service of healthy child development and strong families*

- Implement Developmental Services Guide
- Classroom environments reflect the children and families served
- Improve collection/use of social-emotional data
- Partner with families to develop meaningful family goals
- Touchpoints Parenting curriculum
- Assess opportunities and barriers to providing reflective practice and integrate RP into systems

### GOAL 3

#### HEALTH AND SAFETY

*Ensure the health and safety of all children and increase overall child, family, and staff health and well-being*

- Ensure all children are supervised and safe
- Additional health resources for children
- Collaborate with dental providers
- Provide oral health training and guidance for parents
- Additional health resources for families
- Additional resources for staff wellness

### GOAL 4

#### ACCESS

*Improve access to services in our program, agency, and community for the children and families who need them most*

- Provide additional access to Early Head Start
- Analyze the demographics of eligible children in our region and integrate results into recruitment, enrollment, and prioritization systems
- Promote Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health service integration and service delivery in western MA
- CAPV Service Integration Project to improve intra-agency referrals and services

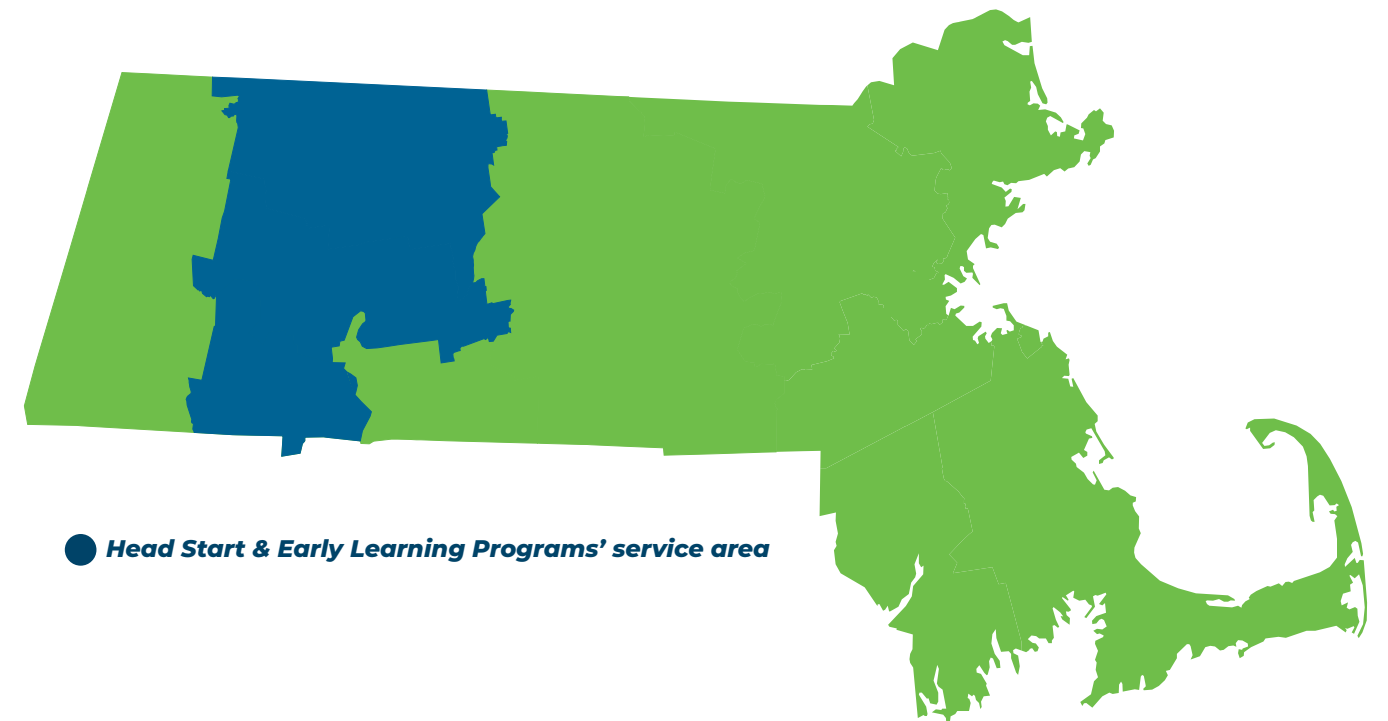
Revised Program Goals and Objectives

# Who We Serve



For more than fifty years, Head Start and Early Head Start have provided early education and care and comprehensive services for very low-income pregnant parents, infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families in communities across the country using models that are chosen by and for those communities. Here in western Massachusetts, our service area spans nearly 1,600 square miles in the Pioneer Valley and includes three mostly rural and semi-rural counties from the border of Vermont to the border of Connecticut. We work in partnership with families whose histories feature poverty, resilience, trauma, and love using a proven, relationship-based approach to help them meet their goals and to provide critical support for children's development and school readiness.

In 2020-2021, Community Action Pioneer Valley's Head Start and Early Learning Programs (HS & ELP) provided services to 156 infants and toddlers and 4 pregnant women in Early Head Start from 139 families and 327 preschoolers in Head Start from 300 families. Because of COVID-19, we held Zoom-based virtual classes, offered virtual home visits, and operated classrooms on-site at some centers and through our 3 independently-licensed Head Start Family Child Care Educators.



● Head Start & Early Learning Programs' service area



This year, HS & ELP invested in picture books to initiate diversity conversations with children and families.



# Our Community

Many families in our service area face challenging situations and need access to affordable, high-quality child care and comprehensive services. The impacts of COVID-19 compounded these circumstances. During the 2020-2021 school year, our families were experiencing:

- Incomes below or near the Federal Poverty Line
- Loss of work and difficulty finding work during pandemic shutdowns
- High cost of living, driven by the costs of housing, child care, and transportation
- Inadequate public transportation systems
- Immigrant and refugee populations that have come here from all over the world, with small numbers of families from each country and many different languages spoken in our communities
- Closures of child care providers and decreases in Pre-K availability when these were already in high demand in our region

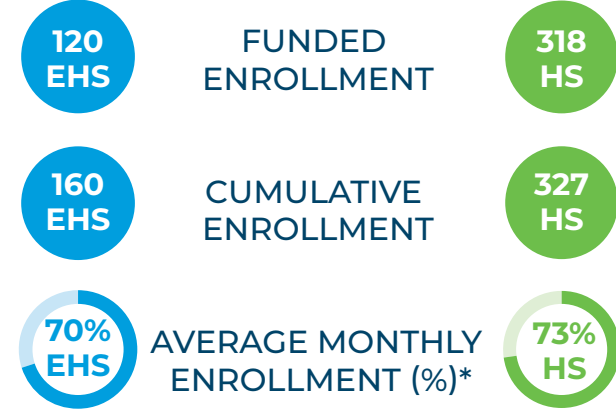
- Inadequate mental health resources for young children and their families and an increasing need for these services
- A concerning number of families and children experiencing homelessness, though some were protected by eviction moratoria
- High levels of opioid-related deaths over the past few years
- Strong and growing networks of mutual aid and community organizations to address these issues

And through all these very significant challenges, families remained resilient and resourceful, doing all they could for their children, families, and communities. As we partner with families to meet their specific goals—from supporting their relationships with their children, to housing and employment—they are better able to build the emotional and economic foundation that will support their children's healthy life-long development.

# 2020-2021 Enrollment & Eligibility



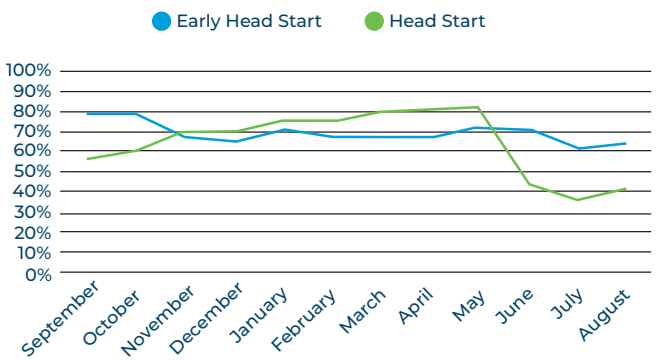
## 2020-2021 ENROLLMENT



\*These percentages do not include Jun-Aug for Head Start because our preschool part-day, extended-day, and home-based programs are not in session over the summer.

Children are eligible for Early Head Start and Head Start services based on their age (birth to age 3 for EHS and 3-5 for HS) and their income (at or below the Federal Poverty Level, which was \$26,500 for a family of four in 2021). Children are also eligible if they are in foster care, they are homeless, or their families receive public assistance. Families with risk factors such as homelessness, refugee status, domestic violence, and parental or child disability are given priority for enrollment, and at least 10% of all children enrolled must have a documented disability.

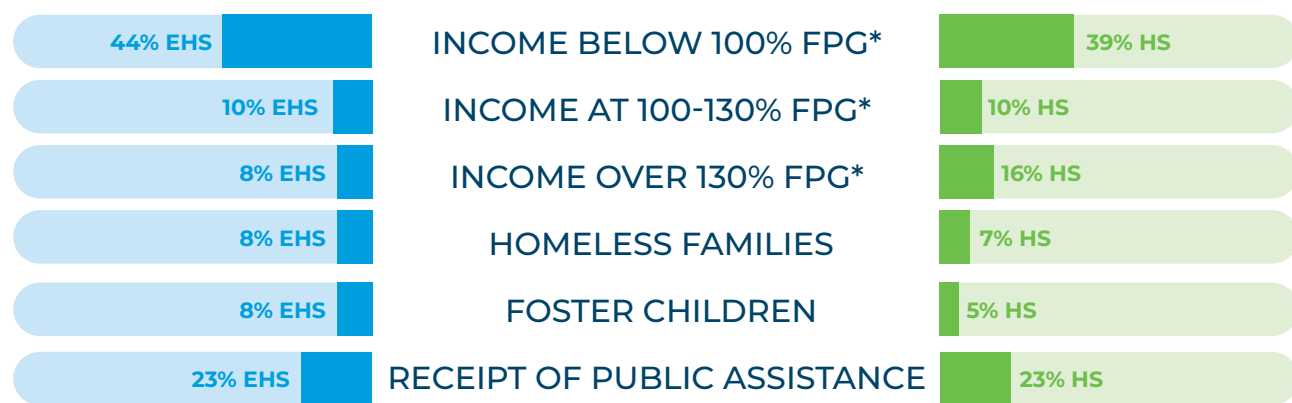
## MONTHLY ENROLLMENT BY PROGRAM 2020-2021



Note: Part-day, extended-day, and home-based Head Start settings closed during the summer months.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, HS & ELP enrollment looked much different in 2020-2021 than in a typical year. To begin with, recruitment staff adopted new and innovative ways of finding eligible families, including Zoom open houses and presentations to our partners. Once families applied, physical distancing requirements limited the number of children who could attend on site, and virtual programming was not a fit for all families. We were on average 73% enrolled in Head Start and 70% enrolled in Early Head Start during the months when all program options were open.

\*Federal Poverty Guidelines. Note: Family enrolled based on status as homeless do not represent all homeless families in the program.



These graphs illustrate how the children in our program were eligible by displaying the percentage of HS and EHS children for each criterion.



## The Stories of COVID-19

In the summer of 2020, with pandemic shutdowns still in place, HS & ELP was busy planning for reopening. That reopening took many forms. Home Visitors met with families over Zoom, waving at babies over screens. Family Child Care Educators and Educators, Cooks, and support staff in our full-day and extended-day classrooms trained on extensive cleaning and physical distancing protocols before cautiously opening their doors for small numbers of children. Educators in our part-day classrooms met with children in large groups, small groups, and one-on-one—all virtually. Family Advocates and enrollment staff worked in homes and offices across our region to stay in touch with families as their needs changed and to partner with them to meet those needs. Health staff conducted vision and hearing screenings on front porches and community parks to ensure the wellness of all

children. Head Start looked different than it ever had before—and meant more, to many families, than it ever had before.

While physical distancing compounded the stresses of the pandemic, we found ways to support each other, listen in the hard times, and share small joys. We hold on to our belief that when physical distancing is necessary, it is all the more important to remain emotionally connected in relationships. Because of the care we showed for each other through masking and vaccinating once we could, there were no major outbreaks in any of our centers. Through it all, children grew and learned. The following pages tell just a few stories of what their experiences looked like during these disrupted days.

Christina and her daughter Samantha enrolled in home-based Early Head Start when Sam was just turning one. As a working mom of four, Christina was glad to have home visits as reserved time that wasn't about laundry or dishes or older siblings—it was just for Christina and Sam and their home visitor, Emily. Christina and Emily worked together: planning projects, sharing ideas, and building relationships. Everyone in the household got to know Emily, and she helped Christina and her husband navigate parenting with different approaches and different children. When Christina began to have concerns about Sam's sleep and other milestones, Emily was her go-to resource. She validated Christina's questions and was there for the family as Sam was diagnosed with autism and began to get services to support her development.

In the early days of the pandemic, Christina and Sam sat at their laptop and greeted Emily and her dog, including her in activities with the whole cooped-up family: a little bit of normalcy amid chaos. At the same time, Sam was getting ready to transition to Head Start. With Emily's help and a thoughtful transition, she joined a Westfield Head Start at Home classroom, attending via Zoom with her new teachers Molly and Sarah. Despite the challenges, Christina found that classes gave her family something on the calendar to look forward to when many other things were cancelled. One-on-one sessions allowed Sam to get to know her teachers—and one teacher's bunny!—and small group sessions gave Sam time to get to know two of her classmates. By the time centers reopened for the following school year, Sam was excited to greet her teachers and friends in person.

### Christina & Sam

*I wish everyone had the ability to try home visiting because it's definitely helped my family and I wish it could help so many more.*



## Rafaela, Arya & Symphony

*I'm very grateful my children were placed with Shirley. It's a great experience for them before transitioning into elementary school.*

Rafaela's family first got involved with Head Start when her older daughter, Arya, enrolled in Shirley Guertin's family child care at age 3. Rafaela was nervous at first about what the experience would be like, but once Arya started asking to sleep over at Shirley's house, she was on board! Over the family's first several months in the program, Rafaela got to know Shirley and learned how family child care was offering her child rich educational opportunities as well as the chance to make friends and play while Rafaela was working.

Then in March 2020, the pandemic began. During the short-term closure that followed, Arya missed her friends and Shirley, and Rafaela worried about what it would be like to transition back into care safely. As reopening approached, Shirley and Eunice, Rafaela's Family Advocate, were in touch often. As Rafaela says, Shirley helped alleviate her stress and made the children feel comfortable wearing masks. Even though she couldn't go into the home, Rafaela heard from Shirley almost every day and Zoomed with Eunice to discuss her family's goals. In the fall of 2020, Arya's little sister Symphony joined her in Shirley's care and began her own Early Head Start journey. The sisters got to learn together every day with their friends.

By the end of the 2020-2021 school year, it was time for Arya to go off to kindergarten. Though well prepared, she was sad to lose the relationship she'd formed with her Educator—and she's always glad to see Shirley when she has the day off from big girl school!

## Stephanie, Greyson & Acacia

*It's a great program! They really will make you feel comfortable and secure that they will keep your children safe and that regardless of whatever's going on in the world, they do a good job teaching and interacting with the children.*



Stephanie learned about Head Start when her son Greyson's speech therapist from REACH recommended the program just before his third birthday. He enrolled in HS & ELP's extended-day classroom in North Orange, and his sister Acacia joined the class two years later when she was old enough.

Because the North Orange center was open for face-to-face classes beginning in the fall of 2020, there were a lot of changes compared to what Greyson was used to! Stephanie describes how because of COVID-19, she couldn't join her children in the classroom. Inside, they were getting used to wearing masks, washing hands, no longer playing in large groups or with certain toys, and trying to maintain distance to limit the spread of the virus. Although a lot was different, some important things stayed the same. Their educators Marla, Bonnie, Mariah, and Elizabeth were all there with them, as were many of the children's familiar classmates, and established relationships made the transition that much easier. Stephanie still met regularly with their Family Advocate—just over Zoom instead of in her home. HS & ELP staff communicated often and did a good job of making Stephanie and her children feel comfortable and preparing them for the changes as they came.

As the school year wrapped up and Greyson prepared to go off to kindergarten, Stephanie could see that both children understood more about the importance of wearing masks and avoiding large groups; as she says, they'd adapted to their new normal, even if they still wondered whether things would ever go back. Acacia was getting ready for another year building on relationships with the same educators and some new classmates—and whatever future changes lay ahead!



HS & ELP has School Readiness Goals in the areas of Approaches to Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Language and Communication; Cognition: Math and Science; and Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development, as well as goals around attendance, Early Head Start data, and teachers becoming reliable raters on our assessment system. In a typical year, classroom quality is measured with the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), and children's progress is tracked using the Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) system. These tools rely on in-depth observation, which was challenging for children with virtual services. In response to these challenges, HS & ELP invested in cloud-based curricula and the web-based MyTeachstone platform and worked to learn how to assess interactions and the progress of children in virtual classrooms. Beginning in the winter, we assessed all children in Social and Emotional Development and Approaches to Learning.

The data in this section show progress made by children in on-site classrooms and include some children who were part of virtual classrooms and our home visiting program for whom we tested virtual assessment. Our Early Head Start children met all School Readiness Goals! Our Head Start children met Social and Emotional Development and Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development goals. We were also pleased that attendance in virtual settings was nearly as high as on-site settings.

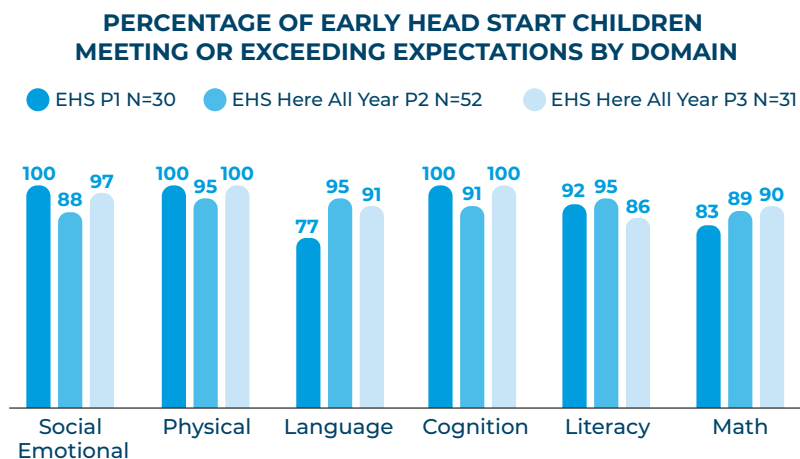
# School Readiness



**School Readiness Mission** Head Start & Early Learning Programs seeks to build a foundation for lifelong learning. We work with families and the community so that children can develop caring relationships, confidence, and curiosity. Caring, confident, and curious children are ready for school.

## Early Head Start

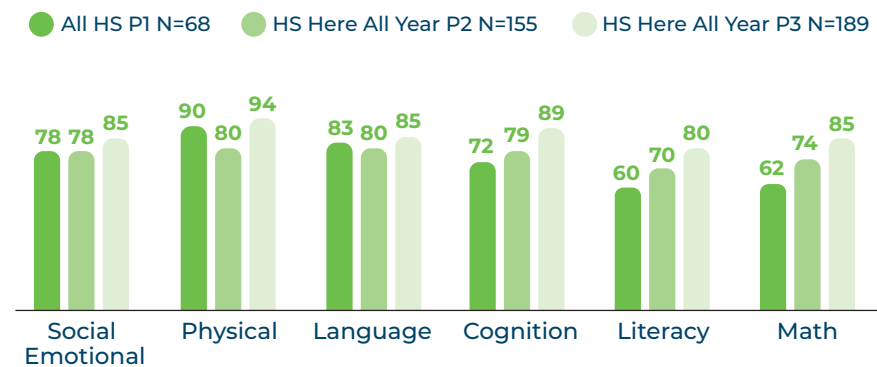
In Early Head Start, we documented outcomes for children attending on site who were enrolled throughout the year. Because infants and toddlers develop and change so rapidly, each child is assessed against different sets of expectations at different times through the year. The chart at right shows the proportion of children who were meeting or exceeding their age-appropriate expectations at each point in time in each domain.



## Head Start

Similarly, in Head Start we tracked the progress of children who were enrolled all year long. This group of children was assessed (for the most part) based on a consistent set of expectations and showed meaningful progress throughout the year. At Period 1, only the children attending in person were assessed, but all children enrolled at P1 and longer were considered "here all year," despite not having the advantage of being in person. Children who were returning for a second or third year of Head Start had stronger outcomes than children in their first year.

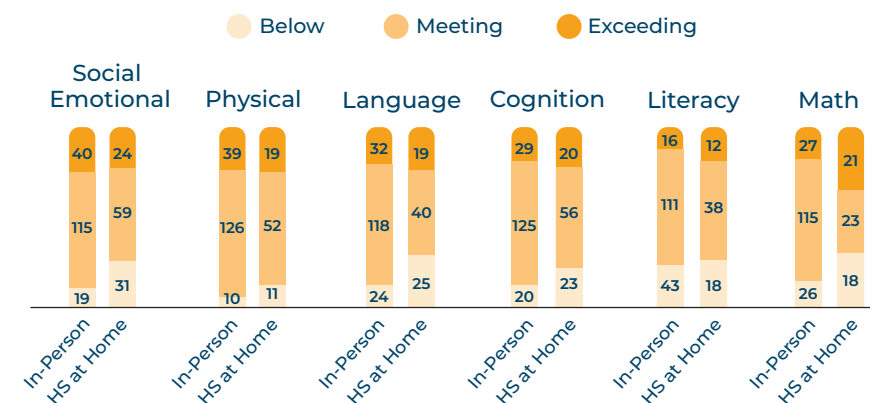
**PERCENTAGE OF HEAD START CHILDREN MEETING OR EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS BY DOMAIN**



## Virtual and On-Site Learning

Although not all children in virtual classrooms could be fully assessed over Zoom, by the spring we were able to assess enough children to compare outcomes for 175 children attending face-to-face and 119 children attending Head Start at Home. Overall, we found that similar or slightly higher proportions of children in Head Start at Home were below expectations—but there were also slightly higher proportions of children in that setting exceeding expectations.

**IN PERSON & HEAD START AT HOME P3 NUMBER OF CHILDREN MEETING OR EXCEEDING**



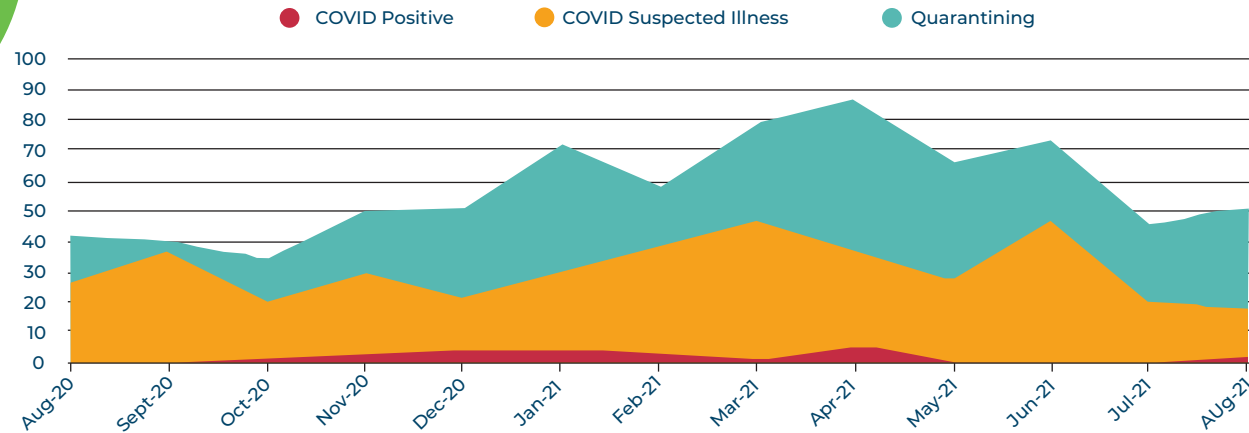
# Transportation

In order for families to attend on-site programs, many need support with transportation—and of course COVID-19 disrupted transportation, too. In 2020-2021, we purchased a new 47-passenger bus and were able to transport 10 children at the North Orange site, seated one per seat based on COVID-19 guidelines. Our Bus Driver Diane and Transportation Supervisor Linda drove the children with the support of the site's Bus Monitor, Mariah—and all transportation staff followed strict protocols for cleaning, masking, and physical distance. As the year ended, we were at work planning to expand transportation services for 2021-2022.



# Health

## 2020-2021 COVID-19 TRACKING

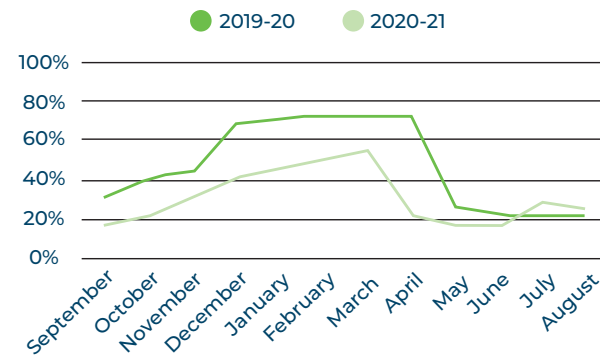


Head Start & Early Learning Programs' comprehensive services include support to children and families in accessing health, dental, mental health, and disability services. On top of their usual work to support health and dental access, during 2020-2021, our Health Department took on the huge challenge of tracking dozens of staff and children every month who had symptoms of COVID-19, confirmed cases, or reasons to quarantine. Through extensive tracking and careful protocols, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases was very low throughout the year.

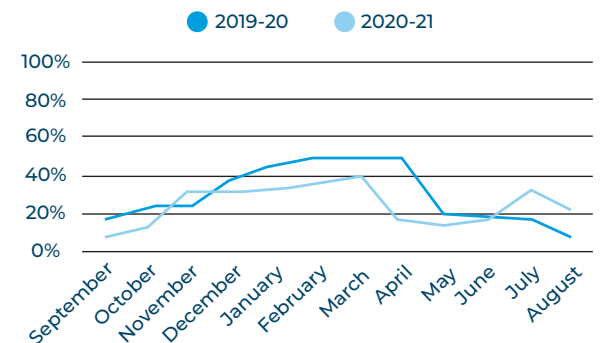
At the same time, the pandemic created new challenges for children getting routine health and dental needs met. While more than 99% of all children had health insurance and medical homes and 95% of Head Start children and 81% of Early Head Start children had dental homes by the end of the year, actually going to see a doctor or dentist was a much greater challenge than in the past. Delayed appointments, an overwhelmed medical system, and families' real fears of exposure to the virus all kept children from being up to date on the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) sequence of health events that the state requires. Over the course of the year, the proportion

of children who'd had every physical, dental exam, vaccine, and screening slowly caught up—until the one-year mark of the pandemic led to many children being a year overdue for some element of EPSDT. Yet our Health Department persisted! By the end of the program year, families were beginning to understand the “new normal” in health care and were getting caught up on required appointments.

### HEAD START- UP TO DATE ON EPSDT



### EARLY HEAD START- UP TO DATE ON EPSDT



## Developmental Services

Healthy development requires not only medical care but attention and support for how children are forming relationships and learning about the world around them. Our Developmental Services Department is made up of a team of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Consultants, a Disabilities Coordinator, and a Practice-Based Coach, all working together to ensure all children have what they need to thrive. To support their work, we also contract with a behavior specialist and inclusion consultant from Kids Included Together (KIT) to provide individual case consultation and ongoing training on trauma-informed approaches to behaviors that challenge. Amid the effects of the pandemic, our team found new ways to consult and collaborate with Educators and Family Advocates to support children and families they couldn't always see in person.

Over the course of the year, Disability Services supported 48 children with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)—a higher number and proportion than in previous years, reflecting our mission to continue to enroll and support the children who need Head Start most no matter the circumstances. They also worked with 50 infants and toddlers with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs), nearly a third of enrolled Early Head Start children. Our partnership with the Northampton Public Schools through the

Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative was implemented for its first full year in 2020-2021 to support children with disabilities attending Northampton center-based and family child care sites. While there were obstacles to delivery of services during the pandemic, this collaboration showed how much relationships support us in supporting children and families.

As staff and educators worked with children and families in new ways, from smaller groups in on-site classrooms to virtual home visits and small group classes over Zoom, they partnered with IECMH Consultants to identify and understand children's social emotional needs and behavior and respond with care. IECMH Consultants promoted resilience-building strategies and activities in classroom consultation, supportive conversations with parents, and through participation in Family Meetings. Across the U.S., COVID-related stress and trauma have dramatically increased demands on therapists and mental health providers, and long waitlists for services have made it more difficult for anyone seeking help to access the supports they need in a timely manner. IECMH Consultants continued to help families, children, and educators explore referral options, navigate those long waitlists and referral processes, and connect with mental health counseling and other supports in the communities we serve.



Just like children, all families are unique—and so are their goals. In Head Start and Early Head Start, each family works with a Family Advocate or Home Visitor to explore their strengths, resources, and needs before setting personal goals about what would help them achieve the success and stability that will support their children’s long-term well-being. These partnerships are grounded in Head Start’s Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework and in the Brazelton Touchpoints Approach™, an evidence-based, trauma- and culturally-informed way of working with children and families. This year, Family Advocates and Home Visitors conducted the same kinds of work in new ways, using an electronic version of the Ecomap to develop Family Partnership Plans with families over screens.

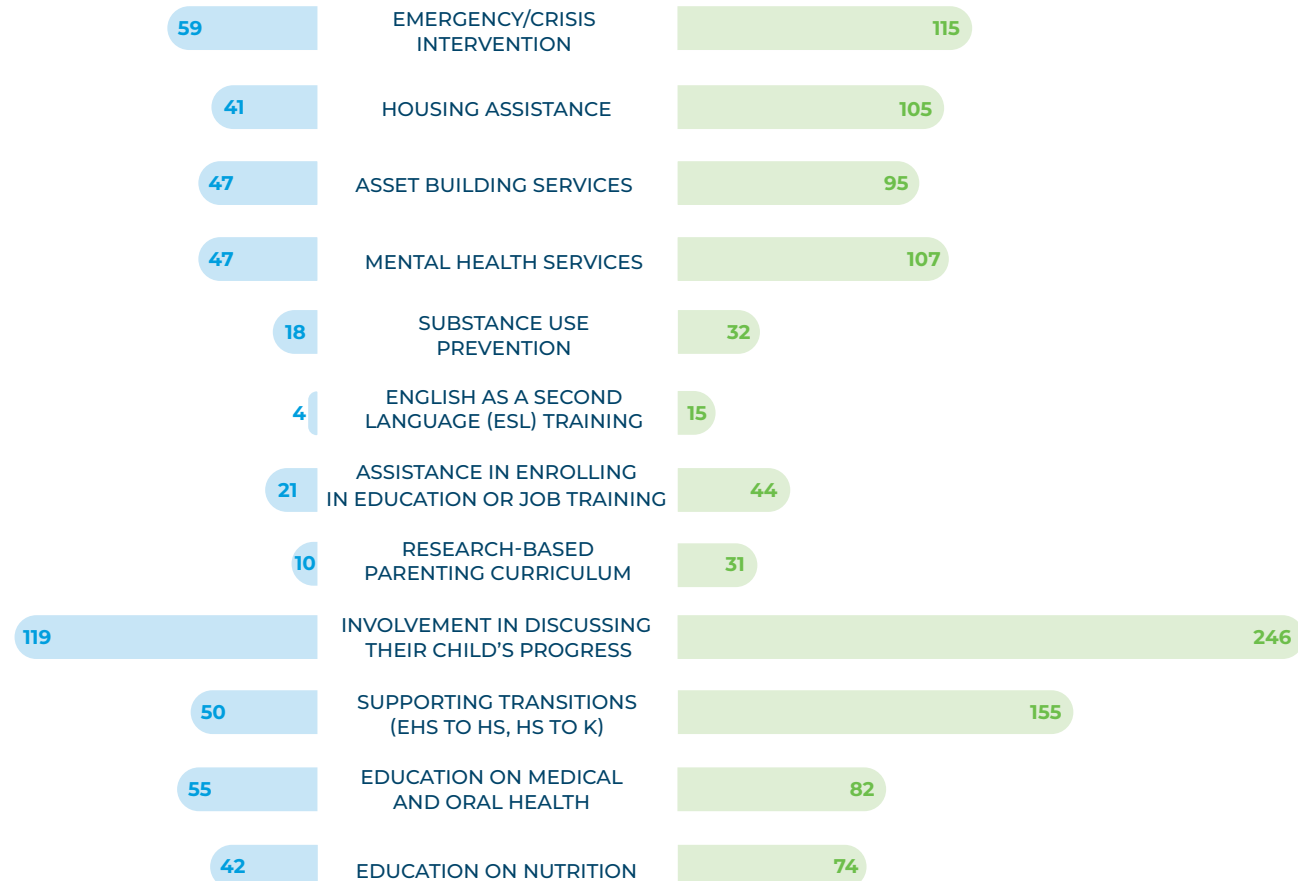
In 2020-21, 98% of our 300 Head Start and 92% of our 139 Early Head Start families received some of the services in the chart below—all customized to their circumstances. Given the conditions of the pandemic that unfolded over the course of the year, there was higher demand for emergency/crisis intervention, housing assistance, and assistance enrolling in job training than in the 2018-19 program year. As always, the priority was on helping families meet their own goals for themselves and their children.



# Family Services

## FAMILY SERVICES 2020-2021

● Early Head Start ● Head Start



I loved talking with other parents and knowing I am not alone. It’s nice to share with other families.\*

My child and I are similar and different in many ways and that plays a big role as to how I can help my child with understanding.\*

Most parents are going through many of the same challenges as we are. The different perspectives of dealing with parenting challenges are refreshing.\*

\*Parent Groups participant quotes

### Brazelton Touchpoints Parenting Program™

COVID-19 protocols meant HS & ELP couldn’t offer face-to-face Touchpoints Parent Groups like in previous years, but the transition to Zoom led to experimentation and often success! Parents from across the region gathered for discussion and reflection about topics including:

- Parenting your unique child: joys and challenges
- Understanding your child’s development
- Exploring your family’s culture and language
- Nurturing and caring for your children: keeping your children safe and healthy
- Discipline: your role as parents over time—teacher and guide

For several years, HS & ELP has been part of an evaluation of the Touchpoints Approach and Parent Groups conducted by the Brazelton Touchpoints Center at Boston Children’s Hospital. While formal results are not yet available, surveys of Parenting Group participants tell us the value of the work we’re doing!



# Staff & Volunteers

Everything Head Start & Early Learning Programs accomplished this year—from School Readiness, to Health and Developmental Services, to Family Services and Parent Groups—was possible because of our exceptional, dedicated staff. Even as they were experiencing all the stresses of the pandemic, staff did their part to protect the health of everyone in our community and never forgot the importance of their work with children and families.

To offer support during difficult times, HS & ELP leaders regularly held listening sessions to understand what staff were thinking and feeling about the changes that were being made, increased pay for all, gave bonuses to those whose work involved the most risk, and relied on the relationship-based Touchpoints Approach that has kept our community strong. In our 2021 Spring Staff Survey, 80-85% of staff said they found each component of Touchpoints-informed practice helpful in interactions with families during the pandemic. Asked what lessons they'd learned during the pandemic or what had improved about their work, they had this to say:

**We have been involved in working out solutions: together, we do better.**

**Families are resilient and they want their children to learn. We are all looking for ways to support each other in this time and forming better relationships due to this as well.**

**Seeing all the ways people help each other even when we all feel stretched this is heartwarming.**

**The connection you make with a child can happen anywhere.**

## Volunteer Spotlight: Robin Cooley



As a grandmother of a Head Start child and a volunteer at the Westfield Food Pantry, Robin Cooley saw an opportunity to help HS & ELP families during the pandemic! As programs reopened in August 2020, she coordinated for 15 families to get groceries from the Food Bank including \$300 worth of fresh produce, \$25 gift cards through a grant from the Boys and Girls Club, and access to cases of diapers. She didn't stop there! Over the course of the fall, Robin purchased a car seat for a family in need from her own pocket, delivered food pantry items to Head Start for several families, gave out information on how families could sign up for monthly Food Pantry deliveries to their homes, coordinated for three families at Head Start to be "adopted" by community members, hosted a fundraiser to raise money for Head Start families in need during the holiday season, organized pajama donations for children in Westfield classrooms, arranged delivery for five turkeys and Thanksgiving sides to Head Start families, and delivered 18 gift cards to Big Y to families at Head Start. As winter approached, Robin delivered wrapped bags of pajamas, hats, mittens, socks, and gloves for each child in Westfield extended-day. In all her work, Robin didn't forget our staff who were also working hard, and she delivered coffee and donuts to the Westfield staff to recognize their commitment. Many thanks to Robin for her generosity and partnership in caring for our community!

**Connection and relationships are still important when you can't be in close physical proximity.**

### Volunteers by the Numbers

It was hard for volunteers to visit our classrooms this year, but they found many other ways to contribute! Head Start parents, family members, and community members contributed to our Policy Council, Education Advisory Committee, and Health and Family Services Advisory Committee; attended family meetings and extended their children's learning at home; interned in our program; and donated goods and time to help our community make it through hard times. Their efforts added up to more than 1,450 hours of in-kind donations!



*Head Start & Early Learning Programs is part of Community Action Pioneer Valley, where our vision is a community that celebrates our shared humanity as well as our diversity. We strive to build a community that invests in access for everyone to healthy food; safe, affordable housing; living wage work; high quality, affordable education from birth; and full participation in the democratic process. In service to that vision, Community Action Pioneer Valley relies on the leadership of people who have low incomes to define how we approach our work. We advocate for policies and resources that protect the vulnerable and disenfranchised, and open opportunity to all. Working with many partners, we create a community where children and youth are nurtured and protected and everyone achieves their potential and prospers in the fullness of life.*



# Community Action Pioneer Valley



**COMMUNITY ACTION PIONEER VALLEY**

## CAPV Compensation Work Group

Across the nation, early childhood programs face challenges in paying educators and staff the wages they deserve for the important work they do. Over the past decade, CAPV and HS & ELP have been committed to raising wages and benefits both because our staff deserve them and because having long-term, dedicated staff ensures the best possible outcomes in our work with children and families. Wendy Mullen, HS & ELP's Director of Business Operations and a member of the CAPV Compensation Work Group, has been a champion for that commitment and has a true passion for the work. Of their efforts, Wendy says, "We've made some real progress with compensation over the past several years. I love when we're able to move the needle and change

compensation for staff, as it is one factor that contributes to longevity at CAPV." Wendy also says, "It's a committee I love going to and participating in! Being able to pay livable wages to staff, who work with our most vulnerable populations, is a long-standing issue that needs to be addressed and I am happy I can be a part of the movement towards more equity and recognition of their efforts."

During the 2020-21 program year, the Compensation Work Group worked hard to recognize staff and make them feel valued. CAPV increased compensation through an across-the-board raise in July and disbursed hazard pay to some direct service staff using one-time COVID-related federal funds. In addition to pay, the agency provided staff with a half-day off as a form of employee recognition and invested time and energy in relationships through regular opportunities for open dialogue across the agency through "Tuesday Chats with Clare," Supervisor meetings, and HR Check Ins.



## Community Action Pioneer Valley, Inc. and Subsidiaries

Consolidated Statement of Activities

For the Year Ended September 30, 2021 (with comparative totals for 2020)

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	
			2021	2020
<b>Revenue and support:</b>				
Federal contracts	\$ 10,211,009	\$ -	\$ 10,211,009	\$ 8,811,174
State contracts	15,042,082	-	15,042,082	15,353,788
Other contracts and grants	3,217,982	-	3,217,982	2,937,652
In-kind	2,573,275	-	2,573,275	2,656,348
Donations	191,934	152,280	344,214	254,161
United Way	77,840	-	77,840	112,178
Parent and other program service fees	344,078	-	344,078	544,183
Employment assistance services	531,749	-	531,749	569,089
Investment income (loss)	15,559	-	15,559	(5,060)
Other revenue	41,792	1,274	3,066	96,932
Net assets released from restrictions	75,383	(75,383)	-	-
Total revenue and support	32,322,683	78,171	32,400,854	31,330,445
<b>Expenses:</b>				
Program	29,534,230	-	29,534,230	28,832,638
Administrative	2,420,838	-	2,420,838	2,529,744
Fundraising	49,036	-	49,036	2,238
Total expenses	32,004,104	-	32,004,104	31,364,620
<b>Change in net assets from operations</b>	318,579	78,171	396,750	(34,175)
<b>Other Changes in Net Assets</b>				
Employee Retention Tax Credit	375,023	-	375,023	-
Paycheck Protection Program	33,021	-	33,021	-
Gain on sale of property and equipment	43,807	-	43,807	-
Total other changes in net assets	451,851	-	451,851	-
<b>Changes in net assets</b>	770,430	78,171	848,601	(34,175)
<b>Net assets - beginning of year</b>	2,314,820	155,588	2,470,408	2,504,583
<b>Net assets - end of year</b>	\$ 3,085,250	\$ 233,759	\$ 3,319,009	\$ 2,470,408

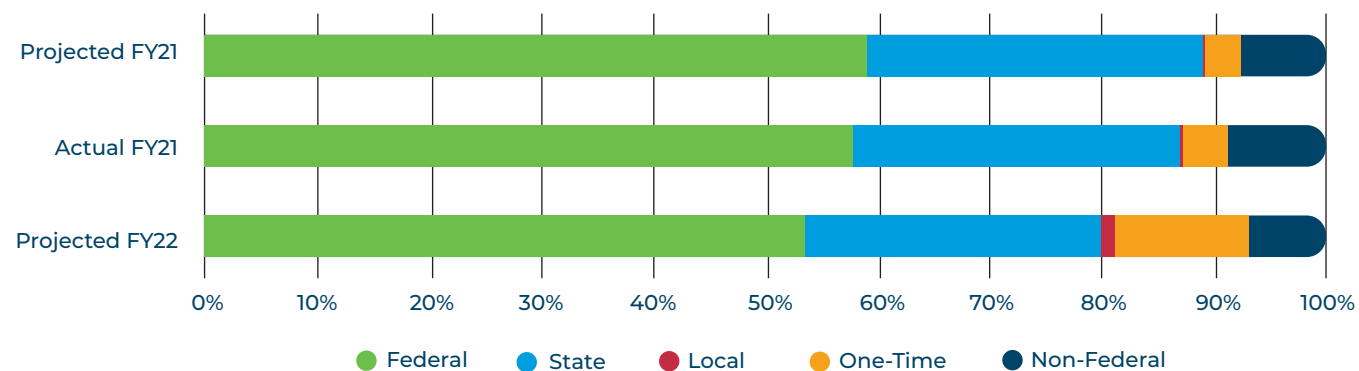
# HS & ELP Fiscal Highlights



## REVENUES FOR FY21

	Total HS & ELP Actual	Other HS&ELP Actual	Head Start & Early Head Start Actual	Total HS & ELP Budget
<b>Revenue and support</b>				
Head Start	\$4,600,268	–	\$4,600,268	\$4,979,963
Early Head Start	\$1,838,985	–	\$1,838,985	\$1,897,151
USDA Food and Nutrition Service thru DESE	\$154,081	\$154,081	–	\$274,650
Early Education and Care (EEC) Subsidies	\$2,382,119	\$2,382,119	–	\$2,506,006
EEC Head Start State Supplemental	\$626,469	\$626,469	–	\$622,572
Department of Children and Families	–	–	–	–
CPPI, Northampton Public Schools	\$93,053	\$93,053	–	\$98,284
Town of West Springfield Office of Community Development	\$31,562	\$31,562	–	\$15,000
Parent fees	\$11,322	\$11,322	–	–
Shurtleff Children's Services	\$2,208	\$2,208	–	\$2,208
In-kind rents, goods and services	\$990,445	–	\$990,445	\$936,128
Other Revenue	\$10,099	\$10,099	–	\$8,400
One-Time HS/EHS Carryover revenue	\$20,069	–	\$20,069	\$20,069
One-Time COVID support revenue	\$427,260	\$82,200	\$345,060	\$345,060
<b>Total revenue and support</b>	<b>\$11,187,939</b>	<b>\$3,393,112</b>	<b>\$7,794,827</b>	<b>\$11,705,492</b>

## REVENUE COMPARISON



### Administration for Children and Families Reviews

- HS & ELP's most recent monitoring event was a Focus Area 1 review conducted in February 2018 by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). HS&ELP was found to be in compliance on all measures and no corrective action was required.
- Community Action's independent audits submitted a consolidated financial statement for the period ending September 30, 2021 and concluded there were no material findings.

## EXPENSES FOR FY21

Expense	Total HS & ELP Actual	Other HS&ELP Actual	Head Start & Early Head Start Actual	Total HS & ELP Budget
Salaries & wages	\$5,269,509	\$1,606,875	\$3,662,634	\$5,408,666
Payroll taxes	\$588,690	\$178,227	\$410,462	\$622,672
Fringe benefits	\$979,754	\$316,989	\$662,765	\$1,071,948
Facility rent & mortgage interest	\$42,870	\$8,177	\$34,693	\$37,289
Facility operations/maintenance/furnishings	\$457,762	\$112,262	\$345,499	\$521,303
Property & general liability insurance	\$35,250	\$7,247	\$28,003	\$30,125
Direct care consultants	\$53,333	\$24,845	\$28,489	\$17,950
Subcontracted direct care	\$333,066	\$300,536	\$32,530	\$303,113
Staff training, conferences & meetings	\$78,789	\$6,581	\$72,208	\$39,215
Staff mileage/travel	\$24,688	\$3,583	\$21,105	\$66,750
Meals and food preparation supplies	\$171,420	\$136,961	\$34,460	\$261,228
Client transportation	\$7,140	–	\$7,140	\$407,000
Vehicle expenses	\$48,049	\$3,030	\$45,019	\$53,941
Program supplies/materials and equipment	\$159,685	\$25,892	\$133,793	\$100,830
Office, telephone, advertising and other misc expenses	\$142,426	\$22,777	\$119,649	\$101,096
Depreciation of property & equipment	\$8,922	\$894	\$8,028	\$3,400
Capital expenditures	\$456,162	–	\$456,162	\$50,000
In-kind expenses	\$990,445	–	\$990,445	\$936,128
Allocation of indirect costs	\$978,101	\$276,357	\$701,744	\$1,085,198
<b>Reimbursable expense</b>	<b>\$10,826,060</b>	<b>\$3,031,233</b>	<b>\$7,794,827</b>	<b>\$11,117,852</b>
Accrued vacation expense	\$(24,534)	–	\$(24,534)	–
Non-reimbursable depreciation expense	\$145,664	\$4,432	\$141,232	–
Non-reimbursable indirect costs	\$25,244	\$25,244	–	–
Prior year costs	\$808	\$338	\$470	–
Write-off of uncollected parent fees	–	–	–	–
<b>Non-reimbursable expense</b>	<b>\$147,182</b>	<b>\$30,014</b>	<b>\$117,168</b>	<b>–</b>
<b>Total expense</b>	<b>\$10,973,242</b>	<b>\$3,061,248</b>	<b>\$7,911,995</b>	<b>\$11,117,852</b>
<b>Net Revenue Over Expenditures</b>	<b>\$214,697</b>	<b>\$331,864</b>	<b>\$(117,168)</b>	<b>\$587,640</b>

### Head Start Funding Notes

- Over the course of the pandemic, HS & ELP received a significant amount of one-time funding to support programs from the impact of COVID-19. In FY21, over \$443,000 of one-time funds were allocated to provide hazard pay for some staff, personal protective equipment for staff and children, air purifiers and new windows to decrease the chance of viral spread indoors, and mud kitchens and playground enhancements to better enable children to learn and play outdoors. In FY22-23, we anticipate allocating another \$1.5M towards these efforts and will prioritize staff wellness.
- Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) Head Start State Supplemental grant revenue is used to meet the 20% non-federal share requirement.



**COMMUNITY ACTION  
HEAD START &  
EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS**

*To speak with our staff about enrolling your child in one of our program options, call 413.387.1250.*

[info@communityaction.us](mailto:info@communityaction.us)

[www.communityaction.us](http://www.communityaction.us)

[www.facebook.com/CAPVHeadStart](https://www.facebook.com/CAPVHeadStart)

