

**Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation (NEICAC)
Annual Early Childhood Programs (Head Start and Early Head Start)
Report to the Public 2022**

Total amount of Public and Private Funds Received and the Amount of each Source

For the Fiscal Year February 1, 2021 to January 31, 2022, Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation received the following funding:

Funding Sources:	Amount
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services	3,289,844
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services-CARES	136,829
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services-ARPA	104,580
Wrap Around Child Care	401,909
Iowa Shared Visions	150,656
Community Empowerment Grants	56,060
Iowa Stipend	132,718
USDA Food Program	171,280
Local Grants	9,548
In-Kind	543,090
TOTAL FUNDING	4,996,514

Explanation of Budgetary Expenditures and Proposed Budget for the Fiscal Year

07CH011393-02-04	Budget	Expenses
Personnel	1,866,625	1,829,692
Fringe Benefits	662,348	654,102
Travel	54,377	26,306
Supplies	133,392	60,762
Contractual	6,600	18,678
Other Costs	410,642	369,959
Indirect	333,959	330,345
SUB TOTAL	3,467,943	3,289,844
In kind	543,090	543,090
TOTAL	4,011,033	3,832,934

Total Number of Head Start funded Children and Families Served, Average Monthly Enrollment (as a Percentage of Funded Enrollment), and Percentage of Eligible Children Served (funded for 233 for HS and 80 for EHS)

Month	Head Start Enrollment	Early Head Start Enrollment
Feb 2021	100%	100%
March 2021	100%	100%
April 2021	100%	100%
May 2021	100%	95%
June 2021	Not operating	98%
July 2021	Not operating	95%
Aug 2021	97%	100%
Sept 2021	99%	80%
Oct 2021	100%	81%
Nov 2021	100%	91%
Dec 2021	100%	100%
Jan 2022	100%	100%

Results of the Most Recent Review by the Secretary and the Financial Audit

Office of Head Start conducted an offsite Focus Area 1 review from 11/16/20-11/20/20. The FA1 review allows the OHS to understand how programs are progressing in providing services in the 5-year grant cycle. The process includes performance measures used to understand grantee progress towards program goals. The results identified where the program was able to describe progress toward implementing program services that promote quality outcomes for children and families. The program had no areas needing continuous improvement, no areas of concern, no areas of noncompliance and no deficiencies.

The Independent Auditor’s report for the Fiscal Year February 1, 2021 through January 31, 2022 issued an unqualified opinion and reported no audit findings or questioned costs.

Percentage of Enrolled Children that Received Medical and Dental Exams

	Head Start Children	Early Head Start Children
Medical Exams	100%	99%
Dental Exams	100%	96%

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Parent and Family Engagement

As the cornerstone of a child's life, family engagement is critical to the full development of a child's potential. Our Head Start program is committed to helping each child and family achieve success through a comprehensive partnership that recognizes the parent's role as their child's first and most important teacher. Parent engagement begins at enrollment with the development of Individual Child Plans that incorporate the family's goals for their child. Regularly scheduled home visits/conferences provide regular conversations on children's progress and at-home activities provide opportunities for parents to support children's skill development. Of the 231 Head Start families who were served during our program year, 96% of them participated in home visits/parent conferences to discuss their child's screening and assessment results and their child's progress. Moreover, 96% strongly agreed that the Head Start program is helping their child to get ready for school. All 28 Early Head Start families who completed our survey reported feeling better prepared to be their child's first and most important teacher by participating in home visits and lesson plan activities. When parents were asked to list one or two things, they have learned that has helped them, parents responses included, "How to play with my children as I'm teaching them and how to include all ages in an activity," and "There are many things already in the home we can use to help teach our children." All respondents reported they would strongly recommend Early Head Start to others.

We were excited to resume in-person classes this year, although opportunities were still restricted for families to be present in our classrooms. Despite this, 246 parents still volunteered their time or talents to our Head Start program through participation in in-kind activities such as helping their child with at-home learning games & activities, virtual guest visits with the classroom, participation on Policy Council, and/or family engagement with ReadyRosie.

ReadyRosie is an electronic learning tool that provides parents with short, modeled moment videos that demonstrate fun learning games to support their child's school readiness skills and child development content specialists to answer questions. The two-way communication capability allows families to provide individualized feedback and assessment to their child's teacher. We had 211 registered caregivers that watched nearly 2,800 videos collectively in the areas of language and literacy, math, social/emotional, and health. Parent comments included, "Easy to follow. Looking forward to bite sized activities to work into the day!" and "Will enjoy getting new ideas." Parents also reported their children having positive responses to the tool, "They had fun finding all the different kind of sizes of acorns and pine cones and seeing some of the ones trying to grow into trees." and "They got really excited to see which vehicle would come in first, second, and third. They had some good predictions!" Using the ReadyRosie Family Workshops, we were able to offer

parenting curriculum to support parents with challenging behaviors, developing schedules and routines, and creating math and literacy rich environments.

A mix of virtual and in-person playgroups were offered to Early Head Start families. 75% of our survey respondents reported that the parent education topics were useful.

Families can participate in leadership development, decision-making, and program policy development through participation in the Early Childhood Program's Policy Council. This year, nine past or present parents served as Policy Council Representatives. Parents provide valuable input on curriculum planning, policy development, and program improvement plans through active participation on committees, councils, and completion of our annual program survey.

Together, parents and staff decide what roles parents and other community agencies play in the planning of activities that are consistent with children and families' needs and interests. The Early Childhood Program has many community partners that contribute to successful outcomes for children and their families. Among these are area school districts, Keystone and Central Rivers AEA, Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness, and numerous health professionals.

NEICAC Prepare Children for Kindergarten

Preparing children for Kindergarten and success beyond Head Start is the daily focus for each child; therefore, NEICAC has fully embraced the School Readiness Initiative of Head Start.

School Readiness Goals

School readiness goals are regularly reviewed and revised as needed. Parent Policy Council is informed of student progress reports each quarter. Teachers use Teaching Strategies GOLD objectives in their weekly lesson plans to target the 36/38 learning objectives needed to help prepare children for Kindergarten. By utilizing the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework as a guide with our TS GOLD (Creative Curriculum) objectives, Iowa Learning Standards, and communication with our 10 school district partners, we transition children from Head Start into Kindergarten as smoothly as possible.

A complete set of Parent, Family and Community goals are incorporated to support the academic school readiness goals. These Parent Engagement goals acknowledge the important role parents play in the school readiness process and outline the importance of the parents' supporting children in their education. *(See PFCE Goals for details.)*

Teachers use the five Central Domains from the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, which align with the TS GOLD Learning Objectives in lesson plans. The central domains: Approaches to Learning, Social and Emotional Development, Language & Literacy, Cognition (includes mathematics development and scientific reasoning), and Perceptual Motor and Physical Development (including creative art). These domains are used in planning all the

educational activities implemented in the classroom. In addition to the TS GOLD assessment (*See the School Readiness Alignment for details*) work portfolios and journals are created and artifacts collected throughout the year to monitor student progress. The TS GOLD program compares children's progress with "widely held expectations" to help demonstrate progress not only in individual achievement, but also with age-appropriate expectations to prepare them for Kindergarten. With parent permission, end-of-year snapshots created from TS GOLD data are shared with individual school districts to help Kindergarten teachers plan for incoming students.

Parents participate in setting individual goals for their children during parent teacher conferences. Parents may have access to their child's anecdotal assessments via the parent section on the GOLD website as requested. Teachers meet with parents at a minimum of four times per year: (2) conferences and (2) home visits. Staff strive for daily contact with parents to communicate about student accomplishments. Teachers work in close communication with Parents to create at-home activities connected to student goals in an effort to involve parents in their child's education. Parents are routinely invited to participate in classroom activities. Monthly parent meetings/family fun nights are held so parents can advise staff in developing and implementing program policies, activities, and services to ensure they meet the needs of the children and families. Due to the pandemic protocol NEICAC Head Start implemented we were not able to have parents in the classroom or hold parent meetings, but we plan to resume these for the 22-23 school year as the Office of Head Start, The Iowa Day Care Licensing department and the Iowa Department of Public Health allows.

Creative Curriculum with Fidelity

Due to the pandemic protocol NEICAC Head Start implemented, we did not do any Creative Curriculum with Fidelity observations for the 21-22 school year. We plan to resume observations in the fall of 22-23 pending the directives from The Office of Head Start, The Iowa department of public health and CDC guidelines.

CLASS/Practice Based Coaching:

NEICAC Head Start has established a coaching component within our professional development model to promote the teaching strategies outlined in the CLASS or The Classroom Assessment Scoring Tool. This year we continued to use the TLC (teacher learning community) component of the Practice Based Coaching model to educate teachers on the dimensions and behavior indicators of the CLASS tool. We began to meet using the TLC model in the fall of the 21-22 school year. We stopped meeting in person and resumed zoom meetings due to staffing shortages and a rise in COVID numbers across our communities. We resumed TLC groups in person in February of 2022 and continued to the end of the school year. We are planning on once again using the TLC model to educate staff on the use of the CLASS tool beginning in October of 2022. We will resume meeting in person for TLC groups and once again -require teachers to tape a lesson to use a tool to build skills and practice through collaboration with peers. CLASS is a research-based scoring tool used to measure the emotional support children receive from teachers, classroom management and instructional support. CLASS is an integral part of Head Start review process. The Office of Head Start has reported significant increases in

CLASS scores nationally and has increased the target thresholds, which are reflected in the current NEICAC Dashboard. NEICAC is including coaching models of professional development to support teachers in their instructional development. (*see Dashboard results to compare NEICAC scores with new thresholds*). During the 2021-22 school year we started a group of new lead teachers so that all of our lead teachers were involved in a TLC group once a month. Because of the pandemic protocol implemented by NEICAC Head Start we were unable to meet with the co-teacher TLC group this year. We plan to continue with this group in the fall of 22-23 if pandemic protocol allows us to. This group is an important group because their support directly contributes to lead teacher success with this instrument. CLASS practices are best practices for all early childhood staff, educating co-teachers on how to use these practices to support leads is paramount to their success. We want all classroom staff to be educated in the use of best practice in the classroom, so children receive the best education experiences possible. Because of the pandemic, we were not able to complete any of these coaching cycles in the manner we had intended. We continued to provide support to staff and meet with TLC groups as regularly as possible.

Positive Behavior Instructional Supports (PBIS)

Program-wide implementation of PBIS strategies is our foundational base to support children's social and emotional well-being. A variety of large group, small group, and individualized instruction activities help children develop emotional literacy, friendship skills, and problem-solving strategies to navigate their everyday lives. Teaching staff receive regular training on current "best practices" and on-site coaching to ensure classrooms support nurturing and responsive relationships, provide high quality supportive environments, teach targeted social and emotional skills, and provide effective interventions for challenging behaviors. Family Workshops offered parents the opportunity to learn simple, consistent strategies to reduce challenging behaviors at home, as well.

Recognizing the importance of strong friendships in children's social/emotional well-being and lifelong success, we continue to focus on peer mediated strategies training to build these skills. This training focuses on strategies for strengthening children's relationships with their peers and building foundational skills such as asking to play, sharing and trading toys, and suggesting play organizers that lead to an increased number of friends for young children.

With the social and emotional impact of Covid, our Behavior Specialist was very instrumental in providing support to both children and staff to assist with challenging behaviors and conduct individual and small group lessons to reinforce PBIS strategies.

Transitions to Kindergarten:

Each classroom hosts an annual meeting between the Head Start teachers and the local school district Kindergarten teachers to share educational strategies and expectations. Most classrooms also offer individual transition activities in conjunction with Kindergarten classes. Because of the Pandemic protocol put into place many of these monthly activities did not take

place. We plan to resume these monthly activities in the 22-23 school year as the pandemic protocol allows. These activities include things like; visiting or transitioning to eating lunches in the cafeteria, riding the district school bus, visiting the school library for story time, and field trips to visit the kindergarten classroom. Kindergarten teachers are invited to the May parent meetings to share summer activities parents can do with their child in an effort to ensure children are ready for Kindergarten and answer any questions parents might have.

Teaching Strategies GOLD Data 2021-2022

