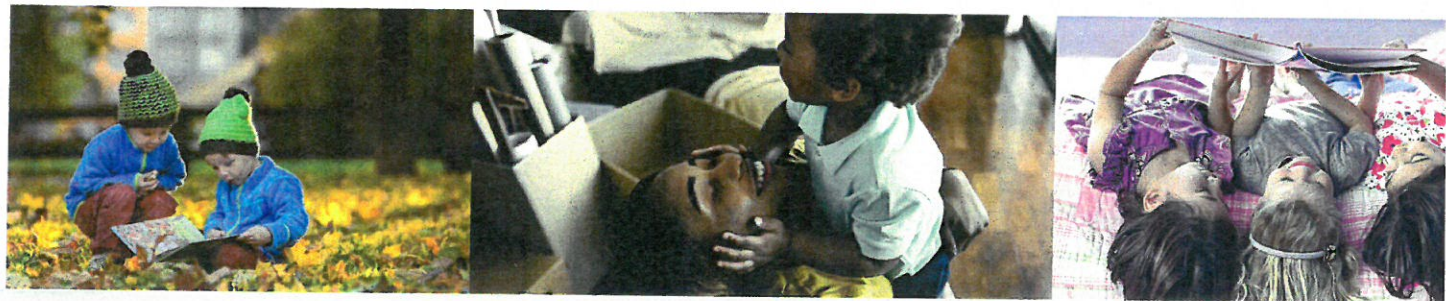




# ANNUAL REPORT

MERCER COUNTY HEAD START

2016 - 2017 Program Year



# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR AMY ESSER



**M**ercer County Head Start has been serving children and families for over 43 years. Our traditions of teaching children and serving families is as strong today as it was at our inception. Our leadership team which includes administration, Celina City Schools Board of Education, and Policy Council is forward-thinking and planning for the potential impacts Mercer County Head Start can make on the next generation of learners.

This annual report provides a review of the program year 2016-17. Throughout these pages, it is our intention to reveal the high-quality early childhood program and the vast services we provide to children and families in Mercer County. By influencing the trajectory of a child's life in a positive way, our purpose is to progressively impact the future of our community.

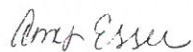
This year, Mercer County Head Start employed 33 staff. Our program is located in two facilities. The primary site is located in the Franklin Elementary Building in Montezuma, Ohio. The second, single site location is located at New Horizons Church in Rockford, Ohio. Both facilities enjoy a **5 STAR Step Up to Quality** recognition for the extraordinary dedication to high-quality education services provided to children and families.

Our primary source of revenue is federal funds provided by the Office of Head Start with supplemental funds provided by the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). As a requirement of the federal grant, the program must match 20% of the funding amount through in-kind resources (non-federal sources). Each year we are able to meet this requirement through the gracious support of local volunteers, parents, and supporters.

Throughout our history, MCHS has participated in many collaborative partnerships, to support children and families. This year, we concentrated on developing new, and strengthening already existing partnerships. The collaboration between Mercer County Head Start and the Mercer County Education Service Center has been in place for many years. Through like-minded goal planning between leadership, this partnership evolved. The continued evolution of this partnership can lead to positive child outcomes for children and families. To support the growing population of kinship caregivers, MCHS advanced already existing partnerships with Mercer County Department of Job & Family Services and Foundations Behavioral Health Services. Together we were able to create and promote a support group for kinship caregivers in and around Mercer County.

During PY 16/17, Mercer County Head Start applied for additional grant funds to add full-day programming as an option for children transitioning to kindergarten and working families. Once awarded, implementation of the full-day option will be implemented in PY 17/18.

Mercer County Head Start finished PY 16/17 with a final good-bye to the Franklin Elementary Building. Mercer County Head Start had been housed at the Franklin facility for over 8 years. The program will begin PY 17/18 at the Education Complex in Celina, Ohio. The move from Montezuma to Celina centralizes program operations, as the majority of families served in the program reside in Celina. I encourage you to visit our programs and request to tour our centers. We love to share how we make a difference in the lives of children and families.

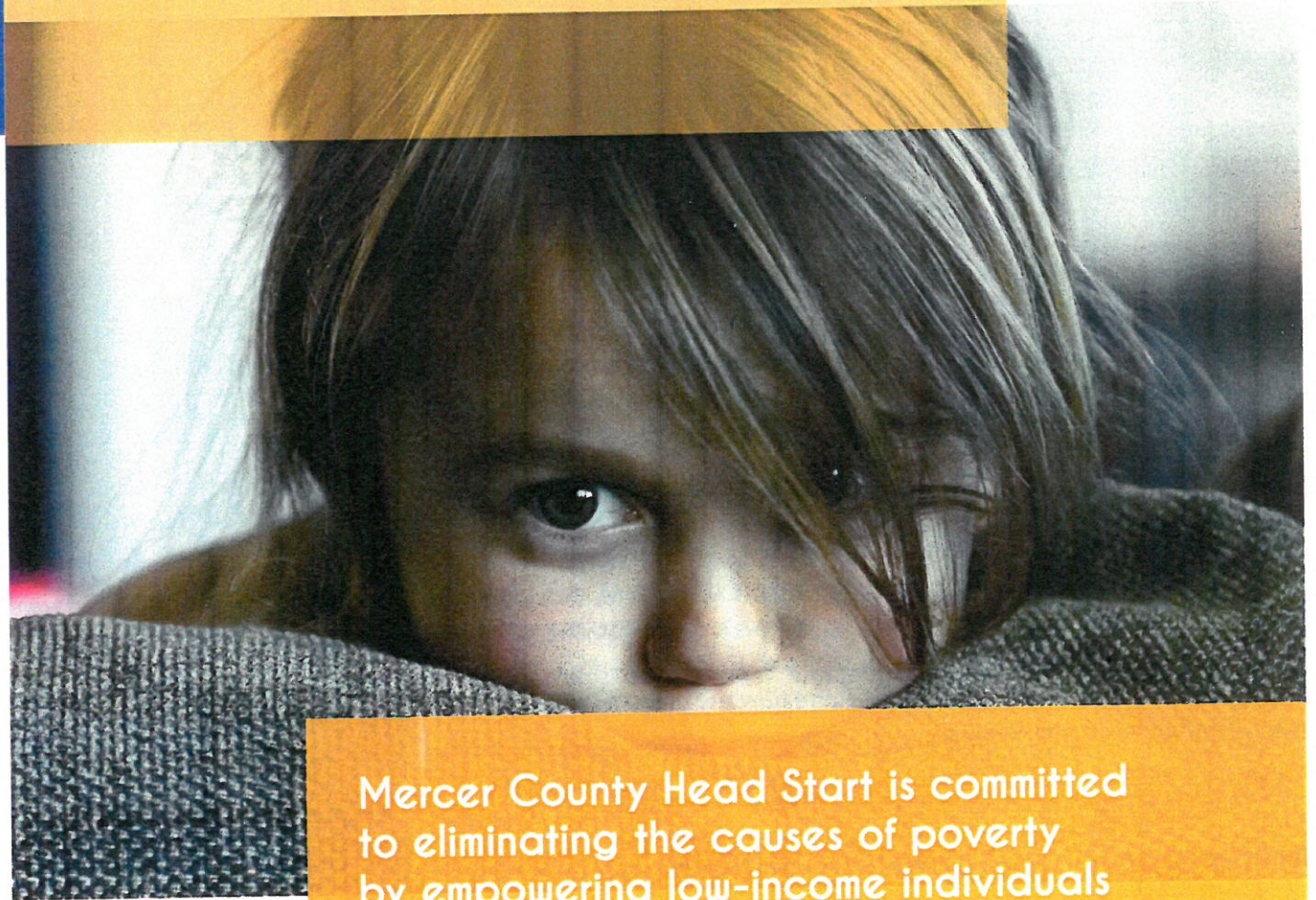


**Amy Esser**  
Head Start Executive Director



**NO WRONG DOOR** was conceptualized as an event to educate Mercer County service providers about the vast resources available in the area. The premise is that families would be able to gain access or a direct referral to services needed through each provider in the area.

# MISSION



Mercer County Head Start is committed to eliminating the causes of poverty by empowering low-income individuals and families to achieve self-sufficiency through a wide array of community-based collaborations and programs.

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# LEADERSHIP



## administrative team

Amy Esser - Executive Director

Karla Kessler - Family Engagement Manager

Sandy Stammen - Education Manager

Angie Stephenson - Health & Community Manager

Dr. Ken Schmiesing - Superintendent

Tom Sommer - Treasurer

Celina City Schools Board of Education along with Policy Council provide shared governance for the Mercer County Head Start program. While the Celina City Schools Board of Education is comprised of elected members of the community, the Policy Council consists of Head Start parents elected by their peers as well as other volunteer community service providers. Together, these two entities provide guidance and oversight to the program's Executive Director.

Along with the Celina City Schools Board of Education and Policy Council, parents have additional leadership opportunities by engaging in the parent committee also known as POPs (Parent Of Preschoolers). Parent committee members discuss programming, curriculum, and school readiness. All parents of enrolled children are members of the POPs committee.

The Executive Director of Mercer County Head Start provides information to the Policy Council and Board of Education to ensure accurate and responsible decision making.

## policy council

### Parent Representatives

Tori Matthews  
Andria Schreima  
Forrest Shannon  
Carrie Toler  
Jennifer Coleman

### Community Representatives

Anne Ly - OUR HOME  
Lisa Buening - Job & Family Services  
Lori Fuller  
Jodi Grieshop  
Amy Poor - Mercer Co. Health Dept.  
Julie Shaffer - Mercer Co. Health Dept.

### Board of Education

Bill Sell  
Curt Shellabarger  
Matt Gilmore  
Cindy Piper (Liaison)  
Barbara Vorhees

# PROGRAM SNAPSHOTS



"In the best of all possible worlds, parents and guardians love their children, unconditionally. They accept their children with all their imperfections, flaws, quirks and challenges, because real love never has to be earned; it's given freely by those who are able to love." Marcia Sirota.

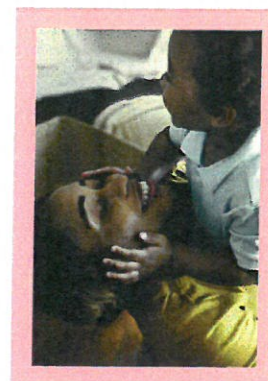




**1** Mercer County Head Start fully implemented *Conscious Discipline* as the social-emotional curriculum. By applying *Conscious Discipline* along with increased mental health supports in partnership with Foundations Behavioral Services into classrooms. Child social-emotional outcomes increased by 40%. When children establish healthy social emotional skills they also increase their ability to be ready to learn.



**2** Mercer County Education Service Center relocated three center-based special education classrooms into the Franklin Center. This relocation allowed a more productive collaborative relationship to develop between Head Start and the Mercer County Education Service Center. Together, administrators and staff provided essential services to all families and children, ensuring the best placement for children identified as needing specialized services.



**3** To support school readiness goals, families provided an additional 17,795 minutes of at-home activities working on language, literacy, mathematics, social-emotional, and motor development.



**4** In an effort to support kinship caregivers of Head Start children, Mercer County Head Start in partnership with Mercer County Department of Job & Family Services and Foundations Behavioral Services developed and implemented a kinship care support group. The program allowed kinship caregivers and children to meet with families experiencing the same trauma and issues in a safe environment. Specialized service providers met with families to support them in their unique situations.

# SCHOOL READINESS

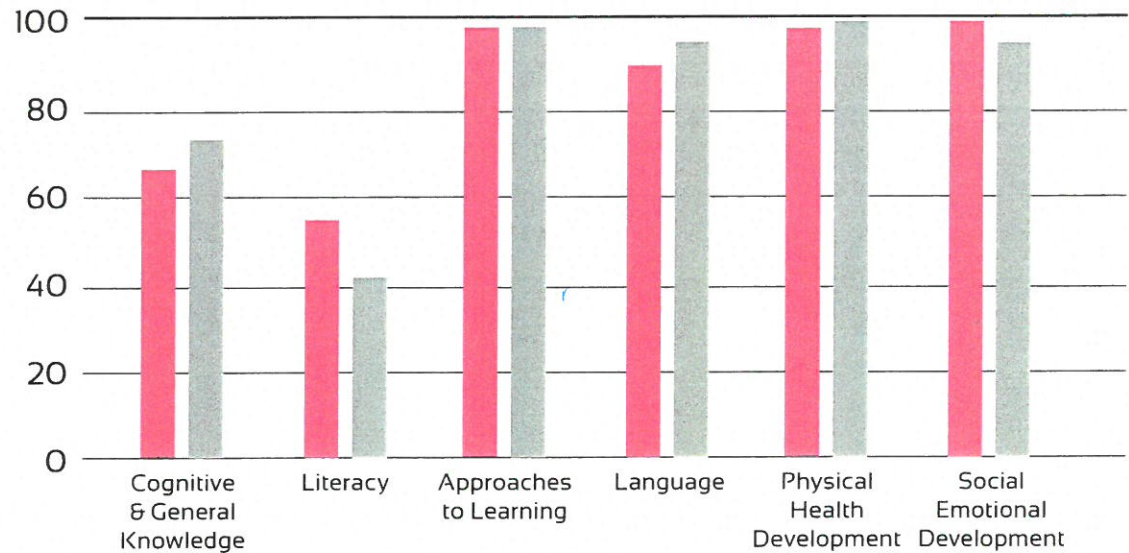


School readiness is measured by skills in the five central domains of the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five (ELOF): Social-Emotional, Physical (Gross Motor/Fine Motor), Language / Literacy, Cognitive, and Mathematics.

**M**ercer County Head Start program uses Creative Curriculum® in order to teach the early learning and development standards established by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF). Teaching Strategies-Gold is used to assess the progress of the children in the program. This criterion-referenced tool uses *Widely Held Expectations* to assess children's skills, knowledge, and behaviors as compared to children of the same age or class/grade. *Widely Held Expectations* determine if a child's skills, knowledge, and behavior are below, meeting, or exceeding the research-based developmental milestones. Mercer County Head Start's school readiness goals are found within the six following domains: Cognitive and General Knowledge, Literacy Development, Approaches to Learning, Language Development, Physical Health Development, and Social Emotional Development. Within each domain a specific objective was targeted to support measurement of school readiness. The chart below reflects the objective used to measure the domain.

DOMAIN	OBJECTIVE
Cognitive & General Knowledge	Quantifies
Literacy	Uses Letter-sound Knowledge
Approaches to Learning	Solves Problems
Language	Comprehends Language
Physical Health Development	Demonstrates Balancing Skills
Social Emotional	Forms Relationships with Adults

The following chart demonstrates the percentage of children achieving school readiness benchmarks in each of the domains listed on the previous page. Children are categorized in two groups, 3-year old children (pink) and 4-year old / PreK (grey).



Sixty-two children transitioned from Mercer County Head Start to local kindergarten classrooms. These include Celina City Schools, Coldwater Exempted Village Schools, and Parkway Local Schools.

Transitions are a critical part of everyday life, especially in the life of a child. Because transitions have such an impact on day to day life it is imperative that transitions are planned in advance, consider individual needs, and incorporate all parties involved. Transitions require partnership and input between parents and staff. While each transition is very important, the transition from preschool to kindergarten is a significant milestone in a child's life. To support this transition several activities take place in the classroom such as learning to carry lunch trays and opening milk cartons. Field trips to local kindergarten classrooms allow children to see their new environment in advance of their attendance. Parents attend kindergarten transition meetings with Head Start staff, kindergarten principals, and teachers.



## TEACHER CREDENTIALS

**T**he Head Start Reauthorization of 2007 requires that at least 50% of all Head Start teachers have a baccalaureate or advanced degree relating to early childhood education with experience teaching preschool-age children. Mercer County Head Start exceeds that benchmark with 100% of teachers having a baccalaureate in Early Childhood Education or closely related field. In addition, 50% of our teacher assistants hold a baccalaureate in Early Childhood Education with the remaining 50% holding an associate degree.

# 5-STAR RATING



Ohio's Tiered Quality Rating & Improvement System

Mercer County Head Start is a 5-Star rated child care program. Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) is Ohio's quality rating system for child care programs. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) use a comprehensive, one-to-five star rating system to assess ODJFS and ODE-licensed early childhood programs that choose to exceed minimum health and safety standards. Starting in 2020, all child care programs that receive state funding will be required to participate in Step Up To Quality. Ratings are posted online, and parents can use them to choose the program that is best for their child.

For more information, visit <http://www.earlychildhoodohio.org/sutq/index.stm>.

## Paolo DeMaria Visit

Superintendent of Public Instruction



Ohio Superintendent Paolo DeMaria visited Mercer County Head Start Center. During his visit to the Franklin Early Childhood Center, DeMaria toured the facility and observed firsthand the collaborative efforts of Mercer County Head Start and Mercer County Education Service Center. The collaborative partnership safeguards that Head Start Children received specialized IEP services in the least restrictive environment as prescribed by the *Every Student Succeeds Act*.

mchs  
visitors

## Cameron Warner

District Director



Cameron Warner, District Director for Congressman Jim Jordan visited Mercer County Head Start. After touring the facility, Director Esser and Director Warner discussed the importance of high-quality comprehensive early childhood programming in Mercer County and the positive impacts that Head Start has on the local and national community. Head Start has earned the support of many local, state, and national leaders by continuously demonstrating positive impacts on children, families, and communities.

# HEALTH STATS





**A** healthy child is a child ready to learn. Through supportive services and collaborative partnerships with local medical and dental providers, Mercer County Head Start works diligently to ensure that children's medical and dental needs are met.

Head Start not only works to ensure that enrolled children's medical and dental needs are met, but the entire family. Through home visits and education provided by our Family Advocates and Registered Nurse, the program supports the overall health and well-being of the family.

### HEALTH SERVICES - Children who...

were considered up-to-date according to EPSDT schedules.  
**117 - 85%**

had an on-going source of Health Care.  
**133 - 97%**

have an updated physical.  
**134 - 98%**

### DENTAL SERVICES - Children who...

received preventative care.  
**125 - 91%**

needed dental treatment.  
**13 - 10%**

received treatment.  
**6 - 46%**

# family engagement

## Boosting School Readiness



**F**amily engagement is a collaborative and strengths-based process through which early childhood professionals, families, and children build positive and goal-oriented relationships. It is a shared responsibility of families and staff at all levels that requires mutual respect for the roles and strengths each has to offer. Family engagement focuses on culturally and linguistically responsive relationship-building with key family members in a child's life.

Ohio has been a victim of the Opioid epidemic. Mercer County has not been immune from the impact. Unfortunately, due to addiction and incarceration, many children have been separated from their biological parents. For many of these children a member of their family / kinship caregiver has stepped in to provide care. Our kinship families require additional supports to ensure that these children are school ready. In response, Mercer County Head Start along with Mercer County Department of Job & Family Services and Foundations Behavioral Health Services created the *Kinship Support Group*.

"Family means  
no one gets  
left behind or  
forgotten."  
- David Ogden Stiers

149...

children were  
served in Program  
Year 2016 - 2017.

139...

families were  
served - 52 of  
these families had  
a single mother as  
head of household.

88%...

the percentage of  
eligible children  
served in Program  
Year 2016 - 2017.

## Head Start Benefits

### *Why is Head Start So Important?*

Mercer County Head Start, a comprehensive early childhood education and holistic development program for children three to five years and their families, is essential because it works—for children, families, and communities.

We use evidence-based best practices and partner with community-based organizations to help remove child and family barriers to success. No other provider of early childhood services seeks

#### *Lower staff/child ratios*

*The administrator and teachers have higher education qualifications.*

*The administrator and teachers complete more than 20 hours of specialized training every two years.*

*Teachers develop lesson plans that support each child's growth.*

*The program completes assessments to evaluate and improve the learning experience.*

*The program values its families and community.*

at-risk children and families and provides the depth, breadth, and scope of services that Head Start does. This is what makes Head Start so vital—its unrivaled and passionate commitment to helping children and families be successful.

Our commitment to our Nation's children, families, and communities pays off. The Head Start investment is effective and means that children are more likely to graduate from high school and college, are less likely to need special education services, and are less likely to repeat grades. We are proud of the positive impact Head Start has on our society, one child at a time.

Head Start is an integral part of communities across the country. Local Head Start programs are adaptive and reflect the unique cultural and social fabrics of their communities. There is no "one size fits all" approach. Head Start programs work collaboratively with local schools, childcare providers, community service providers, and families to meet the needs of a new generation and ensure all children have a brighter future.

Every day, Head Start programs across the county commit to making our Nation's young children ready to succeed in life.

# PROGRAM ENROLLMENT



Mercer County Head Start receives funding to provide high-quality comprehensive early childhood services to 158 children annually. In program year 16/17, 149 children were served.

# federal review

## Results of Audit PY 2016-2017

The audit for Program Year 16/17 was completed in the winter of 2017/18. While all other sections received no findings through the audit, a concern was identified regarding reporting non-federal match. The auditor's report indicated that the program was underreporting the amount of non-federal match the program was receiving.



- ☑ 95% average monthly enrollment
- ☑ 9% of children served from over income families (below 10% allowance)

- ☑ 78% of children from single parent households
- ☑ 7% of children from families receiving financial assistance
- ☑ 16% of parents with less than high school education

# BUDGET vs ACTUAL

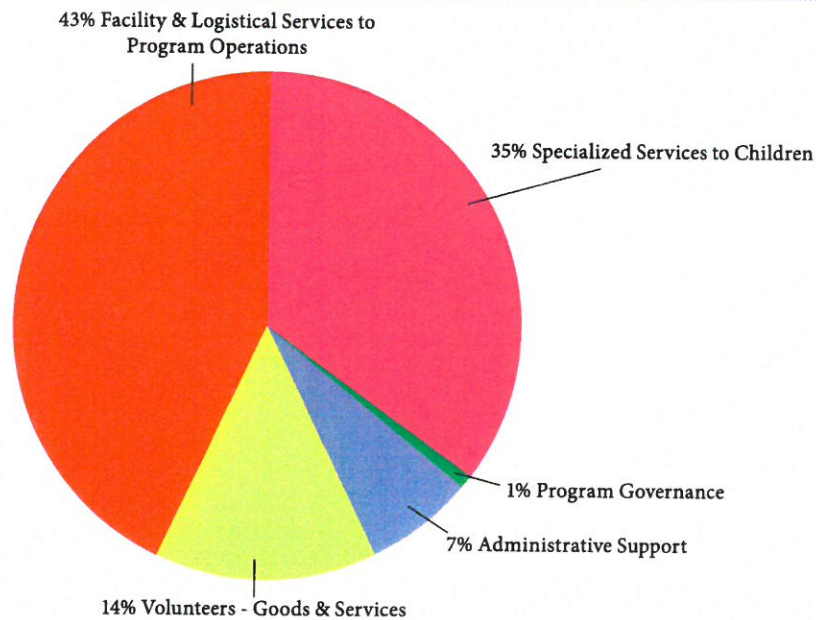


Mercer County Head Start receives federal grant funding from the Office of Head Start (\$1,287,289) and the USDA (\$72,957). Funding from the Office of Head Start provides the bulk of the funding applied directly to the cost of administering the Head Start program. Much of the funding covers the cost of staff salaries, wages, fringe, and benefits. A portion of funds is specifically allocated to provide ongoing training and technical assistance ensuring high-performance service delivery. The remaining funds are used to support programming and supply. Annually, the program applies for funding from the USDA to support the costs associated with healthy nutritious meals provided to children at the center.

# Mercer County Head Start

## PY 2016-2017 Budget vs Actual Expenditures

EXPENSE BREAK DOWN		
	Budget	Actual
Salaries & Wages	\$629,228	\$610,811
Fringe & Benefits	\$340,272	\$339,260
Training & Technical Assistance	\$19,232	\$19,232
Programming & Supply	\$371,514	\$254,000



### Non-Federal Match

Head Start programs are required to match 20% of the federal award with non-federal resources. Non-federal match comes in the form of goods and services provided to the program at no cost to the program. This chart provides a visual graphic of the breakdown of non-federal match for Mercer County Head Start.

**MERCER COUNTY HEAD START**

