

MERCER COUNTY HEAD START

leading the way

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

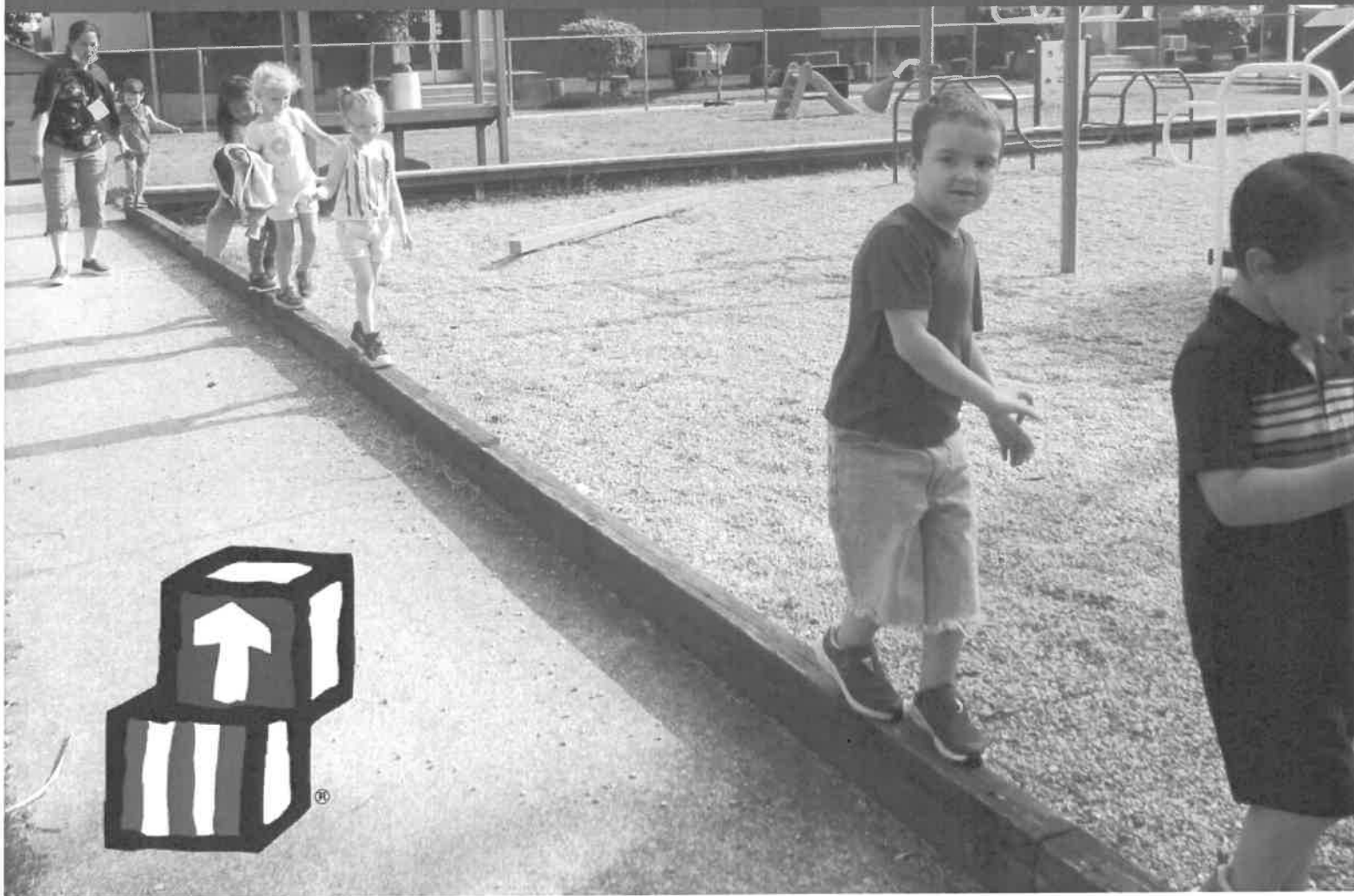




table of contents

- 01 from the director
- 02 our values, mission and vision
- 03 leadership
- 04 school readiness
- 05 EOY achievements
- 06 head start benefits
- 07 teacher credentials
- 08 health stats
- 09 our families
- 10 enrollment
- 11 federal review
- 12 budget

from the director

Persistence and courage describe the attitude of Mercer County Head Start during Program Year 20 / 21. The Pandemic continued to impact all facets of our community, state, and nation. The staff and leadership of Mercer County Head Start faced the program year acknowledging the importance of providing a safe nurturing environment where children could thrive and build foundational early learning skills.

Leadership was never more important than during the pandemic. Program leadership completed Servant Leadership coaching and training. From that process, leadership created the program's core values, mission, and vision. By unifying the program under the core values, mission, and vision, staff and leadership focused on service to others.

With safety precautions in place, Mercer County Head Start was able to serve children and families in our facilities. Honoring safety requirements, classes sizes remained small. Parent engagement activities were put on hold to prevent any possible spread of any communicable illnesses. Teachers and Family Advocates maintained relationships with parents and guardians by meeting in open air spaces, conducting ZOOM meetings, and utilizing phone calls as a means of communication.

The pandemic created some unforeseen obstacles that required the program to reevaluate and overcome. Staffing shortages plagued the workforce throughout the nation. It was no different for Mercer County Head Start. Critical positions in all areas became and remained vacant for long period of times. Regardless, the program carried forward and supported the most vulnerable children in our community.

Looking to the future, Mercer County Head Start will reach into the soul of the program to be resilient as we carry on our mission! The program has witnessed the increase of abhorrent behaviors, increase in children placed out of the home, and increase in mental health concerns among parents and guardians. We believe that our program is a lifeline for these families and continue to look at creating unique community partnerships to address these issues.

As the Director of this program, I have never been prouder of the staff and leadership who endured the pandemic and continued to support our children and families. I look forward to next program year as we endeavor to provide equity to children and families!

Wishing you well!!

Amy Esau



our core values our mission our vision



Mercer County head Start has established **CORE VALUES** that lead and exemplify the work that we endeavor to complete in every aspect of our mission and vision. These core values include Trust, Integrity, and Excellence.

Mercer County Head Start invests in individualized, comprehensive services which champion school ready children and self-sufficient families, this is our **MISSION**.

To establish Mercer County Head Start as the foremost leader in early childhood services. This is our **VISION**.

It is our fervent belief that by living our core values throughout our mission, we will accomplish our vision. Children, families, community members, stakeholders, and peers will benefit from the exemplary work accomplished.

Mercer County Head Start staff will hold true to our core values, mission, and vision displaying the compassion needed to combat poverty, inequity, and social injustice; forever impacting our local, state, and national communities.



administrative team

Amy Esser - Executive Director
Sandy Stammen - Education
Manager
Angie Stephenson, RN - Health &
Community Services Manager
Kim Kramer - Family Engagement
Services Manager
Dr. Ken Schmiesing -
Superintendent
Tom Sommer - Treasurer

policy council

PARENT REPRESENTATIVES

Danielle Naugle
Amanda Wenning
Keysha Chilcoat
Diana Patrick
April Ball

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Jodi Griseshop - WIC
Jamie Miller - JFS
Diane Gable - Foundations
Emily Plummer - YWCA CCR

CELINA CITY SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

Deb Guingrich - Board Liaison
Craig Flack
Matt Gilmore
Carl Huber
Bill Sell
Barb Vorhees

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.

leadership

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
- Mathematics

Mercer 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 Outcome 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

Social Emotional

Children will form and participate in meaningful relationships.

Language

Children will develop expressive language skills and expand their vocabulary.

Literacy

Children will understand that print conveys meaning.

Physical / Health

Children will develop gross and fine motor skills.

Approaches to Learning

Children will develop the skills to remember and connect experiences.

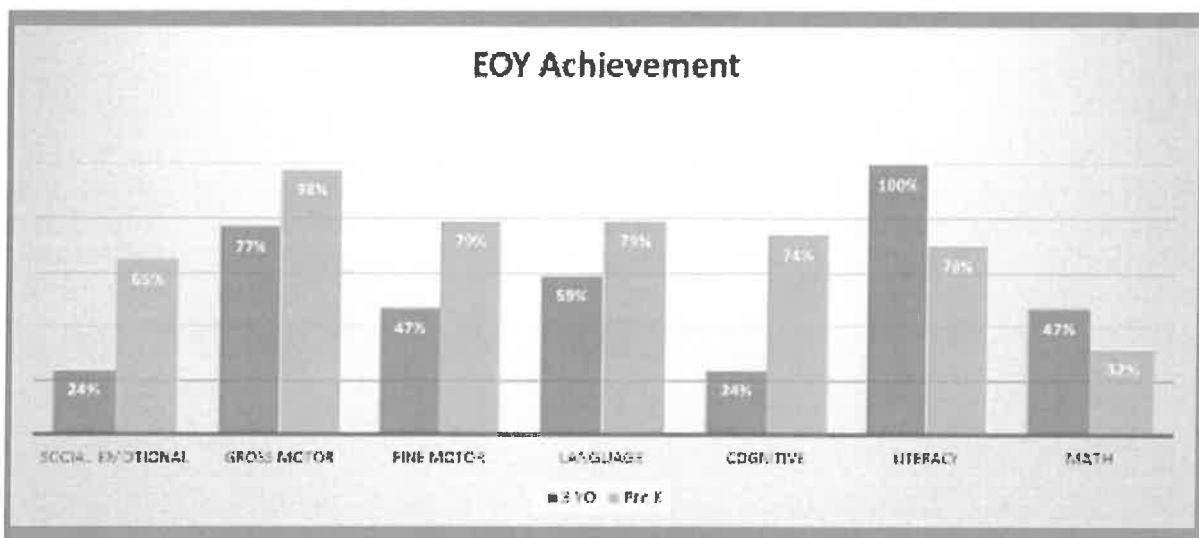
Cognitive and General Knowledge

Children will understand numbers and quantities.



school readiness data

PY 20 - 21



What does the chart say? To understand the chart, the reader must consider the following mitigating factors. For 3-year-old children, this was their first school experience during a pandemic where they had been quarantined in their homes for one third of their young lives. Secondly, safety precautions in the environment reduced staff's ability to teach utilizing "hands on" skills and other teaching techniques. Attendance was a significant factor in natural learning progressions. Absences due to illness and quarantine by both students and staff had a detrimental impact on a child's ability to follow the building blocks of normal child development. MCHS staff provided a safe nurturing environment in which young children experiencing the unique circumstances of a pandemic had a place to learn and develop skills.



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 at-risk children and families, and provides the depth, breadth, and scope of services that Head Start provides.



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.



Why is Head Start so important?

- 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.

head start benefits

teacher credentials



The 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 this benchmark with 100% of teachers having a baccalaureate in Early Childhood Education (ECE) or closely related field. Two of our teachers have an advanced degree in ECE. In addition, 70% of our teacher assistants hold a baccalaureate in Early Childhood Education, 10% hold a CDA, and 20% hold an associate degree.



HEALTH

Health and Safety were the primary focus of PY 20/21. Regardless of the Pandemic, Head Start standards were followed resulting in the following outcomes.

At the end of enrollment 100% of all children had health insurance. 100% of all children had access to ongoing medical care. There was a 40% increase in children being up to date on immunizations. Thirty-two children were placed on a "catch-up" schedule for immunizations because of referrals from Head Start.



DENTAL

At the end of enrollment, 76% of all children have access to preventative dental care. 79 children received dental treatment. Of those children, 40 children required follow up care. Only 19 received necessary follow up care, leaving 21 children with on-going dental needs.



VISION

Because of Head Start's vision screening requirements, 12 children were referred on to receive vision treatment / examinations.

health stats

our families

The health and safety regulations prescribed by oversight agencies prevented Mercer County Head Start from hosting parent engagement activities. As much as the program tried to utilize technology platforms to engage families, normal parent activities were not attended. Parent leadership meetings, such as Policy Council, utilized ZOOM to conduct business. Logistical structure of the program including picking up and retrieving children at bus stops and pick up and drop off at the center, completely changed.

Mercer County Head Start served 100 families. Fifty of those families are described as 2-parent families. The remaining 50 families are single parent families. 41 single moms and 4 single dads (remaining 5 were single grandparents /foster parents).

At the beginning of enrollment, 74% of all families were employed. By the end of enrollment only 44% of families were employed. Mirroring the nation, unemployment had settled on Head Start parents. 17 families received mental health services.





108 children were served in PY 20/21

For Program Year 20/21, the Office of Head Start directed programs to focus on providing services to returning children. Returning children are defined as those children who had previously been enrolled in the Head Start program. For Mercer County Head Start these were our second and third year returning children. This initiative was put into place to combat the learning loss from the disruption of services in the previous program year. Mercer County Head Start was able to serve 52 children who would later transition to kindergarten.

The Ohio Department of Education along with the Ohio Department of Health, established preschool class sizes to not exceed 10 children. This requirement was put into place to ensure children had access to early care and education, but also ensured social distancing in classrooms. Mercer County Head Start also provided a virtual learning option for children and families who were not comfortable sending their children into a center. Mercer County Head Start served a total of 108 children.

Of the 108 children served: 64 children were at or below the federal income poverty level, 7 children were receiving SSI or TANF, 6 were in Foster care / Kinship Care, and 2 children were homeless.

10% of total enrollment were Marshallese,
5% were Hispanic,
26 children were receiving individualized education plan (IEP) services.

enrollment

federal review

Results of Audit PY 2020 - 2021

The audit for Program Year 2020 - 2021 was completed in the winter of 2021.

The auditor's report stated that there were no findings within the 2020 - 2021 audit report.

Sec. 641A of the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 requires the Office of Head Start (OHS) to implement ongoing monitoring of all programs receiving federal funds. As a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and public health emergency, all monitoring reviews for the 2020-2021 school year will be conducted virtually. This decision was based on two principles that have driven OHS's decisions and guidance to programs throughout this period: (1) taking decisive actions to support each program's success and (2) keeping the safety of children and staff paramount.

While prevalence or risk of COVID-19 varies from community to community, OHS recognizes that each program's energies are focused on making innovative programmatic changes in a fluid environment to serve as many children and families as safely as possible. OHS does not wish to distract from those critical efforts by adding the burden of planning and accommodating an on-site federal review team. OHS believes a virtual monitoring protocol more appropriately balances the need for monitoring with the on-the-ground challenges to which programs are actively responding at this time. Secondly, and as important, OHS is committed to protecting the health and safety of children and staff in OHS programs.

It understands that having outside monitors visit programs, in some locations, may increase the risk of exposure to COVID-19. Limiting visitors to Head Start facilities is consistent with guidance on best practices from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on safely providing child care in group settings during the pandemic. Given the availability of a suitable virtual alternative, on-site OHS monitoring reviews as a general practice present an unnecessary risk at this unique time. However, OHS reserves the right to conduct special off-site or on-site reviews if they are determined to be necessary.



The Head Start program is primarily funded through the Administration of Children and Families which is located within the Department of Health & Human Services. The Head Start Act requires grantees to utilize the USDA's Children and Adult Care Food Program to provide financial means to cover the cost of healthy and nutritious meals for children while they are attending Head Start programming. Additional financial resources come from local entities such as community partners, families, and friends of the Head Start community.

budget

HEAD START BUDGET (TABLE ENTRIES)

	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>
Salaries & Wages	948,693	892,454
Fringe & Benefits	640,545	520,117
Programming & Supply	359,483	348,437
<u>TOTALS</u>	<u>1,948,721</u>	<u>1,761,008</u>
TTA	19,232	19,232

For FY 21, MCHS received \$1,948,721 from the Office of Head Start and \$79,584 from the USDA. Due to the COVID 19 Pandemic, the American Rescue Plan provided \$236,600 to support programs from April of 2021 thru March 2023. In FY 21, MCHS expended \$35,760 from the ARP & CRSSA funding.

Base grant funding covered normal operational costs such as personnel and fringe, supply and programming, while ARP / CRSSA funding covered specialized costs such as additional personnel and safety supplies. Typically, the program would have seen donations from local organizations or Non-Federal Match hours; however, the pandemic ceased those types of events as resources were needed elsewhere and restrictions prevented program volunteers. As such the grantee was granted a waiver of its Non-Federal match requirement.

5-star rating



Ohio's Tiered Quality Rating & Improvement System

585 E. Livingston St. www.mercerheadstart.org
Celina, OH 45822
419-268-0301

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 (ODJVS) and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) use a comprehensive, one-to-five star rating system to assess ODJVS 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>.

