

Northwest Community Action

**Head Start
Prenatal to Five**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2022-2023**





Our Mission is to stimulate a focusing of all available resources upon the goal of enabling area low-income families and individuals of all ages to attain skills, knowledge, and motivations, and secure the opportunities needed for them to become self-sufficient.



Annual Report 2022-2023

Head Start serving families prenatal to age five



Northwest Community Action (NWCA) provides comprehensive Head Start services to 240 children and their families in our four-county service area: Lake of the Woods, Roseau, Marshall and Kittson county. A total of 155 families were served, including children with special needs and those needing individualized series. These services were provided in collaboration with their school districts. Head Start services include home visits and centers located in area schools providing nutritious breakfast, lunch and snacks. Additional services include medical screenings done with each county's nursing service, oral health screenings, and follow-up work. Head Start may help with payment if the child is not covered by MA, MN Care, or other private insurance.

NWCA Head Start and Early Head Start promote parents as their child's first, and most important teacher. Head Start parents have many opportunities to participate in educational activities in their individual service area. Parents participated in Policy Council both in person and virtually, attended local parent meetings, and worked with a teacher and their child on home visits. Additionally, conferences and home visits are held with each family throughout the year.

Five Year Program Goals

1. Northwest Community Action, Inc. (NWCA) Head Start supports children and families to develop skills to enhance their nutrition, health and well-being.
2. NWCA Head Start will support parents as lifetime learners and educators.
3. Children enrolled in NWCA Head Start will gain skills needed to transition successfully to their next developmentally appropriate stage.



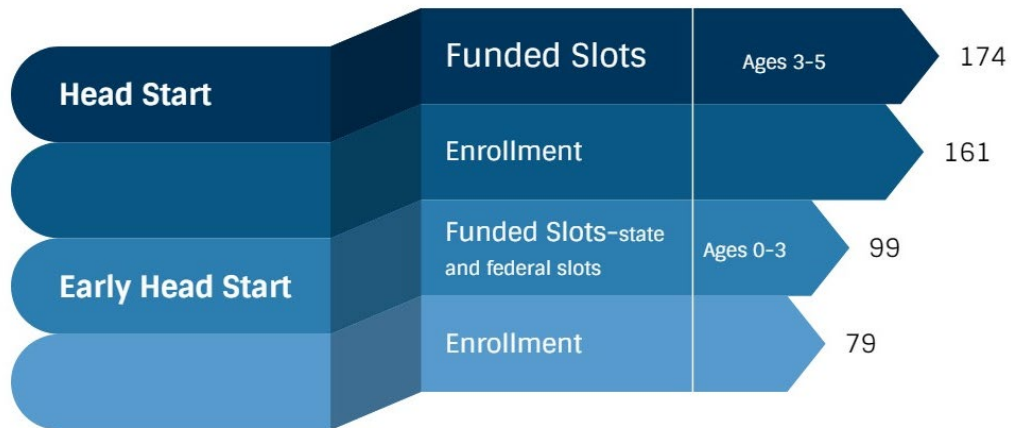
Northwest Community Action, Inc. continues to provide Head Start services to families in Marshall, Roseau, Kittson, and Lake of the Woods counties in the Northwestern corner of Minnesota. Our service area is bounded on the west by North Dakota and on the north by Manitoba and Ontario. This service area covers 6,500 square miles, in which over 32,000 people reside. The communities' range in size from 50 to 2600 people. Our entire service area is designated Medically Underserved, and 2 of our classrooms are located in areas of less than 1,000 individuals, and 50 percent of the families are eligible due to income guidelines.

Policy Council

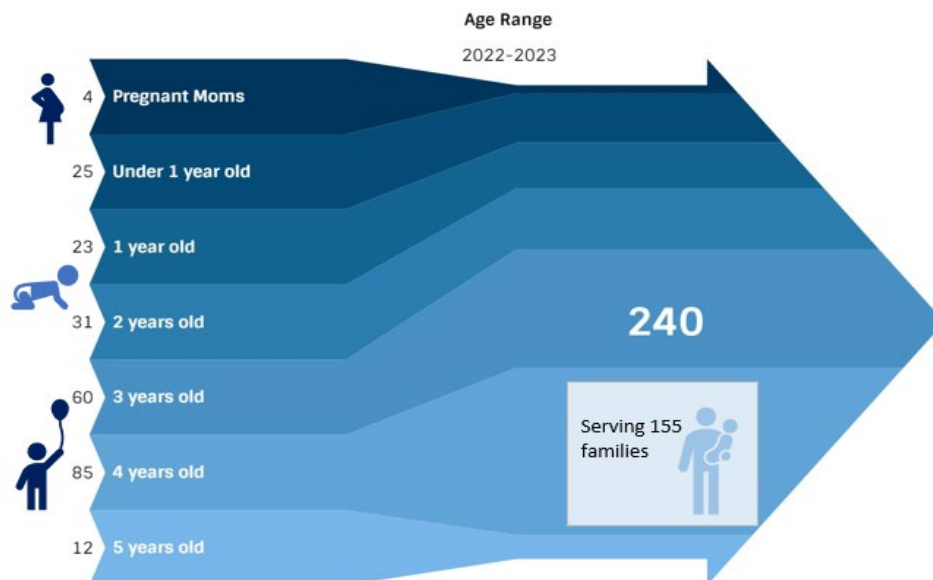
Parents are encouraged to be involved through parent committee meetings and Policy Council. This year's Policy Council is made up of 9 Head Start and Early Head Start elected parents who lead and make decisions about our program. The Policy Council participates meetings with program management to evaluate, provide insight, encouragement and community engagement. Our Policy Council members are valuable members of our program and our gratitude for their volunteer time and talents are appreciated.

Who we serve

2022-2023 Head Start Enrollment



Head Start

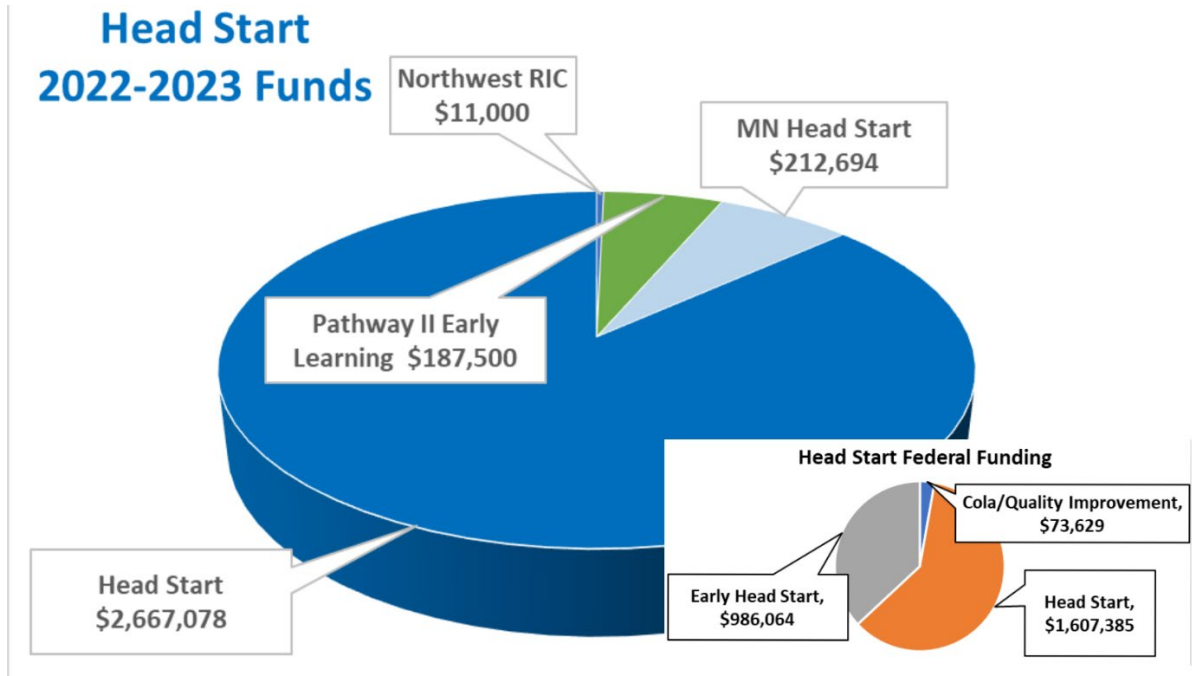


Fiscal

Head Start is funded with federal and state dollars. Our recent financial audit was completed in May 2023. NWCA has implemented the Corrective Action Plan noted in the agency's audit, with a completion date of August 31, 2023.

- The agency will continuously review and reconcile all significant account balances in a timely manner
- The agency will work to submit financial statements to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse within nine months of the year-end.

Funding

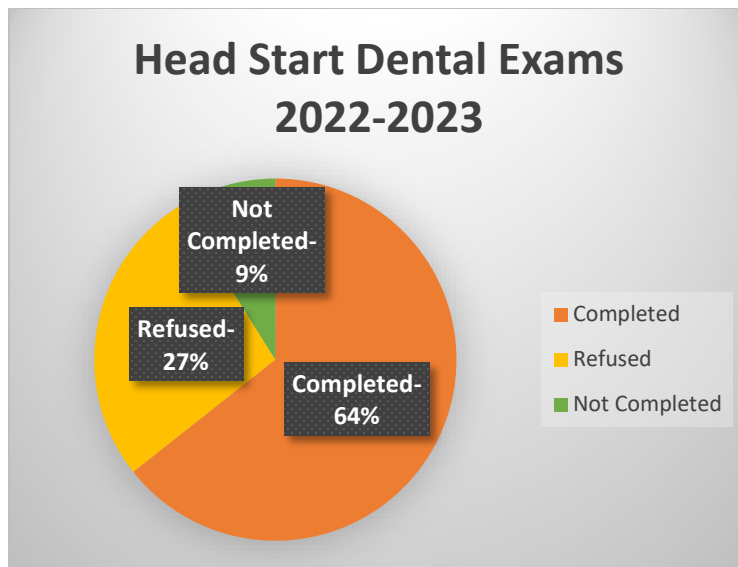


Expenditures

2022-2023 Head Start General Expenditures	Total
Personnel	\$ 1,462,062.21
Fringe Benefits	\$ 504,006.80
Travel/Travel-Out of Area/Vehicles	\$ 139,742.95
Supplies	\$ 220,571.09
Training	\$ 142,217.12
Total	\$ 2,568,306.47

Health

Our health-related services are well-received, with staff and community professionals collaborating to complete health and developmental screenings. During the screenings, children are assessed on dental, vision, and hearing tests, as well as developmental screening tests designed to identify young children who need further testing or who need help with academic skills. Children have received early identification of hearing, dental, and vision needs.



While at the dentist, 29 children were diagnosed with dental needs, and 15 of those children received treatment. Ten parents did not make an appointment, two children left the program, and two children had appointments scheduled after the end of the program year.

During our health screenings, 15 children recommended for dental appointments by our contracted dental hygienist did not follow up on the recommendation.

NWCA Head Start children aged 3-5 years old have insurance and access to health care, and 100% of families that choose immunization are up to date. 72% of the children are current on their preventive and primary care. Of these children, 20% have been diagnosed with a chronic health condition.

Of families with children 0-3-year-old, 99% have insurance and access to health care. 77% of the children are up to date for their preventive care, and 4% are documented with chronic health conditions.



Our health-related services are well-received with staff and community professionals collaborating to complete health and developmental screenings. During the screenings, children are assessed on dental, vision and hearing as well as developmental screening test designed to identify young children who need further testing or who need help with academic skills. Children have received early identification of hearing, dental and vision needs.

School Readiness

NWCA Head Start promotes parents as their child's first, and most important teacher. Head Start parents have many opportunities to participate in educational activities in their individual service area. Parents participated in Policy Council and with knowledge, attendance and

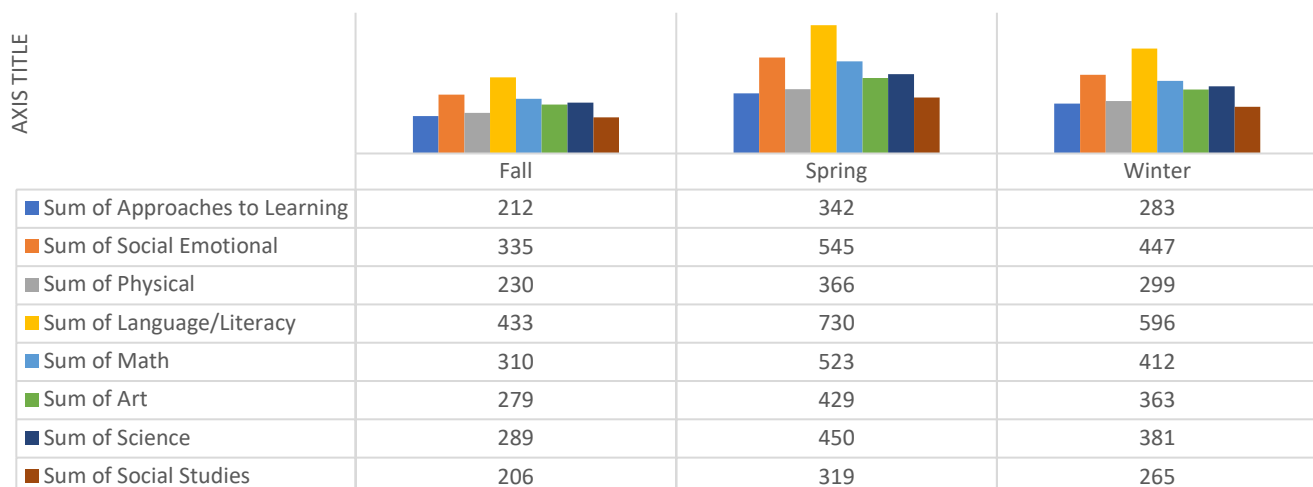
participation growing with each meeting. Parent attend local parent meetings, work their teacher and their child on home visits. Additionally, 4 conferences are held with each family throughout the year. In Early Head Start, a weekly (46 total) home visits of 1.5 hours is done with each enrolled child and a parent. The Buddy Group get-together is held twice a month for families in each local area in which activities, education, and information is provided for the children and parents. Parent engagement is emphasized and literacy activities, budgeting education, mental health counseling, and crisis assistance are a few of the parent support services provided.



Early Head Start continued to utilize the Child Observation Record Advantage (COR) for outcome and growth tracking. The COR works well in monitoring infant and toddler development, and during the 2022-2023 program year there continued to be growth in all areas of development.

Early Head Start teachers utilize COR Advantage to provide a complete picture of each child's development. COR Advantage allows teachers to observe children's development through play and naturally occurring activities.

COR SUMMARY OF APPROACHES TO LEARNING 2022-2023



We continued our involvement in a project to aggregate child outcome data statewide using the Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG). The intent of the program is to document child growth success as well as point to areas for improvement. The results will also help refine our efforts to optimize each child's development and for transitions to kindergarten as well as individual teacher growth. During each school year, communications occur with kindergarten teachers in each school district to review expectations and discuss transition experiences. Developmental growth and/or concerns is shared as appropriate. Memorandums of Agreement that lay out transition activities and mutual school readiness goals are developed with each school district. Overarching goals and the developmental growth of Kindergarten-bound children are included below. There was growth from fall 2022 to spring 2023 in all assessment areas including; Social-Emotional, Gross Motor Fine Motor, Language, Cognitive, Literacy and in Math.



NWCA also participates with MHSA data collection and evaluation for School Readiness Outcomes. Participating with MHSA in this project provides information to showcase our efforts as well as identify areas of need. We are able to analyze our assessment results across the

state. For example, if a classroom is showing higher or lower than average scores, we are able to compare across the state and/or do a deeper dive with our tools, classroom needs and documentation and act accordingly.

CLASS Observation and HOVRS provide teachers with constructive feedback; as well as areas to focus on for training. Requests for Conscious Discipline and Mental Health trainings are examples of requests that have resulted from observations.



School Readiness and Transitions

Home visitors supported four pregnant women this program year. The mother transitions to the parent role in Early Head Start while the baby becomes the enrollee. As EHS children turn three, they are transitioned into the Head Start center as space and eligibility allow.

Head Start supports the transition from the center to Kindergarten. All children receive a summer packet of activity ideas for parent-child interactions, which will give them a foundation for their Kindergarten experiences. Activities sent home include literacy, math, social, creative arts, fine motor, gross motor, and science exploration.

Head Start children visit the kindergarten classrooms in preparation for the next school year. Kindergarten teachers introduce themselves to the children throughout the year. They may speak to parents at spring parent meetings because the Head Seals in the cafeteria are eaten at the same time as the Kindergarten. Hence, the Head Start children are familiar with the Kindergarten teachers.

At 30 months, home visitors and parents develop a transition plan for each enrolled child. The Busy Buddy meetings are often in our Head Start centers. This provides additional opportunities for children to visit and become comfortable in the classroom.

School Readiness Goals

School readiness is foundational across early childhood systems and programs.

- It means children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children.
- Head Start views school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life.

Physical Development and Health

1. Children will acquire and maintain a high level of physical health, including being up to date on physical and dental checkups and immunizations.
2. Children will demonstrate an increased ability to care for their own needs appropriately. They will become more independent and resourceful getting needs met.
3. Children will demonstrate increasing control of large muscles for movement, navigation and balance consistent with their chronological and developmental level.
4. Children will demonstrate increasing fine motor strength, coordination and agility for use in self-care, manipulation of materials and exploring their environment.

Social Emotional Development

1. Children will be able to manage feelings appropriately and self-regulate with regard to their emotions, attention span and behavior.
2. Children will demonstrate positive, appropriate social relationships with family members, peers and other significant adults.

Approaches to Learning

1. Children will demonstrate a positive approach to learning through persistence, attentiveness, engagement and curiosity.
2. Children will show an increasing ability to express themselves through sound, movement, visual media and role play.

Language and Literacy

1. Children will demonstrate increasing skills in comprehension and use of more complex and varying vocabulary.
2. Children will demonstrate increasing proficiency using language to communicate needs, wants and for self-expression.

Cognition and General Knowledge

1. Children will use math skills in everyday routines as appropriate for their developmental level with increasing competency in counting, comparing, relating and problem solving.
2. Children will engage in exploring their environment through observation, imitation, manipulation, and curiosity.
3. Children will demonstrate use of skills to solve problems, find multiple solutions and answer questions.

Family Engagement

Head Start centers hosted 2 parent meetings; of the 4 parent conferences, at least two are scheduled at the family's home. In Early Head Start, in addition to the home visits, we host Busy Buddy groups twice a month.

Our families are invited into the classroom to volunteer during events and participate in our Policy Council. Policy Council had nine active members participate this program year. NWCA had 187 family members volunteer in our program.

Partnering with families includes setting goals on family outcomes. The most common goals were financial stability, school readiness, and transition support. Families made gains of 63% in their family outcomes.

