

*Great Futures*

*begin with a*

**HEAD START**



2021- 2022

**Annual  
Report**

“

**Early  
childhood  
education  
is the key  
to the  
betterment  
of society.**

- M.MONTESSORI -

”







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## Who We Are

Children & Families First is one of Delaware's oldest and most respected leaders in meeting the needs of children and their families.

Using brain science research as the foundation of our framework, we engage more than 25,000 children, youth, and families each year in programs, services, and supports proven to transform lives and futures.

Every child deserves the opportunity to achieve their full potential. We believe investing in children and families is the single most powerful lever to create a healthier society and stronger economy for us all, now and in the future.

Our commitment to the health, safety, and well-being of all children and their families makes us proud to say, **Our Name Is Our Promise.**

## Our Mission

We help children facing adversity on their journey to adulthood using proven methods to help families raise their children so they can flourish.

## Our Vision

We envision communities where children are nurtured, healthy, and safe; individuals are valued; and families are strong and self-sufficient.

## Our Leaders

**Kirsten Olson**

Chief Executive Officer

**John Wood**

Chief Financial Officer

**Tam DeFer**

Chief Leadership  
& Engagement Officer

**Zakiya Bakari-Griffin**

Chief Program Officer  
Prevention

**Brenda Smith**

Chief Program Officer  
Intervention

**Kiera McGillivray**

Chief Program Officer  
School-Based

**Clara Martinez**

Chief Program Officer  
Head Start

**Heather A. O'Connell**

Board Chair

**Jeff Sills**

Board Vice Chair

**Sherry Brilliant**

Board Secretary

**Paul L. McCommons**

Board Treasurer

**William N. Britton,**

Board Assistant Treasurer



*Children are nurtured, healthy, and safe; individuals are valued; and families are strong and self-sufficient.*

Children & Families First's second year as an interim grant manager for the Head Start programs was a year of adaptation, innovation, and most of all reward, when our dedicated efforts earned us the permanent grantee award in July 2022.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued, our staff worked ceaselessly and diligently to provide high-quality services for our children and families - always smiling behind their masks, so their warmth and care was felt by all. We recognize with gratitude their enormous display of dedication, passion, and resilience.

In the face of understandable fear and uncertainty, our families showcased tremendous trust in continuing to choose our Head Start programs to provide the best possible care for their children. We are grateful for their patience, understanding, and flexibility.

Acknowledging the pandemic placed additional burdens on many families, our community stepped up - finding new ways that helped meet concrete needs. We are thankful for their partnerships and the vital supports they enabled us to provide.

Through every change and challenge there was a shared commitment to provide the right services, to the right people, at the right time. Together, we brought our vision to life - building a thriving community where children are nurtured, healthy, and safe; individuals are valued and respected; and families are strong and self-sufficient.

Focused on gratitude and continued growth, we look to the future knowing that we have laid a solid foundation that ensures children and families continue to have the opportunity to thrive to their full potential. And to us there is no greater reward.



Kirsten Olson  
Chief Executive Officer  
Children & Families First

Clara Martinez  
Chief Program Officer  
Head Start





# About Head Start

One of the core programs of President Lyndon Johnson's Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Head Start remains an exemplary family development program that serves more than a million disadvantaged children nationwide each year.

In 2020, Children & Families First was selected as the interim grant manager for the Head Start Delaware programs serving children birth to five years old and their families in Kent and Sussex counties. After two years as interim grant managers, we are proud to have our success earn us the permanent grant manager award in July 2022.

The mission of our Head Start program is to provide high-quality early-childhood education for children in partnership with their families and the community. We offer services that help children grow and develop skills for success in school and life, strengthen families with concrete resources, and promote healthy development while reflecting the community's ethnic and cultural values.



## Headquarters

25448 Primehook Road, Suite 400, Milton, DE 19968  
302-934-1642  
[www.cffde.org/headstart](http://www.cffde.org/headstart)

## Our Centers

### WHITE OAK

195 Willis Road  
Dover, DE 19901

### COLONIAL GARDENS

1000 Hayes Circle  
Dover, DE 19904

### HARRINGTON

112 East Street  
Harrington, DE 19952

### SMYRNA

4272 Brenford Road  
Smyrna, DE 19977

### COOL SPRINGS

28607 W Meadowview Drive  
Milton, DE 19968

### STOCKLEY

26351 Patriots Way  
Georgetown, DE 19947

### ANNEX

308 N Railroad Avenue  
Georgetown, DE 19947

### MILFORD

518 N Church Street  
Milford, DE 19963

### BRIDGEVILLE

2 Laverty Lane  
Bridgeville, DE 19933

### SEAFORD

517 Bridgeville Highway  
Seaford, DE 19973

### DUNBAR

1110 W 6th Street  
Laurel, DE 19956

### SOUTHERN DELAWARE

38229 Dupont Blvd.  
Selbyville, DE 19975

# Our Programs

Head Start and Early Head Start are high-quality early childhood education programs for children birth to 5 years old, offered at no cost to qualifying families. We embrace diversity and welcome children and families of all backgrounds and abilities including those with special needs. Our staff are fluent in English, Spanish, and Creole.

## EARLY HEAD START for children birth to three...

EARLY HEAD START offers families a choice of participating through one of our Center-Based programs or through our Home-Based program. Early Head Start helps parents and caregivers nurture their child's curiosity, strengthen bonds with one another, and establish the safe, stable routines that ensure children reach important developmental milestones when they are ready.

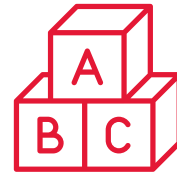
- Center-Based Early Head Start is offered at our Stockley Center.
- Home-Based Early Head Start is offered throughout Sussex County.

## HEAD START for children three to five...

HEAD START is our high-quality early childhood education center-based preschool program where children are welcomed into a traditional classroom setting to prepare them for kindergarten. Knowing that children learn best through play, the goal of our Head Start programs is to inspire a love of learning that prepares them for success in school and life.

- Center-Based Head Start is offered through our twelve conveniently located centers in Kent and Sussex counties.

# Our Services



## Education

Children's readiness for school and beyond is fostered through individualized learning experiences. Through relationships with adults, play, and planned and spontaneous instruction, children grow in many aspects of development. Children progress in social skills and emotional well-being, along with language and literacy learning, and concept development



## Health

Each child's perceptual, motor, and physical development is supported to permit them to fully explore and function in their environment. All children receive health and development screenings and nutritious meals. Programs connect families with medical, dental, and mental health services to ensure that children are receiving the services they need.



## Family Support

Parents and families are supported in achieving their own goals, such as housing stability, continued education, and financial security. Programs support and strengthen parent-child relationships and engage families around children's learning and development.





# Who We Serve

## Funded Enrollment

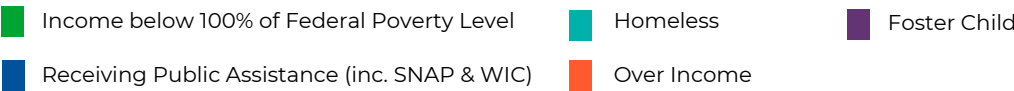


## Cumulative Enrollment



Average monthly enrollment for EHS & HS: 81%

## By Eligibility



### EARLY HEAD START



### HEAD START





## Age of Children

**5%**

under 1 year

**35%**

3 years old

**5%**

1 year old

**41%**

4 years old

**14%**

2 years old

**0%**

5 years old

## Race & Ethnicity

**.15%**

American Indian  
or Alaska Native

**5%**

White  
Hispanic

**.15%**

Asian

**14%**

White  
Non Hispanic

**51%**

Black or African  
American

**12%**

Biracial /  
Multi-Racial

**.4%**

Native Hawaiian  
/ Pacific Islander

**18%**

Other or  
Unspecified



## Primary Language

**65%**

English

**22%**

Spanish

**12%**

Creole

**.2%**

East Asian

**.15%**

Middle Eastern  
& South Asian

“

*Having every flyer and meeting offered in my language tells me Head Start respects me. It let's me know that my children and I belong to a community that cares about us.*

”





# Kindergarten & Beyond

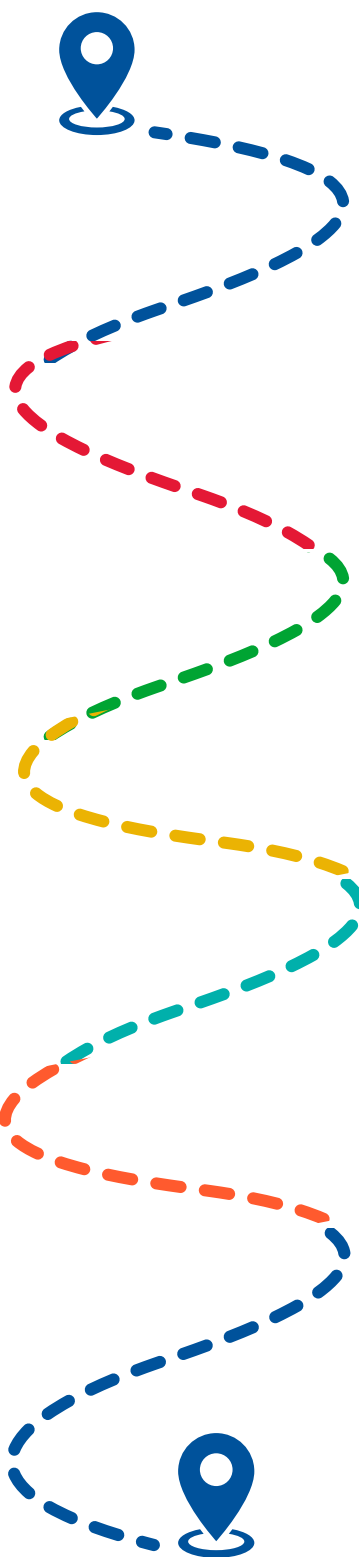
It is our role to prepare children for success as they enter kindergarten and for a lifetime of learning that will follow. We do this by implementing a comprehensive, research-based curriculum. We track the work we do with children using an observation-based child-level assessment tool, in which teachers use a rating scale to measure child learning over time providing measurable child outcomes.

Each child's progress is formally assessed three times per year for Head Start. This information is shared with families and used for goal setting. The data is also used to guide curriculum instruction and individualization. Teachers focus on building children's skills to attain our School Readiness Goals which were adopted to ensure children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children.

We work closely with the ten school districts in the two counties we serve to support children to successfully transfer from our program to kindergarten and beyond. We provide families with Kindergarten Registration Information Packets filled with resources to support kindergarten readiness and registration. We also provide individualized support to each family, including sharing information with the child's future kindergarten teacher to enable a smooth transition from Head Start to Kindergarten.



# Successful School Readiness



**SCHOOL READINESS** means helping all children and families learn and develop the skills necessary for future success in kindergarten and beyond by supporting birth to age-five programming, including early intervention services. Our focus includes key classroom practices such as the use of high-quality curriculum and assessment, teacher-child interactions and individualized professional development, as well as strengthening family engagement.

## Approaches to Learning:

Children will demonstrate curiosity and persistence to learn new things and gain new experiences.

## Social Emotional:

Children will demonstrate growing autonomy and independence maintained by increasing an interest in self-care and willingness to participate in daily routines. Children will begin to recognize, manage, and regulate emotions, both positive and negative through interactions within the classroom environment.

## Language and Literacy:

Children who are dual language learners (DLL) will be encouraged to demonstrate competency in their home language while developing proficiency in English. Children will use and comprehend oral language for conversation and communication.

## Cognition:

Children will ask questions, make predictions and develop ideas to gain a better understanding of the world around them. Children will demonstrate an understanding of spatial relationships.

## Perceptual, Motor, & Physical Health:

Children will demonstrate the ability to control large muscles for movement. Navigation, and balance. Children will demonstrate the control of small muscles

**HEAD START  
AREAS OF  
DEVELOPMENT**  
21-22 Measures

**23%**  
Social-Emotional  
Skills Gain

**14%**  
Language/Literacy  
Skills Gain

**12%**  
Math/Science  
Skills Gain

# Health & Well-Being

CFF Head Start supports Delaware's EPSDT (Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment) schedule to ensure children in our program stay up to date with vital screenings and exams.

Our Head Start program provides vision and hearing screenings for all enrolled children using evidence-based screening equipment.

Our Family Advocates work diligently to support families, connecting them with community resources to help bring their children up to date on all screenings and well-checks.

## Medical & Health

EHS	HS	
<b>80%</b>	<b>95%</b>	Completed Physicals
<b>74%</b>	<b>90%</b>	Lead Screens
<b>71%</b>	<b>84%</b>	Hemoglobin/Anemia Screens
<b>82%</b>	<b>87%</b>	Up to Date Immunizations
<b>86%</b>	<b>74%</b>	Dental Screens/Checks



## Dental

CFF Head Start uses the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry schedule of routine exams, cleanings, and fluoride treatments as our evidence-based guidelines for best practice. Non dental homes get support from our Family Advocates, in partnership with the Delaware Public Health Smile Check program's case management assistance to locate a dental provider for the whole family. Additionally, the Smile Check Program provides licensed Delaware Dental Hygienists who come to our centers, conducting dental screens with fluoride.

## Nutrition

Our program provides quality nutritious meals in accordance with the Child and Adult Care Food Program. We get input from parents to include food from their culture and all of our menus are created and approved by our Food & Nutrition Coordinator. Additionally, in partnership with Food Bank of Delaware we distributed healthy weekend kits (two breakfasts and two lunches) sent home weekly.

### Breakfasts Served

EHS	HS
<b>4892</b>	<b>39,057</b>

### Lunches Served

EHS	HS
<b>4931</b>	<b>38,983</b>





## Mental Health

Strong social-emotional skills are essential to helping children thrive during their early years, and beyond. We support the mental health of Head Start children, families and staff through our Early Childhood-Behavioral Health Consultant Program (ECBHC). ECBHCs focus on prevention through the delivery of trainings for families and staff, as well as by supplementing the social-emotional curriculum used in classrooms. Our intervention services seek to reduce challenging behavior by helping adults understand behavior as communication. Through consultation, ECBHCs work to build the capacity of staff and families to respond using developmentally and trauma-informed strategies.



## Health, Safety, & Well-Being During A Pandemic

By early fall 2021, our early childhood education sites were re-opened for in-person learners, while simultaneously offering virtual services for those families not yet comfortable sending their children into center-based care.

Hybrid schedules, modified drop off/pick up routines, daily health screenings for staff and children, combined with robust health and safety policies allowed our services to continue as safely as possible.

We continued to adapt to offer families the best possible support, investing heavily in technology and training for staff on virtual engagement.

Teachers worked tirelessly to provide children with stable, consistent and high-quality education for children virtually and in person.

Support staff worked to ensure that our most vulnerable children received the services that they needed at a critical time.

Our family service staff acted with dedication to support families with direct services and referrals responsive to their needs, focused on combating food insecurity and the economic hardships families faced, especially those exacerbated by the pandemic.



# Leadership & Governance

Research proves that children thrive to their full potential when they have regular interactions with responsive, caring adults.

It is our goal to offer welcoming environments and ample opportunities that encourage parents to be active partners in their child's education.

Our Policy Council and Parent Committee volunteers work directly with our staff to share responsibility and build mutual respect for one another's strengths in planning programs, special projects, and activities.

## Policy Council Officers

**CHAIRPERSON:**  
Kenyatta Johnson

**CO-CHAIRPERSON:**  
Amber Grinnage

**SECRETARY:**  
Carlisha Nichols

**SECRETARY (Alternate):**  
Unique Coursey

“

*As a parent and a member of the Policy Council I know that I helped make choices that will benefit my children and all the children in Head Start. It means so much to me that the voices of the families are encouraged, heard, and valued.*

”



# Building Relationships With Families

Engaging parents and families in their child's educational experience is central to Head Start's mission as well as an important element of school readiness. Children & Families First's Head Start programs serve all families by providing leadership and personal development opportunities that motivate, inspire, promote, engage and educate families directly.

Parents identify their own strengths, needs and interests in the Family Partnership Agreements. Head Start provides support through parent meetings and referrals to relevant resources.

Throughout the year, staff had weekly contacts with families to determine needs and provide resources including food assistance and follow-up on health requirements.

## How We Did It

- Virtual Open House Nights
- Parent Committees
- Policy Council
- Parent Surveys
- Home Visits
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Holiday/Christmas Gifts Program
- Food Bank of Delaware Program
- Health Fairs
- Wellness checks
- Car seats and installation supports
- Emergency Preparedness Bags
- Resource Connections
- Parenting Education Curriculum
- Providing Technology & Training



“

*Knowing that my daughter would come home each weekend with a backpack of healthy food took so much stress off of me. It made me feel so sure that she was safe in school because they were still helping me take care of her when she was at home.*

”



# Thank You To Our Community Partners



ABC Pediatrics  
Bright Futures Pediatrics  
Clothing our Kids  
Delaware Department of  
Health and Social Services  
Stockley Center  
Delaware Institute for the Arts  
in Education  
Delaware Museum of Nature &  
Science  
Delaware Office of Highway  
Safety



Delaware Pediatric Dentistry  
Department of Public Health  
Smile Check Program  
Division of Prevention and  
Behavioral Health Services,  
ECMHC

Dover Housing Authority  
Dr. Scott Lowell  
Food Bank of Delaware  
Foster Grandparent Program  
Highmark Health Options  
Kent & Sussex Counties School  
Districts



Kids and Teens Pediatrics  
La Red Health Center  
Mercer Sydel Dental  
Milford Public Library  
NCall

Nemours  
Queen Pediatric Dentistry  
Read Aloud  
Salvation Army  
Shine Early Learning  
The Town of Laurel  
United Way, Stand by Me  
Program

West Dover Dental  
Women, Infant, Children (WIC)



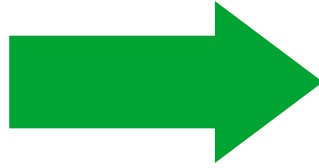
# Community Assessment & Need

## 5743

Number of children aged 0-5 living at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level in Kent and Sussex Delaware



Mandated Federal and State policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in smaller classroom sizes and modified enrollment.



Children & Families First Head Start programs served

## 12%

of eligible children and families in Kent & Sussex Delaware during the 2021-2022 program year.

## Financials

FUNDING	2021-2022 Actuals	2022-2023 Budget
Department of Health & Human Services - ACF Interim Grant	\$8,862,281	\$8,708,417
Supplemental Grant	\$1,800,000	\$0
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>\$10,662,281</b>	<b>\$8,708,417</b>
<i>Includes CACFP and United Way Stand by Me funding</i>		
EXPENDITURES		
Personnel	\$6,062,015	\$5,824,809
Fringe Benefits	\$1,568,780	\$1,333,742
Travel	\$14,176	\$3000
Supplies	\$600,706	\$231,093
Other	\$2,004,293	\$929,751
Contractual	\$412,311	\$386,058
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$10,662,281</b>	<b>\$8,708,417</b>



The results of the most recent review by the Secretary and the financial audit: Children & Families First Head Start did not have a review during the 2021-2022FY. The most recent audit yielded complete compliance with no findings. Copies of the financial audit are available at CFF's headquarters, 555 Justison St, Wilmington, DE 19801





**CFFDE.org**



[www.cffde.org/headstart](http://www.cffde.org/headstart)



302-934-1642



@cffheadstart