



# Head Start for Kent County

Connecting Families and Community Resources



2019-2020 Annual Report

# Message from the 2019 Board President

I am happy to share with you our 2019 - 2020 Annual Report. The National Head Start Association (NHSA) began with a mission to provide comprehensive preschool preparation for families and children living in poverty. Head Start for Kent County's Board of Directors and all the agency's employees continue to be committed to working hard to provide the best comprehensive preschool experience. Besides early educational services and school readiness, our agency also offers family support, mental health services, dental services, health and physical well-being services, special needs services, and nutritional services to the children and families in Kent County.

Partnerships with the Michigan Department of Education and the Kent Intermediate School District have allowed our agency to provide full-day preschool services for most of our children. We were also able to open our first Infant-Toddler classrooms in four of our buildings.

As we continue into an uncharted school year, the likes which we have never seen, we are confident in our leadership. MaDonna Princer is entering her seventh year as Executive Director. The board is proud of how MaDonna and her staff have led the agency's response through the pandemic.

As our agency continues through the program year, I would like to thank all our devoted Head Start staff that make this possible especially during these tough and sometimes trying times. Our dedicated classroom teachers and teacher assistants make learning and every day experiences fun and enjoyable for all our children. Family advocates, bus drivers, custodial staff, food preparation staff and many others work hard to provide the consistent care and assistance that our families deserve. The dedicated members of the Parent Policy Council continue to help the agency make decisions that impact their families and the agency. We are also grateful for all our community



partners.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Head Start families and children that have chosen Head Start for Kent County for their child's education. There are many options for early childhood education in the West Michigan area, but, I believe there is none better than ours.

I am looking forward to another productive and outstanding year.

Sincerely,  
Rudy Gutierrez  
Board President

# Message from the Executive Director

The 2019-2020 school year has certainly brought about new challenges for us and the community. I don't think any of us could have imaged how our lives would change in the spring of 2020. This year has allowed HS4KC to showcase just how flexible and responsive we are to our changing community needs.

The 2019-2020 year began with opening our first Infant-Toddler classrooms in four of our buildings to create a 0-5 space for families with children across the early childhood age span. We were excited at the possibilities the Office of Head Start afforded us through the announcement of quality improvement funds. These funds allowed us to focus on trauma-informed care, and

further strengthen our program to meet the needs of our families and staff. As the COVID pandemic took hold, we had to make rapid decisions to keep children, families, and staff safe, all while continuing to provide HS4KC services at a time when they were needed most.

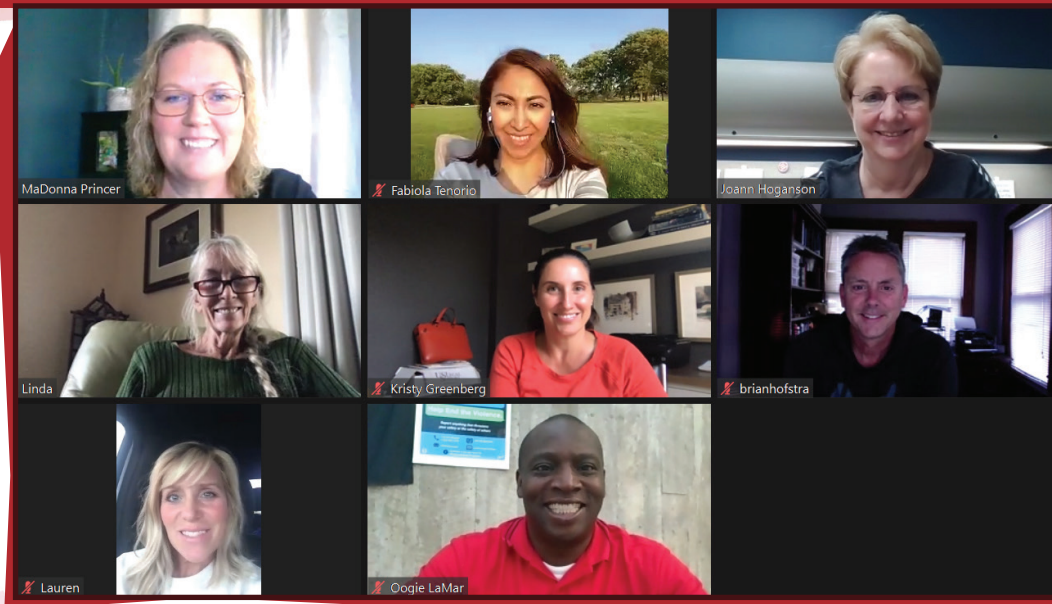
I am very proud of our team at HS4KC. I saw how they jumped into action to meet these needs, juggled their own family's needs, and learned just how flexible they can be. As this year comes to a close, we know we still have more to do. We will continue to do what is best for our community, staff, parents/families, and children. We will continue to take the lessons learned during the pandemic and enhance our services. Thank you for



taking time to learn a little bit about HS4KC. As I have been known to say over the last 6 months, please remember to give yourself and others grace.

Sincerely,  
MaDonna J. Princer  
Executive Director

# Board of Directors



**MaDonna Princer**  
**Linda Pickett**  
**Lauren Stanton**

Not Pictured:  
Tammy Smith

**Fabiola Tenorio**  
**Kristy Greenberg**  
**Oogie LaMar**

Rudy Gutierrez  
Dean Pacific

**Joann Hoganson**  
**Brian Hofstra**

Fredericka Brown  
Jessica Turk (2019)

# Parent Policy Council

Amber Taggart  
Bonnie Ingersoll  
Daniele Chandler  
Fabiola Tenorio  
Fredericka Brown  
Guadalupe Hernandez  
Ildi Talaga

Jackie Hernandez  
Jaylynn Yancy  
Kathleen Szarowicz  
Katie Medina-Rivera  
Lakeitha Walker  
Lianna Tagle  
Megan Ward

Ryan Cooper  
Savannah Nanninga-Jensen  
Stacy Robertson  
Wayne Hill  
Whitney Jarnegan  
Zamkhup Samte

*No picture available at this time*

# Mission

To deliver comprehensive services to low-income children five and under and their families, promoting their well-being and development.

# Vision

To strive to provide comprehensive services through a highly trained staff, current technology, innovative programming, and diverse community partnerships that will create a strong foundation for each child's future success.

# Core Values

Integrity  
Competence  
Professionalism  
Humanitarianism  
Commitment  
Respectfulness





# Table of Contents

Mission, Vision, & Core Values .....	4
Program At-A-Glance .....	6
Community Needs Assessment .....	8
Testimonials .....	10
Finances .....	12
Nutrition .....	14
Education .....	15
Parent, Family, and Community Engagement .....	18
CCI & Outreach .....	20
Health .....	22
Agency Wellness .....	23
Changing our Tune .....	24
Community Partners .....	26

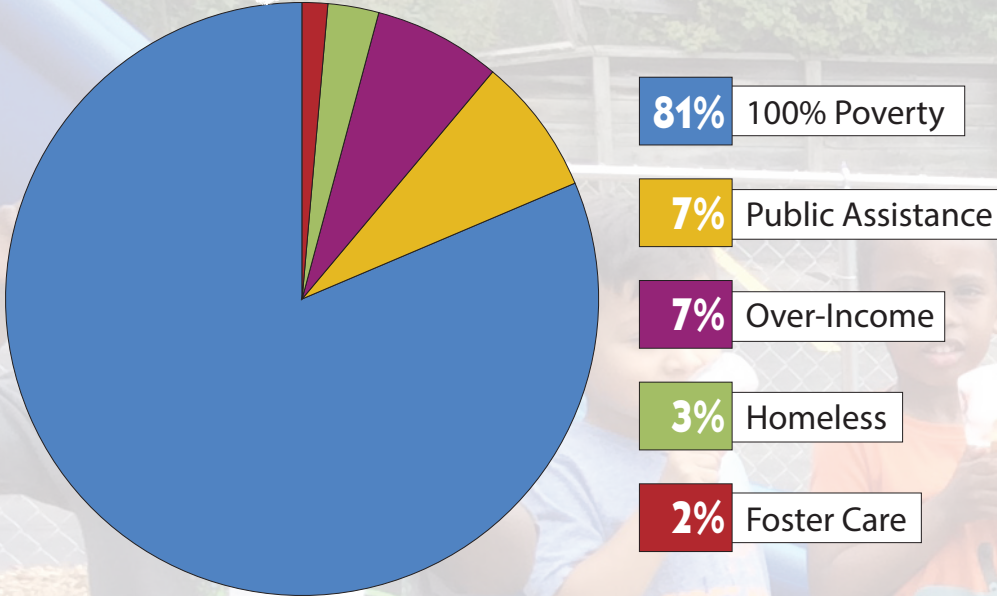
## Head Start Rocks!

The theme for our Annual Report is inspired by our Outreach theme from last year! Our activities were themed around both music and literal rocks!

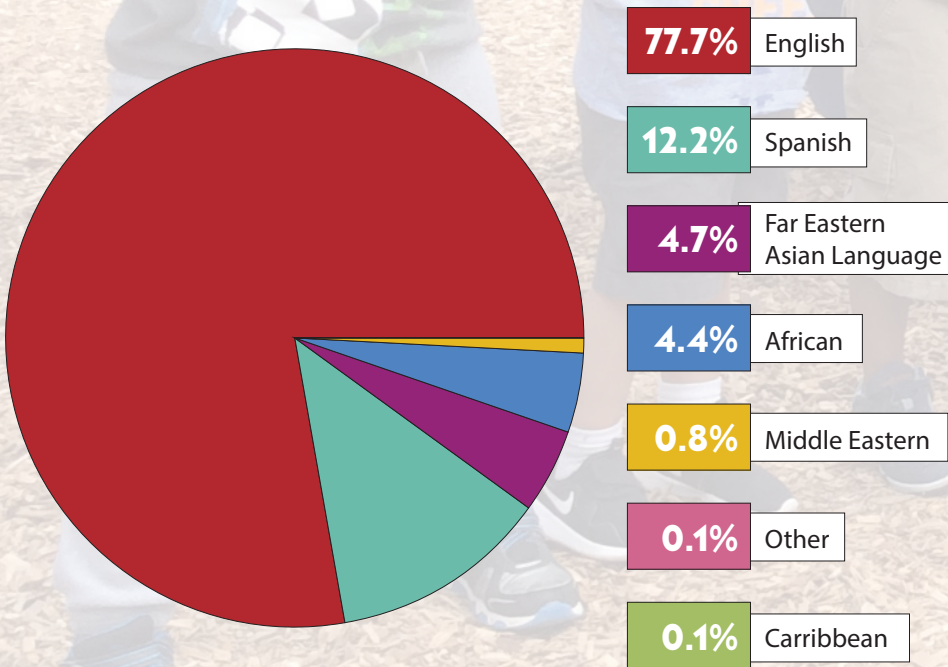
At our summer engagement activities, kids painted their own rocks to hide for others to find. Kids had the opportunity to play with parachutes, listen to book read-alongs, play with bubbles, and sing songs.

# Program At-A-Glance

## Eligibility Statistics



## Primary Language

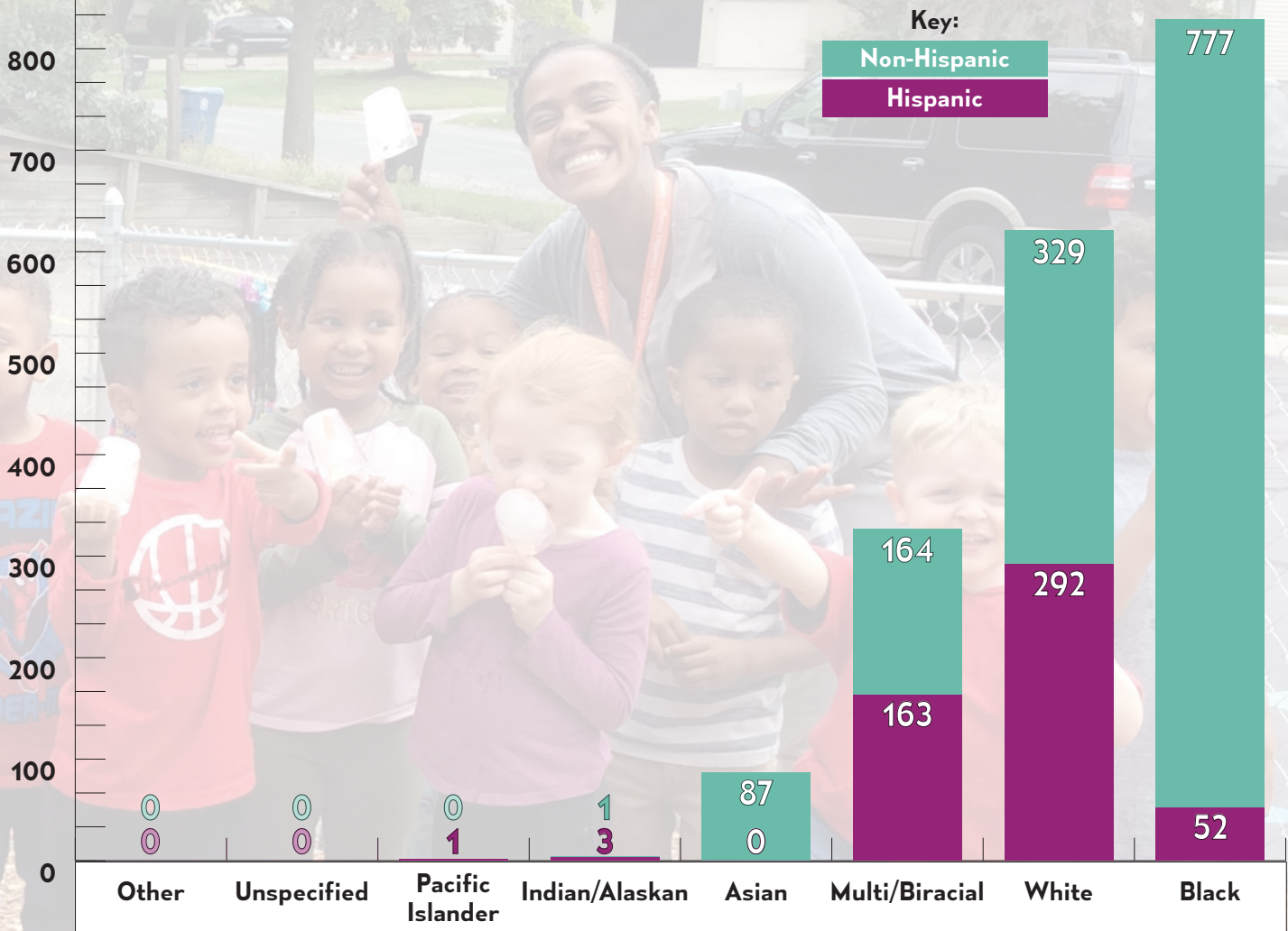


## The Languages We Speak

Amharic	Falam	Kiswahili	Nepali
Arabic	Hakachin	Kirundi	Samaritan
Arabic/Sudanese	Hakha	Matu	Somali
Burmese	Karen	Nepali	Swahili
Chaldean	Kinyarwanda	Mindat	Tedim



# Primary Racial Identity



Preschool



Home Visiting



Infant/  
Toddler

**Children Served**

1,601

218

47

**Sites**

13

N/A

4

**Classrooms**

88

N/A

4

**% of Children with Diagnosed Disabilities**

15%

17%

19%

# Community Needs Assessment

**16.5%** of children in Kent County under the age of 5 live in **Poverty**

52,729 children ages 0-5 live in Kent County (**8%** of the **total population**)

**2,744** children in 0-5 Kent County were in **Special Education**

1,691 children 0-5 in Kent County are **uninsured**, representing **3.2%** of the population

**12,121** children in **foster care** in Michigan





# Testimonials

## Jeri - Head Start Parent for the '19-20 year

I am a parent of a preschooler and have another child in Early Head Start. Head Start has stepped in and the bridge to success in my children's education. When my son was three-years-old, he was diagnosed with cancer. After being out of school for two months, Head Start reserved his spot and he was able to return to school after recovery. I urge you as a parent of a child with special needs to learn more about the Head Start program!



## Faith - Head Start Parent for the '19-20 year

Kristy Dyer accompanied me to Plainfield head start for Roman to start school. I figured it would go smoothly. There was an additional application process for the school and I felt if I was just by myself I don't know if Roman would have gotten into school. Kristy helped us with application process. She took pictures of us to remember and enjoy the time of transition which is an emotional time. I'm so thankful to home visiting program for transition us into preschool. It was the most helpful experience I've had with home visiting during a time when it's time for a child to start school for the very first time.



The transition process you never really know what to expect. The child is doing something completely different. Schedules are changing and starting new routines. I would say just trust in the process and give yourself and child lots of grace when it comes to dealing with changes.

For me, it was important Roman go to HS because all of his friends he grew up with go to same school. Socializing is such an important part of growth and building relationships that might even last a lifetime.

## Latoya - Head Start Parent over a 10 year span

I feel very fortunate to be able to share a few words on my experiences with Head Start. I have a 14-year-old son who attended Marywood Head Start in 2007 and the school was great! The teacher loved working with the kids and the communication with families was amazing. Over time, Marywood Head Start moved to what is now Plainfield Head Start and I feel like very little has changed. My youngest son has been at Plainfield for the last two years and has had a very hard time at the beginning of each year. The staff was great with him and after a few weeks he loved going to school! Throughout my years working with this program, I have had a great experience!



## Fabiola - Head Start Parent & Parent Policy Council President

One of the experiences I appreciate the most is the way Head Start supports the entire family during the transition from Home Visiting to Preschool. The Home Visitors do a great job in leading you every step of the way. They provide you with the opportunity to apply to the school and handle all the paperwork, answering your questions and providing you with any resources that you may need along the way. From suggestions on books to resources in dealing with our own anxieties as parents with having children leave for school at such a young age—it is reassuring to know that you are not alone in this process.

During the transition event, we get many questions answered regarding what a typical day for our children will look like in school. We get a daily schedule, and a teacher explains to us the activities that the children do in a day. A nutritionist talks about the food, meals, and snacks they will be having, a nurse talks about the importance of yearly checkups and dental visits, and the transportation department gives a presentation explaining how bussing works. The kids also get a chance to explore a school bus and the parents get to practice how to buckle them up. As always, the parents get the opportunity to ask questions.

Having my children attend preschool gave them a head start in their education. They knew everything they needed to know to start kindergarten. It also provided my family with an opportunity to engage with other families through Family Engagement Events and Parent Cafés. I've shared ideas and struggles, and have built wonderful relationships with teachers and other parents. Not to mention the countless amounts of materials, games, school-supplies, food, clothing, and books that I received for attending.



My husband volunteered to be a Watch Dog, and he loved it. It helped him understand how things work in school and what a day in school looks like for the children. He felt important, like a rock star.

As a member of Parent Policy Council, I have learned to be engaged and be an advocate for my children's education. My involvement has had a positive influence on my children. They know that everything I do is for them, and it helps them understand that their education is very important. It also makes them feel important, and boosts their self-confidence.

All the Head Start staff has been very supportive, friendly and kind. Thank you for making such a difference in my family's life.



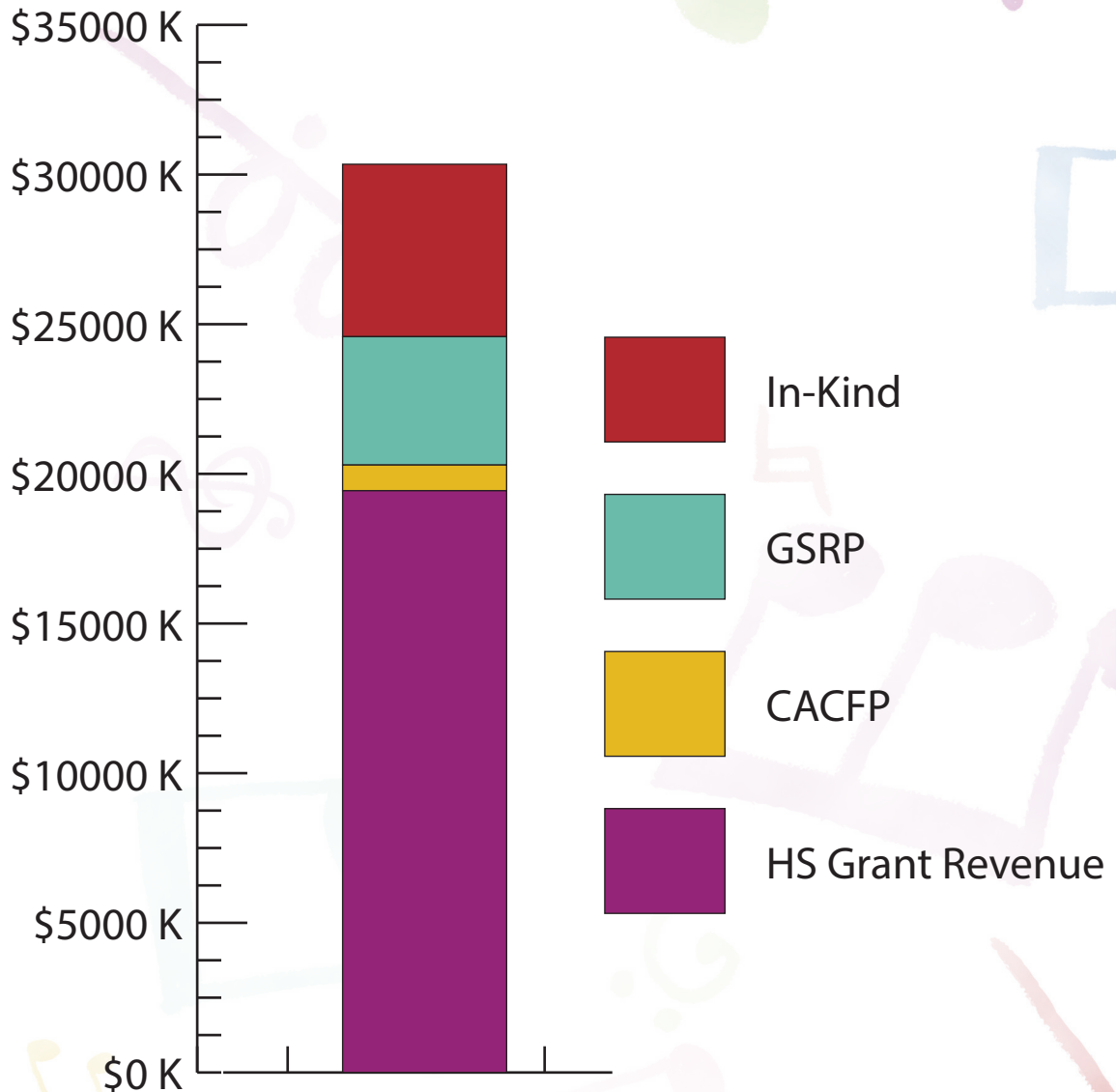
# Finances

## Audit

An independent audit, completed for the year ending December 31, 2019 by Vredeveld Haefner resulted in an unqualified opinion. The financial statement presented fairly, in all material aspects, of the financial position of Head Start for Kent County as of December 31, 2019. This audit provides assurance that the financial statements are free of material misstatement and reviews the internal control over financial reporting for compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements.

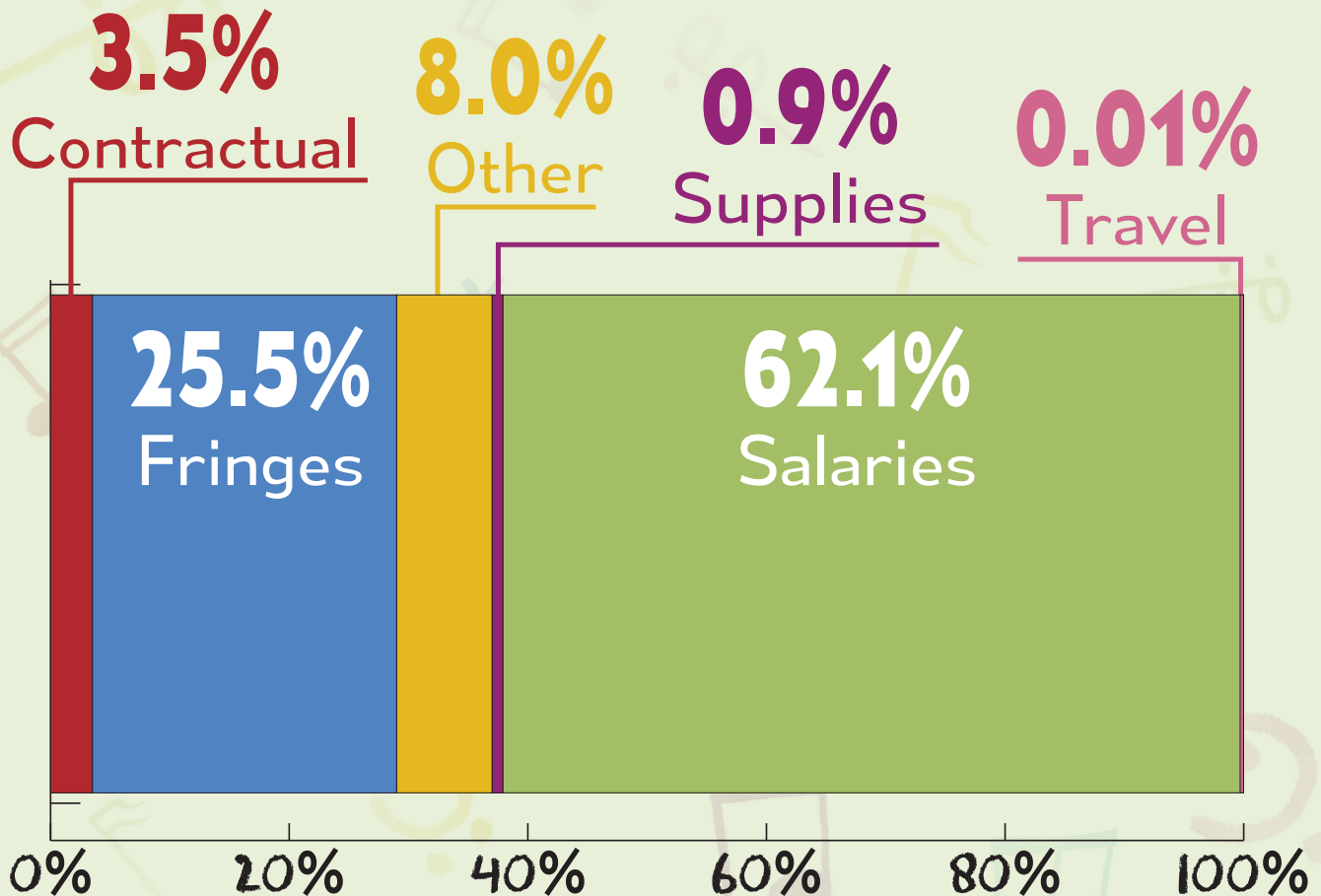
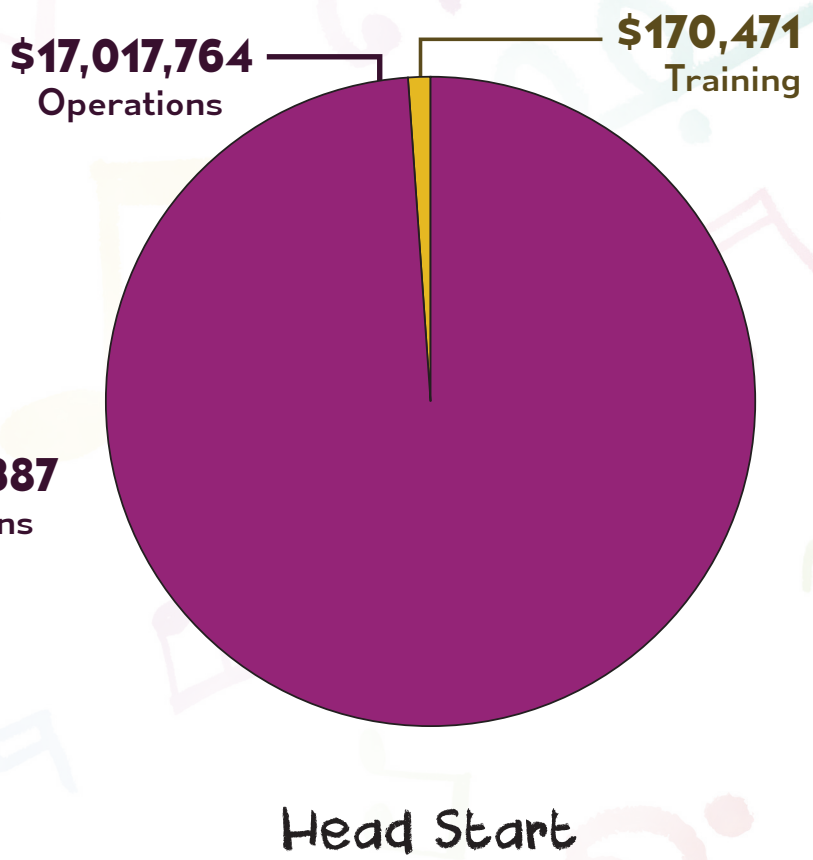
No deficiencies or instances of noncompliance were found. For a copy of the complete audit report and accompanying notes please contact our Controller, Nancy Priebe.

## 2019 Public and Private Funds



# Funding Notice:

## \$19,438,185



Expected 2020 Budget

Breakdown Chart



# NUTRITION

- We provide breakfast, lunch, and snacks to 1,426 preschool children and 36 Infant/Toddlers, Monday-Thursday.
- We create all recipes in-house and have a licensed commercial kitchen at our Central Office, where all our meals are produced.
- We provide in-home snacks for Early Head Start home visits and sponsored events.
- We provide special diets for children due to medically documented food allergies and/or intolerances.
- We provide once a week 'food experiences' where children get to explore new foods. They participate in the prep and servicing of the foods to explore the texture, shape, smell, and taste. Each food experience has a related mini-book, which incorporates the recipe, science, vocabulary, Zoo-Phonics, fun with textures, I'm Moving, I'm Learning, and books to read.

During the 2019-2020, we provided (on average monthly between August-March):

12,685 breakfasts

13,130 lunches

12,293 snacks



# Education

## School Readiness Goals



### Approaches to Learning

Children will show an interest in and persist to learn, create, and solve problems.



### Social and Emotional Development

Children will develop a positive sense of self and regulate their own emotions and behaviors.

Children will engage in and maintain positive relationships with adults and peers.



### Language and Literacy

Children will develop increasingly complex language for use in social conversations and as a basis for literacy skills.

Children will build and use varied vocabulary while identifying and discriminating smaller units of sounds in words; rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, and book appreciation.



### Cognition (Mathematics)

Children will explore and discover their own environments while developing an understanding of shapes, sizes, quantity and patterns.



### Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development

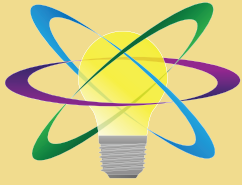
Children will demonstrate control of large and small muscles for movement including balancing and navigation skills.

# How do we Achieve School Readiness?

## Curricula We Use:

- Partners for a Healthy Baby for Pregnant Mothers
- The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers, & Twos
- The Creative Curriculum® for 3-year-old Classrooms
- Connect4Learning® for all 4-year-old Classrooms
- MyTeachingStrategies™ GOLD® to assess and support areas of development essential to school readiness.

Parents, Staff, & Community



**U.R.O.C.**

Understanding Readiness Outcomes Committee

## Understanding Readiness Outcomes Committee

This committee meets quarterly to review the progress that children and families are making towards our school readiness goals. This committee strives for representation of parents from every site, staff across each department, and key community members in the education field.



## Classroom Assessment Scoring System

An observation tool designed to assess teacher-child interactions rated on a 7-point scale ranging from low to high. CLASS is divided into three domains:

- **Emotional Support**
- **Classroom Organization**
- **Instructional Support**

The system uses research based insights to improve how teachers interact with children every day. CLASS assessment data is used to set goals while forming targeted coaching and professional development.

## Success Basics

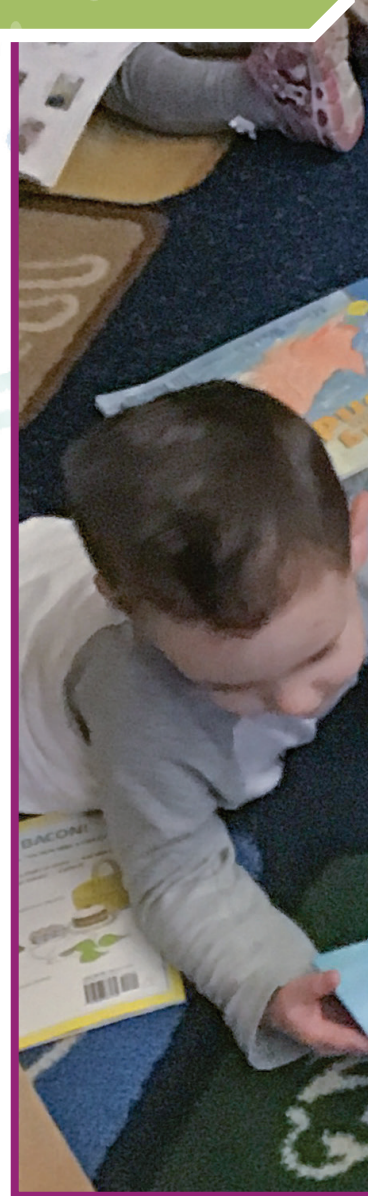
Head Start for Kent County joined with multiple child focused, local community organizations to launch Kent County Success Basics, an early childhood development awareness initiative that provides information for helping parents support their child's readiness for school in the first five years.

These strategies come from research conducted by the Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University. This information is integrated throughout our program.



We gave out over  
**900 books**  
to our families!!

We estimated how many books each site earned, rounded to the nearest 10. Every site had at least 20% of children earn a book!







## Healthy Reading Program

*As families turned in their Healthy Reading Charts, they recieved a book to add to their home library!*

**Comstock Park**

20 books!

**Alger**

60 books!

**Huntington Woods**

50 books!

**South Godwin**

120 books!

**Henry**

160 books!

**Springhill**

30 books!

**Home Visiting**

170 books!

**Rogers Lane**

120 books!

**Kentwood**

10 books!

**North Kent**

20 books!

**Sylvan/Leonard**

100 books!

**Plainfield**

20 books!

# Parent, Family, & Community Engagement

Our department helps lead the effort at the heart of what we do at Head Start: Partnering with our families as they prepare their children for Kindergarten and all about relationships -- positive, relationships.

We take a strengths-based approach that promotes equity, inclusiveness and cultural and linguistic responsiveness. We work with families and the community to support families in achieving their goals and overcoming obstacles on their way to school readiness. In this partnership, it's goal oriented, mutually respectful and play. And that is why we say that PFCE is everybody's business.

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approach that promotes equity, linguistic responsiveness. We work support families in achieving their their way to school readiness. In play. And that is why we say that

## Parent volunteers & Leadership development

Developing parents as leaders in big or small ways. Improves family and personal outcomes in numerous ways.

## Strengthening Families

An 8-week course designed for families to take together. Improves areas such as behaviors, communication, and routines.

## Fathering in 15

Meetings with fathers and father figures once a week covering 15 Fathering topics for 15 minutes each.

## Watch D.O.G.S

(Dads Of Great Students)

Male engagement & presence in schools increases student behaviors and outcomes.

## Parent Cafes

Small group discussions led by parents about various education and parenting topics.

## Non-Parent Volunteer

Community, family/friends and college students are encouraged to volunteer in the Head Start program in various capacities.

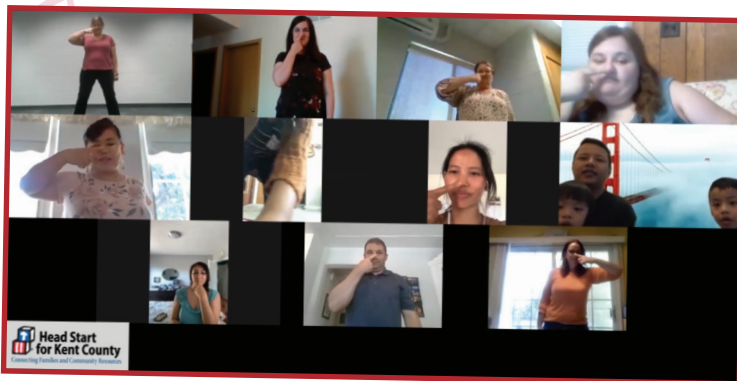
## Parent Policy Council

Policy Council is group of parents and community members working as a team to make decisions about the design and operation of the Head Start for Kent County program. Policy Council members are elected by the parents of children enrolled in the program. Members serve for one year teams, and can serve up to five years.



The purpose of the Policy Council is to empower parents in their children's education and development in coordination with the Head Start for Kent County Administration and the Board of Directors. Policy Council members bring ideas from site parents to the Policy Council meetings and from the Policy Council meeting to the site parents for discussion, representation and possible action. Policy Council gives parents a voice in the Head Start program.

## Summer Family Engagement Events



Summer Family Engagement Events are an opportunity for parents to engage in their child's education during the summer months. During the 2020 summer, the events were centered around education, special needs, health, nutrition and parent leadership. We were able to have a greater reach this year through posting on social media.

# CCI & Outreach

We strive to ensure we look at our agency's practices with the lens of **C**ultural **C**ompetency and **I**nclusion (CCI). Our department's philosophy is to ensure each individual feels valued and values others. We focus on valuing our staff to staff, staff to children, and staff to family relationships.

Strategic Outreach efforts primary focus is communication and outreach within our agency and with our stakeholders.



## Professional Learning Opportunity

### *"The Danger of a Single Story"*

Early 2020, we used Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "The Danger of a Single Story" Ted Talk to explore how our perceptions may impact our interactions, and we used critical reflective activities to help to sharpen our skills.

A large overview of the topic was brought to all staff in January, and three breakout sessions continued in January and February. The topic was something that everyone could relate to and received an overwhelmingly positive response from participants. We look forward to continuing this meaningful conversation to improve how we interact with each other and those we serve.

## CCI Toolkit

### *Social Justice and Equity Resources*

In agreement with NHSA and MHSA's stance for solidarity and as change agents in the leadership for Black Lives Matter and social justice for everyone, HS4KC also wrote a statement in June 2020 aligning with these interests, particularly focusing on children and families that have been victims of oppressions for years. One immediate action we took was to create a list of social justice and equity resources for our leadership to begin individual and collective learning. We will continue to build upon this toolkit to engage in meaningful, authentic conversations that will lead to transformation for both our staff and families



## Employment

### HireReach

An initiative designed to help West Michigan employers meet their talent demands using an evidence-based selection process.

Goals are to increase workforce diversity, reduce first year turnover, and increase quality of hire.

We will pilot two job families utilizing our new selection tools and evidence-based selection process during the upcoming program year.



### HS4KC Job Fairs

- Two successful job fairs – one in December 2019 and one early March 2020.
  - On the spot interviews and job offers were made.
  - Childcare was provided to help remove barriers.

### Website Redesign

Improved **Site Navigation** and added quick access tabs for high-traffic tools and pages.

Updated our **Careers** page, including promoting reasons to work for our agency and bringing the application tool up to modern standards.

Added a section to provide easier access to valuable **Resources** for our families and our community.

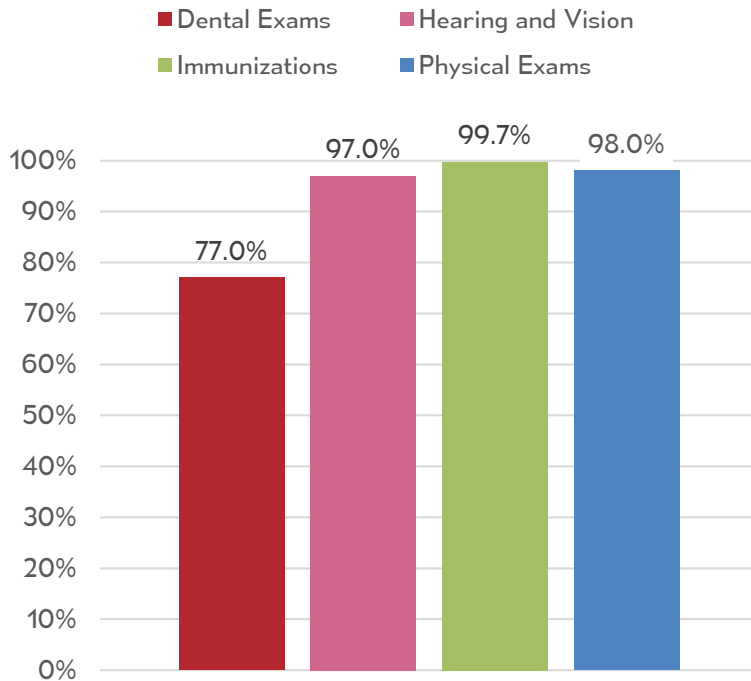
Added a **Calendar** for important school year dates and events hosted by HS4KC and our community partners.



# Health

Head Start for Kent County emphasizes the importance of ongoing preventive care and early detection of health problems. We offer services that support families and strengthen communities so that children are healthy, safe, and ready to learn.

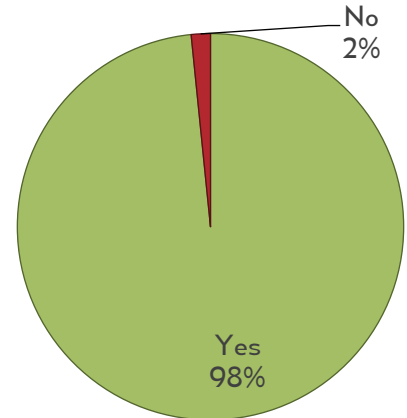
## Preschool



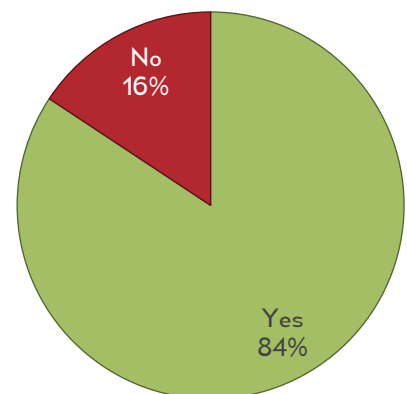
Children newly enrolled to the program are required to have their hearing and vision screened within 45 days of starting. HS4KC partners with the Kent County Health Dept (KCHD) so children are screened either by a KCHD Hearing/Vision technician or an Agency Nurse.

## Students with an ongoing source of continuous, accessible care:

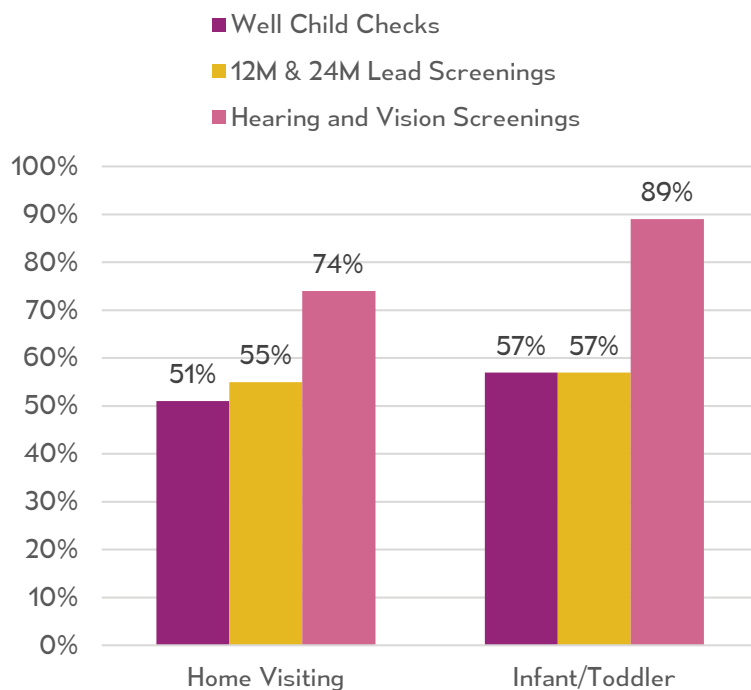
### Medical



### Dental



## Early Head Start





# Agency Wellness

**Wellness** [wel·nis] *Noun*

1. The quality or state of being healthy in body and mind, especially as the result of deliberate effort.



## Beginning of the Year Event

The theme was Field Day! We had a variety of games and activities for everyone to enjoy. It was a wonderful welcome back event!

## Orange Frog

Staff developed their workplace positivity through the "**Orange Frog Workshop: Leading Positive Performance™**", an on-site experiential workshop that teaches the science of sustainable peak performance.

## Hold It for the Holidays

We had 81 participants this year--the highest number yet! 70% of those that participated maintained or gained no more than 2 pounds during the holidays!

## Jeans Stickers

Staff had the opportunity to wear jeans once a week when they participated in wellness activities (as aligned with the dress code policy).

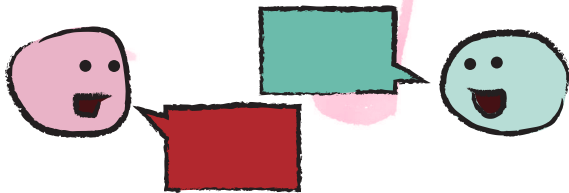
# Changing our Tune

## Our Agency's Response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 crisis created new challenges for our staff and families. Here are some of the ways that our agency adapted and responded to the changing needs of our community.

### Staying in Touch

Percentage of enrolled children who were in communication with HS4KC staff



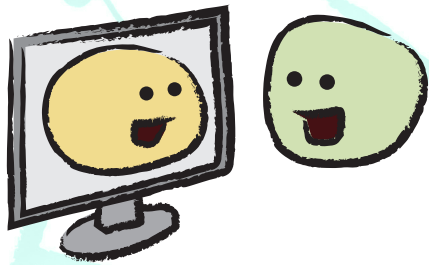
**%96.57**  
Preschool



**%100**  
Home Visiting



**%100**  
Infant/Toddler



### Going Virtual

Families who participated in a virtual Family Engagement Event at least once

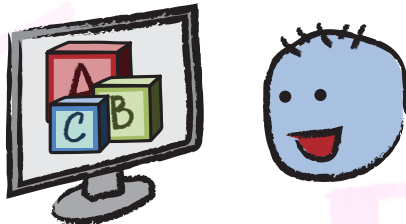
**25** Total Events

**77** Cumulative Participants

**26** Total Families

### Distance Learning Participation

All families who at any point said yes for any of the educational questions



**95.49 %**

Families who had a new emergency need



**251**  
Preschool

**32**  
Home Visiting

**16**  
Infant/Toddler

New emergency needs we provided resources for



- Food
- Shelter
- Clothing





ABC Group  
Technical Products Group  
GO GREEN



Community Partners

- American Red Cross of Greater Grand Rapids
- Arbor Circle Corporation
- Art Prize
- Aquinas College
- Baby Scholars
- Bethany Christian Services
- Calvin Church
- Calvin College
- Camp Fire West Michigan
- Catholic Charities
- Central Michigan University
- Cherry Street Health Services
- Children's Assessment Center
- Community Rebuilders
- D.A. Blodget - St. John's
- Department of Human Services
- Early On of Kent County
- ELNC
- Family Futures
- First Steps
- Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park
- Gaines Pediatric Dentistry
- Goodwill Industries of West Michigan
- Grand Rapids Children's Museum
- Grand Rapids Community College
- Grand Rapids Housing Commission
- Grand Rapids Public Library
- Grand Valley State University
- Grandville Pediatric Dentistry
- Great Start Collaborative
- Habitat for Humanity of Kent County
- Health Net of West Michigan
- Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan
- Help Pregnancy Crisis Center
- Hispanic Center of West Michigan
- Home Repair Services
- ICCF
- In the Image
- Kent County Health Department
- Kent District Library
- Kent Intermediate School District (Kent ISD)
- Kent ISD Adult Education
- Kent Vocational Options
- Kingma Pediatric Dentistry
- LINC
- Literacy Center of West Michigan
- Local Educational Agencies (LEAs)
- Mel Trotter Ministries
- Michigan Head Start - State Collaboration Office
- Michigan Head Start Association
- Michigan State University
- Michigan Works
- Mind Meets Music
- MOMS Program (Spectrum Health)
- Network 180
- Pine Rest Mental Health Services
- Pregnancy Resource Center
- Roosevelt Park Ministries
- Safe Haven
- Safe Kids of Greater Grand Rapids
- Salvation Army
- Samaritas/Lutheran Social Services of Michigan
- Senior Neighbors, Inc.
- South Ends community Outreach Ministries (SECOM)
- Sparta Adult Education
- Special Olympics Young Athletes
- Spectrum Health
- Strong Beginnings
- The Other Way Ministries
- United Church Outreach Ministry (UCOM)
- United Way
- University of Michigan
- Welcome Home Baby (Health Net of West Michigan)
- Western Michigan University School of Social Work
- Women's Resource Center
- Wyoming Public Schools Special Education
- YMCA



**Head Start  
for Kent County**