



Head Start for Kent County

Connecting Families and Community Resources



2020-2021 Annual Report

Message from the Board President

Dear Reader:

2020/21 has been an extraordinarily difficult school year. As we look back, we marvel at the fact that we made it through so well. We have had to be creative and innovative in our methodology and flexible with our students and families. Yet, looking back, we can say that it was a very good year with many successes for our young students and their families.

The Head Start staff and students showed amazing resilience as they adjusted to the limitations placed on all of us because of the pandemic. The students and their families were called upon to learn differently, and the need for parent involvement was greater than ever before. Thank you to all those parents who went above and beyond to help their little ones learn using unconventional methods. Thanks so much to those teachers and assistants who had to bend and adapt to new ways of teaching in order to make sure our children got the education they needed to prepare them for their futures. A special thanks to the support staff – too many to name all of you – who made sure the work got done, even when it was hard and maybe even risky. You all are heroes in my book!

It has been a privilege to be associated with Head Start and to invest my time and energy in an agency that makes sure that every young child is ready to learn, grow, and thrive. The parents, the staff, the administration, and the children – you are all shining examples of what can be accomplished with dedication and hard work.

Sincerely,

Joann Hoganson, MSN, RN

Director of Community Wellness at the Kent County Health Department

Head Start for Kent County – Executive Board Chair



Message from the Executive Director

Dear Community:

Wow, what a year it has been! This past year has brought many challenges and many successes. I don't think any of us could have imagined or predicted facing a crisis like the one we were all trying (and still trying) to navigate in our community, program and personal lives. We have learned how to pivot on a dime, be flexible, give grace, come together, prioritize what's really important, and keep going. We would not have been able to do this without our amazing staff, families in our program, and the community at large.

We appreciate each and every person who has been a part of this past year and helped us to deliver the high quality, individualized, comprehensive services we are known for. We continue to stay committed to our mission and look forward to the 2021-2022 school year.

Sincerely,

MaDonna J. Princer



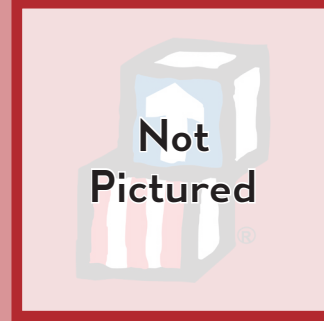
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Linda Pickett
Zamkhup Samte
Kathleen Szarowicz
Lianna Tagle
Fabiola Tenorio



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

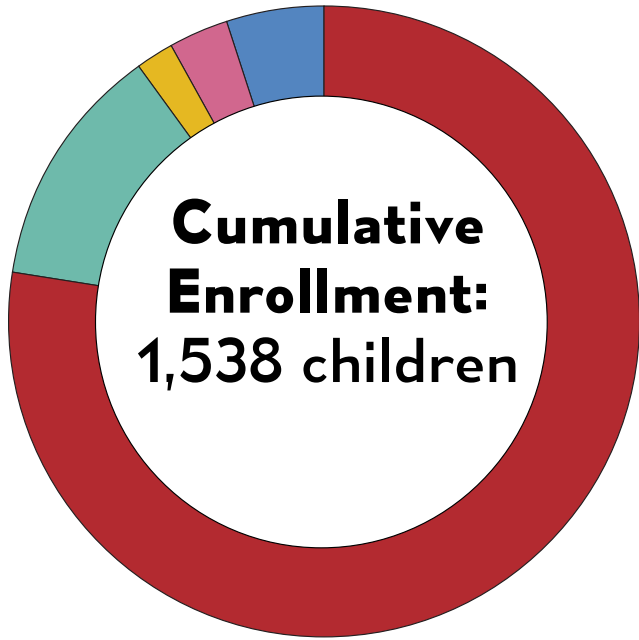




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Program At-A-Glance



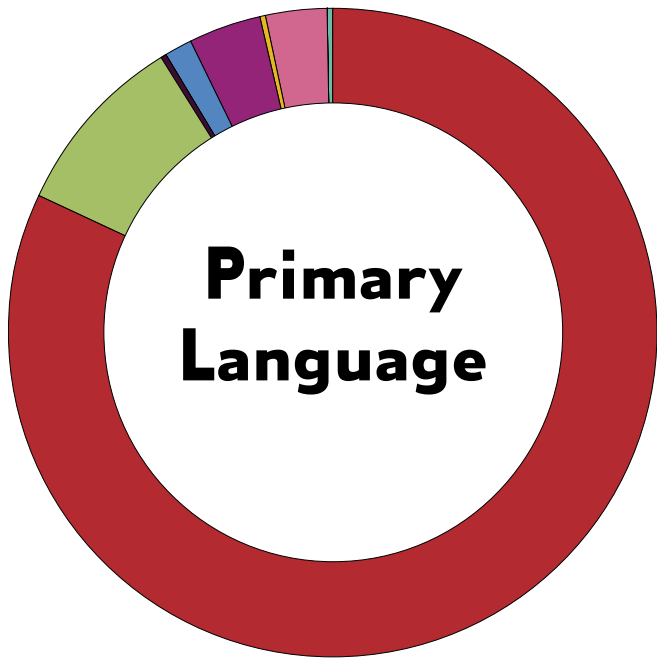
- Over-Income (4.9%)
- Homeless (3.1%)
- Foster Care (2.0%)
- Public Assistance (12.5%)
- 100% Poverty (77.7%)

In Kent County, we served:

6.9% of children age 0-5 living in foster care.

4.6% of children age 0-4 experiencing homelessness.

26% of children age 0-5 living below the poverty line.



- American Sign Language (0.07%)
- Middle Eastern (1.30%)
- African (3.10%)
- Central American (0.13%)
- European (0.13%)
- Spanish (9.36%)
- Far Eastern Asian Language (3.70%)
- English (82.00%)
- Other (0.13%)





Preschool



Home Visiting



Infant/Toddler

Children and Pregnant Women Served

1,274

215

49

Sites

13

-

4

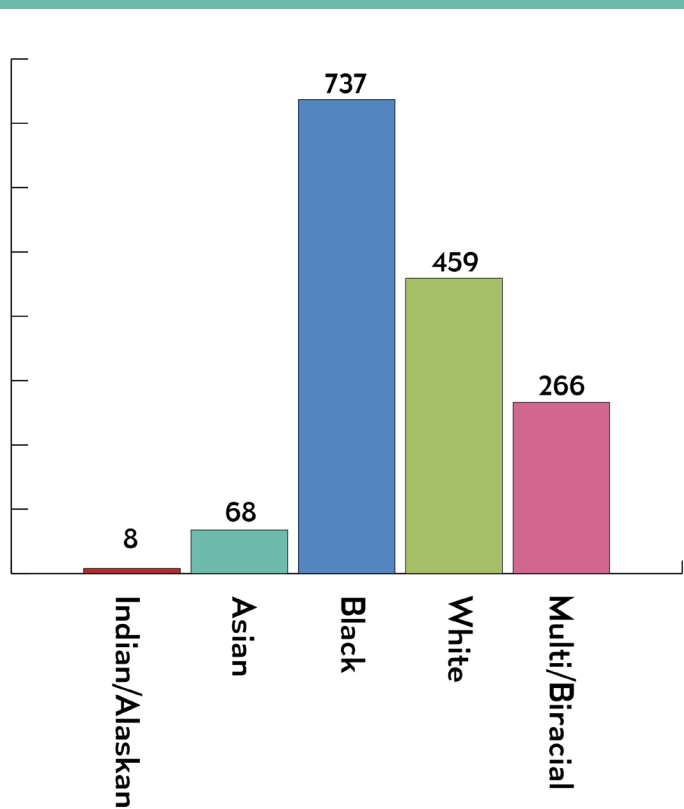
% of Children with Diagnosed Disabilities

14%

15%

12%

Racial Identities

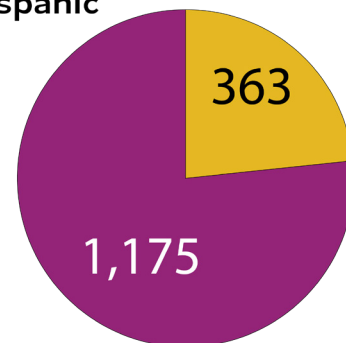


What's the difference between "Race" and "Ethnicity"?

Race is defined as "a category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical traits." The term ethnicities is more broadly defined as "large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background."

Ethnic Identities

■ Non-Hispanic
■ Hispanic



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, representing **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

Of the **1,538** **children and pregnant women** served by Head Start for Kent County:

47

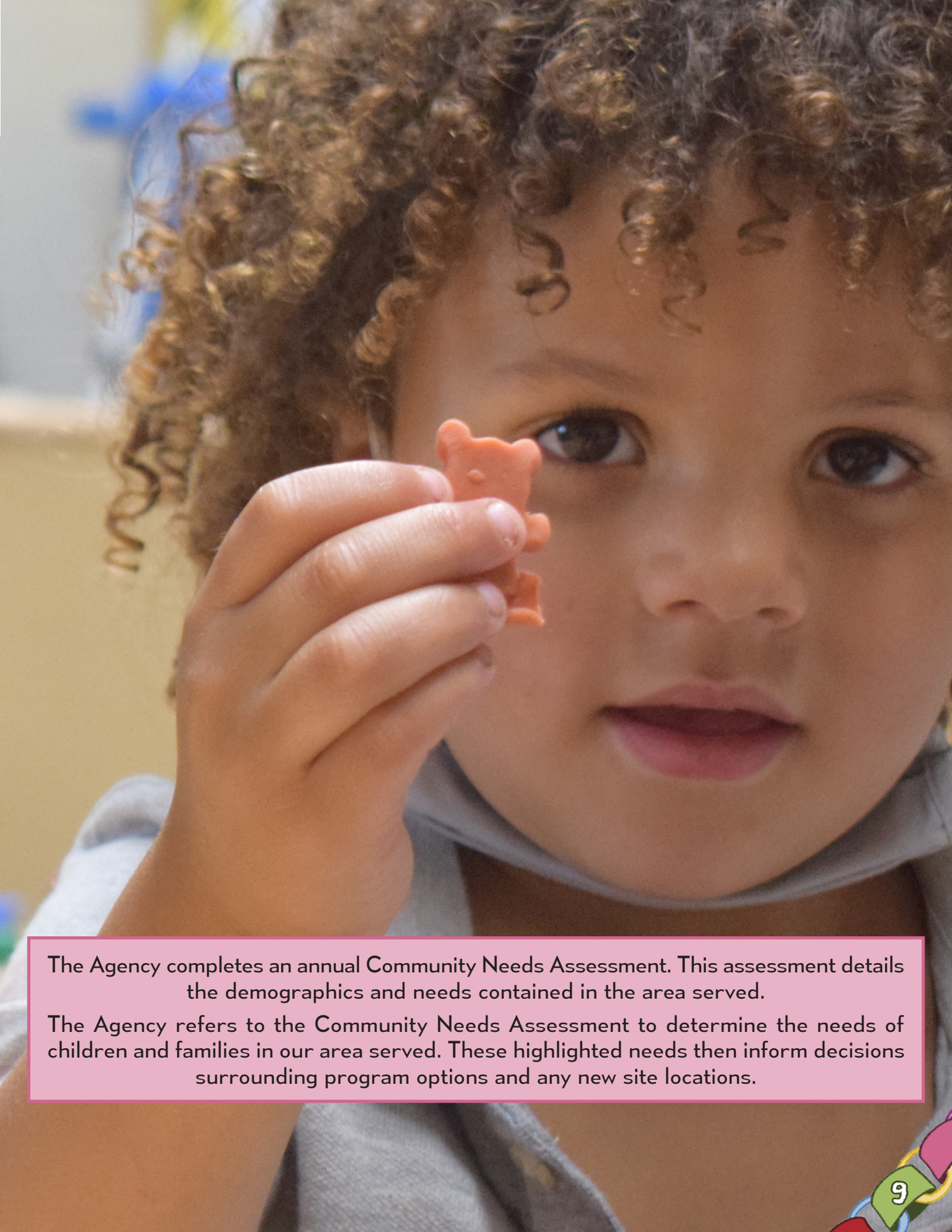
were experiencing homelessness

29

were in foster care

213

had a diagnosed disability



The Agency completes an annual Community Needs Assessment. This assessment details the demographics and needs contained in the area served.

The Agency refers to the Community Needs Assessment to determine the needs of children and families in our area served. These highlighted needs then inform decisions surrounding program options and any new site locations.

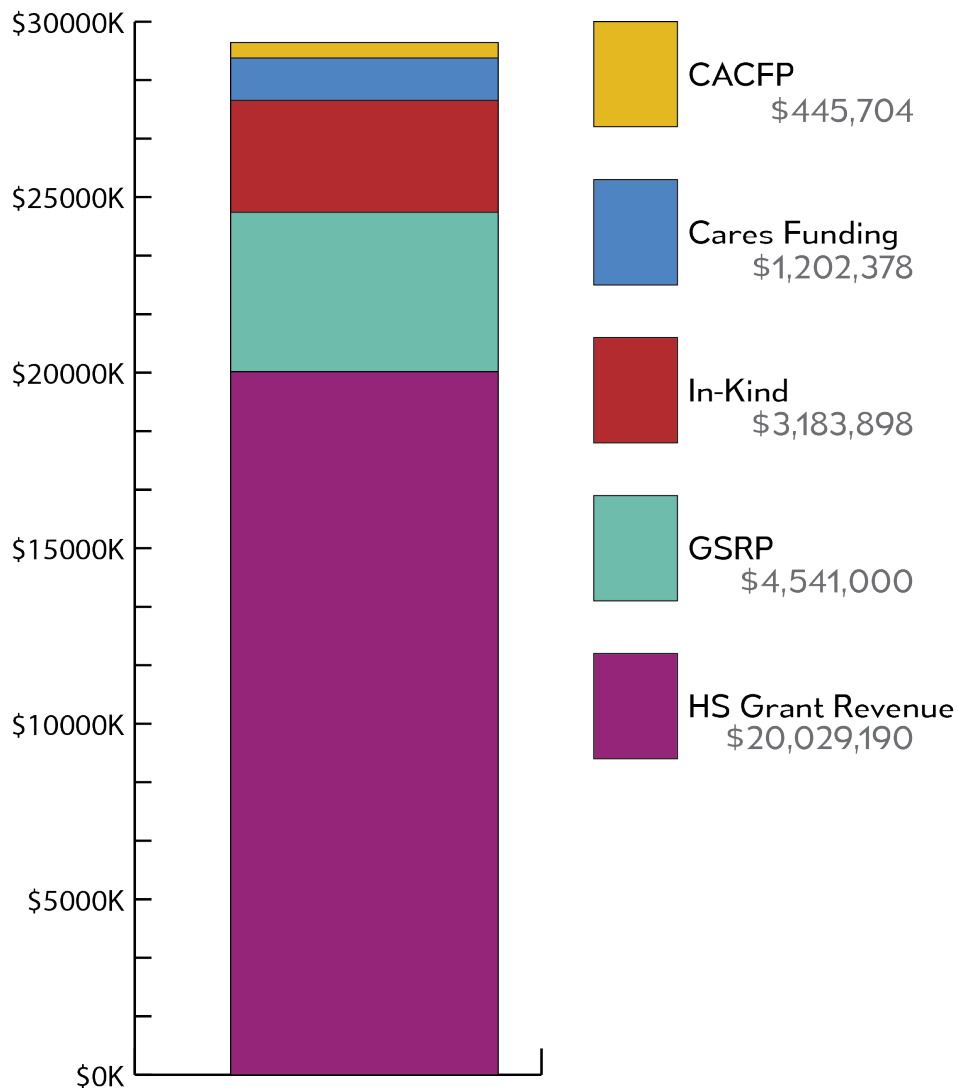
Finances

Audit

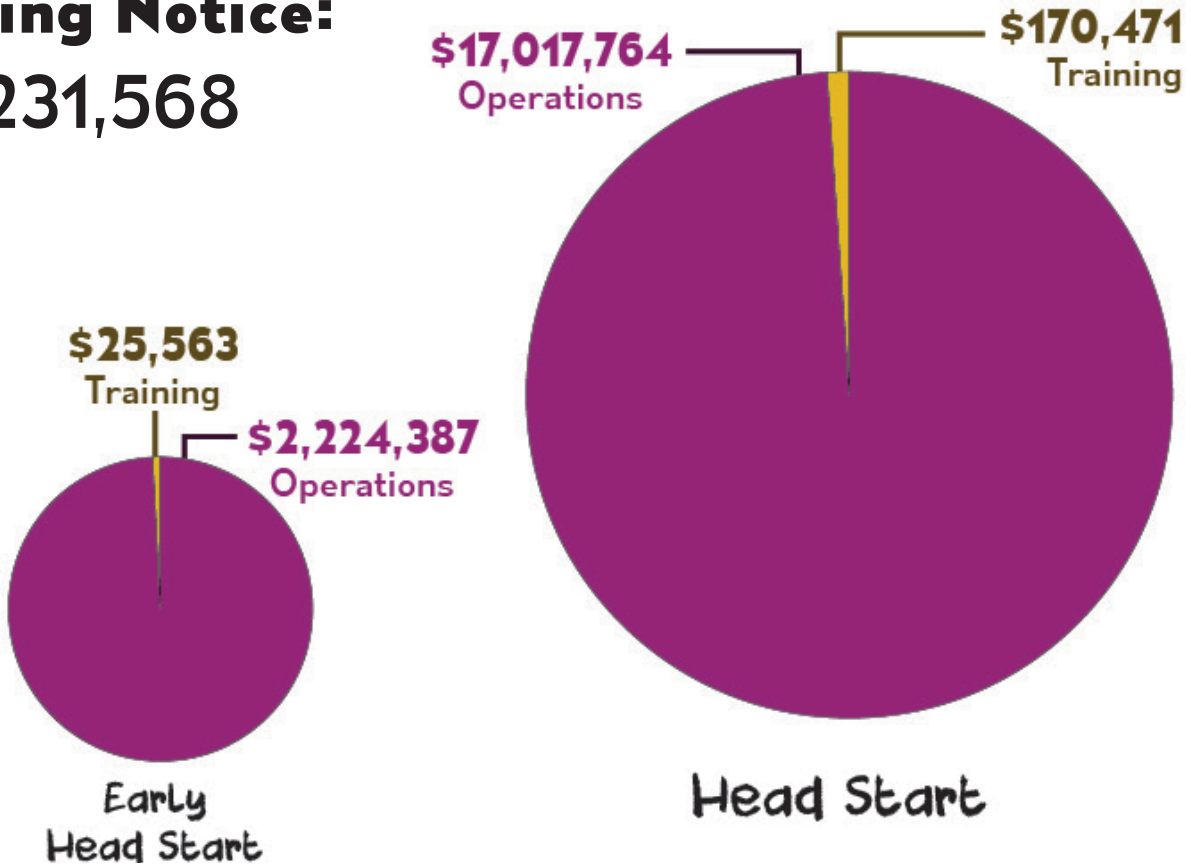
An independent audit, completed for the year ending December 31, 2020 by Vredeveld Haefner resulted in an unqualified opinion. The financial statement presented fairly, in all material aspects, of the financial position of Head Start for Kent County as of December 31, 2020. This audit provides assurance 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.

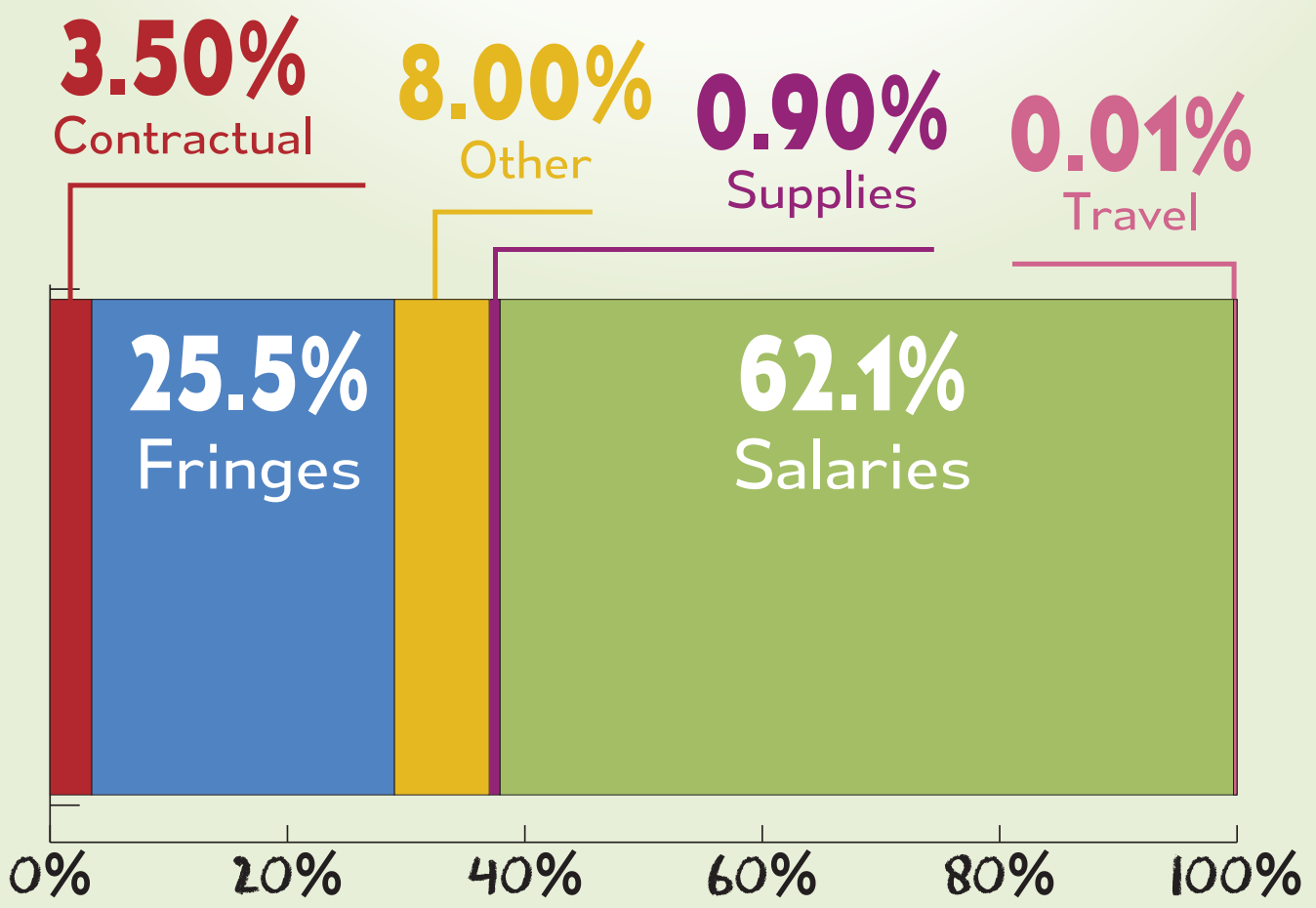
2020 Public and Private Funds



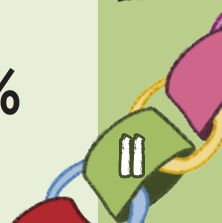
Funding Notice: \$21,231,568



Expected 2021 Budget



Breakdown Chart



CCI and Outreach

Cultural Competency and Inclusion

We strive to ensure we look at our agency's practices with the lens of Cultural Competency and Inclusion (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.

Learning & Development Opportunities

"Third Space Leadership" - Julian Newman

Julian Newman from Culture Creative served as the keynote speaker at our January 2021 All Agency PD and discussed the need for 3rd Space Leadership (utilizing Empathy, Humility, Understanding, Compassion, Faith, and Love to look at issues from a different vantage point). We were challenged to deal with problems and challenges from beyond polarization and to maintain a 3rd position - SOLUTION! He was able to take the vision of CCI to bring healing, unity, and a forward-focus approach to our agency after the monumental year of 2020!



21-DAY **EQUITY** CHALLENGE

Equity Challenges

21-Day Equity Challenges were taken individually amongst the agency, as well as group discussions facilitated by our CCI Manager, including the Board, Transportation, and Health departments. We look forward to continuing these challenges to exercise our abilities to foster self-awareness and social change!

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Assessments

Our agency is now certified through the Cultural Intelligence Center to facilitate 'Developing Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Workshops' and CQ Profile Debriefs to improve our ability to work effectively across culture! We began our self-assessments and workshops with the leadership team summer of 2021 and look ahead to scaling the assessments and identification of cultural values across the agency for the next program year.



Strategic Outreach

Strategic Outreach efforts primarily focus on communication and outreach, both within our agency and with our stakeholders.

Video Series

We created two video series to help promote our agency and inform the community about what we do!

In our "Meet the Managers" series, our department managers introduce themselves and share what they do and why it's important to our agency.

In our "Straight from the Staff" series, a member of our HR team introduces a staff person. That staff person then shares their experiences at the agency and why they're excited to work for HS4KC!



Wimee Wednesday

Head Start for Kent County has paired up with Kent District Library, Grand Rapids Public Schools, and other great community partners to bring you Wimee the Robot!

Wimee is a fun, lovable robot that inspires kids to learn through creativity! Wimee's web series, called "Wimee's Words", is hosted live on our Facebook page each Wednesday at 4pm! You can find Wimee and more at <https://wimee.tv>.

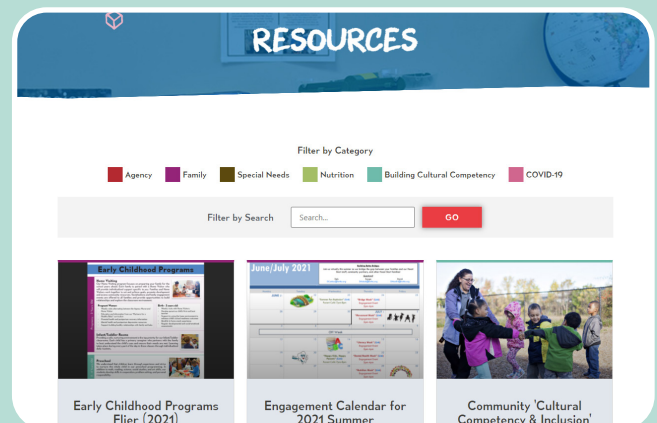


Website Updates

Over the last year, we have added many excellent resources to our website, including many racial and cultural related resources for our families and community.

We also created a page to house all of our COVID related information in one place: <https://hs4kc.org/covid-updates/>.

This webpage shows our current number of school associated cases, a list of COVID resources, a list of safety procedures used by HS4KC and recommended for parents, and our COVID-specific news.



Nutrition

In partnership with classroom staff and the transportation department, we provided:

- Take home meals and distance learning meals via delivery.
- Food resources throughout the school year to meet any food insecurity issues.
- Special diets for children due to medically documented food allergies and/or intolerances.

Between August and March of the 2020-2021 program year, we provided in seat meals as take home meals or as distance learning meals. Our monthly provided average was:

86,978 breakfasts

87,493 lunches

78,640 snacks

Operations

Transportation

Our Transportation team provides Head Start families with comfort and trust by providing dependable service each day, transporting children safely and efficiently. Even with the school year looking completely different, our drivers didn't let it stop them from serving our community. On days where seats could not be filled with children due to remote learning, drivers loaded up their buses with nutritional lunches to deliver to students. Because of Head Start bus drivers, our children start and end each day with a smile.

- Head Start for Kent County drivers delivered 18,212 breakfasts, lunches, and snacks on remote learning days
- 670 Head Start students boarded our buses this year to attend school
- The average time spent on a Head Start bus was 44 minutes – surpassing Head Start's performance standard of a maximum 60 minutes per ride!
- Kent County is the largest Head Start Transportation Department in Michigan

Facilities

This year, more than ever, preventing the spread of germs through sanitation and cleanliness is vital for a healthy environment. Our custodians and maintenance staff went above and beyond this year to ensure our Head Start schools could remain a safe place for children and staff. On remote learning days, custodians used medical grade Ultraviolet lights which use a short-wave germicidal light to properly disinfect and deep clean classrooms to battle COVID-19 germs, so that classroom seats remained full with children ready to learn and grow.

- 20 UV light units were used to disinfect classrooms
- 62 Head Start classrooms cleaned - In addition to our Head Start classrooms, our staff also clean rooms for Wyoming Public Schools and Great Start in shared sites
- 700 work orders completed by Facilities staff through the 2020-21 school year
- 93 safety concern work orders completed



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.

Learning Models

Preschool

Our Preschool classrooms provided the following options:

Distance Learning

Up to 12 students with 1 teacher; 4 days of virtual learning via Seesaw and two options for a Synchronous Learning Zoom meeting; 4 instructional videos each day.

Home Based

90 minute socially-distanced outdoor home visit and virtual group socializations each week; families were provided with weekly guided learning plans to carry out at home.

Hybrid

(Offered until March 1)

Up to 16 students with 1 Teacher and 1 Associate Teacher/Teacher Assistant; up to 12 children on Mondays and Tuesdays and up to 12 children on Thursdays and Fridays; Distance Learning via Seesaw; 3 instructional videos on the two days that children were not in class.

4 Day/Week In-Person

(Offered after March 1)

Up to 16 students on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays with 1 Teacher and 1 Associate Teacher/Teacher Assistant; parents could also send their child for a portion of those available days.

Infant Toddlers

Our Infant Toddler classrooms operated a 4 day per week, in-person format.

Home Visitors

Our Home Visitors provided socially-distanced or virtual home visits and virtual group socializations.

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.

School Readiness



Parent Gauge

Parent Gauge is implemented twice a year and is a tool designed to measure family outcomes. It allows us to measure PFCE efforts and to identify areas of strengths and improvement.



Teaching Strategies GOLD™

Teaching teams at HS4KC collect ongoing assessment data utilizing Teaching Strategies GOLD™ which is a reliable assessment of a child's status and progress, including direct assessment, structured observations, checklists, and other tools. This assessment is a proven method for identifying each child's areas of strength and weaknesses and educational gains.

CLASS

An observation tool designed to assess teacher-child interactions rated on a 7-point scale ranging from low to high.

The system uses research based insights to improve how teachers interact with children every day.

CLASS assessment data is used in our center-based and infant/toddler classrooms to set goals while forming targeted coaching and professional development.



Success Basics

HS4KC integrates Kent County Success Basics throughout our program.

This early childhood development awareness initiative provides information for helping parents support their child's readiness for school in the first five years.



Professional Learning
Community Meetings

Creative
Curriculum

"Connect 4 Learning"
Curriculum

Classroom
Assessment
Scoring System

Success
Basics

Parent
Gauge



Teaching
Strategies
Gold™

"Understanding
Readiness Outcomes"
Committee

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

PFCE takes a strengths-based approach that promotes equity, inclusiveness and cultural and linguistic responsiveness. We work in partnership and relationship with families and the community. We strive to support families in achieving their goals and overcoming obstacles on their way to school readiness.

In the 2020-2021 School Year in Kent County we served 1,149 Head Start families and 189 Early Head Start families.

PFCE department develops parents as leaders through various volunteer opportunities. These opportunities are listed below.



Parent Policy Council

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.

The council is comprised of parents, community members and Head Start staff. They work together as a team to make decisions about the design and operation of the Head Start for Kent County program. Policy Council officers are elected by the parents of children enrolled in the program. Members serve one year terms and can serve up to five years.

Members take ideas between site parents and council meetings for representation and possible action. The Policy Council gives parents a voice in the Head Start program.

During the 2020-2021 school year, we had 32 parent representative spots, 1 community representative, and 1 Board member.

Family Needs

Family Advocates (FAs) at the sites worked diligently to ensure that the emergency needs of our HS4KC families were met.

Our Outcomes Department assisted us in growing in this area allowing us to better support the agency. The FAs also helped provide various resources to the families to support other needs as well as family goals.

**Total
Emergency
Needs Met:**

Preschool:
99.7%

Early Head Start:
98.6%

Testimonials

Jennifer - Head Start Parent & PPC Secretary

Kent County Head Start has proven to be very instrumental in support of my child's early learning and development. I am grateful for the strong initiative that Head Start placed on helping my family connection to a wide variety of resources. Head Start is constantly growing in every area that matches a secure, stable, and healthy home environment to the early education needs of families.



Mandria - Head Start Parent

I am a parent counsel member at Comstock Park Head Start and a mother of a 4 year old girl who also goes to that same school. Head start has been there for my family since the beginning of my daughter starting and that was this past year. Even though they had a little bit of all three: hybrid, virtual and online; they have been communicating with me about my daughter's progress and the school update. They also have been helpful in providing clothing and food for us when my family is in need; when I was looking for another place to move, they were really helpful in taking their time to help me find resources and places to look into. I adore the staff having ambition in loving the children and actually paying close attention to their needs. Instead of teaching them for a paycheck. My daughter grew a good relationship with the staff where she comes home telling good stories from. My daughter and I can't wait until next year when she goes into the 4s classes to gain more skills. We will be sad to leave the following year for kindergarten though.



Shelly - Head Start Parent & PPC Membership Coordinator

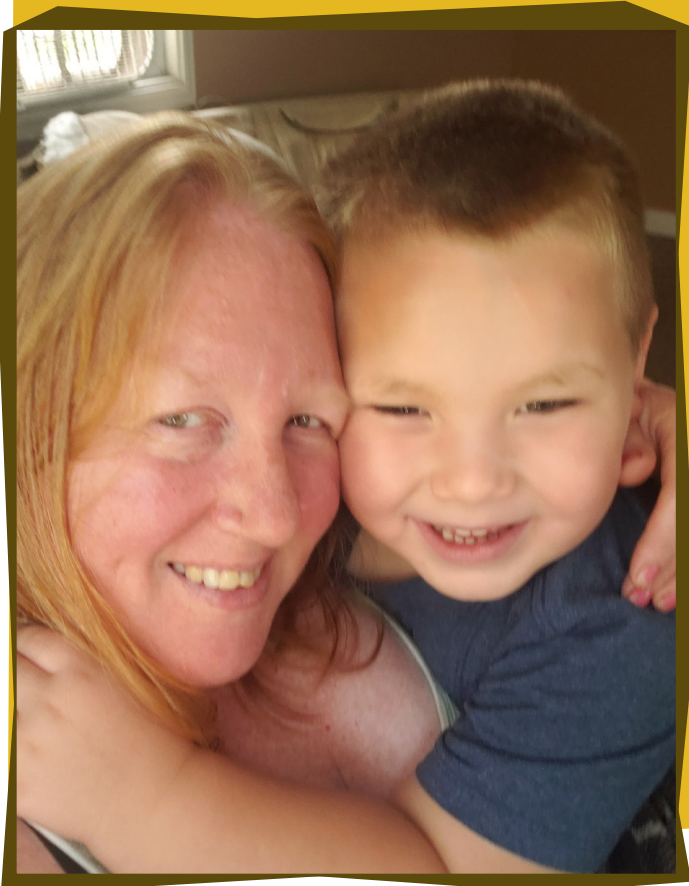
I learned about Head Start when my son turned 3. COVID-19 was just beginning when I enrolled him. I wanted to be a volunteer in his classroom and be the parent involved in his education. At the first family engagement night I learned about Parent Policy Council. Since the school year was different than usual and I was unable to volunteer I knew that Parent Policy Council would be the next best thing for me to be active in my son's education.

We attended every family engagement event via Zoom for school. I was at every Parent Policy Council meeting via Zoom even becoming the membership coordinator. In Parent Policy Council I was also part of the Personnel Committee attending those meetings also via Zoom. I learned how to be and participate Zoom meetings really quick.

My son has an IEP for speech and cognitive learning. Within the first four months of going to school he was improving. I thanked his teachers weekly with the transformation of my son. Over the past year my son grew in his language and social skills. It was a great joy in me when I could finally understand how he was feeling and we can get through the different emotions that he is having. I know the teachers and staff enjoyed having my son attend school.

He is a very loving and caring boy making friends with anyone that will let him. I just can't express how much Head Start has improved our relationship.

His school thanked me for being apart of Parent Policy when all I did was spend a few hours a month going to these Zoom meetings and trying to be the best parent I could be for my son. I feel like it should be the other way around and we as parents should constantly be thanking everyone at Head Start for what they do to help us raise our children to be loving and caring individuals.



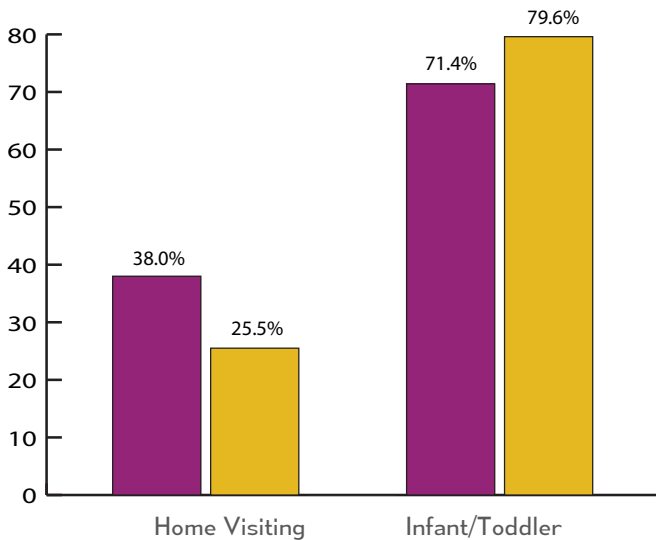
Health

We believe that health is the foundation of school readiness. We work with families to ensure that children are up to date on immunizations, well child visits and dental exams, learn healthy habits, and can access the care they need when they need it. We offer services that support families and strengthen communities so that children are healthy, safe, and ready to learn.

The COVID-19 pandemic made it challenging to access physical and oral health care this year. Doctor's offices postponed well child visits, and dentist offices closed for several months. This resulted in many children behind with their routine doctor and dentist visits, and immunizations. Because Head Start for Kent County emphasizes the importance of ongoing preventive care and early detection of health problems, we worked hard to assist families in accessing the care needed when it became available.

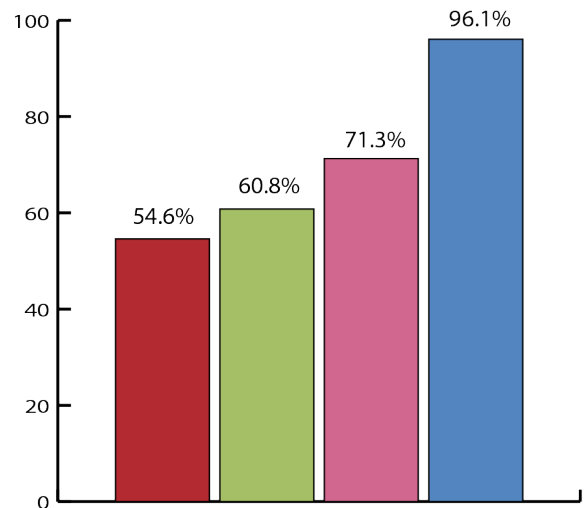
Early Head Start

- Well Child Checks
- Hearing and Vision Screenings



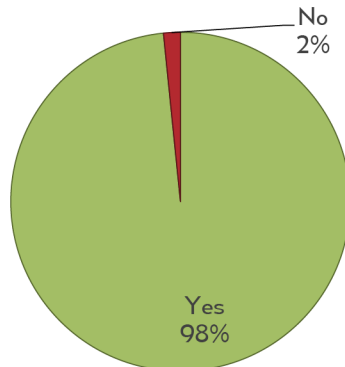
Preschool

- Dental Exams
- Hearing & Vision
- Physical Exams
- Immunizations

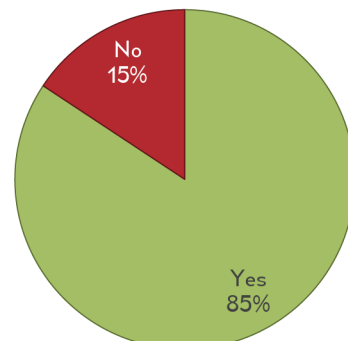


Students with an ongoing source of continuous, accessible care:

Medical



Dental





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.



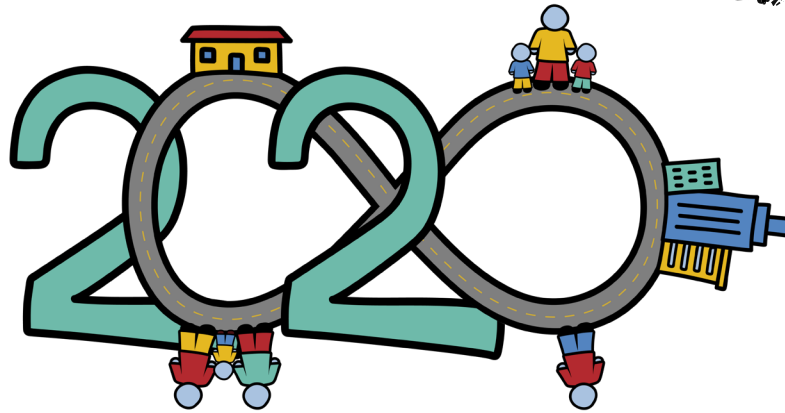


Community Partners



- 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
- 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
- Mitten Kids Pediatric Dentistry
- 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





Making Connections

Our 2020 Theme was **Making Connections!** It's right in our logo, and it fit in well with 2020 (despite the lack of "2020 vision" puns).

The number 0 – resembling a circle – symbolizes infinity and freedom.

The number 2 can symbolize balance, diversity, and partnership.

Put the two numbers together, and you get
infinite potential and relationships!

For this reason, our 2020 theme contains a path connecting people & communities in the shape of an infinity symbol. For the Annual Report, we expanded this concept into paper chain links!

We felt it was really cool, and we hope you do, too!



Head Start for Kent County