

# 2021-2022 Annual Report



## Head Start for Kent County

Connecting Families and Community Resources

# Message from the Board President

Dear Reader:

I have received many wonderful gifts in my life, but none have been more precious than my four children. Growing up, every time I looked at them, I saw a little package of potential, and I wondered, "What will they become?" I am sure that is how every parent of a Head Start child feels. These precious little ones are just starting out in life and they have so much to explore. Those of us affiliated with Head Start are proud to play a small role in helping these children begin their journeys. They are bundles of potential, and we want to do everything possible to turn that potential into reality.



Head Start is uniquely equipped to help children be all they were meant to be. We focus on social and emotional development, pre-literacy skills, math skills, and language skills. We teach children to be respectful and kind, and to be curious and resilient. There is no better place – at any price – to help preschoolers grow into thriving young children. Head Start is a gift to Kent County and invests in the future of the children as well as the larger community. It is a joy to watch children grow and learn.

Thank you to each parent who has allowed Head Start to play that important role in the lives of your children. We take it very seriously and we hope you will build on that foundation at home.

Pressing on with optimism,

Joann Hoganson, HS4KC Board Chairperson

# Message from the Executive Director

Dear Head Start Community,

As we entered the 2021-22 school year, we found ourselves still facing challenges due to COVID. We were excited to be able to safely start with in-person classes. One of the biggest challenges still being faced was that of teaching staff shortages. This caused us to not be able to offer in-person services to all our enrolled children.



Our team did an amazing job of providing quality alternative services to families who were impacted by the staffing shortage. Throughout the year, we faced each new hurdle with a positive attitude and came together as a team to problem solve. The goal was to stay connected to families and support them in any way we could. Our staff rose to the occasion and continued to provide high quality early childhood services to enrolled children and their families.

We recognize the past two years have been difficult for everyone and we also recognize there are still challenges ahead. With that, we look forward to recharging and renewing our efforts around social-emotional learning and wellness. Thank you to our community for your continued support.

We look forward to the year ahead!

MaDonna Princer, HS4KC Executive Director

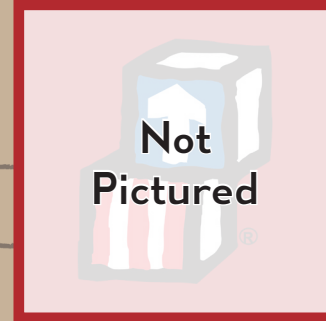
# Board of Directors



**Joann Hoganson**  
*President*



**Kristy Greenberg**  
*Vice President*



**Tammy Smith**  
*Treasurer*



**Rudy Gutierrez**



**Brian Hofstra**



**Oogie LaMar**



**Dean Pacific**



**Linda Pickett**



**Lauren Stanton**



**Fabiola Tenorio**

# Parent Policy Council

**Ryan Cooper**  
**Kyla Fletcher**  
**Jennifer Harris**  
**Mandria Hodges**  
**Shelly Jones**

**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

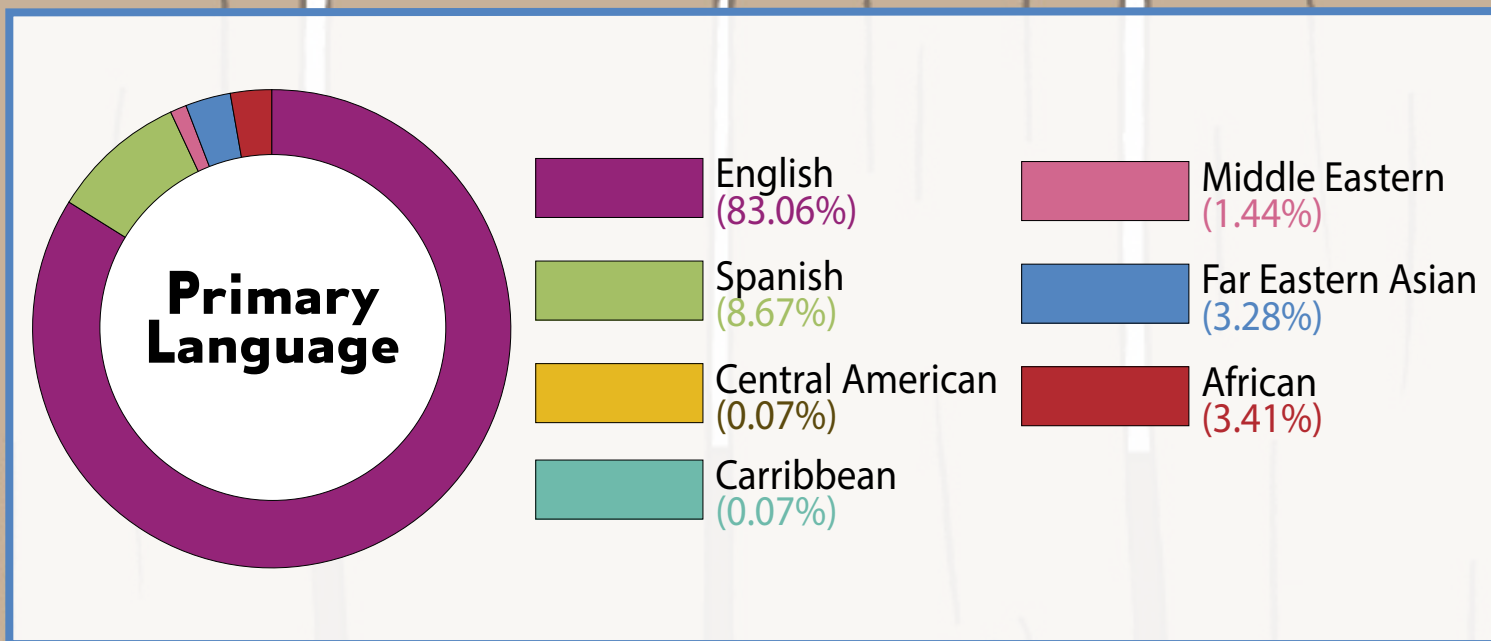
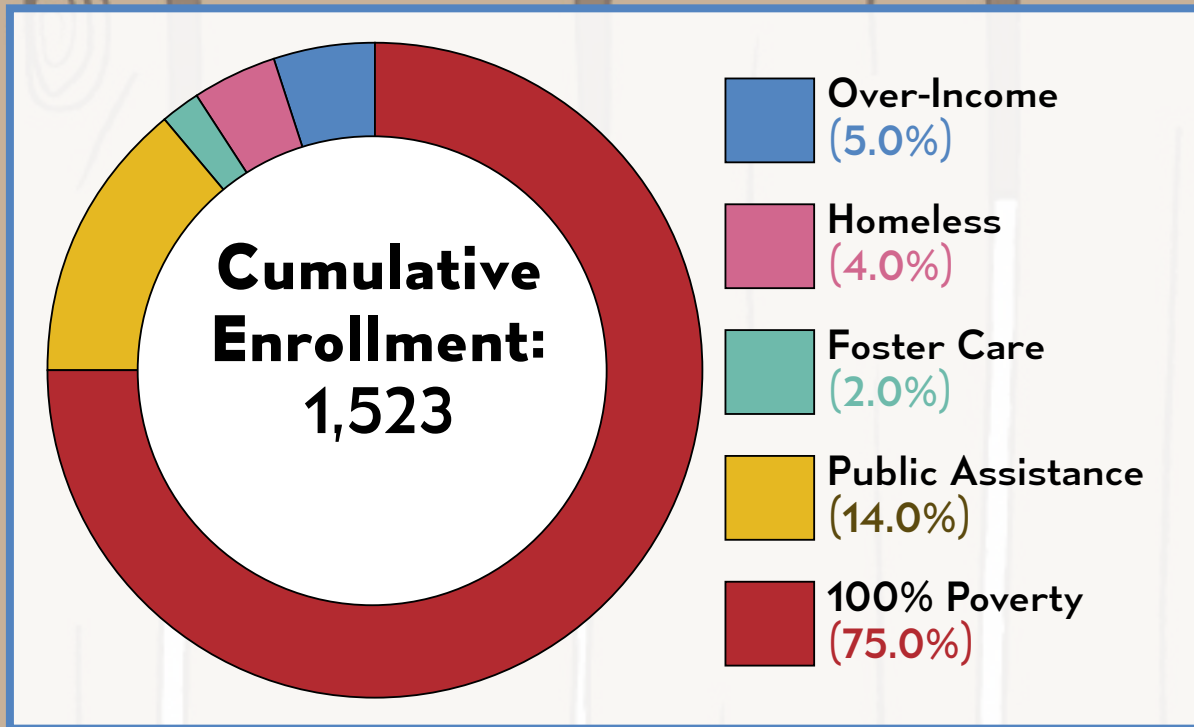




# Table of Contents

Mission, Vision, & Core Values .....	4
Program At-A-Glance .....	6
Community Needs Assessment .....	8
Finances .....	10
CCI and Strategic Outreach .....	12
Nutrition .....	14
Operations .....	15
Education and Special Needs .....	16
Parent, Family, and Community Engagement .....	20
Testimonials .....	22
Health .....	24
Community Partners .....	26
Our 2021 Outreach Theme .....	28

# Program At-A-Glance





### Preschool



### Home Visiting



### Infant/Toddler

**Expecting Families and Children Served**

1,302

168

53

**Sites**

13

-

4

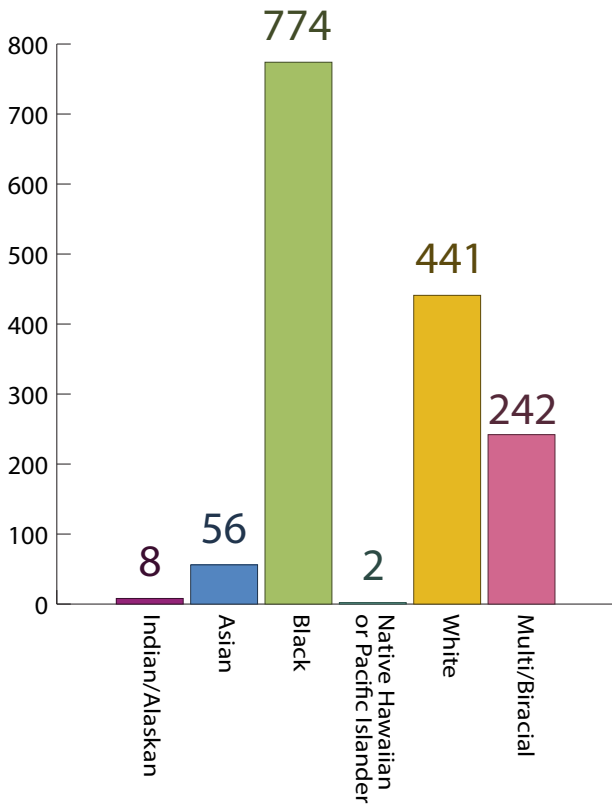
**% of Children with Diagnosed Disabilities**

15%

17%

32%

## Racial Identities

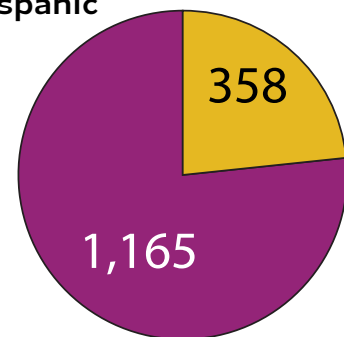


## What's the difference between "Race" and "Ethnicity"?

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



51,347 children ages 0-5 live in Kent County, representing **7.8%** of the **total population**

**15.6%** of children in Kent County under the age of 5 live in **poverty**

**2,468** children in 0-5 Kent County were in **special education**

**238** children ages 0-5 in Kent County lived in **foster care due to abuse or neglect**



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.

Of the **1,523**  
**children** and  
**expecting families**  
served by  
Head Start for  
Kent County:

**77**  
were experiencing  
homelessness

**29**  
were in  
foster care

**236**  
had a  
diagnosed disability

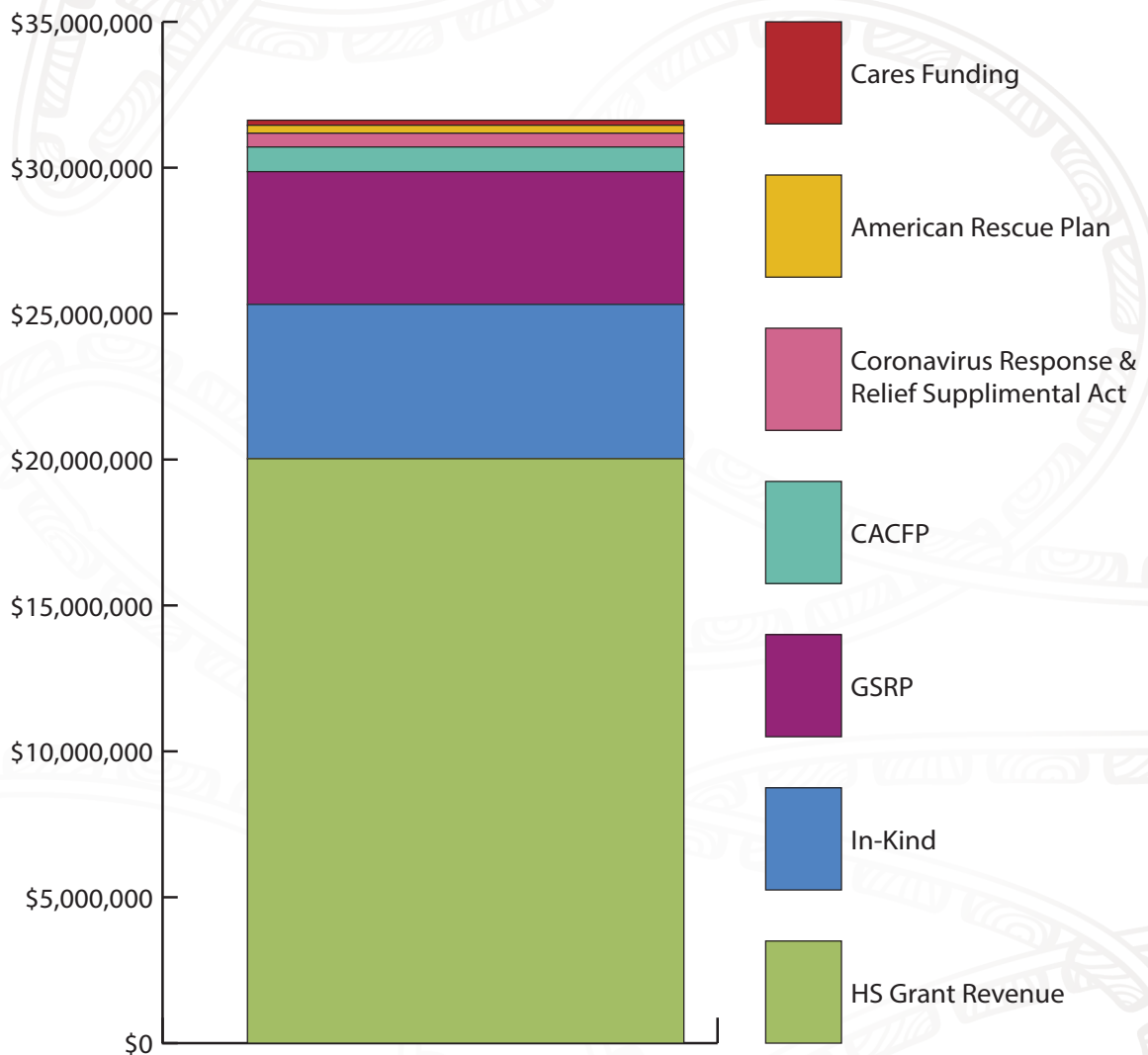
# Finances

Audit

An independent audit, completed for the year ending December 31, 2021 by Vredevelde 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, 2021. 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.

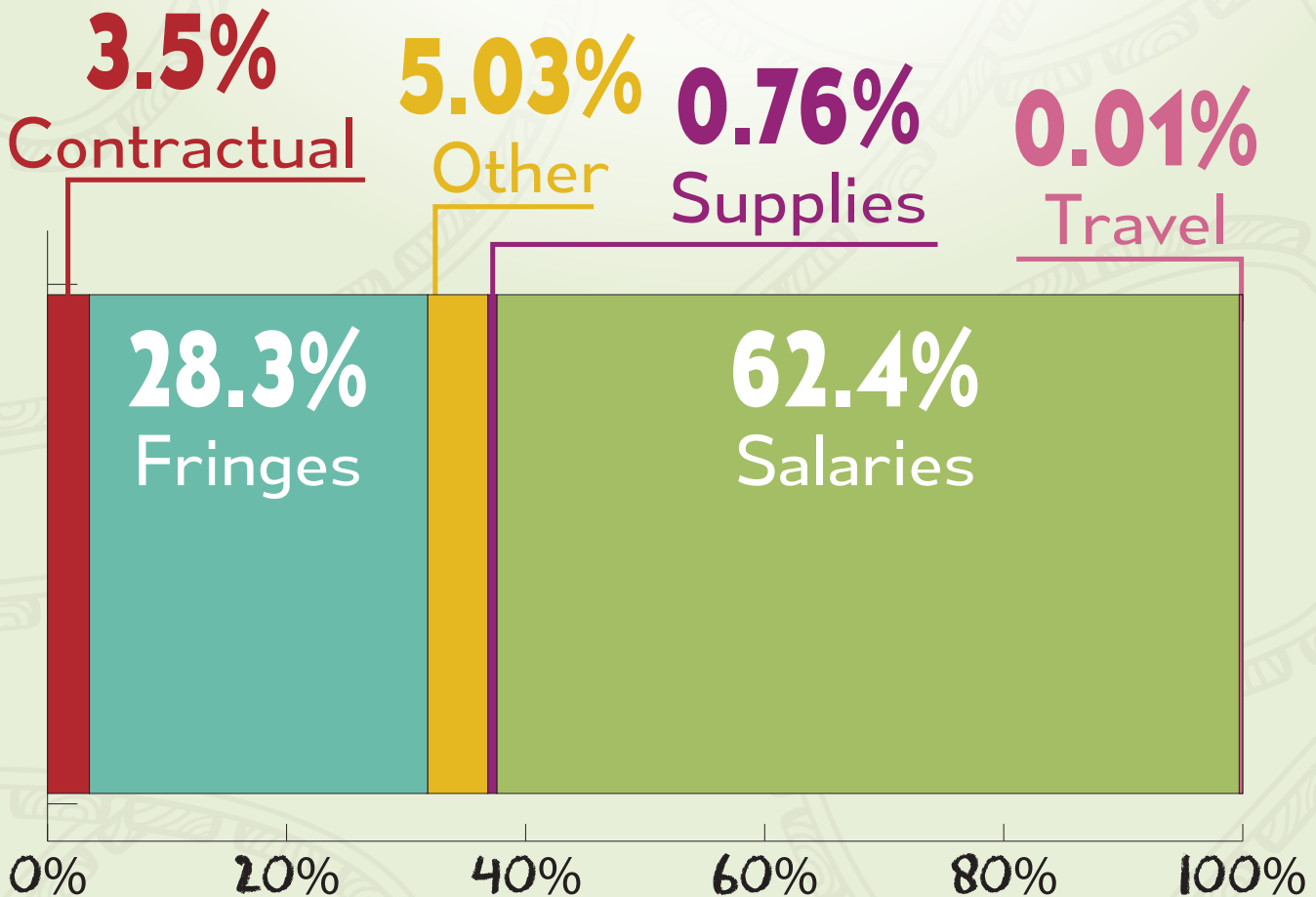
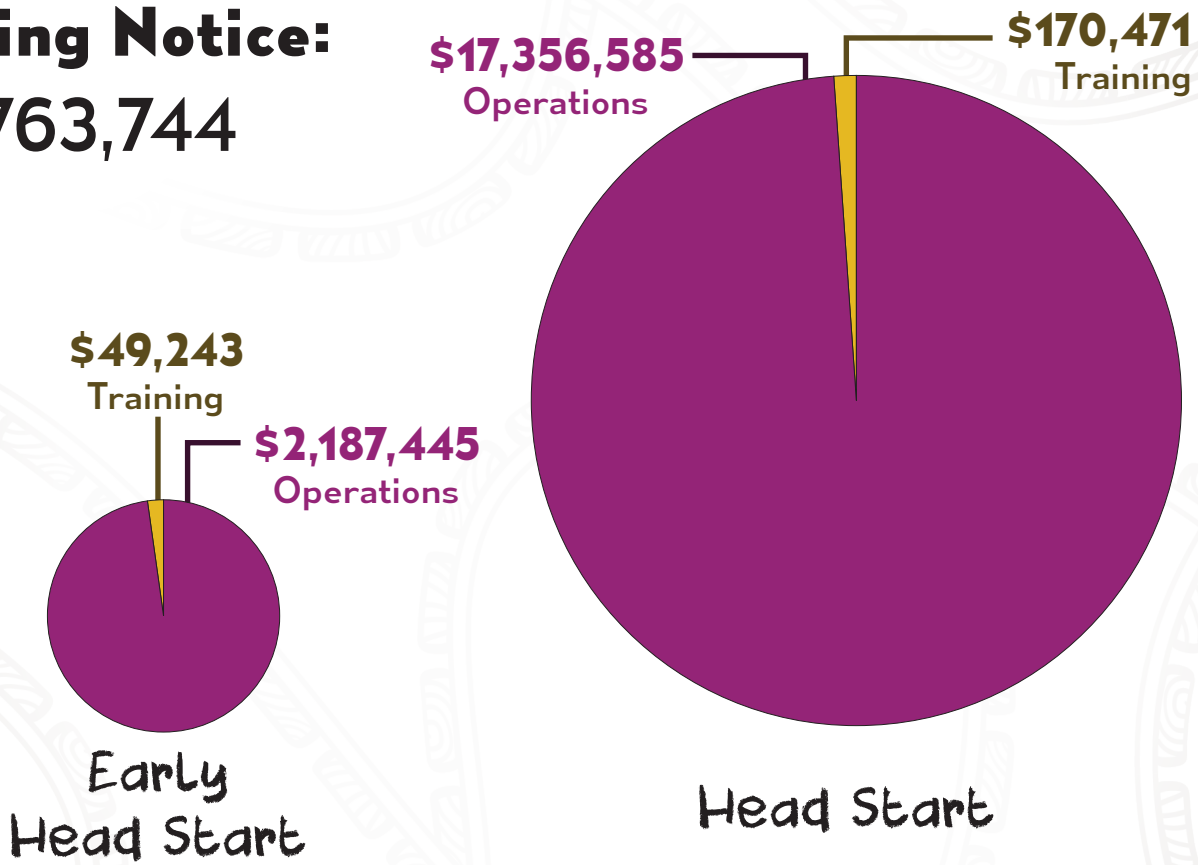
**No deficiencies or instances of noncompliance were found.**

2021 Public and Private Funds



# Funding Notice:

**\$19,763,744**



Expected 2022 Budget

Breakdown Chart





# CCI and Strategic 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.

### Threads of CCI

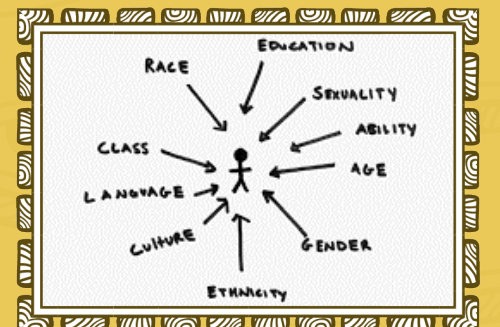
Why "Threads of CCI"? Threads and fabric are a great way to represent how and why each part of cultural competency works together as part of a greater whole.

- Fabric is made of many threads, and the more threads there are, the stronger the fabric is.
- Fully weaving CCI into everything we do makes the entire 'fabric' of what we do more durable. Using a single thread to connect two fabrics is not sustainable long term.
- Multiple colors woven together can create beautiful patterns.
- There is beauty in diversity and inclusion.
- If one thread comes loose, the entire fabric can unravel.
- Each effort ('thread') supports the others and are stronger together.



### Privilege Session

In February 2022, we had our first PD session on Privilege available to all staff. It was a highly requested PD topic, highly engaging session (with reflective activities during and after the session), and a topic we will continue to offer into the next program years!







# 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.

Our yearly provided average was:

**89,565** breakfasts

**92,867** lunches

**83,355** snacks



# Operations

## Transportation

Bus Drivers return to work each August ready to learn their new routes for the entire school year. This year however, the Transportation Department re-worked a whole new set of routes in January to meet the agency's needs, with the many changes brought on by 2022.

Even with having to learn completely new routes and meeting a whole new set of children and families in the middle of the year, our drivers remained flexible and dedicated to make the journey to school and home a highlight of each child's day.

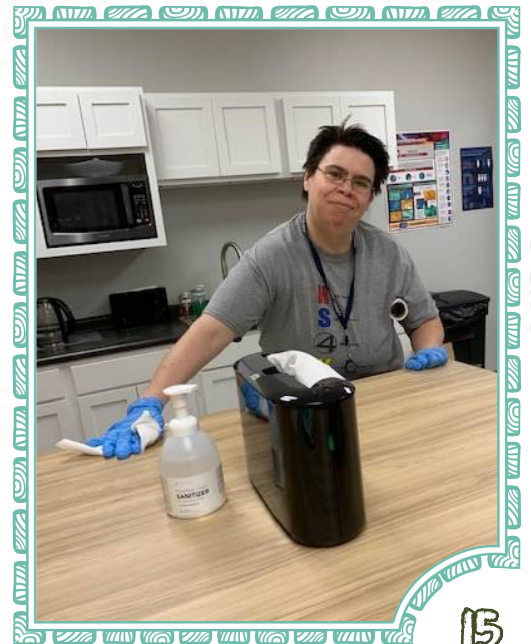
- 831 Head Start students boarded our buses this year to attend school.
- There were 116 different routes each day.
- The average maximum time spent on a Head Start bus was 36 minutes – exceeding Head Start's performance standard of a maximum 60 minutes per ride!
- Kent County is the largest Head Start Transportation Department in Michigan.

## Facilities

Our Facilities Department takes great pride in keeping our Head Start children and staff safe. Although the team started out the school year severely understaffed, each staff member went above and beyond to ensure our buildings were clean, sanitized, and in compliance with licensing regulations.

After a long year of hard work, we could finally announce that the Facilities Department was now almost fully staffed! The team is ready to hit the ground running to prepare our sites for the next school year.

- 77 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!
- 799 work orders completed by Facilities staff through the 2021-22 school year.
- 317 safety concern work orders completed.





# Education and Special Needs



## Classroom Support

### Early Learning Coach Specialists

These support specialists ensure that each classroom provides a developmentally appropriate, high-quality play and learning environment. They help to ensure that the program is culturally and linguistically responsive to children and families. They also help ensure that there is always appropriate care and supervision of children. They provide ongoing individual and group training on departmental processes and expectations, and play a key role in the orientation and onboarding of new teaching staff, and anyone who helps to provide coverage in the classroom. Coaches are regularly working alongside teaching teams in classrooms when children are present to provide modeling.



### Early Childhood Behavior Specialists

These support specialists utilize a model of Tiered Social Emotional Support to follow up with and provide support for children who have behavior and/or mental health concerns that interfere with their ability to participate appropriately in classroom routines. The Behavior Specialists work to build the teacher's capacity to support children's social emotional development and address challenging behaviors. They also partner with families to address behavioral/mental health needs.



# Trauma Informed Practices

As an agency, we are committed to being prepared to recognize and respond to trauma and utilize strategies that promote resilience in children and adults who care for them. We recognize the importance of focusing on adult wellness so that staff are better able to create a trauma-informed organization. Implementing strategies such as mindfulness, training on the impact of trauma, and mental health consultation help create a safe and nurturing environment for children. Our Special Needs department provides resources and referrals for children, families and staff who are struggling with the effects of first-hand and second-hand trauma.

## CLASS

CLASS is 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 preschool and infant/toddler classrooms to set goals while forming targeted coaching and professional development.

## Intensive Coaching

In compliance with federal performance standards, we have a system in place to determine which staff will receive more intensive coaching than others. This support could be provided by the Coaches, Behavior Specialists, Site Supervisors, or other community partners. This includes: New Hire Onboarding, Child Assessment Interrater Reliability, Curriculum Fidelity, CLASS Scores, and/or Supervisor/Manager Identified topics. We track the number of staff who receive Intensive Coaching as well as the number of those who provide Intensive Coaching.

## Curricula and Assessment Tools:

- 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 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.

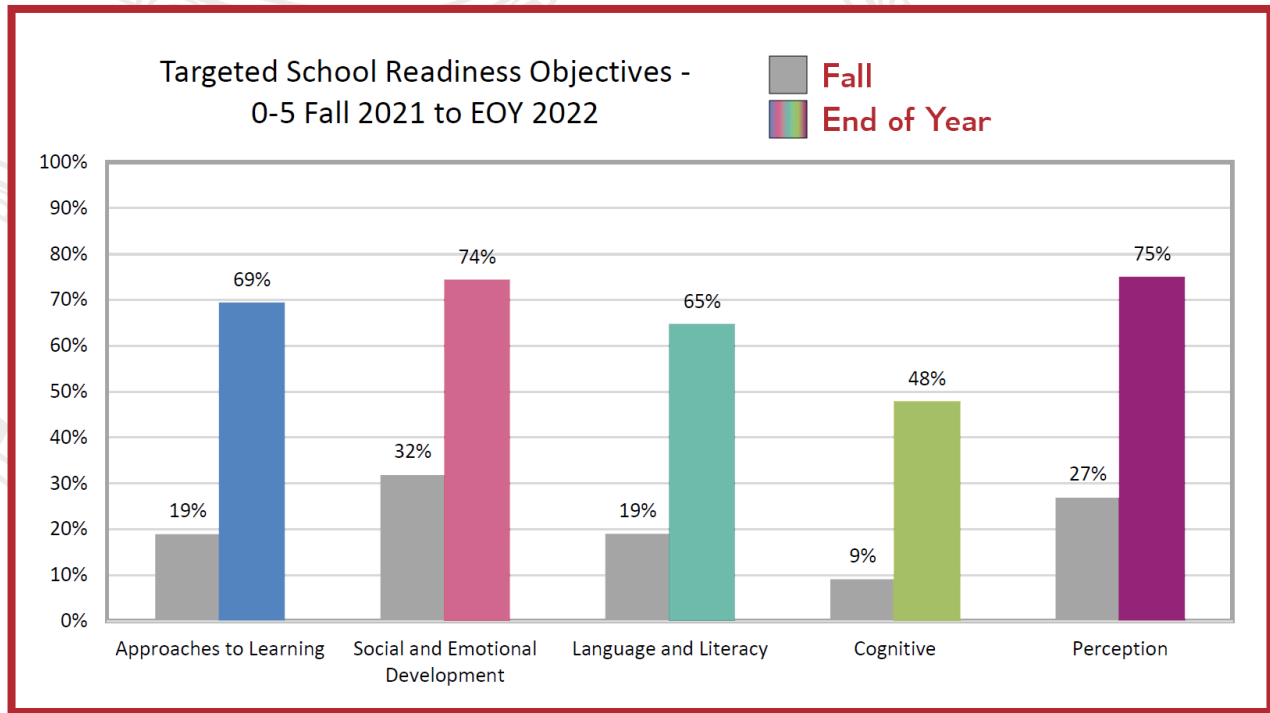


## Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development

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

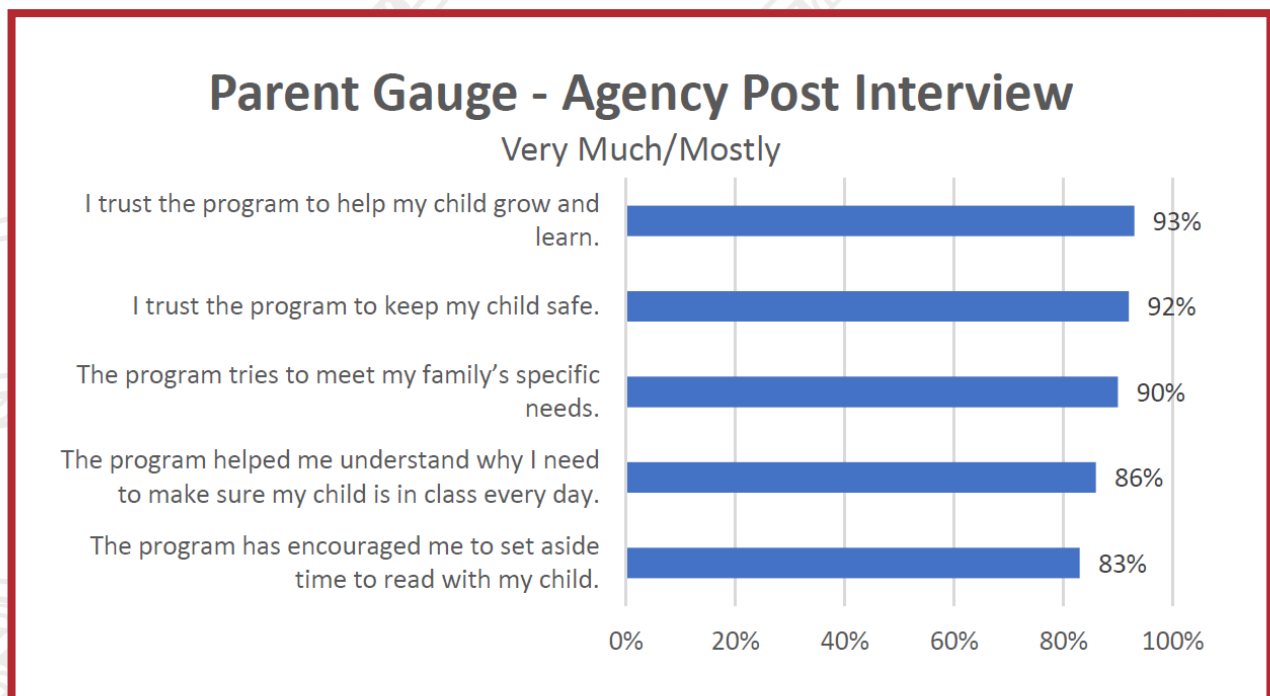
## Teaching Strategies Gold (child outcomes):

Teaching Teams collect ongoing assessment data to measure child outcomes. This data is reviewed and reported quarterly. Teaching Strategies Gold™ is a proven method for identifying each child's areas of strength and weaknesses and educational gains.



## Parent Gauge (family outcomes):

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



# Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE)

PFCE leads 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 2021-2022 School Year in Kent County we served 1,199 Head Start families and 167 Early Head Start families.**

PFCE seeks to develop parents as leaders through various opportunities. These include those listed below.

**Parent Policy Council (PPC)**

**Family Engagement Event Planning**

**Understanding Readiness Outcomes Committee (UROC)**

**Parent Cafes**

**Strengthening Families**

**Cultural Competency & Inclusion (CCI) Advisory Group**

**Watch D.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students)**

**Education Task Force**

**Health Advisory Committee**

**Fathering in 15**

# 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 2021-2022 school year, we had spots for 33 parent representative, 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.

**Total  
Emergency  
Needs Met:**

Preschool:  
**89%**

Early Head Start:  
**91%**

# Testimonials

## Kyi Kyi - Head Start Parent

I would like to say thank you to the Home Visitor and Head Start program. The program has supported my child's growth in many areas, such as social emotional development and language.



## Tasha - Head Start Parent



Head Start is a great experience well needed! My lil tot is the youngest of 5, and believe it or not, was not very good with interactions outside of family.

Head Start was able to help her with communication with others her age as well as adults. She is now able to communicate how she is feeling as well as her needs. My daughter met a lot of new friends and enjoys her play time. Her teachers were able to assist her in learning paths at a preschool level to help with letters and letter recognition. She is now used to a school time routine that has given her a little insight on what's to come for her in kindergarten.

I also appreciate the resources and assistance. My daughter was able to get all her winter gear needs thanks to her teacher. She participated in a GVSU study and enjoyed that.

Head Start offers great family engagements which help parents get to know families of their little tot's friends!

## Heather - Head Start Parent



The experience I had with the Head Start program was great. All staff are very nice, and very helpful with anything I had questions/help with. The program showed me many resources and support with my family as well, and was very flexible with my needs and wants.

The program benefited both of my kids. For my youngest, getting ready to go into the program, the Home Visitor has helped with new learning experiences and helped me to potty train. My oldest got ready for kindergarten and got outside support she needed. All of the staff have been very supportive and encouraging.

There were many aspects of the program we have enjoyed. We felt staff tried to get to know us during one-on-one interactions. They offered new experiences and routines I can now do with my children. There were all the informative and fun zoom meetings they do monthly, hopefully in person soon!

## Cara - Head Start Parent

Our Home Visitor helps us meet our child where she is and understand our daughter's development milestones. Head Start has given us tools to help our children grow emotionally.

Since our daughter is a "covid" baby, when visits started being in person, it took a while for her to warm up to the idea of a someone being in the house, but now you would think she's known our Home Visitor her entire life.

Our daughter looks forward to her visits with our Home Visitor and enjoys showing off her toys to her each week. Having someone in our corner that is willing to help has been very beneficial.





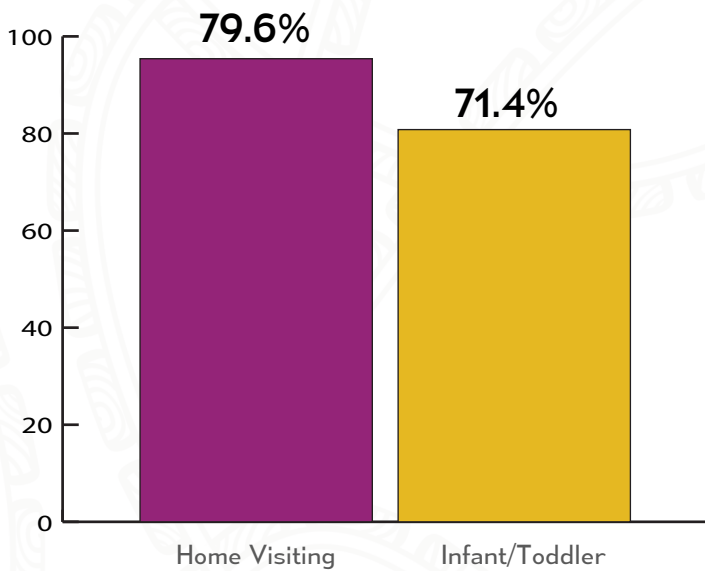
# Health



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

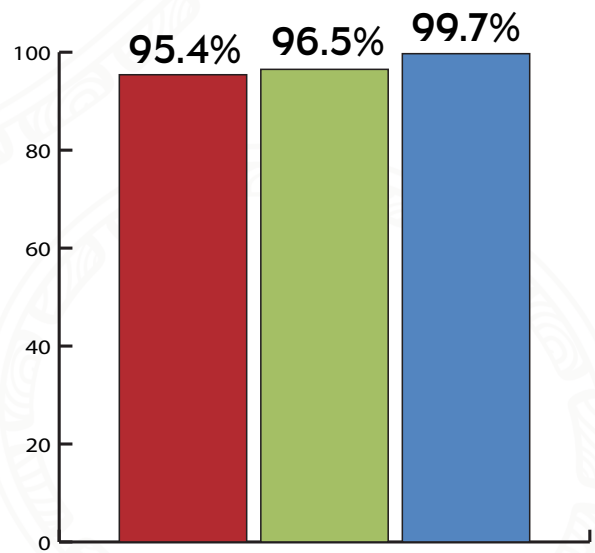
## Early Head Start

- Well Child Checks
- Hearing and Vision Screenings



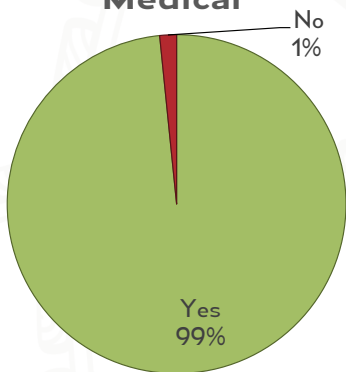
## Preschool

- Physical Exams
- Hearing & Vision
- Immunizations

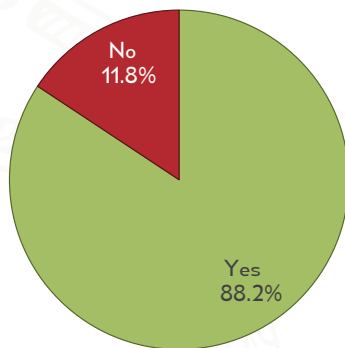


## Students with an ongoing source of continuous, accessible care:

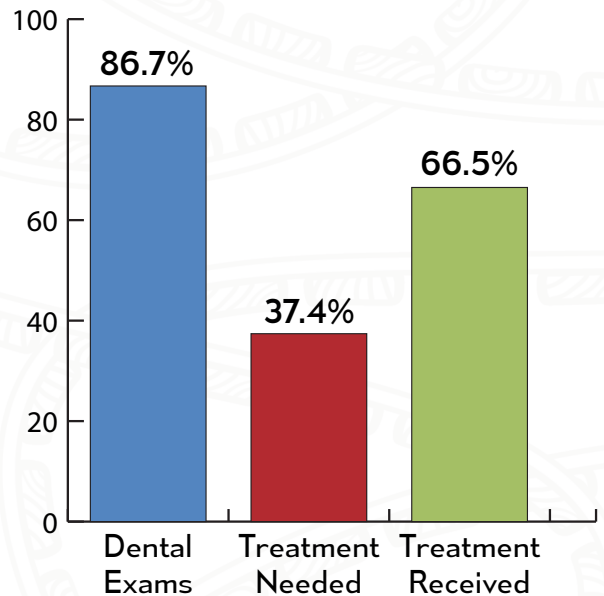
### Medical



### Dental



## Preschool Dental Data





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  
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  
Vibrant Futures  
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

# Our 2021 Outreach Theme



Although 2020 did not look like what we expected, we were still able to "make connections" as we planned in 2020. In 2021, we prepared to reset and refocus on new ways to making better connections for our agency, community, and the children and families we serve. Our Outreach Theme for 2021 was "Building Better Bridges"!

We felt that this was highly applicable and much needed in our community at the time--bridges between our agency and our community, between students and teachers, between resources and the people who need them, and even just between one another as fellow human beings. The concept of "Connecting" is included in our logo, and bridges are an excellent way of linking two things that might otherwise not be able to be connected. It reminded us to work together to build better bridges, for our agency, for our community, and for our kids!



# Head Start for Kent County

Connecting Families and Community Resources