



Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee, Inc. (SMTCCAC, Inc.)

Head Start Annual Report (DRAFT) Fiscal Year 2024–2025

(July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025)

Prepared in compliance with the Head Start Act Sec. 644 and Head Start Program Performance Standards (45 CFR §1301.5).

Service Area: Calvert County • Charles County • St. Mary's County

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	Executive Summary	03
02	Letter from the President & CEO	04
03	Director's Overview	05
04	About Head Start	06
05	Program Model	08
06	Program Locations	07
07	Program Governance	09
08	Meet the Head Start Management Team	10
09	Enrollment & Demographics	11
10	Health Outcomes	12
11	Mental Health & Disabilities	13
12	Child Outcomes	14
13	Parent, Family & Community Engagement (PFCE)	15
14	Meals & Nutrition	16
15	Program Goals, Challenges & Opportunities	16
16	Fiscal Report (Pending Audit)	18
17	Success Story	19
18	Acknowledgements	20

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee, Inc. (SMTCCAC) is proud to present the Head Start Annual Report for FY24–25, covering the program year from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. This report provides a transparent account of program operations, fiscal stewardship, and measurable outcomes, in compliance with the Head Start Act, Sec. 644 (42 U.S.C. §9839) and the Head Start Program Performance Standards (45 CFR §1301.5).

In FY24–25, the Head Start, Early Head Start (EHS), and Early Head Start–Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) programs served a total of **123 children and 117 families** across Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties.



123 Children • **117** Families

95% Immunized • **91%** Medical Home

7,200 Diapers • **800** Wipes



Head Start (ages 3–5): 51 funded slots; 55 children served



Early Head Start / EHS-CCP (pregnant mothers & ages 0–3): 58 funded slots; 68 children served

The programs demonstrated strong results in child development and family stability:



In literacy, nearly **100% of children met or exceeded widely held expectations** by spring 2025, reflecting clear progress toward kindergarten readiness.



95% of children were up-to-date on immunizations, and more than **91% had an established medical home**.



Families accessed vital supports, with **101 parents participating in education activities**, **80 families receiving housing supports**, and others engaged in health, employment, and crisis services.



Signature initiatives strengthened family engagement, including the Male Involvement Program, the Diaper Distribution Program (**7,200 diapers and 800 wipes distributed**), and the Period Poverty Program (**35 participants**).

This Annual Report reflects SMTCCAC's ongoing commitment to accountability, transparency, and shared governance. It has been reviewed by both the Board of Directors and the Policy Council, ensuring that parents, community partners, and agency leaders work together in guiding the program's direction.

The program continues to fulfill the Head Start mission: to promote school readiness by supporting children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, while strengthening families and communities.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Dear Friends and Partners,

As we reflect on FY24–25, I am proud of the progress our Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Head Start–Child Care Partnership programs have made in serving the children and families of Southern Maryland. This year, the programs provided comprehensive early childhood and family support services to **123 children and 117 families** across Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties.

Head Start is more than a program—it is a commitment to equity, opportunity, and long-term community well-being. By providing high-quality education, health, nutrition, and family services, the program ensures that children are prepared for school while parents are supported in building stability and success.

We recognize that this impact is only possible through collaboration. Our **Board of Directors** and **Policy Council** provide critical governance and oversight. Our community partners—including the Department of Social Services, the Judy Center, health providers, and many others—extend our reach and strengthen the network of support available to families. Most importantly, our dedicated staff work each day with compassion and skill to make a lasting difference.

Looking forward, SMTCCAC remains committed to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. Together with our families, staff, and partners, we will continue building a future where every child enters school healthy, confident, and ready to learn.

Respectfully,

Michael Young, MSW

President & CEO





DIRECTOR'S OVERVIEW

The SMTCCAC Head Start program has stood since 1967 as a cornerstone of support for families with young children. Our mission is simple yet powerful: to give children a “head start” by promoting school readiness and family stability.

This year, we served **123 children and 117 families** through Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships. Our dedicated staff worked hand in hand with families to create nurturing environments where children could grow socially, emotionally, and academically. Using Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies GOLD, we ensured developmentally appropriate learning and closely monitored child outcomes.

Family engagement remained central to our work. Parents participated in education activities, leadership roles, and special events such as **Family Fun Day, the Parent Appreciation Ceremony, and our Head Start Graduation**. Signature initiatives like the **Male Involvement Program**, the **Diaper Distribution Program**, and the **Period Poverty Program** provided families with the additional supports they need to thrive.

As Director of Educational Services, I am continually inspired by the resilience of our families and the dedication of our staff. Together, we are building strong foundations for lifelong learning and success.

With gratitude,

Donna Montgomery

Director of Educational Services

ABOUT HEAD START

The Head Start program has been a cornerstone of early childhood services in Southern Maryland since **1967**, later expanding to include **Early Head Start (2018)** and **Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships (2019)**. Together, these programs provide comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, and family engagement services to low-income families across Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties.



HEAD START MISSION

To promote the school readiness of infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development.



HEAD START VISION

All children and families will have the opportunity to reach their full potential.



SERVICE AREA

All children and families will have the opportunity to reach their full potential.



PROGRAM OPTIONS

- **Head Start (ages 3–5):** Center-based classrooms preparing children for kindergarten readiness.
- **Early Head Start (pregnant mothers and children ages 0–3):** Center-based and home-based supports for infants, toddlers, and expectant parents.
- **Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP):** Delivered through partnerships with licensed child care providers to expand access to comprehensive services for infants and toddlers.



PROGRAM MODEL

To meet the diverse needs of families across Southern Maryland, the Head Start program operates through three interconnected models that provide comprehensive services for children from birth to age five.



Early Head Start (0–3 years of age): Funded enrollment of **58**, serving **68 infants, toddlers, and pregnant mothers**. Services are delivered through **center-based classrooms** and partnerships, with a focus on nurturing environments, developmental screenings, and strong family supports.



Head Start (3–5 years of age): Funded enrollment of **51**, serving **55 preschool-aged children**. Services are provided through **center-based classrooms** using Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies GOLD, ensuring school readiness across cognitive, social-emotional, literacy, and physical domains.



Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP): Delivered through collaborations with licensed child care providers, this model expands Early Head Start services into **community-based childcare settings**, raising program quality and increasing access for families.

Comprehensive Services

All program models integrate education, health, nutrition, disabilities, and family services:

Education:

Developmentally appropriate curriculum, assessments, and inclusive classrooms.

Health & Nutrition:

Screenings, referrals, medical/dental homes, and USDA/CACFP-compliant meals.

Family Services:

Case management, goal-setting, and referrals to housing, employment, and crisis supports.



Signature Family Engagement Initiatives

SMTCCAC responds directly to family and community needs identified through annual assessments by offering targeted initiatives that strengthen engagement and reduce barriers:

- **Male Involvement Program:** Engages fathers and male role models through family events and the *24/7 Dads* curriculum.
- **Diaper Distribution Program:** Distributed **7,200 diapers and 800 wipes** to **35 children** during FY24–25, alleviating financial stress for families.
- **Period Poverty Program:** Provided menstrual health products and education to **35 participants**, ensuring access to essential supplies that support family well-being.

This program model reflects the **whole child, whole family approach** that defines Head Start, ensuring children are prepared for school while families gain the tools and resources needed for long-term stability.



PROGRAM LOCATIONS

Head Start services are delivered across three counties in Southern Maryland, through centers and partnerships that ensure families have access to high-quality early childhood education and comprehensive support.

Center-Based Locations



J. Woodall Center
Charles County



Brawner Center
Charles County



Inspiring Dreams Center
Charles County



Visions & Dreams Center
Charles County



A Child's Journey Center
Charles County



Little People Center (CCP)
Charles County

Service Area Coverage

In addition to center-based services, the program provides Early Head Start and EHS-Child Care Partnership supports across:

Calvert County

Charles County

St. Mary's County

These locations allow Head Start to serve **rural, suburban, and military-connected families**, reflecting the diverse needs of the Southern Maryland community.

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

Head Start is guided by a strong system of shared governance between the **Board of Directors** and the **Policy Council**, ensuring that parents, community representatives, and agency leadership work together to provide oversight and direction. This structure is mandated under the **Head Start Act and 45 CFR §1301.5**, promoting accountability and transparency in all program decisions.

Board of Directors



Rev. Ernest Downs – Chairperson



Ronald Clark – 1st Vice Chair



Anita Bratcher-Butler – 2nd Vice Chair



Josephus L. Harris, Jr. – Member



Mary E. Dryden – Member



Joseph D. Frederick – Member



Garnell Miles – Member



Raquel Stone – Member



Reuben Collins, II – Member

Policy Council Officers



Chair: **Thomasina Coates**



Vice Chair: **Talia Harris**



Secretary: **Jessica Darby**



Treasurer: **Jacqueline Harvey**

Policy Council Community Partners



Wanda Collins – Department of Social Services (DSS)



Jennifer Gimmell – Judy Center



MEET THE HEAD START MANAGEMENT TEAM

Our Head Start Management Team is comprised of experienced professionals dedicated to providing the highest quality of education and support to children and families.

Team Highlights

- **Over 140 Years of Combined Experience:** Expertise spanning education, social work, healthcare, and community services.
- **Diverse Educational Backgrounds:** Degrees ranging from Bachelor's to Doctorates, with specialties in Early Childhood Education, Business Administration, Social Work, Nutritional Sciences, and Healthcare Management.
- **Specialized Certifications:** Credentials in Early Childhood Education (ECE), Human Resources – Labor Law, and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).
- **Leadership & Advocacy:** Experience as PTA Presidents, Deans of Students, and leaders in community organizations.
- **Multi-State & International Experience:** Professional backgrounds across multiple states and countries, bringing broad perspectives to the program.
- **Commitment to Family Engagement:** Leadership of initiatives such as the Male Involvement Program and Family Advocate Program, strengthening connections with families and communities.
- **Adinia Cuadrado Pimentel – Assistant Director of Educational Services**
Adinia holds a BA in Modern Languages from the University of Puerto Rico and a master's in Early Childhood Education. She has served as a regional supervisor and education manager, with extensive experience in program oversight and teacher development.
- **Nashonda Sherrod – Education Specialist**
Nashonda holds a master's degree in Education and has experience mentoring teachers, supporting classrooms, and providing specialized services for children with developmental delays and disabilities.
- **Miya Raspberry – Social Services Director**
Miya holds a master's degree in Social Work and over 20 years of experience in homeless services, child welfare, and restorative justice. She leads family engagement and support services, ensuring families receive the resources they need to thrive.
- **Russell Patterson – Male Involvement & Family Engagement Coordinator**
Russell has more than 30 years of experience working with children and families, including roles in juvenile services, school administration, and family advocacy. He leads initiatives to engage fathers and male caregivers in meaningful ways.
- **Dr. Raeleena Collington – Health, Nutrition & Safety Coordinator**
Dr. Collington has 14 years of Head Start experience and over 27 years in the fields of nutrition, healthcare, and safety. She holds advanced degrees in Nutritional Sciences, Leadership, and Healthcare Management, and ensures compliance with all health and safety standards.

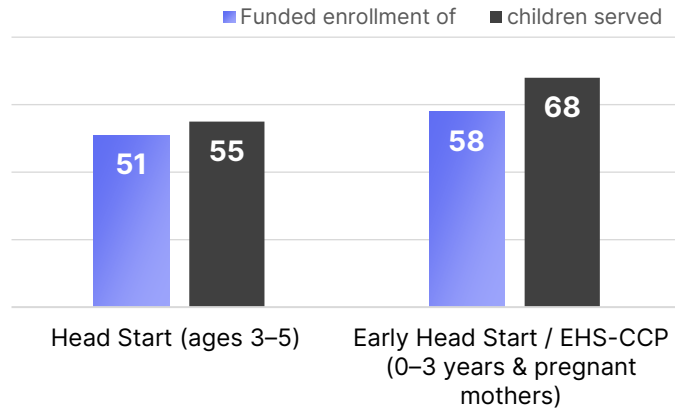
Leadership Team

- **Donna Montgomery – Director of Educational Services**
Donna brings over 20 years of experience in early childhood education and leadership across the DC/MD/VA region. She holds multiple ECE credentials and has served in a variety of roles, from childcare center director to community advocate.

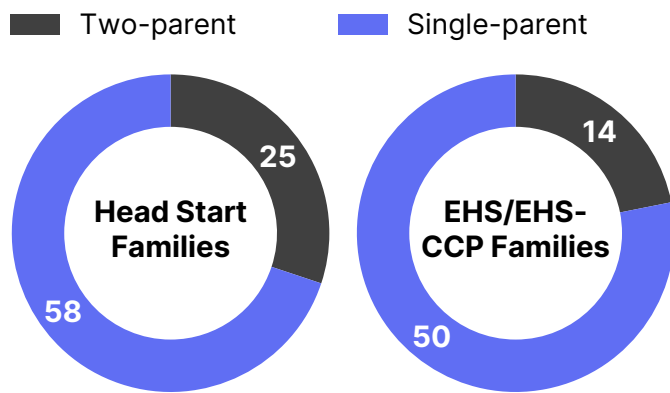
ENROLLMENT & DEMOGRAPHICS

In FY24–25, the Head Start and Early Head Start programs served a total of **123 children and 117 families** across Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties.

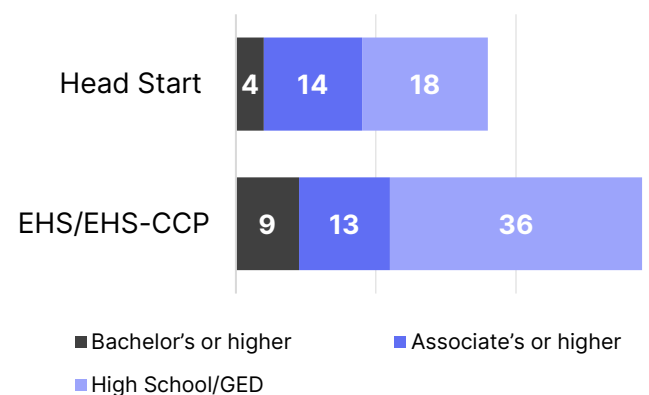
Enrollment



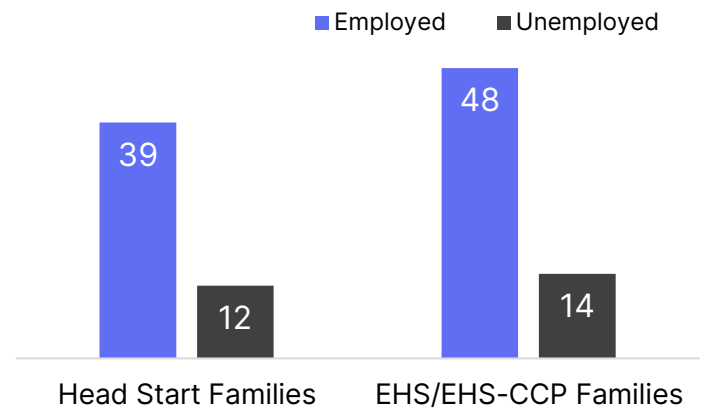
Family Demographics



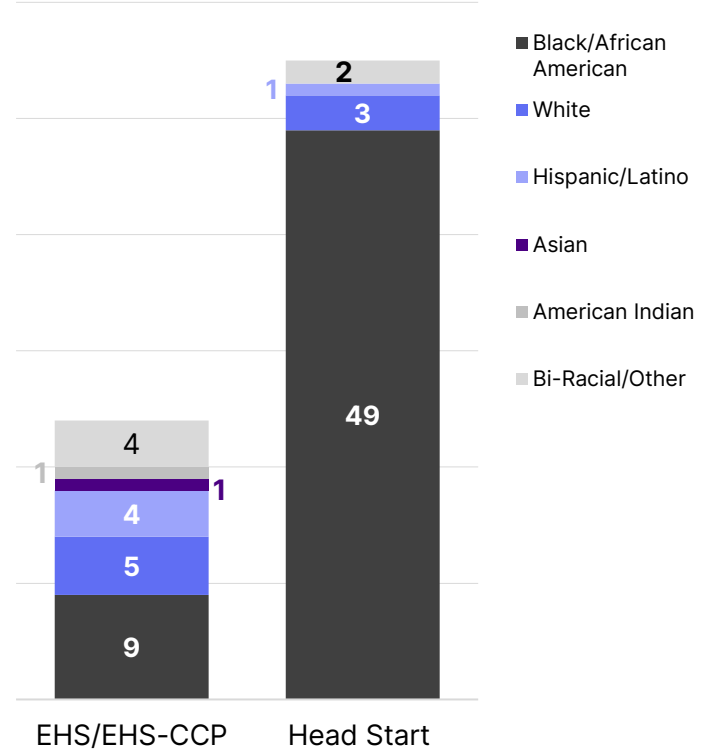
Parent Education Levels



Parent Employment Status



Racial & Ethnic Demographics

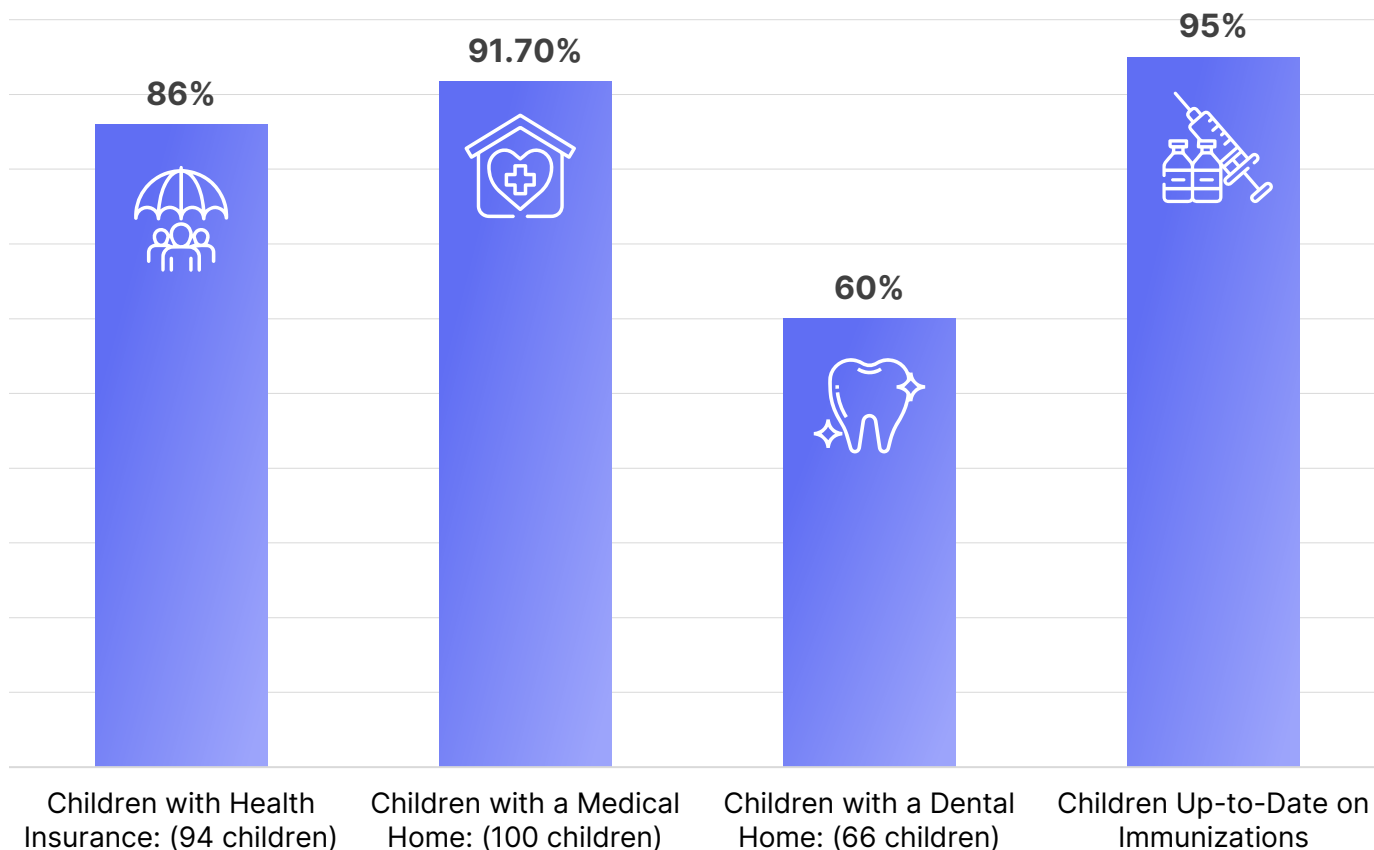


The demographics reflect a program that primarily serves **Black/African American children and families**, with a significant proportion of **single-parent households**. Many parents hold a **high school diploma or GED as their highest level of education**, underscoring the importance of continued educational and workforce readiness supports.

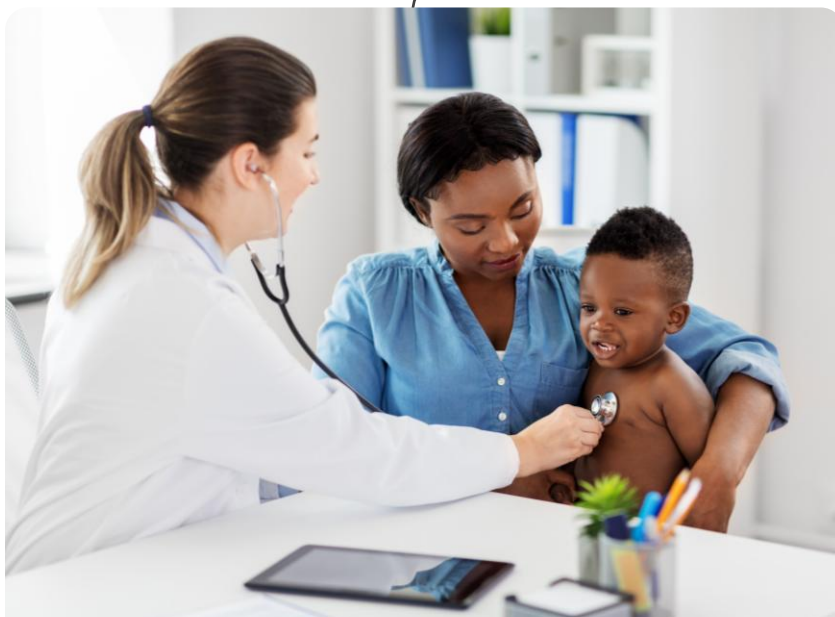
HEALTH OUTCOMES

Ensuring that children are healthy and ready to learn is a cornerstone of Head Start. In FY24-25, the program continued to prioritize access to health care, screenings, and immunizations for all enrolled children.

Health Indicators



The majority of children maintained consistent access to medical care, with nearly **92% having an established medical home**. Immunization compliance remained strong at **95%**, reflecting effective partnerships with local health providers. Access to dental care remains a challenge, with only **60% of children maintaining a dental home**. The program is addressing this through expanded partnerships, parent education, and assistance with scheduling and transportation.





MENTAL HEALTH & DISABILITIES

Supporting Every Child's Learning Journey

Head Start is committed to ensuring that every child can learn and thrive in an inclusive environment. Our staff implement individualized classroom strategies tailored to each child's needs, supported by a multidisciplinary team that includes educators, family advocates, mental health professionals, and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) specialists.

In FY24-25, the program provided targeted supports to **10 children with diagnosed disabilities** and offered **mental health services to 1 family**. Children and families received referrals and resources through partnerships with the **Center for Children, the Judy Center, the Infant/Toddler Program, and Child Find**. These collaborations ensure access to evaluations, early interventions, and specialized supports.

Educators and staff participated in ongoing professional development to strengthen inclusive practices and trauma-informed strategies, ensuring that children with developmental delays and mental health needs are fully supported in the classroom.

In alignment with Office of Head Start (OHS) requirements, the program maintained its commitment to serving at least **10% of enrolled children with disabilities**, successfully meeting this mandate. This reflects our dedication to inclusive education, equitable access, and supporting the whole child and family.



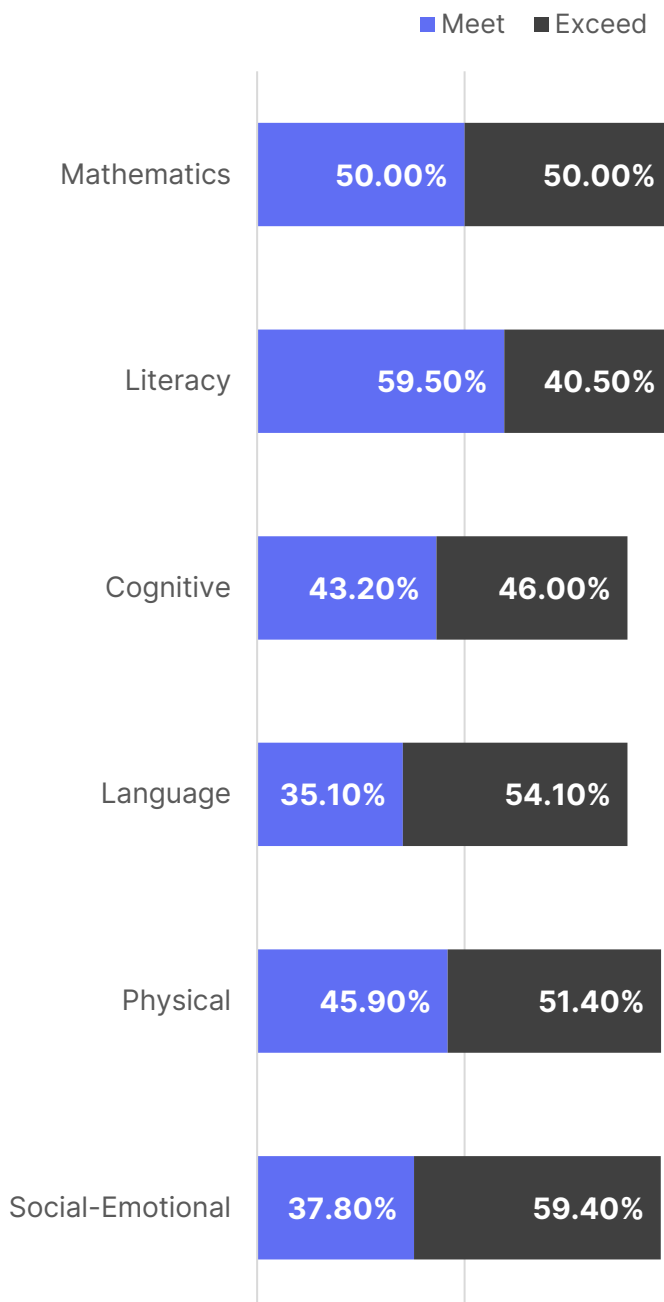
10 Children with Disabilities



1 Family Received Mental Health Support

CHILD OUTCOMES

Head Start uses the **Creative Curriculum** and **Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG)** to assess children's development three times each year. Outcomes are measured against widely held expectations for age groups in six developmental domains.



Early Head Start / EHS-CCP Outcomes

Preliminary results indicate that the majority of children are meeting developmental expectations, with **language development** identified as an area where enhanced supports are needed.

By spring 2025, nearly **100% of Head Start children were at or above expectations in literacy**, while almost **60% exceeded expectations in social-emotional development**. Mathematics and language remain priority areas, and the program is strengthening **small-group instruction and language-rich interactions** to address them.

Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot

Head Start's comprehensive approach prepares children for a successful transition to kindergarten. In FY24-25, assessment results confirmed that children made strong progress in **literacy and social-emotional development**, while targeted supports in **language and math** are helping to ensure children enter kindergarten with the skills and confidence they need to thrive.

PARENT, FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (PFCE)

Family engagement is at the heart of Head Start's work. Guided by the **Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework**, the program partnered with families in FY24–25 to set goals, access supports, and participate in leadership opportunities through the Policy Council and parent committees.

Family Services

Parent Education:

101 families

Employment Support:

3 families

Health Education:

11 families

Housing Supports:

80 families

Children with Disabilities Supported

10 families

Mental Health Services:

1 families

Crisis Support:

1 families

Signature Family Engagement Initiatives

Male Involvement Program: 52 family assessments, 51 family goals, 32 child experiences, and 36 parents engaged in Parent Café sessions.

Diaper Distribution Program: Distributed **7,200 diapers and 800 wipes** to **35 children**, reducing financial burdens on families.

Period Poverty Program: Enrolled **35 participants**, ensuring access to essential hygiene products and health education.



Community Events

- **Family Fun Day (July 11, 2025):** 26 families participated in a day of learning and recreation with community partners.
- **Parent Appreciation Ceremony (June 11, 2025):** 16 families recognized for their engagement and leadership.
- **Head Start Graduation (June 13, 2025):** 8 children celebrated their transition to kindergarten, joined by families and community leaders.

These efforts reflect a **whole family approach**, addressing immediate needs while strengthening long-term family capacity. Families not only received services but also gained leadership opportunities and stronger connections with the program and community.

MEALS & NUTRITION



Nutritious meals are an essential part of supporting children's growth and learning. In FY24-25, the program provided a total of **15,579 meals**, all in compliance with the **USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) standards**.

Meals were served in **family-style settings**, encouraging healthy eating habits, self-help skills, and social interaction. Nutrition education was also integrated into classroom activities, reinforcing lifelong healthy choices.



Total meals: **15,579**

PROGRAM GOALS, CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Strategic Goals

High-Quality Early Education:

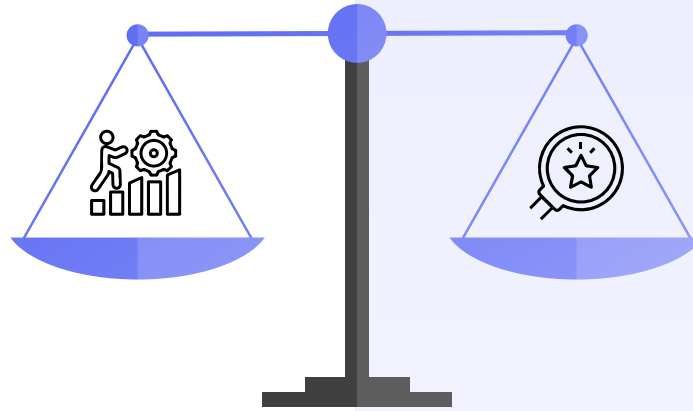
Provide outcome-driven early childhood education services that strengthen school readiness for children and support for their families.

Family Stability:

Create opportunities that help families achieve stability and improve quality of life.

Community Partnerships:

Collaborate with residents, partners, and stakeholders to improve community conditions.



CHALLENGES

The program continues to face the dual challenge of **retaining dedicated staff** and maintaining **full enrollment** in a rural service area. Recruiting and keeping qualified staff is difficult as we compete with both local school districts and the broader Washington, D.C. job market. Enrollment requires ongoing effort to reach families early and demonstrate the unique value of Head Start.

Additional challenges identified this year include:

- **Dental Access:** Only **60% of children maintained a dental home**, reflecting limited provider availability and transportation barriers.
- **Language Development:** Assessment data showed language as a relative weakness, requiring more targeted classroom strategies.
- **Family Economic Barriers:** High rates of single-parent households highlight the need for housing, employment, and stability supports.

To address staff retention, SMTCCAC is focused on:

- Offering competitive compensation and benefits.
- Investing in professional development.
- Fostering a positive, supportive work environment.

To sustain enrollment and attract families, the program is:

- Building a strong program identity.
- Amplifying its value through parent and community testimonials.
- Using targeted outreach and marketing to highlight success.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

The program is positioned to strengthen outcomes and expand impact by:

- **Health Partnerships:** Deepening collaborations with local dental and medical providers to close care gaps.
- **Curriculum Enhancements:** Expanding language-rich instructional strategies to improve literacy and communication skills.
- **Parent Engagement:** Building on successful initiatives such as Male Involvement, Diaper Distribution, and Period Poverty to further reduce barriers and promote family leadership.
- **Community Collaboration:** Leveraging partnerships with DSS, the Judy Center, and other community organizations to deliver wraparound supports.
- **Funding & Innovation:** Exploring diverse funding streams and new partnerships with businesses, community groups, and educational institutions to sustain and expand services.

Through these efforts, SMTCCAC's Head Start program is committed to **continuous quality improvement**, ensuring that every child enters school ready to learn and every family has the resources to thrive.

FISCAL REPORT (PENDING AUDIT)

As required under the Head Start Act, this annual report must include fiscal information detailing program expenditures, funding sources, and the results of the most recent independent audit.

For FY24–25, the fiscal report is **pending final audit results**, which will be completed and presented to both the **Board of Directors** and the **Policy Council** in alignment with federal requirements. Upon completion, this section will include:



Federal funding received for Head Start, Early Head Start, and EHS-CCP.



Total expenditures by program component (personnel, training, equipment, supplies, contractual, etc.).



The independent auditor's certification of financial compliance.

SMTCCAC maintains strict fiscal accountability through ongoing monitoring, Board and Policy Council oversight, and adherence to federal regulations. The final audited financial report will be posted publicly on the agency website upon approval.

Fiscal Report Pending Audit

SUCCESS STORY



Jessica D., a Head Start parent, entered the program seeking support for her family during a time of transition. Through engagement with staff and participation in parent activities, Jessica set personal and family goals that helped her move toward greater stability.

She became actively involved in the **Policy Council**, where her leadership skills grew as she represented other parents in program decision-making. With support from Head Start's family services team, Jessica also pursued educational opportunities and connected to resources that strengthened her family's foundation.

Today, Jessica describes Head Start not only as a program for her child, but as a **community that empowered her as a parent and a leader**. Her story reflects the program's commitment to building both **school readiness for children** and **resilience for families**.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

thank
you



The success of Head Start depends on the dedication of many individuals and partners who share in the mission of supporting children and families.

Board of Directors

We thank our **Board of Directors** for their governance and oversight, ensuring accountability and transparency in every aspect of the program.

Policy Council

We recognize our **Policy Council officers and parent representatives** for their leadership and active role in shaping program decisions.

Community Partners

Special thanks to our community partners whose support strengthens our impact:



Wanda Collins

Department of Social Services (DSS)



Jennifer Gimmell

Judy Center



Staff and Families

We extend gratitude to our **Head Start staff**, whose commitment to children and families makes this work possible, and to the **families** who entrust us as partners in their children's early learning journey.

Together, this network of leaders, staff, parents, and partners embodies the spirit of Head Start — building stronger foundations for children and creating opportunities for families to thrive. Their collective contributions embody the mission and vision of Head Start in Southern Maryland.



Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee, Inc. (SMTCCAC, Inc.)

Head Start & Early Head Start Programs

**Administrative Office:**

8371 Old Leonardtown Road, Hughesville, MD 20637



Phone: (301) 274-4474



Website: www.smtccac.org

This Annual Report was prepared in compliance with the Head Start Act Sec. 644. The final report will be reviewed by the Board of Directors and the Policy Council prior to posting publicly on the SMTCCAC website.

