



2020
2021



Florida State University Early Head Start Program



FSU EARLY HEAD START
Empowering Families in Godsden since 1996

Annual Report



FSU Early Head Start Program At a Glance

The mission of the FSU Early Head Start Program is to promote healthy prenatal outcomes for pregnant women, enhance the development of very young children, and promote healthy family functioning.

The FSU Early Head Start Program is funded through the federal **Office of Head Start** to serve **68 infants, toddlers, and pregnant women**. The Office of Head Start is part of the Administration for Children and Families, which falls under the Department of Health and Human Services.

To be eligible for services, an expectant mother or family with a child under three years old must be **living in Gadsden County, Florida** and **earn less than the federal poverty guidelines**. There are a few enrollment opportunities for families who earn more, but have **significant risk factors**. At least **10%** of enrollment slots are reserved for **children with delays or disabilities**.

Services are provided **year-round** to meet the **health, developmental, educational, and social service** needs of young children and families through **weekly home visits**.

Services are offered to families through home visiting:

- ❖ **Weekly 90 minute home visits** focus on prenatal and parenting education, child development activities, health and safety, and family goal setting.
- ❖ **Group Socializations** or “Play Groups” held at least twice a month provide families with opportunities to interact in fun, educational activities and strengthen the parent-child relationship as well as their peer networks of support.

COVID-19 Pandemic: In March of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic began in the US. The FSU Early Head Start program transitioned all families from in-person visits and Group Socializations to virtual home visits and contacts, utilizing phone, text, and secure video chat platforms. Health, safety, and educational supplies were mailed to families. No in-person services were provided for the remainder of the program year. In July 2020, Florida State University began allowing program staff to provide supplies through “no-contact” drop-offs. Families without phone or internet service were offered donated cell phones and loaned mobile hotspots to enable participation in Early Head Start services. This virtual service provision lasted through June of 2021 before the program began transitioning to modified in-person services on a case by case basis to best meet the needs of families.



Early Head Start Staff

Early Head Start prioritizes recruiting and maintaining a multi-disciplinary staff of passionate professionals to work with children and families. The program employs a Director and a management team to ensure all Performance Standards are properly implemented in the areas of Program Administration, Health Services, Education and Disabilities Services, Family and Community Engagement, and Enrollment and Data Management. In addition, the Home Based Coordinator, provides reflective supervision to seven Home Visitors, one of whom is a Home Visitor/Counselor able to provide consultation on infant and maternal mental health concerns and mental health services to families as requested under the supervision of the Director, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Two Bilingual Spanish speaking Home Visitors primarily serve families with limited English skills. The program contracts with a registered dietician/licensed nutritionist to provide consultation on nutrition services, as needed. The program also employs current or former parents on a part time basis to assist in the recruitment of new families.

The Role of Home Visitors:

Promote positive birth outcomes by providing information and support to pregnant women.

Inspire confidence and competence in parents by highlighting their strengths and encouraging the parent-child attachment.

Encourage healthy habits and safe environments by providing information on health and safety issues and assisting families with accessing preventative health care.

Coach parents to be their child's first teacher by educating them about what to expect during a child's first three years of development.

Demonstrate how parents can enrich their child's development and school readiness by providing weekly skill-building play activities that parents can replicate with their children using common materials found around the home.

Assist families identifying their strengths and setting goals for the future for themselves and their children by being a consistent positive support to families and linking them with other community resources.

Empower rural, isolated families to build a stronger network of support by hosting play groups where parents can connect with their children and other families in a fun atmosphere of learning.

A Little Bit About Our Children...

During the 2020-21 program year, FSU EHS served

20 infants, 

23 one-year olds, 

21 two-year-olds, 

and 6 pregnant women, 

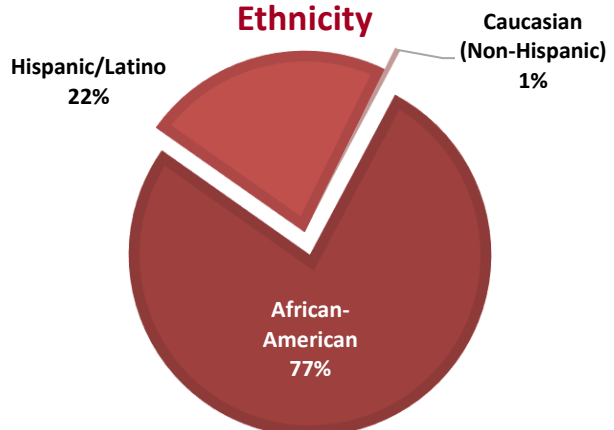
for a total of **70** participants.

This represents only **4.3%** of the **eligible population** in Gadsden County; a county where approximately **80%** of **children 0-5** are **eligible for Medicaid***.

Of the **70** children served:

- **17** were enrolled in their **second year**
- **28** were enrolled in a **third year**
- Due to COVID-19, the program was unable to stay fully enrolled
- Only **6 over-income** children or pregnant women participated

2020-2021 Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity



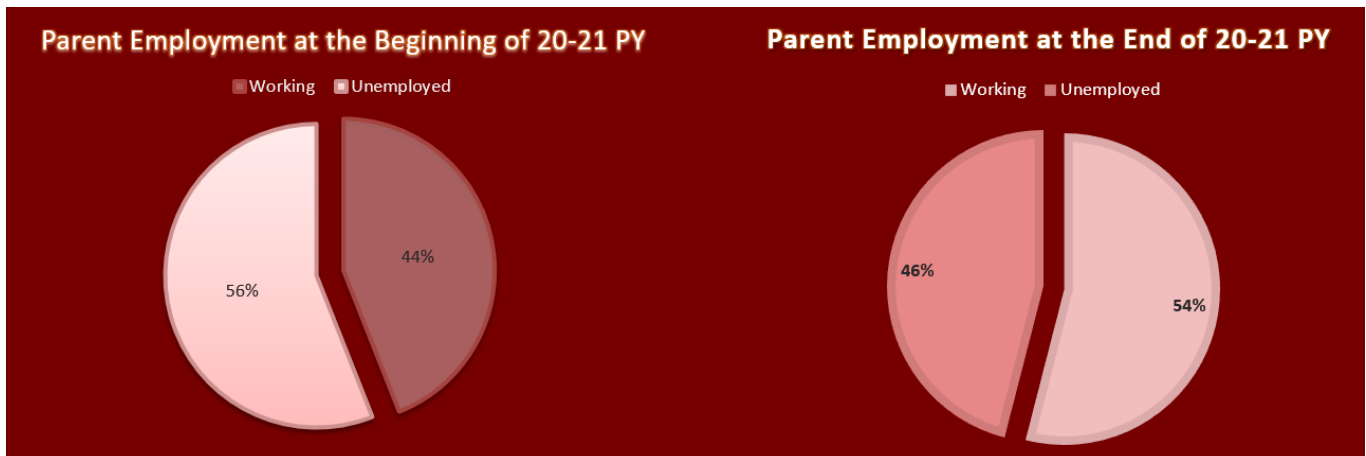
* Agency for Health Care Administration. Number of Medicaid Eligibles by Age By County as of 8/31/21. August 2021. https://ahca.myflorida.com/medicaid/Finance/data_analytics/eligibles_report/docs/age_cnty_2021-08-31.pdf
Florida CHARTS, 2020 Population by Year by County . https://www.flhealthcharts.gov/FLQUERY_New/Population/Count

And Our Families...

Of the 54 families served by Early Head Start during FY 2020-2021...

- **86%** *Earned less than federal poverty level (\$26,500 for family of four)*
- **87%** *Participated in WIC (Supplemental Foods Program)*
- **72%** *Received SNAP benefits (formerly known as Food Stamps)*
- **19%** *Received SSI for parent, enrolled child, or sibling*

54% of Early Head Start families were single-parent families, with 46% having two parents living in the household.



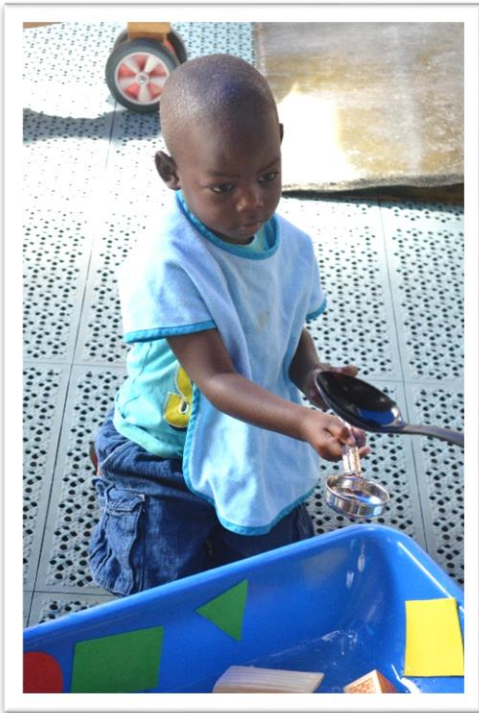
Family Education Level

- **43%** of parents completed high school or GED
- **20%** completed some college or obtained a college degree or certification
- **4%** were enrolled in school or job training during the program year

School Readiness

The FSU Early Head Start Program has developed readiness goals for all children in the five essential domains of child development: social and emotional, approaches to learning, physical well-being and motor development, cognitive and general knowledge, and language and literacy.

This year the “Approaches to Learning” school readiness goal was updated slightly to include developmentally appropriate use of technology. The goals are posted throughout the program office and are shared with all families. School readiness goals are woven into multiple areas of the program’s services, from staff training and professional development to budget planning.



Measuring Progress

Progress toward school readiness goals is measured through child assessment data collected at three different time points during the program year. Other sources of information are also considered, such as parent surveys, child health records, and home visit completion. This data is then aggregated and analyzed along with other sources of child data to improve program effectiveness.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not possible to collect child assessment data with the program’s assessment tool, the Learning Accomplishment Profile, Birth to Kindergarten (LAP B-K), for the entirety of the program year. In order to provide age appropriate

activities virtually, Home Visitors completed periodic developmental screenings using the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3) and incorporated that data along with following parent and child interest.

FSU Early Head Start Program School Readiness Goals

2021-2022

APPROACHES TO LEARNING

#1: Children will be interested in discovery and able to engage in learning about the world around them, including the developmentally appropriate use of technology.

SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT

#2: Children will develop positive relationships with others and begin learning how to express and manage their feelings.

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

#3: Children will communicate with others, become familiar with books and writing materials, and begin connecting pictures, sounds, and symbols.

COGNITION

#4: Children will demonstrate increasing knowledge and problem solving skills gained through exploration and participation in everyday routines and interactions.

PERCEPTUAL, MOTOR, & PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

#5: Children will demonstrate increasing coordination and control of their senses, large muscle and small muscle groups.

#6: Children will develop healthy practices and habits.



	CENTRAL DOMAINS				
	APPROACHES TO LEARNING	SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	LANGUAGE AND LITERACY	COGNITION	PERCEPTUAL, MOTOR, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
▲ INFANT/TODDLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Cognition	Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development
● PRESCHOOLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication Literacy	Mathematics Development Scientific Reasoning	Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development



Child Screening & Disability Services

Early, high-quality child development services are critical to prevention and identification of physical, cognitive, social, and language delays in young children.



All children receive developmental and sensory screenings within 45 days of enrollment to determine if they are “on target” or may need additional support from early intervention services.

Early Head Start programs set aside 10% of their funded enrollment slots for children with special needs and developmental delays. Children with diagnosed delays may be referred to Early Head Start, or they

may be identified after enrolling and receiving ongoing observation and assessment in the program.

- **11%** of children enrolled in Early Head Start during **2020-2021** had an **Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP)** through the **Early Steps Early Intervention** program due to a diagnosed disability or developmental delay.
- **FSU Early Head Start** partners with **community partners, the FSU College of Medicine and Dance Marathon** to offer early childhood screening events in Gadsden County. These events were cancelled in **2020-2021** due to the **COVID-19** pandemic.
- **Local Early Intervention providers** offered a combination of tele-health services and modified in-person services during the **COVID-19 pandemic**.

Health & Nutrition Services

Health services are a central focus of Early Head Start because a child's health can support or limit their typical developmental path. Early Head Start staff become knowledgeable about the health of enrolled children and help families understand the importance of developing an ongoing relationship with a consistent health care provider.

The program assisted all families enrolled during the 2020-2021 program year in establishing a "medical home" for all routine health care. Dental services are available to all children and pregnant women through the local federally qualified health center, Neighborhood Medical Center and all children turning three are referred for a dental exam.



*Only **42%** of children had an up-to-date physical and **80%** were current with immunizations when they enrolled Early Head Start.*

*By the end of the program year, **58%** of children were up-to-date with their well child physical and **88%** had current immunizations. (Some children left the program before this could be completed.)*

Program staff spend time preparing parents for what to expect when they take their child to the doctor or dentist. They also focus on developing healthy habits at home, like hand washing and tooth brushing. **Due to COVID-19, there was an extended period during which Medicaid transportation was unavailable and many families were concerned about taking their children to health care facilities where they might contract COVID-19.**

Home Visitors provide information to families on nutrition about beginning solid foods, appropriate portion sizes for children, and how to read ingredient labels. **All families are referred to the county's Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC)** for additional assistance on nutrition and breast feeding. Healthy food choices are provided at all program events.

Services to Pregnant Women

A healthy pregnancy has a lasting impact on a baby's potential for healthy growth and development. The FSU Early Head Start program strives to enroll women as early during pregnancy as possible, and assist women with navigating the prenatal and post-partum system of care.



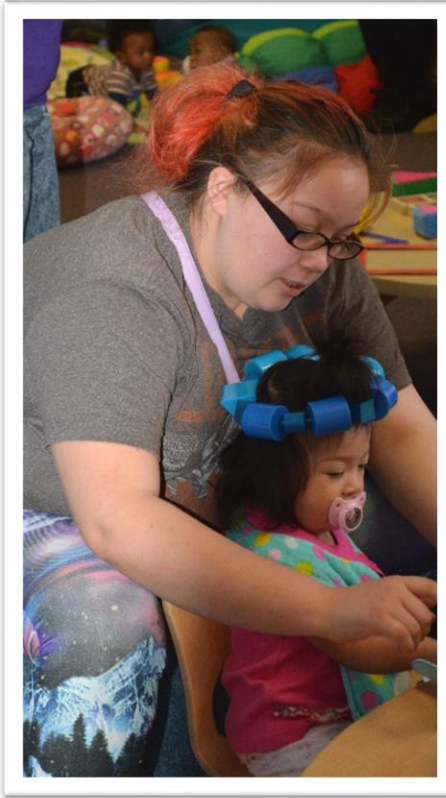
Pregnant women receive weekly home visits and are provided education on fetal development, benefits of breastfeeding, maternal nutrition, maternal depression, substance use and abuse during pregnancy, labor and delivery, and understanding routine prenatal and postpartum care. Other topics discussed during weekly visits may include managing stress, newborn care and safety, intimate partner issues, budgeting, goal setting, and adjusting to life with baby. All of this information is provided using the FSU Partners for a Healthy Baby Home Visiting Curriculum, a unique, research based resource developed right here at the FSU Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy.

Of the 6 pregnant women served by

Early Head Start during FY 2020-2021...

- **50%** *Enrolled in Early Head Start before the beginning of their 3rd trimester*
- **100%** *Enrolled in Medicaid*

Family Engagement

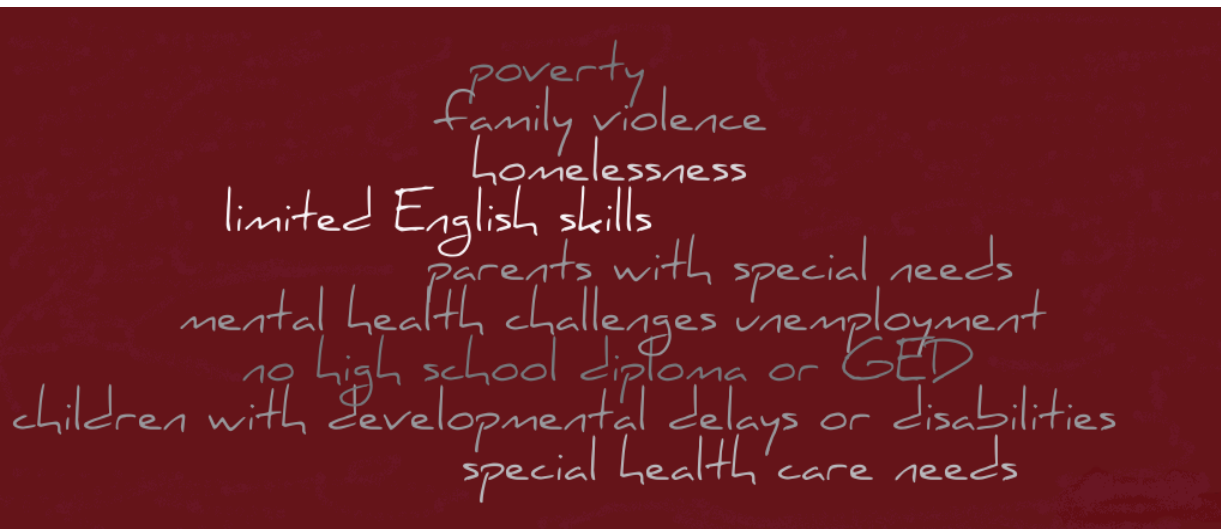


In addition to enhancing child development, Early Head Start programs are designed to strengthen families and empower parents to set and achieve goals. To this end, families are actively involved in goal-setting for their children and families, planning and decision-making about program services. Family engagement activities include:

- ★ Home visits (virtually due to COVID-19)
- ★ Setting goals for their child's educational plan
- ★ Setting goals for their own education and family development
- ★ Leadership activities, through Parent Committee and the Policy Council (virtually due to COVID-19)

100% of families in the program were provided emergency or crisis services (emergency food, diapers, formula, or clothing) due to the increased need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some of the many challenges faced by families in Early Head Start last year include:



A History of Excellent Service

Federal Standards Compliance Review

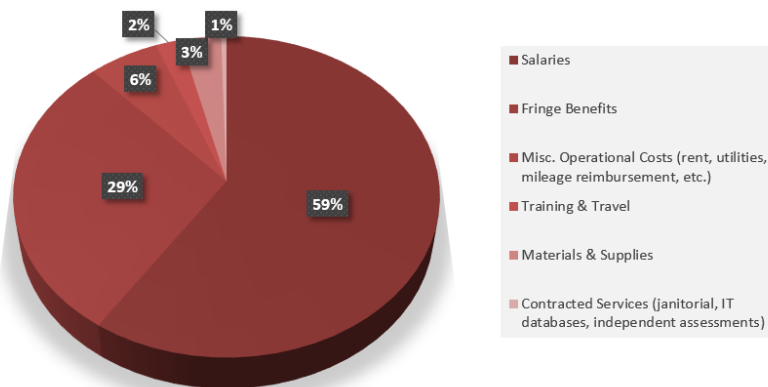
All Head Start and Early Head Start Programs receive an on-site audit through a federal monitoring system to determine how well the program is doing in meeting a volume of Federal regulations which ensure program quality. The most recent review of the FSU Early Head Start program was conducted in January 2018. During that review, a Federal team found the program met more than 2,000 performance standards in 10 of 11 program areas, with only one regulation that needed improvement in the area of non-federal share. As of the publication of this annual report, the program had corrected the review findings and is in full compliance.

Annual Financial Audits

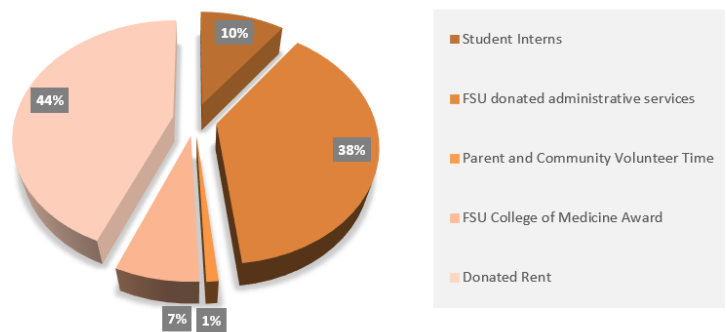
The FSU Early Head Start Program is funded by the federal Office of Head Start, under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Funding received by Florida State University to operate the Early Head Start program is audited annually through the State of Florida Comptroller's audit of compliance and internal controls over financial reporting and Federal awards. The audit is conducted in accordance with the Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996, and related guidance provided by OMB Circular A-133. In more than 20 years of operation, the FSU Early Head Start program has never received a finding from the annual audit of Florida State University.

FY 2020-2021 Program Actual Budget

2020-2021 Federal Award: \$952,363



2020-2021 Non-federal Contribution: \$238,091



FSU Early Head Start
Administrative Office
FSU Center for Prevention & Early Intervention Policy
1339 East Lafayette Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301
(850) 922-1330

Colleen Williams, LCSW
Early Head Start Director

FSU Early Head Start
Program Office
343 E. King St.
Quincy, Florida 32351
(850) 627-9116

For information about participating in the program or volunteering,
contact Jackie Ramirez, Enrollment Coordinator
at jbramirez@fsu.edu

