



Howard Area Community Center Department of Early Childhood Education Annual Report 2017-2018

Howard Area Community Center's NAEYC-accredited Early Childhood Department delivers year-round child care and nutrition services, along with on-site and home visiting family support programs to 157 ages 0-5 and their families through our Family Center and Home Visiting Programs.

Head Start and Early Head Start

In FY18, which began on July 1, 2017 and ended June 30, 2018, 74 Head Start and Early Head Start families found full-day, affordable early childhood education at the Sheila H. Berner Family Center. Our Head Start funded program provided center-based care and education to 36 eligible children, and Early Head Start served 121 eligible children and their families, and 6 expectant mothers with either on-site care, or home visiting services and support.

During FY18, all Head Start children who enrolled in our program entered the classroom. 97% of the children serviced in the Head Start Program were eligible based solely on family income. No families were eligible over-income. 3% of families were categorically eligible. 97% of our Head Start children were able to maintain an up to date schedule of age-appropriate and preventative and primary health care. 100% of the children diagnosed with a chronic condition received medical treatment. 100% of enrollees were up to date with all immunizations

appropriate for their age. Of our Head Start children, 94% received a dental exam. In the Head Start Program, the average monthly enrollment as a percentage of funded enrollment was 93%.

During FY18, all Early Head Start children who enrolled in our program entered the classroom. 88% of the children served in the Early Head Start program were eligible based solely on family income. 6% of families were eligible over-income. 6% of families were categorically eligible. Our Early Head Start was 92% compliant with age-appropriate medical exams. 100% of the children diagnosed with a chronic condition received medical treatment, or 16 children. 91% of enrollees were compliant with up-to-date immunizations according to the Illinois Department of Health audit. In our Early Head Start Program, the average monthly enrollment as a percentage of funded enrollment was 94%.

In Spring of 2018, Howard Area Community Center received an audit from the Office of Head Start covering Focus Area 2. The summary of this audit indicated the program to be in compliance with all requirements in the following areas:

- Program Infrastructure, Oversight, and Improvement
 - Program Management
 - Program Governance
 - Financial Management
 - ERSEA
- Service Delivery
 - Education and Child Development Program Services
 - Health Program Services
 - Family and Community Engagement Program Services

Howard Area Community Center's Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2018 was audited by Knutte & Associates. The organization increased oversight over timely single audit filing. Additional time for the audit process to meet the report submission deadline was included. The organization did not reconcile the grants receivable to the accounting records. This condition was caused due to the employee turnover in the accounting department during the audit period year end. Management agrees with the finding and has successfully implemented corrective actions.

School Readiness

From birth, our goal is to support families in preparing their child for a productive, successful life in the world in which we live. Our philosophy is to promote children's development through play, parent involvement, and goal setting. Our staff is dedicated to the vision of fostering children's optimal potential throughout every developmental milestone.

With a focus on school readiness, we cultivate, encourage, and promote the following:

- Self-regulation
- Self-esteem
- Responsibility

- Cooperation
- Courage
- Confidence
- Sound decision-making
- Character development (compassion, acceptance of self and others, creativity, respect, dependability, and integrity)

School Readiness Plan: The Steps that Connect to Success

Parent Goals

We begin with the firm belief that all parents want their children to be successful in life. We focus on building a working relationship with families, so that we can purposefully plan for children to be exposed to experiences that help form trust, independence, and social skills. We want to work with families in preparing their children to be industrious, creative, and productive individuals with a sense of identity. We believe this begins by asking families to envision their children as successful adults.

Parents as Teachers

All children will learn, grow, and develop to realize their full potential. Our goal is to provide the information, support, and encouragement parents need to help their children develop optimally during their crucial early years of life. The early years of a child's life are critical for optimal development and provide the foundation for success in school and in life. Parents are their child's first and most influential teacher. All young children and their families deserve the same opportunities to succeed, regardless of any demographic, geographic, or economic considerations. An understanding and appreciation of the history and traditions of diverse cultures is essential in serving families. This is why we value family engagement in the program. Parents have expertise and knowledge of their child's strengths and abilities.

Healthy Foundations

Good physical health is a foundation for optimal growth and development. At Howard Area we understand that a child's physical health and overall level of wellbeing impacts all other areas of their development. We pride ourselves in our approach of modeling strategies that support good health and wellness. We put great effort into supporting families' understanding of current best practices for providing for the health, oral health, nutrition, physical safety, and mental health of their children. We utilize Go, Slow, Whoa healthy nutritional messaging guidelines, I'm Moving, I'm Learning initiative, our own unique Howard Area Early Childhood Obesity prevention plan other health and nutrition education frameworks to support healthy foundations.

Mental Health and Wellness

Infant and early childhood mental health is observed and assessed as social and emotional development. In very young children, mental health develops as a capacity for the child to form close and secure relationships; experience, regulate, and express emotions; explore the environment and learn. Children learn these important skills in the context of family, community, and cultural expectations. Children's relationships with their family members first teach them what to expect from other adults and their childcare and school experiences help them to express emotions and feel confident and competent in the exploration of their environment. Exploration and play are the basis for all learning, making mental health arguably one of the most important pieces to a healthy child.

Approach to Learning and Curriculum

Howard Area Community Center's Department of Early Childhood believes that children construct knowledge based on hands-on experience and play. Our curriculum models, The Creative Curriculum and Partners for a Healthy Baby are based on play. They incorporate current educational research and are designed to encourage children to explore, solve problems, and make sense of the world they live in by freely interacting with a variety of materials made available to them both inside and outside of the classroom. We actively create an environment that allows children to explore and enjoy – to see, hear, feel, touch and to move. Our emphasis is on supporting children to reach their fullest developmental potential in the process of engaging with people, equipment, and materials rather than on the creation of a product or result. We focus on child-directed, process-based activities that foster children's educational independence and creativity. The Center's classrooms and home visiting experiences are planned and organized to maximize the following areas of development: Social and Emotional development, Physical development (gross and fine motor), Language and Literacy development, Cognitive development, and Mathematical development. We also plan so that children have the opportunity to explore Arts, Social Studies, and Science. We use Partners for a Health Baby for general prenatal education.

Individualization

As part of our dedication to partnering with families, we believe that collaborating together to develop individualized goals for each child will provide them with the most beneficial educational experience. We believe that every child is unique, having a variety of strengths and learning styles. Our goal is to work together with families to plan and implement goals that are relevant to their child's current stage of development and individual needs. In the Center-based program, we meet formally with families to discuss and plan for these goals four times a year, and we make ourselves available for additional conversations with families as needed. In the event that a parent or staff member have questions about how a child is developing, we believe that working together to provide any additional support that a family may need is the most beneficial approach. This may include offering the family child therapeutic services on-site or at a local school for part of the day once they have an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) from a hospital or Early Intervention Program, or Individual Education Plan (IEP) from a hospital or Chicago Public Schools.

Family Engagement

There are many ways for our Early and Head Start families to become involved and stay engaged in the program, and in their child's education and future. Research indicates that children whose parents and families are involved in their educational experiences are more successful in school. Getting involved during the early childhood stages will prepare families to be active once their children enter elementary school, middle school, and high school. Schools need family engagement to succeed just as much as children do. We welcome family members to spend time in the classrooms. Our program also focuses on providing parents with support on how to create a learning environment at home, and the benefits of doing so, as it further supports classroom learning. As a Head Start and Early Head Start program, we support families in discovering even more ways to become active role models for their children by providing opportunities to explore and expand education, to search for better suited employment, and to tap into support groups where parents and family members can encourage each other.

The philosophy of family support services is to build trusting relationships by listening and providing practical and emotional support to create family partnerships that are child-centered, parent-directed, and supportive to the caregiving environment. Each family is assigned a Family Support Worker (FSW) at the time of enrollment. The Family Support Worker will assist each family in meeting personal or family goals, as well as provide referrals to resources within the community. Family Support Workers are also available to discuss children's behavior and development, and work in collaboration with teachers, coordinators, and consultants to support parents in making informed decisions about their child's wellbeing.

Throughout FY18 the Howard Area Community Center's Department of Early Childhood offered over 45 Parent/Child involvement socialization events that focused on parent and child activities, and relationship strengthening. Activities included Summer, Fall, and Winter Festivals, monthly Parent Meetings with a mental health and wellness focus, bi-monthly groups socialization events, and additionally, our annual Curriculum Night. Several of these events were specifically geared towards men's involvement, such as a Men's Breakfast. We also held 4 parent meetings and various resources tables for parents to discuss the transition to kindergarten. The meetings focused on assisting parents with the registration process for the local public and private schools as well as selective enrollment/option schools, and speaking to parents about how they can better advocate for their children within their new school system. The meetings also focused on informing parents about their rights when advocating for the needs of special education children. Children in our program also visited our own Lending Library where they chose books to read at home with their families that focus on going to kindergarten.

Advocacy

We welcome parents to become an advocate for their child. Becoming an effective advocate for a child means becoming involved in many aspects of their life, including education. And being involved in a child's life is what it takes to be a great and successful parent. As a Head Start and Early Head Start program, we recognize that parents are the strongest supporters of their children, and we encourage their involvement as their children's advocate. We especially encourage involvement as children transition from Head Start to kindergarten, another preschool program, or a different childcare setting.

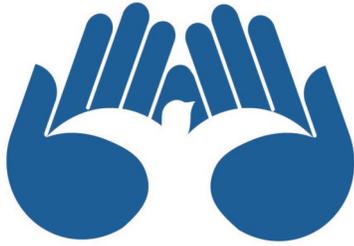
Assessment

We believe that assessing individual and group status and progress is the key to planning learning experiences that respond to the needs, interests, and abilities of every child. To accomplish this, we regularly screen all children within the first 45 days of enrollment into the program, and thereafter as needed. We utilized the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social/Emotional for all children; and Ages and Stages Questionnaire 3 for children 6 weeks to 3 years; and the Early Screening Inventory-Revised for children 3-5 years of age. The tools are designed to identify children's developmental and social/emotional strengths as well as identify any potential areas of concern regarding their individual development. These screenings cover the continuum of development by looking closely at the following areas: cognitive, gross and fine motor, language, and social/emotional development.

We routinely screen children's hearing, vision, height and weight. We accomplish these screenings a number of ways. Hearing and vision skills are often screened by our Community Health Nurse, local pediatricians, or by the City of Chicago. Our Community Health Nurse conducts regular health checks to collect blood pressure, and height and weight information.

We also document children's ongoing development through observations. Four times a year, we collect a "snapshot" of each child's development by assessing these observations and plotting the children's development on a standardized continuum. The tool we utilize for this is the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system. This tool's objectives, dimensions and indicators are aligned with the specific domains and domain elements indicated in the Head Start Early Learning and Outcomes Framework, as well as the Illinois State Early Learning Standards.

What follows are some growth highlights from FY18 Child Outcomes Data. Our data is organized by age level for more valid comparisons.



HOWARD AREA FAMILY CENTER

Assessing Progress Toward School Readiness

Utilizing Teaching Strategies GOLD as the evidence-based assessment tool, Howard Area Community Center’s Early Childhood Department evaluates individual child progress across all program models – Home Visiting, Center-Based Birth-Three, and Center-Based Three-Five. GOLD’s assessment system enables the program to evaluate student achievement data and individual child progress toward school readiness goals.

Through ongoing observations, evidence of each child’s knowledge and skills are collected, documented, and compared to national benchmarks, otherwise known as Widely-Held Expectations. This student achievement data is utilized to inform planning on a variety of levels. Data is utilized to create individualized plans for children and families. It informs action plans for improving instructional delivery, and it informs programmatic planning.

Early Head Start Growth Highlights:

Throughout all domains of development and learning, student achievement data highlighted a positive growth trajectory for each age level of children. See highlights below.

Table 1: Average Annual Student Growth: Early Head Start – Students Ages Birth-One

Bottom Range: Widely Held Expectations	Top Range: Widely Held Expectations	Domain	Score: Beginning Program Year 2017-2018	Score: End Program Year 2017-2018	Margin of Growth for Program Year 2017-2018
4	16	Social/Emotional	12.9	18.1	+5.2
4	12	Physical	9.9	14.2	+4.3
3	15	Language	11.4	17.8	+6.4
2	12	Cognitive	10.0	17.0	+7.0
0	2	Literacy	2.8	5.8	+3.0
0	2	Mathematics	1.8	4.4	+2.6

Children Ages Birth-One demonstrated a growth margin between +2.6 and +17.0 points, with Cognitive development seeing the highest level of growth.

Table 2: Average Annual Student Growth: Early Head Start – Students Ages One-Two

Bottom Range: Widely Held Expectations	Top Range: Widely Held Expectations	Domain	Score: Beginning Program Year 2017-2018	Score: End Program Year 2017-2018	Margin of Growth for Program Year 2017-2018
14	30	Social/Emotional	19.9	27.9	+8.0
12	19	Physical	16.1	18.4	+2.3
14	29	Language	16.8	24.1	+7.3
9	27	Cognitive	17.1	26.7	+9.6
2	13	Literacy	5.1	11.3	+6.2
2	12	Mathematics	3.7	8.9	+5.2

Children Ages One-Two demonstrated a growth margin between +2.3 and +9.6 points, with Cognitive development seeing the highest level of growth.

Table 3: Average Annual Student Growth: Early Head Start – Students Ages Two-Three

Bottom Range: Widely Held Expectations	Top Range: Widely Held Expectations	Domain	Score: Beginning Program Year 2017-2018	Score: End Program Year 2017-2018	Margin of Growth for Program Year 2017-2018
24	39	Social/Emotional	21.3	30.0	+8.7
18	26	Physical	19.3	22.0	+2.7
25	39	Language	23.3	31.3	+8.0
23	39	Cognitive	26.0	33.0	+7.0
12	28	Literacy	9.7	18.0	+8.3
10	24	Mathematics	9.0	13.3	+4.3

Children Ages Two-Three demonstrated a growth margin between +4.3 and +8.7 points, with Social/Emotional development seeing the highest level of growth.

Head Start Growth Highlights:

Throughout all domains of development and learning, student achievement data highlighted a positive growth trajectory for each age level of children. See highlights below.

Table 4: Average Annual Student Growth: Head Start – Students Ages Three-Four

Bottom Range: Widely Held Expectations	Top Range: Widely Held Expectations	Domain	Score: Beginning Program Year 2017-2018	Score: End Program Year 2017-2018	Margin of Growth for Program Year 2017-2018
34	50	Social/Emotional	37.0	45.4	+8.4
23	32	Physical	36.5	32.8	+3.6
34	49	Language	36.5	42.8	+6.3
36	52	Cognitive	37.9	44.9	+7.0
26	52	Literacy	30.2	42.3	+12.1
20	36	Mathematics	22.3	28.0	+5.7

Children Ages Three-Four demonstrated a growth margin between +3.6 and +12.1 points, with Literacy development seeing the highest level of growth.

Table 5: Average Annual Student Growth: Head Start – Students Ages Four-Five

Bottom Range: Widely Held Expectations	Top Range: Widely Held Expectations	Domain	Score: Beginning Program Year 2017-2018	Score: End Program Year 2017-2018	Margin of Growth for Program Year 2017-2018
46	61	Social/Emotional	45.0	58.0	+13.0
29	39	Physical	28.5	38.5	+10.0
43	58	Language	44.0	57.0	+13.0
46	66	Cognitive	50.0	63.0	+13.0
40	81	Literacy	40.0	71.0	+31.0
35	53	Mathematics	32.0	45.0	+13.0

Children Ages Four-Five demonstrated a growth margin between +10 and +31 points, with Literacy development seeing the highest level of growth.

Howard Area Community Center Financial Report

