

Mountain Projects, Inc.
Head Start and Early Head Start
Annual Report 2020-2021



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Mission Statement

Mountain Projects, Inc. Head Start program is dedicated to providing income eligible children and families a comprehensive developmentally appropriate program that is culturally ~~sensitive~~, nurturing, safe, in which children, families, and staff are inspired to reach their fullest potential.

Education Philosophy

Mountain Projects, Inc., Head Start program's philosophy focuses on promoting school readiness through positive social and educational skill building. We are a comprehensive program for children ages 0-5, focused on providing children and their families with educational, social/emotional, health, and nutritional opportunities throughout the classroom environment. We work on establishing patterns and expectations of success for each child in our program that will ultimately create a climate of confidence for present and future learning efforts as well as their overall development. Mountain Projects, Inc., Head Start is an inclusive program for all children including but not limited to children with specialized services.

Mountain Projects, Inc., Head Start staff is committed to providing families with encouragement and support in order for the parents to be their child's first and foremost teacher by encouraging literacy activities at home in addition to developing positive educational experiences so they can have a leadership role in their children's lives including future educational experiences. It is our belief that each child comes to Head Start bringing their own strengths, unique experiences, and different cultural backgrounds, ensuring that every child is treated with love and respect at all times. The Head Start teaching staff will utilize these assets as a foundation base to impact the future through every child we teach.



I am pleased to present the 2020-2021 Head Start Annual Report. This report contains information about our program, services, and this year's accomplishments. What a year! Due to COVID-19, our centers were at reduced capacity to meet social distancing guidelines. Teachers and staff served one preschool classroom virtually, and our agency, program, and community partners helped families by providing food, supplies, and resources as needed.

During 2020-2021, Mountain Projects, Inc. Head Start served a total of 108 children in ten classrooms operating 7 hours a day. We served one child in a private pay slot at Kneedler Child Development Center. Three of our classes participated in NC Pre-K, a state-sponsored school readiness program for 4-year-olds.

Our Early Head Start program served 42 children in six classrooms operating 7 hours a day. We offer the center-based Early Head Start program for 32 children in Haywood County and 16 children in Jackson County.

All of our centers are licensed and have obtained a 5 Star rating, which is the best in quality, teacher qualifications and curriculum. Our comprehensive program provides services to our families in the areas of Family Partnerships, Transition, Education, Health and Nutrition, Intervention, and Mental Health.

Christie Paxton
Head Start Director
Mountain Projects, Inc.

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PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

The governing body shall have legal and fiscal responsibility for the Head Start program. Mountain Projects Board of Directors along with Policy Council works together to govern the Head Start/EHS programs. They are responsible for the direction of the Head Start program including: program design and operation, long and short-term planning goals and objectives. Policy Council representatives also work with the administrative staff to conduct the self-assessment yearly.

Head Start program leadership consists of three key entities: the governing body, Policy Council, and management staff. The governing body assumes legal and fiscal responsibility for the program. The Policy Council sets direction. Management staff oversee day-to-day operations. Together, they are a powerful force that provides leadership and strategic direction.

When innovative leadership, strong management systems, and well-designed services are working together, quality child and family outcomes are the results.

Parent representatives were elected by parents at each center to be Policy Council representatives. Members received orientation in September and annual Shared Governance Training in October. In 2020-2021 all Policy Council meetings were held through Zoom to reduce risk of Covid exposure.

Board of Directors

Board Chair – Rev. Carl Matthews

Vice Chair – Boyce Deitz

Policy Council

Policy Council Chair: Noelle Henson

Policy Council Vice Chair: Ashley Campbell



Secretary – Richard Frady

Treasurer – Bucky Dykes

Secretary: Cori Fritz

Administrative Leadership

Executive Director – Patsy Davis

CFO – Joni Elkins

Head Start Director – Christie Paxton

Education/Disabilities Coordinator – Laura Passmore

Health/Nutrition Coordinator – Lindsay Sutton

ERSEA Coordinator – Madison Hewett

Family Services/Mental Health – Tabitha Justice



Head Start

...a fun place to
learn and play

Serving Haywood and Jackson Counties

Haywood County	Patricia S. Turner Head Start/EHS 35 Peach Bloom Drive Canton, NC 828-648-6637	Edwina G. Hall Head Start/EHS 384 Jones Cove Road Clyde, NC 828-627-0060	Waynesville Head Start Head Start/EHS 489 Pigeon Street Waynesville, NC 828-564-2516
Jackson County	Fairview Head Start Head Start 453 Fairview Road Sylva, NC 828-586-4245 or 828-586-2528	Kneedler Child Development Head Start 69 Cordelia Camp Building WCU Cullowhee, NC 828-293-1530	

For enrollment information, please contact:

Haywood County: 452-1447

Jackson County: 586-2345

Funded Enrollment

EHS – 48 children

HS Children-163

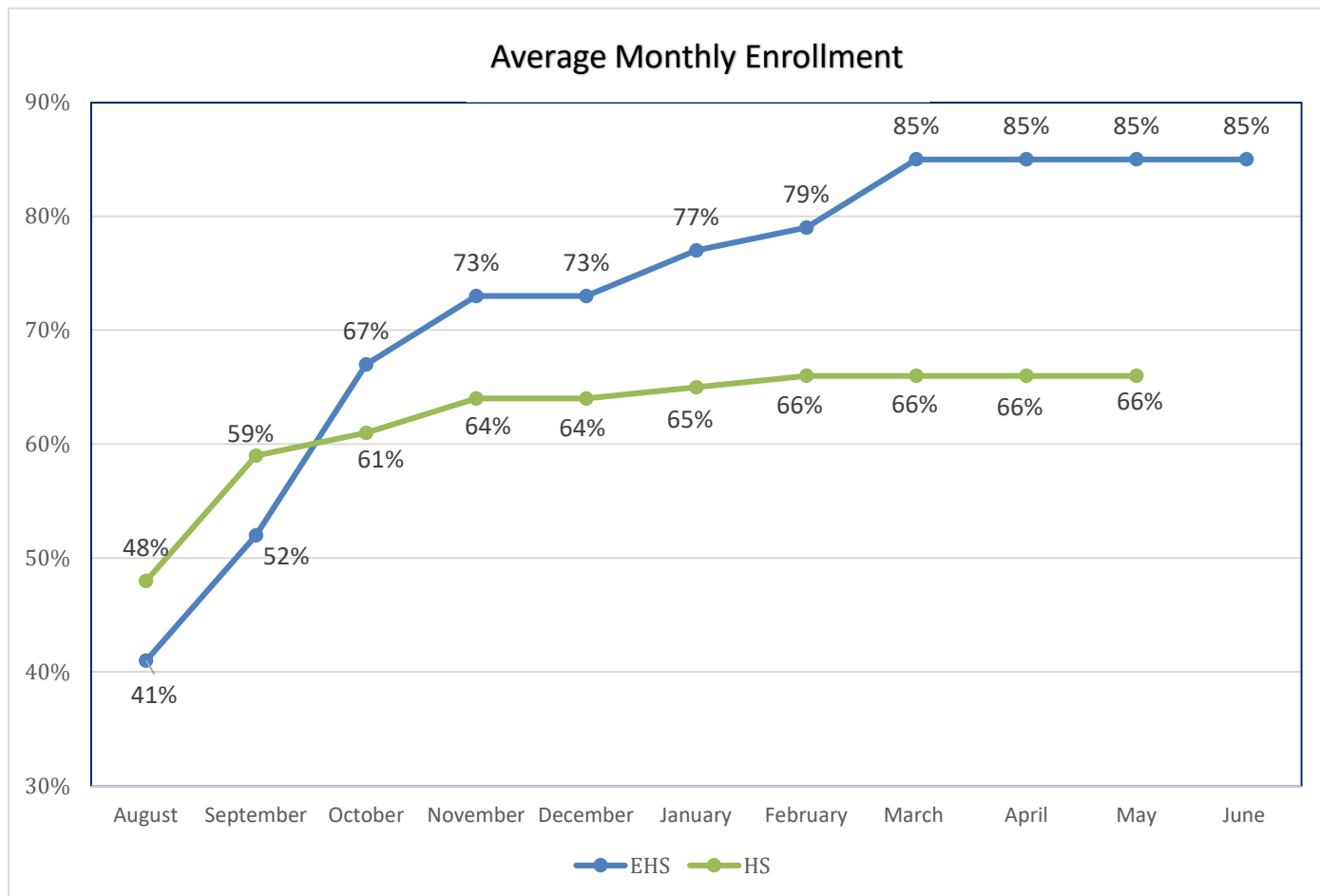
Children Served 2020-2021

1 Year Olds
18

2 Year Olds
24

3 Year Olds
42

4 Year Olds
66



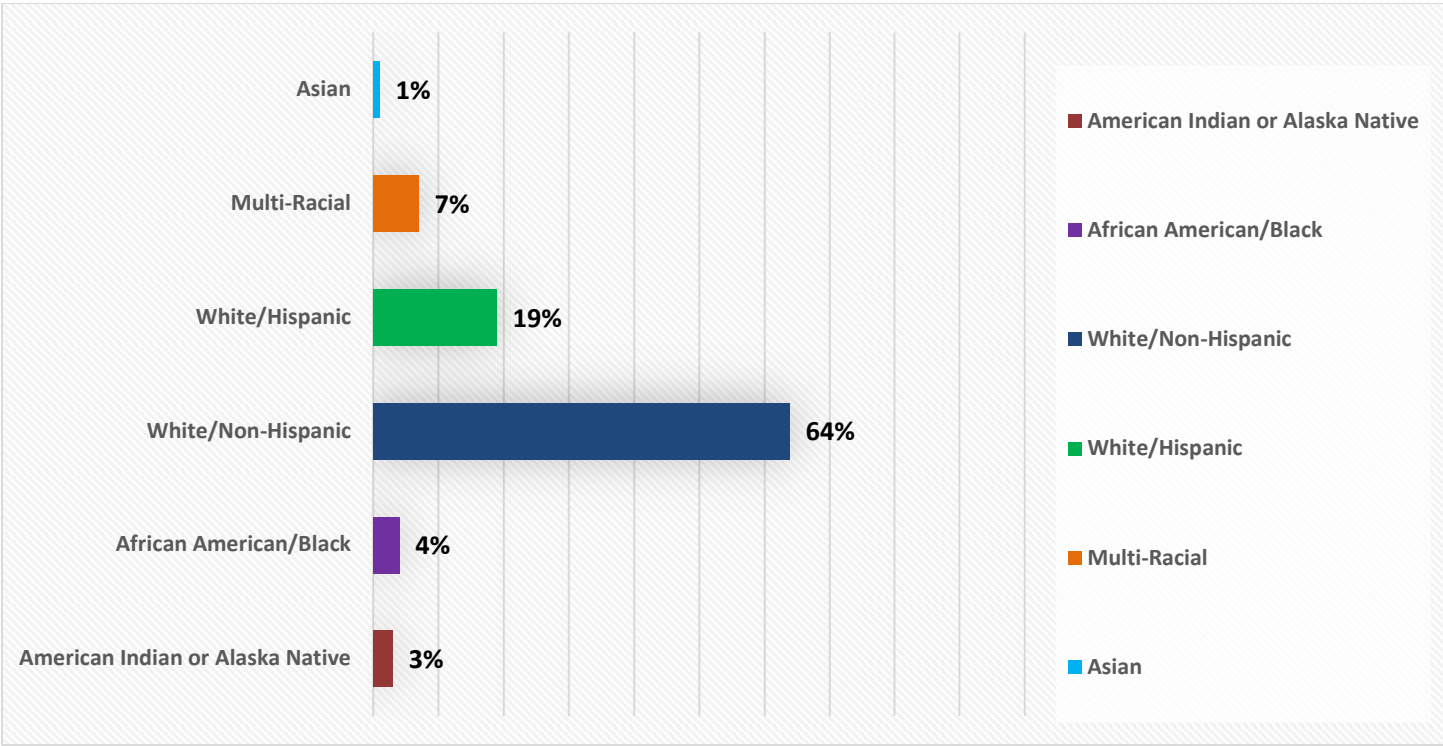
Eligibility

<p>Head Start's Poverty Guidelines are used to determine income eligibility for Head Start and Early Head Start families.</p> <p>Families who meet the income guidelines are eligible for the Head Start program. Children experiencing homelessness and families receiving public assistance such as SSI or TANF are also eligible. Foster children are eligible regardless of income. Over income families are placed based on eligibility.</p>	Type of Assistance	EHS	HS
	100% Poverty	34	63
	Public Assistance	0	5
	Foster Child	2	3
	Homeless	3	12
	100-130%	2	18
	Over Income	1	7

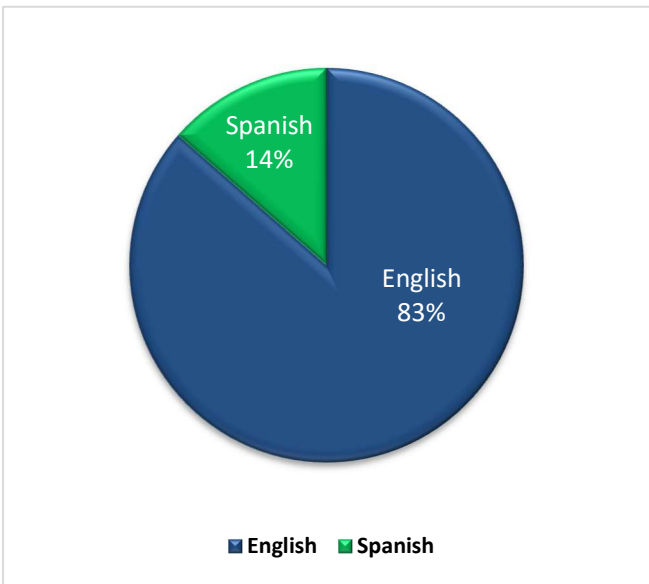


Profile of the Children in Head Start/EHS

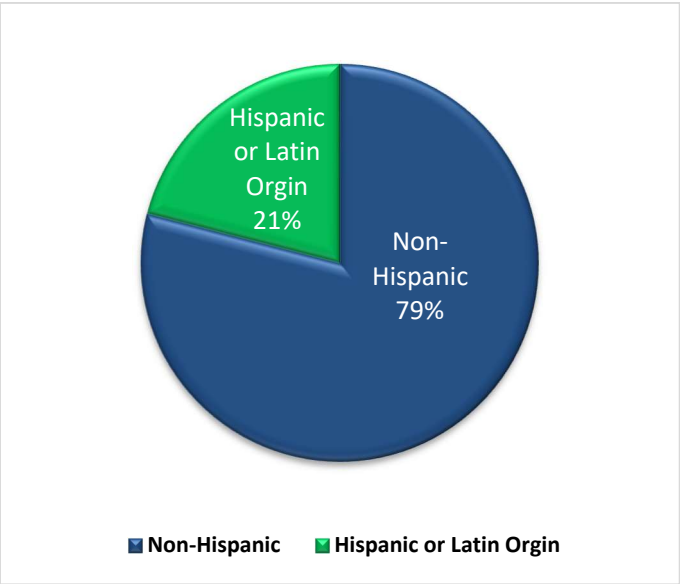
Race

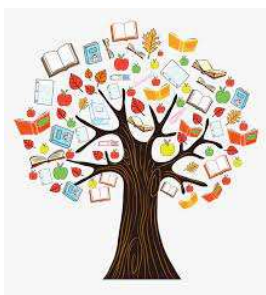


Language



Ethnicity

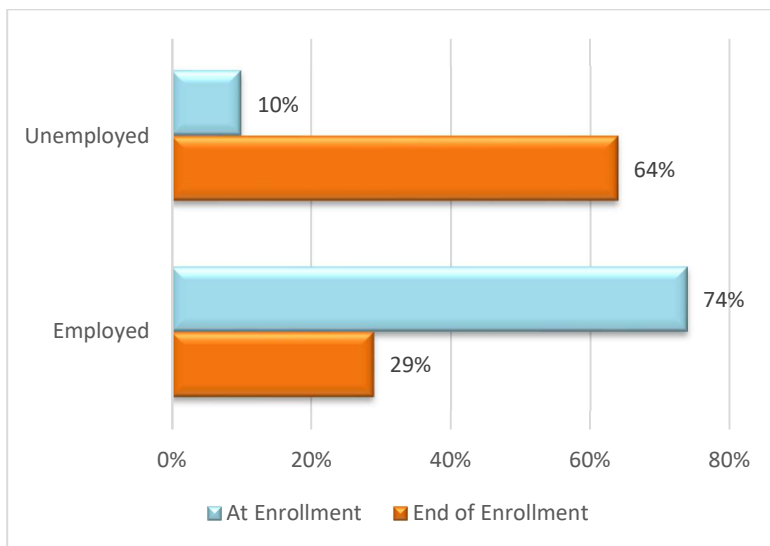




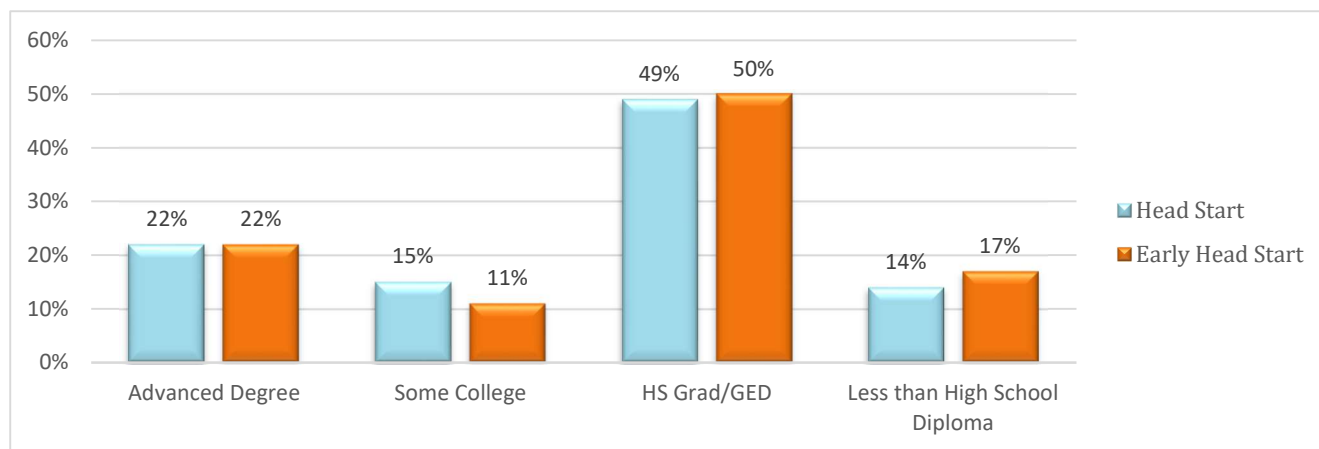
Families Dynamics

Employment

139 families were served during the 2020-2021 program year. Mountain Projects, Inc., Head Start program served **78** two-parent households and **61** one-parent households. During the pandemic, most of our families were employed in the service industry which contributed a higher percentage of unemployment. To help families, Mountain Projects, Inc. aided families with food boxes, diapers, milk, etc. when these businesses shut down and/or decreased work force.



Education Levels of Families

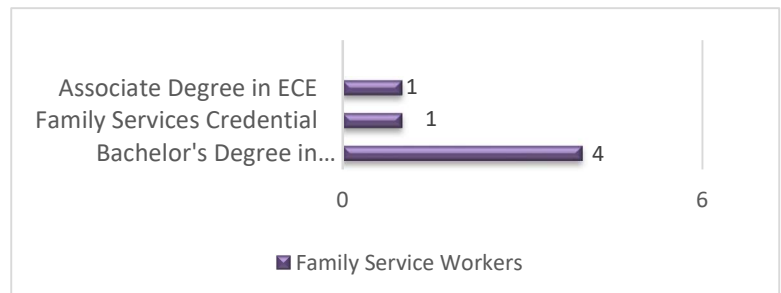
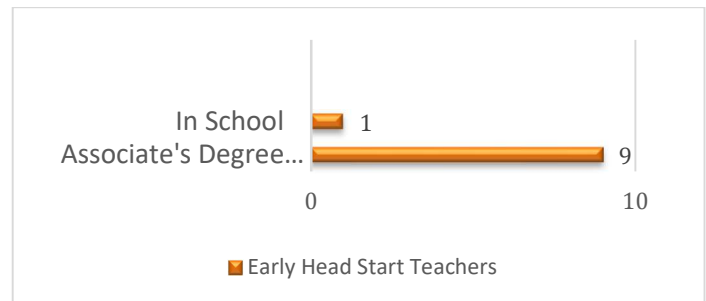
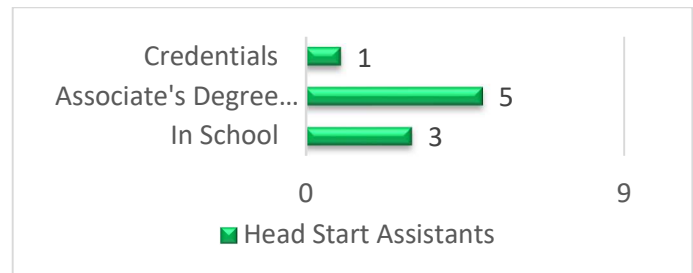
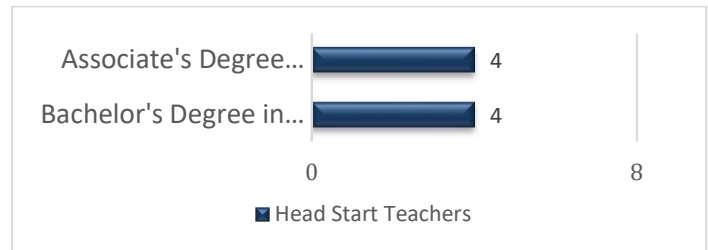


Head Start Qualifications

Mountain Projects, Inc. provides one lead teacher and one assistant in each of the 10 Head Start classrooms. Center Supervisors are housed at each of the five sites to provide mentoring, and support to all teaching staff.

Early Head Start classrooms have two co-teachers in each of the six classrooms.

Family Service Workers are also housed in each of the five sites throughout Haywood and Jackson counties. The education criteria for Family Service Workers is a degree from an accredited university in social work or human services. A family services credential is also offered through North Carolina Community Action Association through a virtual platform.



School Readiness

Why is School Readiness Important?

Children's experiences and skills and characteristics they develop during the first five years of life are critically important to a child's lifelong development. For children to reach their full potential during these early years, adults must provide an environment and experiences that promote growth and learning which influence brain development, language acquisition, problem solving, reasoning, social skills and emotional health.

School readiness to Mountain Projects, Inc. Head Start Program means each child enters kindergarten ready to engage and benefit from their early learning environment and experiences. Each child is unique and an active learner, ready and excited to learn. Each family, teachers, school personnel, and community partners work together to provide developmental opportunities and experiences that incorporate the "whole" family in the educational experience as they move into the next phase of their educational process. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's definition of school readiness along with North Carolina Division of Child Development includes:

Ready children are, physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively healthy.

Ready schools involve parents in their child's education, transition all students into public, private or charter schools and across grades and provide quality instruction and alignment from preschool to grade 3.

Ready families are healthy, educated, safe and stable and provide supportive environments rich with opportunities to learn and grow.

Ready communities are clean, and connected to the mainstream and offer resources, services, and support for families of young children.

Mountain Projects, Inc., Head Start program utilizes Creative Curriculum, a researched-based curriculum which is fully aligned with Head Start Early Learning Framework and North Carolina's Foundations for Early Learning and Development.

School Readiness Goals

School readiness to Mountain Projects, Inc. Head Start Program means each child enters kindergarten ready to engage and benefit from their early learning environment and experiences. Each child is unique and an active learner, ready and excited to learn. Each family, teachers, school personnel, and community partners work together to provide developmental opportunities and experiences that incorporate the “whole” family in the educational experience as they move into the next phase of their educational process.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL

- ❖ Children will develop personal relationships with peers by engaging in cooperative play
- ❖ Children will increase their ability to control emotions internally and externally with self-regulation
- ❖ Children will increase their ability to take care of own needs appropriately

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- ❖ Children will increase gross motor skills by demonstrating balance, strength and motor coordination for a wide-range of physical activities
- ❖ Children will increase fine motor skills by demonstrating hand strength and dexterity for controlling small muscles.

APPROACHES TO LEARNING

- ❖ Children will increase their ability to begin and finish tasks with direct and indirect instruction

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

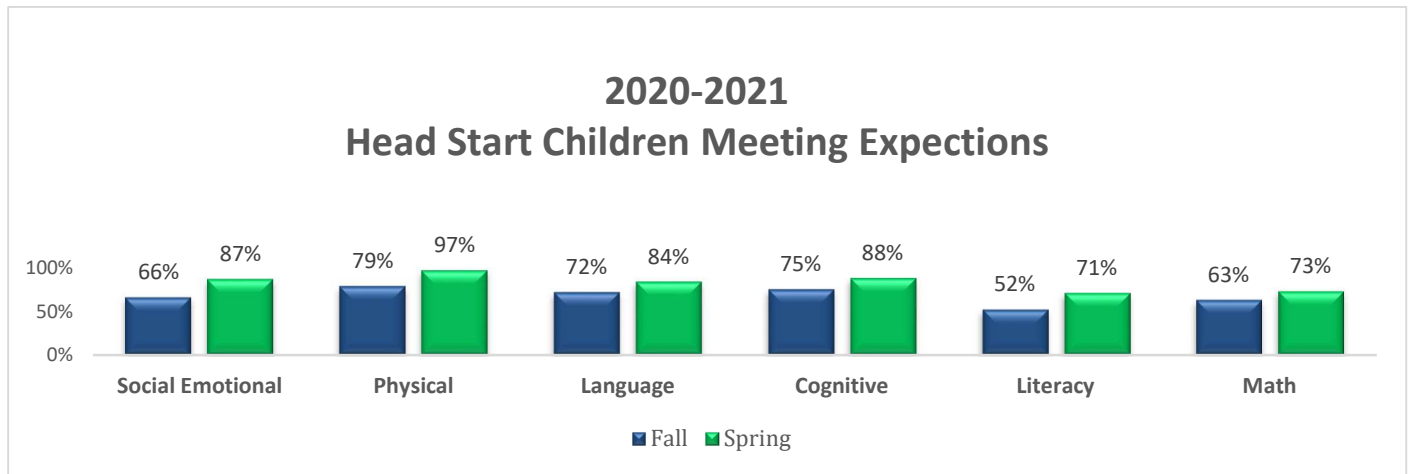
- ❖ Children will increase vocabulary to express wants, needs, ideas, feelings, and to relate information and experiences.
- ❖ Children will increase their use of books in everyday routines to acquire literacy skills.
- ❖ Children will demonstrate knowledge of the alphabet by identifying and naming letters randomly.
- ❖ Children will demonstrate emergent writing skills by experimenting with writing tools and materials.

COGNITION

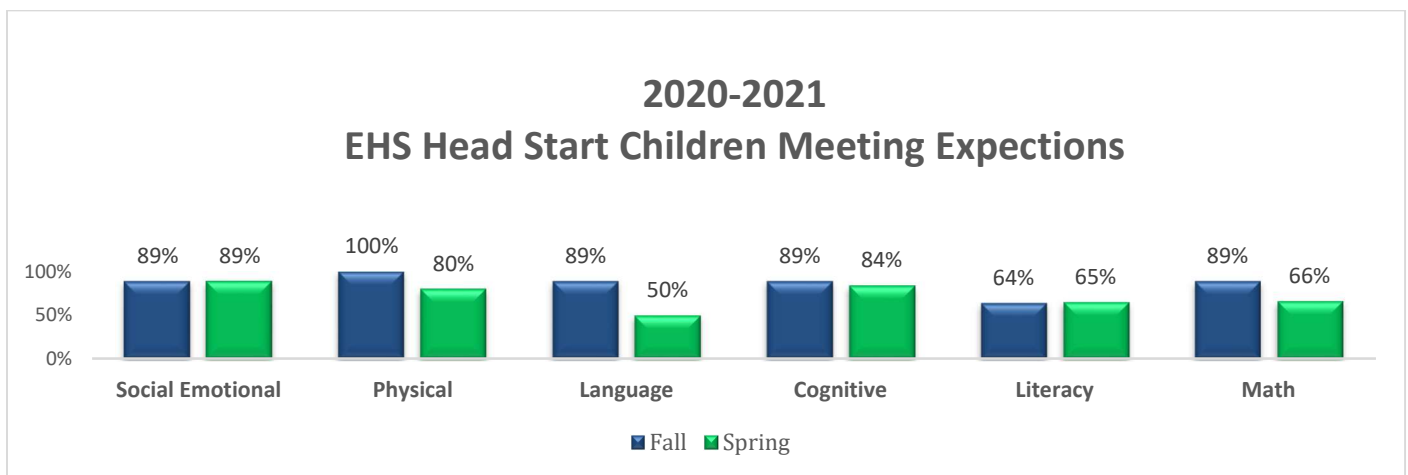
- ❖ Children will use a variety of strategies to problem solve, gather information and make predictions
- ❖ Children will develop an understanding of numbers and quantities within the classroom environment and individualized activities.
- ❖ Children will start to associate quantities with written numerals through hands-on activities.
- ❖ Children will be able to understand simple patterns through small and large group setting and individualizations

School Readiness Outcomes

Teaching Strategies Gold is a standardized ongoing assessment system to evaluate each child's development and progress. Teachers observe, and document each child's progress three times a year. Teachers share each child's progress through parent-teacher conferences or home visits.



Based on the 2020-2021 data, Mountain Projects, Inc., made gains in all areas of development. The largest gains were made in Social Emotional development (21%), Literacy (19%) and Physical Development (18%). Based on the 2020-2021 data, Mountain Projects, Inc., overall scores in Language, Cognitive and Mathematical Development showed the slowest growth. Mountain Projects, Inc. Administrative staff have analyzed the data and will provide professional development activities during pre-service and throughout the 2021-2022 year.



Based on the 2020-2021 data, Mountain Projects, Inc., Early Head Start program showed a decrease in all areas of development. Due to Covid-19, enrollment numbers were lower than previous years. Enrollment increased throughout the year as parents felt more comfortable enrolling their children in the Early Head Start program. The data is skewed based on children enrolling throughout the year.

PREPARING CHILDREN FOR KINDERGARTEN

65 children in Haywood and Jackson Counties transitioned to kindergarten at the end of the program year.



Subsidy (Wrap-Around Services)

Due to the pandemic, subsidy services were limited to maintain social distancing. Services were provided from 7:30 to 8:00 AM and 3:00 to 4:30 PM. These services were available for qualifying parents who are working or attending school.

Transition Activities

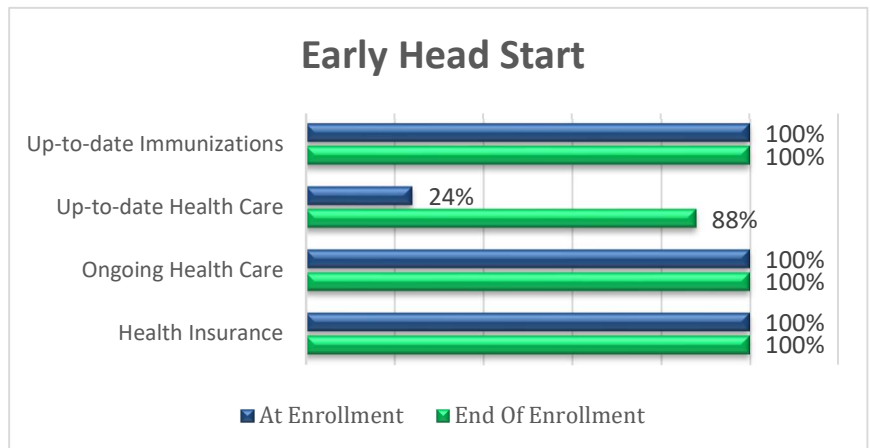
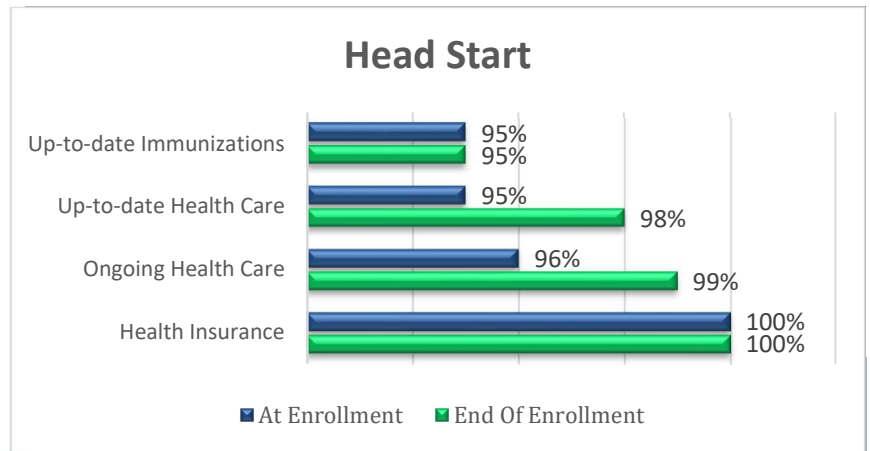
- ❖ Education Coordinator worked with teaching staff to complete portfolios to be sent to each child's prospective school
- ❖ Kindergarten readiness parent meetings were held virtually for parents at each center.
- ❖ IEP Transition meetings were held for children with special needs



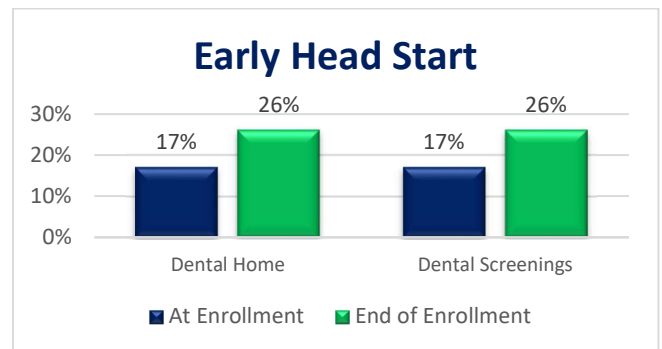
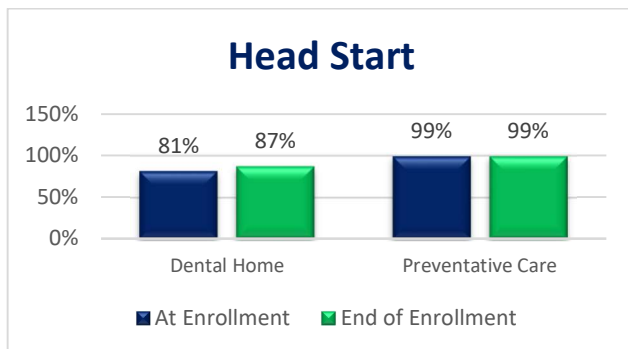
Head Start Comprehensive Services

Health Data

Screenings are completed within the first 45 days for newly enrolled children. Family Service Workers work diligently with parents to ensure physicals, immunizations and dental screenings are up-to-date based on the EPSDT guidelines. Growth assessments are completed twice a year to measuring each child's height and weight. Due to COVID-19, all children did not receive all recommended medical and dental follow-up and/or treatment compared to previous years. Pediatrician and dental offices were closed or limited to only emergency and acute care. Parents were also hesitant to take children into medical or dental offices due to the pandemic.



Dental



Mental Health Matters

Mountain Projects, Inc. Head Start program contracts with KARE (Kids Advocacy Resource Effort) and 30th Judicial District Alliance, Inc. to provide services including classroom and individual observations, trainings for staff, parent consultations and referrals. KARE also provided ongoing Mental Health consultations to families and staff.

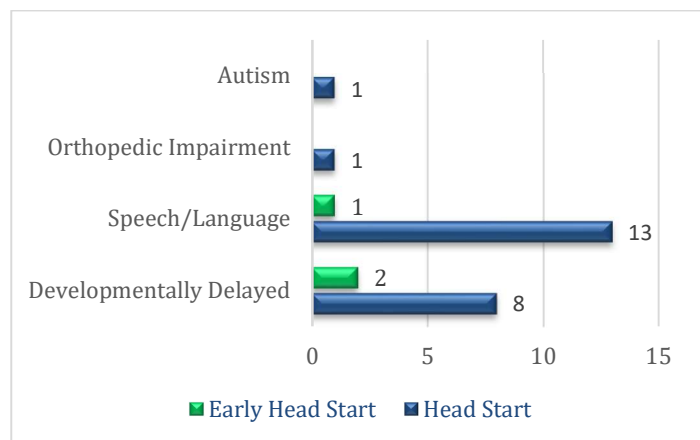
In 2020-2021, mental health consultants provided 30 hours of services for 10 Head Start and Early Head Start children.

Intervention

Mountain Projects, Inc. Head Start program has MOU's with Haywood and Jackson County schools and the CDSA (Child Development Service Agency) to provide evaluations and services to children. Collaboration with outside agencies is vital to all children enrolled in our program to receive specialized services to meet their individual needs based on North Carolina criteria for special needs. In 2020-2021, 21% of Head Start children and 7% of Early Head Start children have been determined eligible for special education and related services.



Disability Services by Category



Services for Families

A strong parent-child relationship is essential to a child's healthy development, school readiness, and well-being. When families face challenges that cause stress, including poverty, homelessness, pandemics, natural disasters, and job loss, their health and wellness can be negatively impacted. Family Service Workers work closely with all parents to connect them with resources and services within our community. Each Family Service Worker is assigned to a center to be able to build positive relationships with each family. Goals are set at the beginning of the year with the Family Partnership Agreements and continue to work with parents throughout the year. Immediate needs are addressed at enrollment to ensure all families are given information and resources and followed up throughout the year.

Parent Engagement



All Head Start and Early Head Start parents spent time completing home activities with their children. Parent Activities are an extension of classroom instruction. Some activities included matching, sorting, counting, reading to their child, etc.

In Haywood County, there were 100 volunteers who provided 5,865 hours of service

In Jackson County, there were 44 volunteers who provided 3,039 hours of service.



123 families received crisis intervention services, including food, clothing or shelter



95 families received parenting classes through "Positive Action", our parent curriculum

Agencies and places who volunteered time, services, and donations to the program during the 2020-2021 program year.

- ❖ Feeding the Multitudes
- ❖ Women with the Moose Lodge
- ❖ Knights of Columbus
- ❖ Clothes to Kids
- ❖ Anna Kiddie Korner
- ❖ Long's Chapel United Methodist Church
- ❖ Mountain Credit Union
- ❖ Crabtree United Methodist Church
- ❖ KARE
- ❖ 30th Judicial Alliance
- ❖ Balsam Mountain Preserve
- ❖ Jackson County Christmas Connection
- ❖ WNC Communities -Food Boxes
- ❖ Volunteers who delivered food boxes
- ❖ Private Sponsors



Funding Sources

Program Revenues

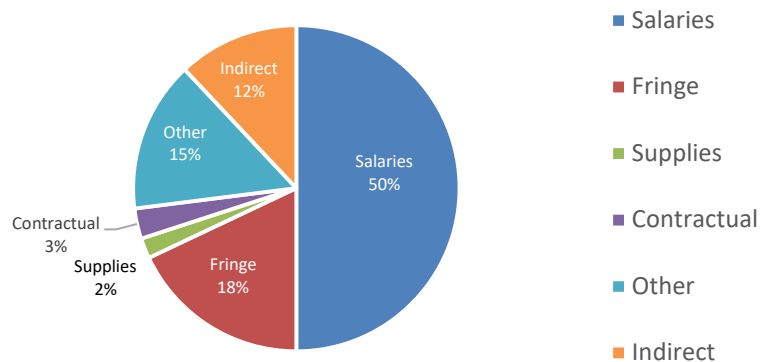
Head Start	\$1,839,169
Early Head Start	\$819,696
Covid Funds	\$185,429
NC Pre-K	\$80,000
Subsidy (Wrap-Around)	\$9,523
CACFP Reimbursement	\$86,379
American Rescue Fund	\$315,966
Total Income	\$3,336,162

Program Expenditures

Head Start

Budget Line Item	Budgeted	Expenditures
Salaries	\$1,000,869	\$800,021
Fringe Benefits	\$403,130	\$281,398
Supplies	\$98,213	\$37,244
Contractual	\$45,220	\$49,051
Other	\$150,360	\$235,437
Indirect Costs	\$198,987	\$186,962
TOTAL	\$1,839,169	\$1,601,716

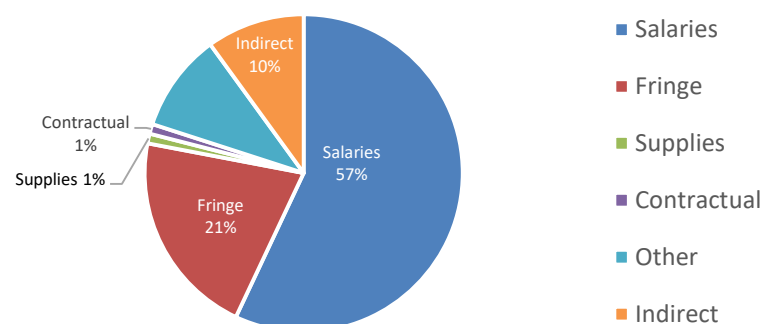
Expenses

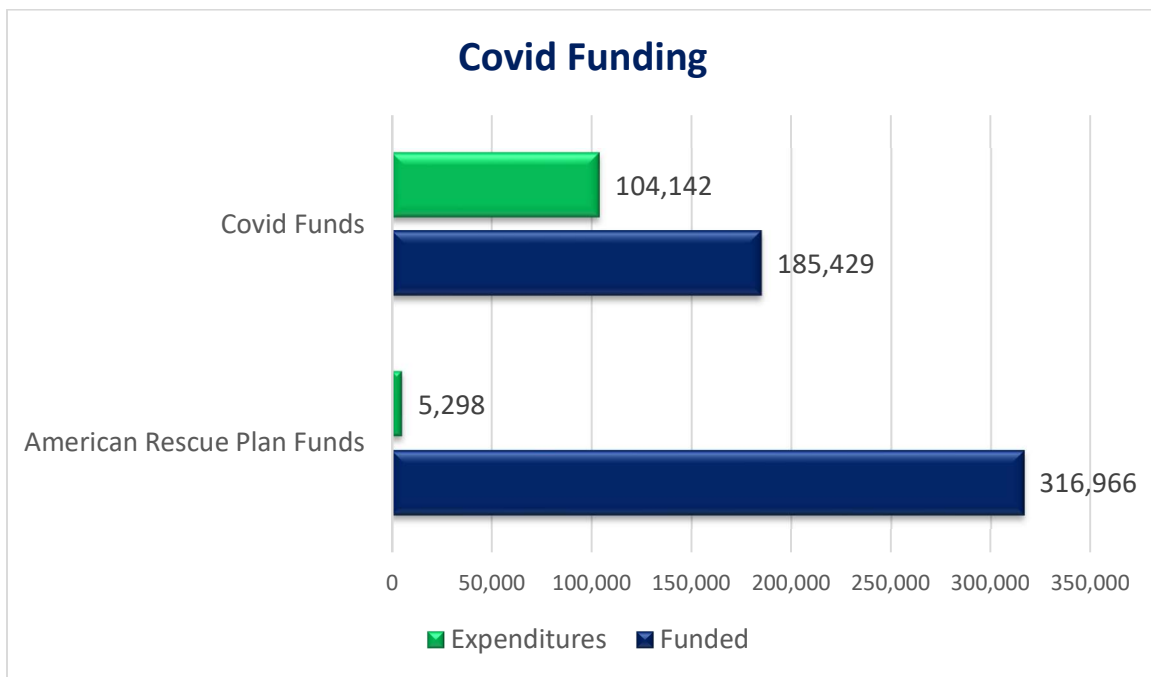


Early Head Start

Budget Line Item	Budgeted	Expenditures
Salaries	\$463,285	\$462,000
Fringe Benefits	\$176,049	\$166,265
Supplies	\$44,439	\$8,652
Contractual	\$9,766	\$9,594
Other	\$30,131	\$78,789
Indirect Costs	\$77,914	\$79,948
TOTAL	\$819,696	\$808,203

Expenses





Public Funding

Mountain Projects, Inc. Head Start Program collaborated with NC PRE-K Program and received \$80,000 in funding for 20 children in three (3) NC Pre-K /Head Start classrooms.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a program that is provided by the United States Department of Agriculture. The purpose of CACFP is to improve the nutritional quality of meals served to children in child care centers and child care homes, and adults in day care. The program improves the nutritional quality of meals and snacks in three ways:

1. Setting requirements for the kind and amount of food to be served.
2. Providing money (reimbursement) to eligible programs and providers for meals that meet requirements.
3. Requiring periodic training and monitoring for staff in participating organizations.

As greater numbers of young children are in child care, the CACFP program becomes more important in helping to assure that infants, toddlers, and young children are served nutritious meals and snacks as part of a healthy lifestyle. Mountain Projects, Inc. Head Start program was reimbursed an established percentage for every meal (breakfast and lunch) and every snack that we served to enrolled children. For 2020-2021, we received a total of \$86,3279 in subsidies for meals/snacks served to enrolled children.

Professional Development

Head Start		Early Head Start	
Budgeted Amount	Expenditures	Budgeted Amount	Expenditures
\$22,090	\$11,603	\$18,112	\$2,955

Non-Federal Match

2020-2021 ACTUAL BUDGET	MATCH REQUIRED	MATCHED EARNED
Head Start & Early Head Start	\$664,716	544,247

In 2020-2021 program year, Mountain Projects, Inc., Head Start program asked for a waiver of \$130,000 to meet the required match \$664,716. The waiver was granted and the match required was reduced to \$534,716. Mountain Projects, Inc., Head Start program earned \$544,247 to meet the required match.

Audit

The audit will be presented at Mountain Projects, Inc., governing board meeting in December 2021.

Did you know...

The Head Start Logo
tells a story?



- ❖ The two squares represent early childhood by suggesting building blocks.
- ❖ The arrangement of the blocks represents stairs by which this can be accomplished.
- ❖ The vertical stripes represent the child and parent.
- ❖ The arrow pointing upward represents the direction out of poverty and on to the future.
- ❖ The colors red, white and blue represent the United States and the many opportunities it provides for its citizens.



GET A HEAD START FOR KINDERGARDEN

MOUNTAIN PROJECTS HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START

Now accepting new children, birth to age 5, for the upcoming school year! Call 828-452-1477 in Haywood County and 828-586-23485 in Jackson County.