

Mountain Projects, Inc.
Head Start and Early Head Start
Annual Report 2021-2022



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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 2021-2022 Head Start Annual Report. This report contains information about our program, services, and this year's accomplishments.

During 2021-2022, Mountain Projects, Inc. Head Start served a total of 137 children in seven classrooms operating 7 hours a day. 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 59 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.

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 2021-2022 all Policy Council meetings were held through Zoom to reduce risk of Covid exposure.

Board of Directors

Board Chair – Rev. Carl Matthews
Vice Chair – Tracy Rodes
Secretary – Brandon Rogers
Treasurer – Bucky Dykes

Policy Council

Policy Council Chair: Cassie Rogers
Policy Council Vice Chair: Tisha Biddix
Secretary: Cathy Langdale

Administrative Leadership

Executive Director – Patsy Davis
CFO – Joni Elkins
Head Start Director – Christie Paxton

Education/Disabilities Coordinator – Laura Passmore
ERSEA Coordinator – Madison Hewett
Family Services/Mental Health – Tabitha Justice
Health/Nutrition Coordinator – Lindsay Sutton



Head Start

...a fun place to
learn and play

Serving Haywood and Jackson Counties

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

For enrollment information, please contact:

Haywood County: 452-1447

Jackson County: 586-2345

Funded Enrollment

EHS – 56 children

HS Children-151

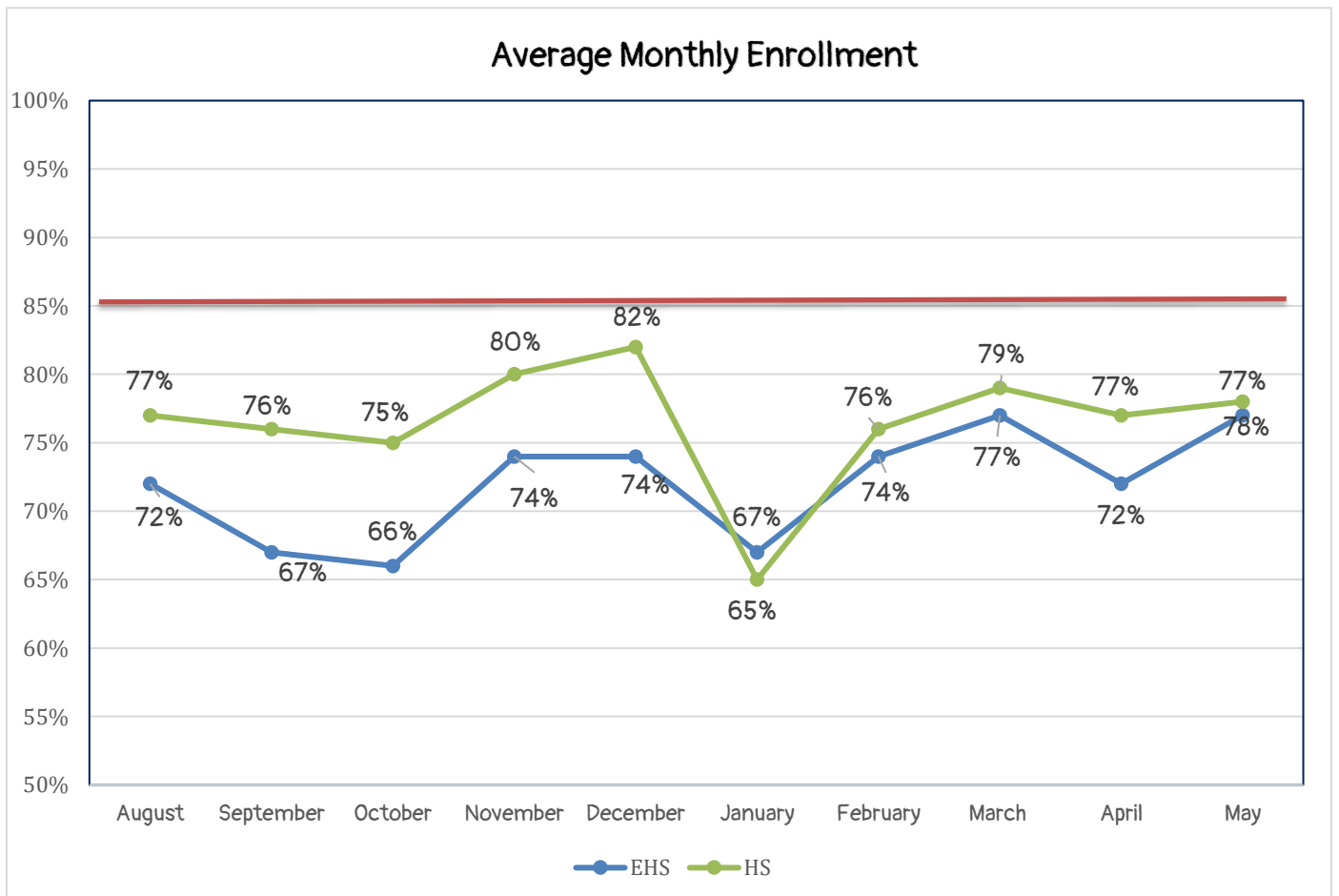
Children Served 2021-2022

1 Year Olds
30

2 Year Olds
34

3 Year Olds
70

4 Year Olds
62



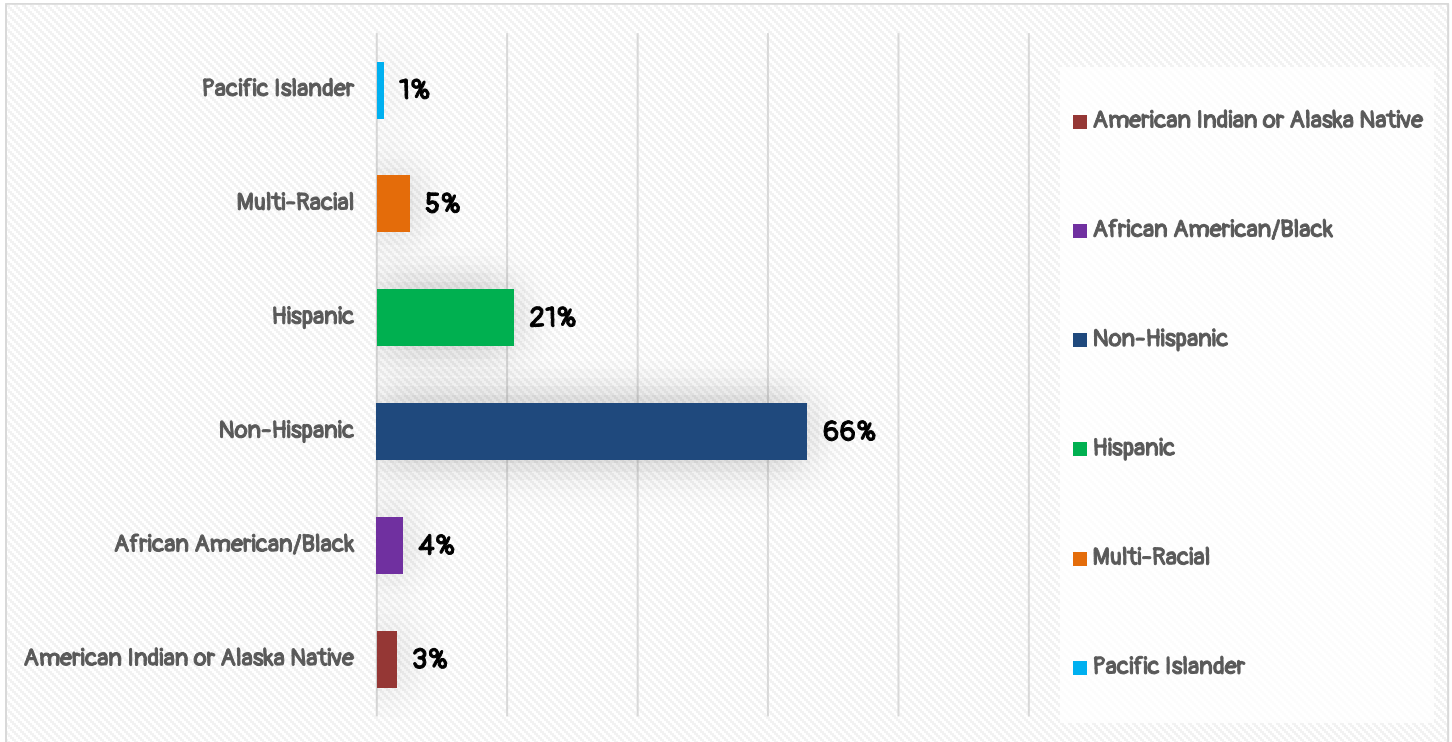
Eligibility

<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	46	92
	Public Assistance	0	1
	Foster Child	1	6
	Homeless	2	3
	100-130%	7	27
	Over Income	3	8

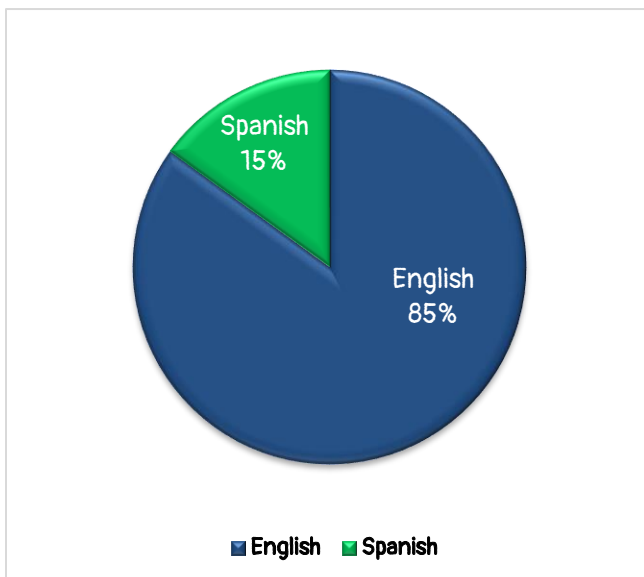


Profile of the Children in Head Start/EHS

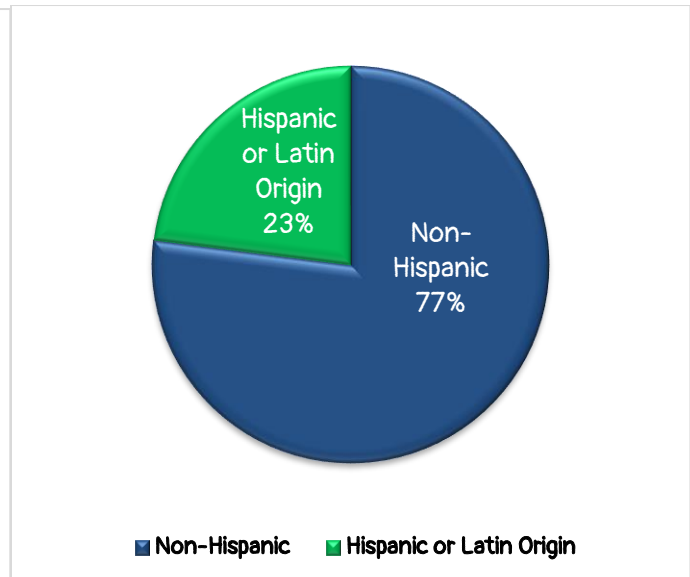
Race

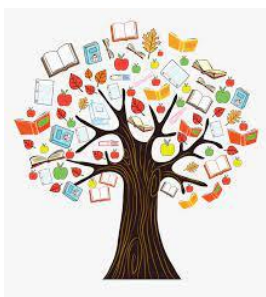


Language



Ethnicity



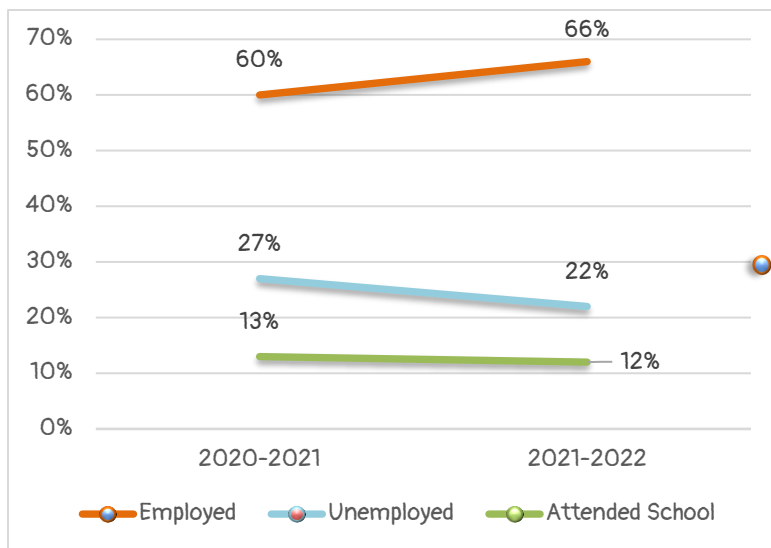


Families Dynamics

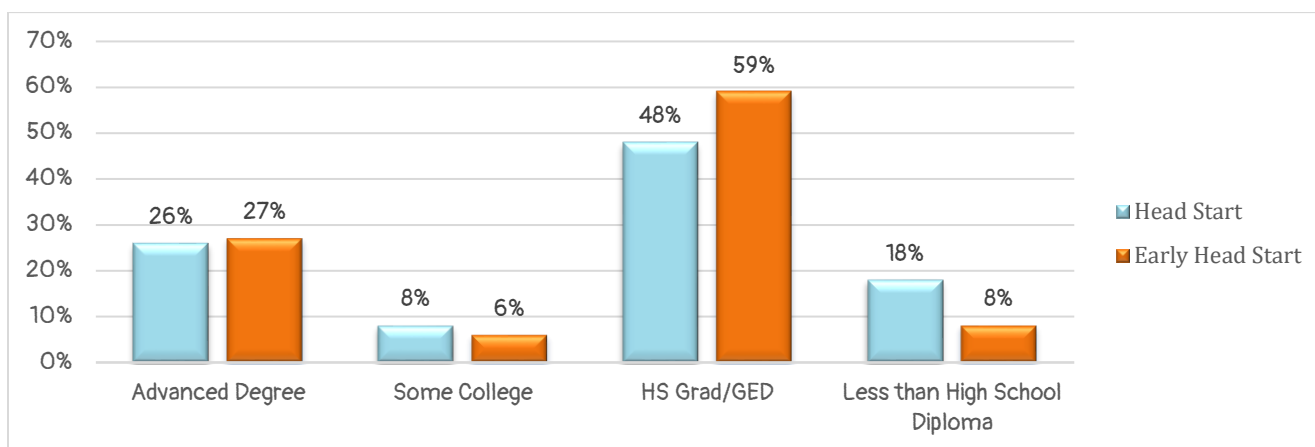
Employment

182 families were served during the 2021-2022 program year. Mountain Projects, Inc., Head Start program served **85** two-parent households and **97** one-parent households.

In 2021-2022 program year, Mountain Projects, Inc. Head Start program served 43 additional families compared to 2020-2021 program year. One-parent households increased by **19%** from 2020-2021 program year to 2021-2022 program year. Data has shown that an increase in stress from Covid-19 could have led to this increase. To help families, food boxes were offered to any family in need.



Education Levels of Families

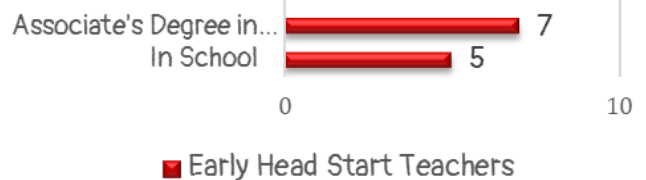
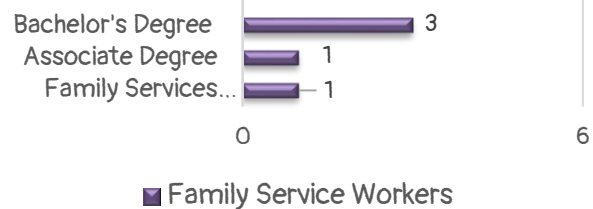
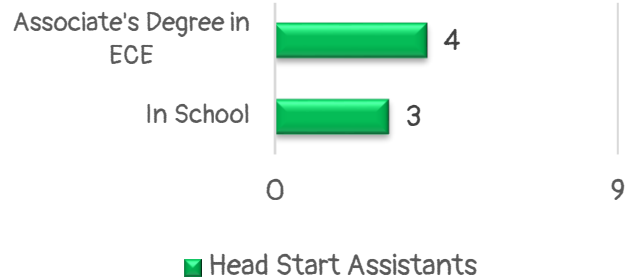
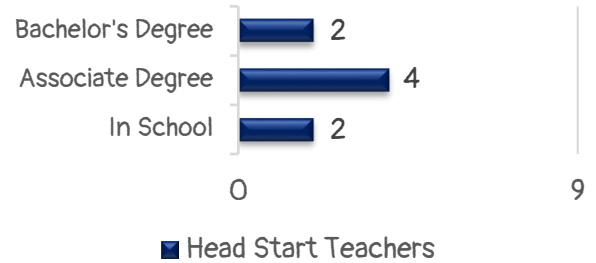


Head Start Qualifications

Mountain Projects, Inc. provides one lead teacher and one assistant in each of the seven opened 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 or a Family Services credential which is 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

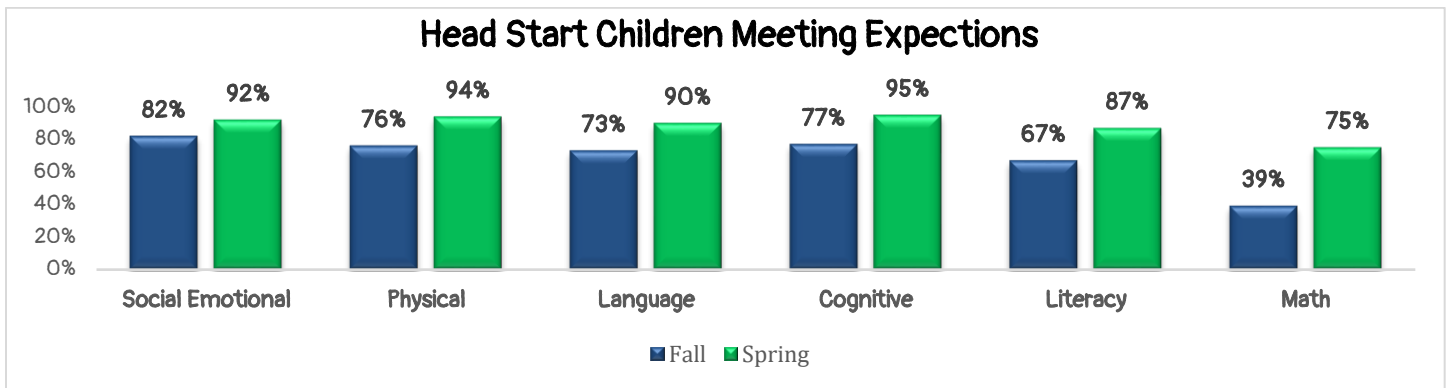
- ❖ Children will increase vocabulary to express wants, needs, ideas, feelings, and to relate information and experiences.
- ❖ Children will increase their use of books in everyday routines to acquire literacy skills.
- ❖ Children will demonstrate knowledge of the alphabet by identifying and naming letters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

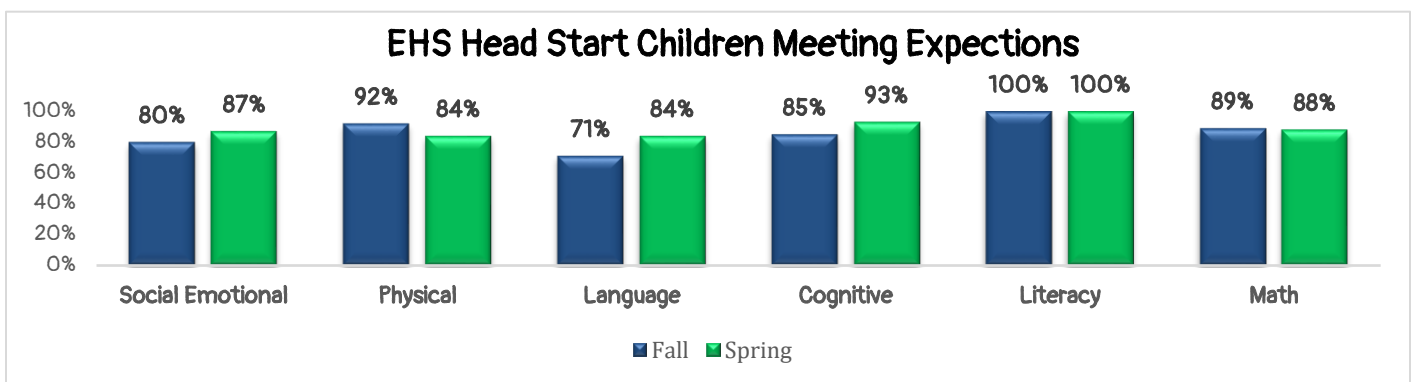
School Readiness Outcomes

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 2021-2022 data, Mountain Projects, Inc., made gains in all areas of development. The largest gains were made in Mathematical Development (36%), Literacy (20%), Cognitive and Physical Development (18%). Based on the 2021-2022 data, Mountain Projects, Inc., overall scores in Language, and Social/Emotional showed the slowest growth based on the pandemic and children being at home for almost six months before returning to school.

Mountain Projects, Inc. Administrative staff have analyzed the data and will provide professional development activities during pre-service and throughout the 2022-2023 year.



Based on the 2021-2022 data, Mountain Projects, Inc., made gains in all areas of development with the exception of Physical and Mathematical Development. Language development showed the most growth (13%) based on the pandemic and children being at home for almost six months before returning to school.

Mountain Projects, Inc. Administrative staff have analyzed the data and will provide professional development activities during pre-service and throughout the 2022-2023 year.

PREPARING CHILDREN FOR KINDERGARTEN

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



Subsidy (Wrap-Around Services)

Wrap-Around 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

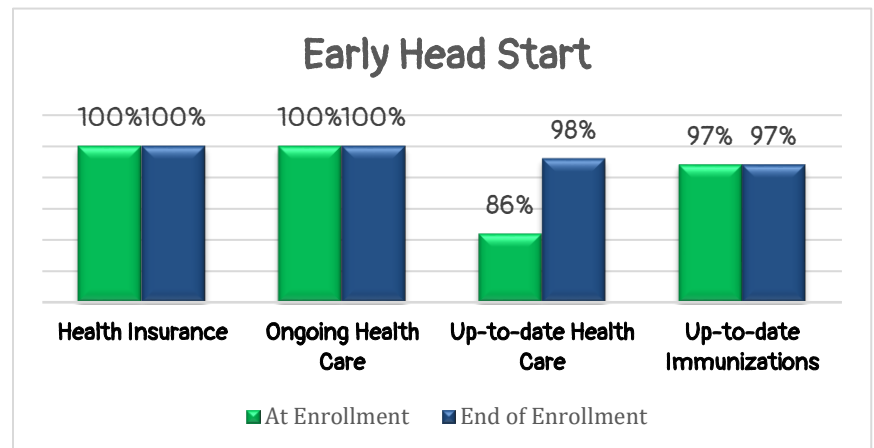
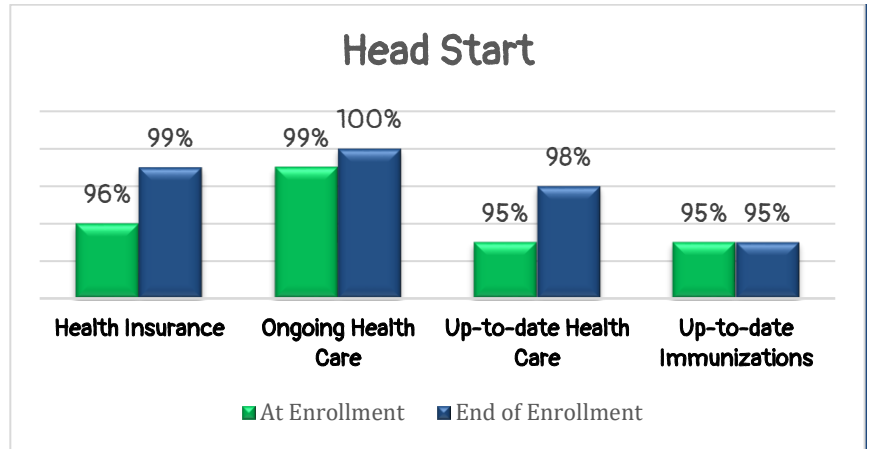
- ❖ Education Coordinator worked with teaching staff to complete portfolios to be sent to each child's prospective school
- ❖ Kindergarten readiness parent meetings were held virtually for parents at each center.
- ❖ IEP Transition meetings were held for children with special needs



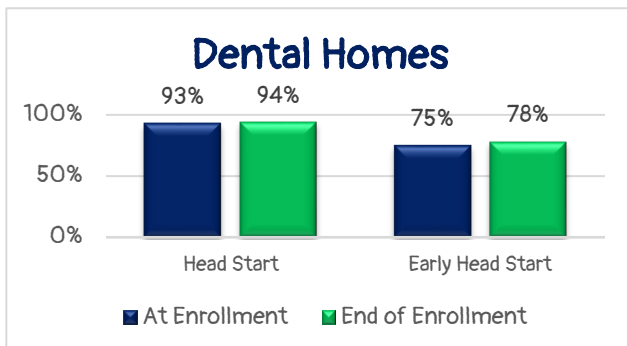
Head Start Comprehensive Services

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. Parents were also hesitant to take children into medical or dental offices due to the pandemic.



Dental



Preventive Dental Care

- Head Start: **57%** received dental screenings in 2021-2022
- Due to the pandemic, children fell behind on maintaining the recommended EPSDT schedule.

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 2021-2022, Mountain Projects, Inc, Head Start/EHS program hired a Mental Health Consultant to work part-time with the children enrolled in our program as well as their families. **Seventeen** children were provided with mental health consultation throughout the program year.

Intervention

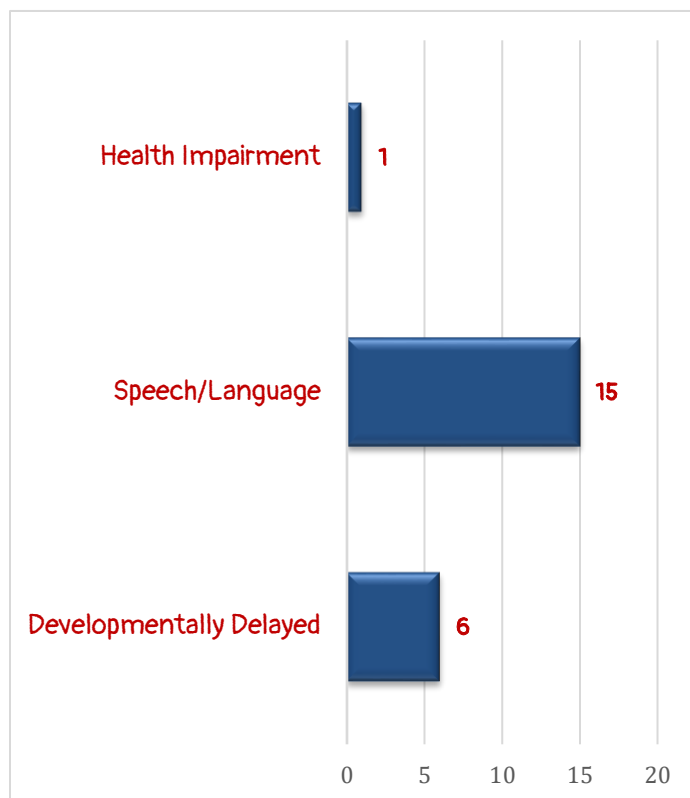
Mountain Projects, Inc. Head Start program has MOU's with Haywood and Jackson County schools and the CDSA (Child Development Service Agency) to provide evaluations and services to children. Collaboration with outside agencies is vital to all children enrolled in our program to receive specialized services to meet their individual needs based on North Carolina criteria for special needs. In 2021-2022, 16% of Head Start children and 8% of Early Head Start children have been determined eligible for special education and related services.

Disability Services by Category

Head Start



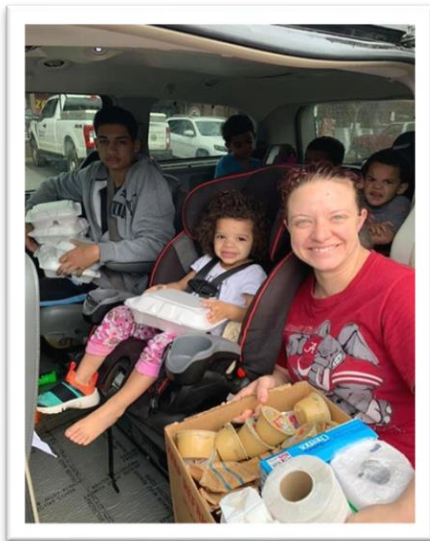
~15~



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 150 volunteers who provided 16,691 hours of service

In Jackson County, there were 78 volunteers who provided 12,780 hours of service.



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



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

Thank You



Agencies and places who volunteered time, services, and donations to the program during the 2021-2022 program year.

- ❖ Community Donations of Food and Clothing for Head Start
- ❖ Knights of Columbus
- ❖ Anna's Kiddie Korner
- ❖ Roses of Sharon
- ❖ Balsam Mountain Preserve provided food boxes at Christmas for Jackson County
- ❖ Feeding the Multitudes – provided food boxes for Haywood County children
- ❖ Sylva Shopping Network – provided food boxes for Jackson County children
- ❖ Sponsored Children at Christmas
- ❖ Long's Chapel United Methodist Church
- ❖ Mountain Federal Credit Union
- ❖ Crabtree United Methodist Church
- ❖ Christmas Connections
- ❖ Blue Ridge Books
- ❖ Private Sponsors

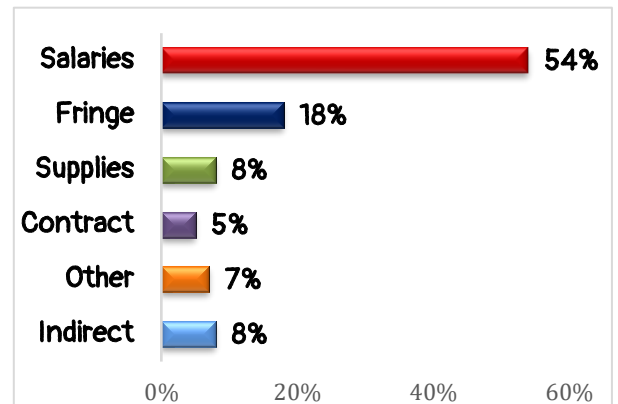
Funding Sources

Head Start	\$ 1,918,869
Early Head Start	\$ 853,296
Covid Funds	\$ 185,429
NC Pre-K	\$ 94,740
Subsidy (Wrap-Around)	\$ 38,520
CACFP Reimbursement	\$ 125,830
American Rescue Fund	\$ 315,966
Total Income	\$ 3,532,650

Program Expenditures

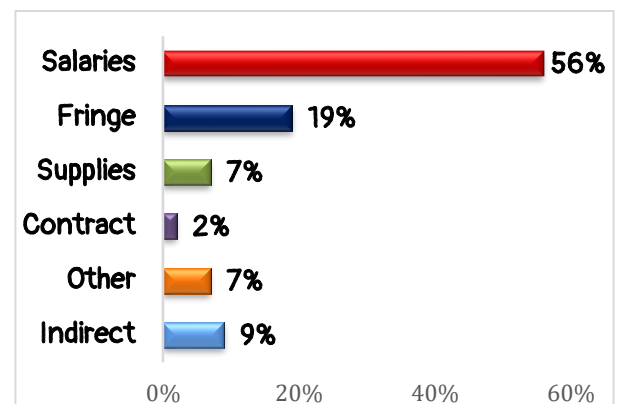
Head Start

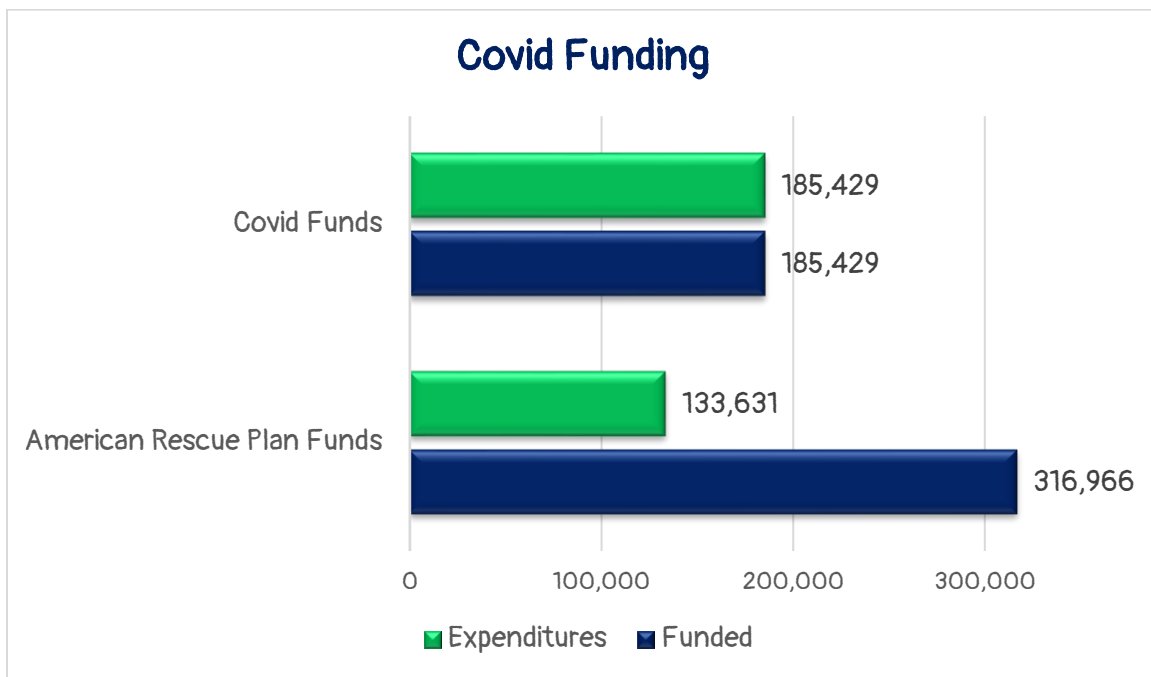
Budget Line Item	Budgeted	Expenditures
Salaries	\$ 1,000,869	\$ 726,477
Fringe Benefits	\$ 403,130	\$ 253,262
Supplies	\$ 98,213	\$ 100,648
Contractual	\$ 45,220	\$ 72,800
Other	\$ 150,360	\$ 106,749
Indirect Costs	\$ 198,987	\$ 123,824
TOTAL	\$ 1,779,324	\$ 1,383,760



Early Head Start

Budget Line Item	Budgeted	Expenditures
Salaries	\$ 568,757	\$ 447,855
Fringe Benefits	\$ 210,440	\$ 155,025
Supplies	\$ 48,084	\$ 51,754
Contractual	\$ 16,938	\$ 16,295
Other	\$ 39,505	\$ 54,531
Indirect Costs	\$102,245	\$ 76,513
TOTAL	\$985,969	\$ 801,973





Public Funding

Mountain Projects, Inc. Head Start Program collaborated with NC PRE-K Program and received \$94,740 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 \$125,820 in subsidies for meals/snacks served to enrolled children.

Professional Development

Head Start		Early Head Start	
Budgeted Amount	Expenditures	Budgeted Amount	Expenditures
\$22,979	\$22,697	\$19,223	\$10,235

Non-Federal Match

2021-2022	MATCH REQUIRED	MATCHED EARNED
Head Start & Early Head Start	\$546,433	\$373,335

In 2021-2022 program year, Mountain Projects, Inc., Head Start program asked for a waiver of \$250,000 to meet the required match \$546,433. The waiver was granted, and the match required was reduced to 296,433. Mountain Projects, Inc., Head Start program earned \$373,335 to meet the required match.

Audit

The audit will be presented at Mountain Projects, Inc., governing board meeting in December 2021 will no findings.

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.