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SERVING SKAGIT, ISLAND & SAN JUAN COUNTIES

ANNUAL REPORT 2022 / 2023



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Skagit/Islands Head Start,

a Skagit Valley College program, provides high quality, happy, early-learning environments for children aged birth to five. We also provide culturally responsive services to the entire family, including home-based services to pregnant women. We understand that each child's first and most important learning happens in the home, so we strive to work in partnership with families to ensure we are reaching the best possible outcomes for each individual child and family.

This report underscores key aspects of our activities during the school year 2022/2023. Throughout this period, the lingering effects of the COVID pandemic persisted, with an ongoing influence on our program operations. Marking our second year of in-person services following an 18-month hiatus due to COVID, our team enthusiastically continued face-to-face interactions and provided services to children and families. Despite appearing to have overcome the immediate impacts of COVID, its ramifications continued to show up in various aspects of our program operations, as evidenced by our data. Navigating through hiring and staffing shortages remained an ongoing challenge. We observed an uptick in behavioral and developmental challenges exhibited by children, with both families and staff reporting heightened stressors, increased mental health challenges, and signs of burnout.

Nevertheless, our dedicated staff rose to the occasion admirably, responding to these challenges and adjustments with amazing adaptability and good humor.

Director:

• Mary Ellen Lykins

Policy Council:

- Salomon Mbouombouo: Chair
- Brandon Gallegos: Vice Chair
- Jessica Wells: Secretary

Governing Board:

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- Ms. Mariko Doerner Vice Chair
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MISSION, VISION & VALUES

Mission

Building strong foundations for lifelong learning through family-centered, child-focused partnerships.

Vision

We support children, families and each other to build resilience, strength and a sense of belonging to grow into their true potential and flourish. We join with families to make a positive difference in all of our lives and in the communities where we live, work, and learn.

Values

STRONG, POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS: Connecting children, families, communities, and each other; honored through open-honest communication, and taking time to understand and build mutual regard.

OPEN, ENGAGING COLLABORATION: Cooperation, open-minded give and take, shared decision making, engaging diverse talents and resources with a focus on common goals and passions.

PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRITY: Consistency, honesty, sharing thoughts, confidentiality and professionalism.

RESPECT AND ACCEPTANCE FOR ALL: Recognizing, valuing encouraging and supporting community and individual differences and perspectives.

HIGH STANDARDS OF QUALITY: Best practice at the core of decisions, professional development and personal growth, high expectations, personal responsibility.

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OUR PROGRAM

This report covers the time period from September 2022 - August 2023. This was our second year of providing in-person services since the pandemic.

Funding for enrollment remained the same for 2022/2023 as the prior year. Cumulative and average monthly enrollment however, continued to remain below average. This was due to staffing shortages hindering our ability to fully staff centers. We were unable to enroll more children, as we could not reliably and consistently ensure centers could stay open without backup staff to cover illness, breaks and to safely staff centers.

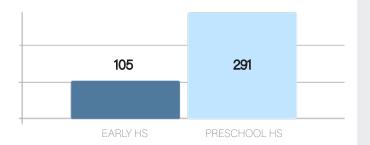
Average Monthly Enrollment



AVERAGE MONTHLY ENROLLMENT Early Head Start



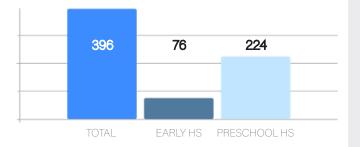
AVERAGE MONTHLY ENROLLMENT Preschool Head Start



Total Funded Enrollment

<u>396</u>

In a regular program year our funding enables us to enroll 396 children at one time - 105 in Early and 291 in Preschool Head Start.



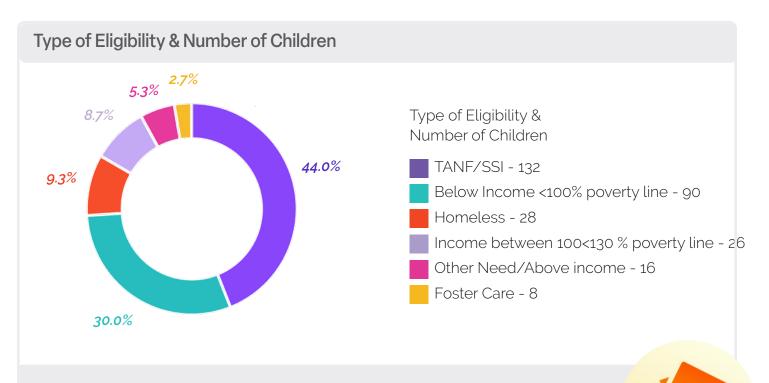
Total Cumulative Enrollment



We enrolled 300 children and 1 pregnant woman cumulatively over the program year.

ELIGIBILITY

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There are more children eligible for the Head Start program than we have slots for, and most years more eligible families apply for the program than we can enroll. Due to staff shortages, our average enrollment totaled about 50% of funded enrollment this program year. We anticipate a return to full enrollment when we are able to hire a full complement of staff.

Attendance

In the 2022/23 program year consistent child attendance saw improvement from the prior year. The program continues to work towards meeting benchmarks in this area. We based attendance calculations on actual and not funded enrollment.

82%

Average Daily Attendance Preschool Head Start 150 children average daily attendance



76%

Average Daily Attendance Early Head Start 23 children average daily attendance



11 Centers & 11 Center Managers	28 Lead Teachers	19 Assistant Teachers
10 Program Managers/Staff	3 Family Service Coordinators	3 Home Visitors
19 of our staff are bilingual	36 of our staff are former Head Start parents	47 people volunteered for the program



CENTER & STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

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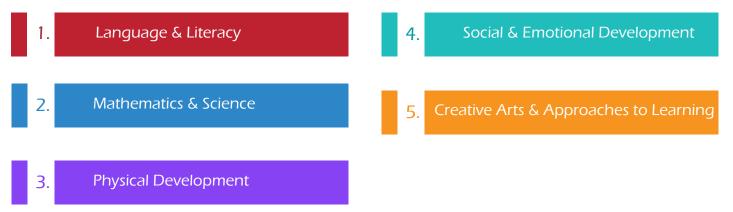
OUR EDUCATION PROGRAM

Our philosophy toward education is based on the foundational belief that the parent is their child's first and most important teacher. We partner with parents to provide a nurturing and secure environment in which their children can not only learn but thrive. This year we have been able to move toward inviting more adults into our classrooms, which has given more opportunity for parents and family members to volunteer and participate in the classroom experience. Conferences and home visits are back in full swing, and that has helped the relationships between teachers and families develop and grow. We continue to recruit and hire new teaching staff, and while the workforce interest has remained low and we are short staffed, the existing staff at SIHS has proven to be resilient and flexible while meeting the demands of their job and engaging families in a wonderfully rich experience.

Kindergarten Preparation

As noted above, SIHS staff work with parents and community members to establish school readiness goals (skills and knowledge children should have when they enter kindergarten). We are careful to align our expectations and practices with the Head Start Early Learning and Outcomes Framework (HSELOF), state guidelines and our Kindergarten Readiness goals. When planning and implementing our different strategies, we consider program data, community and self-assessment data, and specific needs of the population we serve, including dual language learners and children receiving special education services. These considerations and practices ensure our children have the best possible preparation for kindergarten and life.

We use GOLD, an assessment tool developed by Teaching Strategies to help measure children's progress (outcomes) toward their individual school readiness goals and to plan for continued learning that meets the needs of both the individual and the entire class. Creative Curriculum is the foundational curriculum and promotes learning through structured and unstructured play opportunities.



SIHS Birth-to-Five Programming



KINDERGARTEN READINESS



SIHS usually evaluates how our outcomes compare to children in our service area entering kindergarten, by looking at Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) data collected via WaKIDS .This is the first year we have been ale to do this since the pandemic.

The following bar chart compares:

1) SIHS outcome data for four year olds in the spring of 2022, (exiting Head Start 21-22),

2) OSPI WAKid outcome data averaged for the seven school districts with whom we collaborate for children entering kindergarten in the fall of 2022, and

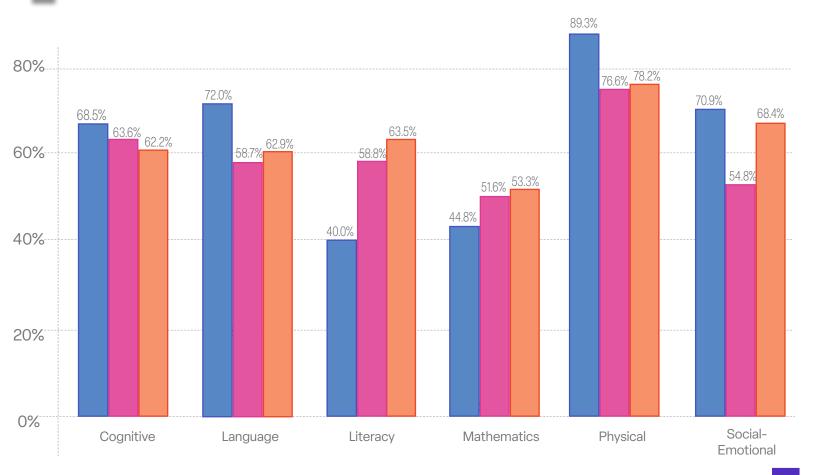
3) OSPI WAKid statewide outcome data for children entering kindergarten in the fall of 2022.

This chart uses OSPI data for low income children and those eligible for free or reduced lunch to more closely align to Head Start income eligibility, which is 100% of federal poverty (actually much lower than the free and reduced eligibility guidelines.) The percentage represents the average number of children that demonstrated the skills typical for a child ready to enter kindergarten in each domain.

% SIHS Pre K-4 Children Met or Exceeded Threshold (leaving SIHS 21/22)

% Average of Comparable School Districts Met or Exceeded Threshold (entering kindergarten 22/23)

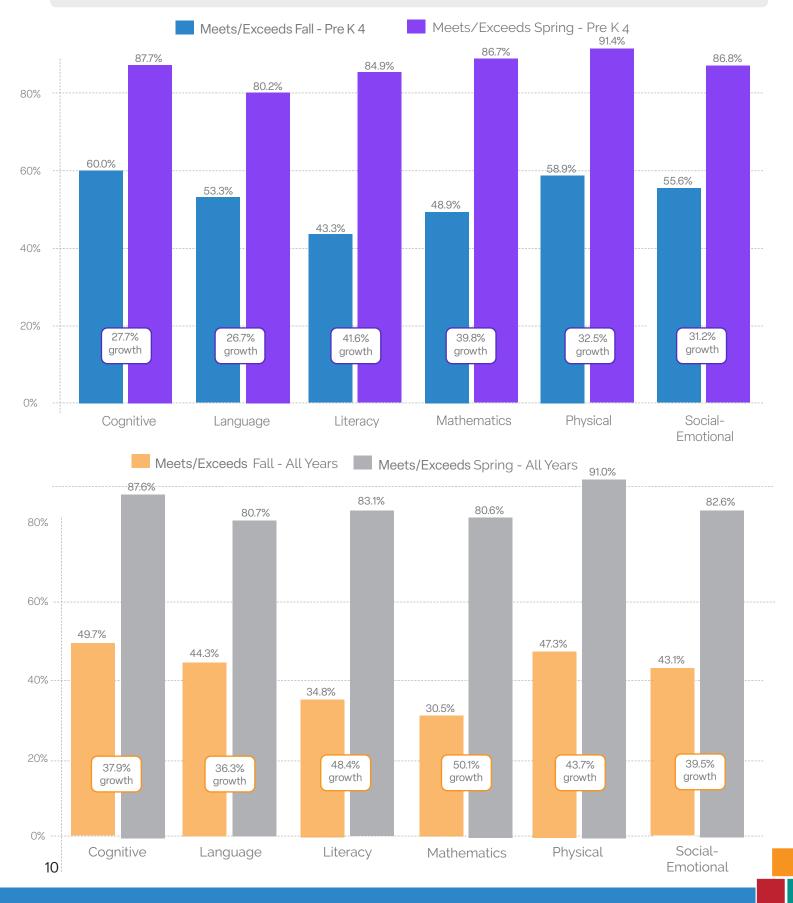
% Average School Districts Statewide Met or Exceeded Threshold (entering kindergarten 22/23)



CHILD GROWTH

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These charts represent the average total domain scores (e.g. Language, Cognitive) for children in the fall and the spring. It also notes average child growth - shown as a percentage - between the fall and spring.



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INCLUSION SERVICES

All our classrooms continue to be fully inclusive offering a variety of services to children of all abilities.

Supporting that work means committed and collaborative relationships with the providers of specialized services.

We used different methods to identify developmental and emotional concerns:

- parent observations
- teacher observations and assessments
- required developmental and behavioral screenings

We noted an increase in both social-emotional and behavioral concerns in the last few years. This is in line with the national trend. It is believed that this can be directly related to stresses exacerbated due to the pandemic, a lack of socialization for children, and a unique set of circumstances that have put new challenges in front of our children and families.

Due to these trends and the staff's desire to provide the best support, our program has decided to adopt a new social emotional curriculum. The new curriculum will support children 3-5 years and focus attention on resiliency factors and responsive & protective environments. Our previous social emotional curriculum focused more on the development of executive function and self-regulation in 4-5-year-olds. We feel this will meet the increased and varied needs of our children and families.

In the 2022/2023 program year under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act:

29% of our children had an Individualized Education Plan.

1.3% of our children had an Individualized Family Service Plan.

We continued to follow up on concerns and referred children for school district evaluation when warranted and in a timely manner. We also ensured that Head Start staff followed up on any additional family needs and referrals, even if the children were attending class at the school district. Teachers collaborated with school district partners to ensure all children enrolled in our classes were meeting the goals of their IFSP/IEP. They discussed developmental milestones on the identified GOLD dimensions so that teachers could include that data in our checkpoints and that parents understood child goals and could track progress. We are thrilled to re-establish a previous partnership with total inclusion at one of our centers. This will provide a rich environment and learning experience for all children enrolled.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

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We increased our mental health/behavioral health consultant hours to ensure that staff. children and families had numerous expert support options available to them. Support and resources were available either by phone or teletherapy. Our mental health professional has streamlined her services to include drop-in services for staff to address emergent and emergency needs.



OUR FAMILIES

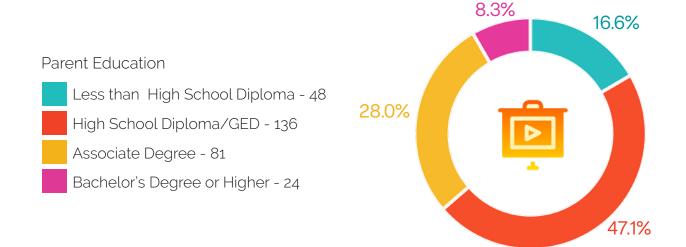
Our children and families are the center of our program. We have a unique, diverse and vibrant family community. 289 families participated in our program this year.

Family Training/Education/Employment

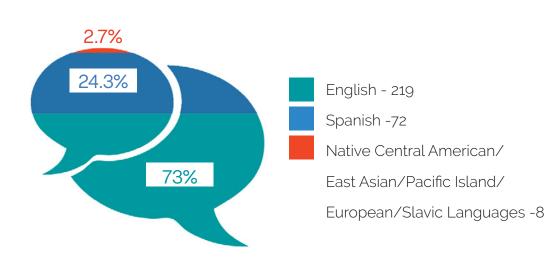
Parents employed full/part time or in job training/school:

Start of enrollment: 80.3%

End of enrollment: 71.6%



Primary Language Spoken

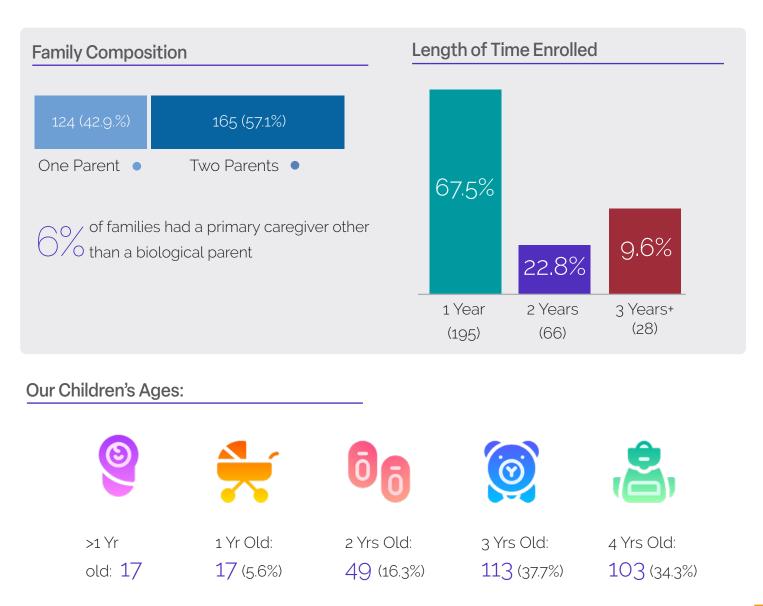


121 dual language learners

OUR FAMILIES

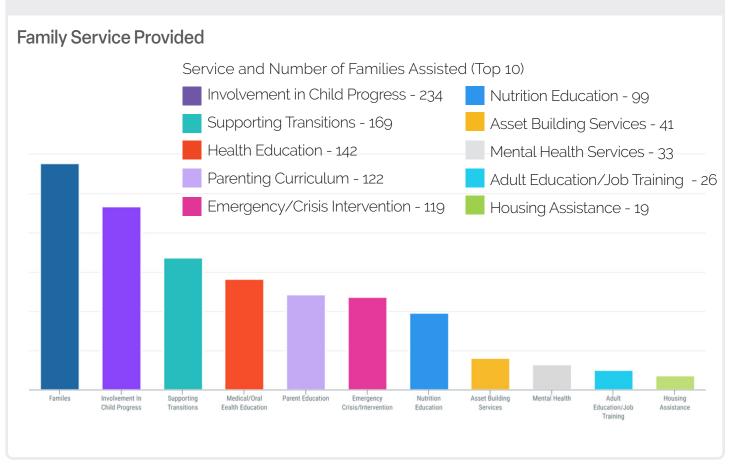
	Hispanic/Latine	Non-Hispanic/Latine
American Indian or Alaskan Native	6 (2.00%)	4 (1.33%)
Asian	0 (0.00%)	4 (1.33%)
Black or African American	1 (0.33%)	5 (1.67%)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0 (0.00%)	2 (0.67%)
White	123 (41.00%)	99 (33.00%)
Biracial/Multi-racial	13 (4.33%)	15 (5.00%)
Other	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.0%)
Unspecified	28 (9.33%)	0 (0.0%)

57~% of our children/families identify as Hispanic or Latino/Latine origin or ethnicity.



FAMILY SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

We provide or link whole families to services. Families can request this assistance at any point during the program term.



Parent Curriculum

We use Ready4K as our parent curriculum. It is a research-based text messaging program for parents that sends fun facts and tips for activities to boost their child's learning. Parents can opt in or out and participation has grown over time.

Spring 2023 parent survey highlights:

80% of parents read text messages when they receive them 95% of parents said the texts helped their children learn and grow 94% of parents said Ready4K has improved their relationship with their children 100% of families said Ready4K helped them feel supported as a parent

52,920 messages cover 7 curriculum units were sent in program year 2022/2023!

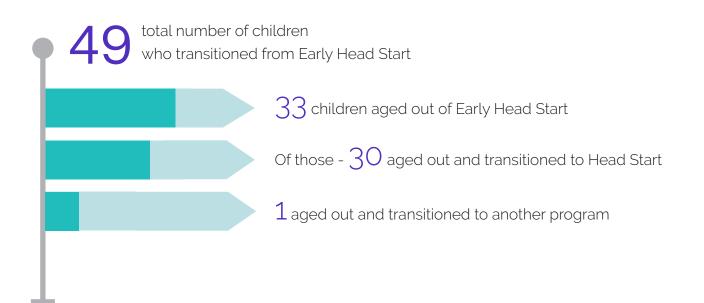


CHILD TRANSITIONS

Transitions

SIHS has a system in place to help children who are transitioning from one program type to the next (i.e., Early Head Start to Head Start, and Head Start to public school). This transition process requires that each child who is transitioning has a plan in place, and the families of children transitioning from Head Start to Kindergarten are kept informed about important district enrollment activities prior to the child's actual transition in order to prepare the child, the family, and the new program.

Early Head Start



Head Start

93 number of children who are transitioning from Head Start to Kindergarten

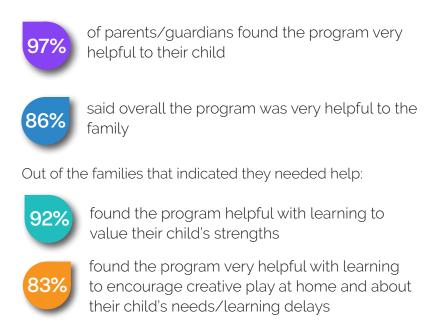


FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

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In order to evaluate our success in meeting parent needs, we administer a fall strength, needs, and interest survey to learn about families and children as they enter the program. We then administer a spring family outcome survey to determine how well the families feel their needs have been met.

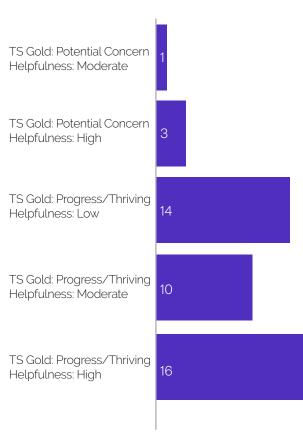
We have limited our enrollment numbers the last few years due to staffing challenges. This year our response rate was also lower than in prior years at 53% of enrollment. Data collected is valuable to the program. We discovered that:



found the program very helpful learning about the educational supports children have the right to

Contrasting Child Growth and How Helpful Families Found the Program

80%



Family Outcomes Survey and Gold Data

Definitions (excluding "Did Not Need Help" responses):

Low Helpfulness: Families who responded "Very Helpful" on fewer than half of the questions in the Survey

Moderate Helpfulness: Families who responded "Very Helpful" on 50% to 80% of the questions in the Survey

High Helpfulness: Families who responded "Very Helpful" on more than 80% of the questions in the Survey

Progress / Thriving: Children who are consistently "at or above age expectations" or who move into "at or above age expectations" on the majority of core domains.

Potential Concern: Children who are scoring consistently below age expectations, the score is declining, or not keeping up with age expectations on a majority of core domains.

COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH SERVICES

After the pandemic, families are getting back on track with their children's check-ups and dental appointments. If children missed these exams, we found it was due to parent choice or challenges like transportation issues and other hardships. Another issue families faced, was finding providers to follow up on failed vision screenings. Many local clinics lost specialists, and were no longer seeing children under the age of 4. It is important to note that the pandemic is still affecting clinic staffing, especially for dentists in San Juan and Oak Harbor.

In the 2022-2023 program term, Washington State updated its immunization requirements to match CDC standards more closely. This meant that children turning four or those already four were no longer considered up to date. Staff worked hard to help families by providing information and support for those needing immunizations. This also led to changes in intake procedures to make sure families wouldn't face a gap in their child's care through a temporary exclusion. Now, when a child is accepted into the program, their Certificate of Immunization records are obtained. Managers then review these records and discuss any missing immunizations with the family before enrollment. Policies were also changed for home-based children to make the transition from home to the classroom smoother and to ensure all children are up to date. If a home-based child is not up to date, they won't be able to attend socializations.

By the end of the program year:

97% of children had HEALTH INSURANCE and

99% had a MEDICAL HOME (provider) 66.0 % of children were up-to-date with MEDICAL EXAMS and age appropriate PREVENTATIVE and PRIMARY HEALTH CARE (increased 69% from enrollment)

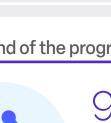
92.3% of children had a DENTAL HOME (provider)

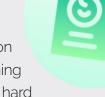
88.0% of children were up-to date with DENTAL EXAMS

20 children needed dental treatment & 19 received it

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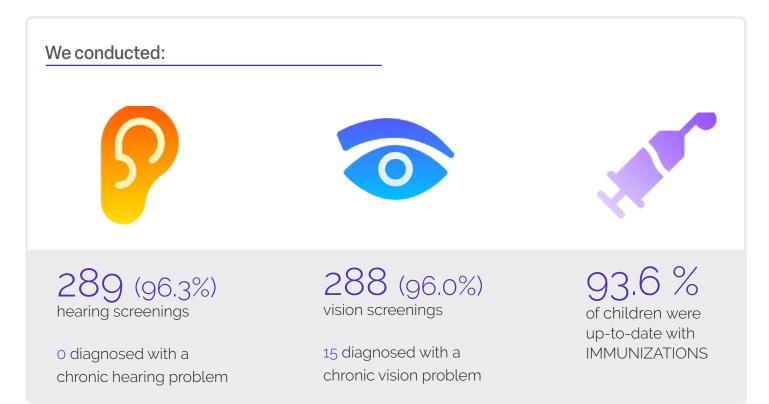




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COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH SERVICES

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Nutrition

Staff screen all children for nutritional risk within 90 days of enrollment, Staff offer nutrition referrals to the family for individualized support for children who are in the bottom or top percentiles (at risk for obesity or underweight).



9 CHILDREN had a BMI below the 5th percentile

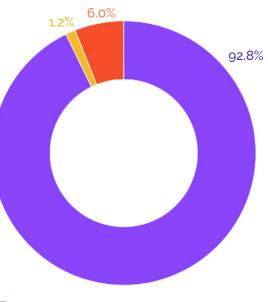
34 CHILDREN had a BMI over the 85th percentile

51 CHILDREN had a BMI at or above the 95th percentile

FISCAL INFORMATION

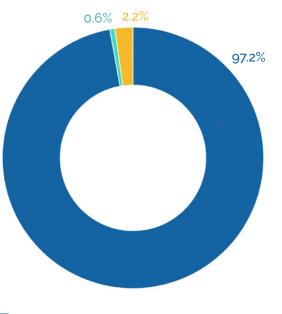
Explanation of Expenditures for 2022/2023 fiscal Amount year (not finalized): ACF - Head Start/Early Head Start Grant \$8,490,412 Total ACF Grants \$8,490,412 Estimated Federal Share of Expenditures \$7,975,338 Estimated Unobiligated \$515,074 Non-Federal Share (waived) \$0 USDA Reimbursement \$105,104 Total Estimated Expenditures for 2022/2023 \$8,080,442

*Estimate only, year is not yet closed out and so final numbers are not yet available.



Estimated Federal Share of Expenses USDA Reimbursement Estimated Unobligated

Proposed budget for 2023/2024 fiscal year:	Amount
ACF - Head Start/Early Head Start Grant	\$9,088,199
Total ACF Grants	\$9,088,199
Carryover funding	\$0
COVID carryover	\$57,255
Non-Federal Share (waived)	\$0
USDA Reimbursement	\$209,000
Total Funding for 2023/2024	\$9,354,454



ACF - Head Start/Early Head Start Grant
COVID Carryover
USDA Reimbursement

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AUDIT REVIEW



In 2020 a Focus Area 1 monitoring review was conducted with no areas of non-compliance identified.

In 2023 Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Head Start (OHS) conducted a Focus Area 2 monitoring review for all areas of the program. SIHS received an excelled review with only one small area of non-compliance identified during the visit. A solution was drafted and implemented immediately. There were no fiscal findings or concerns.

In 2023 SIHS was selected to conduct a pilot project for a new Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) review system. The pilot project was completed successfully and SIHS passed all areas with excellent scores.

Emotional Support scores showed SIHS has a high-quality program which indicates rich and supportive environments with caring and sensitive teachers. Classroom Organization scores were also in the "high quality" range, which is the positive result of a training and coaching intentionally implemented over the last 4 years to provide children with predictable and safe environments.

Our Instructional Support scores are rising as teaching staff become more and more grounded in providing children with interactions that scaffold more complex thinking.

The Washington State Auditor's Office fiscal audit of Skagit Valley College conducted in September of 2022 reported no areas of noncompliance.



SKAGIT/ISLANDS HEAD START

SERVING SKAGIT, ISLAND & SAN JUAN COUNTIES

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