



Children's
FRIEND

Head Start Annual Report 2021-2022



OUR Principles



Family-Centered:

Discovering child and family needs and working with families to best meet them. Providing opportunities for families to be meaningfully engaged in the design of services. Being committed to serving families of diverse cultures and lifestyles in a non-biased and non-judgmental way.

Seamless:

Coordinating and integrating our services to ensure that families receive the support they need regardless of point of entry to the agency. When our families face challenges outside our expertise, we partner with other highly-qualified organizations.

Outcome-Driven:

Thoughtfully measuring the impact and effectiveness of our services. Engaging in ongoing learning and innovation to ensure we are offering effective services to children and families. Consistently identifying what we can improve, doing what we can do best, and measuring ourselves against national benchmarks.

Advocates:

Taking a leadership role in educating policymakers and the public on the needs of the youngest and most vulnerable children, even when it means taking risks for the benefit of children.

Stewards:

Taking responsibility for growing and sustaining our human and financial capital. Demonstrating respect and cultural sensitivity for our community, staff, and Board.



About Children's Friend



Children's Friend, a non-profit organization founded in 1834, is Rhode Island's oldest child-serving organization, and a leading provider of child welfare, family support, mental health, and child development services.

Mission:

Children's Friend is the innovative leader in improving the well-being and healthy development of Rhode Island's most vulnerable young children.



our Strategic Priority:

Too many of the youngest and most vulnerable children in Rhode Island are experiencing devastating outcomes, including death as a result of abuse and neglect. As stewards of the resources entrusted to us, Children's Friend is realigning itself to proactively respond to the crisis.



Children's Friend is a member of the Child Welfare League of America and is accredited by the Council on Accreditation.





Dear Friends



Throughout 2021-2022, Children's Friend worked diligently to support our children, parents, families, and staff while Covid continued to impact how we delivered our services and our communities.



Amid the "great resignation," we faced staffing shortages that prevented us from being fully operational, regardless of robust efforts to recruit and retain talent. However, we remained optimistic, forging forward, and laser-focused on fulfilling our mission.

We were grateful for our staff's creativity, resiliency, and determination, which resulted in many accomplishments. We revamped our electronic medical record, improving service delivery efficiency. For our dedicated team of educators, we leveraged our funding streams to provide retention bonuses, salary adjustments, and other comprehensive benefits.



Ensuring the safety of our children, parents, families, staff, and community partners has remained our top priority. Our Covid-19 Task Force worked tirelessly to ensure everyone was safe at our centers. We are proud that we continue to see no evidence of any center-based spread of Covid.

We were thrilled to see the children in our centers and classrooms, learning in our high-quality environments to prepare them for kindergarten and beyond! We were delighted to find safe ways that allowed parents, families, and community partners back in our centers for the first time in over two years!



We continued to serve expecting families, infants, and toddlers as part of our Early Head Start Program. We facilitated hybrid home visits and socialization opportunities with our children, parents, and families at our centers and in the community.

We are committed to our principles of being family-centered, seamless, outcome-driven, advocates for the youngest and most vulnerable children in Rhode Island, and stewards of the resources entrusted to us. It is only possible to serve our families and uphold these principles with a dedicated team of professionals and diverse community partners.

We are grateful to all who have supported Children's Friend throughout the past year. We look forward to our continued work together!

With gratitude,



Tiana Ochoa

Jennifer Heywood

Tiana Ochoa
Director of Head Start

Jennifer Heywood
Deputy Director





Dear Friends

I am elated to inform you that I have completed my first year as the Policy Council Chair. It is undoubtedly an important day for me. In December 2021, I became a part of this big family and have grown a year older with the Policy Council. I want to thank each and every one who has been a part of my journey and has made it so memorable.

A special thanks to my team leaders, who were always there to guide me through and to always keep me informed. My leaders have been a great support to me in all my challenging times.

I would also like to thank all my Board members and parents who made each and every day on the Policy Council Board a wonderful experience. Since I joined the Board, I have seen myself grow up into a better version of myself. Thank you for giving me a suitable and comfortable environment to grow and be the best version of myself.

I promise to keep continuing putting the best of my heart into my work and keep contributing toward the growth and success of Children's Friend.

My family and I have been with Children's Friend since 2018. Thank you again for the support that we have been receiving, especially with the open-door policy that is set in place. My husband and I feel safe and secure having our children attend Berkshire Street Center.

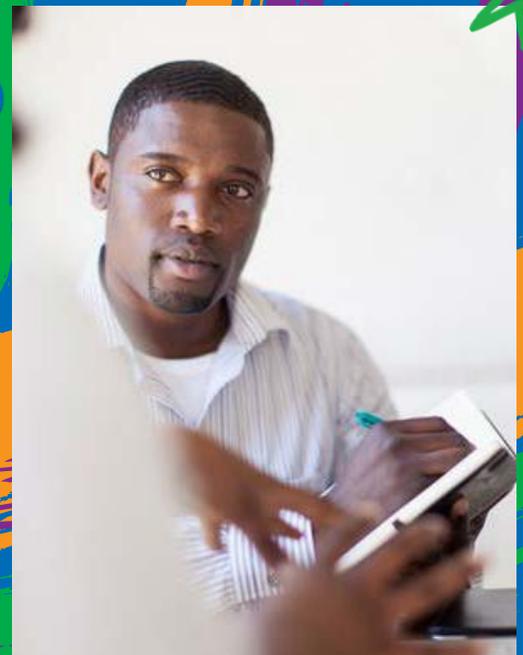
The impact of Children's Friend is wonderful and wide. Children's Friend is spoken of wonderfully all over Rhode Island. It is an honor to be of service as the Policy Council Chair. Thank you again for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Patricia Janvier



Patricia Janvier
Policy Council Chair







Supportive Relationships and Active Skill-Building Strengthening Families' Foundations of Resilience

Four-year-old Emma* and her 18-month-old sister, Kira, who were enrolled in our Head Start and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships programs, were at great risk of losing their childcare spots in our classrooms due to poor attendance. Rey, their mother, informed the staff that there was domestic violence in the home and a recent incident happened in front of Emma. For the safety of Emma, Kira, and Rey, the staff called child protective services with Rey. As a result of the father's abuse, he was removed from the family's home.

The Family Advocate, Nitita, went to great lengths to build a relationship with Rey, listening to and supporting her. Rey was initially reluctant to engage in any recommended services. Over time, Rey began to trust Nitita and began to follow up with the referrals. Rey started to participate in counseling and other services for domestic violence survivors. With this support, Rey started working on goals for herself and her children.

Two of her goals were to get Emma and Kira to school and to secure employment. Rey did not have a car but was determined that her girls continue their preschool and childcare programs. Nitita helped Rey brainstorm ideas for transportation. Through this process, Rey connected with a neighbor who could drive Rey and her girls to the center.

After a few months of counseling, Rey gained the confidence to reach out to the Rhode Island Department of Human Services. Through their Rhode Island Works program, Rey found part-time employment. Rey began saving some money from her job, and along with her tax refund, she bought a vehicle. Since then, Emma's and Kira's attendance has been excellent! Rey brings Emma and Kira to school every day.

Rey has made many incredible accomplishments since the conversation about her girls' attendance. Rey has become a strong advocate for herself and her girls. She is confident that she can care for herself, Emma, and Kira. Rey has learned her value and how to ensure that her personal or professional relationships are healthy. Emma and Kira are achieving tremendous improvements toward reaching their developmental milestones since coming to school daily.

Rey continues to work with Nitita and her counselor. She has set a path for her new goal -- owning a house. We do not doubt with Rey's determination that she will reach her dream of being a new homeowner soon!

* all names in our featured families' stories have been changed to protect their privacy and confidentiality.

Creativity, Perseverance, and Diligent Coordination Making a Big Difference for Families



Mohamed is a single father raising three children, six-year-old Fatima, four-year-old Maria, and six-month-old Joseph, who was newly diagnosed with Down Syndrome.

Fatima had just enrolled in our Head Start program. The family's Family Advocate, Ana, tried to schedule an initial home visit with Mohamed. After multiple unsuccessful attempts, Ana realized Mohamed did not speak English and reached out to Selena, the person listed on the family's Emergency Contact form. Selena was mom's friend and told Ana about the family's circumstances.

Mohamed newly immigrated to the United States and only spoke French. Zola, Mohamed's wife, recently passed away in her home country. She had gone back to her home country so her family would not be burdened by her death. With Zola's passing and being a new immigrant, Mohamed was alone. Selena did not speak French, and Mohamed had no family or friends in the state or country. In addition to managing the grief of Zola's death and becoming a single father of three children, including a child with special needs, Mohamed was not working. The family had multiple needs and was not connected to community resources beyond Children's Friend.

When Ana heard of the family's story, she immediately signed them up to be sponsored through the agency's Holiday Drive. Ana knew that Holiday Drive-sponsored families received clothing, diapers, and other basic human needs, along with a few educational toys, during the holiday season. The support from the Holiday Drive was tremendously helpful for the family.

Ana acquired an interpreter, allowing her to effectively communicate with Mohamed to provide home visits and link the family to additional support and services. Through Ana's dedication and resourcefulness, she quickly attained much-needed help for the family. Ana secured Social Security benefits for the family by obtaining Zola's death certificate from her home country. She connected Mohamed to the local school department for special education services for Joseph. Ana also referred Mohamed to English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at our Dexter Street Center and Dorcas International for guidance regarding his immigrant status.

Mohamed and Ana continue to work together to help ease his role as a single father. Mohamed is actively engaged in services, participating in regular home visits with Ana. He is starting to develop natural supports in the community and learning how to navigate the various systems to get help for himself and his children. With the variety of supports in place, Mohamed's follow through, and Ana's ongoing support, Fatima, Maria, and Joseph are thriving at home and school.

Mohamed understands that there may be many challenges and joys ahead as a single father of three children, but he also knows he has a great deal of support whenever needed.



Notes from the Year: The Impact of Covid on Learning & Development



We continue to make countless adjustments in how we deliver our programs in our classrooms and parents' and families' homes due to Covid. When the Covid pandemic began in early 2020, leading to remote learning and changes to learning environments within schools, we, along with schools everywhere, witnessed the impact of the pandemic on our children.

In our classrooms, we could not use certain learning materials (such as fabric toys and shared sensory bins). Classrooms were closed for several days when there was a positive Covid case. Special visitors (such as dentists and hygienists from Samuels Sinclair Dental Center or volunteer readers) were not allowed to come into our centers when Covid cases spiked in our communities. Meanwhile, many home visits and socialization opportunities for our home-based Early Head Start program were provided virtually. All of these adjustments, and missed opportunities, impact children's learning and development.



As we pivoted and made programmatic adjustments, we always had hope. We worked hard to be flexible and innovative in our service delivery. The resiliency of our children, parents, and families has humbled us. We are grateful for their understanding as we navigated how to deliver our Head Start programs in a pandemic-stricken world.

In partnership with our parents and families, we will help our children to recover from Covid's negative impacts and get back on track. Each year gets a little brighter. Our children are making many developmental strides! It is important to take time to know that all our efforts are working. Our infants, toddlers, and preschoolers are continuing to develop well.

We hope you enjoy seeing our children's progress in our School Readiness report (featured on the next couple of pages).



School Readiness

Each year, our Head Start team works in partnership with parents and families to ensure that every infant, toddler, and preschooler in our Head Start, home- and center-based Early Head Start, and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships programs, are making gains toward School Readiness. Whether two months old or four years old, we provide various services so that all children are ready to learn and attain age-appropriate skills. We work to ensure our children are social-emotionally and academically prepared when it is time for kindergarten.



As part of our process of working to improve School Readiness outcomes for our children, we use Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG). TSG is used throughout our programs to develop our curriculum and track child outcomes. TSG is a birth-to-kindergarten assessment system that assesses school readiness on a per-student level completed three times during the school year. TSG provides an individualized assessment and feedback on each child, allowing the teachers, parents, and families to understand the child's developmental areas of need and strength. From the gathered developmental information, teachers, parents, and families can plan ways to build upon the children's strengths and support their developmental needs in the classrooms and at home. The completion of TSG in the fall, winter, and spring give teachers, parents, and families opportunities to track the children's progress and adjust their classroom and home strategies, if necessary.

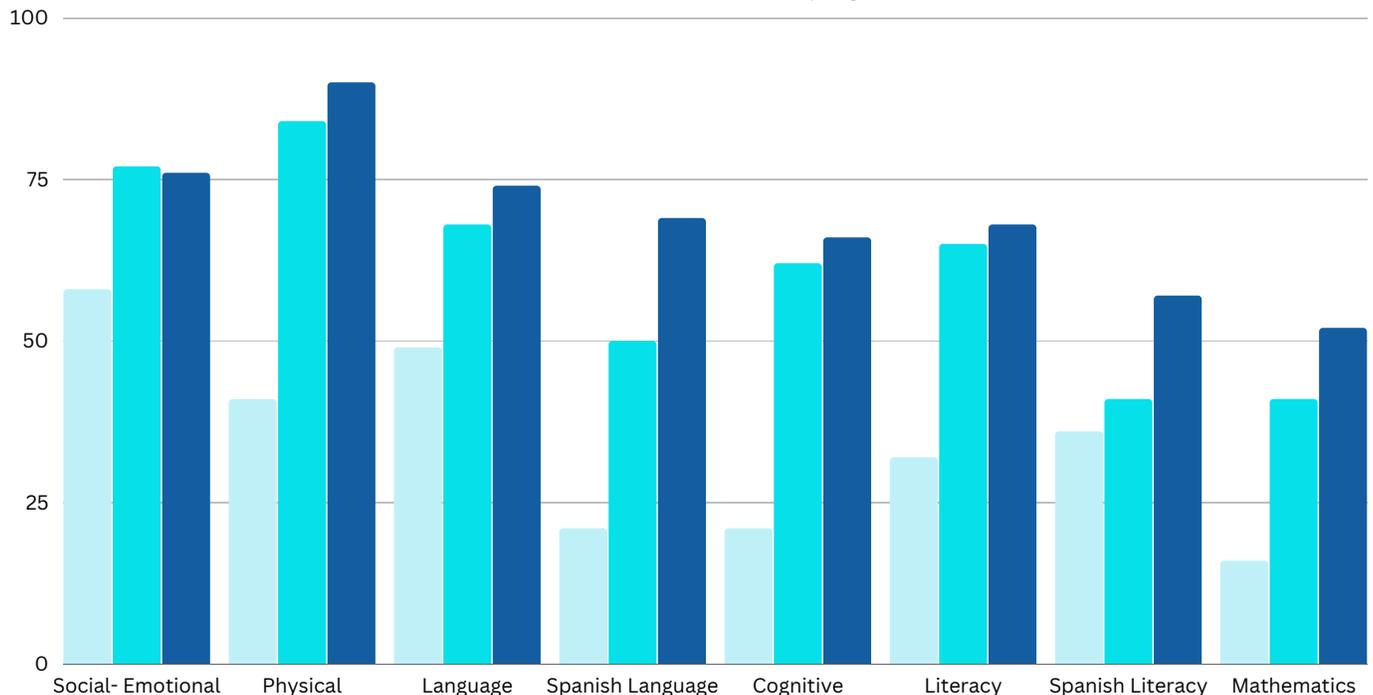


The following graphs show the percentages of children who were "meeting or exceeding expectations" in each of the assessed developmental areas at the start (fall 2021), middle (winter 2021), and end (spring 2022) of the academic year. The assessed developmental areas include Social-emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, and Mathematics. Language and Literacy are also measured for children for whom Spanish is their primary home language.

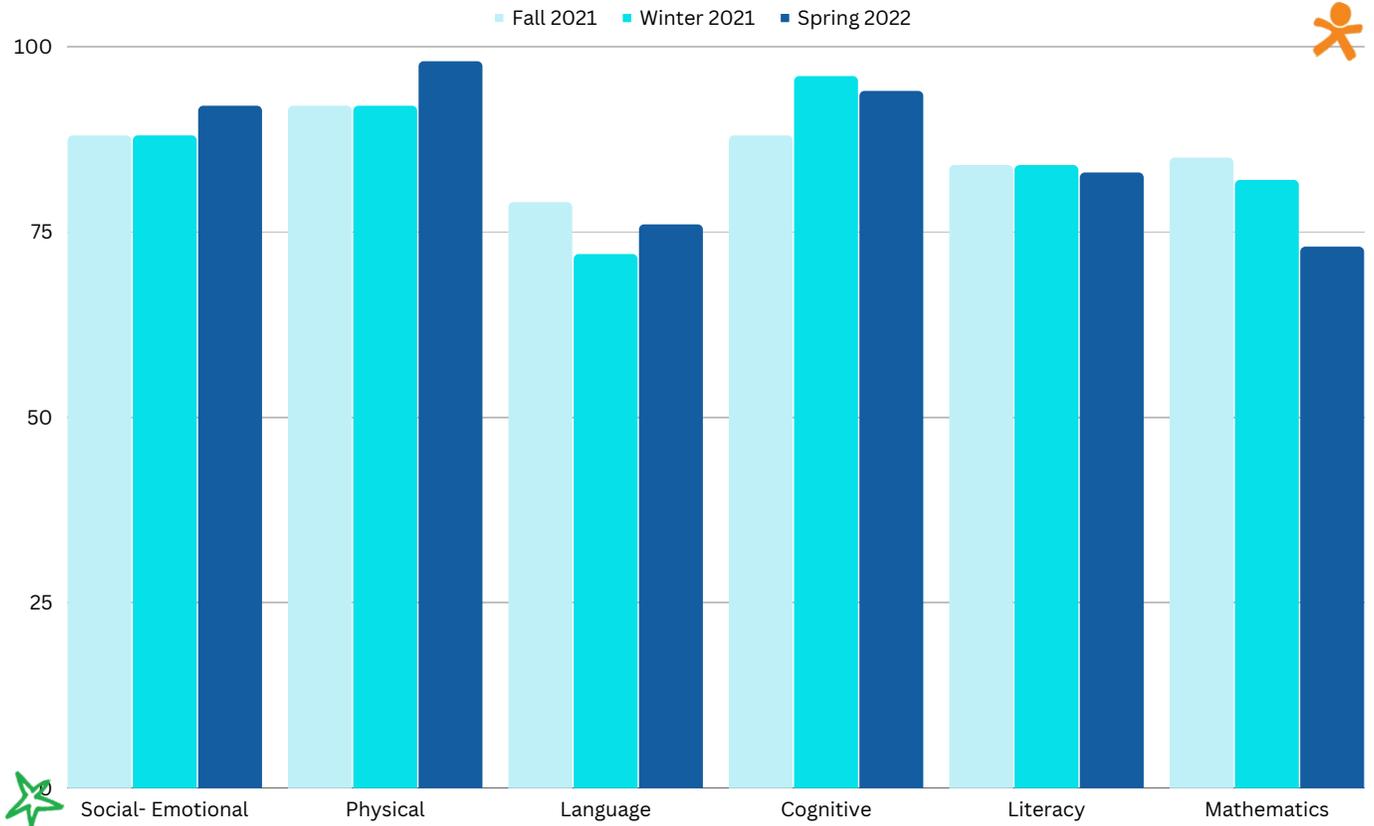


Head Start: Meeting/ Exceeding Expectations

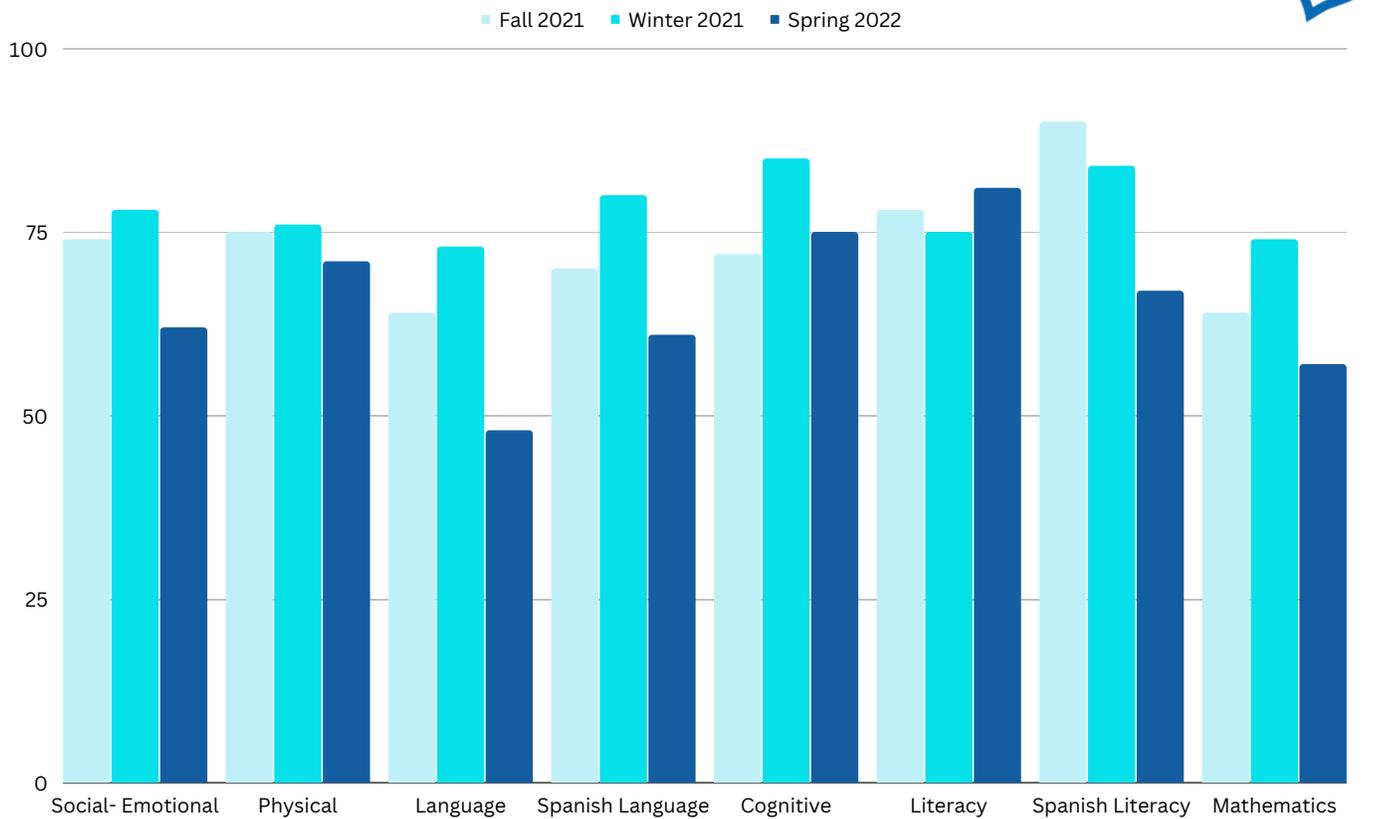
■ Fall 2021 ■ Winter 2021 ■ Spring 2022



Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships: Meeting/ Exceeding Expectations



Early Head Start Home-Based: Meeting/ Exceeding Expectations





Parent and Family Engagement

We are honored to partner with our parents and families in each of our Head Start programs! Annually, parents and families complete our "Parent Interest Survey," which informs us of what they would like to do to support them as learners or for fun, with other adults, with their children, or with other families. While Covid may have required in-person, virtual, or blended activities, we gave parents and families various opportunities to share, socialize, and learn. Highlights this year:

- **Kindergarten Readiness** - We held monthly informational meetings on the transition to kindergarten and ended the year with a hybrid Kindergarten Conference in May. We were honored to have RIDE Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Angélica Infante-Green, as the Keynote Speaker, and Lisa Nugent, RIDE Early Childhood Coordinator, made the Closing Remarks.

We offered different workshops Lead Prevention; Parent Advocacy; Navigating the IEP Process; Male Involvement/ Dads Making a Difference; Autism in the Early Years; Supporting Your Transgender Child; and Parents as Role Models.

- **Workshops** - Community guests provided workshops to our parents and families at our monthly Parent Committee meetings. Subjects included childhood lead poisoning, Covid, transitions, health insurance, special education, and more.
- **Promoting Literacy** - We continue gathering parents' and families' information to reach our goal of having a library card for every child!
- **Supporting Leadership** - We encouraged new members to run for Policy Council Officer positions and interviewed more candidates for AmeriCorps and our Child Development Associate Training programs.





The Numbers



Early Head Start

- # of slots: 176
- Total # of children & families served: 225
- % of children with an ongoing source of accessible health care: 90%
- % of children with an ongoing source of access to comprehensive dental care: 87%
- # of children with disabilities who received services and coordination with other service providers: 29
- # of homeless families served: 6
- % of families who were helped in obtaining stable housing: 1
- # of pregnant mothers who received prenatal education and support: 19

Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships

- # of slots: 100
- Total # of children & families served: 69
- % of children with an ongoing source of accessible health care: 100%
- % of children with an ongoing source of access to comprehensive dental care: 60%
- # of children with disabilities who received services and coordination with other service providers: 29
- # of homeless families served: 2
- # of families who were helped in obtaining stable housing: 1
- # of pregnant mothers served: N/A





The Numbers (continued)



Head Start

- # of slots: 825
- Total # of children & families served: 629
- % of children with an ongoing source of accessible health care: 98%
- % of children with an ongoing source of access to comprehensive dental care: 97%
- # of children with disabilities who received services and coordination with other service providers: 66
- # of homeless families served: 6
- # of families who were helped in obtaining stable housing: 1





Financials



INCOME

8/1/21 - 7/31/22

RI Department of Human Services	\$852,154.68
RI Department of Education	\$587,907.00
US Department of Health & Human Services	\$16,630,596.81
In-kind	\$2,197,879.85
Total	\$20,268,538.34



EXPENSES

8/1/21 - 7/31/22

Salaries & Fringes	\$12,763,229.06
Purchased Services	\$1,892,320.57
Occupancy	\$3,297,440.50
Client Benefits	\$634,751.18
Other	\$1,680,797.03
Total	\$20,268,538.34



ACF BUDGET

5/1/22 - 4/30/23

Personnel	\$8,479,286.00
Fringe Benefits	\$3,603,697
Travel - Equipment - Supplies	\$344,742
Contractual	\$1,102,629
Facilities/Construction - Other	\$2,706,945
Total Approved Budget	\$16,237,298





Children's
FRIEND

153 Summer Street
Providence, RI 02903
401.276.4300
ChildrensfriendRI.org

