



ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024 PROGRAM YEAR





A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends of CABBC,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you our annual report for the 2023-2024 program year. This past year has been one of tremendous growth, resilience, and strategic advancement for Child Advocates of Blair County and our Head Start program. Despite the challenges posed by a tight labor market and an increasing gap between community needs related to housing security and mental health and the resources available, we have navigated through the year with unwavering determination and adaptability, achieving significant milestones and reinforcing our position as a leader in the education and its intersection with social services. As we reflect on our accomplishments and challenges, we look forward to sharing our achievements, insights, and future aspirations with you in this report.

I am delighted to highlight a pivotal achievement this year: a successful Change of Scope application. This achievement resulted in a substantial increase in our cost-per-child allocation, reinforcing CABBC's long-term viability and bolstering our capacity to serve children and families throughout Blair County. As a direct outcome, we were able to implement a wage increase for all Head Start staff members, making considerable progress towards the goal achieving equitable pay and a stable workforce. Furthermore, these funds have empowered us to codify enhancements to our student transportation services and support offerings for families, ensuring even greater impact and support for those we serve. This accomplishment underscores our commitment to our mission and our dedication to enhancing the quality of our services.

Throughout the year, CABBC has strived to connect with local, state, and federal officials who share our dedication to the young children of our community. We were honored to host visits from Altoona Mayor Matt Pacifico, County Commissioner David Kessler, State Senator Judy Ward, US Representative Dr. John Joyce, and US Senator Bob Casey, all of whom demonstrated a keen interest in understanding and supporting the Head Start model. Their engagement underscores a shared commitment to enhancing educational opportunities and community support. We deeply appreciate their ongoing support and advocacy, which are crucial in ensuring the continued success and impact of our programs.

On the frontline, CABBC's early childhood programs continue to create lasting impacts that extend far beyond the classroom. Thanks to the ongoing commitment and collaboration of staff, more children and families across Blair County have established medical and dental homes that are instrumental in promoting ongoing health and wellbeing. Likewise, since the start of the 2023-2024 program year, we have witnessed significant strides in children's learning and development, measured by both the number of children meeting or exceeding age-level expectations and the individual gains children made over the course of the school year. Equally important, our efforts have supported families in achieving their goals, fostering greater stability and overall family wellbeing. These achievements align with research demonstrating that Head Start participation correlates with enhanced educational outcomes, increased economic self-sufficiency, and the breaking of generational cycles of poverty.

Just as we strive to end our CABBC meetings with "shoutouts" that acknowledge others' contributions and our appreciation for one another, I'd like to close by highlighting a few individuals. First, I'd like to acknowledge the dedication and leadership of our Policy Council and Board of Directors members. These leadership groups are comprised of parents, friends, and community leaders who generously give their time and expertise to guide our efforts and support our mission. Of special note, Board Chair Dan Hoover, who has served in this capacity for over 40 years, was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award in October. Finally, I'd like to give thanks to our dedicated and outstanding staff, who carry out our mission-driven work each day and are fondly remembered by the children and families they serve, even many years later. Our two longest-serving staff have a collective 90 years at CABBC. Family Advocate Kelley Schaffer will begin her 46th year with Head Start this fall, and Educator Annette Reed will begin her 44th year. These long-serving employees are an inspiration and provide invaluable perspective, insight, and leadership that help us all continue to learn and grow. To our Policy Council, Board of Directors, and CABBC Staff, I express my most sincere thanks.

Warm Regards,

JENNIFER NEELY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LONG STANDING BOARD MEMBER RECOGNIZED



Pictured (left to right): Kristen Pearson (CABC Board Secretary), Jennifer Neely (CABC Executive Director), Scott Andrews (CABC Board), Stacey Corle (CABC Board), Dan Hoover (CABC Board Chairperson), Caroline Kelley (CABC Board), May Anne Mong (CABC Board), Aimee Willett (CABC Board Vice Chair), Daryl Sarver (CABC CFO).

Dan Hoover, Chairperson of the Board of Directors for Child Advocates of Blair County (CABC), was honored with a Lifetime Achievement in Business Award by the Blair County Chamber of Commerce at their Business Excellence Dinner in October 2023. This prestigious award recognizes individuals who are regarded as business leaders in the region and have made a sustained positive impact on the Blair County business community.

One of Mr. Hoover's biggest passions has been early childhood education.

He has been a member of the CABC board since the late 1980s and has served as its chairman for more than 20 years. In addition to his work with CABC, he is a member of Pennsylvania's Early Learning Investment Commission, founded by Governor Ed Rendell in 2007. Dan Hoover is the Co-chair and CEO of Spring Cove Container and Allegheny Mountain Spring Water.

CABC is proud to celebrate Dan Hoover's achievements and his unwavering commitment to improving the lives of young children and families in Blair County.

CABC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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AIMEE WILLETT
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STACEY CORLE

CAROLINE KELLEY

SCOTT ANDREWS

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JENNIFER NEELY
Executive Director

DARYL SARVER
Chief Financial Officer

KRYSTAL RHODES
Child Development & Education Manager

CAROL LEONARD
Family & Community Engagement Manager

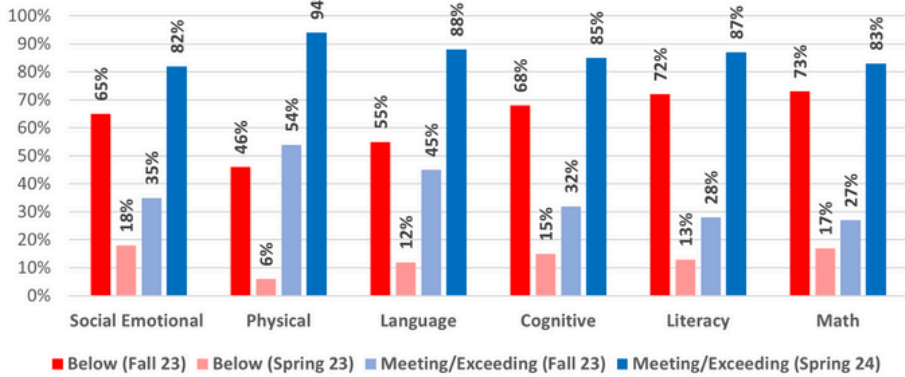
AMANDA LYKENS
Health & Disabilities Manager

KEN POORMAN
Facilities & Transportation Manager

ERICA PETERSON
Planning & Development Specialist

AIMEE SAPITA
Human Resources Specialist

FALL 2023 v. SPRING 2024 Children Below & Meeting/Exceeding Age Level Expectations



EDUCATIONAL GAINS

CHILD OUTCOMES 2023-2024

The Blair County Head Start program reported notable advancements in child outcomes for the 2023-24 program year, based on the Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) online child outcomes assessment. When comparing the number of children meeting or exceeding age-level expectations at the start of the program in fall 2023 to those in spring 2024, significant improvements were observed, particularly in the domains of Literacy (59%), Mathematics (56%), and Cognitive skills (53%).

The most substantial year-over-year improvement was in Mathematics, where there was a 5% increase in the percentage of children achieving age-level expectations between the fall and spring, compared to the 2022-23 program year.

For the 2023-24 program year, the area with the highest improvement percentage was physical development. Initially, 46% of children were below age-level expectations, but by the end of the program, 94% were meeting or exceeding these expectations. Language development also saw

significant progress with the percentage of children meeting or exceeding goals rising from 55% below expectations in the fall to 88% by the program's end.

Blair County Head Start is committed to enhancing school readiness by setting clear goals and making necessary adaptations based on self assessment and community data. This year, the program is placing strong emphasis on social-emotional development, specifically focusing on helping children to manage their feelings, balance the needs and rights of themselves and others, and solve social problems effectively. Additionally, the program aims to improve general cognition and approaches to learning by encouraging problem-solving and fostering greater persistence in activities. Professional development and coaching opportunities will be provided to teachers, enabling them to enrich social-emotional learning within the classroom environment. Efforts will support the program's overarching goal of preparing children for school success in a holistic manner.

WIGGLY WORMS!

CREATIVE CURRICULUM STUDIES OFFER NEW EXPERIENCES



The Creative Curriculum offers a comprehensive, research-based approach to early childhood education, designed to foster the development of the whole child. By incorporating in-depth studies on a variety of topics, this curriculum engages children in hands-on, project-based learning that promotes critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. Each study builds on children's natural curiosity, encouraging exploration and discovery, while covering essential academic concepts and nurturing social-emotional development, language acquisition, and physical growth.

In the 2023-24 program year, BCHS children engaged in multiple studies, such as **Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle**, **Insects**, and a **Ball Study**. These studies are flexible and responsive to the interests and developmental levels of the children, allowing teachers to customize the framework to fit their classroom's unique needs. By making connections between their experiences and the world around them, children develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter. This approach not only enhances academic learning but also fosters a love of learning, equipping children with the foundational skills needed for future success.

CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE

PROGRAM TAKES EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH TO CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT



Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive social-emotional learning and classroom management program designed to foster a positive school climate and develop essential life skills in children. Created by Dr. Becky Bailey, this evidence-based approach integrates social-emotional learning, discipline, and self-regulation to transform school environments and enhance the well-being of both students and educators.

Conscious Discipline is built around seven powers for conscious adults and seven skills of discipline. The powers help educators change their perception of conflict and see it as an opportunity for growth, while the skills provide practical strategies for teaching children how to manage their emotions, solve problems, and interact positively with others. Key components include creating a school family atmosphere, establishing consistent routines, and using positive language to guide behavior.

The curriculum emphasizes the importance of adult self-regulation and emotional intelligence, recognizing that children learn best from models who demonstrate healthy social and emotional behaviors. By fostering a supportive and nurturing environment, Conscious Discipline helps children

develop resilience, empathy, and self-control, laying the foundation for academic and personal success.

In the 2023-24 program year, Blair County Head Start introduced the Conscious Discipline curriculum to foster a positive school climate and develop essential life skills in children. The rollout began with a two-day training session presented by Jessica Shields-Flowers, M.Ed., during pre-service training in August 2023. An additional one-day follow-up training was conducted in April 2024 to reinforce the program's principles and strategies.

Staff confidence in implementing the Conscious Discipline curriculum has increased significantly. Surveys conducted in the spring of 2023 showed a 5% increase in confidence levels, with nearly 70% of staff rating their confidence at 8 or higher out of 10. Phases of implementation will continue into the 2024-25 program year, including onsite professional development facilitated by Conscious Discipline Certified Instructors, who will be delivering training sessions during preservice and coaching sessions during the year. Additional on-demand learning and virtual consultations will occur throughout the year to ensure ongoing support and development.

HEAD START AWARD & MONITORING



OFFICE OF HEAD START

An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

Blair County Head Start submitted a new five-year baseline application on October 1, 2023, and received a Notice of Award in January 2024, naming CABC as the grantee for the Blair County Head Start program. Funding for the current five-year grant period extends through December 31, 2028. The program's previous five-year grant period ended on December 31, 2023, with its most recent monitoring review being conducted in May 2022, resulting in strengths being reported in all six focus areas. The program has since redesigned its process for obtaining and tracking child health records as a result of growth areas identified during the review.

With the award of this new five-year grant period, the program anticipates receiving its Focus Area (FA) 1 monitoring review by the Office of Head Start sometime within the 2024-2025 program year. Blair County Head Start is poised to continue providing high-quality early childhood education and comprehensive family support services. The upcoming FA 1 review will help ensure that the program maintains its standards of excellence and continues to make a positive impact in the community.



Jennifer Neely meets with Senator Bob Casey in May 2024 during his visit to tour the Greenwood Center and discuss the impactful work of CABC, along with the challenges facing children and families in Blair County.

INDIVIDUALIZING HEALTH & NUTRITION NEEDS

At Blair County Head Start, the program's commitment to the health and well-being of each child is paramount. The Nurse and Health and Nutrition Specialist work closely with families and physicians to identify and plan for all individual child needs.

To ensure that every child receives the necessary care, staff are trained by the Nurse to administer medications and follow specific medical or special diet plans. The Health and Nutrition Specialist coordinates all food services to meet the unique dietary requirements of our children.

During the 2023-24 year, the program developed 63 Individual Child Health Plans (ICHPs) based on physician instructions. These plans addressed a variety of medical needs, from inhaler use and diabetic intervention to epi-pen administration. They also covered nutrition-related needs, such as avoiding cow's milk and managing allergies to peanuts.

Through these comprehensive health plans, Blair County Head Start ensures that each child's health and nutritional needs are met, allowing them to thrive in a safe and supportive environment.

Children enrolled in Blair County Head Start receive nutritious meals and snacks daily through grant funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).



HEALTH SNAPSHOT

The following represents the number of children with up-to-date health requirements during the 2023-24 year.

- PHYSICAL EXAMS: 289 CHILDREN (90%)
- DENTAL EXAMS: 277 CHILDREN (87%)
- IMMUNIZATIONS: 286 CHILDREN (89%)
- LEAD SCREENING: 271 CHILDREN (85%)
- HEMOGLOBIN SCREENING: 271 CHILDREN (85%)

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Blair County Head Start offers bus transportation in most areas, ensuring the safe and age-appropriate transport of children to and from school. Our transportation department collaborates with numerous child care centers throughout the county to accommodate children who attend care before or after the Head Start day. Recognizing that transportation is a common barrier for families, providing this service supports daily attendance and helps families overcome this challenge. The following data reflects transportation services provided in the 2023-24 program year.

- ✓ 10 BUSES IN FLEET
- ✓ 290 CHILDREN TRANSPORTED
- ✓ 98,000 ONE-WAY TRIPS
- ✓ 101,185 MILES LOGGED



Left: Teacher Marissa Thompson checks children from her list as they board the bus at the end of the day.

Below: Blair County Head Start staff and family members attend the Altoona Christmas Parade with a CAB bus, adorned in an Olaf theme from the Disney movie "Frozen". Staff distributed recruitment information along the parade route.



DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

Throughout the 2023-24 program year, Blair County Head Start had the distinct honor of hosting several esteemed local, state, and federal officials at its centers. The program welcomed Altoona Mayor Matthew Pacifico, County Commissioner David Kessler, State Senator Judy Ward, US Representative Dr. John Joyce, and US Senator Bob Casey. Their visits provided a valuable opportunity to discuss the critical importance of early childhood education and the specific needs of the children and families CABC serves in Blair County. These engagements underscore the program's commitment to fostering strong community partnerships and advocating for the resources necessary to support the success and well-being of the county's youngest learners.



Above: CABC staff greet Senator Bob Casey to the Greenwood Center location during a building tour and visit in May 2024. From left: Jennifer Neely (Executive Director), Senator Casey, Erica Peterson (Planning and Development Specialist), and Aimee Sapita (Human Resources Specialist).



Above: Senator Judy Ward reads a Clifford book to Head Start children at Frankstown Elementary School during a visit in November 2023 (Hollidaysburg, PA). Below: Altoona Mayor Matt Pacifico met with staff and children at the Head Start classroom located at Hope Community Church in Altoona, PA and read to children during his visit in October 2023.



Above: Congressman John Joyce reads with two Head Start children during a visit in May 2024 to the Greenwood Center in Altoona, PA. Congressman Joyce donated books from the Library of Congress during his visit. Below: Blair County Commissioner David Kessler visits the Claysburg Head Start center in March 2024 as part of the national Read Across America initiative.



ENGAGING FAMILIES IN SCHOOL READINESS

In the 2023-24 program year, the program introduced two key events designed to connect families and support student learning: Discovery Night in the fall and Makers Night in the spring. Discovery Night was themed around the Creative Curriculum's Tubes, Tunnels, and Simple Machines study, offering families the opportunity to participate together in various stations that promoted investigative learning and aligned with our program's school readiness goals. Similarly, Makers Night, which took place in the spring, featured learning stations tied to the study: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

Both events not only reinforced the educational concepts taught in the classroom but also emphasized the importance of connecting school and home. By providing opportunities for families to engage in school readiness activities with their children, the program fostered a collaborative relationships that supports both academic and personal growth. In addition to school readiness nights, the program also conducted 36 total Parent Meetings during the year, each with accompanying school readiness activities to engage both children and families. These events exemplified how family involvement and hands-on learning can work together to enhance educational outcomes and prepare children for future success.



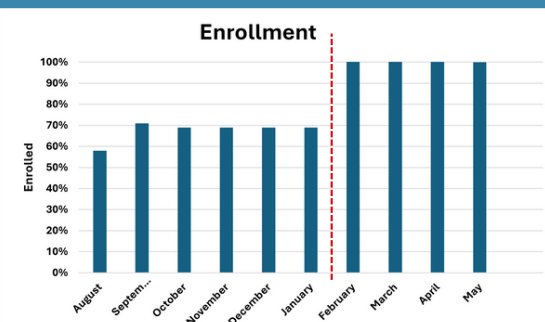
ENROLLMENT

356

Number of children enrolled in Blair County Head Start during the course of the 2023-24 program year.

345

Number of families served throughout the course of the 2023-24 program year.



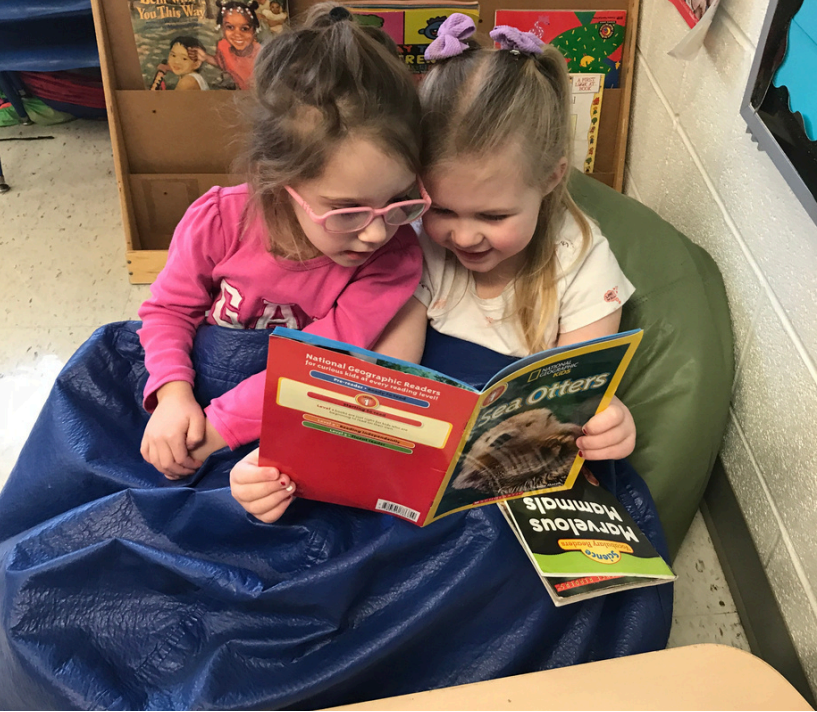
CIS (Change in Scope) Approved January 2024, reducing funded enrollment to 320 children.

The average monthly enrollment for 2023-2024 was 83%, which includes the months prior to the approved Change in Scope application.

ATTENDANCE BOOST: FUN INCENTIVES DRIVE SUCCESS

In the 2023-24 year, the program introduced an exciting classroom attendance incentive initiative, where the classroom with the highest attendance percentage each month received a pizza or ice cream party. This friendly competition was so popular that a few months even ended in a tie, resulting in 12 monthly classroom winners. Thanks to this initiative, there was a remarkable 9% improvement in average daily attendance compared to the 2022-23 program year. The success of this program highlights the positive impact of engaging and rewarding children for their participation while also educating families on the importance of early childhood education and daily attendance.





EVIDENCE-BASED THERAPY

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTS TEACHER CHILD INTERACTION THERAPY

In 2023, Blair County Head Start introduced Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) with families on a voluntary basis. PCIT is an evidence-based treatment program designed for caregivers and their young children (2 to 7 years old) who are experiencing social, behavioral, and/or emotional difficulties. The therapy is regarded by national expert panels as a gold standard treatment for children who exhibit frequent temper tantrums, defiance, verbal and/or physical aggression, destruction of property, backtalk, whining, hyperactivity, and difficulties with behaviors at school or daycare. Data shows that parents implementing the practices are seeing a decrease in difficulties and an increase in parent confidence and connectedness.

PCIT therapy has resulted in a wide range of improvements for families, including increased feelings of security and attachment, improved attention span and self-esteem, enhanced prosocial behaviors, decreased tantrums and hyperactivity, reduced negative attention-seeking behaviors, and decreased caregiver frustration. Additionally, there have been significant improvements in behavior at home and in public, and increased caregiver confidence.

During the 2023-24 program year, the program partnered with a certified Parent Child Interaction Therapist to implement Teacher Child Interaction Therapy (TCIT) within four classrooms. TCIT is an adaptation of the empirically supported Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) for use with teachers and classrooms. TCIT is a classroom-wide training program that serves as both a prevention and intervention model to improve the social-emotional and behavioral competence of children. Additionally, TCIT has been known to increase teacher efficacy and job satisfaction for early childhood educators.

*“A hallmark of the TCIT program is the use of constructive, positive, in-vivo coaching of teachers. Direct coaching allows the TCIT coach to provide immediate, positive feedback to shape and reinforce behaviors, adapt skills to address unique behavior problems, and fade out as teachers become more adept at using classroom behavior management skills”.** TCIT has been scientifically tested since 2008, with research consistently showing decreased frequency of disruptive behaviors, increased prosocial behaviors, improved teacher confidence, and enhanced job satisfaction.

Internal data at BCHS has reflected similar findings. In the 2024-25 year, the program will implement TCIT on a voluntary basis to support children, teachers, and classroom communities. BCHS looks forward to continuing implementation of these evidence-based therapy programs to support children, families, and educators through its innovative approaches and has integrated these approaches into the program’s Five-Year Strategic Goal Plan.

*www.parentchildinteractiontherapy.com



FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS



345 FAMILIES SERVED



159 TWO-PARENT HOMES



186 SINGLE PARENT HOMES



53 FAMILIES WITH AT LEAST ONE PARENT HOLDING AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE OR HIGHER



30 CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE



62 FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOUSING INSECURITY

(AS DEFINED BY THE MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT)

FAMILY SUPPORT: A YEAR OF IMPACT

Blair County Head Start remains committed to providing comprehensive support to families, with Family Advocates and Intensive Case Managers playing a crucial role in delivering these services. Through home visits, referrals, training, and advocacy, families receive the help they need to thrive.

During the 2023-24 program year, Family Advocates and Intensive Case Managers completed over 1,000 home visits, including specific visits to discuss attendance, and made nearly 2,000 referrals to connect families to essential resources. The program supported children in foster care and families experiencing homelessness, conducted eligibility verification visits, and provided vital programs such as "Love in a Backpack." Additionally, family support staff provided transportation to medical, behavioral health, and crisis-related appointments, ensuring families had access to critical services. Intensive Case Management services were also extended to families requiring additional support.

These efforts highlight the program's comprehensive approach, demonstrating an unwavering dedication to meeting the diverse needs of Head Start families and helping them achieve stability and success.

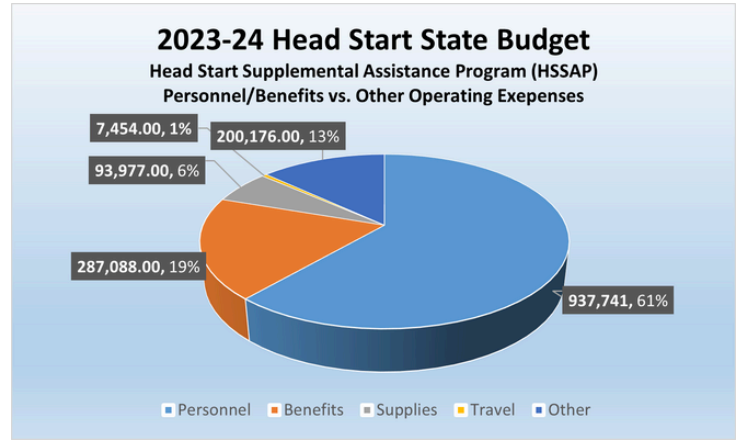
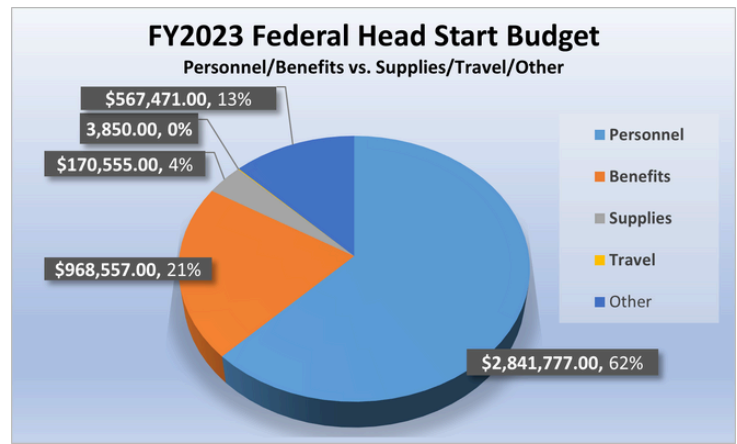
- **1,588 HOME VISITS COMPLETED BY FAMILY ADVOCATES AND INTENSIVE CASE MANAGERS**
- **1,924 REFERRALS MADE TO FAMILIES**
- **232 HOME VISITS COMPLETED TO WORK WITH FAMILIES REGARDING ATTENDANCE BARRIERS**
- **214 ELIGIBILITY VISITS COMPLETED**
- **185 TRIPS COMPLETED TO MEDICAL, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND OTHER CRISIS RELATED APPOINTMENTS**
- **69 FAMILIES RECEIVED INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES DURING THE 2023-24 YEAR**
- **158 FAMILIES ASSISTED THROUGH THE 'LOVE IN A BACKPACK' FOOD PROGRAM**

BUDGET & EXPENDITURES

Child Advocates of Blair County, Inc. (CABC), the grantee for the Head Start program in Blair County, received notification in January 2024 of its successful Change in Scope application which adjusted the program's funded enrollment and resulted in a substantial increase in the program's cost-per-child allocation. This redistribution of funds allowed for a wage increase for all Head Start staff members. The program received its official Notice of Award for the Change in Scope application on January 22, 2024, and is now funded to serve a total of 320 children county-wide.

CABC received \$4,518,360 in federal funding in FY2023 from the Administration for Children & Families to serve 212 children and \$1,468,476.00 in Pennsylvania State Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP) funds to serve 108 children in the 2023-24 program year. In both the Federal and State budgets, personnel wages and benefits occupy over 83% of the entire budget for both grants.

The most recent financial audit for January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023, was performed by Young, Oakes, Brown & Company, certified public accountants. In the independent auditor's report, the auditors expressed a "clean opinion" showing no findings of non-conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America



CELEBRATING DECADES OF DEDICATION

Blair County Head Start is honored to spotlight two exceptional veteran employees of Blair County Head Start: Kelley Schaffer and Annette Reed. Kelley, a devoted Family Advocate, is beginning her remarkable 46th year with the program in 2024, while Annette, a dedicated Teacher, embarks on her 44th year. Their decades of unwavering dedication have profoundly impacted countless children and families, exemplifying the heart and soul of our program.

Kelley Schaffer has been an invaluable member of Blair County Head Start for an incredible 46 years, beginning her career as a Teacher Assistant before advancing to various roles including classroom teacher, homebase program leader, Family Engagement Coordinator, and currently, a Family Advocate. Kelley also contributed significantly to the former Teen Link Connection, facilitating both the teen and adult nurturing programs. Throughout her extensive tenure, Kelley has cherished her interactions with families, witnessing their growth and the profound impact of the program. Among her many memorable moments, the transition from Community Action to the creation of Child Advocates of Blair County stands out as a pivotal event that shaped the program's evolution. Kelley reflects on her career with the belief that everyone has strengths, and focusing on those strengths is the best way to build relationships. Outside of work, Kelley enjoys spending time with her family, including her husband of 41 years, two sons, and three grandchildren. She credits Connie Shafer, Koelle Williams, and Carol Leonard as significant influences in her career.



Annette Reed has been a dedicated member of Blair County Head Start for an impressive 44 years. Inspired by her daughter's involvement in the program, she started her journey as a volunteer and, over the years, transitioned to a Teacher Assistant position with the program. During this time, she began taking college courses that eventually led to her securing a full time Teacher position. After a decision to retire from the lead teaching position, Annette chose to return to the classroom as a substitute and eventually her current role as a Paraprofessional. Annette cherishes the special memories and milestones, particularly the heartfelt connections with families and students who remember her fondly. Her love for helping children learn and discover new things, coupled with the support and encouragement she has received to move her career forward with the program, underscores her commitment to Head Start. Outside of work, Annette enjoys spending time with her family, participating in the Miracle League, walking, working out, and dancing with her grandchildren. Her family and co-workers have been her biggest inspirations throughout her remarkable career.

LOVE IN A BACKPACK




The Love in a Backpack program is a partnership between the Salvation Army and Blair County Head Start that aims to provide non-perishable food supplies, comfort, and hope to families facing food insecurity, homelessness, and hardships. Blair County Head Start staff packed and delivered to families in need on a bi-weekly basis. In 2023-24, Blair County Head Start served 158 families through this initiative.



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COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

The Head Start Program Performance Standards require all programs to conduct a full Community Assessment at least once during the five year grant period. The program's most recent full assessment was conducted in the spring of 2020 with additional updates since that time. The assessment includes data regarding community strengths, needs and resources.

- The most recent estimates from the US Census and American Community Survey shows Blair County's population an estimated 121,132 with 2.2% being children 3-4 years of age.
- The most current data collected from Kids Count Data Center indicates in 2022, there were 4,900 children living in Blair County at 300% of the federal poverty guidelines, equating to 69.1% of the total 0-5 population. Likewise, 25.9% of the same population are living at or below 100% of poverty. Head Start income eligibility is 100% or below the federal poverty guideline, while eligibility for PA Pre-K Counts falls at 300% or below.
- Nearly 25% of SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefit recipients in Blair County are between 0-4 years of age.
- The PA Future Ready Index identifies the Altoona Area School District with the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged elementary students at 60.6% followed by the Claysburg-Kimmel district at 60%.
- Nearly half of students in Blair County qualify for free or reduced lunch.
- In 2022-23, the Kids Count Data Center denotes 49.6% of children eligible for publicly funded, high-quality pre-k went unserved.
- Of the 11 counties with Region 5 of the PA Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program, Blair County held the highest number of identified homeless students, equating to 13% of the region's total. Blair County Head Start saw a 60% increase since the 2022-23 program year in the number of children considered homeless according to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- In Blair County, 2022 American Community Survey data shows an estimated 1,370 grandparent householders responsible for their own grandchildren under the age of 18 with 85% of those with no parent present in the home. These same estimates show that 17.4% of all households in 2022 were grandparents raising grandchildren.
- The State of Child Welfare Report for 2023 indicates that reports of suspected child abuse and neglect increased by 1.5% in 2022, however, the number of substantiated cases decreased by 5.6%.