

LAKE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT R-1

The Center
Early Childhood Programs
&
Head Start

ANNUAL REPORT
2024-2025

The Center Early Childhood Programs & Head Start: 2024-2025 Annual Report

Mission

Our mission is to serve and respect children and families by providing research-based early childhood services that promote the development of knowledge, life skills and self-esteem.

About The Center

In 2024-2025, The Center operated five integrated preschool classrooms with children from all programs and backgrounds represented. All children learn respect for self and others and are prepared with skills and resources for success in both school and life. The Center believes that families are a child's first and most important teacher and makes developing relationships with families a priority.

HEAD START is the largest and best-known federal early childhood program. Head Start provides comprehensive education, physical and mental health, nutritional, and family development services with an emphasis on prevention and early intervention for eligible children ages three to five years. Eighty-eight percent of the 34 families served in Head Start in Lake County have income at or below 130% of the federal poverty line or are otherwise categorically eligible, and 11% were identified with special needs. Head Start helps children enter Kindergarten ready for success in school, while also building strong relationships between families and schools.

UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL PROGRAM served 39 four-year-old children and their families in the year before they are age-eligible for kindergarten. All four-year-old children receive at least 15 free hours of preschool and those with additional risk factors for school readiness can receive up to 30 hours of free preschool time per week. In addition, 30 three-year-old children with risk factors, including 14 being served on IEPs, received some free preschool time. Children and families receive many of the same services that are provided for Head Start families, including health and developmental screenings, family supports, and opportunities for parent involvement

TUITION-BASED PRESCHOOL serves children three and four year olds and their families on a sliding scale fee schedule. Families receive the same services as children enrolled in the Universal Preschool Program.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ages three and four receive their services at The Center in an inclusive preschool setting.

EARLY HEAD START is a Federal initiative providing child development and parent support services to low-income pregnant women and families with children ages birth to 3 years old. EHS home-based services offer home visits and group socialization activities for parents and their children. Eighty-eight percent of the 16 families served in Head Start in Lake County have income at or below 130% of the federal poverty line or are otherwise categorically eligible.

Major Funding Received by The Center: FY25

Federal:

Head Start \$763,620

State:

Universal Preschool Program \$429,374

Private:

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Head Start FY2025 Budget

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Head Start Personnel , including salaries & fringe benefits | \$563,582 |
| Head Start Training & Technical Assistance , including teacher education & professional development | \$9,083 |
| Head Start Other Expenses , including medical, utilities, supplies | \$35,776 |
| | |
| Early Head Start Personnel , including salaries & fringe benefits | \$132,424 |
| Early Head Start Training & Technical Assistance , including teacher education & professional development | \$2,848 |
| Early Head Start Other Expenses , including medical, utilities, supplies | \$19,907 |
| | |
| Total Grant Amount | <u>\$763,620</u> |

Proposed Head Start FY2026 Budget

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Head Start Personnel , including salaries & fringe benefits | \$563,582 |
| Head Start Training & Technical Assistance , including teacher education & professional development | \$9,083 |
| Head Start Other Expenses , including medical, utilities, supplies | \$35,776 |
| | |
| Early Head Start Personnel , including salaries & fringe benefits | \$132,424 |
| Early Head Start Training & Technical Assistance , including teacher education & professional development | \$2,848 |
| Early Head Start Other Expenses , including medical, utilities, supplies | \$19,907 |
| | |
| Total Grant Amount | <u>\$763,620</u> |

The Center operates through a braided funding model that allows services to be offered through a wide spectrum of sources. We continue the implementation of our Core Knowledge Language Acquisition and our Early Head Start home visiting program.

Our financial records as of June 2024 were audited as part of the wider standard audit of all local, state, grand and federal funds at Lake County School District. Suggestions made by the auditors are being included in discussions around continuing improvement and enhanced transparency. A copy of this audit is available on the Lake County School District website at <https://www.lakecountyschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/LCSD-2025-Audited-financial-statements-FINAL.pdf> or can be provided upon request.

Head Start Facts

Total number of children served in Head Start, 2024-2025: 35
Total number of children served in Early Head Start, 2024-2025: 17
Total number of families served in Head Start, 2024-2025: 34
Total number of families served in Early Head Start, 2024-2025: 16
Percentage of eligible families served in Head Start: 100%
Percentage of eligible families served in Early Head Start: 100%
Average monthly Head Start enrollment: 89%
Average monthly Early Head Start enrollment: 98%
Average monthly Head Start attendance: 86%
Total number of Early Head Start visits and check ins: Scheduled weekly, per Performance Standards
Percentage of Head Start children receiving medical exams: 67%
Percentage of Early Head Start children receiving medical exams: 88%
Percentage of Head Start children receiving dental exams: 52%
Percentage of Early Head Start children receiving dental exams: 94%

Opportunities for Family Engagement

The Center provides many opportunities for parent and family involvement, including:

- Family Fun Nights: At least 5 events throughout the year offering educational activities for parents and children to do together and opportunities to connect with and enjoy community resources. Parents have the opportunity to assist with planning these events and advising on topics of interest..
- Parenting classes: Offered in partnership with Full Circle of Lake County
- Home Visits: Offered twice a year
- Parent/teacher conferences: Offered twice a year
- Policy Council: Part of our shared governance approach, parents can serve on the Policy Council and influence program policies and goals, and budget development.
- ~~Program committees: Including health services, family and community partnerships, and education.~~

- Take home ~~practice packs~~ activities: Allowing parents to participate in the curriculum directly with their child. Emphasize activities for learning, not worksheets.
- Special events: Catered to families' needs and interests.
- Interpretation Services: There are bilingual staff members available for our many Spanish speaking families to participate in events and activities.

Family Engagement Highlights

Opportunities for Family Engagement are programmed to meet the needs of families with diverse work schedules and transportation needs. In-school celebrations generally include an October costume party, Thanksgiving Lunch, Winter Holiday party, Valentine's Day party, and end-of-the-year celebrations. These festive events are always very well attended.

Families are also invited to accompany classrooms on field trips throughout the year and have occasionally visited the public library, a bank, local parks, and the post office. Practice Packs describe activities that families can do together at home to further their educational goals for their child. Supplies and other resources are offered for families who request them. These include making a family tree, cooking projects, and easy ways to encourage early literacy.

Committee meetings are scheduled with the input of families who express interest in serving on those committees. Family Fun Nights (Parent Committee Meetings) are held in the evenings, so parents who work during the day may attend. EHS socializations are held at school and at neighborhood locations. Some of these are at the school and some are often at community locales, including the public library. Family Fun Nights offer parent education opportunities, information updates from Policy Council, connections to community resources, and fun activities for families.

Kindergarten Transition

The Center works closely with Kindergarten leadership to ensure that skills taught in preschool help prepare children for school. In addition, several transition activities and events are offered each spring, including an Open House and Kindergarten Classroom Experience, to prepare children and parents alike for Kindergarten.

All children enrolled at The Center who will be entering Kindergarten in the fall receive a take-home bag of activities that will encourage reading and pre-Kindergarten skills during the summer. Parents also receive information on how to enroll their child in kindergarten and how to help prepare their child for public school.

Historically, data has shown that children who enter Kindergarten having attended The Center are well-prepared both academically and from a social-emotional perspective.

The Center School Readiness Goals

The Center’s school readiness goals were revised with the participation of the Instructional Leadership Team and Policy Council and with advice from Region VIII using last year’s data on child outcomes. These goals address all domains of early development to support the whole child.

Children’s progress is assessed using the TS Gold tool. According to Teaching Strategies Inc., widely held expectations (WHE) in early childhood have been determined by researchers which allow teachers to see what skills children demonstrate according to their age. The end of the year target is to have 20% or less of our children within the below WHE in each area of development.

| Goal | Measures of Progress |
|--|--|
| Social Emotional Domain | |
| <i>Children will develop and demonstrate positive interactions and relationships with adults and peers by balancing the needs and rights of self and others and through solving social problems.</i> | <u>Relationships with adults outcomes:</u> 80% of Kinder Ready preschoolers will be at a level 7 or 8 for TS GOLD objective 2a, forms relationships with adults <u>Relationships with peers outcomes:</u> 80% of Kinder Ready preschoolers will be at a level 6-8 for TS GOLD objective 3a Balances needs and rights of self and others and objective 3b for Solves Social Problems |
| Approaches to Learning | |
| <i>Children will manage emotions with increasing independence.</i> | <u>Manages feelings outcomes:</u> 80% of Kinder Ready preschoolers will be a level 7 or 8 on TS GOLD obj 1a manages feelings |
| Cognitive | |
| <i>Children will build number sense concepts including counting, quantifying, and connecting numerals with their quantities.</i> | <u>Counts outcomes:</u> 80% of Kinder Ready preschoolers will be at a level 5 or 6 on TS GOLD Obj 20a counts <u>Numerals and quantities outcomes:</u> 80% of Kinder Ready preschoolers will be at a level 5 or 6 on TS GOLD 20c connects numerals with quantities (within 10) |

Program Reviews and Monitoring

In accordance with Head Start Performance Standards and state licensing requirements, different aspects of our program are regularly reviewed and monitored.

The Early Head Start program was placed on a Full Enrollment Initiative (FEI) plan in June of 2023. The purpose of this plan was to bring the EHS program up to full enrollment within twelve months. The program did complete this initiative successfully and was released from the plan in December of 2025.

Another FEI was placed on the Head Start preschool program in February of 2025. This initiative was solved by reducing the number of spots in the program from 40 to 30 and through enhanced recruitment efforts, especially through community partners like Wraparound.