

**Children's Learning Centers of Fairfield County
Head Start/Early Head Start Program
2023-2024 Annual Report**



Message from the Head Start Director

Dear Colleagues and Friends of Children's Learning Centers,

I am honored to share with you the 2023-2024 Annual Report for the Children's Learning Centers of Fairfield County (CLC) Head Start/Early Head Start program. Since our founding in 1902, CLC has remained dedicated to delivering high-quality early childhood education and care to families in Stamford, Connecticut. As the second-largest early childhood education provider in the state, CLC continues to be a leader in the field, enriching the lives of children and families across Fairfield County.

For over 50 years, our Head Start and Early Head Start programs have been a vital resource for Stamford's most vulnerable young children and families living in poverty, ensuring they are prepared for school and lifelong success. Our mission is to create nurturing and innovative early childhood experiences for all children and their families. In addition to education, our comprehensive services include health, nutrition, and family support, addressing the holistic needs of every child in our care.

CLC serves low-income families who might not otherwise have access to these critical services. With support from federal Head Start and Early Head Start funding, as well as state-subsidized early childhood education funding, CLC provides care to 236 children and families through a multi-funded approach. This enables us to offer full-day, extended-day, and full-year center-based services, ensuring consistency and quality in early childhood education.

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated staff, engaged parents, and invaluable community partners. Your unwavering support and collaboration allow us to make a lasting impact on the children and families we serve.

With appreciation,

Marsha Guthrie

Head Start Director, Children's Learning Centers



Our Mission: *CLC builds nurturing and innovative early childhood educational experiences for all children and their families to succeed.*

Our Vision: *Shaping a just future through early childhood education*

Our Values: *Creativity, Kindness, Inclusion, Partnerships*

Children's Learning Centers of Fairfield County (CLC) is committed to providing early childhood education for all families, with direct services and programs focused on health, nutrition & family support for children 6 weeks – 5 years of age.

CLC is a nonprofit agency funded by Head Start, and accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) with multiple locations in Stamford. As the second largest early childhood education provider in Connecticut, CLC has been a leader in developing and implementing high-quality and affordable early childhood education and care programs since 1902.

CLC is a Fairfield County innovator in early childhood education outcomes, empowering families to be their own advocates in any circumstance, including when faced with early education obstacles. CLC also identifies and develops strategic relationships with community stakeholders to strengthen families and just educational outcomes.

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EDUCATION/SCHOOL READINESS

CLC prepares children entering Kindergarten for success in elementary school and beyond. The Head Start and Early Head Start programs use research-based educational tools to monitor children's growth and progression. These tools include the Creative Curriculum, and its accompanying online assessment instrument, Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG).

For assessment of child and teacher interactions, we utilize the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Teachers also participate in coaching that focuses on each teaching team's skills. The results of each classroom's CLASS scores and coaching goals inform our practice, and help guide our professional development training plan on an annual basis. During the 2023-2024 school year, we continued our mission of providing high quality educational experiences to promote school readiness and positive program outcomes in the following ways:

1. CLASS observations: We conducted 2 sets of CLASS observations (Fall 2023 & Spring 2024). We took the average of both Fall and Spring CLASS scores to establish our CLASS score for the 2023-2024 school year. Our average scores were as follows: Emotional Support 6.025, Classroom Organization: 5.705, Instructional Support: 3.64. The Office of Head Start's quality threshold scores are 6 for Emotional Support and Classroom Organization, and 2.5 for Instructional Support.
2. We analyzed the child outcomes data for 3 checkpoint assessments (Fall, Winter & Spring).

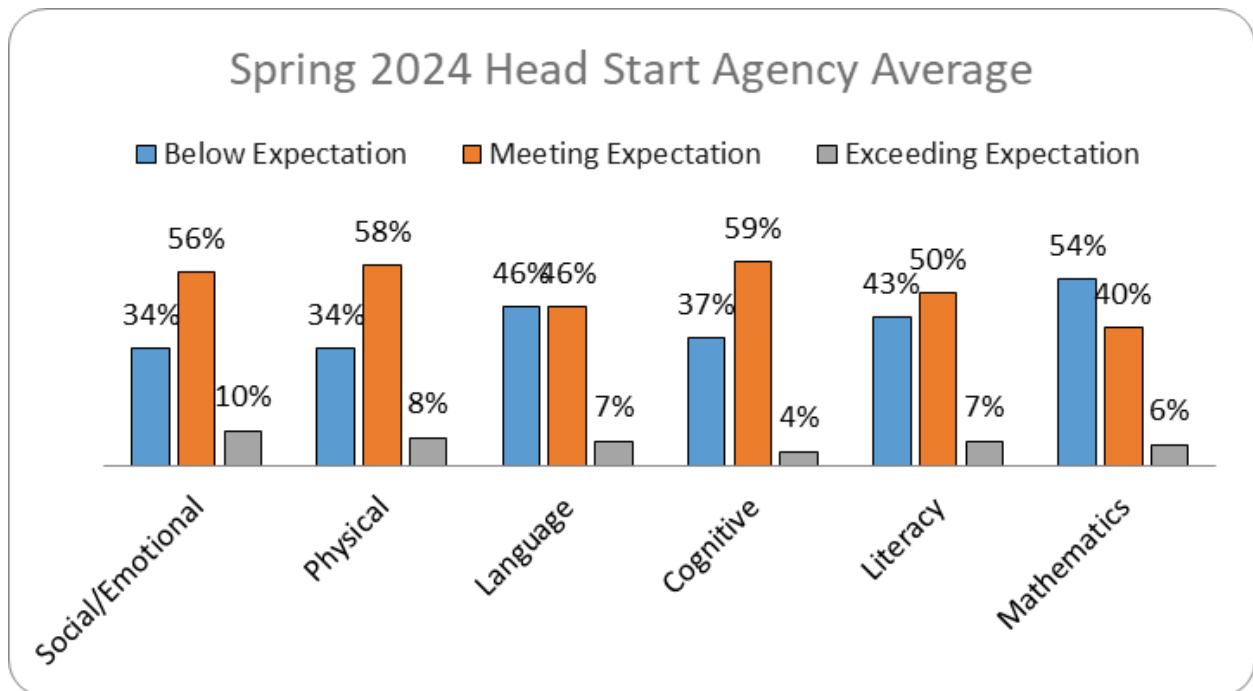
TSG Assessment data demonstrated that children in both Head Start and Early Head Start made progress towards meeting school readiness goals during the 2023-2024 program year. Below is a breakdown of the children who met and exceeded the widely held expectations as assessed from the Spring 2024 checkpoint assessment for Head Start and Early Head Start. The phrase, "widely held expectations" is defined as knowledge, skills and behaviors of a child measured against widely held developmental expectations for children of the same age or same class/grade as determined by TSG.

Aggregated data from TSG: Children Meeting and Exceeding Age Appropriate Expectations

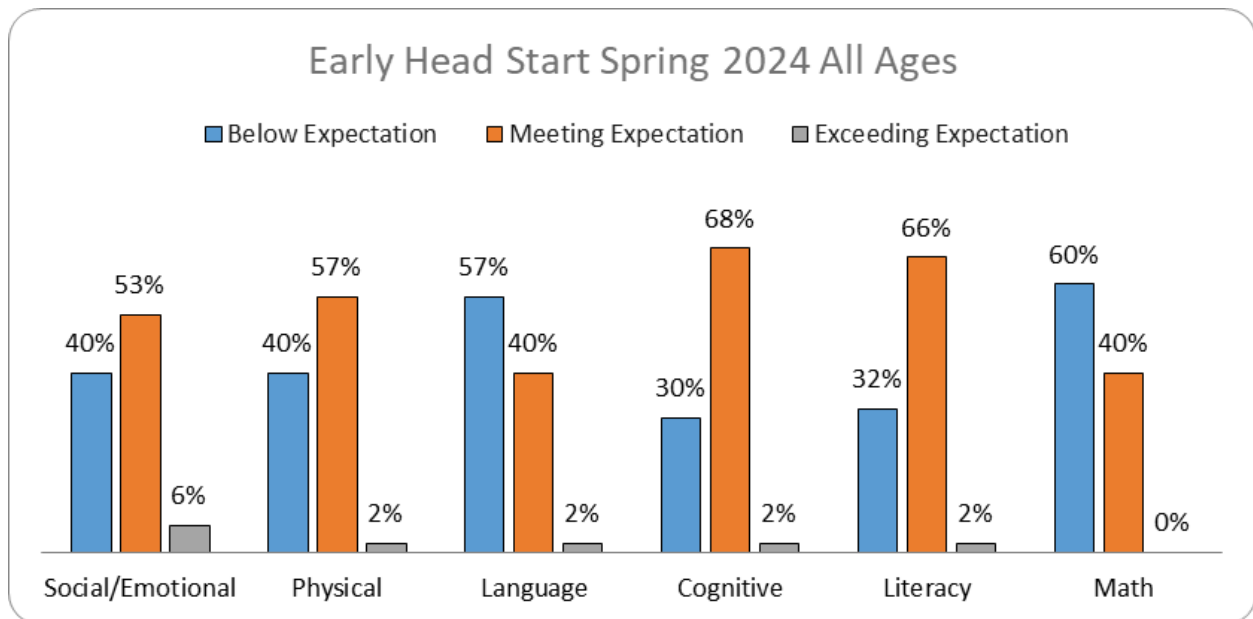
CLC Child Outcomes Data Summary SY 2023-2024

All children are assessed using Teaching Strategies Gold assessment 3 times a year (Fall, Winter & Spring). This report will summarize the Spring assessment data and will focus on the following demographic groups:

- Overall HS Average (across all learning domains)
- Overall EHS Average (across all learning domains)



As an agency 59% of all Head Start children met or exceeded expectations across all learning domains.



The data here indicates that 56% of all Early Head Start children met or exceeded expectations across all learning domains.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

CLC has a coordinated approach in place with the LEA to serve children ages 3-5 with special needs through a partnership between CLC and the Stamford Public Schools' *APPLES* program. In addition, CLC also partners with birth-to-three to provide services to infants and toddlers with developmental delays in our Early Head Start program.

Head Start children requiring special education services receive their services at *Apples* preschool. Integrated classrooms are also available at CLC sites to support the needs of children with special needs in the least restrictive environment; including at our Head Start program. Children also receive itinerant services at our centers as well.

For the 2023-2024 school year, HS and EHS exceeded the 10% enrollment requirement for children with special needs. Head Start averaged 18% (27) children with an IEP, and EHS averaged 19% (9 children) with an IFSP.

HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Nutrition services are coordinated by the CLC nutrition team. The nutrition staff monitor and follow up on all children's nutrition and dietary needs, and maintain a food restrictions list for each classroom. The nutritionist provides nutrition case management services which include; medical and nutrition assessments, anthropometric measurements and training, CACFP meal observations, nutritional counseling for families, monitoring food allergies, and nutrition education and support.

The school nurse reviews all children's medicals and follow-up on their health care needs; including children with a chronic condition that require an Individual Health Care Plan. In addition, the nurse will monitor Asthma Action Plans, and Medication Administration Plans for all children requiring special care. All services provided through these special plans are closely monitored by the school nurse. Health screenings are provided either by the school nurse or community partners; including follow up care. Children are also educated on proper tooth brushing, and good oral health practices.

The Assistant Director is responsible for coordinating mental health consultation services for Head Start and Early Head Start. Mental health consultation is provided through a partnership with the Child Guidance Center of Southern Connecticut (CGC). Consultation is provided in the form of classroom observations, feedback to the teaching staff on behavioral and classroom management strategies, supporting nurturing classroom environments, and offering a guided approach to promoting positive teacher-child interactions. Mental health consultation also includes school-based therapeutic services for children, and referrals for mental health services for families.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CLC Head Start and Early Head Start Programs follow a two-generational approach that promotes family well-being, supports children's school readiness, and the healthy development of children in partnership with their families. This year, CLC HS/EHS continued to offer a wide variety of parent engagement activities, monthly parent education workshops, and fatherhood engagement activities.

CLC HS/EHS uses *Parenting Journey* as our evidence-based parenting curriculum. Parenting Journey fosters healthy, resilient families and improves parenting practices by engaging parents in guided discussions and hands-on activities to support them in developing their parenting skills.

ERSEA Committee: Collaborative Recruitment Efforts, Partnerships & Highlights;

The Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) Committee guides the assessment of our program's practices for verifying the eligibility status of children and families who are receiving Head Start/Early Head Start services and for ensuring appropriate enrollment of children. Each year, the Committee meets to review and update the Head Start and Early Head Start selection criteria to ensure it is in alignment with the Head Start Program Performance Standards and that it reflects the composition of the communities our program serves.

CLC strives to ensure that our practice to assess communities, and recruit and enroll children and families most in need, includes the following activities:

- Training of all new staff who determine eligibility within 90 days of hire.
- Ongoing training of staff, Policy Council, and Governing Board on Head Start and Early Head Start enrollment and eligibility guidelines.
- CLC HS/EHS staff meet with community partners regarding eligibility and referral process.
- Community outreach to secure partnership agreements that enhance recruitment opportunities.
- Ongoing monitoring to ensure recruitment efforts are ongoing.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAMILIES AND VOLUNTEERS

Building trusting and sustainable relationships with families is integral to our family engagement work. CLC's approach to family and community engagement is supportive and collaborative; and connects families to resources in the community to strengthen family well being and promote positive child and family outcomes.

We engage parents in opportunities to participate in a shared partnership with CLC staff. This includes the Parent Policy Council, Health and Nutrition Advisory Committee meetings, and various classroom activities, events, and monthly parent workshops.

CLC has established community partnerships with organizations that support our communities; including Stamford Public Schools (SPS), The Child Guidance Center of Southern CT, the Ferguson Library, Filling in the Blanks, Mothers for Others, Family Centers, Building One Community, and Inspirica to name a few.

GOVERNANCE

Policy Council and Governing Board

The CLC Parent Policy Council (PC) prepares parents/guardians to be advocates and leaders on behalf of their children, and cultivates them as community leaders. Parents on the Policy Council are provided with the opportunity to be fully engaged with program planning and decision-making, and work closely with the Head Start Director and Governing Board. CLC's Governing Body and Policy Council utilizes key program information established at the center-level parent committees, which are discussed during monthly Policy Council (PC) and Board meetings to conduct their governance responsibilities. The Policy Council and Governing Board receive monthly financial statements, monthly HS/EHS program reports, all documents requiring HS Policy Council and Board approval, as well as communication and guidance from the Office of Head Start.

The CLC delegate agency at Family Centers, Greenwich Head Start conducts monthly Policy Committee meetings, and business conducted at those meetings is shared with the grantee.

The CLC Board provides oversight of all CLC program operations, and maintains responsibility for safeguarding the assets of the agency in tandem with the CEO. Through its regular meetings and the exercise of its fiduciary duties, the CLC Board members receive annual training on their roles and responsibilities with Head Start.

Parents on the CLC Parent Policy Council receive annual training on the Head Start regulations, a review of their roles and responsibilities, and eligibility training on federal regulations.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES SERVED**CLC Head Start Enrollment as of June 30, 2024**

Funded Enrollment: **154 (grantee)**

Cumulative Enrollment: **166**

Number of Children Served Year-to-Date in 2023-2024**Participants' Age at Time of Enrollment:**

- 6% of the children enrolled were 2 Years Old: **(10)**
- 41% of the children enrolled were 3 Years Old: **(68)**
- 53% of the children enrolled were 4 Years Old: **(88)**
- 100% of eligible children served: **(166)**

Figure 1- Participants by Age & Percentage

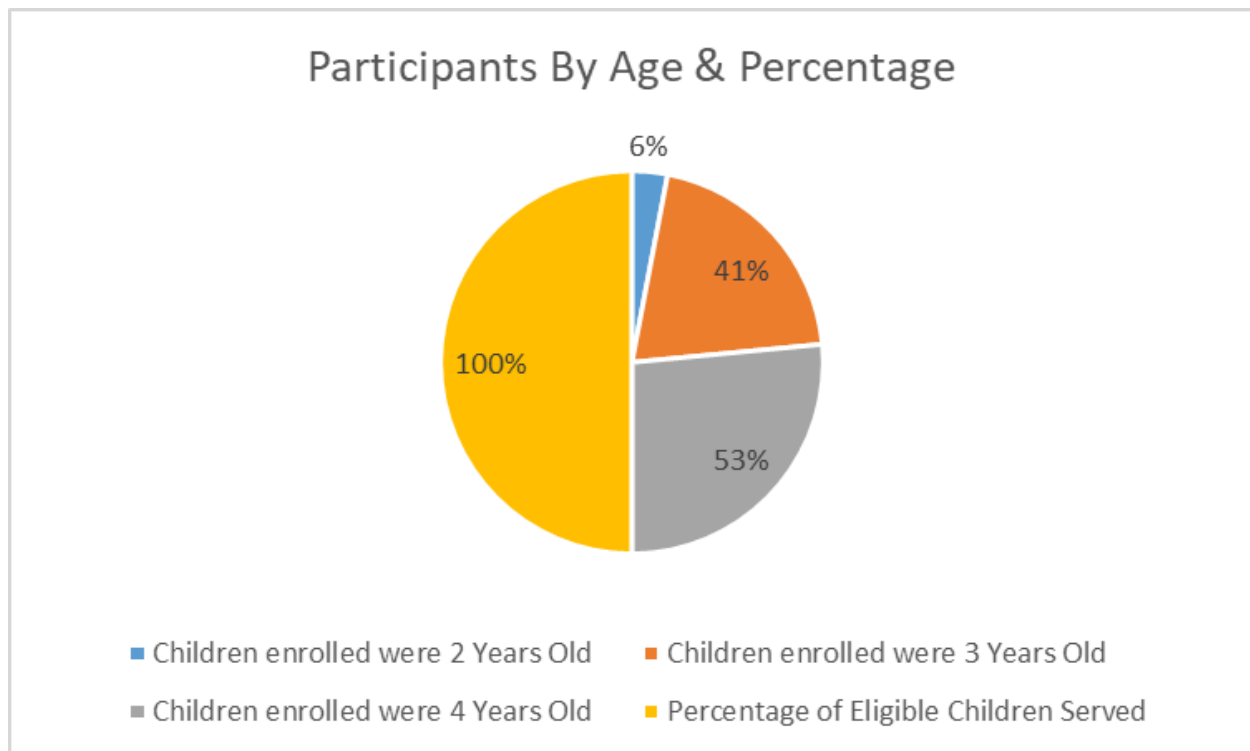
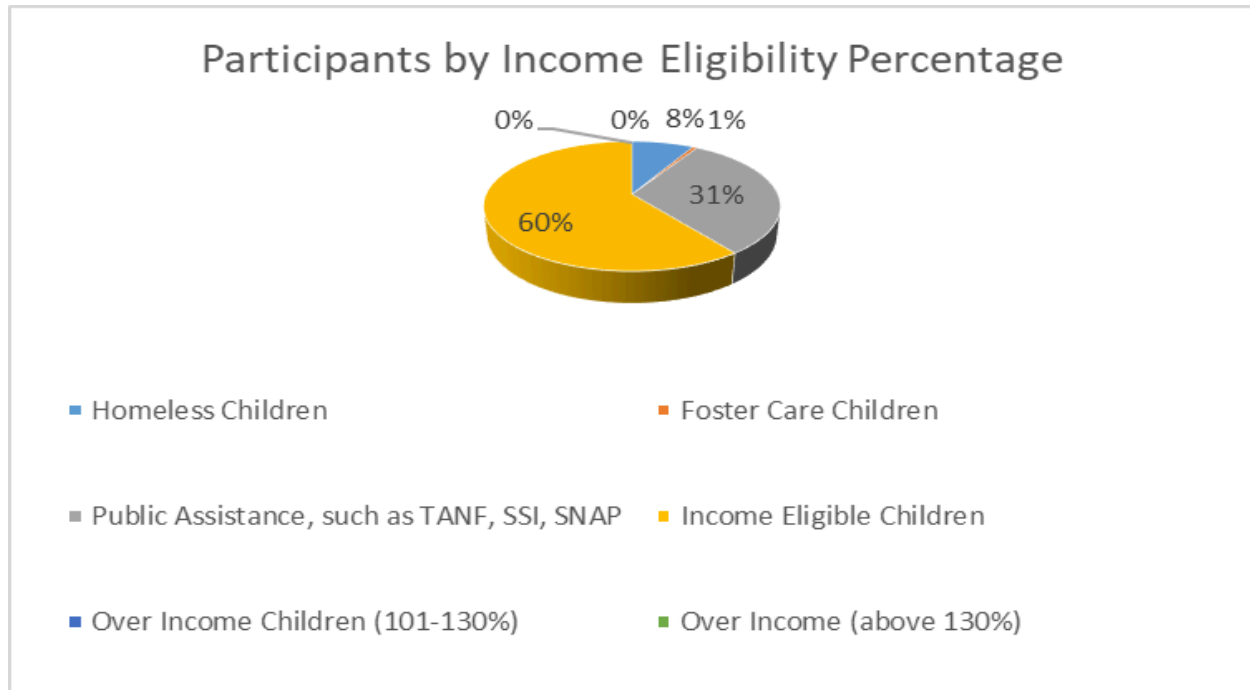


Figure 2- Participants by Income Eligibility Percentage

**Participants by Income Eligibility Percentage**

- **14** (8%) Homeless Children
- **1** (1%) Foster Care Children
- **52** (31%) Public Assistance such as TANF, SSI, SNAP
- **99** (60%) Income Eligible Children
- **0** (0%) Over Income Children (**101-130%**)
- **0** (0%) Over income (**above 130%**)

Volunteers

- Total number of volunteers: **16**
- Total number of these volunteers who are current or former Head Start Parents: **16**

Head Start Staff

- Number of Head Start Staff: **41**
- Number of Head Start Head Teachers: **8**
- Number of Assistant Teachers/Aides: **15**

Families

- There were more single-parent families served during this program year than two-parent families. We served **98** single-parent families and **63** two-parent families.
- Father Engagement: **173** fathers
- **35** families received WIC services/other assistance
- **161** Families that received program services to promote family outcomes

Health/Dental

- Children with completed medical exam: **100%**
- Children with up-to-date immunizations: **100%**
- Children with a completed dental exam: **86%**
- Children with health insurance: **96%**
- Children with no health insurance: **4%**

Race and Ethnicity as of June 30, 2024 (Cumulative Enrollment)

Race/Ethnicity	# of Participants	% of participants
American Indian or Alaska Native	17	10%
Asian	0	0%
Black or African American	31	19%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0	0%
White and Hispanic	80	48%
White non-hispanic	3	2%
Biracial / Multi-Racial	3	2%
Other Race	0	0%
Unspecified Race	0	0%

Primary Language of Family at Home as of June 30, 2024 (Cumulative Enrollment)

Languages	# of Participants	% of participants
English	46	28%
Spanish	107	64%
Central American, South American, or Mexican	0	0
Caribbean	3	2%
Middle Eastern or South Asian	6	4%
East Asian	0	0%
Native North American or Alaska Native	0	0%
Pacific Island	0	0%
European or Slavic	3	2%
African	1	.6%
Other	0	0%
Unspecified	0	0%

NUMBER OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES SERVED (Early Head Start)**Early Head Start Enrollment as of June 30, 2024**

Funded Enrollment: **48**

Cumulative Enrollment: **56**

Number of Children Served Year-to-Date in 2023-2024**Participants' age at time of enrollment**

- 9% of the children enrolled were under 1 year old: **(5)**
- 32% of the children enrolled were 1 Year Old: **(18)**
- 59% of the children enrolled were 2 Years Old: **(33)**
- 100% of eligible children served: **(56)**

Figure 1- Participants by Age & Percentage

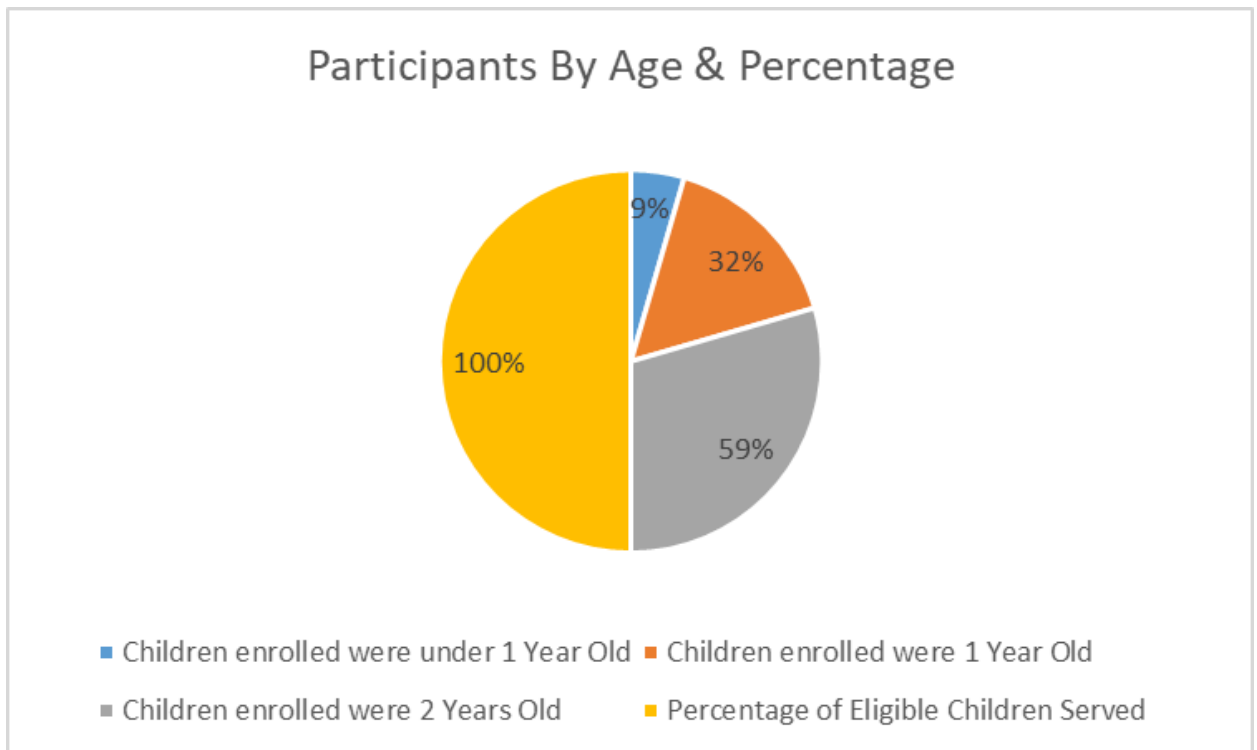
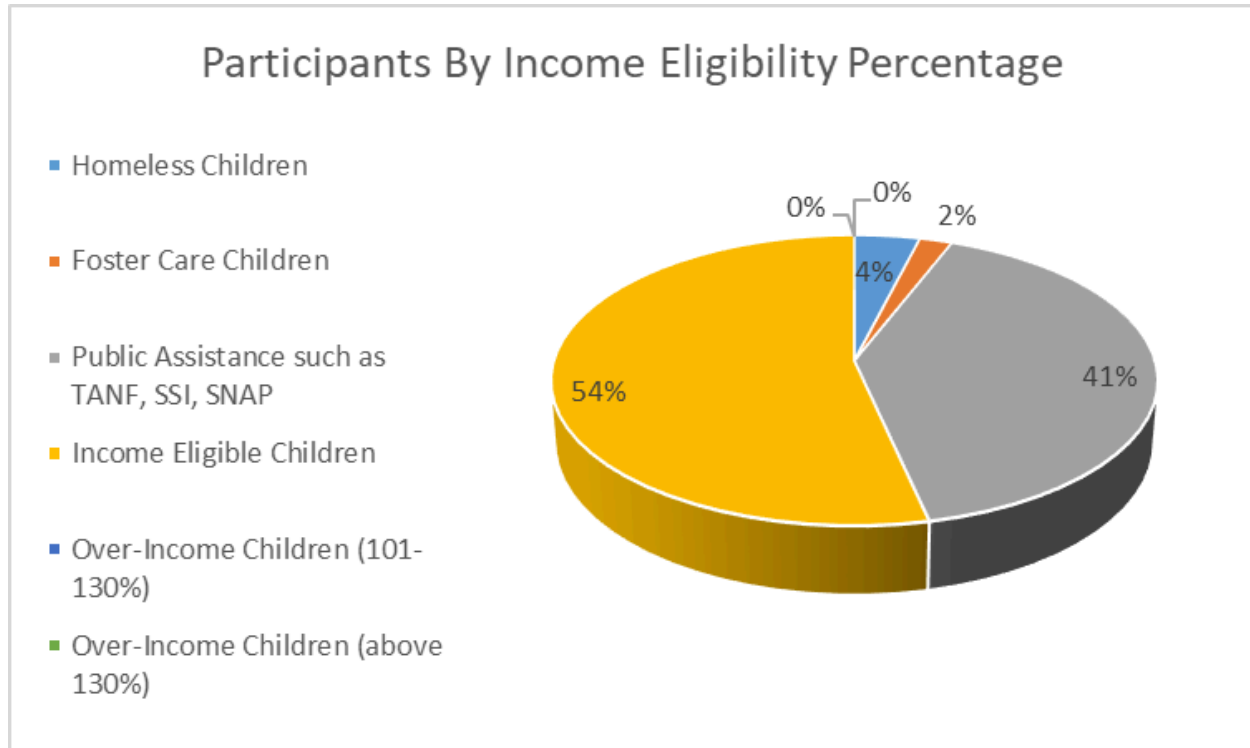


Figure 2- Participants by Income Eligibility Percentage



- **Participants by Income Eligibility Percentage**
- **2 (4%)** Homeless Children
- **1 (2%)** Foster Care Children
- **23 (41%)** Public Assistance such as TANF, SSI, SNAP
- **30 (54%)** Income Eligible Children
- **0 (0%)** Over Income Children (**101-130%**)
- **0 (0%)** Over income (**above 130%**)

Volunteers

- Total number of volunteers: **6**
- Total number of these volunteers who are current or former Early Head Start Parents: **6**

Head Start Staff

- Number of Early Head Start Staff: **18**
- Number of Early Head Start Classroom Teachers: **12**

Families

- There were more single-parent families served during this program year than two-parent families. We served **33** single-parent families and **22** two-parent families.
- Father Engagement: **40** fathers
- **42** families received WIC services/other assistance
- **55** Families that received program services to promote family outcomes

Health/Dental

- Children with completed medical exam: **100%**
- Children with up-to-date immunizations: **100%**
- Children with a completed dental exam: **100%**
- Children with health insurance: **100%**
- Children with no health insurance: **0%**

Race and Ethnicity as of June 30, 2024 (Cumulative Enrollment)

Race/Ethnicity	# of Participants	% of Participants
American Indian or Alaska Native	6	11%
Asian	0	0%
Black or African American	8	14%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0	0%
White and Hispanic	32	57%
White and non-Hispanic	5	9%
Biracial / Multi-Racial	0	0%
Other Race	0	0%
Unspecified Race	0	0%

Primary Language of Family at Home as of June 30, 2024 (Cumulative Enrollment)

Languages	# of Participants	% of participants
English	13	23%
Spanish	37	66%
Central American, South American, or Mexican	1	2%
Caribbean	1	2%
Middle Eastern or South Asian	1	2%
East Asian	0	0%
Native North American or Alaska Native	0	0%
Pacific Island	0	0%
European or Slavic	3	5%
African	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Unspecified	0	0%

**2023-2024
HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START GRANT SUMMARY**

Federal & CIK Actual Funded Revenue

Federal Head Start	\$1,952,174
Early Head Start	\$1,592,104
Total	\$3,544,278

Head Start Actual Expenditures

Salaries	\$1,157,007
Fringe Benefits	\$323,961
Training	\$18,700
Equipment	\$0
Supplies	\$37,932
Contractual	\$41,826
Other	\$320,973
Allocated Indirect Cost	\$51,775
Total Expenses	\$1,952,174

Early HS Actual Expenditures

Salaries	\$823,605
Fringe Benefits	\$230,609
Training	\$5,785
Equipment	\$0
Supplies	\$19,053
Contractual	\$8,100
Other	\$104,531
Allocated Indirect Cost	\$400,421
Total Expenses	\$1,592,104

FINANCIAL AUDITS AND FEDERAL REVIEWS

Cirone Friedberg's audit opinion from CLC's last completed audit: "In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Children's Learning Centers of Fairfield County, Inc., as of June 30, 2023, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."

CLC's Head Start and Early Head Start programs are in the 5th year of their grant award. All monitoring reviews have been conducted for the project period in full compliance, and no monitoring reviews were conducted by ACF in FY 24.

Children's Learning Centers of Fairfield County Executive Leadership

Monica Maccera Filppu, CEO

Darrell Ingram, CFO

HS/EHS Leadership Team

Marsha Guthrie, Head Start Director

Enrique Pabon, Assistant Director

Board of Directors

Noah Lapine, Board Chair

Emily Kroenlein, Vice Chair

Ellen Mellis, Second Vice Chair

Ipashri Bharti, Secretary

Bruce Blasnik, Treasurer

Alma Farez, Head Start Policy Council Chair

Dr. Tremane Bartley

Amy Beldotti

Scott Conley

Christine D. Annibale

Ernest Fleishman

Dr. Janmeet Grover

Carmen Hughes

J. David Nelson

Sanjay Sidhwani

Anne Wichman

Jaclyn Williams

Policy Council

Alma Farez, Chairperson

Careli Gonzales Garcia, Vice Chairperson

Nene Diallo, Treasurer

CLC Head Start/Early Head Start Sites

CLC Head Start
90 Maple Avenue
Stamford, CT 06902

CLC Early Head Start
72 Franklin Street
Stamford, CT 06902

