

**Children’s Learning Centers of Fairfield County
Head Start/Early Head Start Program
2024-2025 Annual Report**



Message from the Head Start Director

Dear Colleagues and Friends of Children’s Learning Centers,

I am pleased to present the 2024–2025 Annual Report for the Children’s Learning Centers of Fairfield County (CLC) Head Start and Early Head Start program. Since 1902, CLC has upheld its commitment to providing high-quality early childhood education and comprehensive services to children and families in Stamford, Connecticut. As the second-largest early childhood education provider in the state, CLC continues to advance the Head Start mission by promoting school readiness and strengthening family well-being across Fairfield County.

For 60 years, Head Start has served as a cornerstone of support for children and families, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive. Guided by the Head Start framework, we offer comprehensive services—including education, health, nutrition, mental health, and family engagement—that address the developmental, social-emotional, and health needs of each child.

Through federal Head Start and Early Head Start funding, alongside state-subsidized early childhood education funding, CLC supports 236 children and families through a multi-funded service model. This approach allows us to provide full-day, extended-day, and full-year center-based programming that fosters consistency, stability, and strong outcomes for children.

I extend my sincere appreciation to our dedicated staff, committed parents and caregivers, and valued community partners. Your partnership and leadership are essential to fulfilling the Head Start mission and ensuring that the children and families we serve continue to grow, learn, and succeed.

With appreciation,

Marsha Guthrie

Head Start Director, Children’s Learning Centers



CLC is a nonprofit agency funded by Head Start, and accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) with six locations in Stamford.

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*

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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 improving 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 2024-2025 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 CLASS observations in Fall 2024 & Spring 2025. We took the average of both Fall and Spring CLASS scores to establish our CLASS score for the 2024-2025 school year. Our average scores were as follows: Emotional Support 6.01, Classroom Organization: 5.47, 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).

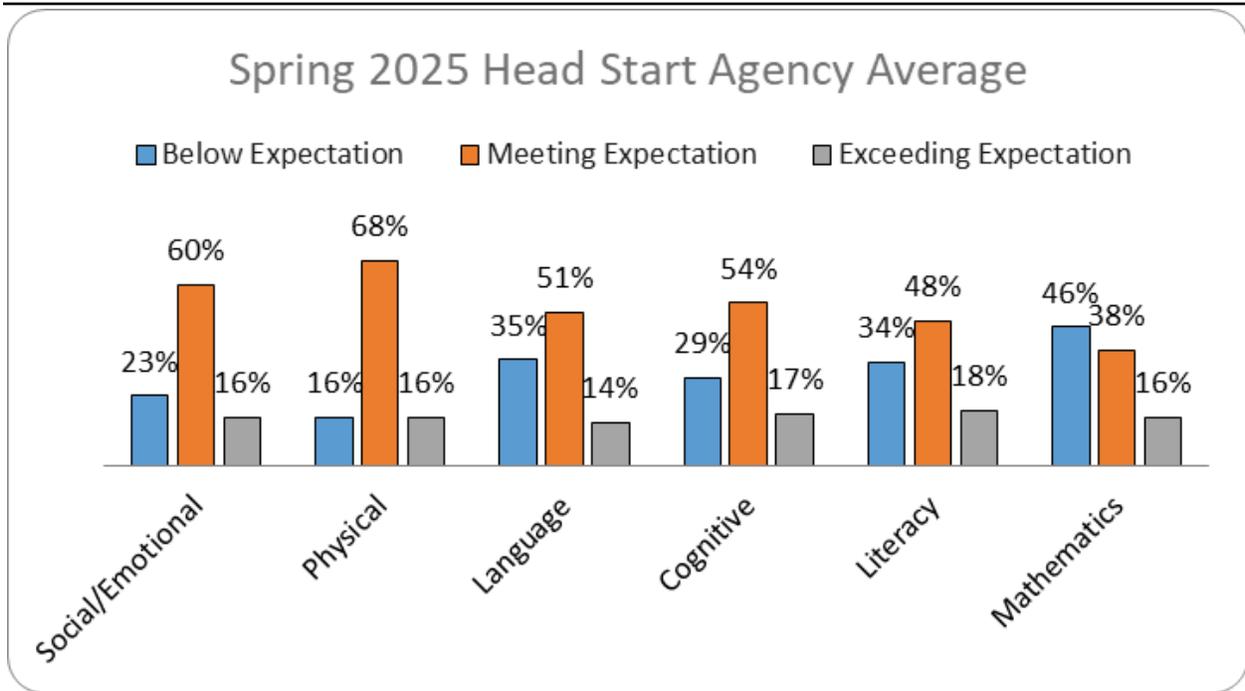
TSG Assessment data demonstrated that children in both Head Start and Early Head Start made progress towards meeting school readiness goals during the 2024-2025 program year. Below is a breakdown of the children who met and exceeded the widely held expectations as assessed from the Spring 2025 checkpoint 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 2024-2025

All children are assessed using the 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)

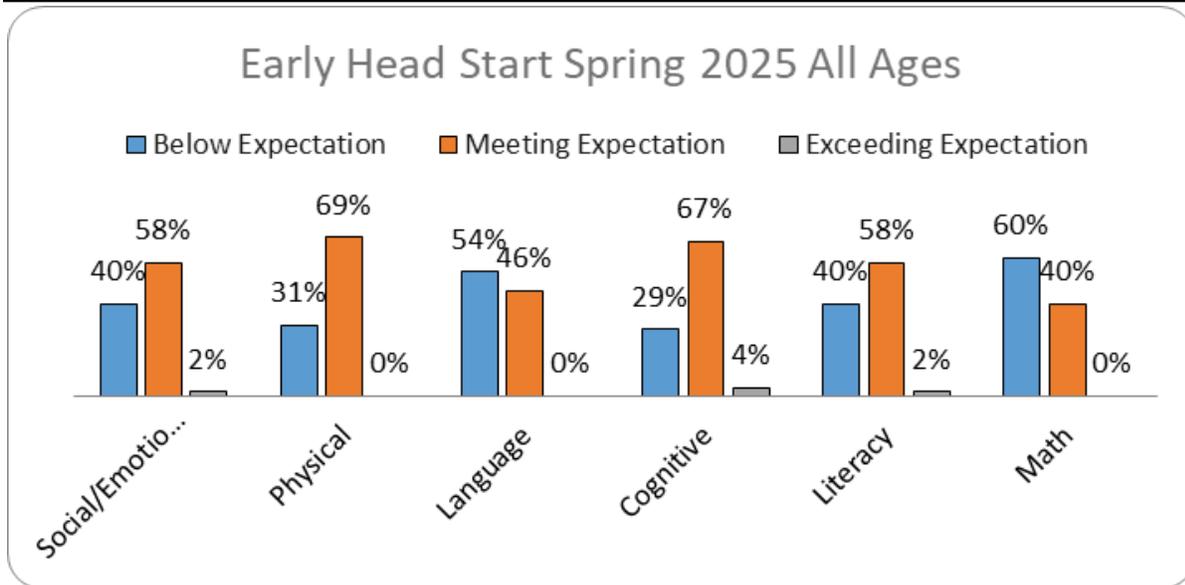


As an agency 69% of all Head Start children met or exceeded expectations across all learning domains.

The chart below shows the Head Start agency average of children meeting/exceeding expectations from the Fall 2024 Assessment compared to the Spring 2025 Assessment:

Domain	Fall 2024	Spring 2025	Difference (+, -)
Social Emotional	49%	76%	+27%
Physical	57%	84%	+27%
Language	34%	65%	+31%
Cognitive	46%	71%	+25%
Literacy	41%	66%	+25%
Mathematics	32%	54%	+22%

Overall Head Start children averaged a 26% increase from the Fall 2024 assessment to the Spring 2025 assessment.



The data here indicates that 58% of all Early Head Start children met or exceeded expectations across all learning domains.

The chart below shows the Early Head Start agency average of children meeting/exceeding expectations from the Fall 2024 Assessment compared to the Spring 2025 Assessment:

<u>Domain</u>	<u>Fall 2024</u>	<u>Spring 2025</u>	<u>Difference (+, -)</u>
Social Emotional	50%	60%	+10%
Physical	46%	69%	+23%
Language	29%	46%	+17%
Cognitive	58%	71%	+13%
Literacy	40%	60%	+20%
Mathematics	29%	40%	+11%

Overall Early Head Start children averaged a 16% increase from the Fall 2024 assessment to the Spring 2025 assessment.

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 2024-2025 school year, HS and EHS exceeded the 10% enrollment requirement for children with special needs. Head Start's cumulative average of 26% (40 students) of children enrolled with an IEP, and EHS averaged 33% (16 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 medical records and follows up on their health care needs, including children with a chronic condition that requires 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.

CLC’s Health, Nutrition, and Mental Health Services Advisory Committee meets twice a year during the Fall and Spring, and is led by our Health and Nutrition Managers. The committee brings together Head Start parents, community health providers, local partners, and CLC staff. Serving as a collaborative forum, the committee addresses key health, mental health, and community topics while strengthening partnerships with families to support children’s overall well-being.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CLC follows 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 enhances parenting practices by engaging parents in guided discussions and hands-on activities that 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 receiving Head Start/Early Head Start services, as well as ensuring the appropriate enrollment of children. Each year, the Committee meets to review and update the Head Start and Early Head Start selection criteria to

ensure they are in alignment with the Head Start Program Performance Standards and that they reflect 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 the 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, WIC, Person to Person, 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 utilize 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, 2025

Funded Enrollment: **154 (grantee)**
Cumulative Enrollment: **169**

Number of Children Served Year-to-Date in 2024-2025

Participants' Age at Time of Enrollment:

- 17% of the children enrolled were 2 Years Old: (29)
- 42% of the children enrolled were 3 Years Old: (71)
- 41% of the children enrolled were 4 Years Old: (69)
- 100% of eligible children served: (169)

Figure 1- Participants by Age & Percentage

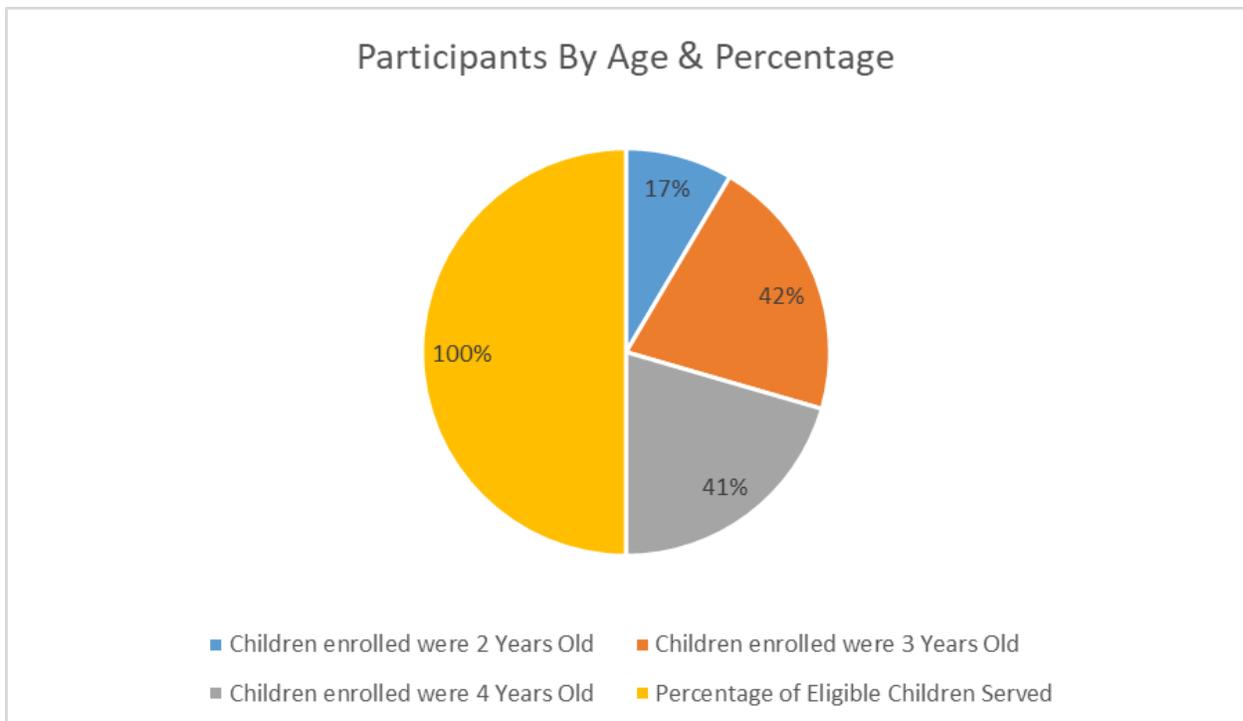
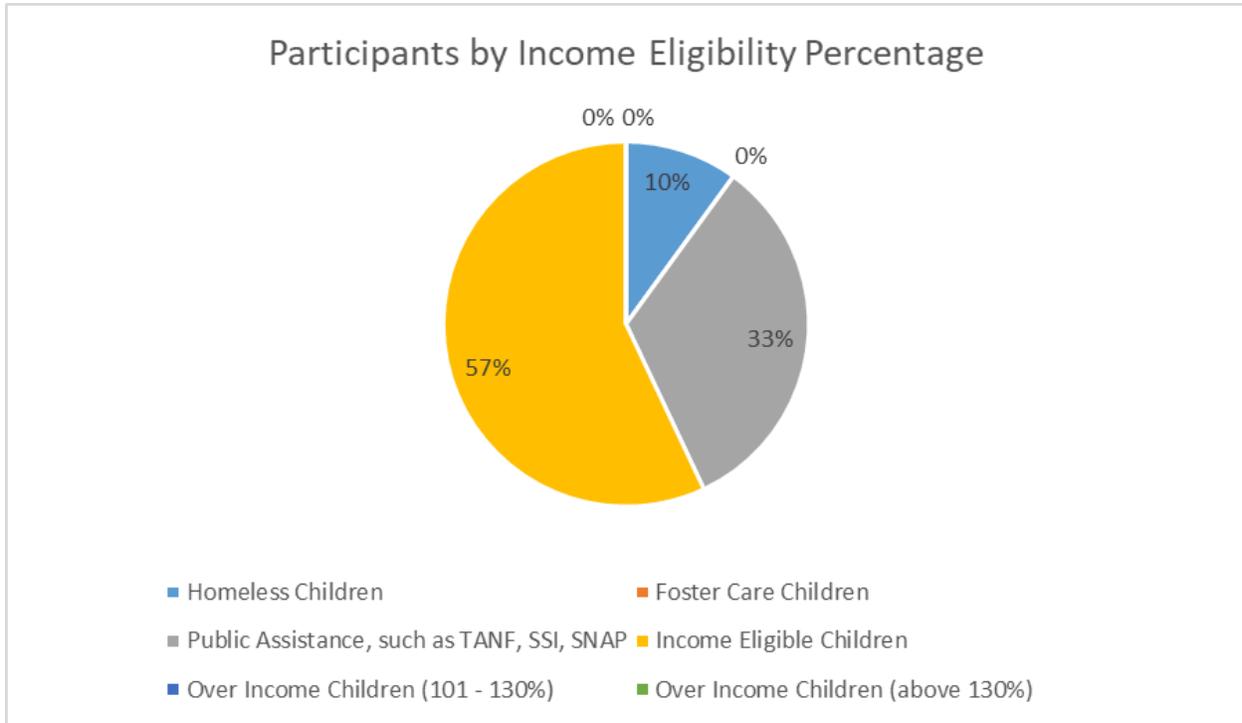


Figure 2- Participants by Income Eligibility Percentage



Participants by Income Eligibility Percentage

- 17 (10%) Homeless Children
- 0 (0%) Foster Care Children
- 56 (33%) Public Assistance such as TANF, SSI, SNAP
- 96 (57%) 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: 39
- Number of Head Start Head Teachers: 8
- Number of Assistant Teachers/Aides: 18

Families

- There were more single-parent families served during this program year than two-parent families. We served 99 single-parent families and 63 two-parent families.
- Father Engagement: 128 fathers
- 39 families received WIC services/other assistance
- 162 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: 97%
- Children with health insurance: 100%
- Children with no health insurance: 0%

Race and Ethnicity as of June 30, 2025 (Cumulative Enrollment)

Race/Ethnicity	# of Participants	% of participants
American Indian or Alaska Native	27	16%
Asian	4	2.4%
Black or African American	45	27%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	2	1%
White and Hispanic	75	44%
White non-hispanic	3	1.8%
Biracial / Multi-Racial	4	2.4%
Other Race	0	0%
Unspecified Race	0	0%

Primary Language of Family at Home as of June 30, 2025 (Cumulative Enrollment)

Languages	# of Participants	% of participants
English	42	26%
Spanish	122	75%
Central American, South American, or Mexican	0	0
Caribbean	3	2%
Middle Eastern or South Asian	2	1.2%
East Asian	0	0%
Native North American or Alaska Native	0	0%
Pacific Island	0	0%
European or Slavic	0	0%
African	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Unspecified	0	0%

NUMBER OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES SERVED (Early Head Start)

Early Head Start Enrollment as of June 30, 2025

Funded Enrollment: **48**

Cumulative Enrollment: **58**

Number of Children Served Year-to-Date in 2024-2025

Participants' age at time of enrollment

- 16% of the children enrolled were under 1 year old: **(9)**
- 46% of the children enrolled were 1 Year Old: **(27)**
- 38% of the children enrolled were 2 Years Old: **(22)**
- 100% of eligible children served: **(58)**

Figure 1- Participants by Age & Percentage

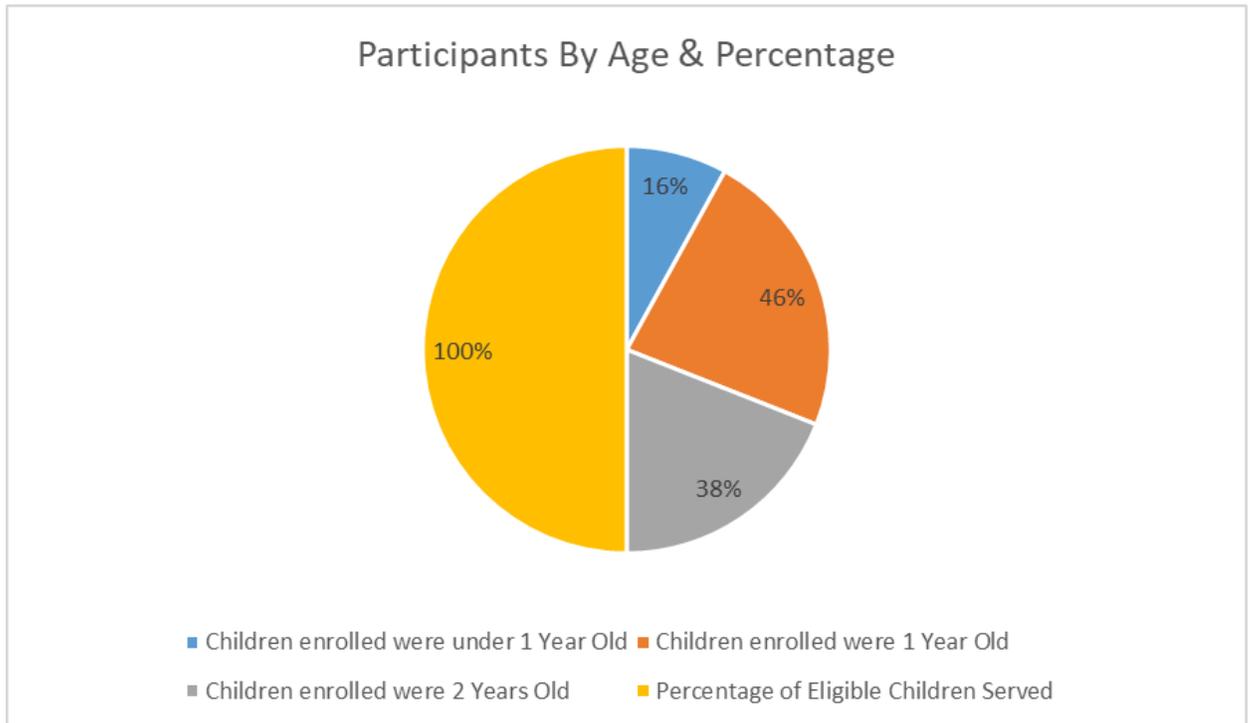
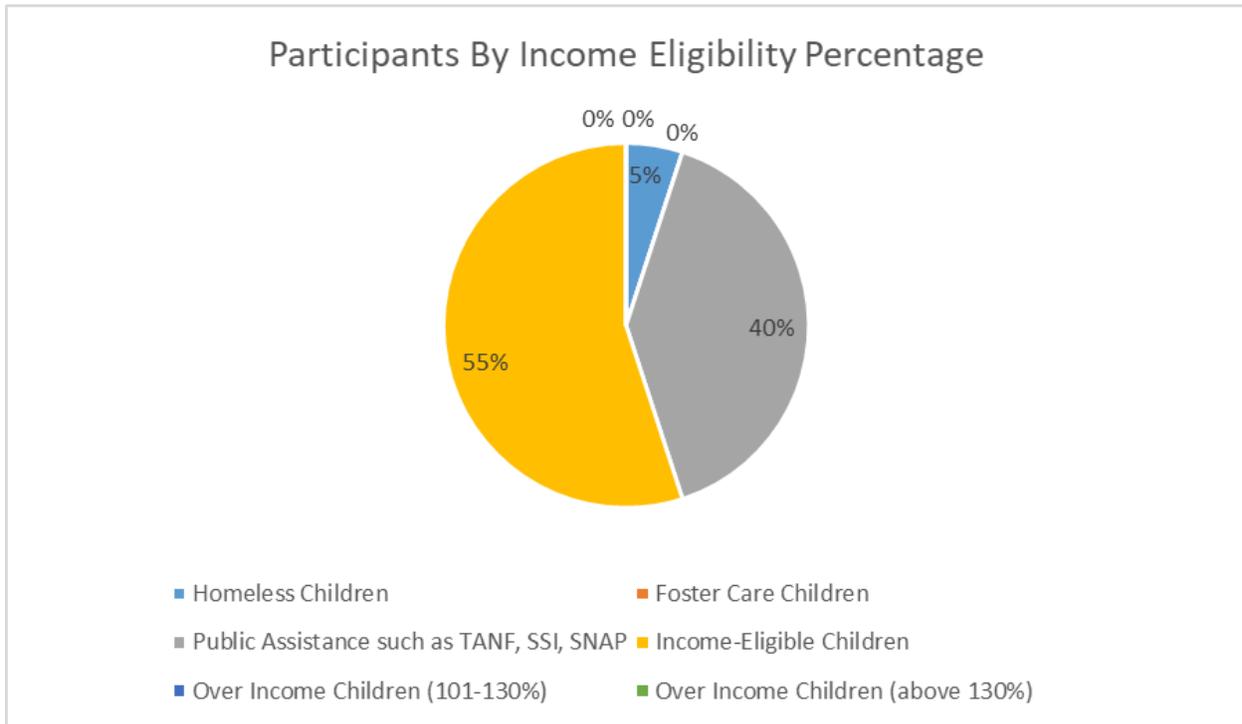


Figure 2- Participants by Income Eligibility Percentage



- **Participants by Income Eligibility Percentage**
- **3 (5%)** Homeless Children
- **0 (0%)** Foster Care Children
- **23 (40%)** Public Assistance such as TANF, SSI, SNAP
- **32 (55%)** 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: **20**
- 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 **38** single-parent families and **15** two-parent families.
- Father Engagement: **44** fathers
- **20** families received WIC services/other assistance
- **53** 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: **98%**
- Children with health insurance: **100%**
- Children with no health insurance: **0%**

Race and Ethnicity as of June 30, 2025 (Cumulative Enrollment)

Race/Ethnicity	# of Participants	% of Participants
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	3.4%
Asian	0	0%
Black or African American	17	29%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0	0%
White and Hispanic	36	62%
White and non-Hispanic	2	3.4%
Biracial / Multi-Racial	1	1.7%
Other Race	0	0%
Unspecified Race	0	0%

Primary Language of Family at Home as of June 30, 2025 (Cumulative Enrollment)

Languages	# of Participants	% of participants
English	14	24%
Spanish	42	72%
Central American, South American, or Mexican	0	0%
Caribbean	0	0%
Middle Eastern or South Asian	0	0%
East Asian	0	0%
Native North American or Alaska Native	0	0%
Pacific Island	0	0%
European or Slavic	1	2%
African	1	2%
Other	0	0%
Unspecified	0	0%

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

Federal & CIK Actual Funded Revenue

Federal Head Start	\$1,952,173
Early Head Start	\$1,592,103
Total	\$3,544,276

Head Start Actual Expenditures

Salaries	\$1,104,357
Fringe Benefits	\$309,220
Training	\$20,357
Equipment	\$0
Supplies	\$23,164
Contractual	\$16,067
Other	\$337,572
Allocated Indirect Cost	\$141,436
Total Expenses	\$1,952,173

Early HS Actual Expenditures

Salaries	\$878,742
Fringe Benefits	\$246,048
Training	\$11,717
Equipment	\$0
Supplies	\$18,818
Contractual	\$5,659
Other	\$149,610
Allocated Indirect Cost	\$281,509
Total Expenses	\$1,592,103

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, 2024, 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 is in the first year of its Head Start grant award. Monitoring reviews will begin in year two of the grant.

Children’s Learning Centers of Fairfield County Senior Leadership

Monica Maccera Filppu, CEO
Marsha Guthrie, Head Start Director

Board of Directors

Noah Lapine, Board Chair

Emily Kroenlein, Vice Chair

Ipashri Bharti, Secretary

Christine D’Annibale, Treasurer

Sheila Alfaro, Head Start Policy Council Chair

Dr. Tremane Bartley

Amy Beldotti

Scott Conley

Ernest Fleishman

Dr. Janmeet Grover

Carmen Hughes

Brittany Miller

Polly Morrow

J. David Nelson

Marnie Sadlowsky

Sanjay Sidhwani

Anne Wichman

Jaclyn Williams

Policy Council

Sheila Alfaro, Chairperson

Estefania Alfaro, Vice Chairperson

Delmi Garcia, Treasurer

Rosario Rosales, Secretary

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

