

Program Narrative

Duluth Preschool blends and braids funds, through a mixed delivery format, with funds from Head Start and the State of Minnesota. Duluth Preschool offers 13 class options in 8 elementary schools within the school boundaries of Independent School District 70, in Duluth, Minnesota. Duluth Preschool is an inclusive high quality early childhood program for children 3-5 years of age. Meeting each child in his or her developmental milestones allows the activities and experiences offered to strengthen and build a child's social emotional skills, language & literacy, health & nutrition, and physical skills. We are proud to be one of the first preschool programs in the state to earn a Four-Star Rating from Minnesota Parent Aware- the highest rating possible!

The Head Start student enrollment in the Duluth Preschool for the 2024-25 program year was 184 children, or 97% of the funded slots. 77 Head Start students were identified with developmental disabilities during the program year. The identified children were provided special education services in an inclusive preschool setting, the least restrictive environment. The health and wellness of the Duluth Preschool Head Start students includes 84% of students up to date on dental exams, 70% of students up to date on well-child checks, and 98% of children are up to date on immunizations.

The requested one-time funds for nutrition and health, through the Office of Head Start, log number ACF-OHS-PI-25-02 will focus on area 3: Nutrition and Education Resources for Head Start children in the Duluth Preschool classroom setting. The requested funds will be used to promote taste and non-taste exposures for the children in each of the 13 Head Start classes. Duluth Preschool Head Start children will have the opportunity to taste new, novel, and familiar fruits and vegetables, paired with literacy and classroom community activities. Research indicates that taste and non-taste exposures of food can increase preschool children's

willingness to engage with food exploration behaviors (Johnson, A.R., Johnson, N.R., 2025).

Non-taste exposures of food include sensory and visual exploration of the food, with a focus on new, novel, and familiar fruits and vegetables.

Additionally, the impact of visual exposure will also include exploring fruits and vegetables through preschool-appropriate books. Research indicates that stories and pictures of vegetables and (fruits) increase the willingness of preschoolers to taste them (Braga-Pontes, C., Simoes-Dias, S., Lages, M., Guarino, M., Graca, P., 2021). Duluth Preschool Head Start children will have an opportunity to explore fruits and vegetables through a variety of books, shared in the classroom setting, paired with visual vocabulary cards, language, and dramatic play opportunities.

Both the taste and non-taste fruits and vegetables experiences will take place 2 times per month, in each of the 13 Duluth Preschool Head Start classes, from December 2025 through May 2026. The classroom teaching staff will be guided by the Head Start Nutrition Coordinator and Head Start Education Coordinator in the implementation of the taste and non-taste fruits and vegetables experiences and supporting activities. Parents will be included in the experience through take-home ideas for increasing fruit and vegetable consumption in their preschoolers, shared through the ChildPlus platform. A final take-home book will allow each Head Start family to try a taste and non-taste fruit and vegetable experience in their own home. Parents will be prompted to explore taste, texture, colors, and descriptive vocabulary in the home setting, providing an effective and appropriate way to improve fruit and vegetable intake in their preschool children.

Citations:

Braga-Pontes, C., Simoes-Dias, S., Lages, M., Guarino, M., Graca, P., Nutrition education strategies to promote vegetable consumption in preschool children: the Veggies4myHeart project, *Public Health Nutrition*, 25(4), 1061-1070.

Johnson, A.R., Johnson, N.R., To Taste or Not to Taste, A Narrative Review of the Effectiveness of Taste and Non-Taste Exposures on Dietary Intake of Head Start Children, *Nutrients*, 2025,17,1817.

Budget Narrative

The requested one-time funds for nutrition and health, through the Office of Head Start, log number ACF-OHS-PI-25-02 will focus on area 3: Nutrition and Education Resources for Head Start children in the Duluth Preschool classroom setting. The budget for this proposal includes the taste component of the experience of \$2000.00 for fresh fruits and vegetables, based on the July 2025 USDA food price outlook. The budget will also include \$3000.00 for children's books depicting or including fruits and vegetables for the classrooms and each of the children's families. Duluth Preschool in-kind includes the service of the teaching staff, Nutrition Coordinator, Education Coordinator and ChildPlus Communication Platform. The total requested funds through the Office of Head Start, log number ACF-OHS-PI-25-02 for Head Start children in the Duluth Preschool is \$5000.00

Link to slides

[OHS Supplemental Nutrition Grant Request](#)

Duluth Public Schools Federal Head Start One-Time Supplemental Nutrition Grant

Funding Type: OHS Nutrition Education and Resources

Total Request: \$5000.00

Grant Goals:

1. Taste exposure opportunities for preschool children in the classroom setting.
2. Non-taste experiences for preschool children in the classroom setting.
3. Parent engagement opportunities in the home setting, for both taste and non-taste fruit and vegetable exposure for the preschool child and his/her family.

Signatures indicate approval of the OHS grant application/request

_____ Kelly Durick-Eder, School Board Chairperson

_____ Date

_____ Kristi Meyer-Fladwood, Head Start Policy Council Chair

_____ Date