

Duluth Head Start/Preschool
Annual Report to the Public
2020-2021

Mission:

The mission of Duluth Head Start is to provide services for income eligible preschool children and their families. These services include opportunities to enhance social and cognitive skills, increase health and wellness and build upon family strengths. Working together, we strive to create a strong learning community in order to achieve success both in the classroom and beyond.

We offer preschool services in seven of Duluth's elementary schools.

Our state funded Head Start program offers home visiting services to families- including families experiencing homelessness including Star of the North, a homeless shelter specifically for homeless pregnant women.

Funding

Duluth Head Start receives grants from the Office of Head Start and the State of Minnesota through the Minnesota Department of Education. Additionally, we receive funds through the State Pathway II Early learning scholarships.

Federal Head Start Budget \$2,769,181. This money funds personnel (\$2,210,947). The remainder is spent on things that support staff who work district wide to support families – things like cell phones, taxi services for families, mileage reimbursements, and classroom supplies. Indirect costs to the school district also come out of this budget. This money funds us to serve 224 children and their families. Due to COVID our enrollment numbers were lower. We served 185 children and their families. This year we were also awarded an additional \$210,035 to be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

Pathway II Early Learning Scholarship Award \$191,040. This money supports the classroom with additional paraprofessional assistance to reduce the class size and assist in serving food in our classrooms. We serve breakfast, lunch, and snacks in our full day classrooms, and breakfast and lunch, or lunch and snack in our half day programs. Serving meals in our rooms allow us the opportunity to both provide nutritious meals, but also to do nutrition education. Self- help skills and engaging in discussions at the table are also time well spent in an early childhood classroom.

State Head Start Budget \$393,238. These funds provide our program the opportunity to offer several unique ways to support families. Families in Transition staff is supporting families experiencing homelessness and a Home Base option for families who, for many reasons, cannot access our classrooms across the city. **\$353,259**, is dedicated to staff wages and fringe benefits, while the remainder is spent on things to support the work the staff is doing things like cell

phones, taxi services for families to attend class, socializations, doctor appointments, classroom supplies, and mileage reimbursements. State funded enrollment is 34.

AUDIT

The audit that was done for the 2020-2021 school year shows there were no audit findings for Head Start. A copy of the audit is available through our office. Follow the contact information at the end of this report.

Duluth Preschool believes that all children should have strong bodies, strong minds, and strong families.

STRONG BODIES

Addressing Health Needs

One very important piece of the work we do in Head Start is to assist families with their health needs. This means we work to ensure all families have a source of ongoing and continuous health insurance. With our cumulative enrollment at 185 children, 96% have health coverage. 58% of our children were up to date on our yearly physical exam requirements. This includes a physical, growth assessment, hearing screen, tympanogram, vision screen, hemoglobin and lead check. 80% percent of our children were up to date on their immunizations. 89 % percent have what we call a Dental Home; meaning they have a relationship with a dentist and 97% have a medical home.

Nutrition Services

A licensed nutritionist works with families to support access to healthy foods, including students with special dietary needs.

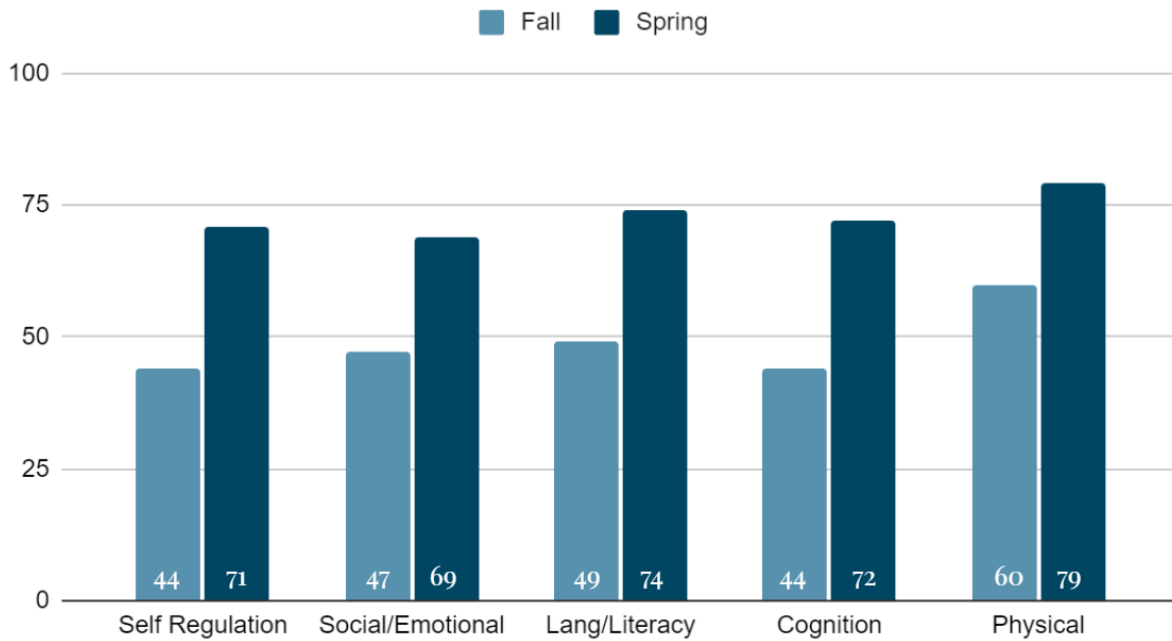
STRONG MINDS

Preparing Children for Kindergarten

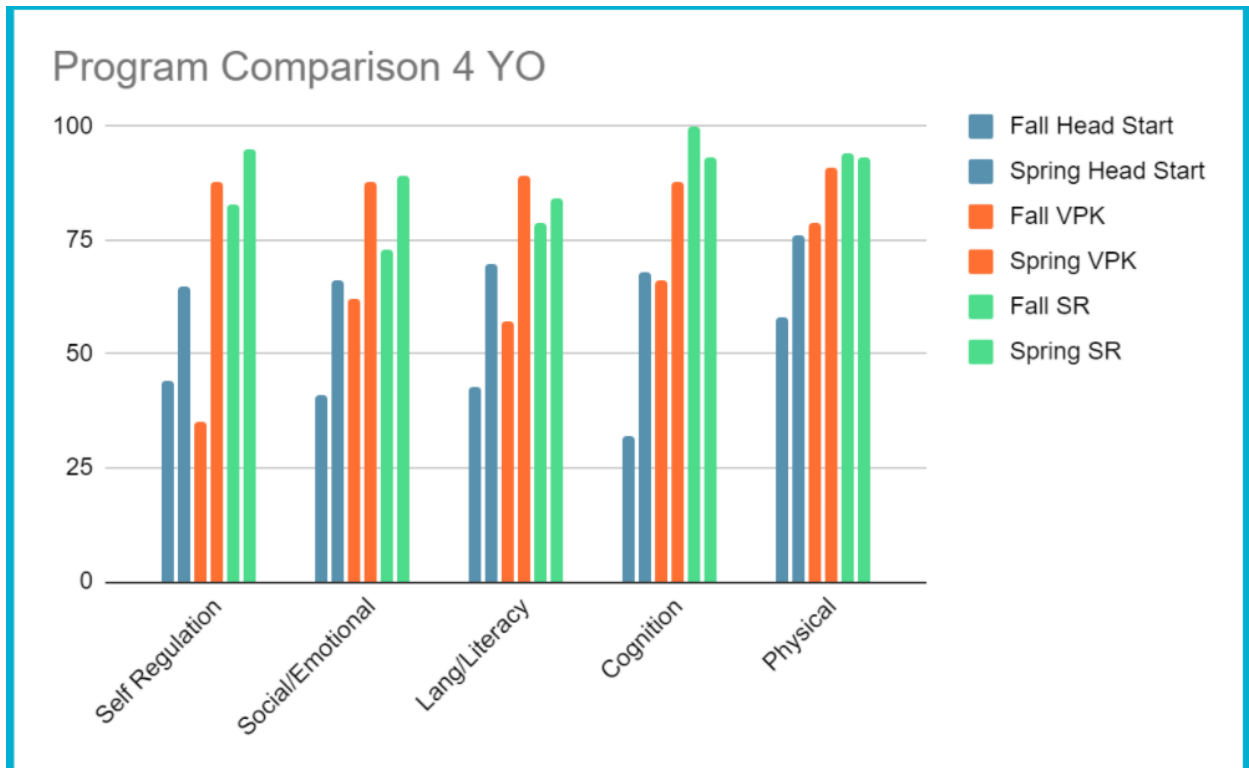
Our assessment tool in 20-21 was Desired Results Developmental Profile. It measures all domains of learning. Typically, data is collected three times per year, but due to shifting models of delivery due to the pandemic last year, we were only required to measure students twice last year: Fall and Spring.

The first data set is the progress of all student enrolled in Duluth Preschool: Head Start, Voluntary Pre-K, and School Readiness. It includes three to five year -old children.

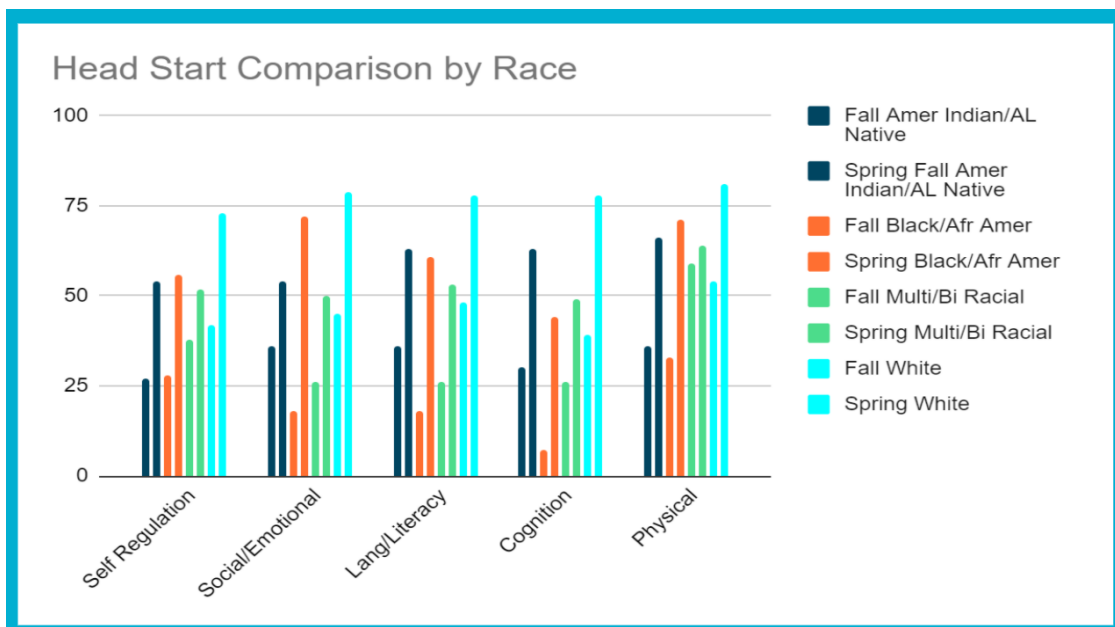
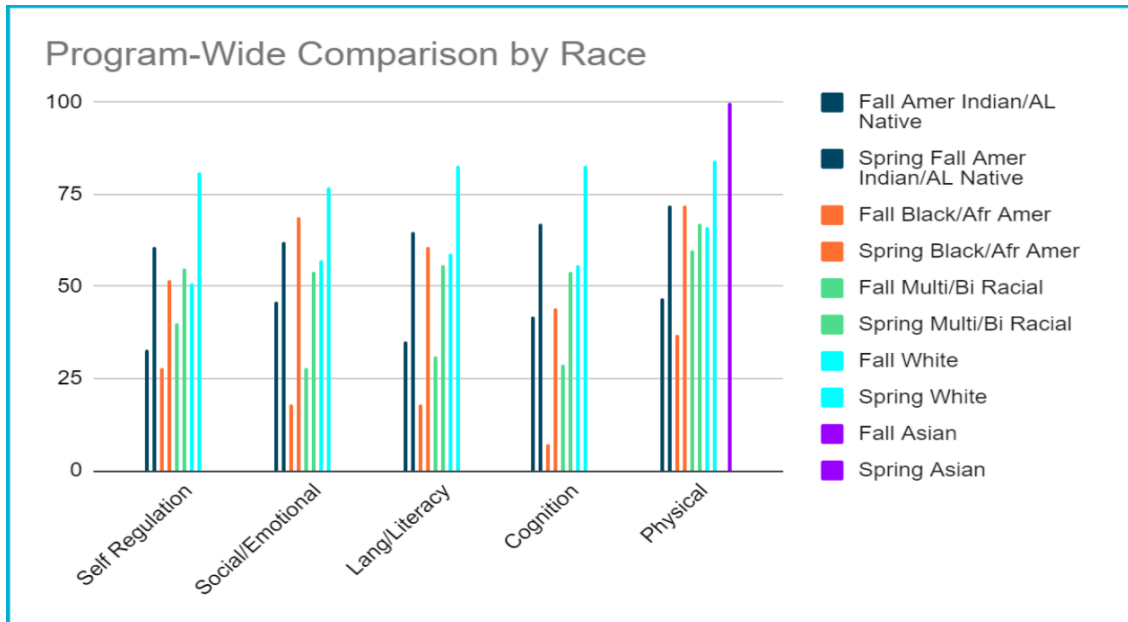
Program-Wide 3-5 YO: End of Year Before K Benchmark



Duluth Preschool is funded by three separate funding streams. We have broken the data down by program, monitoring our growth for each of the three funding streams. Head Start students meet the federal poverty guidelines, making this program one of Equity. The following data looks at achievement by program enrollment.



We continue to analyze data by sex, race, school site, and students who are receiving Special Education. Our work in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion is central to our programming.



*Evidence of opportunity gaps are present.

Students receiving Special Education services make great strides in our classrooms.



It is noted that we had smaller class sizes than a typical year, and the impact of that remains unknown. In 2020-2021, we served 185 Head Start children, 41 Voluntary Pre K children, and 48 School Readiness children. In a typical year, we serve 224 Head Start children, 54 VPK children, and 62 School Readiness children.

Attendance

The Office of Head Start requires programs to maintain attendance rates of 85% or better. We must also monitor classrooms/sites that fall below that level and analyze the reasons for the lower attendance.

STRONG FAMILIES

Parent Involvement and Family Engagement

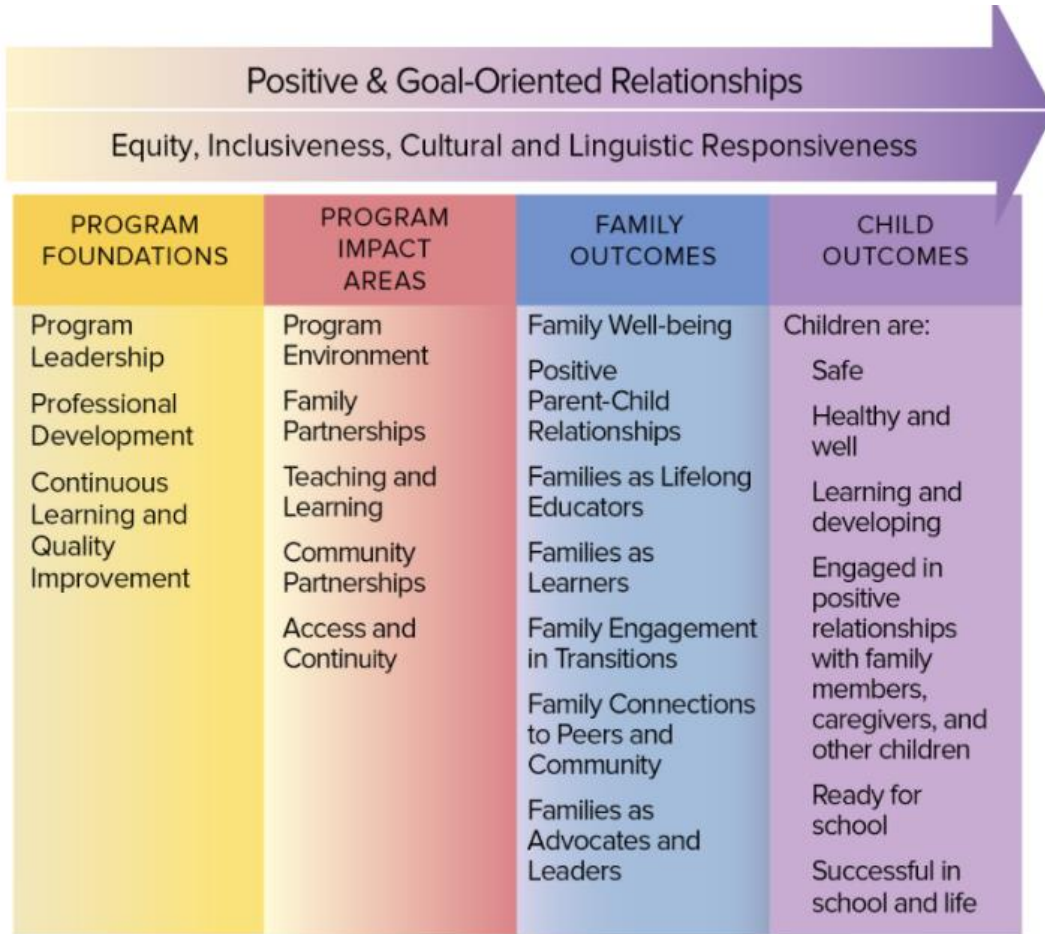
Early childhood professionals have opportunities to build relationships that can positively impact children and their families for a lifetime. Strong relationships with families promote family well-being, positive parent-child relationships, and the ongoing learning and development of children and parents.

Parent involvement occurs when parents /adult caregivers participate in activities and take advantage of opportunities offered at their child’s preschool. Staff and program typically initiate parent involvement.

Family engagement happens when preschool staff and families engage in an interactive process of relationship building. This process is mutual, respectful, and responsive to a family’s language and culture. Family engagement is ongoing in preschool and includes all adult caregivers.

In Duluth Preschool, we seek to engage with families to the highest degree possible. We not only strive to involve parents/caregivers in activities at sites, but to value and honor their unique perspectives as each child’s first, and most important teacher.

Below is the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework used by all Head Start programs.



Increasing Data Capacity and Engaging Families Across the Program

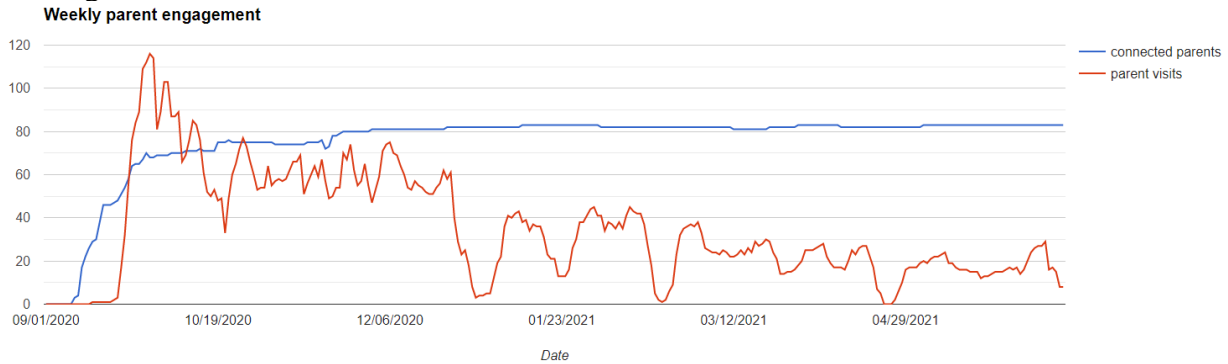
It has been challenging to capture good data in the area of Family Engagement. This is a goal area on our Self- Assessment. We are also working hard to make sure we are doing our best to engage families in all areas of programming. Covid-19 made that more challenging with parents and volunteers not being allowed in school buildings in the 2020-21 school year.

Family engagement in 2020-2021 looked very different than it usually does.

SeeSaw: Adults had to help preschool students get on devices to participate in Distance Learning. We took advantage of this and embedded lots of parent education. Lessons included why the activity was important, and extensions of how to continue similar activities at home. Parents reported that it was challenging to manage distance learning if there were older siblings in the home. We provided devices and hotspots to families needing them. 18,210 posts were added to SeeSaw. 12,672 comments were made on student work. There were 1,825 visits by

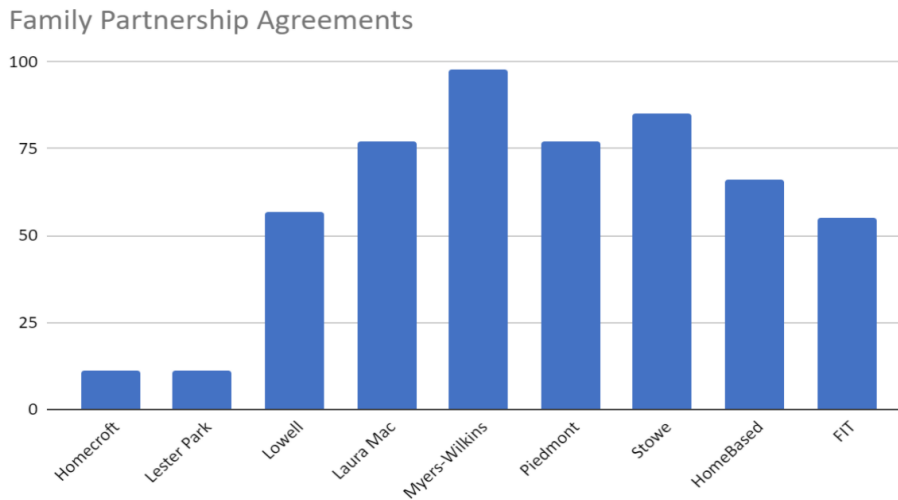
families. Family members often logged on as the child, which is not captured as visits by families, hence skewing the data below.

Below are some analytics off the SeeSaw platform that was used to post lessons during distance learning. Engagement with See Saw dropped significantly when school went back to in person learning.

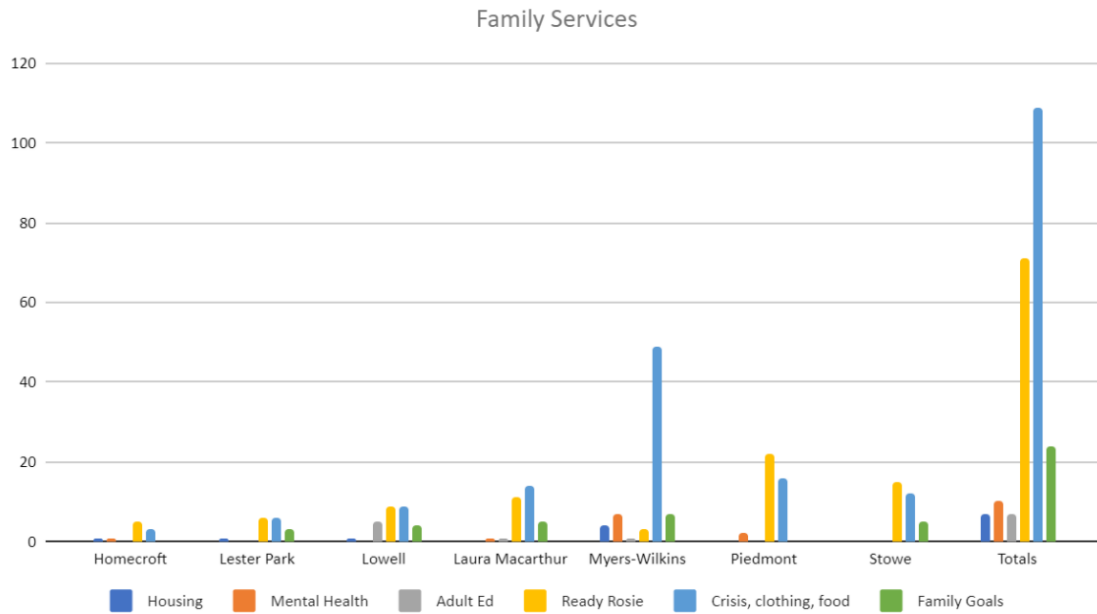


Alternative ways to connect with families: Teachers and Family Advocates also connected with families weekly on Google Meets, by phone, text, and email.

Family Strengths Survey/ Family Partnership Agreements: Family Advocates help families identify strengths and challenges. These are documented with a Family Strengths Survey completed in the first quarter of school and again at the end of the school year. This informs a Family Partnership Agreement, where families set goals for themselves. Last year, many families engaged in partnership with advocates.



We notice the types of resources families are looking for. This is information families sought last year from each of the seven sites.



Family Advocates began using a research -based parent education curriculum called Ready Rosie. A short video is delivered to parents via text message that models activities to do with kids at home. This tool has other uses that we will explore in years to come.

Distance Learning Class: One unexpected result was the success of a preschool class that was Distance Learning for the entire year. Children and families had virtual play dates. Once the weather was nice, they began to meet outside in neighborhood parks. These 26 families continued to meet throughout the summer.

Looking Ahead to the next five years

Based on our Community Needs Assessment, we have identified three areas we will focus on in the coming years.

Trauma: We know that Covid-19 has led to trauma in the lives of many, with serious disruptions to life as we have known it. Young children who have experienced trauma often require strategies and interventions that are intentional and consistent. We are engaging in full partnership with our Early Childhood Special Education Department. Working together, we will engage in Professional Learning Communities to best meet the needs of the children we serve.

Fostering Resilience with Health and Wellness: We will create and integrate health and wellness across our program: for children, families, and staff. A collaboration with the YMCA will provide opportunities for swim lessons and free days for Head Start enrolled families.

Students will spend at least an hour outside each day, taking advantage of the wellness opportunities provided by spending time in nature. Most of our schools have school forests nearby, and several of our schools have newly installed nature playscapes.

Walking the Talk of Equity: The death of George Floyd created a tipping point requiring all citizens to carefully examine the prevalence of systemic racism. Our community needs assessment indicated significant disproportionate suffering by people historically underestimated. This has resulted in our program creating an Equity Team, who will guide our commitment to equity. One of the first issues we are tackling is how to increase representation of people of color in our classrooms. With low staff turnover, this requires creative approaches.

We have also revived a preschool model integrating Ojibwe culture and heritage in its program called Oshki-Inwewin. We want to make sure all families feel seen and welcome in our classrooms.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency

Children's Dental Service

CHUM: Steve O'Neil Apartments

City of Duluth: Washington Center

Community Action Duluth

College of St. Scholastica Social Work Department

Duluth Children's Museum

Duluth Public Library: Every Child Ready Duluth

Duluth Zoo

East Side Neighborhood Development Company

Family Freedom Center

First Witness

Great Lakes Aquarium

Help Me Grow

ISD 709: Early Childhood Special Education, American Indian Education Department

Kid's Closet

Lincoln Park Child and Family Collaborative

Minnesota Reading Corps

Northland Foundation

One Roof

Safe Haven Shelter

Salvation Army

St. Luke's Pediatrics

Star of the North Maternity Home

Thrive

UM Extension Service

University of MN Duluth: College of Education and Human Service Professions

YMCA

DULUTH PRESCHOOL

Our classrooms blend funding from School Readiness and Head Start to deliver services that meet the Head Start Performance Standards. Voluntary PreK is also under the umbrella of Duluth Preschool.

We are the only Head Start program in the state to have a school district as a grantee. Our teachers are part of the Duluth Federation of Teachers and are compensated at the same level as all other teachers in the district. This has resulted in very low turnover, and very capable and compassionate teachers. Our paraprofessionals are part of the same collective bargaining unit as school district paraprofessionals, also resulting in long term, well trained team members.

For more information, please feel free to contact us online, by phone or in person.

Duluth Head Start

Historic Old Central High School

215 N. 1st Ave. E. Suite #300

Duluth MN 55802

218-336-8815

www.isd709.org