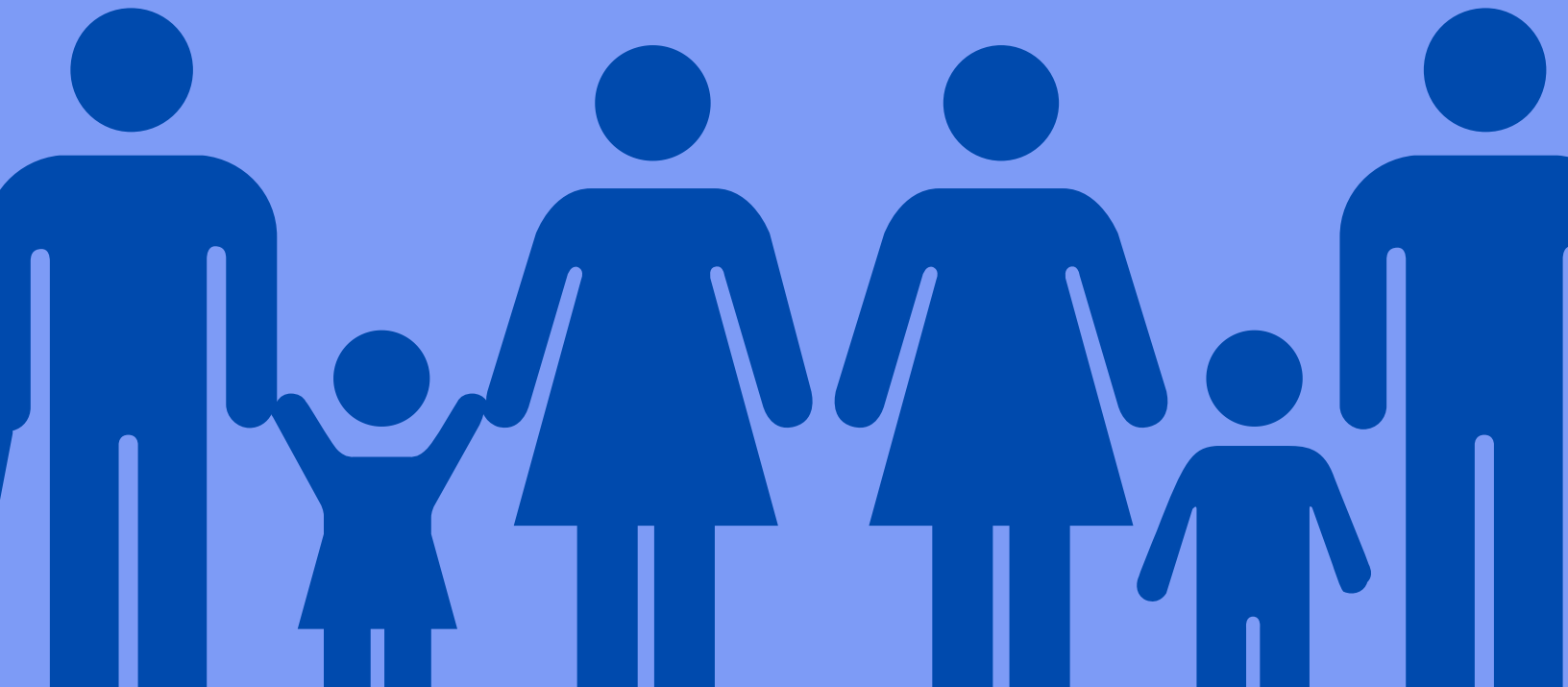


ANNUAL REPORT TO THE PUBLIC
2022-2023



DULUTH
HEADSTART/
PRESCHOOL



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. This includes our spots for Early Head Start. We have 18 spots reserved for children from birth through age three. Many preschool age children whose families are experiencing homelessness take advantage of the McKinney-Vento Act and are bussed to their home schools while their families are without housing.

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

\$2,597,984

This number includes our base grant funding and additional COLA and QI Funds that were awarded. This money funds personnel (\$2,485,205). The remainder is spent on things that support staff to work district wide to support families - cell phones, taxi services for families, mileage reimbursement, and classroom supplies. Indirect costs to the district also come out of this budget. \$28,958 from this budget is earmarked for training and technical assistance for both staff and families. This money funds us to serve 224 children, though our numbers remained lower than that likely due, in part, to the changing needs of families since the Covid-19 pandemic. We served 191 families in the 2022-23 school year. 49 of those were families of three year old's whose child returned for a second year.

State Head Start Budget

\$401,253

These funds provide our program the opportunity to offer several unique ways to support families. Families in Transition staff are supporting 17 children whose families are experiencing homelessness. Homelessness of families with very young children is on the rise in Duluth. We have 12 slots for Early Head Start (pregnant mothers to age 3) and 5 preschool slots. Many preschool aged children whose families are experiencing homelessness take advantage of the McKinney Vento Act and are bused to preschool classrooms that parents have identified as the schools they plan on attending for kindergarten. State funding also supports Home Base option for 12 families who, for many reasons, cannot access our classrooms across the city. \$358,162, is dedicated to staff wages and fringe benefits, while the remainder is spent on things to support staff such as cell phones, taxi services for families to attend class, socializations, doctor appointments, classroom supplies, and mileage reimbursements. State funded enrollment for 2022-23 was 29.

Pathways 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.

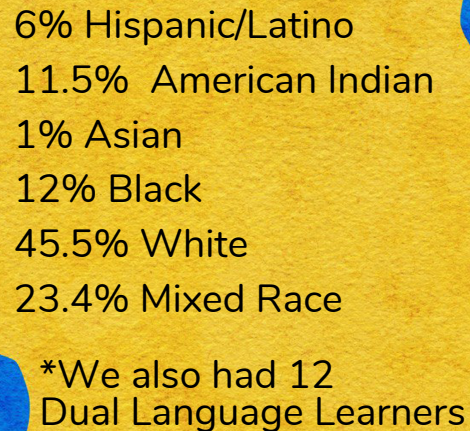
Audit

The audit that was done for the 2022-2023 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.

Celebrating Diversity

We are fortunate to serve a diverse population of children and families. Here is the demographic makeup of our students for the 2022-2023 school year.



6% Hispanic/Latino
11.5% American Indian
1% Asian
12% Black
45.5% White
23.4% Mixed Race
*We also had 12 Dual Language Learners

STRONG BODIES

Addressing Health Needs

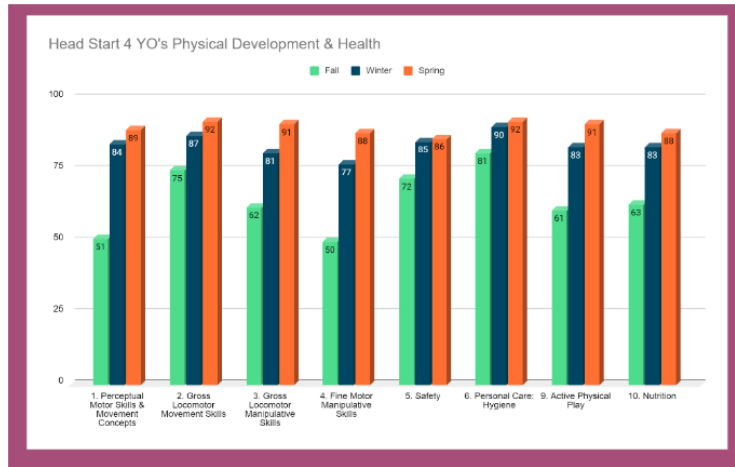
Part of the comprehensive service provided by Head Start is to assist families with their health needs.

We work to ensure all families have a source of ongoing and continuous health insurance. With our cumulative enrollment at 191 children, 92% had health coverage at the end of the year. 98% had an ongoing source of continuous, accessible health care. At the beginning of the year, only 19% of students were up to date on their yearly physical exams, and at the end of the year that number was 69%. 92% percent of our children were up to date on their immunizations. 97% percent have what we call a Dental Home meaning they have an identified dentist. 81% of students received preventative dental care during the school year.

Nutrition Services

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

Children's Growth in the area of Physical Development and Health



Collaboration with Duluth YMCA

With our YMCA collaboration, 72 preschool children went to a six week anti drowning program at the Y called, "Safety Around Water". 286 day passes were distributed to families.

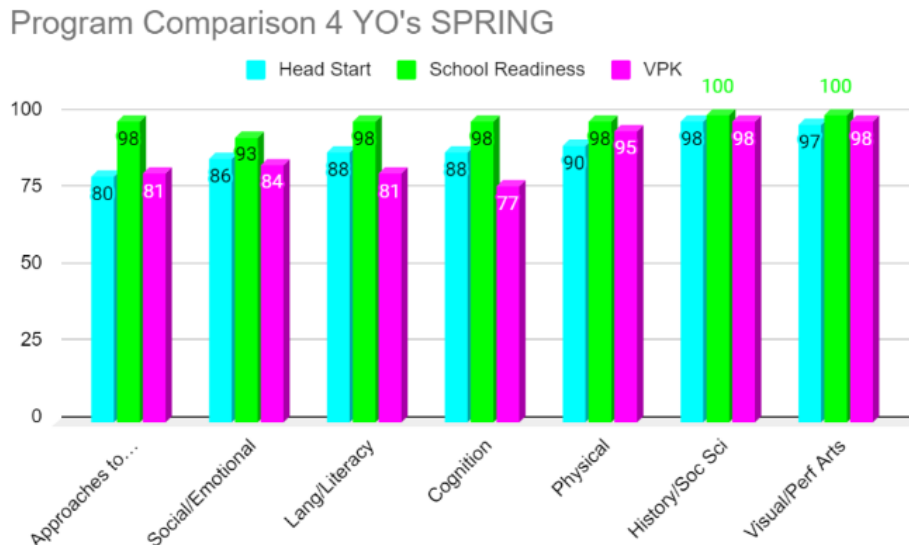
STRONG MINDS

Getting Children Safely to Preschool

86 children rode safely to school following the implementation of Safe Delivery of Preschool Children Training for Parents and bus drivers.

Preparing Children for Kindergarten

Our assessment tool is the Desired Results Developmental Profile. It measures all domains of learning. Data is collected three times per year. The following graph compares how four year old children from all three funding streams performed across all domains



12.2%

OF OUR CHILDREN STARTED THE YEAR RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

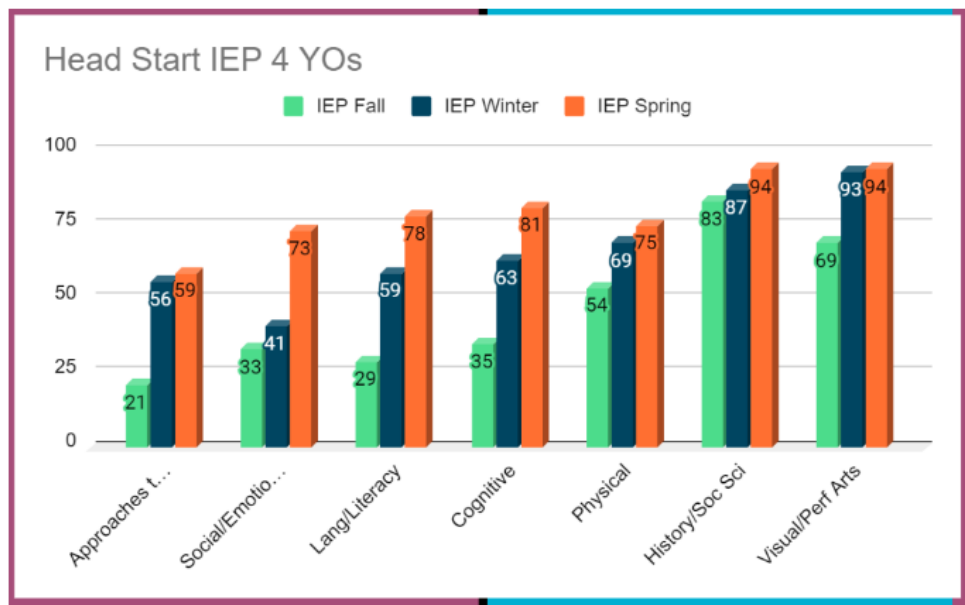
26.6%

OF CHILDREN IN OUR PROGRAM RECEIVED SERVICES FROM SPECIAL EDUCATION BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

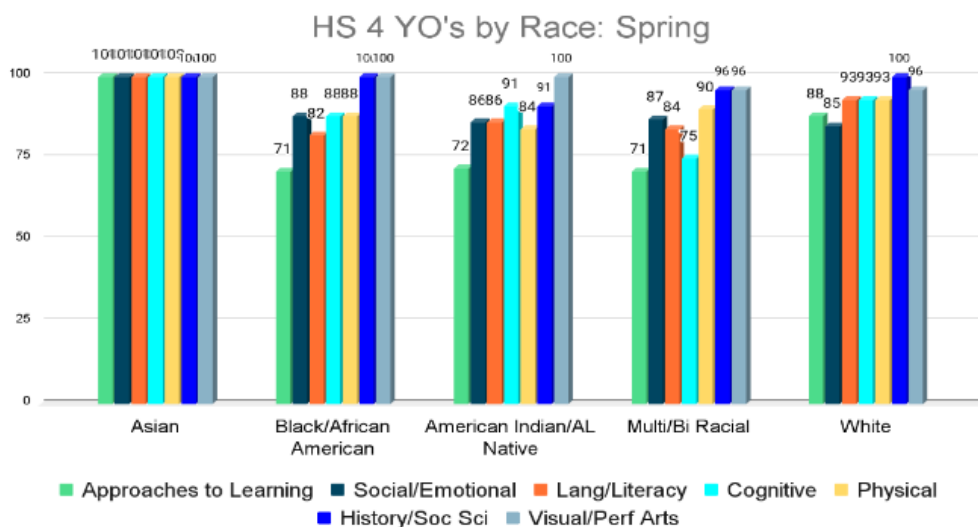
46%↑

47 CHILDREN HAD MENTAL HEALTH REFERRALS IN 2022-23. A 46% INCREASE FROM 2021-22.

As a fully inclusive program, we pay close attention to the achievement of students on IEPs, making sure their rate of growth is similar to all other student groups. The following graph illustrates student growth for Head Start 4 year olds with IEPs.



With an eye on equity, we monitor all subgroups of children.



UMD Study

Last year the Storer Foundation funded a study done by UMD to study the impact of nature based learning on receptive and expressive vocabulary to be done with our program.

Questions they proposed to answer were:

1. Does nature-based early learning support preschoolers' receptive and expressive vocabulary, and is the relationship between nature-based learning and vocabulary mediated by the quality of teacher-student interactions?
2. Can nature-based early learning moderate the relationship between socioeconomic status and preschoolers' vocabulary?

Preliminary findings suggest that incorporating some nature based practices into an early learning setting supports significant receptive vocabulary growth, especially for children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. We will share the published results when they are available.

Here is the one page publication based on the study we participated in last year:

Flourishing in Nature

Harnessing the Potential of Nature-Based Practices to Elevate and Equalize Executive Function Outcomes

Overview. Executive function (EF) skills are attention-regulation skills that allow conscious planning and the ability to work towards goals. EF skills include inhibitory control (impulse control), cognitive flexibility (attention switching), and working memory (mentally "holding" and using information). EF has been particularly emphasized in early childhood education over the last two decades, due to the growing recognition of its importance to young children's cognitive and social-emotional development, school-related behavior, and academic success. EF skills are critical, as they are the foundation for learning and are relied upon throughout life. This study investigated the effect of nature-based practices on young children's EF. The Minnesota Executive Function Scale was administered to 147 preschool children within one public school district at the beginning and end of the 2021-2022 school year.


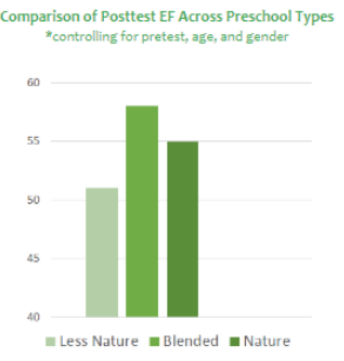


Photo Credit: Lisa Maki

Comparison of Posttest EF Across Preschool Types

*controlling for pretest, age, and gender



Preschool Type	Posttest EF Score (approx.)
Less Nature	51
Blended	58
Nature	55

Results. Incorporating nature-based practices into preschool was effective. Children in classrooms where nature-based practices were used had significantly higher EF levels than children in classrooms where nature-based practices were more minimally used. Preschools that used a blended approach (some incorporation of nature-based practices) were particularly effective. Results also suggest the effectiveness of nature-based practices for equalizing EF outcomes among SES subgroups that typically differ in level of EF. Posttest EF levels for the lower SES preschoolers in classrooms where nature-based practices were used were on par with their higher SES peers. Further, lower SES children in classrooms using nature-based practices significantly exceeded EF developmental expectations.

Conclusion. This study suggests benefits of nature-based practices can occur within a publicly-funded school district, with participants of lower SES, and in urban settings. While private nature preschools often have the resources and flexibility to support to learning outcomes through means of their choosing, a blended approach may offer an effective intervention for supporting school readiness that is closer to a typical classroom context. Thus, not only is it more accessible to public preschools, it is likely more acceptable and feasible. Ultimately, the blended approach can be a vehicle toward greater equity in terms of who experiences and ultimately benefits from nature-based early learning practices.

Citation: Ernst, J., Sobel, D., and Hall, A. (2022). Executive function in early childhood: Harnessing the potential of nature-based practices to elevate and equalize outcomes. Front. Educ., 7(1011912). doi: 10.3389/educ.2022.1011912

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Attendance

30% of Head Start students had high rates of absenteeism last year. Illness and transportation were some of the main reasons. This will be an area we will focus on moving forward.

STRONG FAMILIES

Parent Family and Community Engagement

Policy Council

Policy Council met in person for most months. Exceptions were made when winter weather was difficult or childcare staff were unavailable. For those meetings we were able to meet virtually, thanks to skills gained over the pandemic.

Policy Council had two active fathers, along with four active mothers. We reached a quorum every month. We were able to take a Policy Council member with us to the National Head Start Association Annual Conference in Phoenix, AZ when we presented on our topic, 'Nature for All.'

Parent Family Community Engagement

Most frequent services received:

- Kid's Closet
- Backpack Program
- Emergency/Crisis
- Parenting Education
- Housing
- Adult Education
- Asset Building
- Transportation
- Mental Health
- Employment
- Custody

74

families engaged in Family Partnership Goal Agreements

32

families of preschoolers set 39 Family Goals

77%

of families surveyed participated in some type of Family Event.

That's 200 adults and 230 children

We had our First City-Wide end of the year event at the Great Lakes Aquarium. 89 families, 165 children and 16 staff members attended.

Governor Tim Walz

Governor Tim Walz visited our Laura MacArthur Full Day Head Start Program, along with Mayor Emily Larson. 3 Policy Council members were there to greet them. They were thrilled to meet such important people.



Community Partnerships

In the 2022-2023 school year, we partnered with the following organizations:

Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency

Children's Dental Service

CHUM: Steve O'Neil Apartments

City of Duluth: Washington Center

Duluth Children's Museum

Duluth Public Library: Every Child Ready

Duluth Zoo

East Side Neighborhood Development Company

Family Freedom Center

First Witness

Great Lakes Aquarium

Help Me Grow

ISD 709: Early Childhood Special Education

ISD 709: American Indian Education Department

ISD 709: Adult Education

Kid's Closet

Lifehouse

Lincoln Park Child and Family Collaborative

Minnesota Reading Corps

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 of MN in which a school district is the grantee. Duluth Public Schools have had a Head Start program since its inception in 1965.

For more information regarding our program contact us online, by phone, or in person.

We welcome you!

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