

Federal Head Start Performance Standards require programs to complete a full Community Assessment every 5 years and to provide updates every year in between. This data source is used to help programs determine the needs of families in their service area and whether or not existing programming meets those needs in terms of location, recruitment, and all areas of service to families embedded in the Head Start program. It can also be valuable in predicting future trends that may affect a program's service area. Other data sources include child outcomes, family outcomes, health statistics, Self-Assessment, CLASS Observation scores and information gleaned through parent surveys. This collection of data is part of each grant proposal, decision-making process and strategic planning.

Duluth Head Start is federally funded to provide 239 children in Duluth Minnesota the opportunity to participate in Head Start. Duluth Head Start operates 16 classrooms at 7 sites throughout the city with half day and full day sessions available, following the school calendar for the Duluth Public Schools. This year marks the first year of a 3-way collaboration between Head Start, School Readiness and Voluntary PreK.

State Head Start funds allow us to serve 48 children through our Childcare Collaboration with the YWCA Spirit Valley Childcare Center and to serve families experiencing homelessness with our Families in Transition program option. We also have a State funded Home Base option serving 12 children and their families in their homes as well as exploring the community.

## **Area Demographics**

### **Geographic Boundaries (Size, Counties, Distinguishing Characteristics)**

The Duluth Head Start program serves Minnesota resident families of birth to five-year-old or kindergarten enrollment age children living within the Duluth city limits or enrolled in a childcare situation within the city limits.

Duluth is built into a steep, rocky hillside, located at the westernmost tip of Lake Superior, halfway between Minneapolis/St. Paul and the Canadian border. There are 2,342 freshwater miles from the Atlantic Ocean to Duluth via the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway. The city boasts an extensive climate-controlled skywalk connecting downtown facilities—a useful way to navigate the downtown in the frigid winter climate.

### **Governing Structure**

The city has a Mayor-Council form of government, with the City Administration making policy proposals to a nine-member City Council. Duluth's five representational districts are divided into 36 precincts. Each of the five council districts elects its own Councilor, with four at-large Councilors representing the entire city.

### **Population and Related Trends**

According to the 2013 Census update, the population of Duluth is 86,128 with 200,528 in St. Louis County. This is a decrease of -0.2% from last year. Of the total population of Duluth, 22.1 percent (19.034) are living in poverty.

More than half of Minnesota's residents live in the 7-county Twin Cities region. It is one of the fastest growing regions in the Midwest and is predicted to continue rapid growth; adding nearly one-half million more residents by 2030. According to the MDE birth to four census data, Duluth has a declining preschool population. Fall 2016 data shows 1000 4 year olds. This is up from 2015 at 978 four year olds, but down from 1277 just four years ago.

### **Racial and Ethnic Composition, Gender, Ages**

In 2014, the population of Duluth was 90.6% white, 2.7% African American, 1.8% American Indian, and 1.6% Asian. Of these persons, 5.6% are under the age of 5 years old, 18.5% are under 18 and 13.8% are 65 and over. 51% are female; 49% is male. 2.9% of the population is foreign born and 4.7% speak a language other than English at home.

While Minnesota is less racially diverse as the nation, that trend seems to be slowly changing. About 17 percent of our state's residents are now persons of color, compared to only about 1 percent in 1960. Between 2000 and 2010, the state's population of color grew by 55 percent, making them the fastest growing segment of the population. These individuals will make up an increasingly large part of our workforce, but data show that they are also more likely to live in poverty; less likely to graduate from high school; less likely to own their own home; and more likely to suffer from chronic illness.

According to DEED, the city of Duluth has seen the number of 15 to 34 year olds increase considerably since 2000. The number of 15 to 24 year olds increased by 2,657 people and 25 to 34 year olds increased by 984.

Age trends are also transforming our state. By 2030, the number of Minnesotans over age 65 is expected to almost double and older adults will comprise about one-fifth of our population.

Minnesota's younger residents are more racially, culturally and linguistically diverse than older generations, which creates new challenges and opportunities for future economic and educational trends.

### **Data from the State of Minnesota reports:**

- In 1920, about 1 in 5 Minnesotans was foreign-born; today about 1 in 14 are (2010-2012).
- The largest groups of foreign-born Minnesotans were born in Mexico (71,000); India (26,000); Laos, including Hmong (24,000); Somalia (21,000); Vietnam (19,000); Thailand, including Hmong (15,000), and China (14,000) (data from 2010-2012). These estimates do not include U.S.-born children of these immigrants. They also likely underestimate the size of our immigrant populations because trust and language issues depress response rates to Census surveys.
- Behind English, the most common languages spoken in the homes of Minnesotans 5 and older are Spanish (about 198,000 speakers), Hmong (54,000 speakers), and Somali (37,000 speakers) (data from 2010-2012).

### **Household Composition**

71.3% of Duluth residents own their own homes, the average value of owner-occupied housing units is \$137,500 compared to \$207,000 for the state of Minnesota. There is an average of 2.24 of persons per household. Among Duluth's households, 18.5% had children under 18, 12.5% had a female head of household, and 43.7% were non-families. 35.2% of all households were one-person households, and

13.8% had someone 65 or older living alone. The average household size was 2.24 and the average family size was 2.80.

## **Economic Activities**

The Port of Duluth is a major transportation hub for the transshipment of coal, taconite, agricultural products, steel, limestone, and cement. Duluth is home to two four-year colleges and two vocational colleges. Headquarters for Maurices, a major retail outlet, and Cirrus Aircraft, a manufacturing facility, are located in Duluth. It is also a center for aquatic biology and aquatic science and a popular center for tourism and outdoor activities. The 148<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing National Air Guard base, United Health Care and our local medical facilities are also large area employers.

According to the November 2016 Regional Analysis by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development:

- The Duluth-Superior MSA added 320 jobs (0.3 percent) in October.
- September estimates were also revised upward slightly, giving the area two consecutive months of modest job growth.
- The total employment change is largely the product of two super sectors: Government employers in Duluth added 1,283 jobs (5.1 percent), with Local Government adding 887 of those (up 5.4 percent); Leisure and Hospitality lost 1,243 jobs (8.4 percent). The movement in the two areas largely canceled each other out, and overall growth in the area was relatively flat.
- The Duluth area lost 120 jobs (0.1 percent) over the year. This was the first annual job loss for the MSA since June.
- The Trade, Transportation, and Utilities sector shed 980 jobs (3.7 percent), with 782 of those jobs coming from the Retail Trade industry group (down 4.8 percent). The Professional and Business Services sector continued to add to its over-the-year growth and was up by 460 jobs (5.6 percent) over October 2015 estimates.

As of December 2014, the labor force in Duluth was 44,979, with 43,356 people employed, 1,623 unemployed and an unemployment rate of 3.6%

Minnesota unemployment rates for 2015 show the following statistics across racial lines: Whites 3.8%; Blacks 10.2% (Black men 22%); American Indians 39%; Hispanics 8.2%.

## **Future Trends**

The *Regional Spotlight for Northeast Minnesota* reports, “manufacturing is projected to grow by 8.5 percent from 2010-2020 in the Northeast, adding jobs at a slower rate than the average for all industries (13.1 percent). Several Manufacturing subsectors will grow much more quickly, though. Wood Products Manufacturing, Nonmetallic Mineral Products Manufacturing, Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing, Transportation Equipment Manufacturing, and Furniture Manufacturing will each increase employment by more than 25 percent. Subsectors projected to lose jobs include Paper Manufacturing, Apparel Manufacturing, and Textile Product Mills. Almost all of the 179 projected new jobs in Transportation Equipment Manufacturing will occur in the Aerospace Product and Parts subsector, reflecting the growing aviation cluster in the Duluth area.”

A ratio-trend analysis suggests that Duluth-Superior metropolitan area will increase by approximately 9,000 jobs by the year 2035. If recent trends continue, new jobs in the *Retail* and *Other* categories will increase at a faster rate than the *Service* jobs. *Service* jobs will still account for the vast majority of the area's employment.

**Median Income Level:**

In 2014, Duluth's median household income was \$43,518; \$17,310 less than the median MN household income. The per capita income was \$25,715. About 16.4% of all residents were below the poverty line. 15.3% of children under 5, and 11.6% under 18 in Minnesota were living in poverty.

<b>2018 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia</b>	
<b>Persons in family/household</b>	<b>Poverty guideline</b>
1	\$12,140
2	16,460
3	20,780
4	25,100
5	29,420.
6	33,740
7	38,060
8	42,380
<i>For families/households with more than eight persons, add \$4,320 for each additional person.</i>	

**Principle Source of Income**

The number of full-time job openings in NE MN rose 14% from 2011 to 2014. The median hourly wage for all jobs in St. Louis County is \$12.05, compared to \$18.15 throughout the state.

Many jobs in the Duluth-Superior area are in retail and service industries, which typically offer low-pay and part-time positions. Of 84,696 jobs posted in St. Louis County in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2014, 42% were part-time, 16% seasonal and 36% required a post-secondary education.

### **Number Below Poverty Level**

In 2015, poverty in Duluth was at 21.9%, down slightly from the 2010 census at 22%. However, this is up significantly from the 2000 rate of 15.5%.

A higher poverty level affects persons of color and children in Duluth. African Americans have a poverty rate of about 63% and Native Americans have a poverty rate of about 67.6%. 24.3% of households with children under the age of eighteen receive food assistance, compared to the state average of 12.5%. Females are somewhat more likely to be living in poverty. Having less than a high school degree or being a minority increases the likelihood of living in poverty.

The federal poverty line is only \$12,060 for an individual and \$24,600 for a family of four. A person working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year would earn \$15,080 at the current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour. Barriers to work— the inability to find work, the unaffordability of childcare, and disability — may be greater contributors to poverty status than wages.

### **Issues That Will Affect the Economy**

According to an article in November 2016, the Duluth News Tribune reports that the jobless rate in Duluth has fallen as our labor market shrinks. Since rebounding from the recession, it seems that there are too few people around to take available jobs. In October of 2016, the number of people working or looking for work hit a 20-year low. State data showed that in the Duluth metro area, 139,126 people are in the labor force, the lowest number since 1996. Many workers who are entering retirement age have affected the smaller labor force and few people are moving into the region. Little job growth is expected in the area from 2014 to 2024.

### **New Minimum Wage Law**

According to the September 2014 Minnesota Economic Trends Quarterly, *“Women, most minority racial groups, people with disabilities and residents in Greater Minnesota stand to benefit the most from a new law that will raise the state’s minimum wage to \$9.50 an hour by August 2016.*

DEED’s workforce development programs target economically vulnerable Minnesotans, ranging from those with persistent employment barriers to those who were laid off from a steady job.

The current federal minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour, and has not increased since July 2009. However, some states, cities and counties have a higher minimum wage rate. When the state, city or county minimum wage rate is higher than the federal rate, employers are required to pay workers the higher amount.

On September 15, 2017, the Department of Labor published a notice in the Federal Register to announce that, beginning January 1, 2018, the Executive Order 13658 minimum wage rate is increased to \$10.35 per hour (82 FR 43408). This Executive Order minimum wage rate generally must be paid to workers performing work on or in connection with covered federal contracts. Additionally, beginning January 1, 2018, tipped employees performing work on or in connection with covered contracts generally must be paid a minimum cash wage of \$7.25 per hour.

**Minnesota:** Large employers are required to pay workers \$9.65/hour and small employers (less than 500k in annual sales) \$7.87 (Indexed Annual increases will begin on 1/1/2018)

### **Availability of Public Transportation Services**

The location of low-income residents is important to transportation planning because individuals in this subset often face challenges similar to mobility-limited populations. They often lack the means to transport themselves to/from work and other destinations, and often they are reliant on public transit or other services that do not always provide the flexibility they need to effectively chain different trips together (work, daycare, shopping, etc.).

These concentrations are near the downtown districts of Duluth and Superior, the Central Hillside and Lincoln Park neighborhoods of Duluth, as well as Duluth's university district (full-time students are included in the low-income subset). It is important to note that significant distances (two miles in Superior, and greater than four in Duluth) exist between these concentrations and the area's major retail centers, which represent the greatest number of low-skilled or entry-level employment opportunities in the area.

As with areas of concentrated poverty, it is also important to consider the impacts of public transportation decisions as they relate to neighborhoods with a high representation of racial or ethnic minorities. Racial minorities make up less than 6% of the Duluth-Superior population while individuals of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity made up only 1% of the metro area population. The largest concentrations overall exist in Duluth's Central Hillside neighborhood near the downtown, which also represents a high concentration of people living below the national poverty line.

The average travel time to work in Duluth is 19 minutes; 17.4% less than the MN average. 10.3% of workers carpool, 4.2% takes public transportation and 5.0% walk to work. Duluth International Airport serves the city and surrounding areas with daily flights to Minneapolis, Detroit and Chicago. Greyhound and Jefferson Lines offers daily bus service to Minneapolis/St. Paul.

The local bus system is run by the Duluth Transit Authority, which serves Duluth and Superior. Ridership for 2010 surpassed the 3 million-rider mark for the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year and is up 21.6% since 2005. Transit use is up by all segments of the general population but U-Pass ridership for the local colleges has shown the most consistent gains; 4.5% over 2009. DTA Bike & Bus ridership for 2010 also surpassed the previous year's total by 2.5%. In the year 2009, the DTA began providing the Bike & Bus service on a year-round basis. The DTA extends and/or adds service routes during festivals, parades, New Year's Eve and various events in Duluth.

Current public transportation routes and schedules do not cover all the geographic areas where jobs are located. Travel is difficult or impossible during the late night and early morning hours that job schedules may require. Even when the bus is an option, the time required to wait for transfers to get to their destination is prohibitive. The Duluth Transit Authority (DTA) works to plan routes and schedules to accommodate the higher concentration work places. They recently added new routes to accommodate employees at United Health Care that did not previously have access to public transportation.

### **New Legislation/the Getting to Work Bill**

If passed, a new bill, proposed to the State Legislature, would provide funding of \$4.5 million in competitive grants to nonprofit agencies that would offer low-interest car loans to low-income people.

The Getting to Work bill could provide assistance to 4,000 to 6,000 low-income Minnesota families, creating self-sufficiency and the ability to get and maintain employment in areas where public transportation is scarce

### **Proportion of Population with Telephones/Cell Phones/Televisions/Computers**

Communication with Head Start families is accomplished in a number of ways. Because most parents and family members transport their children to Head start classrooms, we have an opportunity to connect face to face twice a day. In addition, teachers send home newsletters and make phone calls as needed. Family Advocates make frequent contacts with families in person and phone calls and increasingly with text messaging. We are updating our website and building a strong distribution list to share Head Start data widely.

### **Black Household Income Plunges in MN**

An article from the Minneapolis Star Tribune (September 2015) stated that household incomes for blacks in Minnesota dropped during the past year, according to survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau. From 2013-14, the median income for black households in the state fell 14%. That was a drop from about \$31,500 to \$27,000 in one year's time.

The statewide poverty rate for black residents rose from 33% to 38%, compared to a stable overall state poverty rate of 11%.

Income and poverty for other racial groups in Minnesota remained stable. There is no apparent reason for the declining income, and higher unemployment in the black community was not a factor.

### **Racial and Ethnic Composition in St. Louis County**

St. Louis County, MN is home to a population of 200,506 people, from which 99% are citizens. The ethnic composition of the population of St. Louis County, MN is composed of 183,824 White residents (91.7%), 4,842 Two+ residents (2.41%), 3,727 Native residents (1.86%), 3,060 Black residents (1.53%), and 2,851 Hispanic residents (1.42%). The most common foreign languages in St. Louis County, MN are Spanish (2,074 speakers), German (1,048 speakers), and Other Native North American (769 speakers), but compared to other places, St. Louis County, MN has a relative high number of Other (739 speakers), Other Native North American (769 speakers), and Scandinavian (254 speakers).

### **Education - Adult Educational Attainment**

THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY UPDATE OF 2010 provides us with the data in EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN DULUTH, which summarizes the educational attainment of residents of Duluth over the age of 25. Over 63 percent of the general population has taken college level classes or received advanced degrees.

## **Information on Functional Literacy Levels**

<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN DULUTH</b>		
<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than High School Grad	4,453	13.1%
High school graduate/GED	15,605	28.7%
Some college, /Associate's degree	17,393	32
Bachelor's/Graduate/ Professional Degree	17,006	31.2

## **Graduation Rates**

### **State Releases 2015 On-Time Graduation Rates**

This week the Minnesota Department of Education released last year's 4-year, on-time graduation rates for Minnesota schools. Results are available [online](#) for all high school programs in ISD 709 with a breakout for each school and each student group. Student groups with fewer than 10 students are not reported.

According to ISD 709 officials, the district continues to see fluctuations in the on-time graduation rate over time. An overview:

- >Last year's overall 4-year, on-time graduation rate was up.
- >The 5-year graduation rate was 78.23; the 6-year rate was 81.58.
- >The Area Learning Center graduation rate doubled.
- >Most student groups made gains.
- >All ISD 709 Students: 77.45%
- >Duluth East: 94.47%
- >Denfeld: 75.32%
- >Area Learning Center (Alternative Programs): 29.27%

While most student groups within the district made gains, officials say there is more work yet to do in closing the achievement gap between student groups, especially black and American Indian students and students from poverty.

## **Health**

### **Incidence of Drug and Alcohol Abuse**

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA):

- In 2013, young adults aged 18–25 had the highest percentage of alcohol dependence or abuse (13.0%) among individuals aged 12 or older, and the percentage was higher for males (8.7%) than females (4.6%).
- In the United States, 6.7% of persons aged 21 or older (an estimated 15.1 million individuals) in 2013 reported heavy alcohol use within the month prior to being surveyed. This percentage has not changed significantly since 2009.
- In 2013, percentages of alcohol dependence or abuse were higher among those who lived in metropolitan areas and among those without health insurance.



- The percentage of alcohol dependence or abuse decreased from 7.5% in 2009 to 6.6% in 2013. This decrease was found for adolescents aged 12–17 and young adults aged 18–25 but not for those in older age groups.
- In the United States, 2.6% of individuals aged 12 or older (an estimated 6.9 million individuals) in 2013 were dependent on or abused illicit drugs within the year prior to being surveyed. This percentage has not changed significantly since 2009.
- In 2013, illicit drug dependence or abuse was more prevalent among males (3.4%) than among females (1.9%).

### **Children Under 6 at Risk**

According to a study done by the Wilder Foundation, there are fifteen high-risk counties in Minnesota for children younger than 6. These are counties, which may have high rates of poverty, and unemployment and low access to health care and other services that ensure children get off to a good developmental start. St. Louis County is one of the high-risk counties.

### **Incidence of Abuse and Neglect**

St. Louis County reports that there were 1,657 reported cases of child maltreatment in 2013.

The Governor’s Task Force on the Protection of Children is charged with making recommendations for comprehensive improvements to the child protection system to the 2015 Legislature. Areas of interest include children protection screening, Family Assessment Response, training for county child protection staff and state oversight.

According to the key findings Minnesota’s Child Welfare Report of 2013:

- Minnesota counties, and the Leech Lake and the White Earth Bands of Ojibwa, assessed 17,716 reports of maltreatment involving 24,962 children in 2011.
- Of all maltreatment reports, 12,243 received a Family Assessment, a strengths-based and family-focused method for working with families in the child protection system where no determination of maltreatment is made.
- Neglect was the most common allegation of maltreatment, found in 63 percent of Family Assessments and 52 percent of Family Investigations. This includes neglecting to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, endangerment, educational neglect, abandonment and inadequate supervision. Medical neglect is counted separately.
- The need for ongoing protective services was identified in 51 percent of Family Investigations and 16 percent of Family Assessments. Another 15 percent of Family Assessments were offered optional supportive services.
- American Indian and African American/Black children had the highest rates of contact with the child protection system. They were more than six and three times more likely to be reported as abused or neglected than were White children, respectively.
- Fewer than 3 percent of all determined victims had at least one subsequent determined report of maltreatment within six months.

## **Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women. It is estimated that one in four women in Minnesota will experience violence from an intimate partner at some point in their life.

The Women's Program at Safe Haven Shelter in Duluth provides battered women and their children with 24-hour emergency shelter, food and clothing, personal advocacy, and a safe environment to explore their options. Advocates work closely with the women, connecting them to available resources in the community including economic assistance, medical services, education and employment opportunities, and permanent housing. Safe Haven Shelter and Resource Center assisted 1,695 people in 2014. As of 03/31/2015, six Head Start families have reported incidents of domestic violence.

The Lake Superior Regional Family Justice Center (FJC) continues to serve the greater Duluth Community as a one-stop shop for women in abusive relationships. The FJC includes a wide range of services and programs available, serving victims of domestic violence community wide.

## **Infant and Child Birth and Death Rates**

St. Louis County's birth rate of 10.4 births per 1,000 is lower than state-level rates of 12.9 births per 1,000. In 2012, 82.5% of births in St. Louis County had adequate prenatal care (nine or more prenatal visits and seen in the first trimester) compared with 78.2% in 2007 and 84.2% in 2003.

- The overall infant mortality rate in Minnesota is the lowest in the nation, and infant mortality rates for African American, Asian, and Hispanic infants are significantly lower than the national average. The American Indian rate is nearly the same as the national average (2003-2005).
- Relatively small numbers of annual births and infant deaths in some Populations of Color including American Indians mean that the prevention of even one infant death can significantly impact rates. Looked at within this context, the EHCI target could have been reached in the 2001-2005 reporting period if there had been five fewer infant deaths for African Americans per year and three fewer deaths for American Indians.

## **Number of Low-Birth Weight Babies**

Babies born weighing 5 pounds, 8 ounces or less are considered to have a low birth weight - which carries a range of health risks and potentially decreased cognitive and social development. A baby's weight at birth indicates both the mother's health status and her baby's chances for growth and overall development. Low birth weight babies have an increased risk of disease and even death during their early months. In 2013, 6.4% of babies born in Minnesota (all births) had a low birth weight. Down from 8% in 2010.

## **Teen Pregnancy Rates**

Overall, birth rates among adolescents ages 15-19 decreased 7.8% from 2009 to 2010, while pregnancy rates decreased nearly 10%. Pregnancy data indicate a drop in number of pregnancies since 2007, marking an overall decline of 38% from 1990 to 2010.

For the first time in more than twenty years, adolescent birth rates for African American adolescents in Minnesota fell below the national average, marking a decrease of nearly 24% from 2009. Birth rates for American Indians decreased 31%, Asian/Pacific Islanders decreased 23%, and Hispanic/Latina decreased 22% from 2009 to 2010. In comparison, birth rates for white adolescents dropped only 0.67%. Possible explanations for these dramatic decreases in rates among populations of color are improved access to culturally appropriate medical and educational services resulting in more young people making informed decisions about their sexual health. Although adolescent pregnancy and birth rates are highest among Minnesota populations of color compared to white populations, the greatest number of adolescent births is still to white females. Rates for all racial groups fell between 2009 and 2010.

### **Immunization Levels among School Children**

According to the Minnesota Department of Health, 95-100% of children 24-35 months in St. Louis County are up to date with their immunizations. To date, 68% of Duluth Head Start children are current; this includes homeless children enrolled in our FIT program.

### **Prevalent Health Problems**

The number of children without health insurance rose sharply in the past two years in Minnesota, making it the only state to see a significant increase since 2008. This is an increase from 5.8% to 6.6% or a total of 84,000 children. The national rate is 8%, down from 9% in the same period. MN has always had a higher rate of children and adults covered by employer-based health insurance, so the recession had a more dramatic impact here as businesses cut workers, raised premiums or dropped health plans altogether. To address chronic budget deficits MN lawmakers reduced adults' eligibility for subsidized health programs such as Medical Assistance and Minnesota Care and eliminated the General Assistance Medical Care program. While enrollment standards have not changed for children, they have been affected. When you cut parents' health care, you lose the children as well. Of the 292 children that have been enrolled in Duluth Head Start for the 2016-2017 school year so far, 244 have health insurance; Medicaid covers 228 of these children.

### **Communicable Diseases and Health Concerns**

No major disease outbreaks have been documented for St. Louis County. There are periodic cases of infectious disease, including influenza, chicken pox and whooping cough.  
<http://www.bridgetohealthsurvey.org>

### **Air and Water Quality**

One of the big draws for people in this area is the air and water quality. We are fortunate to be located on the eastern shore of Lake Superior, the largest freshwater lake in the world. It contains almost 3,000 cubic miles of water, an amount that could fill all the other Great Lakes plus three additional Lake Eries. With an average depth approaching 500 feet, Superior also is the coldest and deepest (1,332 feet) of the Great Lakes. Most of the Superior basin is sparsely populated, and heavily forested, with little agriculture

because of a cool climate and poor soils. More on water and air quality information can be accessed at <http://www.pca.state.mn>

### Head Start Eligible Children and Families

#### Preliminary Statistics on Families with Children Enrolled in the Program for the 2017-2018 School Year

<b>HEAD START HOUSEHOLD EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT 2017-2018</b>		
<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than High School Grad	25	9.12%
High School Grad or GED	119	43.4%
Some College/ Associates	104	37.95%
Bachelors or Higher	15	5.47%
Unreported	11	4.01%

#### Employment/Job Training Status of Head Start Parents During the 2017-2018 School Year to Date (Employed and unemployed numbers do not reflect retired or disabled parents.)

	Two Parents	One Parent
School/Job Training	4	3
Employed	96	61
Unemployed	19	81

#### Languages Spoken

##### **Head Start Program Primary Language Spoken at Home**

LANGUAGE	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18
English	98.44	99.6	99.6	99.03
Asian/Pacific Island (Hmong)	0	0	0	0
Spanish	0	0	0	0
European	.31	0	0	0
Hindi	0	0	0	0
Far East	1.25	.4	.4	0
Unspecified				.67

## **General**

The Duluth Head Start program serves Minnesota resident families of birth to four-year-old children living within the Duluth city limits or enrolled in a childcare situation within the city limits. According to the 2013 Census update, here are approximately 10,428 children under the age of 5 living in St. Louis County.

## **Transition Activities**

Duluth Head Start supports families as their children transition both from Early Head Start (Birth-3) and from Head Start to Kindergarten. Families with children birth to age 3 are eased into the new care setting with frequent visits to the new setting, transition conferences and parent input into the process. For children moving on to kindergarten, transition activities include visits to kindergarten rooms, lunch in the cafeteria and participation in district wide Kindergarten Round-Up activities. Round Up is a good opportunity for Head Start staff to introduce Head Start families to the greater school community. Head Start provides assistance with kindergarten enrollment paperwork, childcare for siblings and transportation to the spring Round Up events. Our District's Prek-Grade 3 Leadership Team has proven to be successful in supporting Transition activities like Round Up, Staggered Start, Open Houses and that very important first day of Kindergarten. With a good variety of staff, administrators and District leadership, the Prek-Grade 3 Leadership Team recently engaged the greater Duluth community childcare providers to talk about our shared work in ensuring all children are ready for Kindergarten.

## **Number of Enrolled Children with Disabilities and Types of Disabilities (By Diagnostic Category) of Enrolled Children**

Multiple Disabilities	Speech Language	Emotional/ Behavior	Developmental	Hearing Impaired	Visually Impaired
0	13	1	53	1	0

As a school district program, Duluth Head Start has a strong working relationship with the district's Early Childhood Special Education program. This relationship allows us to streamline our work with children and families in need of special education services.

## **Resources Provided to Enrolled Children with Disabilities by Other Agencies**

### **HELP ME GROW**

Help Me Grow is the initial point of contact in the city of Duluth for health and development questions about children ages birth to twenty-one. Help Me Grow staff assists families with appropriate referrals and access to needed services for children who have medically diagnosed conditions or have conditions with a high probability of resulting in developmental delay. They also provide developmental screening and/or in- depth evaluation. Special Education services are available to children who meet the Minnesota state special education criteria. Services include speech, physical and occupational therapy, service coordination, special instruction, vision, hearing and nurse services. All services provided through the school system are free of charge.

### **Scottish Rite Clinic Childhood Language Disorders**

Provides families with the assessments and tools for all areas of communication disorders. The services they provide include:

- Hearing assessments
- Communication assessments
- Direct management of language disorders
- Referral to the medical and educational communities' services
- Onsite outreach visits
- Intensive parent education

### **The Robert F. Pierce Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic**

The Robert F. Pierce Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic is the clinical teaching unit within the Department of

Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Minnesota Duluth.

The goals of the Clinic are to: assist people of all ages with speech language, and hearing disorders through comprehensive assessment and individually designed treatment programs; provide a practicum experience for students in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders who are supervised by professional speech-language pathologists and audiologists; and help clients, family members, and other professionals gain a better understanding of communication disorders advance knowledge of communication disorders through research. Therapy and treatment include:

- Group or individual speech therapy
- Family Counseling & Education
- Parent Education to integrate activities from therapy at home
- Group Therapy & Social Activities
- Individual & group interaction to enhance spoken English skills of non-native English speakers

### **Essentia Health–Polinsky Medical Rehabilitation Center**

Part of Essentia Health Children's Services, the Polinsky Center pediatric rehabilitation team offers physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and psychology services. They see children with a wide variety of conditions, from developmental delays to serious brain and spinal cord injuries.

### **Arc Northland**

ARC Northland aids families through many supportive services, by helping people with disabilities and their families overcome challenges and thrive in community life. They serve individuals in Southern St. Louis, Carlton, and Lake Counties. Arc Northland's mission is to create equal opportunity for quality living and to enhance dignity and respect for people with disabilities and their families.

### **St. Luke's Pediatrics**

As part of the St. Luke's Medical Center, the Pediatrics unit provides speech therapy, along with occupational and physical therapy and psychological services. Services are available to children with a wide array of physical and developmental conditions.

### **Mental Health**

Duluth Head Start employs two contracted Mental Health Consultants, who assist with classroom observations and provide resources to classroom teachers. Consultants also provide referrals for families to area mental health facilities—the Human Development Center and Amberwing.

**Nutrition - Children Receiving Free Lunch and Breakfast**

Duluth Head Start Centers are located in Elementary schools with the highest percentages of children receiving Free and Reduced Lunch services.

2017-2018: 41.9% of Duluth schoolchildren are eligible for the Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program, up from 42.1% in the previous year.

\*Schools where Head Start classrooms are located.

**Food Recipients**

Our statistics of our current Start parents in the SNAP

School Name	Enrolled	Percentage
Congdon	596	20.1
Homecroft Elementary*	368	23.9
Lakewood Elementary	222	34.2
Lester Park Elementary*	553	16.5
Lowell Elementary*	414	41.1
Laura MacArthur Elementary*	391	77.2
Myers-Wilkins*	400	81.8
Piedmont Elementary*	486	64.2
Stowe Elementary*	278	68.3
Early Childhood Special Education	140	35.7

**Support**

show that 135 Duluth Head are enrolled program.

**Participant Distribution Programs, Availability of Low-Cost Food**

**in Food**

**Hunger Solutions MN**

Hunger Solutions MN is a comprehensive hunger relief organization that works to end hunger in MN. They support agencies that provide food to those in need. Through their Helpline, they have helped thousands of families and seniors find emergency food and enroll in public nutrition programs. They have distributed more than one million dollars in grants to food shelves so far this year.

**Minnesota Nutritious Food Coalition**

The MNFC is a public-private partnership whose goal is to raise awareness, increase participation in the federal Food Support program, and provide guidance on means of better serving Minnesotans in need of healthy food. Their main charge is to address food access issues, increase participation in the federally funded Food Support program, identify barriers and areas for expansion, and develop a coordinated outreach effort to ensure all Minnesotans who are eligible for the program have an opportunity to apply for it.

More than 500,000 Minnesotans access food support benefits monthly, yet many more, particularly seniors are eligible for the program. Currently, only 65% of eligible Minnesotans and 44% of eligible seniors receive food support benefits. Minnesota’s fifth and eighth Congressional Districts (which includes Duluth) have the highest rates of food insecurity, with both districts containing approximately 96,000 Minnesotans who are food-insecure. St. Louis County has a food insecurity rate of 13% or 27,110 individuals. Thirty-eight percent of St. Louis County’s food insecure individuals are NOT eligible for Federal Nutrition Assistance.

Statewide outreach includes:

☑ More than 20 agencies, which are Food and Nutrition Service grant recipients and are part of Minnesota’s formal state outreach plan.

- ☒ Recruitment of local partners to conduct outreach.
- ☒ Coordination between the Minnesota Department of Human Services and counties to provide infrastructure for material updates, supplies, training and communications.
- ☒ Free nutrition education materials and classes (SNAP-Education) through the University of Minnesota Extension and Minnesota Chippewa Tribe to help SNAP participants make good purchasing choices and stretch their food dollars.

### **Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank**

Second Harvest is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organizations and the sole distributor of surplus food products to over 120 charitable food programs, including our region’s soup kitchens, food shelves and shelters. As a food bank, their primary role is to provide food to the front-line charitable agencies that offer meals to the hungry. In addition, they provide food to over 1,000 people per month as part of their own direct service programming.

As part of Feeding America, Second Harvest rescues food and non-food items from national and regional manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, restaurateurs and growers. These products are then distributed to agencies and people in need throughout their service region.

In NE Minnesota/NW Wisconsin:

- 15% or 49,342 people, live in poverty;
- 12% of people are food insecure meaning they don't have access at all times to enough food to live a healthy, active life;
- 16% of children are food insecure;
- 30% of those receiving food from food shelves are children;
- Food shelf use has increased 70% since 2008;
- Food shelf use among children has increased 19% since 2008;
- Food shelf use among seniors has nearly quadrupled the last 5 years.

### **Churches United in Ministry’s Emergency Food Shelves**

The food shelf provides a five-day food order for people without food or the resources to buy food and advocacy services connecting people to community resources (e.g. shelter, medical care, children’s services, employment, clothing, and emergency monies). Staff, along with approximately 100 volunteers, distributes 260,000 pounds of food annually. An average of 570 households receive emergency food each month; roughly 35% of those fed are children. People using the food shelves have access to an advocate who provides information and referral service and short-term counseling

### **Damiano Center**

The Damiano Center operates the largest on-site meal program in the city of Duluth serving 7 hot meals each week, plus a continental breakfast 5 days a week. In 2012, the Soup Kitchen served 124,000 meals to people in need using salvaged food.

### **Union Gospel Mission**



Located in the heart of downtown Duluth, the Mission provides a free on-site meal program. 80,000 meals were served in 2014. They also provide a food shelf program, with a 21 meal per person food box, with a 7-day supply. 500 households were served in 2014 through the food shelf.

### **Other Area Food Banks**

Fruit of the Vine Food Shelf

Living Waters Food Shelf

Salvation Army Food Shelf – Duluth

### **WIC – Women, Infants, and Children**

The mission of WIC is to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating, and referrals to health care. WIC accepts women, infants, and children who are at or below 185% of poverty. They receive a three-month voucher when they make an appointment. WIC has presumptive eligibility up to 275% when they sign up for medical assistance or Minnesota Care within two weeks.

Automatic Qualifiers for the WIC Program:

- Head Start
- Minnesota Care/Medical Assistance
- Food Stamps
- Reduced or Free School Lunch
- MFIP
- Fuel Assistance
- SSI-Client
- Ready Work

The average monthly YTD enrollment for St. Louis County in 2015 was 4,159.

So far this year, 126 children enrolled in Head Start are receiving WIC services.

### **Housing**

Access to safe and affordable homes builds the foundation for all communities. As Minnesota's economy grows stronger, even working Minnesotans often lack good housing options, and aging homes create health and energy concerns. In St. Louis County, there are about 60,414 owner and 24,369 renter households. More than 53% of those homes are at least 50 years old.

For 24% of owners and 56% of renters in St. Louis County, housing consumes 30% or more of their household income, often at the sacrifice of other basic needs like food and medicine. Saving for education or emergencies often becomes impossible, especially for lowest-income households.

In St. Louis County, 29% of households are renters. Recent data for Northeastern Minnesota shows that renter incomes have fallen by 10%, while rents have risen by 16% since 2000. There are now 33 affordable units available for every 100 extremely low-income renters in St. Louis County. The county ranks 79 out of the state's 87 counties for the most units affordable and available to this income group.

In St. Louis County, approximately 8% of homeowners and 29% of renters pay at least half of their income on housing.

The median sale price for homes (excluding foreclosures) was \$139,195 in 2014 in the county. Since 2006, median home prices have decreased by 4%, after adjusting for inflation.

From 2005-2013, there were 3,781 foreclosures in St. Louis County. Statewide, 3.1% of primary mortgages were delinquent by 60-plus days in early 2014, compared to an average of 1.7% from 1979 to 2004.

Minnesota has the nation's largest racial homeownership gap. In St. Louis County 71% of households, own a home, with white, non-Hispanic households accounting for 73%.

### **HUD Housing**

Section 8 Rental Housing Assistance is a program that makes market rate rental housing affordable for low-income families. Program participants pay a minimum of 30% of their monthly-adjusted income for rent and utilities. The current waiting list for Section 8 housing is 24 months.

In 2010, Duluth had the highest level of renters paying more than 30% of their income for housing of any of the major Minnesota metros. An alarming 56% of renters in the Duluth metropolitan area fell into this category. When families pay even 30% of their income for housing, housing is considered unaffordable. Families then often must choose between paying for their housing and other needs such as food, medications, and transportation.

Unfortunately, the Duluth area, like the state of MN as a whole, has seen a marked increase in both the number of homeless people and the number of foreclosures since the middle of the decade. There were 698 foreclosures in Duluth in 2010, up from 260 in the year 2005.

### **Homeless Count**

Each night in Duluth, as many as 300 homeless men, women and children seek refuge in emergency shelters, battered women's shelters and transitional housing facilities. Currently 5 organizations provide emergency shelter and services. They provide 125+ beds available on any given night for the homeless. There are 7 transitional housing agencies providing 174 beds. Agencies that provide housing and supportive services for homeless persons assist more than 1,500 homeless persons each year in Duluth.

St. Louis County and the city of Duluth initiated the plan in 2005 to end homelessness. A diverse group was assembled to create the End Homelessness in Ten Committee (EHIT). Members of EHIT represented urban and rural areas, private and public sectors and a wide range of disciplines, including mental health, chemical dependency, human services, youth programs, anti-poverty agencies, domestic violence, employment and training, housing developers, school corrections, homeless shelters and services, and the faith community. Eight members of the committee experienced homelessness first-hand or have been part of the safety net for relatives and friends who have become homeless.

St. Louis County Significant Findings:

- 40% of homeless persons are children, with an average age of 7 years.

- 71% of the homeless adults interviewed had been discharged from a correctional or human service facility within the past year.
- 27% of homeless adults meet the definition of chronically homeless (compared to 5-10% national estimates).
- 38% of homeless women are fleeing abuse.
- 80% of homeless adults report a serious or chronic disability that limits work or daily living skills.
- The vast majority (80%) of homeless adults have been Minnesota residents for three or more years, with nearly 40% having lived in the state longer than 20 years.
- Veterans and people of color are disproportionately represented among the homeless. 45% of Duluth's homeless population is white, while African Americans make up 25% and American Indians or Alaska Natives make up 17% of this group.
- In the six months preceding the survey, homeless individuals had 339 visits to hospital emergency rooms in St. Louis County.

In the 2016-2017 school year to date, Duluth Head Start has served a total of 30 children experiencing homelessness. Duluth Public Schools are predicting this academic year will see more homeless kids than it did last year.

### **Foster Care**

During the 2016-2017 school year so far, there have been 29 Head Start children in Foster Care.

There is currently a severe shortage of qualified foster care placements in St. Louis County. According to the Duluth News-Tribune, there are 500 children living in out-of-home foster placements at any given time. This figure is up by 25% in just five years. However, there are only about 200 registered foster parents in the county. Many of those are assigned a specific child because they are related.

The goal of the Foster Care system is to keep children in their communities, near family and their home school district, and whenever possible, to keep siblings together.

According to Jessie Schunk, Professional Development Coordinator for St. Louis County Child Foster Care, the demand for foster care is up because more young parents are experiencing more problems – often related to alcohol and drugs, which lead to financial and behavioral crisis and an inability to care for their children.

Northstar Care for Children, a new program launched January 1, 2015 throughout the state, is a unified benefit program designed to reduce the length of time children spend in foster care by finding them families through adoption or legal guardianship. The program hopes to see more children leave foster care more quickly and become part of permanent families.

### **Early Childhood Screening**

Early childhood screening is required for kindergarten entrance, but screening at age 3 or 4 provides more benefit to children and the schools who will receive them. Efforts to screen children at a younger age are improving; 4 of 5 children screened across the state in 2010 were under 5 years of age.

### **Child Care Needs**

- An estimated 76 percent of Minnesota families will use childcare while they work.

- In 2010 childcare problems prevented 12 percent of parents from taking or keeping a job.
- Families earning low incomes devote 29% of their income to childcare costs.
- Nearly a third of families report they use “whatever child care arrangement they could get” in order to work. This is up from 21 percent in 1999. Families earning low incomes are more likely to describe their childcare arrangement this way (35 percent).
- In 2010, 29 percent of families surveyed were not able to find childcare in their preferred area; 13% were not able to find quality childcare; and 25% encountered problems paying for childcare.

**EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION**

ECFE is a program providing information and support for parents and their young children (from birth through age 3), with classes offered at Stowe, Piedmont, Lester Park and Washington Center. A sliding fee is paid determined by the family income however; no one is turned away for inability to pay. Families are welcome to join at any time.

**Infant and Toddler and Preschool Programs (0-5 yrs)**

According to Childcare and Referral, there are 169 childcare providers in Duluth and 20 centers.

**TANF/MNFIP recipients**

A family of three — a parent with two children — with no other income receives \$532 per month in financial assistance and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits of \$446. That adds up to \$978, 58% of the poverty level of \$1,674 for a family of three. When parents work, and earnings increase, MFIP assistance phases out.

South St. Louis County provides cash services to families under 4 separate programs. SNAP and health care may also be benefits included in these numbers, as they are a part of the benefit set when people apply for cash assistance.

This year 28.85% of Head Start children are on MFIP or SSI.

**Head Start Enrolled Children and Families**

**Recruitment Area**

The Duluth Head Start program serves Minnesota resident families of birth to four-year-old children living within the Duluth city limits or enrolled in a childcare situation within the city limits. Our recruitment area and service area are the same, the Duluth city limits.

**Center Location**

<b>CURRENT PROGRAM INFORMATION FOR DULUTH HEAD START</b>	
<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Site Address</b>
Barnes Early Childhood Center	2102 N. Blackman Avenue, Duluth, MN 55811
Homecroft Elementary School	4784 Howard Gnesen Rd, Duluth, MN 55803

Laura MacArthur Elementary	727 North Central Avenue Duluth, MN 55807
Lester Park Elementary School	5300 Glenwood Street Duluth, MN 55804
Myers-Wilkins	1027 N 8 <sup>th</sup> Avenue E. Duluth, MN 55805
Piedmont Elementary	2827 Chambersburg Avenue, Duluth, MN 55811
Stowe Elementary School	715-101st Avenue West, Duluth, MN 55808
Washington Center (FIT)	310 N 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue West, Duluth, MN 55806
YWCA Childcare Collaboration- Spirit Valley	411 North 57th Avenue West Duluth, MN 55807

**Number and Location of Currently Enrolled Children**

Barnes	MacArthur	Myers Wilkins	Piedmont	Stowe	YWCA	FIT	Homecroft	Lester Park
27	45	53	44	2	10	7	19	16

**Ages of HS Children at enrollment (Includes Those Who Have Left the Program During the Year)**

3	4	5 & Older	Males	Females
77	220	0	131	165

**Tribal/Racial/ Composition of Enrolled Children**

Race/Ethnicity	Percent 14-15	Percent 15-16	Percent 16-17	Percent 17-18
American Indian	8.7	7.36	7.4	6.37
Asian/Pacific Island	1.1	.76	.4	.33
Black/African American	9.1	10.85	16	16.10
White	53.5	63.06	53.6	53.69
Multi Racial	27.3	24.81	22.2	18.79
Unspecified/Other	.3	1.16	.4	.33

## **Attendance/Waiting Lists/Over-Income Children**

### **Average Daily Attendance**

September	October	November	December	January	February
93.46%	90.19%	89.32%	83.84%	85.21%	85.93%

Our average attendance for these 6 months of data is 87.72 %

### **Parent Involvement**

Parent involvement is and always has been part of Head Start's success. We believe parent involvement in Head Start is the beginning of a parent's advocacy for their children throughout their school careers. In Duluth, parents can choose to serve on the Policy Council, a decision-making board made up of current and former Head Start parents and community members. The majority of Policy Council members are elected representatives from parent committees formed at all Head Start building sites, our childcare collaborations and Families in Transition. Policy Council, along with the ISD 709 School Board, our Governing Board, makes up the decision making body of Duluth Head Start.

Parents participate in their child's education in number of other ways as well. Here are a few examples: home visits, conferences, parent and family events, Head Start service area committees, national, state and local community advocacy and involvement, ensuring their child's regular attendance and supporting their child's health and development by all they do at home to support school readiness and success.

### **Head Start and Early Head Start Parent and Family Engagement**

As research suggests, parents and family members are more likely to become engaged in their young child's development and learning when they have positive and trusting relationships with those who support them.<sup>1</sup> In Head Start and Early Head Start, these relationships focus on goals that families develop with the support of program leadership, staff, and engaged community partners. These goal-directed relationships are part of the two-generational approach of working with children and adult family members and distinguish Head Start and Early Head Start from other early childhood initiatives. They are most likely to take root within programs that take intentional steps to promote parent and family engagement.

Families play a critical role in helping their children to prepare for school and a lifetime of academic success. Agencies are required to consult with parents in establishing school readiness goals (45 CFR 1307.3 (b) (1) (iii), as amended). It matters when programs engage parents and families in their children's development and learning. In fact, research indicates that:

- Children with supportive home learning environments show increased literacy development, better peer interactions, fewer behavior problems, and more motivation and persistence during learning activities.<sup>2</sup>
- Among the youngest children, daily parent-child reading from infancy prompts cognitive skills as well as early vocabulary gains that lead to more reading and vocabulary growth<sup>3</sup>, a pattern of growth that has been compared to a snowball.
- Continued family engagement is important through the school years. Longitudinal studies of low-income children show that high family involvement offsets the risks of children growing up in low-income households and in households with low parent education.<sup>4</sup>

The launch of the PFCE Framework marks the beginning of a new wave of technical assistance resources that will be made available to programs in the coming year through the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. The PFCE Framework can be used in program-wide strategic planning, program design and management, systems of continuous improvement, professional development for staff, and with governing bodies and parent groups. It can be used to help improve program services or to inform community partners about Head Start parent and family engagement goals and the importance of those goals for school readiness. The PFCE Framework is intended to inspire a renewed spirit of collaboration with families and community partners as programs identify and take next steps to engage parents, families, and the community to achieve better outcomes for children and families.

**Duluth Head Start Staff**

<b>Staff Ethnicity &amp; Education</b>	17-18
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	24
Hispanic/Latino	2
<b>Staff Race</b>	
White	24
Tribal Composition	0
<b>Languages spoken</b>	
English	24
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	
Advanced Degree	
Director/HB Supervisor	1
Coordinators	3
Family Advocates	2
Teachers	5
Baccalaureate Degree	
Coordinators	1
Home Visitors	2
Teachers	4
Assistant Teachers	10
Associates Degree	
Assistant Teachers	4

**Duluth Preschool**  
**2017-2018 Mid-Year Parent Survey**  
**January 2018**

***Each parent who completes the survey will be eligible to win  
one of four \$25.00 Super One Gift Cards!***

1. Do you feel comfortable approaching your child's teacher with problems or concerns?
  - Yes = 82
  - Absolutely = 8
  - Yes, she is always quick to respond to questions.
  - Definitely, yes.
  - Absolutely – our teachers are open and friendly, making them approachable.
  - Yes – totally wonderful teacher.
  - Yes, I feel very comfortable with my son's teacher as she has been working with us to improve his behavior when he does have issues/problems (very rare).
  - Yes, she is amazing!
  - Yes, I do. They are very inviting.
  - Absolutely. Very approachable.
  - Yes, I feel comfortable talking to the teacher about problems and concerns.
  - Yes, they are all very easy to come to.
  - Yes, for sure.
  - Absolutely! They are always ready for conversation and listen when talked to.
  - Yes, I feel comfortable.
  - Yes, you're doing a great job.
  - Yes, staff is very friendly, polite and kind.
  - Yes, mostly. E-mails work best.
  - Yes, of course!
  - Yes! She also responds very quickly to e-mails.
  - Yes, have done so a few times.
  - Miss Lisa is very honest and helpful! We just love her! She is amazing! Our son, Brandon, looks forward to sharing his days with her and the class helpers.
  - I feel very comfortable approaching my child's teachers with anything.
  - Yes, she is very warm and welcoming.
  - Yes, absolutely. The teachers at Stowe have always been wonderful.
  - Yes, most definitely!
  - Absolutely. Brea boomer is very easy to talk to.
  - Yes, of course!
  - Yes, the best part about my child's teacher.
  - Yes, completely.



- Yes, very much so!
- Yes, very comfortable asking Brea what my child is good at and what she needs to work on.
- Yes, Miss Maggie is awesome.
- Yes, have no problems talking to Miss Lisa. She's great!
- Yes, most definitely!
- Always – they're the best!
- Definitely
- Sometimes
- Yes, it is very easy to communicate with the staff.
- Yes. Tina and others seem to
- Yes, genuinely care about my child.
- Absolutely. Miss Emily is very approachable.
- Yes. Easygoing staff.
- Yes. They are very understanding.
- Yes, I feel comfortable.
- One of my only supportive systems in Duluth!!
- Yes, she even gave a phone number to contact her.

If not, what could we improve?

- If there was any way to make pick up time a time for a quick check-in, it would be nice – or some type of weekly, individualized checklist/communication sheet would be nice and manageable (hopefully) for staff – I know how busy they are! I suppose via e-mail – there is no time or place for it during pick up.
- She doesn't seem approachable, almost like I'm looked at a certain way because I'm a younger parent.
- Her speech. I want her to learn skills to talk more clearly. Referred to Help Me Grow and in the evaluation process.

2. Do you feel comfortable talking with your child's teacher about your child's progress?

- Yes = 93
- Absolutely!
- Yes, she knows what needs work and what he is excelling at.
- Yes. They/she informs me of my child's progress and strengths/weaknesses.
- Yes, absolutely.
- Yes, they are open and understanding.
- Yes, I feel comfortable.
- Absolutely
- Yes, for sure.
- Yes, very approachable.
- I am sure we will (only two weeks).

- Yes. If I ever have any questions on our child's learning, we chat with the teacher and come up with solutions/improvements.
- Yes, for the most part.
- Yes. Have done so a few times.
- Yes, all the time.
- Absolutely. They are able to give good feedback, what could help and what's been helping.
- I feel comfortable talking with my child's teachers about his progress.
- Yes, they make sure that if we haven't asked, they tell us.
- Yes, we chat quite frequently about things she is going through at home and school.
- Yes, she does an excellent job on how my daughter does and also what my daughter needs to improve.
- Yes, I call her almost every day.
- Yes, as the year goes on, I've seen several changes in my child's progress with school. He loves to learn and is very interactive with others.
- Yes, always!
- Definitely
- Absolutely! Even when picking our son up from school, if I have any questions, they always share if he has been super good, or even if there have been any problems (he had a few days of not listening well, or being a little rough when he first started school). He was not used to playing with same-age children.
- Yes, most definitely!
- Yes, very easy to talk to.
- Always – they're the best!
- Definitely
- Yes, very much so!
- Yes. They are open to constructive criticism.
- Yes, I do.
- Yes. Bella's teacher is very good with Bella and understands her needs.
- Superbly
- Yes, I feel comfortable. Progress is everything.
- Yes, she is great with children.

If not, what could we improve?

- Always could put up a sheet each week of children's strong and weak suit for that week.
- I sometimes feel that since he is on an IEP, he is held to a lower standard academically.
- Watching his speech and getting a speech teacher involved.
- Her counting out numbers more clearly and her explaining words more clearly.

3. I know my child's teacher has the best interests of my child in mind and helps my child master new skills.

- Yes = 78
- Yes, she helps. My child's teacher helps my child master new skills every school day!
- Absolutely!
- I do.
- Definitely, yes!
- Izzibella has shown lots of improvement in her writing her name, knowing alphabet and numbers.
- Yes, my son is always coming home with new information.
- Agree
- Yep! She has grown so much in 1 ½ years in preschool.
- Yes, true.
- Yes, my child has made great improvements.
- Yes, the teachers in her class are always creating an environment for learning. My child is often coming home with new skills and enjoys practicing them. The sheet at conferences that show where my child is at and what she will be improving on as well as goals to meet are also helpful for her emotional and educational development.
- Yes, 100%
- Yes, of course.
- Absolutely. Concern for all children's best interests is a huge bonus in this class.
- Yes, she has my son's best interests in mind.
- Yes, she is great with children.
- I hope so! My daughter is happy at school and likes her teachers, so I believe they are doing a good job keeping her interests in mind. I am not seeing a lot of evidence of new skills in paper form, but trust skills are being developed.
- Definitely
- Yes, he has an outstanding team of teachers.
- Definitely!
- Yes, we are very pleased with his teacher.
- Yes, very much.
- Absolutely
- Yes, he comes homes each week with a new skill.
- Definitely. He likes making things with teacher, Jeff.
- For sure.
- Yes. Our child comes home telling us new activities she has tried/learned. She especially LOVED using snow shoes outside!
- Yes – we've seen our daughter improve at zipping her coat, drawing people, and new things we hadn't introduced.
- Yes. My child has improved socially and that is wonderful.
- Yes, I know my child's teachers have his best interest in mind.

- Correct
- Yes, he is starting to learn about things besides colors, shapes and letters. He is also mastering at writing his name!
- Yes. Our child loves to go to school to learn and play, of course, which we know is part of learning.
- Very true
- Yes, I like how the children get to paint.
- Yes, and she's very good at it!
- Yes, she is always so great with all the kids.
- Yes, my daughter has improved a ton and is getting better every day.
- Yes, every time I talk to her, it's always positive feedback.
- Yes, my child is in special ed. He needs extra help.
- Yes, and the helpers are amazing.
- Absolutely! Miss Lisa has helped our 3-year-old little boy (tough age) to be calmer, and about personal space. Also to not say, "I can't," but "I can try." We love this. So helpful!
- Yes, most definitely!
- She's awesome!
- No doubt about it. She is great!
- Always – learn, learn, learn.
- Definitely
- Absolutely he's improved and learned a lot.
- I believe she does.
- Very great skills.
- Yes, she encourages Bella to try new skills and write her name and learn colors.
- My children have grown so much with Ms. Laurie in our lives.

If not, what could we improve?

- Brief comments or check ins once a week would be appreciated, or a communication sheet, like I mentioned above. Often kids with more immediate needs – the parents are regularly connecting with staff. Even little updates or comments about behavior/progress is appreciated.
- Maybe send home the letters you're working on so we can focus on that exact letter as well.
- Her speech.

4. My child is eager to go to school and has a positive view of his/her teachers.

- Yes = 52
- Yes, my son is very upset the days he can't go to school.
- Yes, Caleb loves Miss Tracy!
- My child cries to go to school on days when there's no school; especially on weekends.
- Yes! She counts down the days on the weekend to get back to school.

- Izzibella is always excited about going to school. The day her teacher isn't there, Izzibella is always wondering if she will get to see her the next day.
- Yes! My daughter loves school and her teachers.
- Yes, loves going to school and seeing his teacher.
- Always! He loves going to school.
- My child adores her teachers and all friends.
- Yes, always.
- Yes, he loves going to school.
- My daughter loves school. She would attend on the weekend, if she could.
- Absolutely!
- Yes, my son loves to go to school.
- I would believe so.
- Yes, usually always.
- Yes. She loves school and her teachers are safe people – she's comfortable with them.
- No, but has nothing to do with his teacher/school.
- She is.
- She does.
- He loves school and is always ready to share about what he did each day, so, yes!
- Absolutely – he loves it and looks up to all of his teachers!
- Oh, yeah.
- Yes – sometimes he wants to stay at home, but is easy to convince to go to school.
- Yes, he really enjoys going.
- Yes! He always has great things to say about what he's learning.
- Most of the time.
- Yes, he loves school.
- Sometimes
- Yes! She loves going to school, learning, and playing with all her friends! She has also developed a great relationship with her teachers and likes the routine she has acquired!
- Yes. It took some time, but now – 4 months in – our daughter looks forward to going to school.
- Yes. He talks about Jeff often.
- Yes, Aayla looks forward to school every day.
- Not so much – but enjoys his teachers.
- Yes, very much!
- Still not loving school, but is fine once there.
- Always
- Most often.
- Yes, my child is eager to go to school and he adores his teachers.
- My son loves school every day and always has amazing things to say about his teachers.
- She loves school.

- My child adores his teachers.
- Absolutely. Daily when we pick her up, she asks when she will go again.
- Yes! He always gets excited when we pull into the parking lot. Doesn't cry anymore when we leave.
- Most of the time, my child is eager to go to school. My child has a positive view of the teachers all of the time.
- Yes. She looks forward to seeing her teacher/s.
- Very much so.
- Yes, she does!! She is always excited to go to class and also talks about Ms. Boomer at home.
- Yes, my son loves school and always talks positive about his teacher. His teacher is the best!
- Liyah loves going to school and always has something nice to say about her teacher! I'm glad that my child is in her class.
- Absolutely. My daughter loves her teacher.
- Yes, he loves his teachers.
- He really likes his teachers and the aides.
- The teachers have really helped my daughter love school, and now she loves going to school.
- Most days.
- Yes, she loves school and teachers and friends.
- Yes, very much.
- Yes, my children do not like missing any days even when they are sick.
- Absolutely! Our son would take Miss Lisa home if he could. He just adores her! Brandon loves to learn and play with his classmates. He is so excited about school, that he gets bummed out on non-school days.
- Definitely
- Yes, he loves his class and teacher.
- My child very much looks forward to school. He will ask when he gets to go back on the weekends.
- Yes, most definitely!
- No. He likes home schooling.
- Very excited.
- He loves his teacher, but still working on the eagerness for school. He loves his mom!
- Very much, yes!
- Always – he loves school.
- Yes, he enjoys his teachers!
- Yes and yes. Rylee loves her teachers and never wants to miss school.
- He looks forward to going to school.
- Loves school and all teachers.
- Usually he is eager to go, but he says he is bored a lot. He really enjoys his teachers.
- He never likes school, but he says he loves his teachers.

- Bella loves school and all her new friends.
- Definitely excited to see her.
- Yes, my child loves school.
- Yes, my child loves Judy.
- Yes, he loves his teacher.
- My daughter love school, she would attend on the weekend, if she could.
- Yes, she is always asking when it's school time.

If not, what could we improve?

- Nothing. Sometimes her anxiety gets her.
- Maybe try some more challenging activities.

5. Has the staff helped you better communicate with your child and understand their behavior?

If yes, how?

- Yes = 9
- They have given me resources on how to work on learning and behaviors at home.
- Somewhat. It certainly has given Caleb more opportunity to communicate. His having a school day of his own to share with us has been fun.
- Yes, they talk with both myself and my child.
- Being able to volunteer in class has helped.
- Yes! The teacher helps me see and understand my child's behavior if my child is ot doing eye contact when talking.
- By giving us tips on what they teach in the classroom.
- Yes, she does express herself in new ways.
- I do not normally have behavior issues with my daughter.
- They are great about communicating with my ex and I as we have shared custody – I greatly appreciate their understanding of our situation.
- Yes. They teach how to solve problems and how to put things into words so my child can communicate without whining/crying.
- Vienna was sad one day, and we communicated with the teacher about the reasons for it.
- Yes. Example – visual schedule.
- I think we have worked well together in this area.
- Yes, they have helped her so much with her speech, so each day her words get clearer.
- Just transitioned to this stage. In progress.
- Not really. My child and I have a pretty understandable relationship.
- They offer different parent groups to be a part of to learn about development and behavior.
- We are on the same page, and it is going great.
- Only talked about during conferences; otherwise, no.
- Definitely

- For the most part, yes. They send home different papers on behaviors, provide family nights with helpful topics.
- Yes, because my son has meltdowns. Staff has been great at explaining the cause of the meltdowns and what they did to help stop the meltdown.
- Not really.
- Yes, his teacher and I always have little check ins and talks. My child has some mental health struggles, and I love how Miss Becky tries and helps.
- They keep us informed.
- No
- Yes, during conferences we go over where they are at and how they can improve.
- Yes. Info about child development for parents is appreciated.
- Yes. Keeping communication open.
- Yes. My child used to be “standoffish,” but since starting school and working with teachers, she’s doing amazing!
- The informational handouts have been great, especially behavioral stages through the years.
- Yes, explaining what happened before behaviors and how the situation was resolved.
- We are on the same page with the teacher.
- Yes. We appreciate the occasional literature on child development issues.
- N/A. I’m sure they would, if needed.
- Yes. We have been able to talk with Miss Becky at conferences about where Aayla is academically and socially to help us better decide when she should start kindergarten.
- Yes. Worked with me on separation anxiety.
- Yes, they have helped me better communicate with my child by answering and addressing my concerns for my child.
- No
- Yes, speech eval in progress
- N/a. I haven’t asked.
- Yes, my son is very shy and soft-spoken. We have been working on ways to boost his confidence.
- Yes. Assistance with separation anxiety.
- Yes, she has brought up concerns and helped me contact the correct people to help.
- Not yet.
- We are working on this.
- Yes. With getting notes and feedback on what he does at school, helps us on how to do activities at home.
- My son is pretty shy, and his teacher has been awesome with getting him to socialize more and gets him to engage in activities.
- Absolutely, yes. They have helped so much in his development so we can talk to each other!
- I understand my child well, but I have no doubts the staff would help me understand.



- Yes. Aria's sentences have become so much clearer, as well as her ability to calm herself at the proper time.
- Talk to me right away a new behavior is seen.
- Yes, by keeping me posted about how my child behaves in school and that I can address the problem by talking to my child at home.
- The Special Ed has really helped when they evaluated him and we had the meeting.
- Yes, to understand all kids are different.
- Understanding their wants.
- Yes, by modeling the behavior at school, she listens a little better, but mostly she has routine.
- Yes, we have brainstormed together and discussed what each of us has found to work well.
- By letting me know if something is normal or not, or if they have any tips on handling a situation, they'll share those.
- Neutral. I feel that we communicate well.
- I feel like I already have a good understanding, so I do not feel there was a difference, nor do I feel it was needed.
- Yes, we continue to keep in contact and inform each other of behaviors/rewards at home and school. E-mailed has helped as well.
- Absolutely! With our 3-year-old. Miss Lisa helped with Brandon's "I can't" attitude to "I can try." Also with personal space (will working on this) and listening.
- Not really. We communicate well now.
- Yes! Giving us information daily about classroom activities helps a lot so we can talk with our son. Since he is unable to tell us what he's doing in class, it is so helpful to have.
- Yes, have shared what they do at school and what we should possibly work at home on.
- No, but I don't think they should have to fill that role.
- Yes, we all work as a team to help try to figure out our daughter's needs. My child has special needs.
- Yes, with the help of visual aids, he points and asks for what he would like.
- Yes, introducing new resources.
- Yes, made a chart and suggestions. When she didn't know the answer, she got a second opinion.
- Yes, very nice.
- Yes, the newsletters have helpful ideas for communication.
- Yes, although I am very involved, she has worked with young children for a long time and at times, has tips that have helped with others in the past.
- So far, his behavior is great, to my knowledge.
- Yes – through the Special Education program, I've seen numerous improvements in her daily life.
- He comes home always happy. Tells me what he did at school, who helped him, who played with him. If he went outside. He talks his momma's ear off.
- Yes, talk about it at conferences.

- Yes, I was referred to Krista and had a nice, informational phone conversation. Emerey has significantly improved in school.
- Yes, when asking about our son being loud, she said he is fine at school, but boys have a harder time keeping their voices down than girls.
- Not necessarily – we get those resources elsewhere at his therapy, etc.
- Yes, with the monthly newsletter. Gives us an idea on what the class is doing each day so we can discuss at home.
- Yes. My child is shy and quiet. Her teachers have helped me encourage play dates/making friends, etc.
- Yes. We have made a notebook into a communication log so I know what's going on.
- They tell me how to speak to him and give great tips on how to communicate.
- Bella's speech has improved and communication is much better.
- Kind of, but me and her have a great understanding, but the teacher does help in some ways.
- She treats my kids like humans and accommodates their different personalities and learning skills.
- Yes, I have learned a lot about where my child is developmentally and how well he understands me.
- Yes, staff have been supportive and understanding to personal struggles and weaknesses. Staff has given educated advice from their own experience and knowledge that has been helpful.
- Yes, with my children's disagreements.
- Yes, knowing when and how to tend to his different cries.  
Yes, they talk with both myself and my child.
- Yes, they have also given him the extra services he needs to succeed.

6. Has the staff been able to help you meet your family's needs or goals?

(Staff includes: Teachers, Paras, Family Advocates, Minnesota Reading Corps Members, Nurse)

If so, how?

- Yes = 6
- Teachers give ideas and ways to work on information at home.
- Yes, they've helped with medical education, reading and new methods or ways to teach my son and nieces.
- Caleb is well adjusted and enjoys school. He is thriving, so, yes!
- Head Start has provided me and my child with many helpful resources.
- Yes! At the beginning of the year, the teachers sat down with us and wrote down a list of our goals for our daughter. So far, she has met every single one.
- By being able to answer my questions.
- They work great with my daughter each day, and working with her to learn new skills including socialization.
- Socializing our child.

- Yes, they have given great ideas to do things with my kids.
- By talking about life and goals, by talking about what I want in life or how to make the goals happen, and on how to better my life to make my child's better.
- Yes, my daughter has improved a ton on her IEP goals.
- Yes, academics have grown, social-emotional has grown, and she has become a better problem solver.
- Yes, nurse, PT, OT, and para have been working together to meet my child's needs and help her make advancements.
- Our needs were for him to have a positive school experience, and he has.
- Yes, this year has been a huge improvement with lunch program and family advocate.
- Yes, the family advocate was in contact with us after we had a new baby, and we received a baby box.
- Yes, helping my kids learn to read, write, handle their emotions.
- Yes, Vienna is learning every day!
- By answering questions we have and just learning our children.
- Yes, with her letters, her name.
- Yes. We wanted our son to learn routines, make friends, and try new things. He does all of these in his class.
- Yes. Name writing, sharing, counting, alphabet, etc.
- Yes, the love to learn and socialize which is why we send them.
- Yes. Miss Toscano has given us tips for helping our daughter transition. Family advocate, Jen, has given us a great deal of help with our family transition. Sophia always talks about Miss Tracy! Every other helper I have seen in the classroom has been friendly and professional, helping Sophia and I (and her mom) adjust to school.
- Good communication, feedback.
- Yes, Elijah is recognizing letters in his name now.
- Yes, we are all on the same page with needs and goals.
- Yes. I love that she has integrated learning and social time with kids her age instead of just day care. They do great with learning songs, books, different foods, social skills, and acceptance of others!
- Yes, they are very informative throughout the year.
- Yes, they have reached out, kept me informed on my child's needs and progress.
- Not totally applicable because we've not requested anything additional; however, our goal to have quality family time happened at The Children's Museum Family Night.
- Yes. Smooth transition to school routine.
- For sure. Have provided many options for families to obtain their goals.
- Yes – by being persistent and with enforcing my child to attempt and reach goals.
- My child used to have a slight letter pronunciation problem, but with the help of all of her teachers, she's doing much better!
- Yes, help with visuals, following IEP.

- We wanted Djuna to become more confident in social settings. She has improved in that area with, of course, still more room for improvement.
- N/A. Again, if needed.
- Put me in touch with mental health professionals. Family nights are great.
- Yes. Aayla seems to be picking up on new skills (like letters and sounds), and she has learned school is fun.
- Yes, they have given me advice and pointed me toward resources in the community.
- Yes. Good communication, family nights, friendly atmosphere.
- Yes, ideas and suggestions.
- Kids Closet.
- Yes, they are very helpful.
- Yes. Our advocate has gone above and beyond for all of our children, finding programs and assistance for our family.
- Yes, setting up the IEP really helps us understand their goals for him at school.
- Yes. Working on speech and other goals. They have done amazing things.
- Yes, family advocate has been especially helpful, helping me get snow pants/boots for the year.
- There hasn't been much need for help yet.
- Processing information and following through with things agreed upon.
- Yes, I have met with the family advocate and talked about getting things done so I can make a future for my kids.
- Liyah is more outgoing. Not so shy that much anymore.
- The school counselor gave us ideas with the teacher.
- Yes, by giving me information on different kinds of help available for families.
- Just helpful getting us readjusted to area and school and what Connor needs.
- The family advocate helped me to sign up for medical insurance and WIC program.
- Yes, many resources have helped us!
- Yes, always willing to give resources.
- Yes, she comes home learning new things and spells and writes her name.
- You guys were great.
- Yes, by discussing different approaches to each goal.
- Yes, they give examples of how to help us meet our goals.
- Neutral.
- Has hit goals, and I would say made, but not sure we ever made a personal goal for her.
- Yes, they have been working on the goal identified at the beginning of the year and we have seen improvement at home.
- Yes, a reward system and reminders have worked the best.
- Brandon is learning more and more every day. He is always telling me about story time and special helpers in the class. I think all goals are on their way to being met, or have already been met! Such an amazing atmosphere!

- Yes, drop off was rough for awhile. Debbie made Emerey feel comfortable, which made me feel at ease.
- Yes, great communication with notebook that goes back and forth as we don't drop off or pick up!
- Lisa and I talked at the home visit about my goals for my son. We have been working on them so we can meet them by the end of the year.
- Yes – we didn't have any major goals. Simple to see improvement.
- Yes, I like how they sent home information on Kids Closet as I never heard about it. It helped me out a lot.
- Yes, and it is greatly appreciated on all the help and ideas we bounce back and forth to one another.
- Yes. Keeping me connected to community events.
- Yes, Cameo is using a lot more words.
- Haven't really set goals that need help being met.
- Yes, goes above.
- Yes! She takes time to come to our home to teach our daughter.
- They call or e-mail me whenever needed.
- Through the teacher, family advocate, and e-mail have been my best communication tool along with short meetings face to face.
- He's doing much better. He has improved so much in the past year. I'm so proud of him and thankful that his teachers are caring and helpful.
- Yes, IEP.
- Definitely. I was having trouble furnishing my home after I left my child's abusive father, and they gave me some info/resources to check out which helped a lot.
- Yes – teacher sets up goals and discussed how my child meets them at conferences. The para always greets with a smile, asks how we are, steps in to help my child. The AmeriCorps staff is providing material to bring home – developing language/reading skills. Also always there to help out my child.
- Yes, my child has become familiar with letters, numbers, patterns, etc.
- Yes. Nothing specific – I just feel like there is a great support network.
- Yes. Communication and one-on-one talking.
- He has certain goals for his IEP, and he has shown good progress for these goals.
- Can't remember what the goals were.
- Bella really likes school and she likes her teacher. Bella's speech is good and she likes the play animals. She enjoys listening to stories.
- Yes, helping with new ways to teach or help her understand things in a way she'll understand
- She asks how she can help me with different resources in the community. Helps me navigate different solutions.
- Classroom staff and family advocates have always been so supportive of me as a parent and Reading Corps member, and they have helped me become a better parent and tutor by setting

great teaching examples. I've learned how to handle children's behaviors better and have a better understanding of children and their behaviors.

- With learning colors and understanding herself. Also with help learning name, etc.
- Yes, they are very helpful. Good resources. Very caring.
- Yes, they have our best interest at heart. Julie even thought of me for a scholarship.

If not, what could we improve?

- Never see the family advocate, nor does she talk with me.
- We haven't really talked about family needs or goals.
- Just keep doing the great job you're doing!
- Yes, just getting son acclimated to a school setting.
- I sometimes wish there was someone to encourage/help Rylee with reading at her level (which is probably high for a preschooler).
- Staying on touch with parents, communication.

7. In what ways have you been able to participate in Duluth Preschool?

88 Home Visit 99 Conference 95 Pick Up and Drop Off

24 Classroom Volunteer 50 Family Night 8 Policy Council 9 Other

What were your experiences like for you? Anything you would change or improve?

- Amazing. For first time parents, all the information is available and everyone is very helpful with the transition.
- That the teachers are very open about what they do with the kids.
- My experience is fun, and I love getting help with my child.
- Always geared toward positivity and growth. Very inclusive.
- Positive.
- The conference was a very new experience, but I loved it, and I can't wait to get deeper involved.
- Everything is excellent.
- Experiences for me were awesome. I'm very appreciative for everything. I wouldn't trade or change anything.
- Keep up the good work!
- Everything is fantastic.
- Everything is good and helpful!
- Great, no complaints.
- They are perfect.
- Good. Staff are very friendly and welcoming!
- They were all good experiences.
- They were very organized.

- Pleasant. Wouldn't really change anything.
- Wonderful
- Home visit was nice at beginning of the year so my child could meet the teacher ahead of time. Conferences went well and the pick up/drop off is going well too.
- Everything was very clear and positive.
- Positive. No recommendations.
- It was a great experience volunteering in classroom
- No – all good experiences
- Very positive.
- Good for the most part. Seems like a judgmental environment.
- Great! Everyone was very friendly, understanding and caring.
- They were all positive!
- We got to meet other parents of kids going through the same transition into school as we are.
- Wonderful! Very nice and understanding teachers!
- Always positive
- The experience is like any other meeting. Getting to know each other is important.
- It feels like a big family. We will miss it next year in kindergarten.
- Welcoming, informational.
- Home visit, volunteering and Family Night were positive. Drop off is almost always positive; initially, it felt hectic, and there was no real communication from staff about my daughter's day/progress/anything. Conferences were very standard focused – would have preferred more information about how my daughter contribute to the classroom community – and just how she behaves as a preschooler. Even preschool conferences are nerve-wracking for parents.
- Positive
- Welcoming
- Very positive experience
- So far, I wouldn't change much of anything. Pride's teachers have been great in too many ways to express.
- I love being able to come in and watch the kids learn and grow!
- We have been so impressed. Everyone is so kind and helpful.
- Great
- The home visit was great to get to know the teachers in advance. My husband enjoyed participating in a field trip, and also family night we all enjoyed. Drop off is great to be able to see our child interact for a few minutes in the morning.
- Very enjoyable.
- We have appreciated the opportunity to participate in our daughter's preschool, when possible. It's clear the staff cares about involving parents in the preschool and about connecting parents.
- All good!
- Conferences were helpful in seeing where Aayla is at and what we can work on with her at home. Pick up/drop off – the kids always seem to enjoy being at school.

- Great
- They have all been great.
- Enjoyed class time and a field trip!
- My experiences in participation are always pleasant.
- All positive. Only concern is the office door being open at times – safety concern for access to unlocking doors.
- Welcoming
- I hope to become more involved. We are new to Head Start.
- Wonderful. No change.
- Everything is satisfactory.
- I think they are doing a fine job.
- We have enjoyed every chance we have gotten to participate with preschool activities. We always look forward to it.
- All very good experiences.
- Wonderful. Just working on trying to better my child and no improvements on my end or their end.
- Very positive experience. My child always appears happy when I come to pick her up.
- Haven't had any bad experiences. Always very informative and helpful.
- Always so welcoming. Children are happy, singing, dancing. Always so joyful.
- Perfect – nothing could change.
- Very good.
- It was all good.
- We love Head Start!
- We love Myers!
- They were good.
- Very friendly and understanding.
- Fun and educational.
- Very informative and positive. I felt like my son is being taken care of really well. I wouldn't change anything.
- Good. Very accommodating.
- I appreciate the family nights – they make the information relevant and make it easy to participate by providing child care and dinner.
- All of the experiences were great!
- Amazing! I was so nervous at first. My first baby in school!! Miss Lisa really helped me relax and has proven it's awesome for Brandon to be in school at 3!!
- Great! The only thing we noticed with the afternoon family night is that it was mostly PM preschool students. Nothing you can do about participation, it was just hard to know if anyone knew our son with being nonverbal and we didn't recognize anyone!
- Everything has been great. Very positive feedback every time.



- Awesome
- Positive
- Everything was great. I would not change anything.
- Very friendly and welcoming! Teachers/paras try to communicate with all the parents about each child. As for us, we have a para that tells us about our daughter's day as well as a communication book.
- We love the home-based school service.
- All experiences were great, very well put together. My kids and I enjoy it very much.
- My experience was great. No, they are doing well.
- Great to see all class students interact with each other and to see teacher work with students.
- Good! They're basic and to the point. I wouldn't change anything.
- It was informative.
- I like meeting with my child's teacher to hear how my child is doing. Their teacher(s) are always very easy to talk to and are able to explain things about my child very well.
- Good experience, very friendly and professional.
- I would love it if Head Start would support some holidays.
- Were great. Only problem was the picking up and dropping off on city bus.
- Very good. My son has an IEP, and I have always left (previous school) feeling defeated, but here they have ideas for improving.

8. Are there factors that have prevented you from being more involved in Duluth Preschool?

6 Transportation 62 Work Schedule 2 Location 16 Childcare

5 Lack of Information/Communication 3 Not interested 16 Other

Do you need assistance with any of these areas?

- No, just hard to when you have a little one to volunteer.
- No, would love to volunteer, but have a 3-year-old at home. Will continue to look for opportunities.
- No, but I am in college so busy schedule
- No, unless someone wants to go to work for me. That would be okay.
- No, I don't.
- Child care – although my toddler has been welcomed in the past – don't quality for Head Start.
- Still looking for employment daytime hours. When that happens, I'll need all day preschool!
- Too busy with school and new beginnings. Can you create more time?
- No, thank you!
- It might be nice to see specific volunteer opportunities – either at the start of the year, or periodically throughout the year.
- Her two older siblings are involved in many after school activities.
- No. Thank you for asking.

- No. I have a 2-year-old and a 10-month-old who doesn't tolerate strangers well.
- My girlfriend works nights, so I generally stay home with our 1 ½-year-old while she sleeps, making being there a task.
- No, I am a very busy person during the week trying to get things done while kids are at school.
- No, pretty good all around.
- Information on family nights that were canceled due to not enough interest. I didn't realize I needed to respond saying we were planning on going.
- I would love to volunteer, but my work schedule is hard to change.
- Short notice on some activities.
- A few weeks' notice would be amazing so I can try to take off work. Same week or week before is not long enough.
- Day cares in the area.
- Only because my boyfriend works, so I don't have daycare for him. It would be nice to get out and meet new people and talk about issues I have that someone else may have.
- To be more informed when and where things are, but will still depend on my schedule as well.
- No. I hope to get more involved soon.
- My children not having transportation to preschool.

9. What would you tell other families about Duluth Preschool? Would you recommend it?

- Would recommend it, and it is a great program to get a child ready and used to a school setting.
- The school has been very accommodating to my child's needs. Has a great curriculum for preschools. Yes, I would and have.
- Yes, I totally would recommend it. It's fun and kids do learn.
- I would highly recommend other families to Duluth Preschool because it can teach them and their kids new things. It can even enhance the skills they already know.
- I do recommend it. Preschool/School Readiness has served Sadie and Caleb very well, and we look forward to having Sydney in the program soon.
- I would highly recommend this program to friends and family. Because of this program, my daughter has grown socially and creatively. She has learned how to share, take turns, and how to voice her feelings.
- I have recommended Duluth Preschool.
- Great program where you know your child is cared for, and they always have your best interests at heart.
- I highly recommend it. My two older children went to School Readiness, and I believe it helped them greatly. They were ready to go to kindergarten, and I feel my son will be so ready to start kindergarten greatly because of this program.
- I would definitely recommend it. I have seen both of my children grow in many ways from it.
- Yes, great program.
- Yes, I would tell other families that it is great, and I would also tell them I highly recommend it.

- I have had two of the three teachers, and they are both wonderful. Yes, I would recommend Duluth Preschool.
- I always tell everyone you might have to come once a week, but it's well worth it.
- Yes, I would recommend it. It has been a great experience for both me and my child. I can watch him grow and learn many new things and he enjoys going.
- I will tell other families that our experience has been wholly positive and has been an excellent start to Vienna's schooling.
- Absolutely
- I love that the teachers are so open to talking about the kids and are so nice. Yes, I would recommend.
- It's a great program that I recommend joining as soon as you can!
- That it has helped my child in so many ways, and, yes, I would recommend it.
- Yes, and I have.
- Very good program, very friendly staff. Teachers show they are genuinely about child. Yes, 100% would recommend.
- The teachers are fantastic, and there is plenty of support and information for anyone who needs it.
- Yes, would recommend it – great, safe learning environment.
- Yes – It gets kids ready for kindergarten. The teacher and para are very warm and welcoming.
- Get your kids into it, if possible!
- Yes!
- This is my fourth child in the preschool program, and I love it!
- It has been a positive experience for my son and our family. It is a great step to help kids adjust for kindergarten.
- I would recommend it, but would let them know that there will be no holidays celebrated.
- I highly recommend Lester Park Elementary for preschool.
- Yes
- The preschool is a great start for your child.
- Great teachers. I like that it is in the same building as the rest of the elementary school grades – kids become comfortable in the location. Kids enjoy the class and learn a lot.
- I would recommend it in every way! All three of my children have attended Lester Park pre-K under Mrs. Toscano, and I am saddened to know this is our final year to be a part of her classroom. She is a wonderful teacher who has chosen/built an amazing staff. Combined, they make an outstanding team. I feel very fortunate that all three of my children have been a part of their lives. The impressions they have made in my children are forever in a positive light. Thank you to all who continue to support this inspiring group!
- The teachers and staff are very friendly and approachable.
- I would recommend it – many learning tools to help transition to kindergarten.
- Yes, I would say it is awesome.

- It's great! I would definitely recommend it. I think it's more than just learning the basics of school . . . it's learning to interact and maintaining a routine.
- Highly!!
- It's a great program. I have recommended it to several families!
- It's a great opportunity for children to learn how a school day goes. They get to make more friends and learn from someone other than a parent.
- Yes, I would recommend having your enrollment be announced earlier. Most preschools in Duluth notify parents in the spring for the next fall if your child has a spot.
- Definitely.
- We are happy with Duluth preschool. The teachers engage our daughter in a variety of hands-on activities both indoors and outdoors, which encourages active learning of new skills and facts about the world. The classroom also promotes the learning of important social skills, and does so with enthusiasm.
- That it's excellent to get your child involved in, even if you don't get a full school year, like us.
- Yes, we would recommend it. The days are shorter, so it seems like it is a good bridge to kindergarten. We are happy that Aayla likes going and that she is learning new things as well as getting to socialize with kids her age and new adults.
- Great – yes.
- The kids love it. They keep the kids active with indoor and outdoor play. I would recommend it.
- My child loves to go and is learning more every day.
- My daughter loves school!
- Yes, and I especially love the full days.
- That it is a great learning environment for little ones before school, and it is in a school setting often where they will go in the future. Adequate/great staff at Homecroft. Yes, I'd recommend.
- Sign up. Very helpful.
- I would recommend Duluth Public Schools. I went to Stowe, Morgan Park, and Denfeld growing up. I enjoyed my time at these schools, and it seems my son is too.
- I would recommend it. Class size at 16 is good for amount of teacher and assistants. I wouldn't want a bigger class. My child is excited to go every day and is learning actively.
- Yes, I think it's great for the kids.
- How my daughter is learning a lot, and that I see her grow a little more after school.
- Yes, 100%. I would tell people that everyone at the school really cares about not only the student, but the whole family.
- I would definitely recommend. I love the outside time they get, especially.
- We would recommend it to anyone that asked. Has really been a good thing for our family, and I think anyone would enjoy it for their child.
- That they have helped my son progress in leaps and bounds and I'm forever grateful. Yes.

- This is an excellent environment to send your child. My child's social skills have improved tremendously.
- Yes, I would.
- The teachers are very good at making sure the child(ren) learn what they need to at a pace that is good for them and much more. I would, indeed!
- Yes, the teachers are great. The improvements my child has made are tremendous.
- I would recommend.
- I would tell them Laura MacArthur pre-K is great and my child was always happy to go to school. She loved it!
- Yes, my son loved it and learned a lot.
- I would tell other families that Duluth Preschool is a great school. Yes, I would recommend it.
- That it's awesome, we like it, and I would recommend it.
- I have recommended it as I have been pleasantly surprised. My opinion about the Duluth School district as a whole is poor, but the preschool program has exceeded my expectations – mostly due to the teachers.
- I would say that my child loves it, and our family has been pleased with every interaction with staff. Yes, I would recommend preschool.
- Duluth Preschool is the place to be. Very warm staff and the education is top notch.
- The kids love it. Yes, I would.
- That it's an important part of your child's readiness for school, and I would definitely recommend.
- Very informative and helps gets ready for kindergarten.
- Yes, I'd recommend.
- It's very helpful in getting kids ready for school. I would recommend it and have.
- 100% recommend! Great program! My son loves it!
- I already do! My children's love preschool and how much it gets them ready for kindergarten.
- Duluth Preschool is amazing! My son has learned so much in such a short period of time. Every day he brings home beautiful paintings, pictures or some form of art he has crafted at school, along with stories of books they have read.
- We have really enjoyed our experiences at Duluth Preschool. I do recommend it to others all the time. My son's teacher is always upbeat and positive!
- Wonderful experience. We really feel like our son's needs are being met and he really enjoys it. Definitely, we would recommend it!
- Yes, I would tell others. I have had nothing but great things happen at Homecroft. My son has a great team supporting him.
- It has been positive. Would recommend.
- Yes, I think it's a great program. I love all the changes from last year.
- I would give them our highest recommendation! As parents with a child with special needs, we feel that we have seen such improvement and growth in our daughter since switching schools from last year.

- Yes.
- I have told friends how wonderful the home-based program is. Even signed my neighbor up.
- Yes, great program.
- Yes, has helped us a lot.
- Very awesome, kids love it, this is our second year in a row.
- It is a wonderful program. It gives the child an opportunity to get the feel of school without having to feel overwhelmed. I believe it helps them to get ready for kindergarten.
- It's a great place for kids to go.
- Yes, great pre-start to full-time school.
- If it's affordable, it's a great way to introduce your child to the school system! And for your child to gain a few friends as well!
- Yes!!! I think it's important to allow your child to be involved with others. They learn so much and have such a different attitude. I would tell anyone to join the preschool team!
- I enjoy it, great intro to school setting. Yes, I'd recommend.
- All good things at Piedmont. Yes.
- Yes! I have told 5-7 families how great it is. That it prepares them for kindergarten and sets them up for success.
- Great program. Staff are very helpful and understanding, wonderful opportunity for kids. Yes, I would recommend it.
- I would recommend to other parents. It's a great first step to my child's education – she has a like for learning due to her class – it creates structure and friendship. I also enjoy the half day options as a starting point for school.
- They have worked well with his behaviors and come up with new ways to help him learn as needed. Yes, I would recommend.
- Great teachers, happy kids. Obvious learning because my child comes home and shares his work with us and feels proud. I feel he is encouraged by all teachers.
- I would, and have, recommended Duluth Preschool.
- The staff is very great at their job.
- It's a good school. I would recommend.
- Very happy with Piedmont preschool.
- It is a great learning experience for my child. I wish it was a little more affordable, though.
- Yes – it's an amazing program, especially for families who may need extra help for their kids.
- High quality.
- I will tell them it's an awesome program and it's very beneficial to your child as well as for the parent.
- Yes, my children have grown tremendously.
- Outstanding program for families, especially those in transition.
- Absolutely great resource for families; learning for parents as well as the children. Willing to offer family supports.

- Yes, Duluth Preschool is a great program with great teachers who love their job and go above and beyond for their students. Duluth Preschool gets them kindergarten ready academically and socially.
- It is a wonderful learning experience for children. They learn life skills and communication skills.

10. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about your experience with Duluth Preschool or any changes you feel would improve our program?

- This is an amazing program and my family loves being a part of it.
- At times, communication with parents is inconsistent, or feels incomplete/not thorough. Overall, this program is outstanding.
- Everything is perfect.
- My daughter has learned so much this year! The only concern I have is will she be learning the same curriculum next year when she returns to preschool? If so, it would be nice to have a second year program for returning preschoolers.
- No, I like the way the program is being run. Keep up the good work.
- Further advance notice of family nights and maybe on a Thursday or Friday instead of always on a Wednesday as my child has visitation with her father on Wednesday evenings. So we are rarely able to make them.
- When parents are working, transportation, or before and after care, would be very helpful!
- This past year has improved greatly compared to other past years. The family advocate and family nights are a huge asset. The lunch program and not having to worry about payments helps me, a single mother. The only thing that would help with my work schedule would be transportation.
- Preschool has given my daughter a sense of independence. She is more outgoing and vocal. She looks forward to class!
- Maybe learn more songs – like the ABCs or other preschool songs for learning.
- No – great school!
- First time experience, and it's fantastic!
- No, I love everything about the whole program.
- I have had five children and am now bringing grandchildren through. I love the sense of community and family support offered. Genuinely interested in how life is going and how they can help.
- I have been thrilled with the ½ day pre-K program at Piedmont. The staff is fantastic and so welcoming. Great environment.
- Keep up the good work.
- In general, I hope Duluth schools are encouraging kids to be connected with nature, embrace love and kindness, and develop an integrated, holistic perspective and experience of themselves, others, and gifts from our Earth, and the universe we share. Kids are the future!

- I love that a lot of learning takes place outdoors. I wasn't expecting that with preschool, and it's great.
- Be great if there was all-day preschool.
- Having more all day classes would be nice.
- No, keep up the amazing work.
- Improved security measures to keep intruders and tighter entrance policy. Otherwise, our experience has been pleasant.
- Keep up the amazing work!
- Be more aware of bullying.
- Being the first year that Head Start/pre-K has been merged, I had a few concerns. I feel like a lot of the life skills they incorporate in for the Head Start portion may not be skills every child needs (teeth brushing, etc.). However, I do feel our child is doing well with numbers/letters, etc., which I was concerned there would be enough time for.
- Keep up the good work! The teachers and helpers that fully engage with the children is key!
- Class in AM with only 4- and 5-year-olds.
- Miss Sue and Miss Deedra are doing a fantastic job at Stowe. My child really likes both his teacher and teacher aide and always looks forward to school. I love that they teach good oral hygiene and brush teeth every day. It was an unexpected surprise that my child really has learned from.
- It was chaotic being told she did not get in, later to find out she did. We were told that morning classes were primarily for three year olds only to find out later that was not the case, so we were moved from PM to AM (when originally we wanted AM, but were suggested to do PM). At a meeting with the supervisor, we were called privileged and told our kids did not need this program because we were already singing to them, taking them to the library etc. It really felt like the shift to merge both Head Start and School Readiness (which I looked at as a positive thing) was not meant for kids who don't qualify for Head Start. It seemed as though the merge for inclusion isn't as inclusive as it should be. Luckily, my daughter is unaware and enjoys school, even though, behind the scenes, we haven't been impressed with some of these things. I'm hoping that with this first year under the District's belt, a lot was learned and improvements, especially to registration, will be improved. I also feel that all families should be made to feel equally important and welcomed to the program. What I've appreciated are family nights, regular outdoor play, friendly paraprofessionals, and being made to feel welcome when I've volunteered in the classroom. I also appreciate how comfortable my daughter is with the staff. My daughter was lucky to go into class having friends, which made her transition a smooth one. She loves school and teacher Becky.
- Helping the children organize their lockers when returning from playing outside. Other than that, everything is wonderful! Thank you for your hard work and involvement in all of our children's lives!
- The wood chips are horrible. I appreciate the change made for a safer play space, but the wood is more shredded than chip. I had to throw away two pairs of pants because they were so



embedded with wood slivers, you couldn't get them out. My child (before snow) would be absolutely covered in wood slivers. I'm actually dreading spring because of it.

- Only thing would be transportation could be better for families, and children that are close to kindergarten within six months should be able to get into all-day program easier.
- Everything is great. Good work!
- Since beginning pre-K, my child has become much more outgoing, independent, and compassionate. Thank you.
- I would highly recommend it. I have made this experience wonderful for all our family.
- We are extremely happy with this program. We love our son's teachers and his whole team he has behind him to help with his needs!
- Just that I'm so grateful, and you guys have helped so much with things that will improve me and my child's lives for years to come.
- Both of my children have gone to Laura MacArthur or preschool, and it has set them up perfectly for kindergarten.
- There needs to be a zero tolerance policy for bullying. If a student is found to be a bully, they need to be placed in a different class immediately! The process time of information and talk, talk, talk needs to be dealt with in a quicker manner.
- Nothing as of right now! Just keeping doing the great job you're doing! Thank you!
- Nothing – he loves school and enjoys being there and adores his teachers.
- Thanks for teaching Connor and caring about Connor and making me feel cared about too.
- Everything worked out for us just the way we wanted. We are very grateful. The class teacher is amazing.
- We love your program. Thank you for involving the families so much.
- Nothing but greatness!
- Loved the scholarship so I didn't have to worry about paying financially.
- The preschool staff are all very helpful and understanding.
- With monthly fliers should possibly put teacher contact information on them every month. Maybe exchange e-mails more often about progress or problems (just a short "hi," work more on this/do reading/had problems with), etc.
- Thank you!
- I enjoy that the teachers are concerned when a child has missed school. I also enjoy that if my child is struggling, they will do anything to help him/her succeed.
- I want to say thank you so much!! We appreciate all of the things Brandon has learned. Brandon is so excited to go to school each day. He even wakes up on weekends and asks if he has or can go to school. Miss Lisa is a wonderful teacher and person. We are so happy to know our son has such as amazing role model. Our son is only 3 and hearing about the stories they have read or projects like making play dough or painting and what he has learned each day just amazes me. Thank you so very much for such a cool program!

- We are very happy! It was tough at first when they didn't have a para due to difficulties staffing. So nice to have one so he can get out of the wheelchair. We saw him getting weaker, but see him getting stronger again!
- Thank you!
- I don't think my husband and I have anything negative to say personally. The only thing we would like to see is paras. We have had three different ones since the beginning of the school year for our daughter. The ones she has had took full-time positions. Our daughter sometimes has a hard time with change. She seems to be adjusting so far with what she has now. Thanks for having such a great program for families!
- It is a life saver! Such a great program. Teachers are like family.
- Not only is Miss Laurie here for PJ, she listens and helps in other areas.
- I've had great experiences. The only thing I've had a problem with is my son getting staples in his head due to a child needing a para and not having one. There are children that need constant re-direction, so making sure those children have the support they need so they can learn and be successful would be great!
- Registration this year was horrible, but I'm so happy to have gotten my daughter enrolled. It has been a great experience for the both of us, and she will be very prepared for kindergarten next year.
- Allow them to celebrate holidays. My son doesn't quite understand why his older brother and sister get to and he doesn't. He told me for Halloween he'd bring candy for everyone with spooky stickers so they could have fun too.
- We've enjoyed the program thus far and look forward to the rest of the year!
- We have been pleased so far! I would love to see some pictures of the kids from their big activity days and of the routines. Also, if there are days that make sense for a parent volunteer, I'd love to help!
- I'm extremely grateful for the grant that made preschool free for us this year. Rylee would have attended, regardless, but it is much appreciated! Thank you to everyone involved.
- Just let us know ahead of time about days off, by sending notes home with children. That way we can make plans and appointments.
- Just the affordability. I believe the tuition is a little too high.
- Most improved would be to have holidays. Talk with other families about their own religion. Otherwise, it is an amazing program. Otherwise, it is an amazing program. My child has grown up to be a great young man. Thank you, Head Start program.
- I feel the teachers in the preschool room don't have a lot of control. One teacher has gotten better, but still gets very overwhelmed. I'm worried about some of the subs in the rooms. There's a lot of really young people who can be rude to the kids and are not paying attention to them. I think subs should have to be better picked out to work with kids.
- Thanks for all you've done for my child.
- I'm thankful to be part of the preschool program for my child.

- I would advise other parents to check with enrollment and make sure there are children the same age in the class. My 4-year-old is in a class with a lot of 3-year-olds and has picked up on some of the “baby behaviors” from them. It would be great to try and put the 4-year-olds with each other and older. It’s hard for them to advance and be prepared for kindergarten when they are surrounded by children who are 3.
- No. I’m thankful for all services, people and activities.

***We value your comments and suggestions about your experiences with Duluth Preschool. Information gathered from this survey will help us learn how we can better serve your child and family.***

### **Duluth Head Start Community Assessment Summary**

We have collected data on several large issues that face Head Start families. Transportation, homelessness, children with disabilities, children with behavioral and mental health issues are the largest issues facing Duluth Head Start families. We have worked hard to provide transportation to and from school, yet Duluth’s climate, geography and limited transportation options make it difficult for parents to get to and from work, shopping and school. We are mindful of the areas in the city that offer access to public transportation and want to have our classrooms in those locations.

We are also working on making our classrooms inclusive yet not overwhelmed by the great number of children who present with challenging behaviors, diagnosed and undiagnosed. To that end, we are just completing our first year of blending Head Start, School Readiness and in some locations, the State funded Voluntary PreK. Children in this blended environment have a greater chance to interact with their peers from different life experiences. We find that to be beneficial for children, their parents and our staff,

#### **Transportation**

The climate and terrain of the Duluth community have a major negative impact on families needing to access public transportation or walk to and from schools, work and needed services. We have made major strides in this area with approval from the Office of Head Start for a Transportation Waiver, which allows 4 year olds to ride the bus with K-5 students from a nearby stop to their home school without monitors and seat harnesses. All children and parents received bus safety training and are required to have a trusted adult to meet them at the stop. Children who are 4 sit in the seats closest to the driver. We are working on collaborating with older students in a buddy program to have them assist the younger riders.

#### **Disabilities**

We have seen a growing number of children with disabilities coming to Head Start for services. Currently 26% of our enrolled children use Special Education Services. Perhaps it is a result of our community’s excellent early intervention services that help our district identify and serve more children with disabilities. This means we must pay close attention to the progress of children who receive special education services to ensure they, along with their typically developing peers, are making good progress on the individual goals as well as school readiness goals.

## **Foster Care/Alcohol and Drug Abuse**

St. Louis County Child Protection workers report feeling they are overrun with abuse and neglect cases largely due to drug and alcohol abuse. In turn, this creates a larger demand for county Foster Care providers. This demand is not keeping pace with the number of Foster Care providers. The impact on children is longer stays in emergency shelters and less stability.

Head Start has made some strides in addressing this concern by developing and fostering relationships with St. Louis County Social Services and by developing a form that when used will enable county workers to help keep Head Start children in their classrooms when out of home placements occur.

## **Domestic Violence**

Duluth has led the way in handling domestic abuse cases. This approach, known as the Duluth Model, has been recognized locally, nationally and internationally for transforming the way the community address domestic violence. Duluth Head Start staff are connected to the community domestic violence resources for parents.

## **Housing and Homelessness**

This topic looms large in Duluth. We are fortunate to have many great community resources for families struggling to keep their housing or begin the process of stabilization that may help them move out of homelessness. We have a program option that began to help the growing number of families with young children experiencing homelessness and presenting themselves at the congregate shelter in Duluth. We will continue to support this option through our State Head Start dollars as we grow in our understanding of how we can help families avoid homelessness by being more skilled in identifying the barriers to maintaining housing. We have a good partnership with a supportive housing complex in Duluth that was built for people who have experienced chronic homelessness. This partnership evolved this spring to add a school district staff person to the team that will be doing home visits at this facility. This partnership between Early Childhood Family Education and the Steve O'Neil apartments is very promising.

## **Parent Survey**

Parents with children in Duluth Head Start are generally pleased with the program. An overwhelming majority feels welcome by staff and is in partnership with advocates to work on family goals. Parents know and understand the benefit of having Minnesota Reading Corps members in classrooms and see the gains made by their children because of our efforts.

Transportation and work schedules have kept some parents from accessing program offerings. Transportation, which ended some years ago, continues to be a major barrier for Head Start families. We have been able to make busing available to a large number of children who are 4 years old and live within their school attendance area. This has made a big difference in attendance for many families.

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