

Education Service Center, Region 20 Tri-County Head Start Program

Community Assessment Abstract 2013 - 14

The Education Service Center, Region 20 (ESC-20) Tri-County Head Start Program began in 1991. The model is a partnership with six rural Independent School Districts in Bandera, Medina and part of Atascosa counties. The communities served are along three major highways. Interstate 35 South includes Lytle, Natalia and Devine. Interstate 90 West includes Castroville (Medina Valley) and Hondo. Interstate 10 West includes Bandera.

The Tri-County Head Start Program is funded for 387 children and families. With the partnership model, district Pre-Kindergarten children are mixed with the Head Start children increasing the number of children benefiting from the partnership. The total number of children impacted by the Tri-County Head Start Program is approximately 500 spread across 25 classrooms. Each of the classrooms has a degreed, state certified teacher. The ESC-20 Tri-County Head Start program consists of 19 four-year-old classes and 6 three-year-old classes. The three-year-old classes are in Lytle, Natalia and Devine school districts.

The ethnic demographics of the children throughout the program remain as 78% Hispanic and 22% Non-Hispanic backgrounds. The dominant languages of the children program-wide remain as 10% Spanish and 90% English. The ethnicity and language demographics have remained basically unchanged over the past several years as reported in the annual PIR report. Five of the school districts in partnership with the Tri-County Head Start program are considered by the state to be English as a Second Language (ESL) schools rather than bilingual schools. One school district, Medina Valley, is identified as a bilingual school district. Therefore, children who qualify for bilingual services are placed with a state certified teacher for dual instruction in English and Spanish. The remainder of the program has children enrolled that are Spanish dominant speakers. Provisions are made to provide ESL services for these children. Staff members are available who speak Spanish in order to assist the children in their home language and communicate effectively with families.

In 2012 - 13, the program experienced an increase in the number of hours contributed by volunteers within Tri-County Head Start. Over the past few years volunteers within the program have fluctuated between 230 – 460 participants. This could possibly be due to the recession and some parents finding they have to join the workforce rather than stay at home or those already working have to work second or third jobs to make ends meet meaning they have less time to volunteer. In 2012 – 13 Tri-County Head Start had 278 volunteers log 3,451 hours for a value of \$20,022. Statistics of working parents supports this decline of available volunteers. Throughout the program 74% of the families have a working parent or working parents while only 26% of the families remain unemployed. 91% of the two-parent families have working parents while only 9% of the two-parent families remain unemployed. 60% of the single-parent families have a working parent while only 40% of the single-parent families remain unemployed. All of these percentages regarding working families are slightly increased from previous years.