

# ***Putnam County Head Start Early Learning Program Services***



***Annual Report 2023-2024***

***“Tell me and  
I forget.  
Show me  
and I  
remember.  
Involve me  
and I  
understand”***

***— Chinese Proverb***







## *A Note From The Director*

*We are excited and honored to share our Annual Report for the Putnam County Head Start Program. Our program is committed and invested in providing the highest quality of service to the children and families served within the Putnam County community. Our goal is to serve as a model of excellence in early care and education throughout the nation. We recognize that our success is only possible with the dedication of our staff and the support of our partners as well as our Board and Policy Council. Most of all, we would be remiss if we didn't recognize that parents are their children's first and best teacher. We are humbled by your trust in us to help educate and care for your children.*

*This report is just a snapshot of our efforts throughout the year, but we hope you find it an uplifting reflection of our commitment to cultivating positive and long-lasting experiences for our children and our community. During the 2023 -2024 many early childhood programs faced challenges in finding and retaining qualified staff to work in classrooms. This challenge was no different for us at Putnam County Head Start, through we remained focused on our "mission" of providing the services outlined in this year's Annual Report. We applaud and thank the community, staff and stakeholders for support and resources that have contributed to another successful year. We were grateful for the creativity, resiliency, and determination amongst our staff and stakeholder, which resulted in successful year. We revamped many of our services to include the use of more technology and networking, improving the efficiency of our service delivery. Working closely with our local board of education, we were able to leverage our funding stream to provide retention bonuses, salary adjustment, and comprehensive benefits for all staff.*

*Ensuring the safety of our children, parents, families, staff, and community partners has remained a top priority. Over the past year, our program has placed an increased emphasis on mental health and wellness for our staff, children and families. We researched wellness assessments and programs, interviewed staff to determine strengths, opportunities for growth, current wellness needs and concerns. For parents, we outlined plans for our monthly Family Engagement Meetings to include activities and resources for wellness and mindfulness. we established wellness rooms for staff that included comfortable seating, staff artwork, coffee/tea stations, etc. to allow staff to recharge as needed. Our efforts to foster unity among staff will allow them to bring their best efforts to the classrooms. In addition, we are continuing to build ways to recognize staff's value to our program, including setting up a staff advisory committee to promote involvement in decision making processes and spotlights on staff contributions.*

*The Putnam County Head Start Program is extremely pleased with the levels of parent engagement with high participation in Family Engagement Meetings held monthly as well as with other activities designed to bring educational and networking opportunities to parents of enrolled children. Our program utilizes the Rady Rosie Parenting Curriculum as a support with families to promote family engagement and enhance school readiness in the home.*

*The Putnam County Head Start Program is committed to our principles of being family-centered and outcome-driven, advocates for our community's youngest and most vulnerable children. We are grateful of our community supporters, local school district and other organizations who have supported us throughout the past year. We look forward to our continued work together!*

*Christel H. Nelson, Program Director*

# ***How Putnam County Head Start Supports Growth and Learning***

*Supporting children's growth and development in a positive learning environment through a variety of services, which include:*



***Early Learning and Education:*** *Children's readiness for school and beyond is fostered through individualized learning experiences. Through relationships with adults, play and planned and spontaneous instruction, children grow in many aspects of development. Children progress in social skills and emotional well-being, along with language and literacy learning, and concept development. PCHS works with families, school district and other entities to facilitate the transition of each child to kindergarten.*



***Health:*** *Each child's perceptual, motor, and physical development is supported to permit them to fully explore and function in their environment. All children receive health and development screenings and nutritious meals. Our program connect families with medical, dental, and mental health services to ensure that children are receiving the services they need. Support services exist, and are utilized, for building resiliency to cope with possible adverse effects of trauma and managing and/or overcoming mental health struggles.*



***Family well-being:*** *Parents and families are supported in achieving their own family goals, such as housing stability, continued education, and financial security. Our program supports and strengthen parent-child relationships and engage families around children's learning and development.*

# GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Grantee: Putnam County Board Of Education Head Start  
Grant Number: 04CH011501  
Address: 162 Old Glenwood Springs Rd. Eatonton GA, 31024  
Phone: 706-485-8081  
Fax: 706-485-8424  
Director: Christel Nelson  
Website: [www.putnam.k12.ga.us](http://www.putnam.k12.ga.us)

Program Description: Putnam County Head Start is a grantee agency regulated by the Putnam County Board of Education for the city of Eatonton GA that provides services to all of the Putnam County area.

## PROGRAM MISSION

The mission of the Putnam County Head Start program is to promote child development and school readiness for preschool-age children from low-income families, providing comprehensive services to empower diverse families and strengthen communities.

## CENTER BASED FULL DAY PROGRAM OPERATION

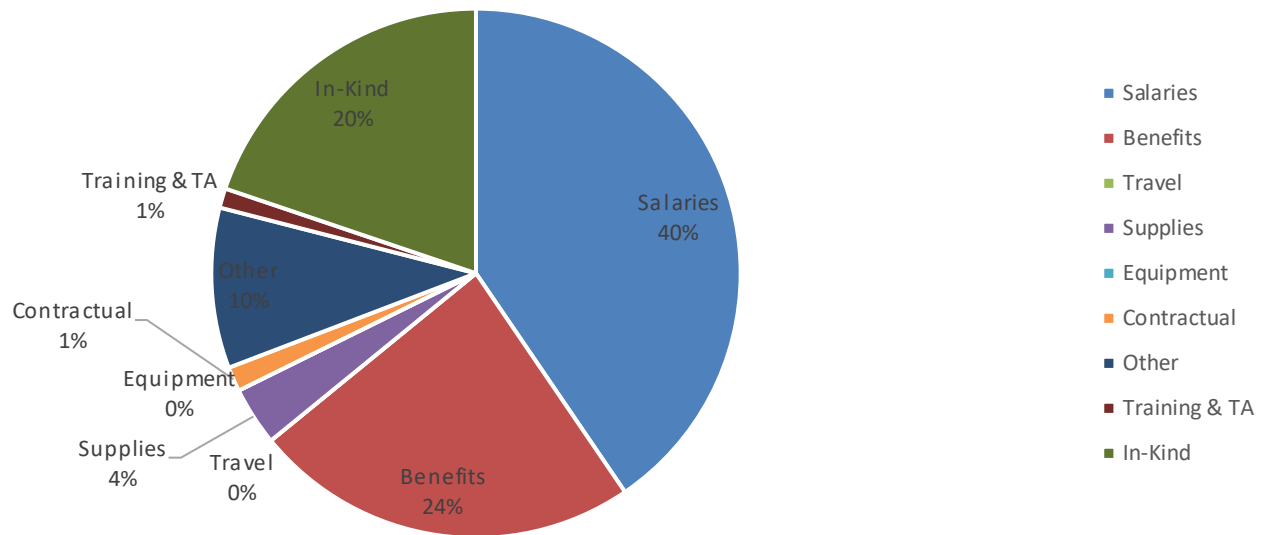
Putnam County Head Start operates 1-center-based program and serves the entire Putnam County, Eatonton GA area. The program operates full day sessions, Monday –Friday and function on the same calendar days as the local school system. The program serves 181-children and families.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

In-kind and community support play a vital role in the success of the Head Start of Putnam County each year. We are fortunate to have relationships with many groups, organizations and individuals who have provided support for our work by contributing in-kind donations. (Partial List of our partners)

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| ✓ Eatonton Service League                             | ✓ CVS Pharmacy                        |
| ✓ Putnam County Board of Education                    | ✓ Wal-Mart Pharmacy                   |
| ✓ Dr. Young Jones Dental                              | ✓ Tender Care Clinic                  |
| ✓ Subway of Eatonton                                  | ✓ Dr. Rakesh Kumar                    |
| ✓ Golden Harvest Food Bank                            | ✓ Eatonton Pediatrics- Dr. Al-Hakim   |
| ✓ Family Connections of Putnam County                 | ✓ Navicent Health Physicians          |
| ✓ Putnam County Division of Family Services           | ✓ Family Practice and Surgery         |
| ✓ Putnam County Family Violence Task force            | ✓ Putnam County Public Transit System |
| ✓ A Kids World of Peace Learning Center               | ✓ Georgia Medical Non-Emergency       |
| ✓ Stepping Stones Learning Center                     | Transportation Program                |
| ✓ Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy             | ✓ Tri-County EMC Electricity          |
| ✓ Mothers Against Crime                               | ✓ Eatonton Kiwanis Club               |
| ✓ Habitat for Humanity of Putnam County               | ✓ Eatonton Main Street                |
| ✓ Housing Authority of Putnam County                  | ✓ Life Source Food Distribution       |
| ✓ Georgia Dream Home Ownership Program                | ✓ Lions Club                          |
| ✓ Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health of Georgia |                                       |

## Head Start Expenses FY 2023

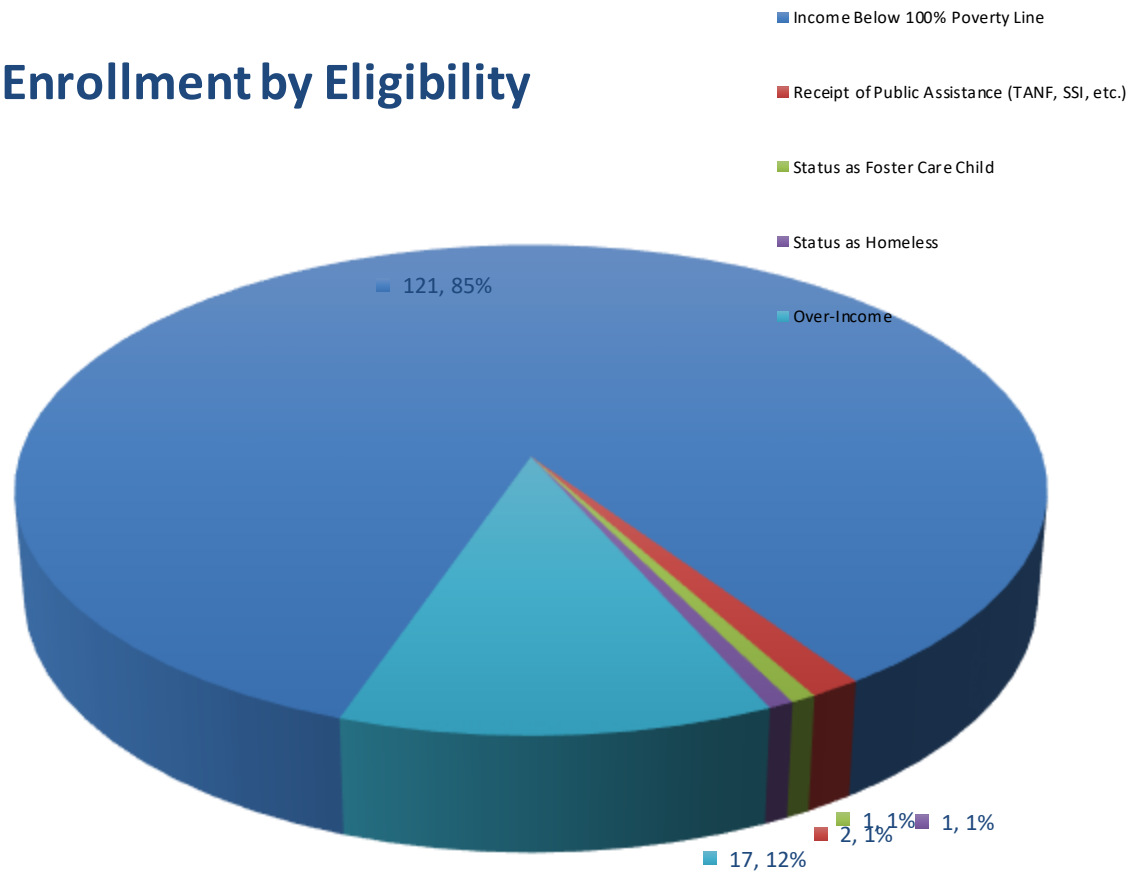


### PUTNAM COUNTY HEAD START EXPENDITURE BY CATEGORY 06/01/2022 – 05/31/2023

Budget Category Description	Line Item Description	Cost for Program Operations	Cost for T/TA
<b>Personnel Salaries:</b>	Total	\$ 701,976	
<b>Fringe Benefits:</b>	Health Insurance	\$ 262,797	
<b>Fringe Benefits:</b>	Retirement for full Time employees	\$ 105,634	
<b>Fringe Benefits:</b>	Social Security (FICA), State Disability, Unemployment, Worker's Compensation, Dental/Life Insurance	\$ 41,360	
<b>Travel:</b>	Staff Out-of-Town Travel (Mileage, meals, lodging for training.)	\$	\$ 16,856
<b>Supplies:</b>	Office, Classroom, Computer Software, Playground, Janitorial, Disability	\$ 62,196	\$
<b>Equipment:</b>	Outdoor Learning Area	\$ 0	
<b>Contractual:</b>	Medical/Dentist, Copier Lease, Insurance, Laminator Maint., Contract Service BOE/Policy Council Governance/Training	\$11,280	\$ 1000
<b>Other:</b>	Building Maint., Advertising, Dues/Fees, Putnam County Nutrition, Other Purchase Service, Telephone, Parent Services for Policy Council, Field Trips Lesson Extension Activity	\$ 170,000	\$ 2,800
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>\$1,369,963</b>	<b>\$ 20,656.00</b>
<b>Federal Dollars</b>		<b>\$1,390,619</b>	
<b>In-Kind</b>		<b>\$ 343,527</b>	
<b>Total Project</b>		<b>\$1,734,146</b>	

# Program Demographic Charts for 2022 - 2023

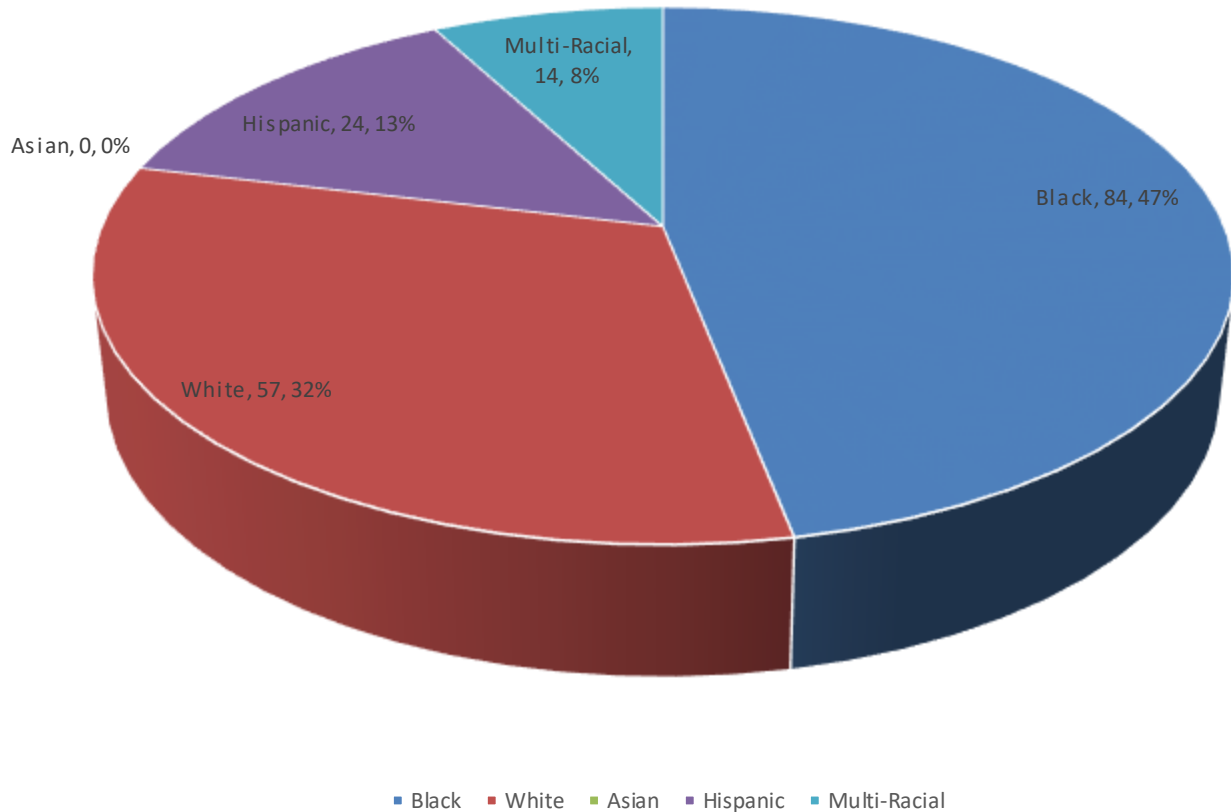
## Enrollment by Eligibility



Enrollment by Eligibility		Percentage
	Number	
Income Below 100% Poverty Line	121	85%
Receipt of Public Assistance (TANF, SSI, etc.)	2	1%
Status as Foster Care Child	1	1%
Status as Homeless	1	1%
Over-Income	17	12%

# Program Demographic Charts for 2022 - 2023

Student Population Demographics By Race



Student Population Demographics

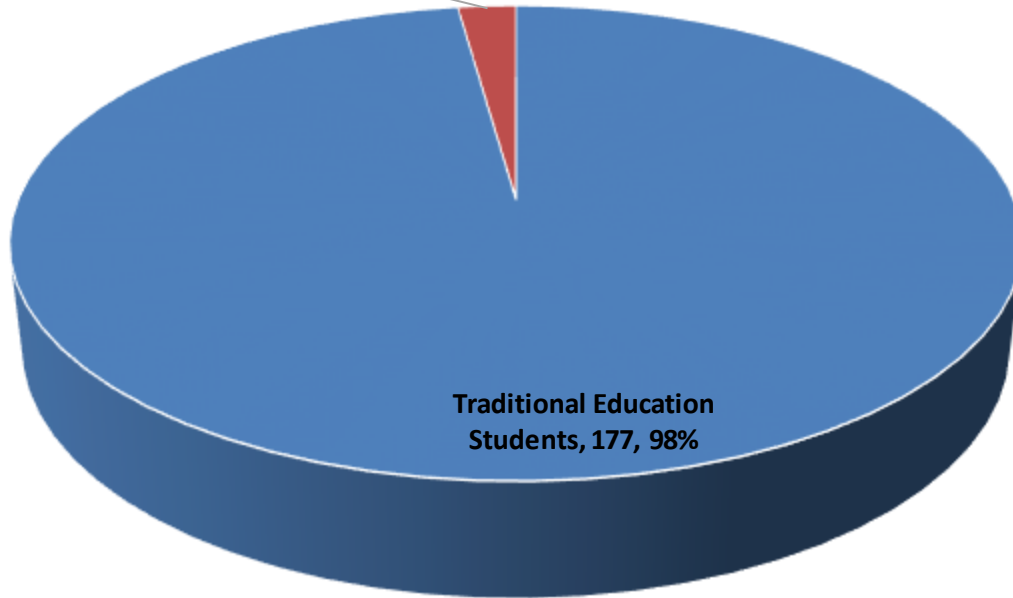
	Number	Percentage
Black	84	47%
White	57	32%
Asian	0	0%
Hispanic	24	13%
Multi-Racial	14	8%



## Student Population With A Disability

Disability  
Services  
Students, 4, 2%

### Student Enrollment - (Day 1)

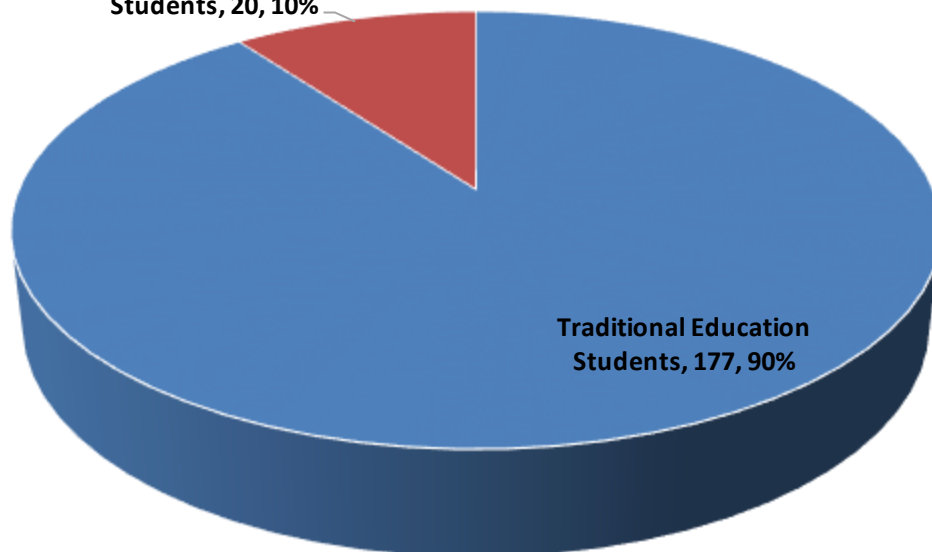


■ Traditional Education Students

■ Disability Services Students

### Student Enrollment - Year End

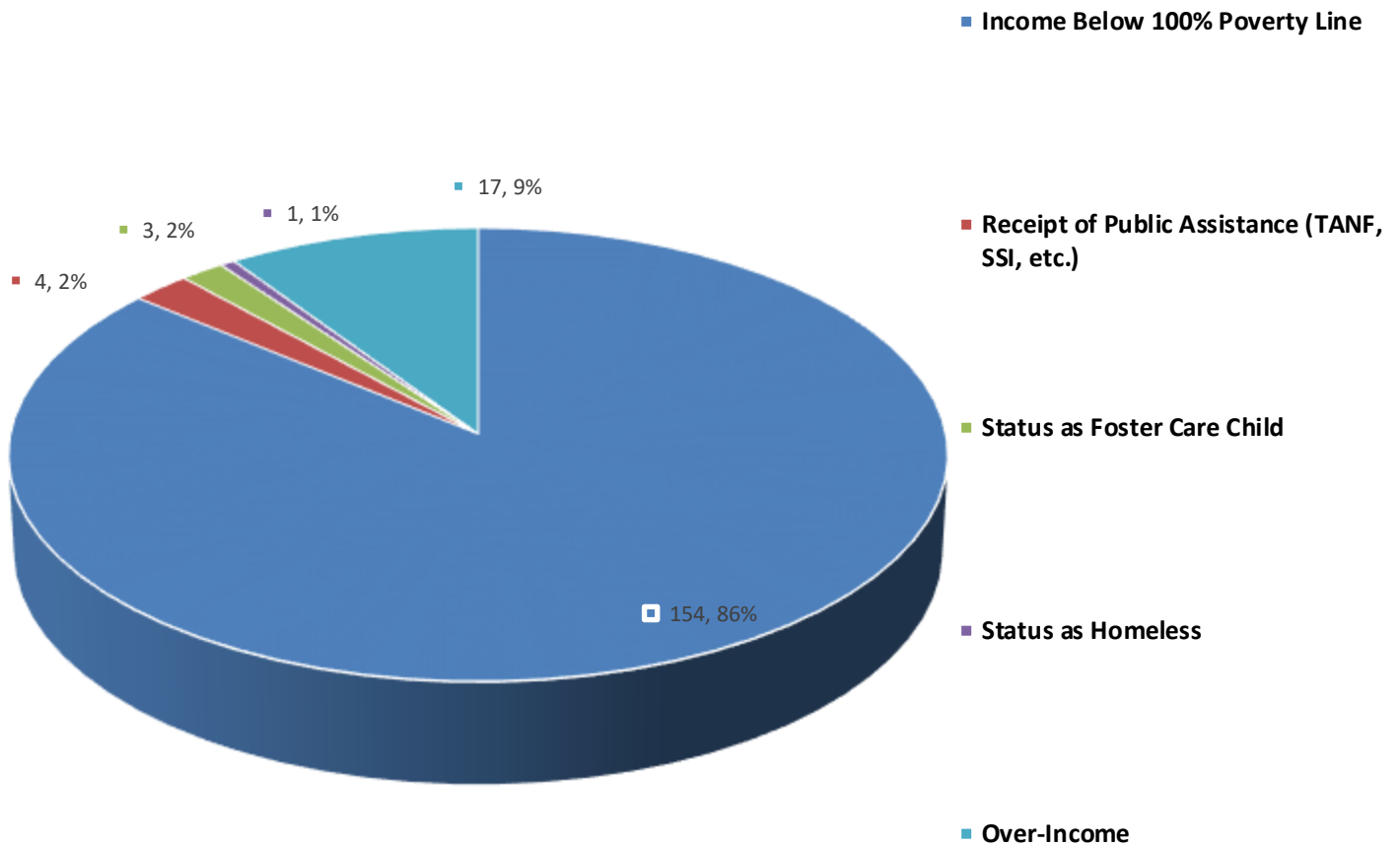
Disability Services  
Students, 20, 10%



■ Traditional Education Students

■ Disability Services Students

# Enrollment by Eligibility

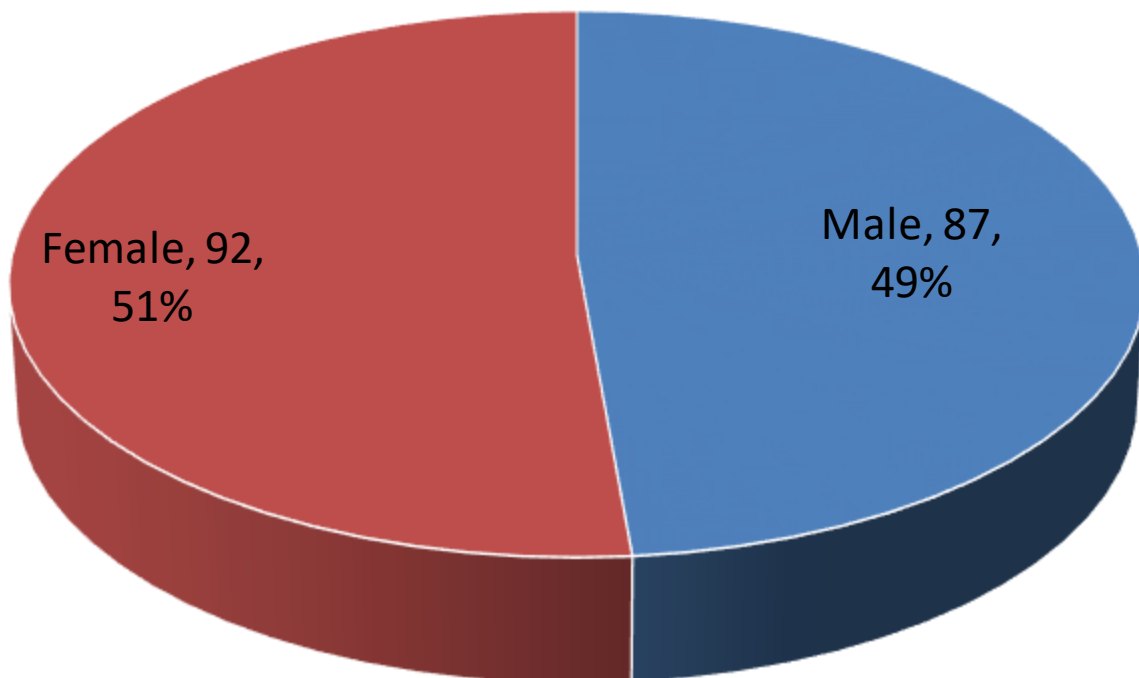


## Enrollment by Eligibility

	Number	Percentage
Income Below 100% Poverty Line	154	86%
Receipt of Public Assistance (TANF, SSI, etc.)	4	2%
Status as Foster Care Child	3	2%
Status as Homeless	1	1%
Over-Income	17	9%

# Program Demographic Charts By Gender

## General Student Population by Gender



■ Male ■ Female

## PUTNAM COUNTY HEAD START HEALTH SERVICES INFORMATION

	ENROLLED	%TOTAL ENROLLMENT
Children With Health Insurance	175	100%
Number Enrolled in Medicaid and/or Chip	155	86%
Number of With Private Insurance	20	11%
<b>MEDICAL HOME (at end of enrollment)</b>		
Number of children With an Ongoing Source of Continuous, Accessible HealthCare	173	97%
<b>MEDICAL SERVICES (at end of enrollment)</b>		
Number of all Children Up-to-Date on:		
EPSDT Schedule	160	89%
Of These, the Number Diagnosed With a Chronic Condition Needing Medical Treatment	1	.6%
Of These, the Number Who Have Received or Are Receiving Medical Treatment	1	.6%
<b>Number of all Children who Received Medical Treatment of the Following Chronic Health Conditions</b>		
Anemia	0	0%
Asthma	1	.6%
Hearing Difficulties	0	0%
Vision Problems	1	.6%
High Lead Levels	0	0%
<b>IMMUNIZATION SERVICES (at end of enrollment)</b>		
Number of Children Determined Up-to-Date	160	89%
Number of Children Exempt	0	0%
<b>DENTAL HOME (at end of enrollment)</b>		
Number of Children with Continuous, Accessible Dental Care Provided by a Dentist	107	72%

*The COVID-19 Pandemic created many challenges for families to obtain health care services. Families reported noticing and wanting help addressing the following, health related issue:*

- *Increase in children's behavioral or emotional problems*
- *Increase in children's sleep difficulties or nightmares*
- *Increase in mental health problems or mood swings and anxiety*
- *Increased screen time in children (phones, tablets, video games).*



# Putnam County *Head Start*

A vast amount of learning takes place between the ages of three and five. During this time, a Head Start program can help a child develop skills that will promote success in kindergarten and beyond!



(Above)  
Putnam County Head Start students in their community garden, plant seeds and enjoy the beautiful outdoors. Scan the QR Code to learn more about how Putnam County Head Start is growing young minds.



## *Accomplishments*

### • Summer Transition Grant

This grant was awarded to Putnam County Head Start/Pre-K for Rising Kindergartners from the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). The Program was awarded to three rising kindergarten classes and will serve a maximum of 42 students this summer. The Summer Transition Program is a six-week intensive academic program for rising kindergartners.

### • Trauma-Responsive Care Grant

Head Start was awarded a Trauma-Responsive Care Grant. The grant has helped build a more trauma-informed responsive community. Our collaborative has expanded to include over 25 mental health organizations that offer mental health services and care.

### • Community Transformation Grant

Head Start was awarded a NEW Community Transformation Grant from DECAL. This grant targets children with social-emotional needs ages 0-8. This grant provides five paid Mental Health Endorsement opportunities from UGA for qualified candidates.





(Above) Putnam County Head Start student gets hands-on experiences with one of our community partners, the Eatonton Fire Department. (Right) Students learn about chemical reactions in the classroom.



Congratulations to these Putnam County Head Start Staff Members who successfully completed 15-hours of Circle of Security Training (COS). (Pictured right)

Our program implements the Classroom Professional Learning Series, an intense 12-hour reflective course to strengthen teacher-student relationships in the classroom. Our teachers know that by creating secure relationships with the children in their classroom, optimal learning can truly happen.



At Putnam County Head Start, we believe that all children can succeed and achieve, and we work to empower families to advocate for their children and themselves. In addition to our educational staff, we have family services staff to support families in setting goals and we provide community resources to these families. We work diligently to provide each child and family high-quality learning experiences in a safe and nurturing environment that promotes school readiness and family positive outcomes.

*Ms. Christel Nelson*  
Putnam County Head Start Administrator



# Putnam County Head Start

## Survey Results for 22-23



Surveys to families, staff and community partners revealed the following about program strengths:

### Families:

- 95% were satisfied with this year's Head Start Program.
- 86% felt they were kept informed about their child's classroom activities and what goes on in school.
- 96% felt free to contact child's teacher or assistant teacher.
- 100% felt free to contact the Head Start office with questions or concerns.
- 95% of you said that you participate in planning your child's education goal with the teacher.
- 93% received help on ideas on how to teach their child at home.

Top supports that staff felt would be most helpful in improving their professional role:

### Staff:

- Professional development or training
- Coaching and/or mentoring
- Technology supports

Community Partners/respondents believe that COVID-19 has had the most impact on:

### Community

- The average household income
- Domestic and community violence
- Job availability

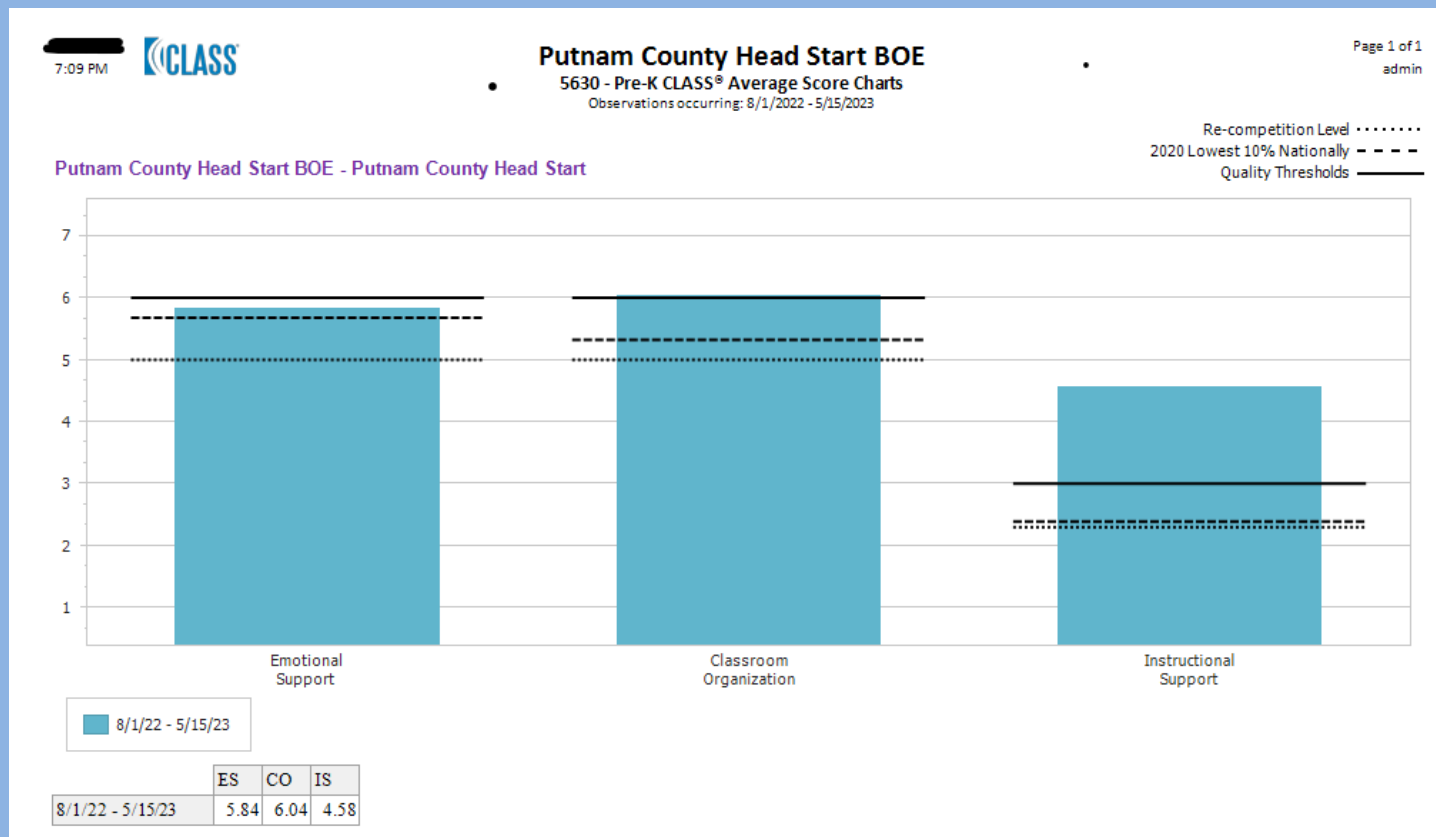
Overall access to services has been most impacted by families' limited knowledge of what resources are available, fear/reluctance to access services, availability of needed services, access to internet/Wi-Fi, access to technology (devices) and affordability of needed services.



## CLASS Scores: (Classroom Assessment Scoring System)

Putnam County Head Start utilizes the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tool as a valid and reliable instrument that assesses teacher-child interactions, classroom quality, and is linked to positive child outcomes. The chart below displays our 2022 – 2023 program scores and shows them in relation to the National Average of 2019 and the lowest 10% National CLASS scores. Putnam County Head Start uses these averages to plan professional development for teaching staff.

Results are shared with the governing board, policy council, management team, staff, parents and other stakeholders.



## CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT, & OUTCOMES

Putnam County Head Start, use the Creative Curriculum for preschool. It guides the teaching teams in addressing all aspects of development; social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language. Our staff build lesson plans for each week that promote literacy, math, science, social studies, art, and technology. The Creative Curriculum is consistent with the Head Start Performance Standards and is based on sound child development principle about how children grow and learn. The Creative Curriculum provides essential strategies the staff can use to make active learning a reality in the classroom.

Parental involvement in the programs' approach to child development and education enhances the ability of parents and staff to work together to support each child's growth and learning in the home program environment. Parental involvement also provides parents with the opportunity to share knowledge about their children so that staff can individual the program to support each child's individual pattern of development and learning.

The Creative Curriculum helps the program meet individual goals for the children's development and learning by providing experiences to meet such goals, and identifying the roles of teachers, staff member, parents, and aids to identify appropriate materials and equipment in both indoor and outdoor environments.

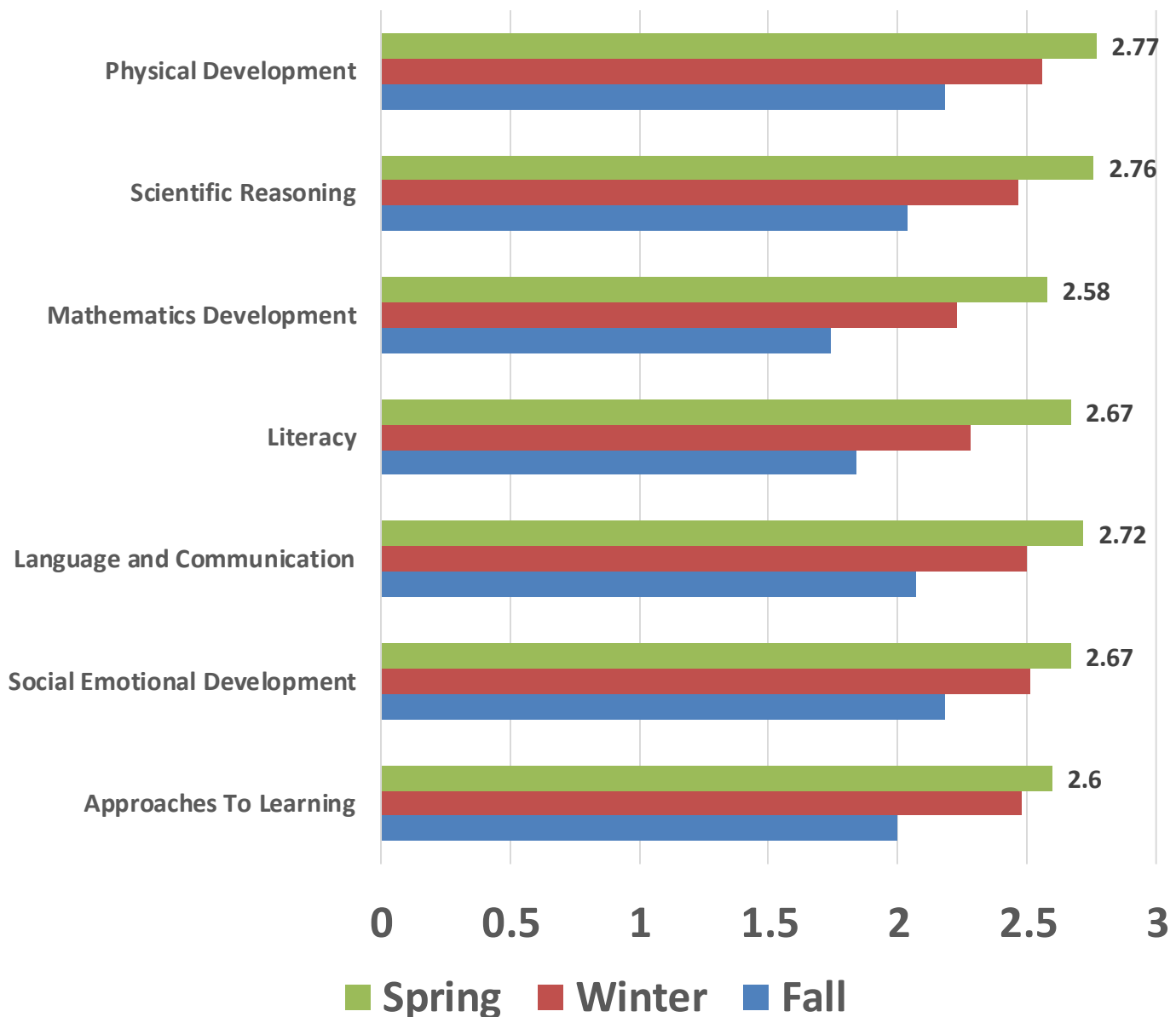


## Achieving Developmental Outcomes for Children Analysis for 2022 – 2023

*Developmental Progress* is monitored through teacher observation, portfolio evidence of each child's work and parent input throughout the school term. Our approach to School Readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children.

Implementing and measuring progress toward school readiness goals helps programs individualize for each child and ensure that children know and can do what is needed to be ready for kindergarten.

### Outcomes Report By Domain 2022 -2023



The assessment demonstrated the spring progress report that the children are on target and meeting expectations. The children have developed skills and knowledge needed. Children going on to Kindergarten have at minimum a starting foundation to be successful and the children returning in the Fall have a strong Head Start!

**Putnam County Head Start 2022 - 2023**  
**Assessment Report: School Readiness/Outcomes Report**  
Analyzing and Addressing Outcome Results

*The program area of strength as indicated are Perceptual Motor/Physical Development and Social and Emotional Development. The children scored highest in these two area and this can be attributed to the program's implementation of Circle Of Security (COS and Practice Based Coaching (PBC) which focuses on building strong, kind and, committed teacher child relationship.*

*The program area of need as indicated were Literacy and Mathematics. The children scored the lowest in these two area and the program plans to address these area of weakness by providing teachers professional development and resources that can be implemented into the classroom. In January, the Heggerty Curriculum will be introduced to the 3-year old teachers and be implemented into the classroom January 5<sup>th</sup>. Heggerty is a phonological and Phonemic Awareness Literacy program for preschoolers. We will also enhance the use of the apps, Khan Academy Kids, to provide literacy opportunities to the children during school and extend the learning experiences in homes of our families. We will also empower our parents to support their student's learning through enhanced use of our Family Engagement App Ready Rosie. The app incorporate video modeling & mobile technology to build partnerships between families & teachers to promote school readiness in all domains of learning (a focus on mathematics).*

*In addition our program will :*

- 1. We will continue to send progress reports to parent(s)/guardian(s), three times a year. Information contained on the report includes gains, outcome/school readiness objectives, and attendance.*
- 2. We will continue to utilize parent engagement through progress report review and increased awareness of parental involvement importance to secure increased outcomes as partners in their child's education.*



# SCHOOL READINESS GOALS

## SCHOOL READINESS GOALS STATEMENT

Putnam County Head Start establishes the following goals for children's learning and development in Head Start. Program teaching practices and goals are aligned with the HSELOF, with state early learning standards or guidelines as appropriate, and with the requirements and expectations of the Putnam County Primary School System in which the children will be attending.

### Social and Emotional Goals

1. Children will engage in and maintain positive adult-child relationships and interactions.
2. Children will engage in and maintain positive peer relationships and interactions.
3. Children will display levels of attention, emotional regulation, and behavior in the classroom that are appropriate to the situation and the supports available.
4. Children will learn and internalize (follow) classroom rules, routines, and directions.
5. All children will develop and display a sense of self, confidence in their abilities, and a strong identity that is rooted in their family and culture.

### Language and Literacy Goals

1. Children will build, use, and comprehend increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.
2. Children will use and comprehend oral language for conversation and communication.
3. Children can identify and discriminate the sounds within words, as separate from the word itself.
4. Children will use and understand print as a system of visible marks that represent the sounds within words and words themselves.
5. Children will engage with literature in developmentally appropriate ways.
6. Children who are dual language learners (DLLs) will demonstrate increased competency in their home language while developing proficiency in English.

### Approaches to Learning Goals

1. Children will show an interest in varied topics and activities, an eagerness to learn, creativity, and independence in their interactions with activities and materials.
2. Children will demonstrate persistence when working with materials, activities, and information.
3. Children will learn and use words and concepts that parallel the information available in activities and materials.

### Cognition Goals

1. Children will use math regularly and in everyday routines to count, compare, relate, identify patterns, and problem solve.
2. Children will use observation and manipulation, ask questions, make predictions, and develop hypotheses to gain a better understanding of information and activities in their surroundings.
3. Children will use their skills in remembering information and in being aware of their own thinking.

### Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development Goals

1. Children will demonstrate control of large muscles for movement, navigation, and balance.
2. Children will demonstrate control of small muscles for such purposes as using utensils, self-care, building, writing, and manipulation.
3. Children will identify and practice healthy and safe habits.



## **Circle of Security Practice-based Coaching Overview: Goals and Outcomes for Putnam County Head Start**

### **Secure Attachment in the classroom**

Putnam County Head Start implements Circle of Security in the Classroom (COS-C) to enhance teachers' abilities to form secure relationships and offers critical organizing principles from attachment theory to improve teacher confidence and competence in relationship building. This, in turn, fosters strong, secure teacher-student relationships and ultimately, student learning. In the 2022-2023 school term consistent implementation of COS yielded quality teacher-child interactions, such as a teacher's sensitivity and responsiveness, and positive classroom climates contributing to greater school readiness for all children. Outcomes were notably stronger in students with significant emotional and behavior problems that interfered with learning. COS-C enhances both teacher-child interactions and classroom climate.

Using the COS framework, teachers understand what young children need in relationship to feel safe and supported to learn in the classroom. COS focuses on creating individualized, high-quality interactions between adults and children. Teachers learned how to read children's needs from an attachment lens, then learned what interaction children needed to be successful in the classroom.

### **Goals and Outcomes**

During the 2022 – 2023 COS Coaches worked with the Putnam County Head Start Program, to identify goals that increase areas that needed strengthening as measured by CLASS and created an Action Plan that includes collaboration with each teacher.

Examples of some shared goals from COS were:

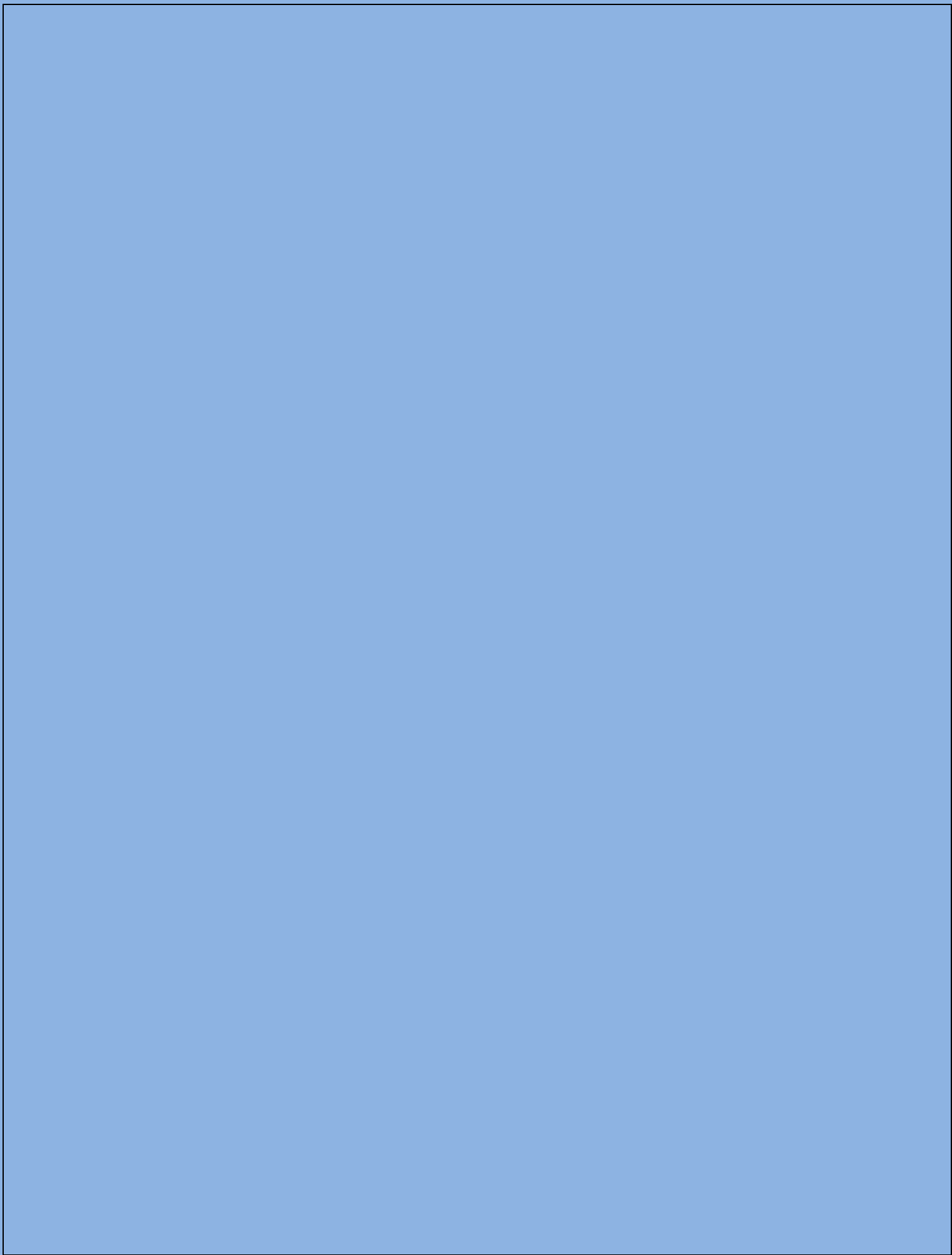
- Notice and observe where the child is on the circle (need for exploration or connection)
- Identify the child's behavior as a cue, miscue or clue to the need on the Circle
- Teacher recognizes behaviors and needs that triggers a negative response from them
- Teacher understands meaning behind children's challenging behavior
- Teacher recognizes ruptures in circles and seeks to repair (i.e. teacher-child, child-child, teacher-family)
- Teacher is able to hold and help child manage different kinds of emotions (i.e. Being With Exercise, i.e. joy, curiosity, sadness, anger, fear, shame)
- Teacher feels competent to meet social-emotional needs of the children in the classroom
- Teacher feels competent to meet learning needs of the children in the classroom
- In the classroom, children trust the adults in charge and know what to expect
- In the classroom, the adults display a calm, confident presence
- The classroom environment (structure, organization, routines, transitions, etc) is relationship-friendly
- Teacher and family have a good relationship
- Teacher displays delight in their relationship with children
- Teacher enjoys her job

### **How reaching our goals were measured?**

Measurable data outcomes, helped us see the difference that COSP implementation was making in the classroom environment, within individual behaviors, and in relationships between teacher-child. Outcomes provided the coach with data on areas that needed to continue to be focused on for observations and served as the foundation for reflection and feedback (PBC component 3). Our classrooms also use measurable outcomes (i.e. Classroom Scoring System, CLASS, etc.), useful to consider how COSP Classroom Coaching shared goals can be tied to those outcomes. Examples of measurable outcomes, typically around frequency, intensity, and duration of behaviors, include:

- Reduction in frequency, intensity, and duration of challenging behavior
- Increase in child's cooperation
- Increase in child's compliance
- Increase in child's impulse control
- Increase the frequency that teacher is able to identify and respond appropriately to needs on the Circle
- Decrease frequency, intensity, duration of child's miscues
- Increase frequency of direct cues for learning and connection
- Increase capacity of teacher to repair ruptures
- Increase in teacher reports in feeling more competent in meeting children's relational needs
- Increase in child's capacity to utilize adults for support (i.e. co-regulation, exploration, etc)
- Increase in a child's learning and developmental outcomes (i.e. letter recognition, concept development, etc).





# *Putnam County Head Start Program*

## *Highlight Lights 2023*

- *6-Six Week Summer Transition and Enrichment Program Offered*
- *Covered outdoor learning spaces were created with special one-time-funding*
- *Continued implementation Of Trauma Informed Curriculum (COS) (Included an expanding access to more then 25 mental health organization that offer mental health services)*
- *Awarded a 2<sup>nd</sup> \$10,000 Trauma Grant that is being used to build a trauma informed/trauma responsive community*
- *Community Transformation Grant (Targets children with social-emotional needs ages 0-8.*
- *Parenting Curriculum was successfully implemented (Ready Rosie)*
- *New Collaborations with Early Childhood Mental Health*
  - *Just For Mens Mental Health*
  - *Collaborative Healthcare and Training institute*
  - *Bruthas Bout Bizins, INC*
  - *Resilient Middle GA*
  - *Mind is Unique Counseling Services*
  - *GA Association For Infant Mental Health*

