

Early Childhood Education Programs Overview



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PPS Early Childhood Education Programs

Agenda:

- Program Overview
- Funding & Slots
- Grant Requirements
- Curriculum & Services Provided
- Why Early Childhood?
- Program Accolades
- Program Challenges
- Looking ahead...
- Questions & Comments



Program Overview

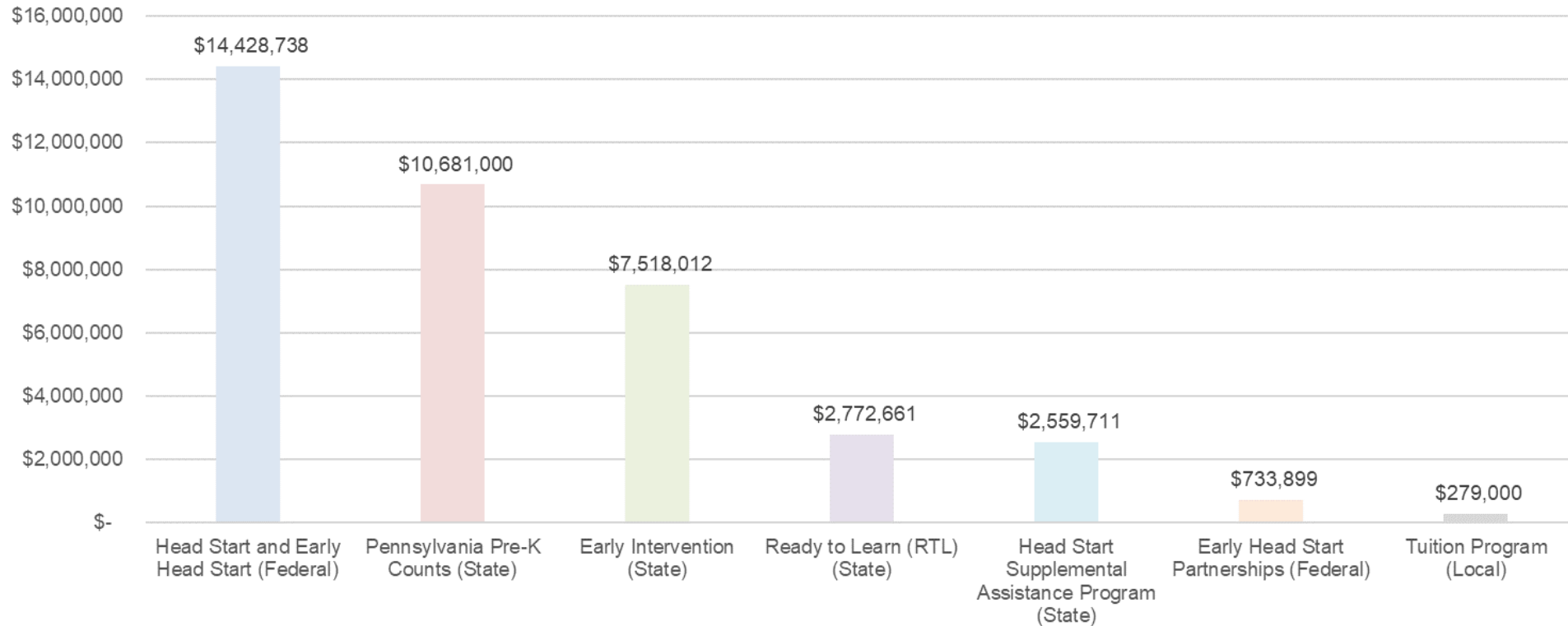
What is included in the Early Childhood Education Programs?

- The Pittsburgh Public Schools Early Childhood Education Programs provides services to almost 2,300 students from prenatal through age 5 across the city of Pittsburgh.
 - 84 Early Childhood/Preschool classrooms
 - 4 Early Intervention classrooms
 - 6 Early Head Start (EHS) infant-toddler classrooms
 - 24 EHS home-visiting families from prenatal through 36 months
 - 25 different child care partners (Pre-K Counts, HSSAP, & EHS CCP)
 - Early Intervention services are provided to 1,614 preschoolers per year
- Early Childhood Education Program funding is provided by:
 - Federal Head Start (HS) / Early Head Start (EHS)
 - State Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP)
 - PA Pre-K Counts (PKC)
 - Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships (EHS CCP)
 - Ready to Learn (RTL)
 - Early Intervention (EI)
 - Tuition (private pay)



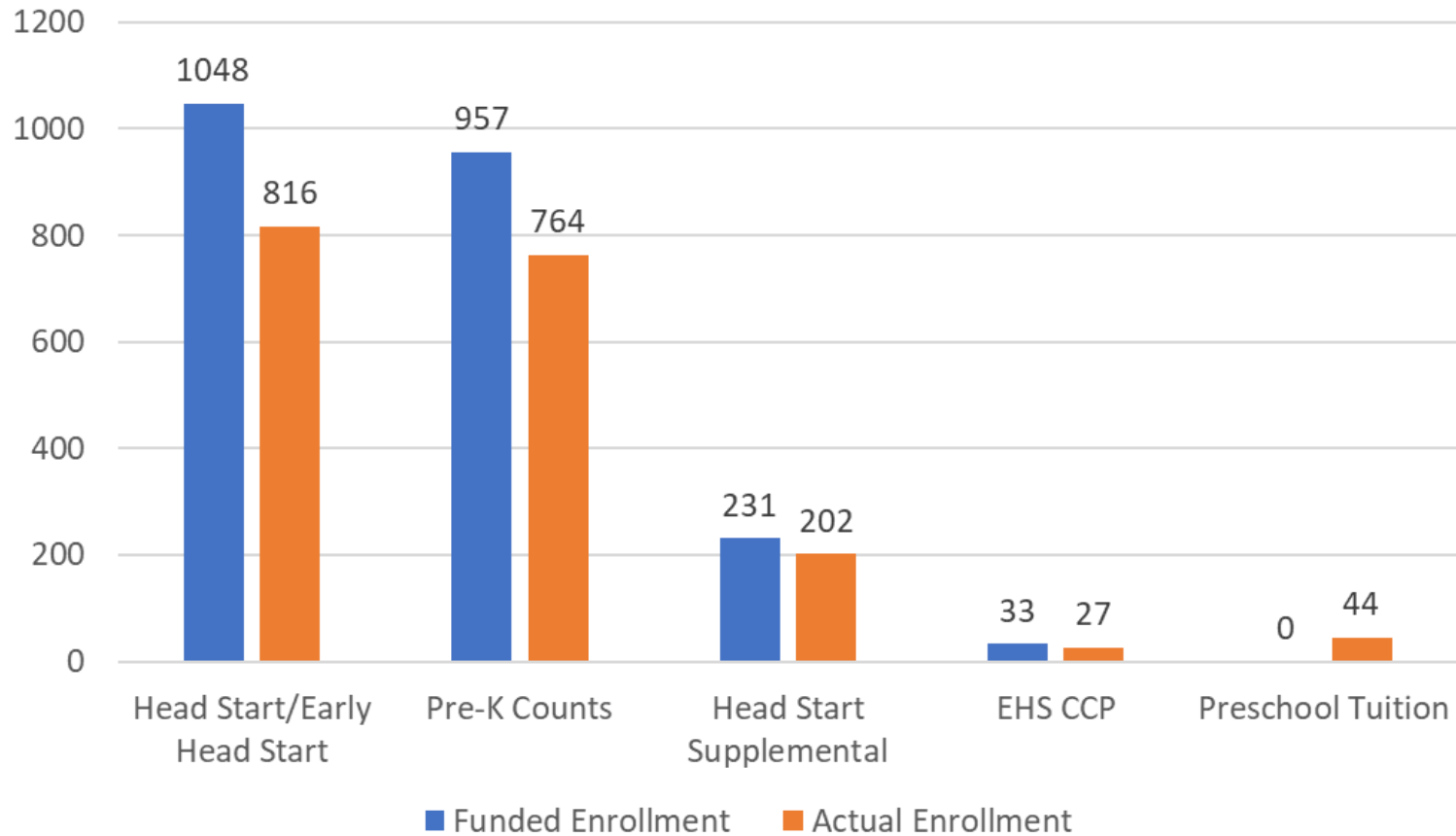
Early Childhood Education Programs Funding

**Pittsburgh Public Schools
Early Childhood Education Department
2023-24 Funding Sources (Actual)
Total Funding = \$38,973,021**



Early Childhood Education Programs Slots

Early Childhood Education Program Enrollment



Total Funded Enrollment: 2,269

Total Actual Enrollment: 1,853



Grant Requirements

Head Start, Early Head Start, HSSAP, and EHS CCP follow the [Head Start Performance Standards](#).

Pre-K Counts adheres to the [PreK Statue, Regulations and Guidelines](#).

Staff Qualifications:

- All teachers have at least a Bachelor's Degree and PA certification in Early Childhood Education. Over 60% also have a Master's Degree.
- Family Services Specialists and EHS home visitors have a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in social work, counseling, child development, or a related field.
- All Education Assistants (EAlls) have at least a CDA (Child Development Associate Credential) or Associate's Degree.

Additional Requirements:

- Use of an Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) approved curriculum & assessment tool.
- Screening of all students within 45-days of enrollment (developmental, social-emotional, and health screenings).
- All child care partners are a STAR 3 or 4 (quality rating).
- We must provide at least 180 days of instruction.
- Preschool ratio of 1:10 and EHS ratio of 1:3.



Grant Requirements

Main differences between the grants:

- **Head Start, Early Head Start, HSSAP, and EHS CCP** serve children from families who are 100% of the Federal Poverty Level or lower.
- **Pre-K Counts** serves children from families who are below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- Head Start uses the Classrooms Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) to monitor classrooms.
- Pre-K Counts and HSSAP use the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) to monitor classrooms.
 - Both tools look at the classroom environment as well as teacher/child interactions and are rubric based.
- Head Start requires that we have a Policy Council in which at least 51% of the members are current program parents.
- Head Start allows us to enroll children on as soon as they turn 3-years-old and also offers infant/toddler services (Early Head Start).
- Pre-K Counts allows us to enroll children who turn 3-years-old on or before September 30th (the kindergarten start date).



Curriculum & Services Provided

The ECE Program provides comprehensive services to support the whole child and their family, including:

- Education
- Nutrition
- Mental/Behavioral Health
- Physical Health
- Social-Emotional Health
- Cultural Responsiveness
- Conscious Discipline
- Family Engagement
- Early Intervention Services



Curriculum & Services Provided

Early Childhood/Preschool Curriculum



The ECE Program adopted a new curriculum for the 2023-24 school year – [Frog Street Pre-K!](#)

- *Frog Street Pre-K* is a comprehensive curriculum that integrates literacy, math, science, social studies, and the creative arts into nine thematic units (approx. 1 theme per month).
- [Conscious Discipline](#) is also embedded into the daily routines of the *Frog Street* curriculum to help support student social-emotional learning as well as help students develop their self-regulation and problem-solving skills.
- *Frog Street* includes adaptations for learners with diverse needs, such as dual-language learners, those with IEPs, and those performing above grade level.
- It is aligned to the PA Early Learning Standards, the Common Core Standards, and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.



Curriculum & Services Provided

Early Head Start Curriculum



The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers & Twos

Our Early Head Start Program utilizes ***The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos***.

- *The Creative Curriculum* explores all aspects of young children's development and helps teachers to offer individualized experiences to all of our students as they develop and grow.
- It is also aligned to the PA Early Learning Standards and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.
- Our EHS Program is also implementing *Conscious Discipline* – specifically Babydoll Circle Time and breathing techniques.

Curriculum & Services Provided

Early Intervention Services

What is Preschool Early Intervention?

- It is specialized programming for children ages 3-5 who have developmental needs and/or disabilities.
- It is administered by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) through a collaborative effort between the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS).
- Children who display a 25% delay in one or more area qualify for services. The developmental areas are:
 - Physical (including vision and hearing), Cognitive, Communication, Social or Emotional, & Adaptive.
- Children are often referred to Early Intervention through routine classrooms screenings, pediatricians, or at the request of the parent.
- Once a child is eligible for EI services an IEP (Individualized Education Program) is developed collaboratively with the parent(s), therapists, and staff.



Curriculum & Services Provided

Family Services

Every classroom is assigned a Family Services Specialist (FSS) who...

- provides assistance to families during the application and enrollment process,
- helps parents with setting personal and family goals,
- helps families to secure housing, employment, and other resources as needed,
- encourages parents to become involved in their children's education by participating in parent meetings, district committees, and becoming part of our Policy Council,
- encourages families to attend parent trainings and events, and
- helps to recruit new students for the ECE program.

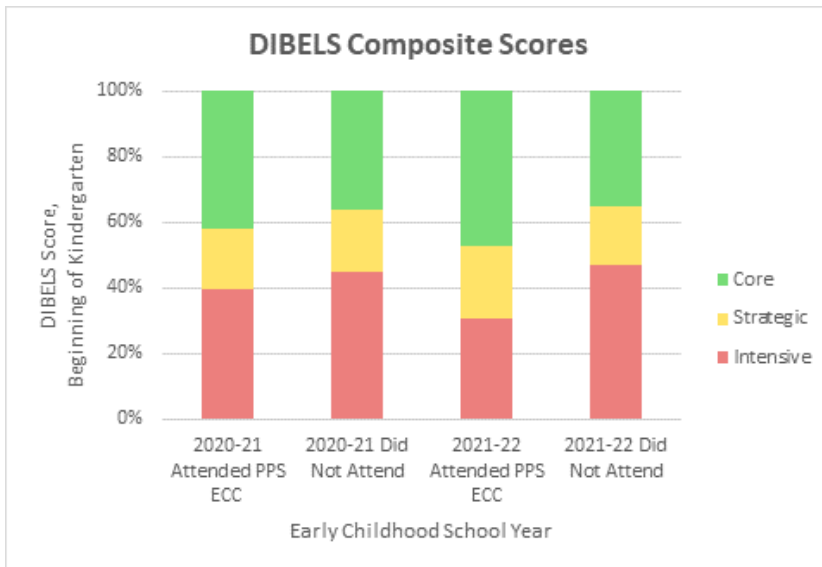


Why Early Childhood?

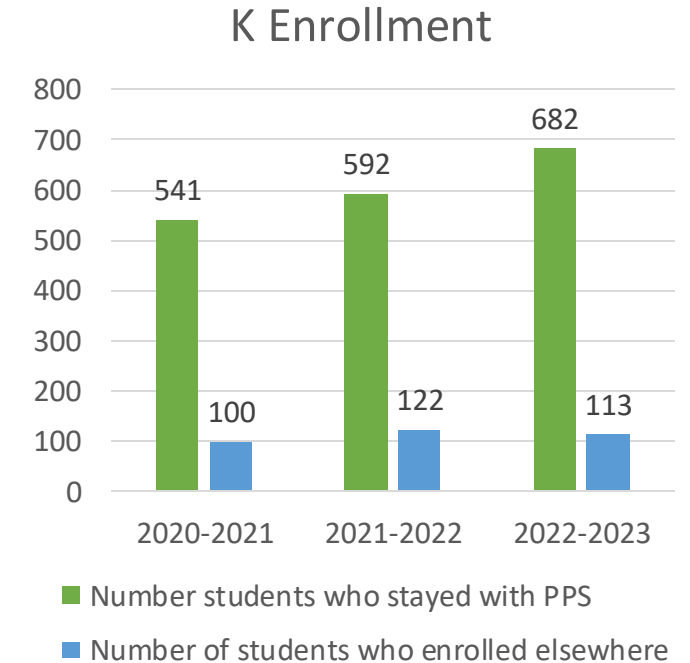
National research show us that children who participate in a high-quality early childhood education program are:

- Less likely to repeat a grade
- Less likely to be identified as having special needs
- More prepared academically for later grades
- More likely to graduate from high school
- Higher earners in the workforce

We see similar results across PPS.
Here is a sample of our DIBLES data:



The children who participate in our ECE Program are also more likely to stay with PPS.



Program Accolades

Federal



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Office of Head Start | 4th Floor – Switzer Memorial Building, 330 C Street SW, Washington DC 20024 edkic.ohs.acf.hhs.gov

From October 30, 2023 to November 1, 2023, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted a Focus Area One (FA1) monitoring review of Board of Public Education School District of Pittsburgh. This report contains information about the grant recipient's performance and compliance with the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) or Public Law 110-134, *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*.

The Office of Head Start (OHS) would like to thank your leadership and management team and staff for their engagement in the review process. Based on the information gathered during this review, it has been determined that your program meets the requirements of all applicable HSPPS, laws, regulations, and policy requirements.

Please contact your Regional Office for guidance should you have any questions or concerns. Your Regional Office will follow up on the content of this report and can work with you to identify resources to support your program's continuous improvement.

Our Head Start/Early Head Start Program was audited this year during the week of October 30th by the Administration for Children & Families for a Focus Area One Review. We received our report back on December 5th and had NO findings and were 100% compliant!!!

A few things that the Office of Head Start noted we excelled in were:

- The grant recipient's program structure and systems are designed to be responsive to community needs and informed by community strengths and resources.

The grant recipient's leadership and management team have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and the appropriate experience to execute Head Start program operations.

The grant recipient uses research-based and culturally appropriate curricula to support child outcomes.

- The grant recipient establishes a system of professional development to support delivery of quality education and child development services.
- The grant recipient develops community partnerships that meet the needs and interests of families.



Program Accolades

State

Pre-K Counts, HSSAP, and Early Intervention have oversight from the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) at the state level.

- 2023 was a competitive grant year for PA Pre-K Counts. Out of 313 applicants across the state, our grant application was ranked #1.
- We picked up an additional 112 PKC slots, which allowed us to add a new child care partner agency and expand both spaces in our district classrooms and existing partner locations.
- Early Intervention had an excellent audit during the 2022-23 school year. OCDEL highlighted our high inclusionary rate of preschool children with IEPs in typical classroom setting and the strong collaboration between the EC & EI staff to best serve children and families.
- Our Early Head Start Program also received an Equity Champion Award (gold level) for our diversity, equity, and inclusion work with the PRIDE (Positive Racial Identity Development in Early Education) Program at the University of Pittsburgh.



A	B	C
Family Engagement Up to 30 points max. for responses with explicit details/examples of family engagement policies and/or practices that align to PA PKC regulations and the Pennsylvania Family Engagement Birth through College, Career, Community Ready Framework for EACH of the six questions. This includes question 6a-f.	30 points	30
Budget		
Points awarded based on budget line item details with allowable expenses, partner budgets (when applicable) and budget narrative fully completed and match the grant proposal information.	500 points	500
Total Points	1195 points MAX	1120
Overall Ranking	1 out of 313	
County Ranking	1 out of 26	Allegheny



Program Accolades

Additional Recognition



Our Early Childhood Education Program has also received local, state, and national recognition for:

- Two classrooms housed inside the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh.
- One classroom housed inside the Carnegie Science Center.
- U.S. Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona's visit as part of his national Back to School Tour in September of 2022.
- Augmented reality learning games (CPI3e).
- The Green Play Spaces at our Early Childhood Centers built in collaboration with PNC Grow Up Great, the Western PA Conservancy, as well as our ECE staff and district facilities/operations team.
- Collaboration with the Carnegie Science Center to develop age-appropriate STEM activities and lessons.

Program Challenges

One of the Early Childhood Education Program’s biggest challenges is enrolling children who meet the Head Start Federal Poverty Level (FPL) (100%).

- We are current under-enrolled for Head Start/Early Head Start (we’re at 78% enrolled).
- All programs who are under 97% enrolled had to complete a root cause analysis and submit a Full Enrollment Initiative (FEI) plan to the Office of Head Start.
- Our root cause analysis showed gentrification across the city as one of the reasons for under-enrollment (lack of low-income & affordable housing for families).
- Another root cause noted was the starting hourly wages for many entry level positions (ex. \$15-20/hour), bumping even low-income families out of the 100% FPL bracket.
- Two other factors that also have some impact on our enrollment are that we are only permitted to offer a 6-hour program day and public transportation is limited in some areas of the city.

2023 Federal Poverty Level Chart

48 Contiguous States

# of Persons in Household	2023 Federal Poverty Level for the 48 Contiguous States (Annual Income)						
	100%	133%	138%	150%	200%	300%	400%
1	\$14,580	\$19,391	\$20,120	\$21,870	\$29,160	\$43,740	\$58,320
2	\$19,720	\$26,228	\$27,214	\$29,580	\$39,440	\$59,160	\$78,880
3	\$24,860	\$33,064	\$34,307	\$37,290	\$49,720	\$74,580	\$99,440
4	\$30,000	\$39,900	\$41,400	\$45,000	\$60,000	\$90,000	\$120,000
5	\$35,140	\$46,736	\$48,493	\$52,710	\$70,280	\$105,420	\$140,560
6	\$40,280	\$53,572	\$55,586	\$60,420	\$80,560	\$120,840	\$161,120
7	\$45,420	\$60,409	\$62,680	\$68,130	\$90,840	\$136,260	\$181,680
8	\$50,560	\$67,245	\$69,773	\$75,840	\$101,120	\$151,680	\$202,240
Add \$5,140 for each person in household over 8 persons							



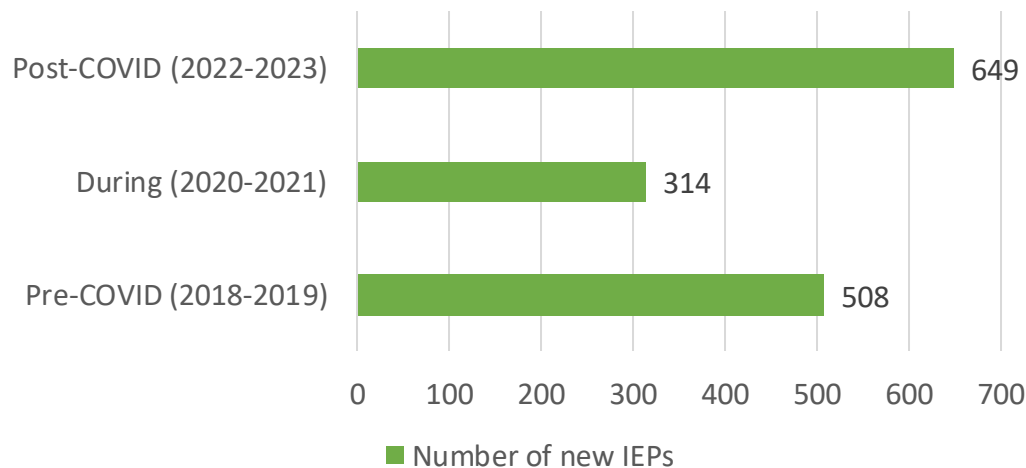
Program Challenges

Another challenge we are experiencing is the increase in number of students who have been referred to Early Intervention and/or need an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) post-COVID. Many of these students did not enter the program with an IEP or diagnosis and are being found during our routine screening process.

Much of this to the result of:

- Children missing well-child visits during the COVID lockdown
- Children having lack of exposure/experiences during COVID
- Children's speech & language development being delayed due to masking

The chart below shows an example of this increase:



Looking ahead...



Additionally, our 2024-2025 student application opens online on February 1st! Applications must be complete by March 22nd to be part of the lottery. Admission is rolling there-after for any open spaces.

As we look ahead, the Early Childhood Education Program is going to:

- Review our community assessment data to see if there are any neighborhoods within the city where median income is at or below the Head Start requirements and where we could open/move a classroom.
- Look at city demographic information to see if there are any neighborhoods with high populations of young children and few preschool offerings where we could open/move a classroom.
- Connect with accredited child care providers as possible partners with for before/after ECE program care.
- Continue to grow our footprint by increasing the number of community child care centers we have formal partnerships with.
- Collaborate with the other local Head Start and Pre-K Counts providers in the county to team up to increase awareness of public preschool options.
- Continue to collaborate with the ELECT program to provide services to our teen parenting population via Early Head Start.
- Increase our collaborations with local pediatricians and the infant/toddler Early Intervention providers to help with early identification of students with special needs.

Questions & Comments



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More information available on our website:
<https://www.pghschools.org/earlychildhood>

