

EMANUEL COUNTY EARLY HEAD START

2023-2024 Annual Program Report

The federally funded grant program, awarded to the Emanuel County Board of Education, provides comprehensive year-round center-based services to 48 infants and toddlers up to age three and 7 pregnant women. Six mixed-age classrooms comprised of eight infants and toddlers are supervised by two trained caregivers. Full-day services are provided 220 days per year, from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at the Early Learning Center adjoining Swainsboro Primary School utilizing the Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers revised edition, Ages and Stages-3, and Ages and Stages: Social-Emotional Second Edition, and The Ounce Scale assessment instrument.

Service Area--Emanuel County-Swainsboro, Twin City, Adrian, Oak Park, Summertown, Garfield, Lexsy, and Stillmore.

Services to Pregnant Women-Pregnant teens at local high schools and middle schools are target groups.

Funding Period- September 1st to August 31st

Financial Award for 2023-2024 Budget Program Year- \$923,569 Budgetary Expenditures-\$906,369 (Salaries, fringe benefits) \$12,868 supplies (operating expenses) and \$17,200.00 Staff Training & Technical Assistance.

Proposed 2024-2025 Budget Program Year - \$944,869 Budgetary Expenditures – \$927,669(Salaries, fringe benefits) \$5,171 supplies (operating expenses) and \$17,200.00 Staff Training & Technical Assistance.

Family Eligibility-Head Start Income Guidelines Weighted Application to insure children and families most in need are served (parents in school or working). Ten percent of actual enrollment slots must be made available to children with disabilities each program year.

Governance-Emanuel County Board of Education-Fiscal Agent and Governing Body

Policy Council-3 Community Representatives and 4 Parents-Quarterly Meetings

Staff-

Director-Maria Daniels

Early Childhood/Disabilities-Christy Ellington

Family Services Manager-Wendi Ricks

Mental Health Consultant and Coach-Leslie Rowland

Health Services Manager-Courtney Dowd

12 Classroom Caregivers and 3 Support Staff-Total staff-19

Classroom Staff Credentials

AA Degree-5

Child Development Associate Credential-7

Staff Turnover-2

Community Partnerships

Approximately twenty-six partnership agreements between Emanuel County Early Head Start and local community resource providers help insure enrolled at-risk families have access to needed resources and services to help them become more self-sufficient.

Program Facts

Funded Enrollment	55	Meals Served by School Nutrition Program (Breakfast and Lunch)	14,063
Average Monthly Enrollment	48	Snacks Served	7,031
Infants and Toddlers Served	74	Number on Wait List	66
Children w/ Disabilities	9	Number of children with health insurance	49
Pregnant Women Served	14	Health Checks for Children	60
Total Families Served	57	Dental Exams for Children	58
Volunteer hours	1,840.55	Family Engagement Activities	37
Family Engagement Activity Attendance	460	Fathers Attending Activities	82
Newborns/Infants of Pregnant Women Enrolled	14	Enrollment Turnover Withdrew	22
Number of Children Exceeding 85% Attendance	17		

**Decrease in numbers due to COVID-19.

Transitions

3 year old transition	13
Number who entered Head Start Program	10
Number who entered another Early Childhood Program	2
Number who did NOT enter another Early Childhood Program	1

2020 Successful Federal Monitoring of program with no findings in the Focus Area One Monitoring Protocol in February.

2015-2016 SUCCESSFUL FEDERAL MONITORINGS OF PROGRAM with No Findings in the Head Start Key Indicator- Compliant (HSKI-C) review in January and Environmental Health and Safety review in March.

Community Assessment

1. Service and Recruitment Area

- a. The identified service and recruitment area for the program operations is Emanuel County, Georgia. The recruitment area includes Swainsboro, Twin City, Adrian, Oak Park, Summertown, Garfield, Lexsy and Stillmore.

b.

(i.) Number of children in the recruitment area (oasis.state.ga.us)

COMMUNITIES	PREGNANT WOMEN	< 1 YEAR	1-4 YEARS	TOTAL
Emanuel Co.	375	303	1,155	1,833

- c. Emanuel County Early Head Start is not proposing any child care partners at this time.

2. Needs of Children and Families (a-c)

The Emanuel County Board of Education serves as fiscal agent for the Early Head Start Program, which is funded to serve 55 infants and toddlers and pregnant women in Emanuel County. Full day, center-based services is provided to 48 infants and toddlers and 7 pregnant women in the Early Learning Center located at Swainsboro Primary School. The program operates 220 days a year from 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM.

Emanuel County Early Head Start serves children and families from the following racial and ethnic representation in the county: Caucasian 62.3%; African American 35.0%; Asian 0.8%; Hispanic 5.0%; American Indian 0.5%; Native Hawaiian 0.1%; and two or more races 1.4%. (US Census Bureau population estimates for July 1, 2023)

Demographic Make-Up of Children and Pregnant Women
Eligible for Early Head Start Services in Emanuel County
(2022 Georgia Kids Count Data, US Census, GA Department of Labor and
Community Partners)

	EMANUEL COUNTY	GEORGIA
Teen Pregnancies Ages 15-17 (per 1,000)	14.8% (7)	9.8% (2,181)
Teen Births Ages 15-19 (per 1,000)	31.1% (24)	16.6% (6,124)
Low Birthweight Babies	12.2% (36)	10.6% (13,148)
Babies Born to Mothers with >12 Yrs. of Education	19% (56)	11% (13,818)
Teen Repeat Births Ages 15- 19	N/A (3)	13% (841)
Infant Mortality	2	712
Population Under 5 Yrs.	6.4%	5.9%
Children Living in Poverty (2022)	34.3% (1,892)	19.5% (426,470)
Individuals Living in Poverty	1565	17.2%
Unemployment	4.1% (355)	3% (164,973)
Median Family Income	\$47,905	\$72,837
Families with Children with Annual Incomes > 150% of the Federal Poverty Threshold (2016- 2020)	39% (1,047)	25.5% (335,736)
Children Whose Parents Lack Secure Employment (2016-2020)	9.2% (479)	7.9% (176,954)
Children in Foster Care	21	N/A
Homeless Students	62	N/A
Children Living in Single- Parent Families (2016-2020)	43.8% (2,040)	33.7% (720,101)
Households with Children Receiving Food Stamps	1,479	311,433
Children Enrolled in WIC Program, Ages Birth-4 Yrs.	535	209,313
Students Eligible to Receive Free Meals	98.09%	N/A
Children Enrolled in Medicaid or PeachCare	4,757	1,359,953
Children Not Attending School Ages 3-4 Yrs. (2016-2020)	45.4% (231)	52.3%
Teens Who Are High School Drop- Outs (2016-2020)	10.9% (126)	4.6%
Teens Not in School and Not Working, Ages 16-19 Yrs. (2016- 2020)	9.8% (113)	7.9%
High School Graduation Rate	83.3% (205)	84.1%

In addition to the above data, the Emanuel County Department of Family and Children Services reported (as of April 2023) 5,586 food stamp households, 26 active TANF cases, 7,282 Medicaid families (adults and children). They also reported 21 children in foster care.

The Social Security Office reported 1,009 SSI cases in Emanuel County (from September 2023 until April 2024). The Emanuel County Health Department reported they are currently providing average monthly services to 7 pregnant women. Numbers have dropped drastically since the WIC (Women and Infant Care) Program is no longer handled at the local level. Parents receive benefits on a card each month, and their contact is in the regional office. They reported 258 children from birth to 5 years received immunizations from January 2024 to present and 396 health checks were performed on children. The Sunshine House Child Advocacy Center reported 40 new cases of child abuse in Emanuel County from September 1, 2023 to February 8, 2024.

Other Child Development Programs

Bright from the Start Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning collect data regarding the number of child care programs in Emanuel County. They reported 8 licensed day care centers and 3 family child care learning homes. The combined total of center-based slots in all centers is 385 (364 in child care centers and 21 in family child care learning homes). One day care center was not willing to give us the information we requested, so their information is not included in this report. Approximately 28 of the children enrolled in childcare centers attend the local Head Start. The US Census Bureau population estimations for 2021 reported 6.4% of the population is children under the age of 5 years in Emanuel County. The Georgia's Cross Agency Child Data System website

reported 138 children were served by a CAPS scholarship during the year 2021(CACDS). This is the most updated number available to the public.

In addition to childcare providers, Emanuel County Head Start has served 75 three-year-olds and 27 four-year olds during the 2023-2024 school year. Approximately 28 of the Head Start children are transported to a local day care center after the Head Start day ends. The Emanuel County Pre-K Program has served 217 four-year-olds, 152 of whom are classified as Category I (eligible for TANF, Medicaid, Food Stamps, SSI, PeachCare for Kids, or receive Free or Reduced Price meals). Southeastern Technical College's Child Development Center, a licensed facility, provided services to 45 preschool children birth to three years of age.

Children with Disabilities

Babies Can't Wait, the Georgia Early Intervention Program, provides data regarding the number of children with disabilities three years of age or younger in Emanuel County.

According to the state coordinator, their agency is currently serving 25 children with developmental delays in speech and motor skills. During the 2023-2024 program year Emanuel County Early Head Start has served 8 children with disabilities, 1 child is currently pending referral to Babies Can't Wait and two children are receiving private speech therapy. The program has exceeded the requirement that 10% of funded enrollment (55) opportunities must be made available to children with disabilities.

Emanuel County Early Head Start has a formal partnership agreement with Babies Can't Wait, which is renewed annually to ensure that enrolled infants and toddlers with disabilities receive all needed services on-site at the center. Last year we reported Babies Can't Wait had been on a 2 month delay for all children who have been referred from outside agencies within the state of Georgia. This has caused delays in getting children

identified for services however we have seen a drastic improvement within the last several months.

The Emanuel County School System Preschool Special Education program, located at the primary school, provides on-site services to all three-year-olds with diagnosed disabilities. Services to each three-year-old continues until the child transitions from Early Head Start to the preschool special education program.

Pregnant Teens

During the 2023-2024 school year, the three local high schools and middle school have referred 7 pregnant teens. Five pregnant women from the community also enrolled in Early Head Start services. Pregnant teens at the local high schools and middle school are the key target group again for Early Head Start enrollment as identified in the initial grant application and in the past annual community assessment results. Currently our Community Assessment shows a decrease increase of teen pregnancy in our county. The Kids Count Data Center reported a decrease in teen pregnancies among 15-17 year olds. Emanuel County had a 26.7% rate in 2021 compared to a 14.8% rate in 2022 with this being the most current data. Georgia's overall rate declined from 12% in 2018 to 9.8% in 2022.

Teen Pregnancies, Ages 15-17 (per 1,000) in Emanuel County (Kids Count Data)

Location	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Georgia	12.0%	11.1%	10.4%	9.9%	9.8%
Emanuel Co.	17.4% (8)	17.8% (7)	14.9% (7)	26.7% (13)	14.8% (7)

Community Resources

Emanuel County Early Head Start has established informal partnership agreements with approximately 26 resource providers in Emanuel County to ensure that enrolled children and their families have access to needed services. Each agency is contacted by staff for annual renewal of each agreement. Formal partnership agreements are signed annually with Babies Can't Wait, Emanuel County Head Start, Southeastern Technical College, Emanuel County Health Department, Sunshine House, Emanuel County Department of Family and Children Services, Emanuel County Schools and other agencies. Prevent Blindness offers free vision screenings on the enrolled 3 year olds once a year and the local health department conducts our annual immunization audit and flu vaccines.

3. Proposed Program Option and Funded Enrollment Slots

- a. Emanuel County Early Head Start will continue with a center-based program option to provide services to children and families. The option was selected based on the data collected in the community assessment that describes the services needed by the families within the service area.

PROGRAM OPTION – CENTER-BASED

	Center-Based	Pregnant Women	Funded Enrollment
EHS	48	7	55

- b. (i-viii) Emanuel County Early Head Start is not requesting a locally-designed program option variation waiver.
- c. The program selected the children and families for center-based services based on the data from the community assessment. Emanuel County Early Head Start will

continue providing services to 48 infants and toddlers and 7 pregnant women for 220 days per year. The education, health, nutrition and social service needs of eligible children and families were assessed in the data in the community assessment.

- d. (i-iii) At this time Emanuel County Early Head Start has no proposals for the funded enrollment slots. We are an Early Head Start program and we are not proposing to convert to Head Start slots.

4. Centers and Facilities

- a. There have been no additions, deletions, or changes to our location at this time.
- b. There are no minor renovations or repairs included within this application.
- c. There are no changes or requests for any facility activities at this time.

5. Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance

- a. Each Early Head Start weighted application collects family information and assigns points based on selection criteria. To insure families most in-need receive services, enrollment opportunities are given to the child with the highest number of points on the waiting list. Children with disabilities, receiving public assistance, experiencing homelessness and children in foster care are given more points on their application. Ten percent of funded slots are made available to children with disabilities. Enrolled families serve as the major referral source. Waiting lists are maintained for both income-eligible and over-income children.

- i. Flyers are placed in offices of community partners and in other public places to inform eligible families of services provided by the program for children with disabilities, experiencing homelessness, in foster care and pregnant women. The program also uses social media and the Emanuel County school

system website to recruit families. The program also partners with the local Department of Family and Children Services to recruit children in foster care and who are experiencing homelessness and Babies Can't Wait to recruit children with disabilities. The program has always met funded enrollment and maintained a waiting list.

Recruitment challenges that our program is expecting includes parents of children with disabilities or experiencing homelessness not applying for services. If the community partners fail to share information about the Early Head Start program with eligible families they are serving, we risk losing that possible referral for children in foster care, who are homeless, or who have a disability.

- b. The data manager calls or messages parents each morning within the first hour of program operation to check on reasons for absences and documents this in ChildPlus under Attendance. Staff implemented attendance monitoring activities to help parents understand the importance of children being present every day possible. Parents receive two monthly reports on their child's attendance and tardiness. Classroom caregivers write personal notes to the parents addressing the importance of the child attending every day possible. Parents who receive a below 85% Attendance Alert form due to unexcused absences may have a conference with management staff, if needed. If the chronic absences continue after conferencing with management a referral is made to the Mental Health Consultant. After school readiness data is aggregated in January, May, and August of each program year,






parents of children whose attendance is below 85% are given a brochure on the benefits of attendance. This brochure explains specific things the parent can implement into their daily routine that will help limit the child's absences in the program.

6. Education and Child Development

a. Center-based program

- i. The infant and toddler evidence-based curriculum for Emanuel County Early Head Start is *The Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers*.
- ii. *The Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers*, is built on sound child development principles about how children grow and learn. It is based on relationships and the daily routines and experiences of infants and toddlers. The Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers includes the goals for children's development and learning, the experiences through which goals will be achieved, what staff and parents do to help children achieve goals, and the materials needed to support the implementation of the curriculum.
- iii. Emanuel County Early Head Start aligned The Creative Curriculum with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five. The five essential domains of development, outlined in the Head Start School Readiness Act of 2007, provide the foundation for the School Readiness goals identified for all enrolled infants and toddlers. All goals, which are aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five, the *Georgia Early Learning Standards*, and the local kindergarten standards,

are also aligned with the program’s assessment tool, *The Ounce Scale*, to insure that curriculum activities match School Readiness goals and assessment tools. The chart below shows evidence of the alignment of The Creative Curriculum revised edition for infants and toddlers and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five.

The Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers	Alignment	Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five
To acquire thinking skills		Approaches to Learning
To learn about themselves and others		Social and Emotional Development
To learn about communicating		Language and Literacy
To acquire thinking skills		Cognition
To learn about moving and doing		Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development

- iv. The Emanuel County Early Head Start program will support staff to implement curriculum with fidelity by utilizing the Fidelity Tool for Infants, Toddlers, and Two’s Edition by Teaching Strategies.
- b. Home-based programs: (i-iv) we do not have home-based services.
- c. Our program will continue to use the Ounce Scale for our on-going assessment tool and the Ages and Stages 3rd edition and Ages and Stages Social Emotional 2nd

Edition for screening. The program's formal assessment tool will provide key child assessment data as indicators in all domains have been aligned with our School Readiness goals. These tools have been chosen because they are age appropriate and evidence-based. At this time our program does not have any dual language learners enrolled. However, the Emanuel County school system provides onsite interpreters for all staff and families.

- d. Emanuel County Early Head Start considers parents an integral part of a child's learning experiences and includes parents in the development of the program's curriculum and approach to child development and education through the following activities:
 - The Daily Schedule is posted in each classroom to inform parents and family members of each child's daily activities at Early Head Start. The schedule includes predictable, repetitive routines while remaining flexible to meet the individual needs of each child and to allow caregivers to follow the biological rhythms of the child.
 - Bi-Weekly Lesson Plans are posted in each classroom. Caregivers implement bi-weekly age appropriate activities for infants and toddlers and turn them in bi-weekly for Early Childhood Manager to initial and make corrections and/or suggestions. Parents are encouraged to review their child's individual plan, provide input and initial lesson plan bi-weekly.
 - Cuddle Grams, which serve as written communication to parents, are completed by caregivers and made available to parents daily and are sent home at the end of each week. Cuddle Grams document the child's daily intake, output, mood, and nap(s) and record caregivers' observations of developmental milestones and progress.

- Conferences with Early Head Start families enable the Early Childhood Manager, parents, and caregivers to get a clearer picture of the whole child. Parents are invited to conference with the Early Childhood Manager and/or classroom Teacher to review their The Ounce Scale according to child's schedule. The Early Childhood Manager meets with parent/guardian to discuss Ages & Stages-3, and Ages & Stages: Social-Emotional-2 results. The classroom teacher or Early Childhood Manager shares school readiness progress and/or concerns identified in the classroom, screenings and ongoing assessments. Each parent is also encouraged to share progress and concerns observed in the home or away from the center. The parent and teacher and/or Early Childhood Manager together develop any necessary plan of action for the child. More frequent conferences may be initiated by either the parent or the Early Childhood Manager as necessary. Parents and caregivers conference informally on a day-to-day basis during arrival and departure times or by other means of communication to discuss each child. Parents are surveyed to get their suggestions for classroom or center activities that would be meaningful or important to them.
- Home visits are conducted by the childcare staff at least twice each year. Parental permission is obtained before early childhood home visits are made. Caregivers and parents share developmental milestones, progress, and concerns with each other.

e. We do not serve AIAN children.

7. Health

- a. (i-ii) Upon enrollment, management staff meet with the family to determine if the enrolled child has a medical and dental home in order to ensure continuous, accessible health and oral care for each enrolled child. The

medical and dental home information is documented on the Personal History Form. If a child does not have a medical and/or dental home, the management staff works with the family closely to secure one. Parents are asked to sign a release which allows dialogue and information exchange between health/dental care providers and staff to ensure appropriate staff are aware of health/dental needs or concerns of the child and therefore better able to assist families in meeting each need. The most current medical, dental, and mental health information is collected from the medical provider. If the child is not current based on the Georgia schedule of well childcare, arrangements are made to bring the child up-to-date. Management staff assists in securing needed appointments and follow-up on results, concerns, or needs, documenting any contacts or activities related to the health service. Transportation to medical/dental appointments is provided by the program if other resources are not available for the parent.

Each child is required to have immunizations recommended by the U.S. of Health and Human Services before entering the program. Immunizations include DTAP, PCV, Polio, Hepatitis A&B, MMR, Hib, and Varicella. The State of Georgia immunization certificate is kept in the child's file in the EHS office to ensure that each child remains current. Written notification is given to parents approximately one month before the child's next scheduled immunization date. Parents are required to have shots updated and/or completed and present written documentation (immunization certificate form 3231) to the Health Manager. If the program does not receive written documentation that the child's shots are updated

or completed within 30 days after the child's due date, the Health Manager works with the parent(s) to secure needed documentation. With parental consent, required medical documentation on enrolled children is obtained by fax and email through a collaborative partnership with local medical providers. If the child is not able to receive immunizations due to illness, etc., the parent is required to provide a written statement from the medical provider explaining why the child was unable to receive the shot and the possible date of rescheduling.

All medical and dental services are tracked by written documents and monitored regularly by the Health Manager and Data Manager. The Health Manager and Data Manager assist families in ensuring that the child follows the Georgia schedule of well childcare. If a child needs further testing, examination, or treatment for a known or suspected health or developmental problem, the Health Manager and Disabilities Manager assist the family in obtaining services, and efforts are documented in the child's record.

Infants and toddlers who are contagious and/or sick, according to our policies and procedure, are not allowed to remain in the center. Management staff assists parents in caring for sick children and follows up on treatment. The Policies and Procedures Manual and Parent Handbook outline procedures to follow when a child is sick. The updated procedures for covid have been added to the handbook.

The Emanuel County Early Head Start environment for infants and toddlers is safe and hygienic. Measures to assure safety include the selection and maintenance of appropriate furniture, equipment, developmentally appropriate toys, and the training of staff who care for toddlers. Hygienic environments are assured by maintaining clean

rooms with frequently mopped floors and shampooed carpets. Toilets, sinks, toys, and manipulatives are cleaned with appropriate disinfectant solutions daily. The toileting and diaper changing area is separated from the food preparation area by walls. Diapering tables are disinfected after each diaper is changed, and soiled diapers are disposed of properly. Staff exercise universal precautions when working with body fluids, rubber gloves are readily available, and staff are required to use them when handling body fluids. Classroom teachers have implemented a procedure for quarterly lead testing in the classroom which is documented on a results form.

Recognizing that maternal and infant health care is essential for ensuring normal pre- and postnatal development of very young children, Health Manager assists pregnant women in meeting medical appointments and securing appropriate health services and resources. Newborn 2-week visits are scheduled with the family by the Health Manager.

Early Head Start parents are given the opportunity to learn the principles of prevention, medical and dental health, emergency first aid, occupational and environmental hazards, and safety practices for use at home and at the center. In addition to general health topics, information on specific needs of individual children is made available to parents.

Adults and families in need of medical, dental, nutrition, and mental health services are referred to appropriate agencies. The Mental Health Consultant, a licensed counselor, coordinates child, family, pregnant women, and staff mental health services. She provides short-term counseling for situational problems such as financial crisis, family disagreements, decision-making, or relationship problems. For

more involved situations, referrals are made to a more qualified mental health professional to ensure timely and effective identification of and intervention in mental health concerns. The Mental Health Consultant observes Early Head Start children in the classrooms to screen for atypical behavior patterns as requested by parents, the Early Childhood Manager, or classroom caregivers. On-site consultations are available with the Mental Health Consultant to help design and implement program practices responsive to identified behavioral and mental health concerns. Mental wellness is promoted by offering group and individual education sessions on mental health issues. The mental health contacts and services are documented in each child's confidential records in Child Plus. The Mental Health Consultant conducts and coordinates on-site opportunities for staff, parents, and pregnant women in the areas of stress management, anger control, healthy relationships, positive child guidance, time management, dangers of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use, and mental wellness. The Mental Health Consultant is responsible for making appropriate referrals to substance abuse prevention and treatment services for any families affected by drug-related problems. Community resources are available to provide immediate intervention. Families needing long-term treatment are referred to professionals and/or treatment centers inside and/or outside the county.

All Emanuel County Early Head Start staff receive annual physical examinations which include a TB skin test or screener.

All meals served in the Emanuel County Early Head Start Program are prepared and served by employees of the Emanuel County School Food Service program.

Nutritious breakfasts, lunches, and snacks are prepared in the center lunchroom for each enrolled infant and toddler, and infant formula is prepared in the Early Learning

Center kitchen. Serving sizes are calculated in keeping with United States Department of Agriculture requirements based on each child's age. The school food service director is responsible for planning all meals for the program. The Health Manager works with the Lunchroom Manager to insure all children with special dietary needs, issues, or concerns receive individualized meals based on documentation provided by health professional office. The Board of Education has provided a new form for any child with a special dietary need.

8. Family and Community Engagement

a-b. The Early Head Start program values parents as their child's first teacher. Parent and engagement in Early Head Start focuses on building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong relationships between parents and their children, and ongoing learning and development for both parents and children. Our goals are to support parents in their efforts to become more self-sufficient by achieving their education/career goals and to support families in helping their infants and toddlers meet school readiness goals. The program also connects families to community resources which provide services to help them meet family goals. The Family Engagement Coordinator provides Early Head Start parents with the following training opportunities:

- Researched Based Parenting Curriculum
- School Readiness
- Parenting Skills
- Child Development
- Family Literacy
- Medical Education
- Dental Education
- Nutrition Education
- Mental Health Education
- Safety Practices
- Budgeting & Money Management
- Community Resources

- Maternal & Child Health
- Father/Male Involvement

In addition to required parent training topics, parent surveys drive our planning to insure that parent needs/interests are met. Workshops are offered at various times: morning, lunch, afternoon, and evenings two to four times a month to accommodate the schedules of working parents and parents attending school. Parents unable to attend receive information in a timely manner. All workshops and family engagement activities include informative handouts to help parents gain useful information related to key topics. The Early Head Start Family Engagement program is committed to goal-directed, positive, culturally responsive and respectful relationships with families.

- c. Emanuel County Early Head Start selected Parenting the Nurturing Way as their researched-based parent curriculum. Brandi Hood from the local children's advocacy center, The Sunshine House, conducts workshops with the enrolled parents that cover the topics in the curriculum.
- d. (i-ii) Emanuel County Early Head Start's goal is to offer families both opportunities and support for growth to enable them to identify their own strengths, needs, and interests and to solve their own problems. Building trusting, collaborative relationships between parents and staff allows sharing and learning from one another in the Family Partnership Agreement Process. An effective Family Partnership Process will be executed according to the following procedures:
 - 1. The process must be initiated as early in the enrollment process as possible; preferably, before the child enrolls or as early after enrollment as possible.
 - 2. Staff involved must engage in collaborative partnership-building with families for mutual trust to be established.

3. The family's goals, strengths, needed services, and other support systems will be identified.
4. Family goal setting is based on individual family needs and wants.
5. Staff must be sensitive to family privacy and allow the parents (s) to choose how much personal information to share and whether or not and how the information is to be recorded.
6. The family partnership agreement process must provide families the opportunity to set family goals and an individualized approach for achieving them – family responsibilities, timetables, and strategies for achieving the goals are components of the agreement.
7. Staff will assist families in defining goals in measurable terms and how progress and goal accomplishment will be measured.
8. Written plans and anecdotal notes are used to help families document the agreement process and progress toward achievement of goals,
9. Emanuel County Early Head Start's Family Partnership Agreements will be documented on the FPA form whenever possible. If communication barriers exist, another acceptable form will be utilized in the family's best interest. All notes are tracked in ChildPlus under Family Services.
10. If it is determined that a family has a pre-existing plan, Family Services staff will contact the appropriate agencies and coordinate with them, to the extent possible, to support the family's accomplishment of the goals in the pre-existing plan. Staff involved in supporting the family in a pre-existing plan will document their efforts to participate in the process of supporting the accomplishment of goals.

11. Assessment of progress and documentation are ongoing as families move toward goal achievement.
12. The Family Partnership Agreements will provide the foundation for conversation with the family face to face. Information will be updated every 4 months or as needed.
13. The Family Services Manager will provide follow-up with the family to assess progress in the program and family's responsibilities in meeting the goals.
14. The Family Outcomes Assessment will be completed during the Family Partnership Agreement Process and up-dated throughout the year.
15. Early Head Start staff involved in the Family Partnership Agreement process will include, but not be limited to, the following: Early Childhood/Disabilities Manager and Health/Family Services/Pregnant Women's Manager.

Family Partnerships

1. All Early Head Start parents will be strongly encouraged to participate in a volunteer training program before they volunteer in the classroom. The Parent Committee and Policy Council members will be encouraged to recruit Early Head Start parents and community volunteers.
2. Other means of soliciting volunteers will be through newsletters, parent training programs, and other parent communications.
3. In the spring during the annual self-assessment, parents will be asked to make comments and suggestions for program improvement for the coming year. During enrollment and the annual Fall Orientation parents will be surveyed to

determine activities they want planned during the year. These activities will be presented to the Parent Committee and Family Engagement Coordinator for consideration and additions.

4. During enrollment, information will be gathered about special talents the parents would like to share with other parents or the children. The Family Engagement Coordinator will strongly encourage both the parents and the staff to utilize those parents with special talents.
5. The Family Engagement Coordinator and Family Service Manager will also act as advocates in seeking services from the community for Early Head Start families.

Community Resources

The Family Services staff will provide each enrolled family with a Community Resource List which is located in the Parent Handbook, and will explain its contents and uses to them. Each year the Community Resource List will be updated prior to distribution. A copy of the community resource list is located in the front office for staff access. The current community resource information will be provided to families via news-letters, fliers, and a Community Resource Fair held annually.

9. Services for Children with Disabilities
 - a. Ten percent of Early Head Start's funded slots are reserved for infants or toddlers with disabilities. The eligibility of the participating children with disabilities is determined by Babies Can't Wait. Referral for services is made by Early Intervention, the Babies Can't Wait program in Georgia, other community resources, or parent requests. Each infant/toddler has an IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) designed to meet the needs of that infant/toddler and his/her family. The IFSP is completed

jointly with the family and all resource agencies serving the family. On-site services for infants and toddlers with disabilities may include Speech Therapy, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Intervention Assistance. Infants and toddlers with disabilities are served in the regular classroom with typical peers in order for them to receive maximum benefits from the activities planned for all children. The Emanuel County Early Head Start application is designed to collect weighted criteria regarding family needs to insure that the program serves children and families most at-risk and in need of services. A child with a diagnosed disability receives a ranking of two, while a child with a suspected or potential disability ranks a one, and a child with no disability receives a zero for this eligibility criterion. Services to infants and toddlers with disabilities are provided in a center-based setting composed of six classrooms with two adult caregivers assigned to a multi-age class of eight children.

- b. Infants and toddlers with disabilities enrolled in Emanuel County Early Head Start are provided services under the supervision of the Babies Can't Wait staff therapists, Early Childhood and Disabilities Manager. Classroom caregiver's lesson plans reflect the individual needs/goals of each child in the class, including children with disabilities. Joint planning takes place regularly between early interventionists, therapists, and classroom teachers to ensure that each child's classroom objectives are in keeping with the Early Intervention goals. Following each child's session with his/her service providers, feedback is provided to classroom staff regarding progress in the targeted areas and suggestions for classroom activities to utilize toward meeting goals. Staff and parents also communicate regularly about each child's daily classroom participation and progress. IFSP's are reviewed at least every six months

with parents, Service Coordinators, therapists, and when possible Early Head Start to assess the progress of each child and to update his/her goals and objectives. Updated IFSP's and IEP's are kept in the child's file and the classroom for individualization. Infants and toddlers with disabilities are referred to the Emanuel County Preschool Special Education Program when they become three years of age. The preschool special education program is housed at the Early Head Start site, and the Coordinator works closely with Early Head Start in serving as a valuable resource for preschool children with a wide range of disabilities. Emanuel County Preschool Special Education serves three year olds in the Center, in their homes, and the local Head Start Program depending on the severity of the child's disability. All special education records are transferred to the preschool special education coordinator by the Early Head Start Disability Manager. Six months before the child turns three the Early Childhood and Disabilities Manager contacts the parents to complete the child's transition plan prior to the child's actual transfer into the appropriate program for three year olds with disabilities. The Early Childhood and Disability Manager arranges for each child to visit the Preschool Special Education and/or Head Start classroom in order for the child to become more familiar with the environment. The child will visit with his/her family and Early Head Start classroom caregiver who is available to help ease the transition into the new environment if necessary.

10. Transition

- a. Emanuel County Early Head Start staff will assist parents in becoming their children's advocate as they transition into Early Head Start, Head Start, The Preschool Special education program, or another child care setting, through

activities geared to education and preparing parents for transition and for their continuing role in their child's education. These activities include, but not limited to, trainings held on the local level which provides information to parents to prepare them to exercise their rights and responsibilities concerning the education of their children in the school setting. These trainings may be provided by a variety of sources the Family Engagement Manager, other Head Start staff, Mental Health Consultant, and other LEA staff. In addition, packets of written materials focusing on transition issue will be distributed early in the program year to children who will be transitioning between settings. For infants and toddlers enrolled in Early Head Start, a transition plan will be written at least six months prior to the child's third birthday. This plan will take into account the following: the child's health status and developmental level, progress made by the child and family while in Early Head Start, current and changing family circumstances, and the availability of Head Start and other child development or child care services in the community. A parent/teacher conference is held near the end of the child's participation in the program to enable parents to understand the child's progress while enrolled in Early Head Start. The child's teacher will go over the school readiness goals and benchmark chart to show all progress from 6 weeks to age 3 depending on age when child enrolled in the program. As appropriate, a child may remain in Early Head Start, following his or her third birthday, for additional months until he or she can transition into Head Start or another program. In cases such as this, the child and family will be included in transition activities with the children and families who will transition out of the program at the same time. The

continued involvement of Early Head Start parents in the education and development of their children is promoted through activities geared to assist parents to communicate with teachers and other school personnel so that parents can participate in decisions related to their children's education. These activities may include the following: transitional IEP meetings, visits to the classrooms at the next educational level, transition breakfast with Head Start Director, and special events where teachers at the new program meet with the children and families.

- b. We do not offer Head Start services.
- c. Our students do not transition between programs

11. Services to Enrolled Pregnant Women (a-c)

Upon enrollment in Early Head Start, the management staff conducts an initial assessment with the pregnant woman to obtain information for the Family Partnership Agreement. If, in the intake process, it is determined that the pregnant woman does not have an ongoing source of continuous, accessible health care, dental care and/or health insurance coverage, an immediate referral is made to the appropriate source of care that will meet her needs. A form is provided for the medical and dental providers to complete for verification of services.

Within 2 weeks after each infant's birth, the newborn visit is scheduled by the Health Manager to offer support and identify family needs. The collaborative with Emanuel County Health Department insures seamless prenatal and postpartum health services for the pregnant woman and newborn through the

Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

Services to the mother and infant continue 6 months postpartum or until the baby is enrolled into the Early Head Start center.

Emanuel County Early Head Start in collaboration with Emanuel County Health Department's WIC program will ensure that each enrolled pregnant woman has access to nutritional information regarding her pregnancy and a current and on-going nutritional assessment throughout her pregnancy. Referrals are made based on the nutritional assessment and needs of the individual. If a pregnant woman chooses not to participate in WIC, the program obtains information from her medical provider to ensure that appropriate prenatal nutritional care is being obtained. The Early Head Start Nutrition Director at the local Board of Education is available for nutritional assessments and counseling referrals as appropriate. Required health documents will be obtained by the Health Manager and any indicated follow-up services will be monitored and tracked.

Monthly contact will be made with all enrolled pregnant women through social media, email, telephone and/or face-to-face contact to provide education on fetal development, the importance of nutrition, the risks of alcohol, drugs and smoking, labor and delivery, postpartum recovery, prenatal depression, infant care and safe sleep practices, and the benefits of breastfeeding. The program will also provide this information to fathers, partners or other relevant family members as appropriate.

Florida State University's Partners for a Health Baby curriculum provides the framework for the instructional component for serving pregnant women. The

curriculum is divided into two parts: Before Baby Arrives for the pregnant woman and Baby's First Six Months for the new mother. Each enrolled pregnant receives the full packet to cover the prenatal and postpartum stages of pregnancy to share with the father, partner or relevant family members.

The Early Head Start Mental Health Consultant will provide mental health services to all enrolled pregnant women including depression screenings and intervention services, as well as referrals to any other appropriate mental health professionals as needed.

Referral sources for the Emanuel County Early Head Start Pregnant Women services will include, but not limited to, the following community partnerships: Emanuel County School System, Southeastern Technical College, Emanuel County Department of Family and Children Services, Emanuel County Health Department, Early Intervention, ABC Women's Clinic, the local gynecologist and pediatrician with whom we have formal partnership agreements, and current enrollees of Emanuel County Early Head Start. Pregnant women may also be enrolled based on self-referrals.

12. Transportation

- a. Emanuel County Early Head Start does not provide child transportation services at this time. Based on parent feedback, transportation is not a barrier for our families getting to and from our center. However, our local school system does provide a bus or van for home visits.
- b. After all other resources have failed, we will refer our families to the local taxi and UBER services.