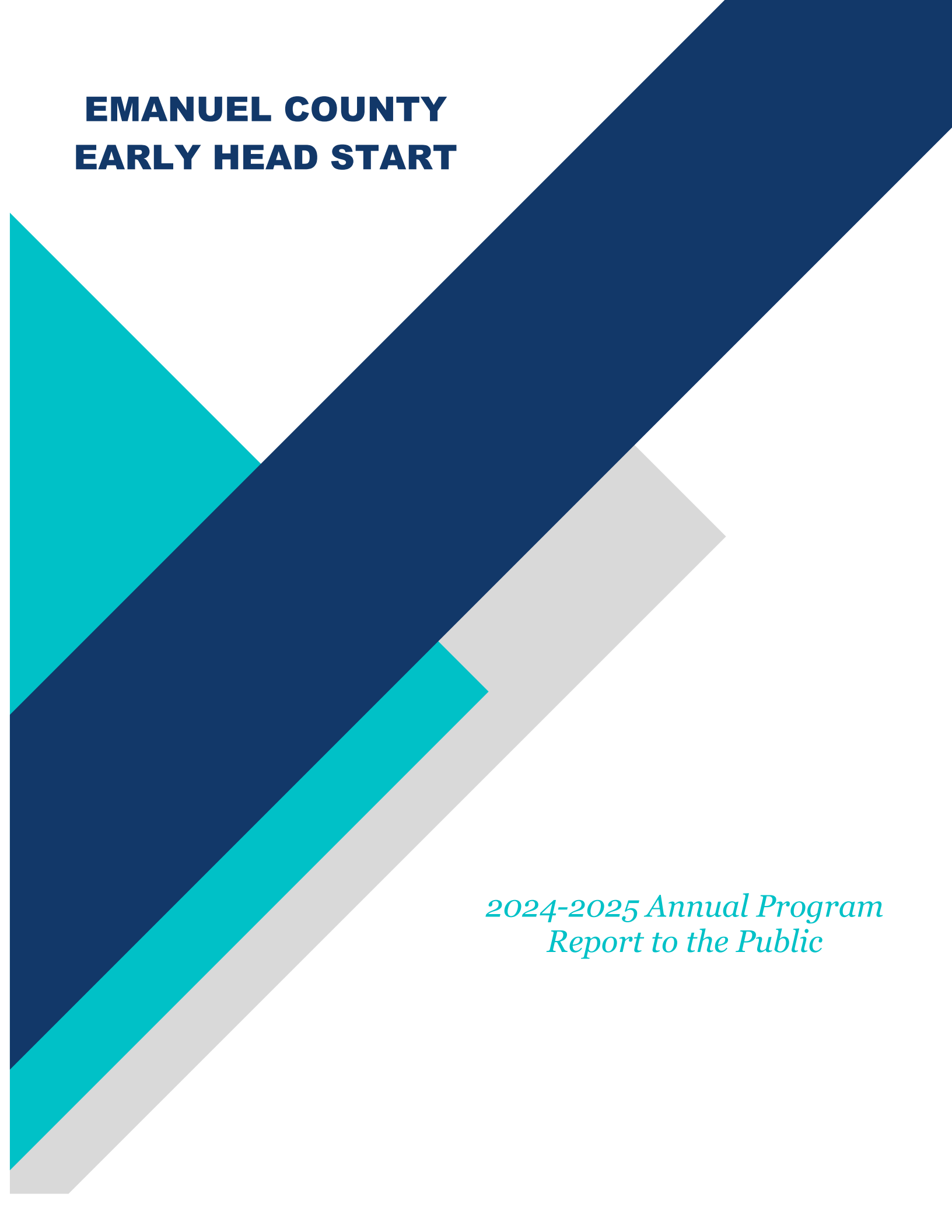




# **EMANUEL COUNTY EARLY HEAD START**

*2024-2025 Annual Program  
Report to the Public*



Thank you for taking the time to review the Emanuel County Early Head Start Annual Report to the Public. This document aims to share data and updates from our center-based program for the program year. It is available to the public on the Emanuel County School District website, <https://elc.emanuel.k12.ga.us>. Additionally, parents may request a copy of this report at any time, and it will provide to them.



# **EMANUEL COUNTY EARLY HEAD START**

## **2024-2025 Annual Program Report to the Public**

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 new Early Learning Center adjoining Swainsboro Primary School utilizing the Creative Curriculum, Ages and Stages-3, and Ages and Stages: Social-Emotional, 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.

### **Emanuel County Early Head Start Philosophy**

Emanuel County Early Head Start is built on a two-fold belief system: the years from birth to age three represent a critical period in the development of a child, and a positive, nurturing environment with consistency in loving adult care giving will enhance a child's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development; and the parents, as the child's first and most important teachers, when equipped with necessary skills and resources, can become self-sufficient members of society. Pregnant teens represent an especially vulnerable and at-risk population in need of intensive prenatal and parent education services to increase their skills in becoming more effective parents and in completing educational goals toward economic independence.

## **Emanuel County Early Head Start Funding Sources**

**Funding Period- September 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>**

**Financial Award for 2024-2025 Budget Program Year - \$927,669 Program Operating (Salaries, fringe benefits, etc.) \$5,171 supplies (operating expenses) and \$17,200.00 Staff Training & Technical Assistance – Total of 944,869 for total operations**

**Proposed 2025-2026 Budget Program Year - \$927,669 Program Operating (Salaries, fringe benefits, etc.) \$36,660 supplies (operating expenses) and \$17,200.00 Staff Training & Technical Assistance – Total of 944,869 for total operations**

## **Emanuel County Early Head Start**

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 funded enrollment slots (6) 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- Meghan Simonin

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-6      Child Development Associate/ TCC Credential-5      No Degree- 1 (Enrolled in CDA Program)

Staff Turnover-8

## 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) | 6,596 |
| Average Monthly Enrollment                  | 48       | Snacks Served                                                  | 3,298 |
| Infants and Toddlers Served                 | 63       | Number on Wait List                                            | 88    |
| Children w/ Disabilities                    | 9        | Number of children with health insurance                       | 63    |
| Pregnant Women Served                       | 10       | Health Checks for Children                                     | 63    |
| Total Families Served                       | 57       | Dental Exams for Children                                      | 40    |
| Volunteer hours                             | 1,282.57 | Family Engagement Activities                                   | 29    |
| Family Engagement Activity Attendance       | 553      | Fathers Attending Activities                                   | 63    |
| Newborns/Infants of Pregnant Women Enrolled | 9        | Enrollment Turnover Withdrew                                   | 21    |
| Number of Children Exceeding 85% Attendance | 45       | Number of children accumulatively enrolled chronically absent  | 50    |

\*\*Attendance below 85% due to Covid, Doctor\Dental Appointments, Diarrhea, Colds, Fever, Parent Sickness, Strep Throat or coughs.

## Transitions

|                                                          |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 3 year old transition                                    | 14 |
| Number who entered Head Start Program                    | 11 |
| Number who entered another Early Childhood Program       | 3  |
| Number who did NOT enter another Early Childhood Program | 0  |

## Audit and Federal Monitoring Review

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.

There are no new compliance issues or findings for the 2024 Emanuel County Early Head Start audit.

## Community Assessment

### 1. Service and Recruitment Area

There is no change or updates in the service and recruitment area for Emanuel County Early Head Start due to no added towns in our county. We only have eight towns in Emanuel County which include Swainsboro, Twin City, Adrian, Oak Park, Summertown, Garfield, Lexsy and Stillmore.

### 2. Needs of Children and Families

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 exceeding the 1380 hours a year. We are located in the Early Learning Center at Swainsboro Primary School and operate for 220 days. Services are provided eight hours daily with the opening and closing times adjusted to meet the varying needs of working and student parents.

Emanuel County Early Head Start serves children and families from the following racial and ethnic representation in the county: Caucasian 62.8%; African American 34.5%; Asian 0.8%; Hispanic 4.9%; American Indian 0.5%; Native Hawaiian 0.1%; and two or more races 1.4%. (US Census Bureau population estimates for July 1, 2022)

**Demographic Make-Up of Children and Pregnant Women  
Eligible for Early Head Start Services in Emanuel County  
(2023 Georgia Kids Count Data, US Census, GA Department of Labor and  
Community Partners)**

|                                                      | <b>EMANUEL COUNTY</b> | <b>GEORGIA</b>     |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Teen Pregnancies<br>Ages 15-17 (per 1,000)           | 20.4%<br>(10)         | 9.7%<br>(2,186)    |
| Teen Births Ages 15-19 (per 1,000)                   | 36.4%<br>(29)         | 16.5% (6,238)      |
| Low Birthweight Babies                               | 9.7%<br>(28)          | 10.2%<br>(12,732)  |
| Babies Born to Mothers with<br>>12 Yrs. of Education | 20.1%<br>(58)         | 10.9%<br>(13,567)  |
| Teen Repeat Births<br>Ages 15-19                     | N/A<br>(4)            | 11.8% (729)        |
| Infant Mortality                                     | 1                     | 884                |
| Population Under 5 Yrs.                              | 6.5%                  | 5.9%               |
| Children Living in Poverty (2023)                    | 34.3% (1,914)         | 18.8%<br>(469,680) |

|                                                                                                |                |                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Individuals Living in Poverty                                                                  | 24.7%          | 13.6%              |
| Unemployment                                                                                   | 4.2% (372)     | 3.2%<br>(169,790)  |
| Median Family Income                                                                           | \$50,053       | \$74,632           |
| Families with Children with Annual Incomes > 150% of the Federal Poverty Threshold (2019-2023) | 45.9% (1,203)  | 25.1% (318,652)    |
| Children Whose Parents Lack Secure Employment (2019-2023)                                      | 8.8% (457)     | 8.0% (190,644)     |
| Children in Foster Care                                                                        | 21             | N/A                |
| Homeless Students                                                                              |                | N/A                |
| Children Living in Single-Parent Families (2019-2023)                                          | 42.07% (1,912) | 33.7%<br>(733,411) |
| Households with Children Receiving Food Stamps                                                 | 1,476          | 417,226            |
| Children Enrolled in WIC Program, Ages Birth-4 Yrs.                                            | 535            | 150,815            |
| Students Eligible to Receive Free Meals                                                        | 100%           | N/A                |
| Children Enrolled in Medicaid or PeachCare                                                     | 4,757          | 1,547,098          |
| Children Not Attending School Ages 3-4 Yrs. (2019-2023)                                        | 41.5% (228)    | 52.4%<br>(141,841) |
| Teens Who Are High School Drop-Outs (2019-2023)                                                | 12.6% (162)    | 4.8%<br>(29,120)   |
| Teens Not in School and Not Working, Ages 16-19 Yrs. (2019-2023)                               | 12.2% (156)    | 7.5%<br>(45,087)   |
| High School Graduation Rate                                                                    | 86.5% (243)    | 84.4% (113,735)    |



In addition to the above data, the Emanuel County Department of Family and Children Services reported (as of April 2025) 5,586 food stamp households, 41 active TANF cases, 9,600 Medicaid families (adults and children). They also reported 21 children in foster care.

The Social Security Office is no longer giving information on SSI cases in Emanuel County. 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 18 cases of child abuse, 45 cases of child sexual abuse, and 2 cases of neglect in Emanuel County from September 1, 2024 to March 14, 2025.

### **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 389 (363 in child care centers and 26 in family child care learning homes). Three day care centers were not willing to give us the information we requested, so their information is not included in this report. Approximately 23 students were enrolled in Head Start as of March 19, 2025. Because of loss of funding, and damage from Hurricane Helene, Head Start did not serve children for the majority of the 2024-2025 school year. Head Start did not provide transportation for the 2024-2025 school year. The US Census Bureau population estimations for 2023 reported 1,490 children under the age of 5 years in Emanuel County. The Georgia's Cross Agency Child Data System website reported 231 children were served by a CAPS scholarship during the year 2024(CACDS). This is the most updated number available to the public. The Emanuel County Pre-K Program has served 162 four-year-olds, 100 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 42 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 22 children with developmental delays in speech and motor skills. During the 2024-2025 program year Emanuel County Early Head Start has served 8 children with disabilities, 1 child is currently pending private speech therapy and 2 children is receiving private speech therapy. The program will exceed 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. Babies Can't Wait has been delayed 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 now have a Service Coordinator that works in Emanuel County with the school system.

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 2022-2023 school year, the two 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 have become 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 major increase of teen

pregnancy in our county. The Kids Count Data Center reported a drastic increase in teen pregnancies among 15-17 year olds. Emanuel County had a 26.7% rate in 2021 compared to a 17.8% rate in 2019. Georgia’s overall rate declined from 11.1% in 2019 to 9.9% in 2021.

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

| Location    | 2017      | 2018      | 2019      | 2020      | 2021       |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Georgia     | 12.3%     | 12.0%     | 11.1%     | 10.4%     | 9.9%       |
| Emanuel Co. | 13.9% (6) | 17.4% (8) | 17.8% (7) | 14.9% (7) | 26.7% (13) |

### 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. Chosen Program Option and Funded Enrollment Slots

Emanuel County Early Head Start is a center-based program option that provides services to children and families.

**PROGRAM OPTION – CENTER-BASED**

|     | Center-Based | Pregnant Women | Funded Enrollment |
|-----|--------------|----------------|-------------------|
| EHS | 48           | 7              | 55                |

#### **4. Centers and Facilities**

There was three dishwashers purchased and installed the Early Head Start classroom for washing dishes. Also, since our custodian retired there have been several custodians hired but have resigned from the job for various reasons. A new employee is in the process of being hired at this time.

Swainsboro Primary School paid for this position this program year, but for 2025-2026 we will pay fifty percent of this position.

The program has continued to follow the updated CDC COVID-19 guidelines, which includes on-going daily sanitation of the facility and increased sanitizing stations.

#### **5. Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance**

Our program has been fully enrolled all year and has not had enrollment or recruitment issues except with pregnant women. We updated our Eligibility Priority Criteria Form and policy and procedures to align with the updated performance standards to reflect the revised income definition and staff member.

We continue to utilize our partners to help with recruiting pregnant women and social media platforms.

Our program aggregates and analyzes data three times a year. During our current school readiness aggregation we found the majority of our students are above the 85% attendance at this time.

Unfortunately the other two times the attendance was under 85%.

#### **6. Education and Child Development**

There have been no changes or updates in education or child development due to no changes in assessment tool, screening tool, curriculum, and school readiness goals.

#### **7. Health**

There are no changes to the health components at this time. A full time nurse will continue to be on site for a fourth year to work with families to stay caught up on all health, nutrition and dental care requirements and to assist with the student's health and safety issues. She will be housed in the Early Learning Center wing and equipped with a fully functioning clinic. This position was paid for by a grant that was received in the county from the East Central Health District School Health Support Funds but

now is cost allocated 50% EHS and 50% Pre-K. A new optoacoustic emissions screener is continuing to be used onsite for hearing screenings completed by the nurse. It was calibrated this program year.

## **8. Family and Community Engagement**

There have been no changes in family and community engagement. The Sunshine House who previously carried out our evidence based parenting curriculum, Nurturing Parenting, trained a new employee to help our program implement the parenting curriculum that we had in place. The program has been able to offer workshops and trainings on site to parents just as we did before the pandemic.

## **9. Services for Children with Disabilities**

There are no changes or updates with services for children with disabilities. During the 2024-2025 program year Emanuel County Early Head Start has served 8 children with disabilities, 1 child is currently pending private speech therapy and 2 children are receiving private speech therapy. The program will exceed the requirement that 10% of funded enrollment (55) opportunities must be made available to children with disabilities. We updated our policy and procedures to reflect actual enrollment to align with the updated performance standards. We now have a service coordinator in Emanuel County that is employed with Emanuel County Board of Education.

## **10. Transition**

The Head Start Director met with our Early Head Start families during a Transition Breakfast held in our conference room on April 15, 2025. Families of children transitioning out of Early Head Start were allowed to tour the Head Start facility and meet with the teachers. There are no changes or updates at this time due to Head Start allowing children transitioning to visit center with COVID restrictions lifted.

## **11. Services to Enrolled Pregnant Women**

There has been no updates or changes to services to enrolled pregnant women due to our enrollment of seven.

## **12. Transportation**

Emanuel County Early Head Start does not provide child transportation services at this time. There are no changes or updates in transportation at this time due to being a small rural town our parents have transportation or they reach out to someone they know to help if needed. Based on parent feedback, transportation is not a barrier for our families getting to and from our center. After all other resources have failed, we will refer our families to the local taxi and UBER services.

## **Emanuel County Early Head Start School Readiness Data Aggregation June, July, and August 2025**

### **Classroom Data**

\*4 out of 6 classrooms have child/children with IFSP and/or IEP

\*2 out of 6 classrooms have 0 children with IFSP/IEP

Analysis of classroom screening and assessment data, based on the Ounce Scale indicators for prescribed age levels present in each classroom, and attendance, revealed that all children were developing as expected, with the exception of children with an IFSP, IEP, delay on Ages and Stages, Ages and Stages: Social-Emotional screening tool or receiving private speech therapy. Assessment age levels are birth to 4 months, 4-8 months, 8-12 months, 12-18 months, 18-24 months, 24-30 months, 30-36 months, and 36-42 months.

### **Program-Wide Data**

\*Program-level data aggregation included 6 Infants, 15 one-year-olds, 18 two-year-olds, and 17 three-year-olds

\*3 Children have IFSP and 4 child has an IEP

\*4 Children are receiving private speech therapy

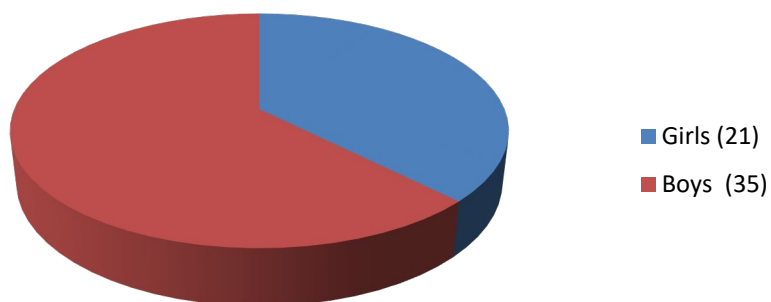
\*1 Child Pending

\*44 children are developing as expected and 12 need development. 56 children were enrolled June through August. Two girls out of 21 need development and 10 boys out of 35 need development.

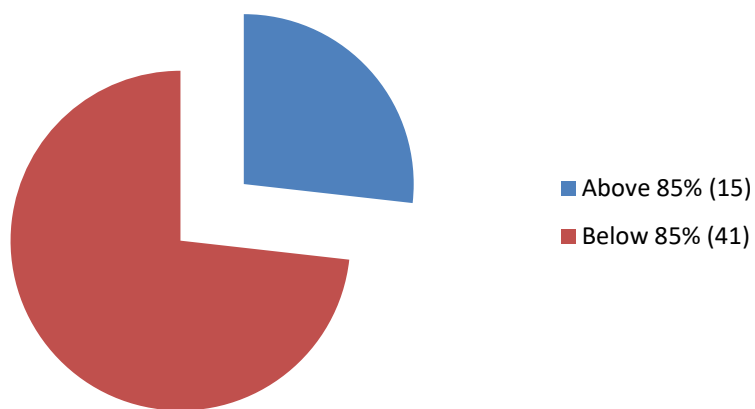
\*Program-level data aggregation reported 0 infant needs development, 0 one-year-old needs development, 5 two-year-olds need development, and 7 three-year-olds need development.

Serving children in mixed-age classrooms results in enrolling infants and toddlers throughout the program year. Therefore, date of enrollment and age of child impacts the ratings on the child's School Readiness benchmarks.

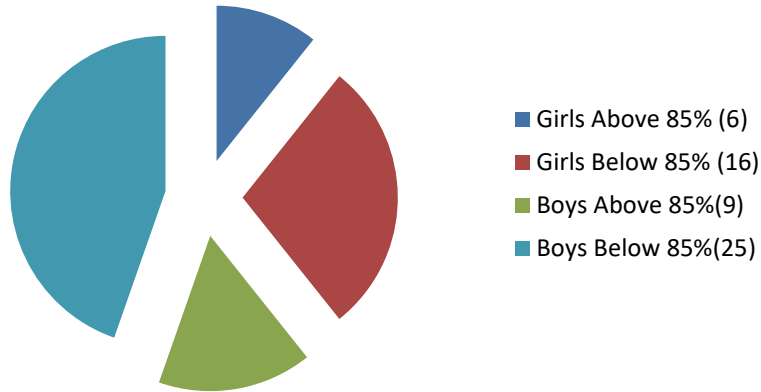
### EHS Enrollment (Male and Female)



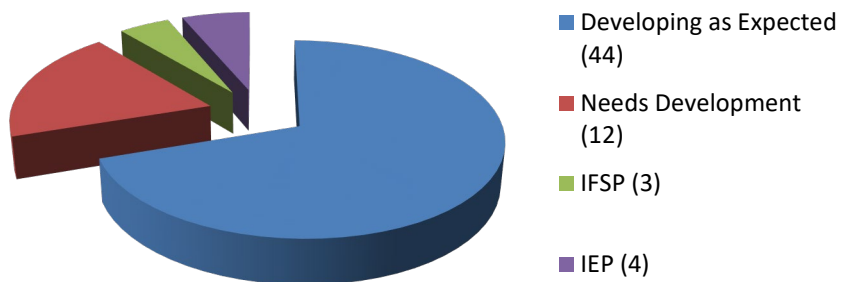
### Average Attendance All Children



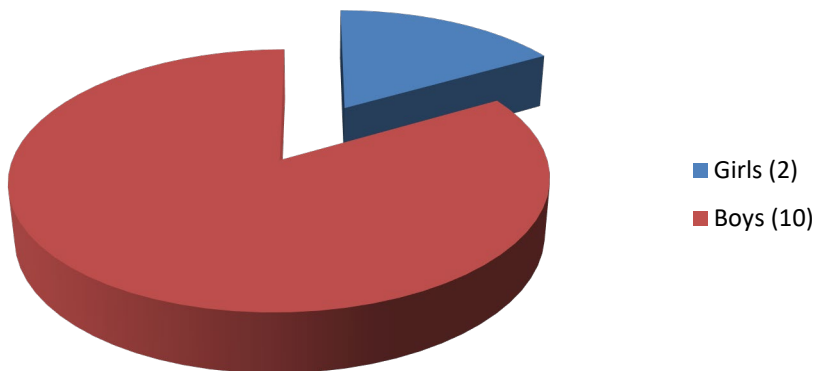
### Average Attendance Male and Female



### Assessment Data All Children

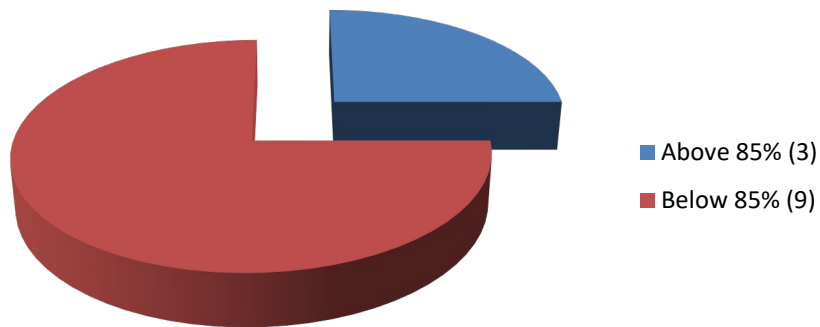


### Needs Development (Comparison by Sex)





## Needs Development (Attendance)



## Development By Participant Year

