



POLICY COUNCIL AGENDA



6 November 2025



5:00 - 6:30 PM

TOPIC	ACTION	PAGE #	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
Call to Order	None	NA	Jenny Reyes
Corrections/additions to the Agenda	Vote?	1	Jenny
Approval of Consent Agenda:			
• Minutes of October PC Meeting		2	
• Financial report	Vote	5	Jenny
• October Director's Report (w/ personnel info)		8	
• Program Information summary		11	
Training:			
ERSEA and Financial Reports	None	NA	Sherrie & Linda
Director Update	None	NA	Lesa Larson
Old Business			
• Enrollment Report	None	NA	Sherrie Scott
New Business			
• Annual Report	None	12	Sherrie
• Financial Audit	None	28	Linda Lorette
• Change of Scope application status	None	None	Linda
• Transportation update	None	None	Linda
• Governance Screener	None	29	Lesa
• Health and Safety Screener	None	30	Lesa
• ACF-OHS-IM-25-05 - Fiscal Year 2026 Monitoring Process for HS Recipients	None	31	Lesa
• ACF-OHS-IM-25-06 - Addressing Vacant Slots Due to Chronic Absenteeism in HS Programs	None	34	Lesa
Parent/Community Reports	None	NA	Jenny
Adjournment	Vote	NA	Jenny
Next Meeting: December 4 2025			



Heartland Early Education Policy Council Minutes 10.02.2025

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jon Baker, Jessica Gravatt, Ashley Hano, Makenzi Kromer, Miranda Kromer, April Rios, Ernesto Esparza, Charlee Smith, Shelly Peters, Jenny Reyes, Candice Sauers.

NON-VOTING MEMBERS:

Udana Arceo, Bonnie Schamberger, Lesa Larson, Linda Loret, Shanna Rector, Sherrie Scott, Adriana Aranda.

GUESTS:

Amanda Preeo

CALL TO ORDER:

Udana Arceo called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

CHANGES AND ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

Candice Sauers motioned to approve the Consent Agenda Items as presented. Jon Baker seconded the motion, which passed.

PARLAMENTARY PROCEDURES

Lesla provided a handout about parliamentary procedures. This process ensures that everyone has a voice in decisions made for the program.

PARENT/COMMUNITY REPORTS:

Lesla explained that at the end of each meeting, parents and community members have the opportunity to share celebrations about their child and events taking place in the community.

IN-KIND:

Lesla invited Policy Council members to review the monthly agenda packet that is sent a week before the meeting, and record the amount of time spent on the sign-in sheet. The time spent and the duration of the meeting will be recorded as In-Kind.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Lesla Larson informed:

- Heartland Early Education is starting a new 5-year cycle. There are Federal expectations, a governance screening that needs to be completed, as well as health and safety screening. Lesla will provide the information that she has compiled in November.
- The government shutdown is preventing access to our program specialist, but our program's funding is not in jeopardy.

NEW BUSINESS:**PIR report**

Sherrie explained that the program Information report is a summary of all the services we provide. The 2024-2025 report shows the Early Head Start and Head Start percentages for eligibility status, including ethnicity, race, language, health, dental, mental health, disabilities, homelessness, and teacher qualifications. Last school year, Early Head Start served 133 children and 10 pregnant women, and Head Start served 251 children. Even though it's hard to find EHS teachers with a CDA at hire, all 21 teachers met or exceeded education requirements by the end of the school year.

Head Start is 100% enrolled, while Early Head Start will probably start an under-enrollment plan. Udana inquired if the number of children wait-listed was the result of the restructuring done to the program. Sherrie replied no. Parents' preferences are the main cause.

Health Services Advisory Council

Every Head Start program is required to have a committee on health services, and includes a group of people involved with health issues in our community. Lacy Krebs is the new leader of this committee and will provide more details on the new structure in the future.

Policy Review

Lesa presented the following policies for review and approval.

- PG020 – Conflict of Interest and Governing Body.
 - This policy was moved from the FIS005 (fiscal section) to the governance program area.
 - The policy states that members of Heartland Early Education Policy Council will not have a financial conflict of interest.
 - Shelly motioned to approve the Policy of Conflict of Interest and Governing Body as presented. April seconded the motion, which passed.
- PG021 – Policy review and Updates
 - It is a new Policy that establishes a consistent process for reviewing and updating policies.
 - Udana inquired about clarification on how often policies are revised. The procedures section outlines the timeline for review.
 - Jon motioned to approve the Policy Review and Updates with changes as stated. Jenny seconded the motion. The motion was approved.
- FIS004 – Purchase Allowability
 - This policy ensures efficient and effective administration of the Federal Grant Award.
 - Udana asked for clarification of the difference between the Head Start Executive Director and the Head Start Director. Shanna Rector explained that she is the USD 305 Executive Director who oversees Heartland Early Education, and Lesa is the director of the Program. Udana suggested using 'Heartland Early Education' consistently throughout to avoid confusion.
 - Jenny Reyes inquired about the visa credit card usage process. Linda explained that there is a separate policy for the use of the Visa credit cards. It is mainly used for traveling or to use at smaller vendors in town that will not accept purchase orders. The

employee is required to fill out a request form to use the credit card, and the supervisor reviews and approves the request. There is a separate policy for credit card usage.

- Candice made a motion to approve the Purchase Allowability Policy with the review of the procedure that is going to be done. April seconded the motion, which passed.
- SYS001 – Annual Report
 - This report is published and available to the public yearly.
 - This Policy comes out of the regulations that the program has to follow. Sherrie will provide the annual report during the November meeting.
 - April motioned to approve the Annual Report Policy as presented, Candice seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- Community Assessment
 - This policy outlines the process to conduct a community assessment every five years that includes the collection and analysis of information about service areas.
 - Udana proposed the consistent use of Heartland Early Education, as well as the replacement, removal, and addition of some words.
 - Jon motioned to approve the Community Assessment Policy with the changes that had been discussed. Shelly seconded the motion, which was approved.

Election of Officers

Chair

Udana nominated Jenny Reyes as chairperson. April Rios made the motion, and Charlee Smith seconded; motion carried. Jenny Reyes was elected 2025 Policy Council chairperson.

Vice Chair

Udana Arceo nominated herself as vice chair. April Rios made the motion, and Jon Baker seconded; the motion carried. Udana Arceo was elected 2025 Policy Council vice chair.

Secretary

April Rios nominated herself as secretary. Jon Baker made the motion, and Udana Arceo seconded. The motion was carried. April Rios was elected 2025 Policy Council secretary.

Parent/Community Reports

- Shanna shared that two high school classes for students will be brought up to the Board of Education. These two classes will be a pathway to complete a CDA (Child Development Associate) for the Early Childhood Education Pathway Program. Students completing this pathway will be able to apply to Heartland Early Education after graduation.
- Candice reminded members that it's flu season and the Health Department receives walk-ins to administer the vaccine. The clinic is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, and 8:00 am to 6:00 pm on Wednesday.
- Ashley Hano inquired if both genders use the same restroom at the same time. Amanda Preeo, Heartland Early Education teacher assistant, explained that children do not go at the same time unless there are multiple stalls with doors, and it's one child at a time.
- Udana provided a flyer that invites individuals to take a survey to share their stories to improve family well-being in Kansas.

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m., motion made by Udana and seconded by Candice. Motion passed.



Heartland Early Education Financial Summary

for Fiscal Year 7/01/25 to 6/30/26

as of September 30, 2025



Categories	Budget	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Total	Balance	% Spent
Fund 61 - Federal Head Start / Early Head Start																
1. Personnel	4,720,408	262,395	308,461	405,890										976,746.27	(3,743,661.73)	20.69%
2. Fringe Benefits	932,320	48,715	55,402	80,611										184,727.69	(747,592.31)	19.81%
4. Contractual	92,518	2,698	5,645	2,400										10,742.24	(81,775.76)	11.61%
6. Supplies	178,800	7,700	10,848	5,514										24,060.72	(154,739.28)	13.46%
7. Other Child Services	29,145	476	282	565										1,322.64	(27,822.36)	4.54%
8. Other Parent Services	23,510	375	265	1,640										2,279.81	(21,230.19)	9.70%
9. Other/Occupancy	217,960	7,257	27,285	17,150										51,692.43	(166,267.57)	23.72%
10. Training	76,921	915	5,847	4,016										10,778.17	(66,142.83)	14.01%
11. Equipment > \$5000														-	-	
Total Federal Grant	6,271,582	330,531	414,034	517,785	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,262,349.97	(5,009,232.03)	20.13%
	Budget	Received													Variance	
Additional Revenues/Reimbursements	230,000	15,515	13,150	15,843										44,507.85	(185,492.15)	19.35%
Fund 59 - Kansas Early Head Start Child Care																
1. Personnel	761,352	58,698	68,533	59,658										186,888.88	(574,463.12)	24.55%
DCF Child Care Revenues	(244,800)	(22,554)	(21,097)	(21,106)										(64,756.92)	180,043.08	26.45%
2. Fringe Benefits	153,448	11,483	12,940	11,888										36,311.32	(117,136.68)	23.66%
5. Child Care Supplies	9,000	316	597	507										1,419.57	(7,580.43)	15.77%
9. Other / Occupancy	18,000	1,734	2,046	1,811										5,590.59	(12,409.41)	31.06%
Total Kansas Grant HCCP	697,000	49,677	63,018	52,759	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	165,453.44	(531,546.56)	23.74%
Fund 59 - Kansas Early Head Start Home Visitation																
1. Personnel	169,769	14,335	13,879	12,900										41,113.90	(128,655.10)	24.22%
2. Fringe Benefits	27,691	2,535	2,395	2,341										7,271.36	(20,419.64)	26.26%
9. Other / Occupancy	2,540	540	211	174										925.01	(1,614.99)	36.42%
Total Kansas Grant HV	200,000	17,410	16,485	15,415	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	49,310.27	(150,689.73)	24.66%
Other Early Childhood Grants																
Fund 28 - Parents as Teachers																
Fund 11 - State Pre-K	149,084	10,966	14,293	11,363										36,622.02	(112,461.98)	24.56%
Fund 70 - KS Preschool Pilot (KPP)	308,200	1,307	30,605	30,555										62,466.04	(245,733.96)	20.27%
Fund 70 - KS Preschool Pilot (KPP)	189,800	5,519	7,707	21,054										34,280.60	(155,519.40)	18.06%
Fund 58 - Non Federal Funds	14,098	-	1,018	-										1,018.25	(13,079.83)	7.22%
Fund 60 - Summer Food Program	2,500	1,872	81	-										1,952.97	(547.03)	78.02%
Fund 69 - Child Food Program (CACFP)	255,000	4,781	26,619	27,223										58,622.76	(196,377.24)	22.99%
Total Other Grants	918,682	24,445	80,322	90,195	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	194,962.64	(723,719.44)	21.2%
															-	
TOTAL ALL GRANTS 8,087,264 422,062 573,860 676,154 - - - - 1,672,076 (6,415,188) 20.68%																

USD 305 Heartland Early Education



Board of Education and Policy Council Reports

CACFP MEALS CLAIMED - SEPTEMBER 2025

	# of Meals	Breakfast	Lunch	PM snack	Total Meals	Revenue Recv'd
Enterprise		196	195	192	583	1,680.56
Ellsworth		181	196	195	572	1,652.34
Salina Education Center		206	210	210	626	1,801.41
Salina Heartland		2,700	2,926	2,615	8,241	24,288.93
	Total CACFP Meals	3,283	3,527	3,212	10,022	\$ 29,423.24

CREDIT CARD CHARGES - SEPTEMBER 2025

	Vendor name	WEX Inc.	Walmart	Dillon's	Gene's IGA	West's C Mart
	Date Paid	9/12/2025	9/26/2025	9/19/2025	9/30/2025	9/30/2025
	Vendor #	vendor # 801	vendor # 7517	vendor # 1152	vendor # 3060	vendor # 905
Account #	DESCRIPTION					
73480	playground / outdoor supplies		66.42			
73465	HS classroom supplies - room 102		20.85			
73470	HS classroom supplies - room 103					
73500	HS classroom supplies - room 104		49.87			
73530	HS classroom supplies - room 106		65.08			
73540	HS classroom supplies - room 108		47.59			
73560	HS classroom supplies - room 110		66.75			
73580	HS classroom supplies - room 111		4.82			
73585	EHS classroom supplies - room 112					
73640	HS classroom supplies - Enterprise					
73660	HS classroom supplies - Ellsworth				3.19	
73680	HS classroom supplies - SA Educ Center					
73720	EHS classroom supplies - room 904		9.24			
73731	EHS classroom supplies - room 810		4.30			
73732	EHS classroom supplies - room 812		19.07			
73735	EHS classroom supplies - room 712		5.30			
73780	EHS Home Visit Supplies					
73930	diapers / supplies		119.91			2.45
74380	Policy Council Meetings		159.82			
74440	Parent Meetings - HS		27.88			
74470	Parent Meetings - EHS Center Based		83.63			
74480	Parent Meetings - EHS socializations			37.27		
74485	Parent Meetings - EHS home based		27.88			
74487	DK CO socializations					
73440	Office Supplies					
73950	Building Supplies		152.01		5.60	
74520	Other Activities - Program		37.98			
74522	Other Activities - Staff Groups		14.99			
74680	vehicle fuel	588.35				
74685	bus fuel	309.62				
74720	Training - Staff					
81860	CACFP - non food supplies		93.21		16.99	
81880	CACFP - Food Expenses		769.70	60.98	535.93	
75757	Preschool Elementary Supplies					
		897.97	1,846.30	98.25	561.71	2.45



VISA Credit Card Statement

9/15/2025

ACCOUNT	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT		CARD HOLDERS	AMOUNT
42520	Parents as Teachers				
73440	Office Supplies				
73460	Classroom Supplies - room 101 Madison	143.94			
73465	Classroom Supplies - room 102 Gina	110.11			
73470	Classroom Supplies - room 103 Nicole	56.98			
73500	Classroom Supplies - room 104 Kate	4.95		Hellmuth, Michelle	
73530	Classroom Supplies - room 106 Heidi			Holecek, Cindy	
73540	Classroom Supplies - room 108 Tonya				
73560	Classroom Supplies - room 110 Casi			Larson, Lesa	179.91
73580	Classroom Supplies - room 111 Jackie			Lorett, Linda	
73640	Classroom Supplies - Enterprise			Wagoner, Megan	
73700	Misc. Expense				
73720	Classroom Supplies - Room 904 Marquesa			Enterprise (LeAnn F)	
73735	EHS Home Visitor Supplies				
73790	Literacy Supplies - Classroom				
73840	Medical/Dental Supplies	15.00		Salina #1	
73950	Building Supplies			Salina #2	546.41
74380	Policy Council Meetings			Salina #3	(99.99)
74400	Volunteer Appreciation				
74430	Parent Meetings - Ellsworth				
74440	Parent Meeting - Saline County			Reward Credit	(272.00)
74470	Parent Meeting - High School				
74485	Parent Meetings - EHS HB				
74487	Parent Meetings - EHS HB DK CO				
74490	Fatherhood/Motherhood Support Group				
74520	Other Activities	52.93			
74521	Other Activities - Lesa	179.91			
74580	Subscriptions				
74620	Advertising - Human Resources				
74630	Staff Heartwarmers Program				
74640	Human Resources - Testing Fees				
74660	Membership Dues				
74700	Training - Leadership				
74710	Training - Mid Manager				
74720	Training - Staff	(272.00)			
74740	Training - Conscious Discipline				
74820	Training - Health / Mental Health	(99.99)			
74870	Training - Policy Council				
74890	Training / CDA Fees	162.50			
75470	Weekend Food Bags				
	TOTAL	354.33		9 Visa Cards	354.33

Heartland Early Education >>> Director's Report

Lesla Larson
October 2025

**1) Enrollment ending 8.31.2025**

Early Head Start: 69/91
 Head Start: 230/230
 KEHS-Home Visitation: 18/20
 KEHS-Child Care Partners: 20/24

2) Attendance Rates ending 7.31.2025

EHS Home-Based: 84%
 EHS Center-Based: 93%
 Head Start: 95%
 KEHS-Home Visitation: 95%
 KEHS-Child Care Partners: 94%

3) Snacks and meals served (August)

School	Breakfast	Lunch	PM Snack	Total	Revenue Received
Enterprise	60	60	48	168	502.38
Ellsworth	100	100	100	300	862.50
Salina Education Center	136	140	134	410	1,190.10
Salina Heartland	1,944	2,092	1,884	5,920	17,417.34
Total CACFP Meals	2,240	2,392	2,166	6,798	19,972.32

4) New Hires

Name	Position	Effective
Stalbaum, Jennifer	Child Development Specialist	9/24/2025
Radenberg, Riley	EECES	9/25/2025
Tucker, Samantha	Health Services Assistant	10/6/2025
Garcia, Maria	EECES	10/6/2025

Transfers

Name	Old Position	New Position	Effective
Simon, Hailey	EECES/CDA	EEC Lead Teacher	9/22/2025

Separation of Employment

Name	Position	Effective

5) Policy Council

Policy Council officially begins this month. I want to share a new report with you that I am providing to Policy Council. This is another Head Start requirement but for a few years, what we were using

didn't seem effective. This report is a more comprehensive view of all the various components of Head Start. The Program Information Summary report is included.

6) **Head Start Enrollment and EHS Enrollment**

I am happy to inform you we are fully enrolled in Head Start! It has been a challenge as you know for a few years. Between our Salina building, SEC, Ellsworth, Enterprise and the elementary preschool classrooms, we are serving 230 Head Start eligible children.

However, our enrollment numbers in Early Head Start are down. Our recruitment committee meets regularly to look at ways to get the word out about our 0-3 classrooms and home based program. We saw an increase in applications and enrollments last month by utilizing staff from multiple areas to conduct drop-bys for families receiving SNAP/TANF as identified quarterly through our partnership with DCF.

There are a variety of factors we have identified that could be impacting our numbers. Birth rates have been on the decline for several years, staff turnover in intake and family services staff has impacted processing applications and the number of families that can be assigned. While we still have one vacant family service position (interviews are being conducted), we served 81/91 children/pregnant moms in September. We are currently in the enrollment process for six more to start in October, have three on our waitlist, and are processing 31 new applications.

7) **Annual Head Start Eligibility Requirements training**

Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.12(m)(1):

Programs must provide training for all governing body members, Policy Council representatives, management, and staff who determine eligibility. Training must cover applicable federal regulations as well as program policies and procedures.

Eligibility Process:

- Families must provide complete and accurate eligibility information.
- Intake interviews are conducted **in person** whenever possible.
- Families must bring proof of income with their application for Head Start/Early Head Start. Proof must include **all income received by the family** over the previous 12 months (or the last calendar year). Acceptable documentation includes wages/salary, Social Security, unemployment, public assistance, self-employment, child support, scholarships/grants, etc.

Confidentiality and Respect

- Families are always treated with dignity and respect.
- Intake interviews are conducted privately and confidentially.
- Intake paperwork is only reviewed by staff directly involved with the family and is stored securely in a locked file cabinet.
- Intake staff use conversational "preliminary questions" to determine the program option that best meets each family's needs. Some questions may cover sensitive topics (e.g., domestic violence, incarceration, child abuse/neglect, welfare benefits). Staff may also provide information on community resources for families with immediate needs.

False or Misleading Information

- If a parent is found to have intentionally provided false information, the participant and any enrolled family members will be exited from the program.

- Staff who knowingly accept false information, omit income, or miscalculate income/family size will be suspended immediately pending investigation. Continued employment will be determined based on the investigation findings.

8) Two Information Memorandums (IM) have recently been released from the Office of Head Start

- The first one is titled **Fiscal Year 2026 Monitoring Process for Head Start Recipients**. As you know we are in Year One of our five year cycle. This IM outlines the revised protocol for monitoring Head Start programs to ensure they meet quality and compliance standards. It includes updates to review formats and when reviews will take place during a grant period.
- The 2nd IM is titled **Addressing Vacant Slots Due to Chronic Absenteeism in Head Start Programs**. This one clarifies when Head Start programs should consider a child's slot vacant after long-term absences, stresses the importance of regular attendance and offers strategies program can use to enhance access and family participation.

Included in this report:

- Program Information Summary (October '25)
- ACF-OHS-IM-25-05
- ACF-OHS-IM-25-06

Program Information Summary

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NOVEMBER 2025

ENROLLMENT

- Five Heartland staff attended Child Plus Training in early October; they learned more about the online version and learned about changes.
- The data entry team completed intake audits for 0-5 center-based programs.
- We continue to be fully enrolled in Head Start and under enrolled in Early Head Start. Since the government is still shut down, we haven't received official notice but anticipate we will receive it.
-

FAMILY SERVICES

- Trunk or Treat was held at Heartland on 10.21; community partners also participated.
- Parent committee meetings are being held to gain insight and feedback from parent. Our 2nd meeting with EHS center-based parents was held 10.1; seven parents attended.
- Family Services staff visited the new location of our local Pregnancy Service Center to learn about referral opportunities.
- Idias is our Family Services intern this year and attends Kansas Wesleyan.

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Attended career fair at Salina South High for juniors and seniors and surrounding area schools to learn about early childhood career opportunities.
- Hired a Health Services assistant.

MISSION STATEMENT:

Inspire and empower children and families through quality education

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

- Health Services Advisory Council (HSAC) resumed but still in the planning and re-organization stage.
- Vision and hearing screenings have been completed..
- Dental day at Salina Tech was on 10.3 and 2nd one scheduled for 11.7.

EDUCATION

- Lesa, Melanie Hammond (CTE Coordinator), and Michelle will take a field trip to Lawrence to visit the High School to observe how the CDA program is implemented. Melanie has done a great job supporting and advocating to have a CDA program in Salina Public Schools. The course proposals for the CDA program were approved at the last board meeting.
- Nursing students from Salina Tech and Kansas Wesleyan are scheduled to observe

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Fire drills and tornado drills are required monthly.
- Bus evacuation drills have been completed at all sites where transportation occurs.

HEARTLAND EARLY EDUCATION

700 JUPITER AVENUE, SALINA KS 67401

HEARTLAND EARLY EDUCATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2025





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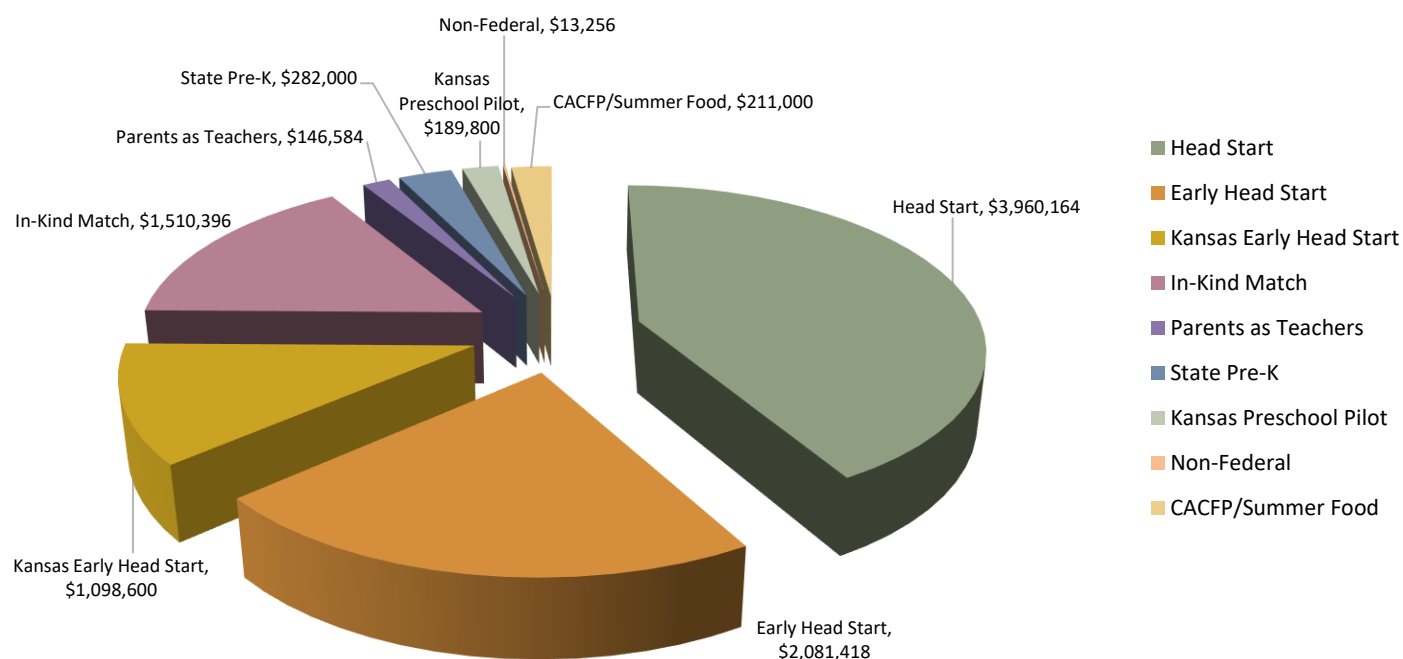


Overview of Program

Heartland Early Education manages the Head Start, Early Head Start (EHS), Kansas Early Head Start (KEHS), Kansas Preschool-Aged At-Risk, and Parents as Teachers (PAT) grants. The service area includes Saline, Dickinson, and Ellsworth Counties.

FUNDING SOURCES

Funding comes from the Office of Head Start (OHS), Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF), Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), and local in-kind donations and services. Salina Public Schools (SPS) provides facilities, maintenance, accounting and program oversight.



TARGET POPULATION BY COUNTY

SALINE COUNTY:

Saline County has an estimated population of 53,459. According to the current Kansas Statistical Abstract, the Saline County median household income was \$63,587 in 2023 and 13% of children under 18 years old in Saline County were from families with incomes that met the federal poverty level.

SPS Preschool, designed to serve identified at-risk students and children with disabilities, is available at all eight elementary schools and has a capacity of 192 students.

**DICKINSON COUNTY:**

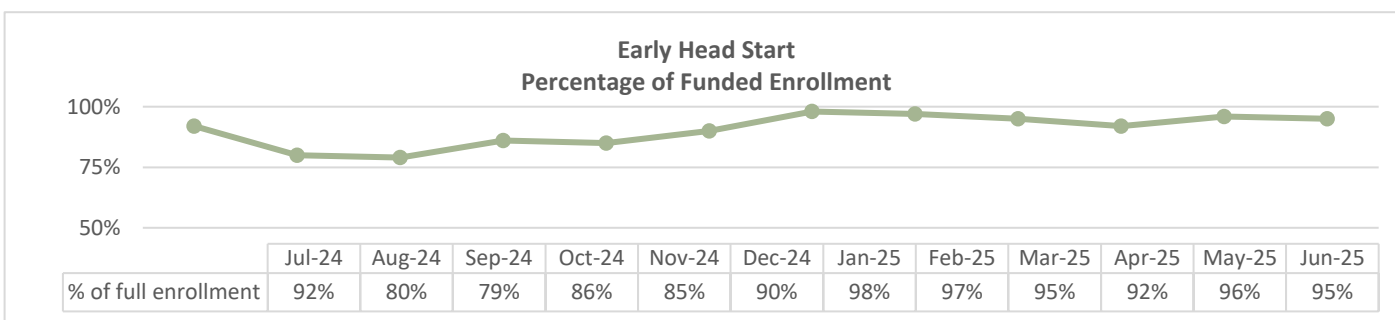
Dickinson County has an estimated population of 18,621. According to the current Kansas Statistical Abstract, the Dickinson County median household income was \$63,417 in 2023 and 12.2% of children under 18 years old in Dickinson County were from families with incomes that met the federal poverty level. Additional state-funded preschool opportunities are available through USD 435 and USD 473.

ELLSWORTH COUNTY:

Ellsworth County has an estimated population of 6,316 and is a rural county of farm communities. According to the current Kansas Statistical Abstract, the Ellsworth County median household income was \$65,396 in 2023 and 13.5% of children under 18 years old in Ellsworth County were from families with incomes that met the federal poverty level.

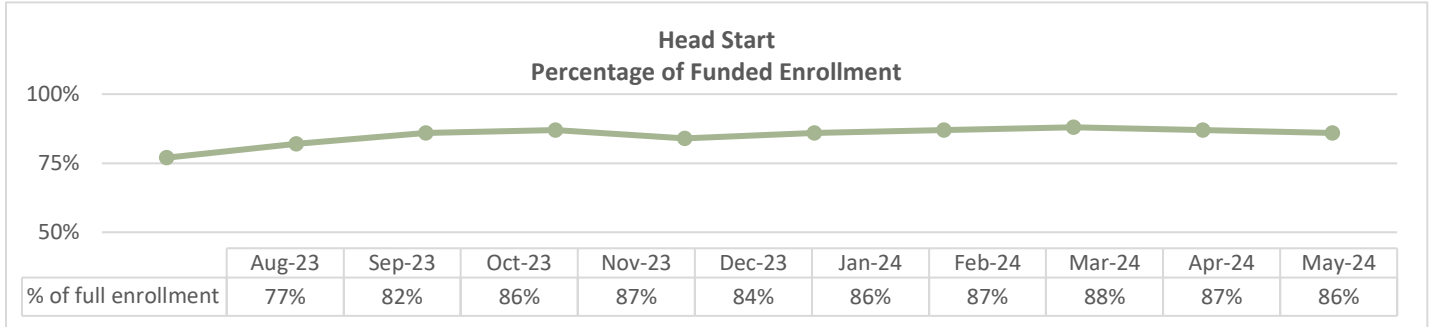
HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START ENROLLMENT REPORTS**EARLY HEAD START**

COUNTY	ESTIMATED # ELIGIBLE CHILDREN	FUNDED SLOTS	CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT	ANNUAL AVERAGE ENROLLMENT
Saline	180	91	143	90%



**HEAD START**

COUNTY	ESTIMATED # ELIGIBLE CHILDREN	FUNDED SLOTS	CUMMULATIVE ENROLLMENT	ANNUAL AVERAGE ENROLLMENT
Saline	120	208	218	85%
Dickinson	37	32	21	
Ellsworth	5	16	12	

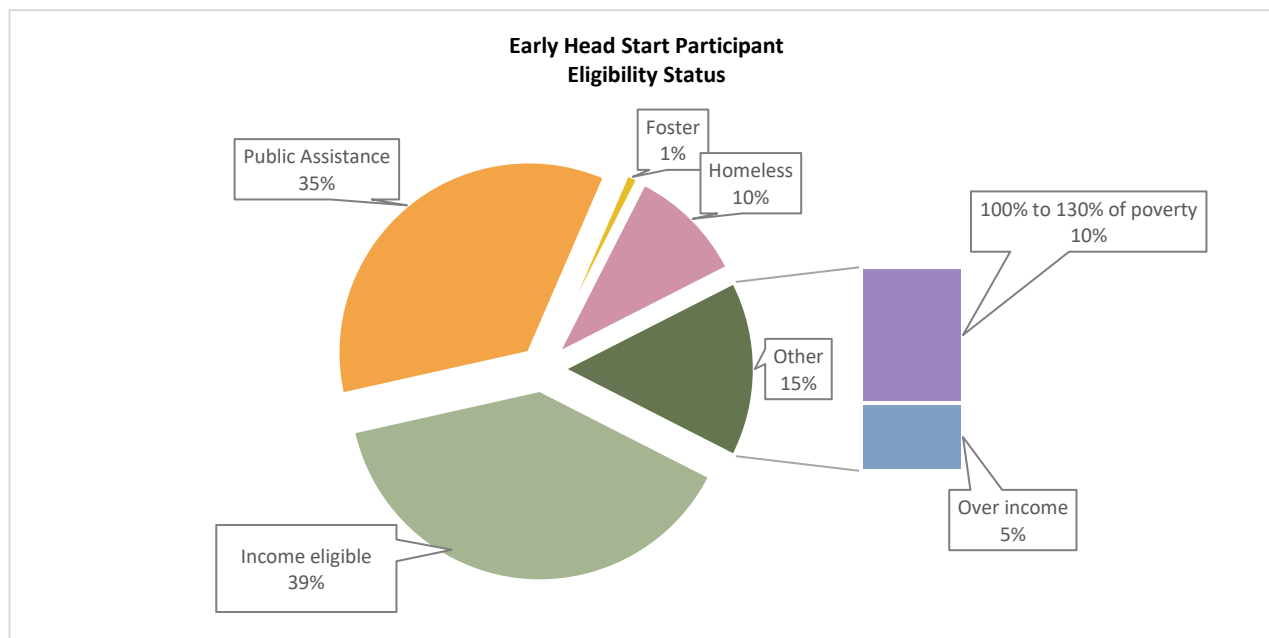




2024-25 PROGRAM INFORMATION REPORT (PIR) SUMMARIES

EARLY HEAD START

Population Served: 133 children and 10 pregnant women



Ethnicity: 40% Hispanic, 60% Non-Hispanic

Race: 74% White; 20% Multi-Racial; 6% Black

Language: 76% English, 24% Spanish

Health: 59% up to date on well child checks; 86% up to date on immunizations; 97% with health insurance; 98% with a medical home.

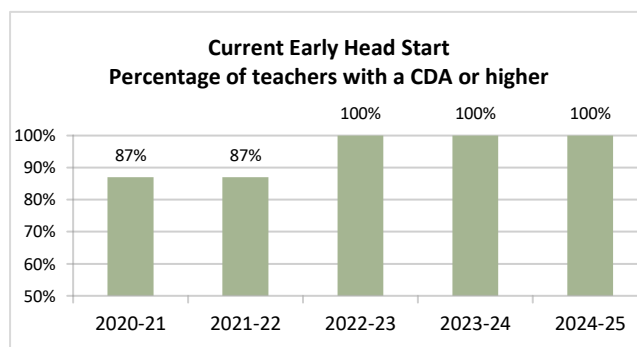
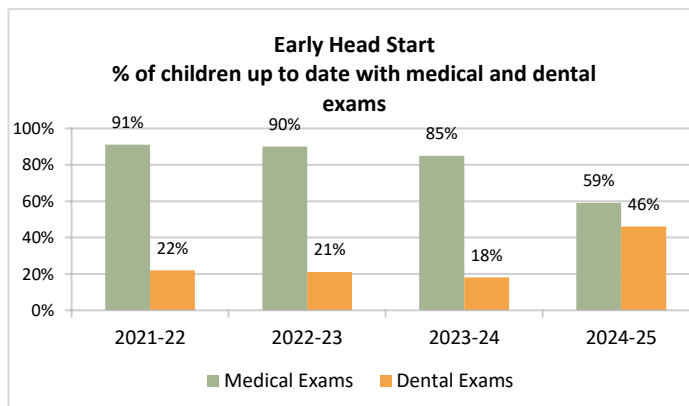
Dental: 47% have a dental home; 46% of children are up to date on dental exams.

Mental Health: Mental health staff provide assistance to all classroom staff and home visitors through observation and consultation.

Disabilities: 22% of enrolled Early Head Start children had a diagnosed disability.

Homelessness: 3% (5) of families experienced homelessness during the year. Of these, 20% (1) were able to find permanent housing before the end of enrollment.

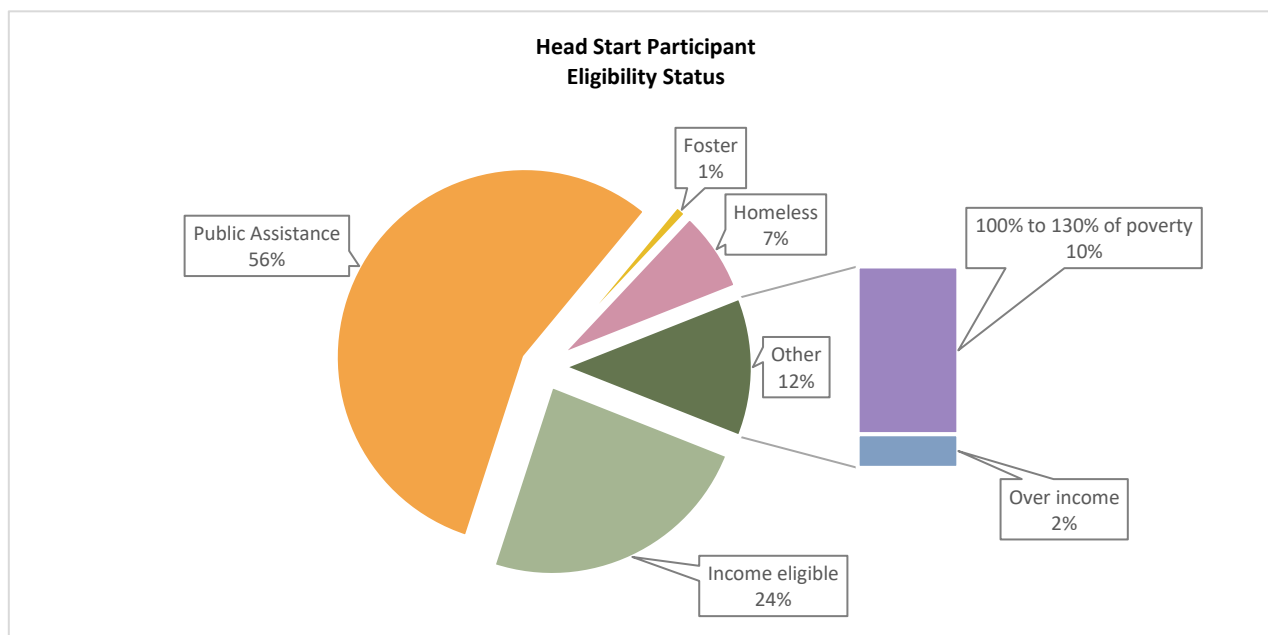
Teacher qualifications: Although it is still not possible to find EHS teachers with a CDA at hire, all 21 teachers met or exceeded education requirements by the end of the school year.





HEAD START

Population Served: 251 children



Ethnicity: 32% Hispanic, 68% Non-Hispanic

Race: 76% White; 18% Multi-Racial; 5% Black; 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native or Asian

Language: 85% English; 14% Spanish; 1% Asian

Health: 94% up to date on well child checks; 92% up to date on immunizations; 93% with health insurance; 99% with a medical home.

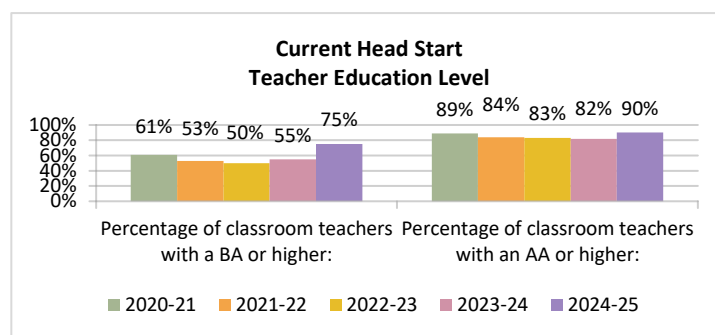
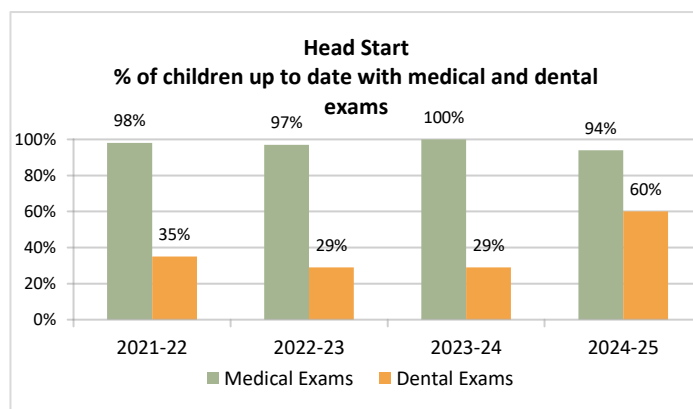
Dental: 64% of children have a dental home; 60% of children had a dental exam during the school year

Mental Health: Mental health staff provide assistance to all classroom teachers through observation and consultation.

Disabilities: 31% of enrolled Head Start participants had a diagnosed disability.

Homelessness: 6% (14) of families experienced homelessness during the year. Of these, 7% (1) were able to find permanent housing before the end of enrollment.

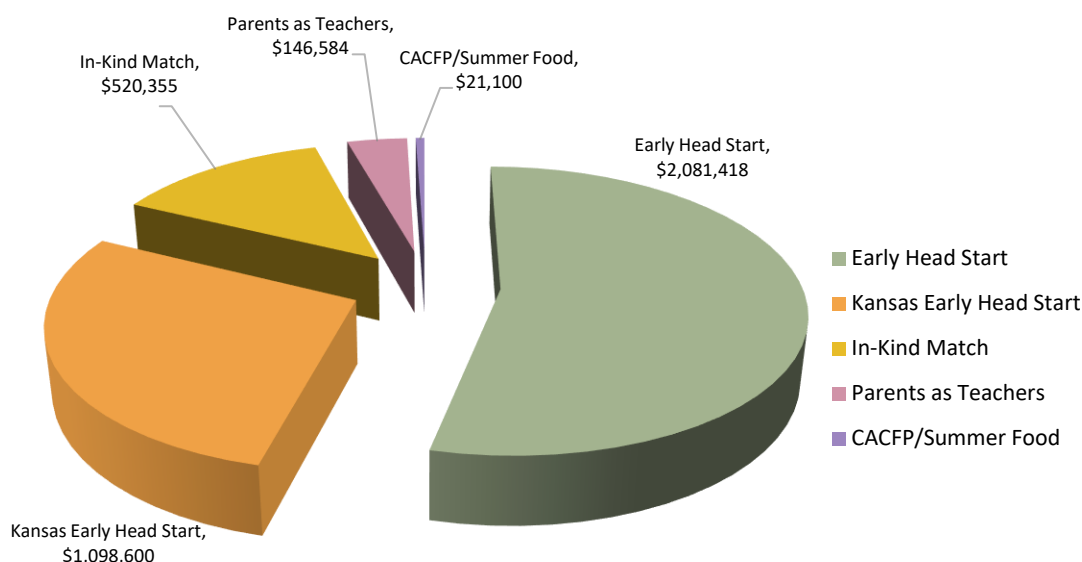
Teacher Qualifications: At least 50% of the Head Start teachers across the nation must have at least a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood or a related degree. Heartland has continued to see a decrease in the number of teacher applicants with Bachelor (or Associate) degrees in Early Childhood Education.





Program Options and Descriptions

PROGRAMS FOR PREGNANT WOMEN, INFANTS, AND TODDLERS



EARLY HEAD START – SALINE COUNTY

HOME-BASED EARLY HEAD START

Families participating in this voluntary program receive weekly 90-minute home visits from a Family Consultant (FC) trained in child development and social services. FCs provide information and connect families with community resources related to budgeting, health, nutrition, mental health, employment, and other areas of need.

During the 2024–25 school year, Saline County served **83 children and 10 pregnant women**, including **two teenage mothers**. Home-based families are expected to participate actively by maintaining regular attendance at home visits and attending monthly playgroups. Playgroups provide opportunities for parent-child interaction, peer connection, and engagement in developmentally appropriate activities.

Throughout the year, FCs and registered nurses conduct developmental, hearing, and vision screenings using the **ASQ-3** and **ASQ-SE** tools to identify potential concerns early and ensure timely referrals for further evaluation.

EARLY HEAD START FULL DAY/FULL YEAR (FDFY)

Heartland operates seven FDFY classrooms. Hours of operation are 7:30am to 4:30pm Monday –Friday. The FDFY program helps reduce the cost of child care for income eligible families while parents are working or attending school at least 30 hours per week. Parents pay a portion of the cost. **Heartland is funded for 32 slots. These classrooms served 50 children during the 2024-25 school year.**



KANSAS EARLY HEAD START (KEHS) – SALINE & DICKINSON COUNTIES

KANSAS EARLY HEAD START-HOME VISITATION (KEHS-HV)

Families enrolled in KEHS-HV receive the same services as those enrolled in federal slots. **Heartland is funded for 20 slots. A total of 34 children and two pregnant women were served during the 2024-25 school year.**

KANSAS EARLY HEAD START- CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIPS (KEHS-CCP)

All families enrolled in KEHS-CCP must receive child care subsidy through the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Unlike federal EHS, families must go through the eligibility process at least annually. Changes in work/school requirements must be reported immediately and may result in immediate exit from the program. **Heartland is funded for 30 slots. A total of 41 children were served during the 2024-25 school year.**

PARENTS AS TEACHERS (PAT)

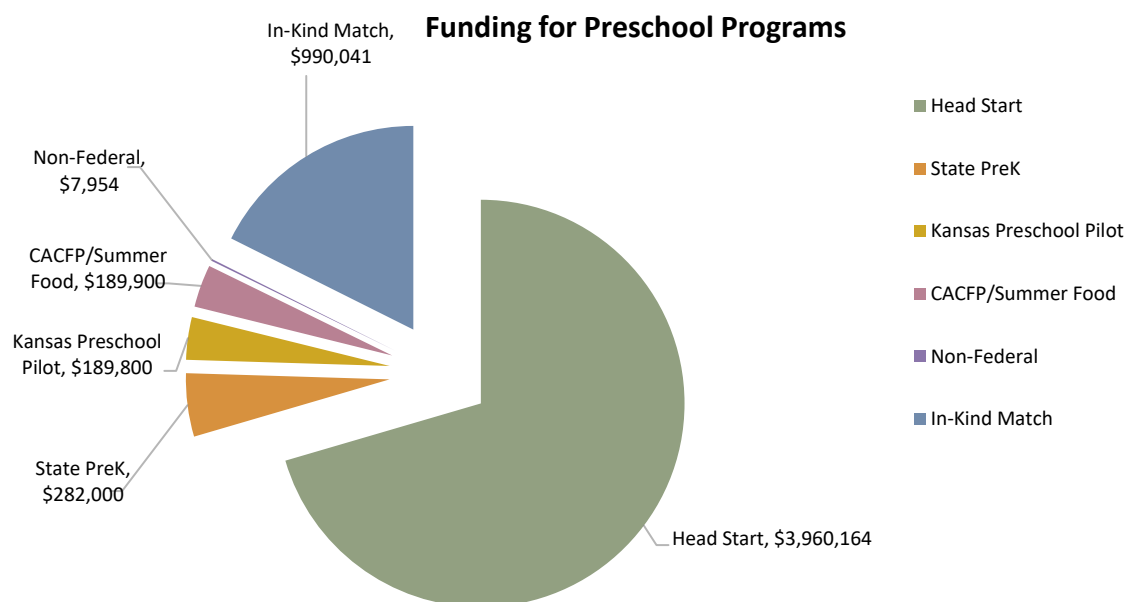
The Parents as Teachers (PAT) evidence-based model equips parents and caregivers with the skills to support their child's development and education. The program offers personal home visits, group connections, developmental, health, vision, and hearing screenings, and links to community resources. Certified Parent Educators provide one-hour visits, with increased frequency for qualifying families.

The program is available to any expectant parent or caregiver with a child under kindergarten age living in the SPS district. During the **2024–25 school year**, the **Salina PAT program** served **41 families and 63 children**, meeting all Essential Requirements and achieving compliance status.

Salina Public Schools also completed the Quality Endorsement and Improvement Process (QEIP) and was recognized by the Parents as Teachers National Center as a Blue-Ribbon Affiliate in October 2025 signifying exemplary quality and service to families.



PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS



HEAD START

Head Start is a federally funded program serving Saline, Dickinson, and Ellsworth Counties. During the 2024–25 school year, the program served **251 children** ages three to five who met federal income eligibility guidelines.

Family Consultants (FCs) provide monthly home visits and connect families with community resources related to budgeting, health, nutrition, mental health, and employment. FCs and teachers partner with parents throughout the year to review each child's progress and set developmental goals.

Heartland offers Head Start through three program options: Part Day School Year (PDSY), School Day School Year (SDSY), **and** Full Day Full Year (FDFY). All program models encourage strong parent involvement through classroom volunteering, home visits, conferences, and engagement activities..

HEAD START PART DAY SCHOOL YEAR (PDSY)

PDSY classrooms provide less than 1020 hours of service through single or double session classrooms.

SALINA: Salina served **33 children Monday-Thursday during the school year** with one double session classroom. Morning session operated 8 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. and afternoon session from 12:10 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Children were served two meals and transportation was available.

ELLSWORTH: Ellsworth served **12 children Monday-Thursday during the school year**. Hours of operation were 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Children were served breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack and transportation was available. *(Does not meet the number of hours required for SDSY per the USD 327 district calendar)*



ENTERPRISE: Enterprise served 14 children Monday-Thursday during the school year. Hours of operation were 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. during the school year. Children were served breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Transportation was available. *(Does not meet the number of hours required for SDSY per the USD 473 district calendar)*

HEAD START SCHOOL DAY SCHOOL YEAR (SDSY)

SDSY classrooms provide a minimum of 1020 hours of class time throughout the school year. The SDSY option was offered in Salina.

SALINA: Salina served 143 children Monday-Thursday during the school year with eight classrooms in the Salina building and one within the Salina Education Center (SEC). Hours of operation were 7:55 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Children were served breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Limited transportation was available.

HEAD START FULL DAY FULL YEAR (FDFY)

Head Start FDFY services were offered in Abilene through a child care partnership with by Abilene Child Care Learning Center (ACCLC).

FDFY services help reduce the cost of child care for income eligible families while parents are working or attending school at least 30 hours per week. Parents pay a portion of the cost. **This program served 7 children in Abilene during the 2024-25 school year.**

Child care partners are required to meet Head Start Performance Standards and Kansas Child Care Licensing regulations. Heartland Early Education Specialists make both announced and unannounced visits several times each month to mentor teachers and ensure standards are being maintained. Heartland ended the partnership with ACCLC, effective June 30, 2025.

SPS PRESCHOOL

SPS offered preschool at all eight Salina elementary schools through KSDE funding. These classrooms operated through a collaboration between SPS, Heartland Early Education, and Central Kansas Cooperative in Education (CKCIE) to offer double-session preschool.

SPS Preschool is funded through two KSDE grants, Preschool-Aged At-Risk (At-Risk) and Kansas Preschool Pilot (KPP), and through a Head Start grant. Children enrolled through Preschool-Aged At-Risk (At Risk) must be three or four years old by August 31st and meet at least one at-risk eligibility factor. Factors include: qualify for free lunch, parent lacks high school diploma or GED, parent was a teen at the time of the child's birth, single parent, lower than expected developmental progress, or a written referral from Department of Children and Families (DCF). **A total of 193 at-risk, Head Start, and special education children received services within a SPS Preschool or Head Start classroom.**



School Readiness

CHILD OUTCOMES

Heartland Early Education utilizes Galileo as its child assessment system for infants, toddlers, and preschool. Heartland prepares children for school through the development of individualized goals based on ongoing assessment data, collected quarterly.

In addition to Galileo, a variety of supplemental screens and assessments are utilized, including:

- Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ3)
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE)
- Spot® vision screen
- Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) hearing screen

Galileo shows the growth of all children (birth – five years). Baseline data in the fall is used during parent/teacher conferences to inform parents and get their input in developing individual goals for each child. On-going assessments are used to guide teachers to group children according to their skill level, ensuring that teaching is designed for each child's individual needs. In addition, teacher observations provide daily guidance to teachers in planning for individual learning.

Intentional school readiness goals include a progressive degree of self-regulation, the ability to listen and attend, the development of physical skills, social-emotional relationships, and language development. Ongoing assessment data, along with parent input, drives planning and goal setting for each individual child.

INFANT AND TODDLER ON-GOING ASSESSMENT

When concerns and possible delays are found in children under age three, families are referred to their medical homes and/or the Part C provider for further evaluation. With parental consent, results of pertinent Heartland screenings are shared with the medical provider. Heartland Early Education works very closely with both Part C programs in the service area. Infant Child Development (ICD) and Infant Toddler Services (ITS) work in collaboration with Heartland staff to provide joint home visits and to write joint family goals.

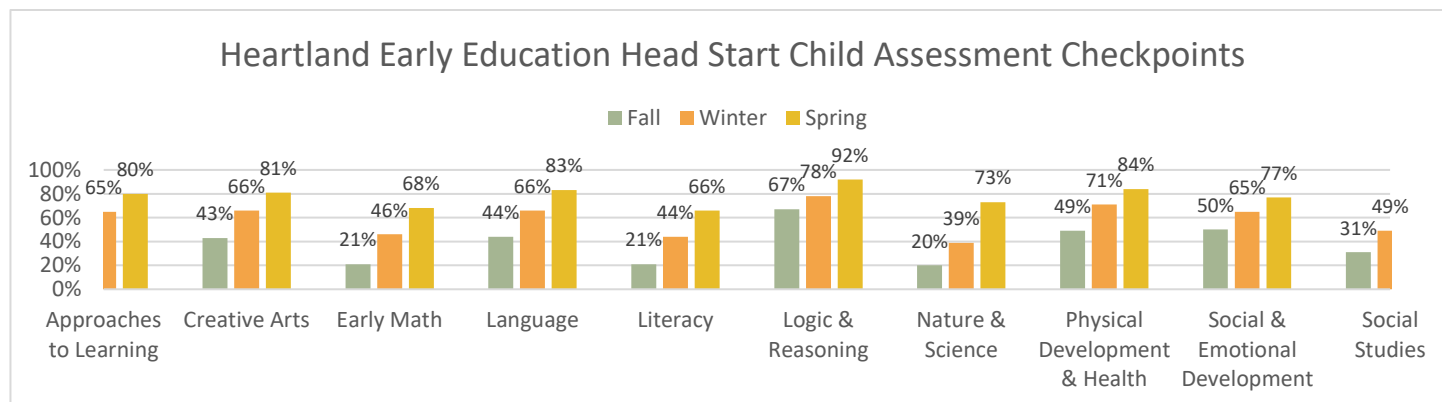
As infants and toddlers move through the natural sequence of developmental milestones, Heartland believes the role of Early Head Start staff is to support families through the process. This support comes in the form of many different services; home visits, parent/teacher conferences, referrals, screening, assessment, etc. These services are in place to support children as they develop the skills they will use for the rest of their lives.



PRESCHOOL ON-GOING ASSESSMENT

Children's progress is assessed on an ongoing basis; this information is used for lesson planning for groups of children and to individualize activities for each child. Data is used to track child growth and development and guide lessons so children are prepared for kindergarten. Data is aggregated and analyzed multiple times throughout the year at individual, classroom, site, and program levels; this information is used to adapt strategies to increase student learning.

The chart shows growth of three and four year olds over the three checkpoints during 2024-25.



When concerns and possible delays are found in children ages three to five, families are referred to the Central Kansas Cooperative in Education (CKCIE), Part B, for further evaluation.

Special Program Initiatives

FOOD INSECURITIES

Through the Weekend Food Support program, staff are able to identify and refer children who are demonstrating food insecurity indicators such as behavior, physical appearance, school performance, and home environment factors. If parents consent to the program the child will receive a weekly food bag containing approximately 12 items to provide approximately 1500 calories and 45 grams of protein.

The table and chart below indicates the number of children, families, and total food bags distributed for the last three years. **The food support program has provided 13,542 bags of food since it started in 2018.**

	Saline County	Dickinson County	Ellsworth County	TOTALS
2022-23	66 children / 45 families	3 children / 3 families	5 children / 4 families	74 children / 52 families
	1921 food bags	97 food bags	163 food bags	2181 food bags
2023-24	74 children / 57 families	3 children / 2 families	6 children / 4 families	83 children / 63 families
	2265 food bags	62 food bags	171 food bags	2498 food bags
2024-25	71 children / 57 families	2 children / 2 families	1 child / 1 family	74 children / 60 families
	1906 food bags	55 food bags	9 food bags	1970 food bags



STAFF DEVELOPMENT

CONTINUING EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

As funds are available, Heartland Early Education will provide tuition assistance for an Early Childhood Associates and/or Bachelor's Degrees through an accredited Early Childhood Education Program for interested classroom staff and partnering staff up to the degree required for the position. For example, Head Start classroom staff may obtain a Bachelor's Degree. Early Head Start classroom staff may obtain an Associate's Degree. Barton County Community College and Hutchinson Community College have been selected for Associates Degrees and Fort Hays State University and Wichita State University for Bachelor's Degrees as these colleges are approved vendors through SPS.

Heartland will provide tuition assistance up to 60 hours towards an Associate's Degree in ECE and 60 hours towards a Bachelor's Degree in ECE per staff person. **During the 2024-25 school year, 6 Heartland staff benefited from the continuing education tuition assistance program. A total of 117 hours in college credit were completed.**

Family Engagement

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Home Visits

- **EARLY HEAD START HOME-BASED:** Weekly 90 minute home visits are provided.
- **HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START CENTER-BASED:** Monthly home visits are provided.
- **PARENTS AS TEACHERS:** Monthly home visits are provided.

Socializations/Playgroups

Opportunities are provided at least twice a month for home-based EHS parents and children to encourage interaction with one another and to create bonds.

Parent Teacher Conferences

The families of all children attending EHS or Head Start classrooms are offered at least two parent teacher conference opportunities per year.

Parent Events

Regularly scheduled events are planned in order to share information about the program, learn about appropriate child development, and provide parent/child connections.

Hiring Process

Parents are invited to participate in the interview of new staff. Parent interviewers are full partners in hiring decisions.

Mom's Group

This group ensures all moms of enrolled children have opportunities to network with other moms while child care is provided.

Policy Council

Policy Council meets monthly to allow parents to participate in policy making and other decisions about the program. At least 51% of the members are current parents.



Parent, Family and Community Engagement (PFCE) Assessment

The PFCE assessment is completed bi-annually with families. A Fall checkpoint is completed between August and September and a Spring checkpoint between April and May. The assessment is based on the PFCE framework that looks at family outcomes in 7 areas; Family Well-being, Positive Parent-Child Relationships, Families as Lifelong Educators, Families as Learners, Family Engagement in Transitions, Family Connections to Peers and Community, and Families as Advocates and Leaders. The goals of the assessment are to help families identify areas to potentially set Family Partnership goals that they along with their Family Consultant and program staff can work towards. The program's goal is that growth is noted in all PFCE assessment areas between the fall and spring checkpoint.

Surveys

Surveys are conducted annually to elicit feedback from parents, staff, and the community. Information is compiled and used within the Self-Assessment and Strategic Plan for on-going monitoring and improvement.

Fiscal Summary

FINANCIAL AUDIT 2024-2025

The Salina USD 305 budget year ended June 30, 2025. The accounting firm Agler & Gaeddert Chartered was contracted to audit the expenditures, revenues, and cash balances to ensure all regulatory accounting policies and procedures required were followed. The Independent Auditor's Report was presented to the school board on October 14, 2025.

The unmodified opinion on regulatory basis of accounting was that that the financial statements presents fairly, in all material respects, the aggregate cash and unencumbered cash balances of the Salina Unified School District 305, Salina, KS, as of June 30, 2025, and the aggregate receipts and expenditures for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting provisions of the Kansas Municipal Audit and Accounting Guide.

Financial transactions are randomly reviewed each year, and detail audits are alternated for different programs over a three year cycle. The full audit report is available on the USD 305 website at:

<https://www.usd305.com/departments/business-office/audit-reports>

BUDGET NARRATIVE

- 1. PERSONNEL** – All Head Start salaries meet the Federal salary cap limitations. Heartland Early Education uses the same salary schedule as the Salina School District and wages are approved annually by the Board of Education.
- 2. FRINGE BENEFITS** – Includes social security, workers compensation, unemployment insurance, health insurance and retirement.
- 3. CONTRACTUAL** – Contracts for services to include technical support from the Salina School district, transportation and cleaning services for Enterprise and Salina, Gross Motor Skills services from CKCIE and grant support from WIPFLI.
- 4. CHILD CARE CONTRACTUAL** – A partnership with a childcare center in Dickinson County provided full day, full year Head Start and Early Start services to families.
- 5. SUPPLIES** – Includes office and computer equipment; and office, classroom, educational, literacy, and building supplies.



6. **OTHER/CHILD SERVICES** – medical and dental care for children, mental health assessment and care, parent meeting child care, and classroom substitutes.
7. **OTHER/PARENT SERVICES** – Policy Council meetings, parent meetings, socializations, Fatherhood Support, Mom’s Club group meetings, and staff activities.
8. **OTHER/OCCUPANCY** – Telephone, internet, utilities, subscriptions, recruitment, Human Resource testing fees, transportation expenses, audit fees, building maintenance and repairs.
9. **TRAINING** – the amount of the training budget is required by the grant and provides training for staff, childcare partners, and Policy Council members.
10. **EQUIPMENT** – vehicle replacement

Heartland Early Education Head Start/Early Head Start Annual Budget 2024-25

Fund 61 – Head Start / Early Head Start			Fund 59 – Kansas Early Head Start		
	Categories	Budget		Categories	Budget
1.	Personnel	4,733,083	1.	Personnel	871,344
2.	Fringe Benefits	873,798	2.	Fringe Benefits	172,454
3.	Contractual	34,400	4.	Child care Contractual	29,262
4.	Child Care Contractual	42,490	8.	Other/Occupancy	25,540
5.	Supplies	177,800		Total Kansas Grant	\$1,098,600
6.	Other Child Services	34,320	Other Grants		
7.	Other Parent Services	22,610	Fund 28 – Parents as Teachers		146,584
8.	Other/Occupancy	243,160	Fund 11 – State Pre-Kindergarten		282,000
9.	Training	76,921	Fund 58 – Non-Federal Funds		13,256
10.	Equipment/Facilities	52,000	Fund 60 – Summer Food Program		2,600
	Total Grant	\$6,288,582	Fund 69 – Child Food Program (CACFP)		211,000
			Fund 70 – Kansas Preschool Pilot		189,800
				Total Other Grants	\$845,240
Overall Grand Total			\$8,232,422		

Financial Audit 2024-2025

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Head Start Governance, Leadership, and Oversight Capacity Screener

Goals for Heartland Early Education, based on screener feedback:

1. Strengthen Parent Committee Engagement *(see #4)*

Action Steps:

- Schedule informal parent listening sessions during drop-off and pick-up times to gather feedback on meeting topics and times.
- Pilot at least one “on-site” parent meeting per quarter (e.g., before or after school hours) to increase accessibility.
- Develop a simple feedback form to capture parent ideas and preferred ways to engage *(see “we’d love your input” form)*
- Family Services staff to review feedback monthly and adjust meeting plans accordingly.

Responsible Party	Timeline
Family Services Staff, Family Service Supervisors	Begin Fall 2025; review quarterly

2. Develop a system to assess/respond to the needs of the Governing Body and Policy Council and ensure consistent and transparent sharing of program information *(see #6 & #8)*

Action Steps:

- Add a governance refresher or training piece during monthly PC meetings and in monthly BOE director’s report (i.e. fiscal oversight, data use, and program governance) to build confidence and understanding of roles.
- Summarize key policy and procedure updates and if applicable, provide brief talking points to GB for sharing information with communities.
- Ask for feedback from PC and GB regarding effectiveness.

Responsible Party	Timeline
Director	Begin Oct 2025; ongoing monthly

3. Create opportunities for parents to actively participate in staff hiring processes *(see #11)*

Action Steps:

- Develop a short “Parent Interview Panel Guide” outlining how parents can participate in screening or interviews.
- Ensure parent involvement 75% of the time this program year.
- Collect feedback from staff and parents afterward to refine the process and expand participation next year.

Responsible Party	Timeline
HR Specialist; EES; parents	As scheduled



Health and Safety Screener: Policies and Procedures for Head Start Programs

Summary of results based on completed screener for Year One of Five Year Program Cycle (2025-2030):

All classrooms serving Head Start children were checked.

No major findings.

Note: We are in Year Two of providing Head Start services in eight elementary buildings in our district - we are working to ensure policies and procedures are in place in these settings. Each building approaches things the same way, yet there are some differences.

Physical copies of H/S screeners kept in Education Manager's office.



Fiscal Year 2026 Monitoring Process for Head Start Recipients

headstart.gov/policy/im/acf-ohs-im-25-05

Fiscal Year 2026 Monitoring Process for Head Start Recipients ACF-OHS-IM-25-05

U.S. (United States) Department
of Health and Human Services

ACF
Administration for Children and Families

1. Log Number: ACF-OHS-IM-25-05
2. Issuance Date: 09/25/2025
3. Originating Office: Office of Head Start
4. Key Words: Monitoring; FY 2026; CLASS®

Information Memorandum

To: All Head Start Grant Recipients

Subject: Fiscal Year 2026 Monitoring Process for Head Start Recipients

Information:

[Section 641A](#) of the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (the Act) requires the Office of Head Start (OHS) to monitor programs to make sure they meet quality and compliance standards. This Information Memorandum (IM) explains the monitoring process for fiscal year (FY) 2026, including updates to review formats and when reviews will take place during a grant period.

OHS (Office of Head Start) is committed to strong program management, protecting children's health and safety, and ensuring effective oversight. To support these priorities, OHS (Office of Head Start) has refined the monitoring approach to be more focused, efficient, and responsive to program needs. This year, updates to monitoring reviews include streamlining and clarifying review questions, reducing the total number of questions from 449 in FY25 to 203 for FY26 (Fiscal Year 2026) (54.8 percent decrease overall), and shortening on-site review days from 5 days to 3 or 3.5 days. These updates focus reviews on the most critical elements for child safety and program integrity, as well as reviewing for compliance with all applicable state statutes and regulations for licensing. These updates help strengthen systems early in the grant cycle, support fiscal integrity, and allow more on-site visits sooner in the process to ensure that there is a strong organizational foundation early in the grant cycle. Together, these updates keep our partnership with recipients strong while maintaining accountability to Head Start standards.

Review Type	FY26 Format	Start Date
Focus Area 1 (FA1): Program Systems Review	Reviews foundational systems that ensure strong operations, fiscal integrity, and child safety across all sites. Reviews happen in years 1 or 2 of the grant; using both virtual and on-site formats.	October 2025
Focus Area 2 (FA2): Comprehensive Services Review	Reviews the quality of education, health, and family services to strengthen child and family outcomes, and ensures implementation of eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance (ERSEA) requirements. Reviews happen in years three or four of the grant; using both virtual and on-site formats.	October 2025
Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®)	Reviews teacher-child interactions. Reviews happen in years two through four of the grant, using a self-recorded video submission. <i>On-site reviews are available upon request.</i> American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) programs have the option to conduct a self-review.	October 2025
Follow-up Reviews	Both virtual and on-site formats, aligned to the nature of the findings.	As needed
Risk Assessment Notification (RAN) Reviews	Both virtual and on-site formats, aligned to the nature of the findings	As needed

Review Type	FY26 Format	Start Date
Other/Special Reviews	Conducted on-site or virtually, with or without notice.	As needed

FY26 Monitoring Review Types starting October 2025

Note: OHS (Office of Head Start) has the right to conduct unannounced reviews at any time.

FA1 Program Systems Review

The FA1 (Focus Area 1): Foundational Systems Review happens in the first or second year of the grant cycle and includes a mix of virtual and on-site formats. This review focuses on program systems that support high-quality services while eliminating unnecessary burden for recipients. This review helps OHS (Office of Head Start) understand each recipient's foundation for program services, including governance, staffing and supervision, service design, internal monitoring, fiscal capacity, and integrity, and ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance) processes. This review type checks if programs meet the requirements of the Uniform Guidance, and the Head Start Act. Updates to the FA1 (Focus Area 1) review this year include:

- Streamlining review questions – reducing the number of items reviewed in each content area by 30–50 percent to improve efficiency while maintaining rigor.
- Focusing earlier on critical systems – incorporating fiscal, governance, and ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance) into the FA1 (Focus Area 1) review to assess these foundational areas sooner in the grant cycle.
- Adding on-site engagement – introducing an on-site component, in addition to virtual formats, to strengthen understanding of program operations and the systems in place to keep children safe.

FA2: Comprehensive Services Review

The FA2 (Focus Area 2): Comprehensive Services Review happens in the third or fourth year of the grant cycle and includes a mix of virtual and on-site formats. This review gives recipients the chance to show how they deliver high-quality services to children and families that meet Head Start requirements. The review looks at the quality of education, health, and family services; checks that ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance) requirements are met; and reviews fiscal capacity and integrity. It also helps OHS (Office of Head Start) understand each recipient's performance and confirm that programs meet the requirements of the Uniform Guidance, and the Head Start Act. Updates to the FA2 (Focus Area 2) review this year include:

- Streamlining questions for clarity, making the review process more efficient and focused.
- Increasing the specificity of review items to provide more actionable feedback to recipients.
- Maintaining a strong focus on child safety, program quality, and fiscal integrity throughout the review process.
- Shortening the on-site portion from 5 days to 3.5 days, reducing burden while maintaining a thorough review.

CLASS® Reviews

Section 641A(c)(2)(F) of the Act requires OHS (Office of Head Start) to assess the quality of teacher–child interactions using a valid and reliable observation measure. In FY26 (Fiscal Year 2026) OHS will continue using the 2008 edition of the CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System.) Pre-K tool. Scores will count toward Designation Renewal System (DRS) decisions using the competitive thresholds set in the 2020 [final rule on DRS changes](#). A 2024 rule delays the increase in the CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System.) Instructional Support competitive threshold from 2.3 to 2.5 until August 1, 2027.

In FY26 (Fiscal Year 2026), programs scheduled for a CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System.) review will record and submit their own classroom videos (video review). On-site reviews with certified CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System.) observers are available **only** by request.

AIAN (American Indian and Alaska Native) Head Start programs can choose to do a self-review for their CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System.) review. All AIAN (American Indian and Alaska Native) grant recipients have the option for a self-review, including those that have consolidated their Head Start program into an approved Pub. L. 102-477 Plan.

All recipients will have the opportunity to attend information sessions specifically developed to discuss FY26 (Fiscal Year 2026) CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System.) options, including a group of sessions convened specifically for AIAN (American Indian and Alaska Native) recipients.

RAN Reviews

OHS (Office of Head Start) conducts RAN reviews when there are serious child health or safety concerns due to a reported incident. These reviews start when OHS (Office of Head Start) needs more information about a significant incident that occurred within a program. They focus on issues such as abuse, neglect, inappropriate conduct, inadequate supervision, or unauthorized release of a child.

RAN reviews are designed to:

- Make sure serious incidents are reported quickly and accurately
- Identify any program or management issues that contributed to the incident
- Share the corrective actions that are needed
- Provide feedback to help programs prevent similar incidents in the future

Other Reviews

OHS (Office of Head Start) may conduct special reviews when there are concerns that fall outside the regular monitoring schedule. These reviews can be done on-site or virtually and may take place with or without advance notice. OHS (Office of Head Start) also has the right to conduct unannounced reviews at any time.

Tribal Programs Integrated Under Pub. L. 102-477 Plans

As required by law, OHS (Office of Head Start) will continue to work with the Tribe and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to conduct monitoring and oversight. Tribal grant recipients that include their Head Start program in a Pub. L. 102-477 plan should describe their monitoring approach in that plan. Information from these reviews helps determine continued Head Start funding through DRS (Designation Renewal System). Programs may receive funds without competition only if the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) determines they provide a high-quality, comprehensive program.

For Tribal programs that are integrated under a Pub. L. 102-477 plan and choose to participate in OHS (Office of Head Start) monitoring, OHS (Office of Head Start) will continue to conduct monitoring and a CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) review (self-review option available) to help ACF (Administration of Children and Families) confirm the program is delivering a high-quality, comprehensive program.

Scheduling

Each year, programs must submit a calendar showing when programs are open and when children are in session. OHS (Office of Head Start) uses this calendar to schedule monitoring reviews. If the schedule changes, programs should update their calendar right away. OHS (Office of Head Start) can only approve rescheduling in exceptional situations. OHS (Office of Head Start) may also conduct reviews without advance notice.

Communications

Programs scheduled for a monitoring review in FY26 (Fiscal Year 2026) will receive a notification letter 45 days before the review starts. The assigned review lead will also schedule a planning call to discuss the review and learn about the program's current service delivery. After the review, OHS (Office of Head Start) will issue the report within 60 days.

Questions

For questions regarding FY26 (Fiscal Year 2026) monitoring, please contact the appropriate regional office.

Thank you for the continued commitment to the success of Head Start children and families.

Sincerely,

/ Tala Q. Hooban /

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CAPT, U.S. Public Health Service
Acting Director
Office of Head Start



Addressing Vacant Slots Due to Chronic Absenteeism in Head Start Programs

headstart.gov/policy/im/acf-ohs-im-25-06

Addressing Vacant Slots Due to Chronic Absenteeism in Head Start Programs ACF-OHS-IM-25-06

U.S. (United States) Department
of Health and Human Services

ACF
Administration for Children and Families

1. **Log Number:** ACF-OHS-IM-25-06
2. **Issuance Date:** 09/26/2025
3. **Originating Office:** Office of Head Start
4. **Key Words:** Vacant Slots; Absenteeism; Enrollment Reporting; Attendance

Information Memorandum

To: All Head Start recipients, including Head Start Preschool, Early Head Start, Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, Collaboration Offices, and National Centers

Subject: Addressing Vacant Slots Due to Chronic Absenteeism in Head Start Programs

Information:

This Information Memorandum (IM) clarifies policy guidance on vacant slots in Head Start programs, with a focus on vacant slots due to chronic absenteeism.

Vacancies occur when a child who is enrolled in the program (and has attended previously) no longer attends for an extended period of time. This empty slot constitutes a missed opportunity for the child who is not attending a program and a missed opportunity for an eligible child who is waiting for Head Start services. Programs should work with the family to reinstate attendance or consider the slot vacant and fill it so the maximum number of eligible children can receive Head Start services.

This IM clarifies when Head Start programs should consider a child's slot vacant after long-term absences, underscores the importance of regular attendance, and offers strategies programs can use to enhance access and participation for children and families.

Clarifying Vacant Slot Requirements

The Head Start Program Performance Standards (Performance Standards), specify that a Head Start program must maintain its funded enrollment level and fill any open slots as soon as possible and within 30 days ([45 CFR §1302.15\(a\)](#)). This does not supersede any requirements set by a state on the timely enrollment of children in state funded programs.

The Office of Head Start (OHS) requires a program to report a slot as vacant as soon as the family or guardian communicates that the child is not returning to the program. The program must consider a slot vacant after a child has not attended for a **maximum** of 30 days (which should be counted as 30 consecutive calendar days) and a minimum of three attempts have been made to re-engage the family. Considering the slot vacant means the child will be unenrolled. This action is not considered expulsion as described in [§1302.17](#).

If a program has reserved one or more enrollment slots for children and pregnant women experiencing homelessness or children in foster care, it can hold that slot for 30 days (§1302.15(c)). If a reserved slot is not filled after 30 days, it becomes vacant and must be filled within 30 days. When filling vacant slots, programs are expected to refer to their waiting list, which ranks children according to the program's selection criteria as outlined in [§1302.14\(c\)](#).

The Performance Standards are also clear that programs must implement strategies to promote attendance, including using individual child attendance data to identify children with patterns of absence that put them at risk of missing 10 percent of program days per year. If a child ceases to attend, the program must make appropriate efforts to reengage the family to resume attendance ([§1302.16\(a\)\(3\)](#)). Efforts to reengage the family, at a minimum, include either directly contacting the parent or guardian or conducting a home visit. Each contact or attempted contact with the family must be documented in the child's file or in the program's record keeping system.

Considerations for Exceptions

The Performance Standards outline an expectation of filling any vacancies as soon as possible and within 30 days (§1302.15(a)), and OHS generally considers a slot to be vacant as soon as a family has confirmed the child is not returning to the program (or when a child has not attended for a maximum of 30 days), as described above. However, Head Start programs may develop policies and procedures that allow for limited exceptions to when a slot is considered to be vacant, as there are some unique circumstances that may factor into a child's attendance. Some examples may include: extenuating family circumstances that require a family to travel out of the service area for more than 30 days, a child with an extended illness or requiring hospitalization, a family recovering from a disaster, or a family emergency that might hinder a family's ability to ensure their child is able to get to the program. Programs must document the rationale for allowing the exception either in the child's file or in their record keeping systems.

In extraordinary circumstances, a child may be temporarily suspended from a Head Start program (§1302.17(a)). A temporary suspension may be used only as a last resort when there is a serious safety threat that has not been reduced or eliminated by the provision of interventions and supports recommended by the mental health consultant, and the program needs time to put appropriate services in place. In these instances, a temporary suspension would not count toward the maximum of 30 days before a slot is considered vacant. If a temporary suspension is deemed necessary, a program must help the child return to full participation in all program activities as quickly as possible while ensuring child safety. A program must explore and document all steps taken to address the behavior(s) and supports needed to facilitate the child's safe reentry and continued participation in the program as outlined in §1302.17(a)(4).

If a program unenrolls a child due to chronic absenteeism, OHS encourages programs to allow the family to re-enroll upon return if there is a vacancy to accommodate them. If a program can no longer accommodate the family, it should place the child to the waitlist and help them identify an alternative care arrangement.

Enrollment Reporting Reminders

All Head Start programs must report their monthly enrollment in the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES) by Head Start Preschool and/or Early Head Start program within each grant (641A(h)(2)). Together, the following categories make up the total enrolled slots for the month: filled slots, reserved slots, and slots vacant for less than 30 days. Programs can make edits to reported monthly enrollment until a new reporting period opens.

For the purposes of enrollment reporting, a slot that is vacant for less than 30 days is counted toward a program's enrolled slots. Programs may report any slots that were vacant for less than 30 days as enrolled for the month. This allows the programs an opportunity to enroll another family. After 30 days, the slots can no longer be counted as enrolled slots (§1302.15(a)). At the beginning of the program year, all unfilled slots are considered vacant, unless they are reserved, and must be filled as soon as possible.

Importance of Attendance and Preventing Chronic Absenteeism

In Head Start programs, chronic absenteeism means missing 10 percent of program days per year. Chronic absenteeism, even among children in preschool and kindergarten, has been shown to be related to future chronic absenteeism, grade retention, and poor academic achievement.¹

Children living in poverty are two to three times more likely to be chronically absent from school. Chronic absenteeism can have disproportionately negative impacts on children living in poverty because their families often lack access to resources needed to make up for the lost learning.² Establishing a pattern of consistent attendance enhances children's cognitive development, social skills, and long-term educational success.

Strategies to Enhance Program Access and Participation for Children and Families

Head Start programs are required to implement strategies to promote attendance (§1302.16(a)(2)). Here are a few strategies programs can use to address chronic absenteeism and boost regular attendance:

- Building relationships with families to improve communication.
 - Program leadership should promote regular attendance by consistently sending the message that regular attendance is important for children's success. Child and family services staff should reinforce this message by highlighting attendance during parent-teacher conferences and other engagement opportunities, and discussing the benefits of regular attendance with families.
 - Programs should ensure that all staff can build trusting relationships with families. These relationships are the foundation for understanding any challenges a family and child may be facing. As part of these ongoing relationships, staff can have regular conversations with families about the value and benefits of attendance as well as problem solve about specific family circumstances that may be adversely affecting child attendance.
- Programs can engage in community partnerships that support child and family wellbeing and promote child attendance. Health and mental health providers, family support services, housing organizations, and child care providers with extended days supports can all help programs to promote family and child wellness, stability, and child attendance.
- Programs must track attendance for every child. Programs must also examine barriers to regular attendance, such as access to safe and reliable transportation, and where possible, provide or facilitate transportation for the child if needed (§1302.16(a)(2)(v)).
- Programs must regularly review and analyze individual child-attendance data to identify trends and patterns in absences and develop targeted supports for families. If a program's monthly average daily attendance rate falls below 85 percent, the program must analyze the causes of absenteeism to identify any systematic issues that contribute to the program's absentee rate (§1302.16(b)).
- Programs should use health data to identify trends in children's absences that are related to health and implement strategies that improve attendance. They can help improve attendance using policies and procedures that promote health, reduce the spread of illness, and prevent injury. Programs should individualize supports for each family when absences are related to health, and provide education and resources for family members to prevent illness and injury and identify when a child is sick and needs treatment.
- Programs must use a multidisciplinary approach that facilitates coordination and collaboration between mental health and other relevant program services, including as education, disability, family engagement, and health services. A multidisciplinary approach, including mental health consultants, can help programs identify why there may be chronic absenteeism and support children and families to attain regular attendance.

Thank you for the work you do on behalf of children and families.

Sincerely,

/ Tala Q. Hooban /

Tala Q. Hooban
CAPT, U.S. Public Health Service
Acting Director
Office of Head Start

Resources:

- [ERSEA \[Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance\] Insights](#)
- [Addressing Barriers that Limit Attendance](#)
- [Health Services to Promote Attendance](#)
- [Eligibility Resources](#)
- [Enrollment: Creating Systems for Filling Every Seat](#)
- [Making Enrollment Accessible to Families](#)

¹ <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/school-health/school-attendance>

² <https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/the-problem/>