

Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands, Inc.

Early Head Start



Program Overview

Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands (LSSVI) is a multi-service non-profit organization that began as the Queen Louise Home for Children (QLH), which has been in continuous operation since 1904. On the QLH campus, three programs serve as a safe haven for children. The programs include Cottages A/B for children who have been abandoned, abused or neglected, Sister Emma Cottage for children with special needs and the Early Head Start program. In September 2003, LSSVI opened the only Early Head Start (EHS-Concordia West) in the Virgin Islands. At the end of 2009, LSSVI/EHS was awarded an expansion grant (Concordia East) which began services in July of 2010.

The LSSVI/EHS programs serve a total of 120 children, families and pregnant women. There are 72 children enrolled in the Center-Based Program, 24 children enrolled in the Home-Based Program and 24 individuals in the Pregnant Women Program. The EHS program is funded for a total enrollment of 120 and services the entire island of St. Croix.

Mission:

Our mission is to partner with parents to promote the development of the total child by providing for their approaches to learning, and meeting their cognitive, language, social, emotional, and physical needs. We also help parents to learn the skills needed to support their child's growth and development with special emphasis on school readiness. Early Head Start aims to accomplish this by adhering to the following guiding principles:

- Each child is unique and can succeed in the context of supportive relationships and environments.

- Families are the children’s first and most important caregivers, teachers, and advocates and are empowered within EHS and the community.
- Nurturing, responsive, and consistent care helps create safe environments where children feel secure and valued.
- Areas of development, including approaches to learning, social and emotional, cognitive, language, and physical, are important and are integrated recognizing that children learn many concepts and skills at the same time.
- Teaching must be intentional and focused on how children learn and grow by providing developmentally appropriate opportunities for exploration and meaningful play.
- Every child and family have diverse strengths rooted in culture, background, language, and beliefs.
- Fostering relationships with the larger community ensures that families and staff are respected and served by a network of community agencies in partnership with one another.
- Developing a continuum of care, education, and services allows for stable, uninterrupted support to families and children during and after their EHS experience.

Program Enrollment

Monthly Enrollment (2018-2019 School Year): EHS Center- Based Option was fully enrolled 100 % of the time August, 2018 through August, 2019. However, the Home-Based Program Option had two reoccurring vacant slots.

- September 2018: 20 Pregnant Women slots were filled and 4 remained vacant.
- October 2018: 2 Pregnant Women slots were filled and 2 remained vacant.
- November 2018: All Program options were filled.
- December 2018: 1 Home-Based family withdrew due to parent’s unavailability.
- February 2019 through August 2019: 2 Home-Based families relocated to the mainland and the two slots remained vacant.

The average monthly enrollment for the EHS programs was as follows:

<u>Month/Year</u>	<u>Enrolled</u>	<u>% of Funded Enrollment</u>
Aug-19	118	98
Jul-19	118	98
Jun-19	118	98
May-19	118	98
Apr-19	118	98
Mar-19	118	98
Feb-19	117	97
Jan-19	119	99
Dec-18	119	99
Nov-18	120	100
Oct-18	118	98
Sep-18	116	96

The cumulative enrollment for the 2018-19 school year was 131.

Eligibility

Figure 1 Type of Eligibility N=131

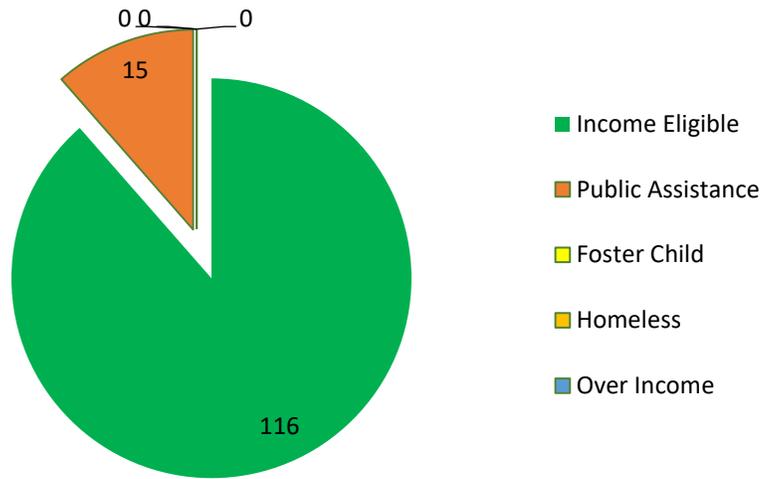
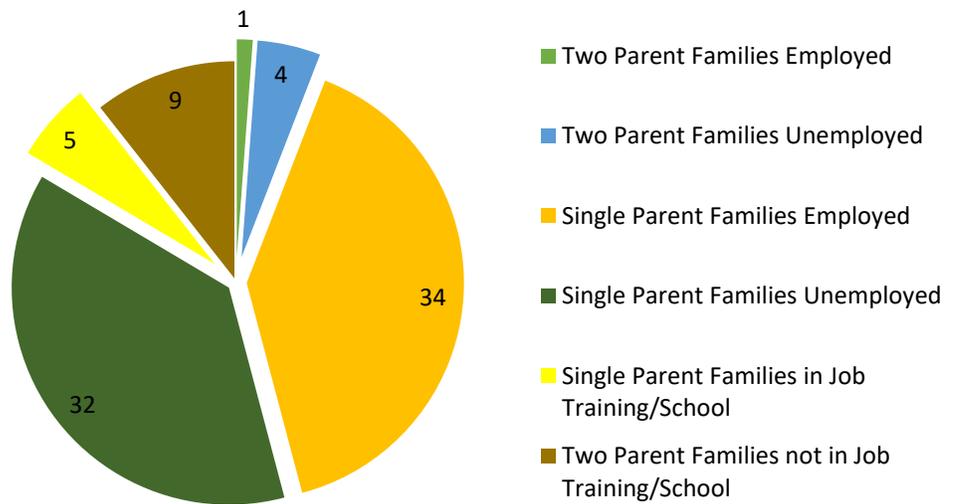


Figure 2 Type of Household N=75
 Two Parent Families: N=9 Single Parent Families N=66



Goal #2: To improve school readiness and individual and overall child assessment scores: EHS SR Goals were updated to reflect consistency with COR Advantage



Office of Head Start’s Definition of School Readiness – Head Start defines school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life.

The Head Start Approach to School Readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children’s learning, and schools are ready for children.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development</u> *Movement: Children will demonstrate increasing ability to move parts (i.e.-hands and fingers) or their entire body with objects and/or in response to music. ▪ <u>Social & Emotional Development</u> *Sense of Self: Children will demonstrate increasing ability to distinguish self from others and express initiative during activities. *Social Relations: Children will demonstrate increasing ability to relate to other children, form attachments and relate to adults. ▪ <u>Language & Literacy</u> *Communication and Language: Children will demonstrate increasing ability to listen and respond, communicate non-verbally, speak, participate in communication and explore picture books and show interest in rhymes and songs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Cognition</u> *Exploration: Children will demonstrate increasing ability to use their senses to explore and investigate their environment to discover what objects and people do, how things work, and how they can make things happen). *Early Logic: Children will demonstrate increasing ability to utilize objects, categorize objects, development number understanding, use space and objects around them and remember the daily routine. ▪ <u>Approaches to Learning</u> *Creative Representation: Children will demonstrate increasing ability to participate in make-believe play, explore building and art materials, respond to, and identify pictures and photographs. *Curiosity and Persistence: Children will demonstrate increasing ability to explore their environment and new materials, maintain focus on activities, and increase their engagement in activities until completion. ▪ <u>Dual Language Learners</u> Children who are dual language learners will demonstrate increasing ability to comprehend or understand the English language; speak or use English, and understand and respond to books/ storytelling.
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Actions taken this year to assist in improving overall child assessment scores:

- The program meets regularly to review school readiness goals, assessments scores and to identify trainings and or manipulatives needed to achieve desired goals.
- The program continues to purchase additional items for students to utilize, including low technology toys such as a toy hammer, to coincide with the additional domains in the COR Advantage based on aggregated data of classroom scores.
- The program has been awarded a STEM Grant from Community Foundations of the VI to assist in improving the scores for Exploration and Early Logic COR Advantage domain.
- The program has filled the position of EDM that completes informal and formal observation of teaching staff and classroom environment.
- Education staff ensured that lesson plans and daily objectives were aligned with the SR goals and High Scope Key Development Indicators (KDI's) to support children in being Head Start ready.
- When completing the formal bi-annual teacher evaluations, the Education and Disability Manager (EDM) observed and reflected on the KDI's for a particular segment of the day and provided teachers with feedback of their observed strengths and areas of improvement. Further, on a weekly basis teachers were encouraged to intentionally incorporate the KDI's throughout their lesson planning.
- During the week-long High Scope training, two days were set aside to model and teach staff to incorporate Math and Science into their daily lesson planning and to incorporate the KDI's into the daily activities. Following the workshop, the EDM met with staff and provided suggestions for about 2-5 weeks of lesson planning.
- Parents were given copies daily of the SR Goals as part of the daily communication log. The log noted what the targeted daily domain was for each teacher and for the individual students by class. By June, parents with online access could opt to receive their daily communication electronically while others receive theirs via text.
- Staff received continuing professional development in regards to the COR curriculum.
- The program continued to promote items for students as their growth and development expanded. Examples: toys that reinforce cause and effect, and children's books related to STEM concepts and resource books, and assorted science and exploring materials.
- The program monitored child-scoring data and made intentional decisions to purchase educational supplies that supported the areas of concern: i.e., foam masonry blocks that support exploration, logic and creativity.
- The program had all ASQ/ASQ SE completed at the first Parent/Teacher home visit, which eliminated the need for many re-screens.

Goal #3: To increase the availability of appropriate and coordinated health services for children and families

Objective	Strategy Update/Progress
<p>Promote collaboration of public and private sector health service providers.</p>	<p>EHS continues to reach out to private and public sector health service providers to assist EHS families who are in need.</p> <p>EHS has on-going communication with members of the Health Advisory Board to assist in providing direction/suggestions with on-going challenges.</p> <p>EHS has secured a MOU with a private sector health service provider who has been supportive and accessible with assisting families/children with a medical concern when they are unable to be seen in a reasonable time by the Community Health Centers.</p> <p>EHS has secured an updated MOU with the Local Health Center, which provides medical and dental services to EHS children and families.</p> <p>EHS has not yet been successful with securing an updated MOU with Department of Health’s Infant and Toddlers Program. This effort will be revisited during the 2019-2020 SY as a line of communication has been established through the new Deputy Commissioner of Health.</p> <p>The FCPC’s and EDM continue to attend IFSP and IEP meetings with the Infant and Toddlers Program to ensure students’ developmental needs are met.</p> <p><u>Expected Outcome:</u> EHS children will receive health services in a timely manner, which will support their overall well-being and improved attendance rate at school.</p>



Goal #4: To improve the compliance rate of health screenings and up-to-date immunization for all families and children

Objective	Strategy Update/Progress
<p>Promote and educate on the importance of health screenings and up-to-date immunizations.</p> <p>Improve coordination of health services with medical providers.</p> <p>Ensure EHS's involvement in initiatives/activities related to promoting wellness for children</p>	<p>Current Compliance rate of health screenings is 100%.</p> <p>The program continues to provide onsite screenings in an effort to facilitate easy access and health screening compliance for families.</p> <p>EHS increased their outreach efforts/communication with parents prior to the first day of school regarding educational information on the benefits of ensuring their children are up-to-date on all health-related issues.</p> <p>MOU established with Frederiksted Health Center and Pediatric Care Center of the Virgin Islands.</p> <p>Nurse and physician from the Health Advisory Board facilitated parent health workshops, which are on going, and parents are also given information on Community Health Events.</p> <p>During Orientation, parents were notified to bring in their child's immunization card to update their file.</p> <p>Health memos and educational materials were sent out to parents regarding community health concerns or contagious outbreaks.</p> <p>EHS established a Developmental and Social Emotional/Behavioral Protocol that lists current screening tools, screening process and screening follow-up for new and returning children.</p> <p>The data tracking system that is utilized by the Health Services Coordinator is consistently updated to track and ensure that all children are up-to-date with their immunizations and health screenings and that all necessary screenings are completed within compliance timeframe.</p> <p>Health information is now captured in CAP 60 database.</p> <p><u>Expected Outcome:</u> Parents will have an increased knowledge and understanding of health literacy. This knowledge will result in their ability to be self-aware and proactive regarding their child's wellness needs.</p>

Goal #5: To improve parent participation in parent/teachers’ conferences, governance responsibilities and other program activities

Objective	Strategy Update/Progress
<p>Increase communication and engagement efforts between all EHS staff and parents</p> <p>For Family and Community Partnership Coordinators (FCPC) to make contact with every parent/family no less than once per month</p> <p>Educate parents and staff in the importance of parents as partners</p> <p>Educate parents on the importance and benefits of embracing a leadership role of being involved in governance activities such as policy council and parent committee.</p>	<p>The program engages in one on one communication with families daily.</p> <p>The program engages parents by encouraging parent committee and policy council participation along with engaging them to participate on the annual program self-assessment.</p> <p>The program has placed a parent board on site that creatively displays participation on special days for special events.</p> <p>During this school year, CW averaged 4-5 parents participating at center activities, workshops, and socializations.</p> <p>With the use of technology in the 2018-2019 SY, parents received text messages from FCPC about upcoming activities.</p> <p>The program has updated its Volunteer, Parent Committee and Policy Council brochures to reflect parent officers and committee chairs.</p> <p>The program has created a Facebook and Twitter page for families and the community at large as part of the Parent Committee feedback.</p> <p>EHS staff received on-going trainings and updates regarding Parent, Family and Community Engagement Strategies.</p> <p>The FCPC’s created a Family Engagement Implementation plan which outlines various steps and activities to promote parent engagement (examples: varying cultural activities and displays, increase the amount of translated literature in Creole and Spanish)</p> <p>During In-service, teachers were given an overview of COR Advantage application Daily Notes. In this app, teachers sent their child’s daily information through text or email, received pictures and messages about upcoming closures and program events.</p> <p>Parent Committee met twice for the 2018-2019 SY.</p> <p>Parents were voted in as officers by their peers on the Parent Committee and Policy Council.</p>

	<p>Parents on the Parent Committee and Policy Council have received Governance training.</p> <p>14 of the 24 CW parents completed the Parent and Teacher Conferences in July 2019</p> <p>Parent participation board began in the 2018-2019 school year to highlight parents who attended activities with their child.</p> <p>Teachers were more proactive in their communication with parents regarding encouraging and reminding them to participate in EHS activities.</p> <p><u>Expected Outcome:</u> Increased communication, attendance and participation from parents at parent meetings, policy council meetings, parent teacher conferences and other activities thus allowing them to take the lead on advocating and being a voice for their child/children.</p>
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Goal #6: To improve attendance rate

Objective	Strategy Update/Progress
<p>Educate parents on the importance of attendance and how chronic absenteeism affects school readiness</p> <p>Promote partnerships with parents and identify any barriers that might impact attendance</p> <p>Increase parent education on school readiness</p> <p>Increase communication and engagement efforts between all EHS staff and parents</p>	<p>EHS increased efforts to identify barriers and provide solutions to obstacles that affected a child’s attendance to school (i.e.: provide transportation to families that need a ride to go to the doctor to get medical clearance in order to return to school, adjust bus transportation services more frequently to provide transportation services to families who may only need the service short term).</p> <p>EHS tracked monthly attendance and children who have an attendance rate of 85% or greater received a certificate. Parents whose child had an attendance rate that fell below 85% received a letter and a phone call to ascertain what obstacles existed affecting the child’s attendance to school.</p> <p>Family and Community Partnership Coordinators will make home visits to follow-up with families whom they were unable to contact.</p> <p><u>Expected Outcome:</u> For EHS to maintain an average attendance rate of 85%, 80 % of the school year.</p> <p>The program communicates with parents frequently when students are absent and makes home visits when necessary.</p> <p>The program tracks absences for each classroom, center and program in an effort to identify areas that can be monitored for improvement or identifiable trends.</p> <p>Although phone calls have been made to parents when students do not report to school, the program’s monthly attendance has not improved above 85%.</p> <p>Based on data collected concerning student’s health post Hurricanes Irma and Maria, the program sees the need for a Registered Nurse on staff and will be requesting such as part of the Hurricane Recovery Grant being submitted during the 2019-2020 SY.</p>

Goal #7: To increase community partnerships

Objective	Strategy Update/Progress
<p>Increase involvement and partnerships with community service/volunteer based programs</p> <p>Increase partnerships with programs and/or agencies that support fathers' engagement.</p>	<p>Pediatric Care Center of the Virgin Islands on-going to provide primary care services for EHS children who are uninsured and/or needs to be assessed by a physician for immediate assessment.</p> <p>MOU updated with Frederiksted Health Center to continue to provide primary and dental services to MAP clients/children.</p> <p>Partnership Agreement on-going with Dr. Lateef, Professor at University of the Virgin Islands to provide literacy support and education to EHS parents.</p> <p>Partnership Agreement on-going with Red Cross to provide disaster preparedness support and training to EHS staff and parents.</p> <p>Partnership Agreement on-going with VI Office of Highway Safety to provide safety and education training and education to EHS staff and parents.</p> <p>Partnership Agreement on-going with a registered dietician to provide nutritional consultation, training and education to EHS staff and parents.</p> <p>The Women's Coalition of St. Croix has completed both staff and parent support workshops and the program is looking to create an established agreement in the upcoming SY.</p> <p>Communications to secure an updated MOU with Head Start (HS) has been successful and follow-up will occur during the 2019-2020 SY.</p> <p><u>Expected Outcome:</u> To increase partnerships with local entities that will provide services to children, families and fathers that are supportive, encouraging, and efficient.</p>

Goal #8: To improve communication with disability service providers and therapists

Objective	Strategy Update/Progress
<p>Promote collaboration with Agency and therapists who provide developmental services and support to children with disabilities</p> <p>Re-introduce and revise, if necessary MOU between EHS and Infants and Toddlers Program</p>	<p>There has been a change in leadership with the Director of Infants and Toddler, EHS is now looking to secure an updated MOU with DOH Infants and Toddlers Program.</p> <p>Improved communication between Therapists and EHS teachers as it pertains to progress and/or concerns of child/children. FCPC participates in the IFSP meetings held with the parent and therapist.</p> <p>The program has discussed updating the Providers sign in sheet to include time in and out and areas or goals worked on for teachers to be aware and continue implementation in the classroom.</p> <p>EHS currently tracks health and background check on all therapists to ensure they are in compliance with the Head Start Performance safety guidelines.</p> <p><u>Expected Outcome:</u> For all children with an IFSP to receive the necessary services to support their assessed developmental concerns.</p>

Funding Sources

Early Head Start LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS, INC



	<u>Approved Budget</u>	<u>Actual Expenditures</u>
	May 1, 2018 to April 30, 2019	May 1, 2018 to April 30, 2019

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS:

U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families	\$ 2,159,534	\$ 1,787,081
Department of Education—Special Nutrition Program	68,000	67,836
Government of the Virgin Islands	30,000	14,990
In-Kind	66,371	85,158
Interest & Other Income	10,478	27,880
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 2,334,383	\$ 1,982,945

EXPENDITURES:

Salaries	\$ 1,295,634	\$ 1,033,368
Fringe Benefits	311,853	250,061
Supplies	172,931	172,767
Utilities	15,118	16,806
Building, Equipment, & Vehicle	352,636	293,367
Training	41,147	53,413
Other	130,064	148,405
In-Kind	15,000	14,758
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 2,334,383	\$ 1,982,945

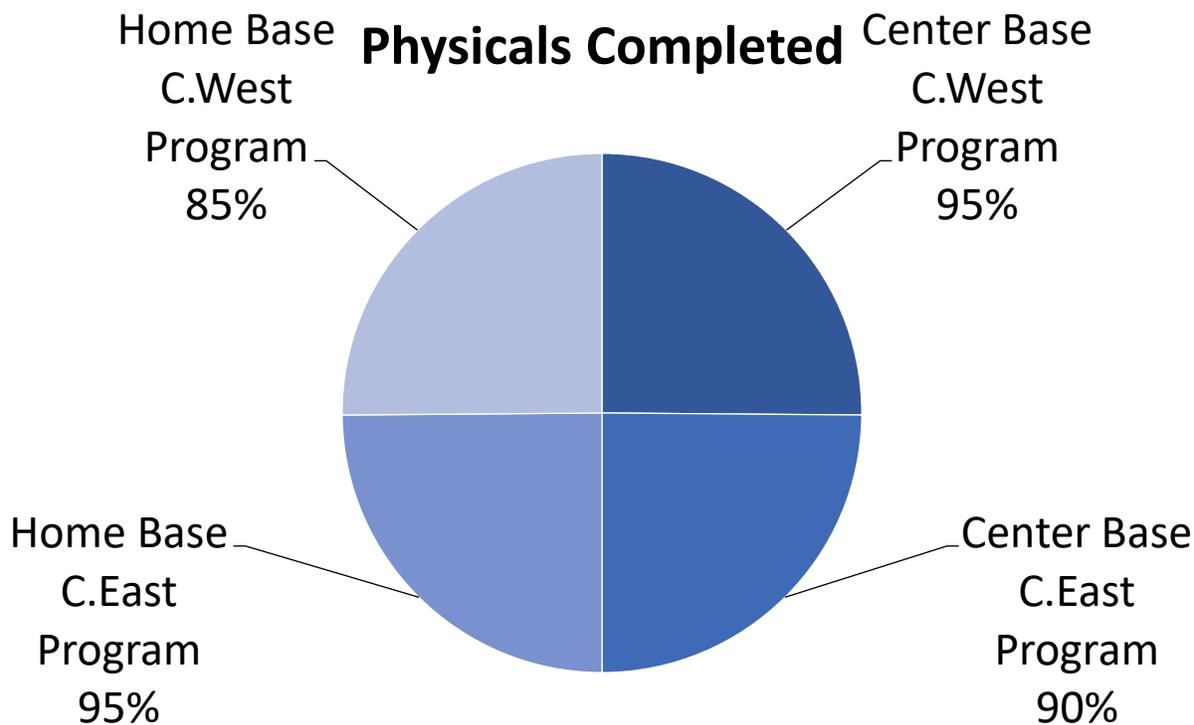
\$372,453 of Federal Funds approved were not expended; these funds mostly resulted from staff vacancies.

Annual External Audit Reports:

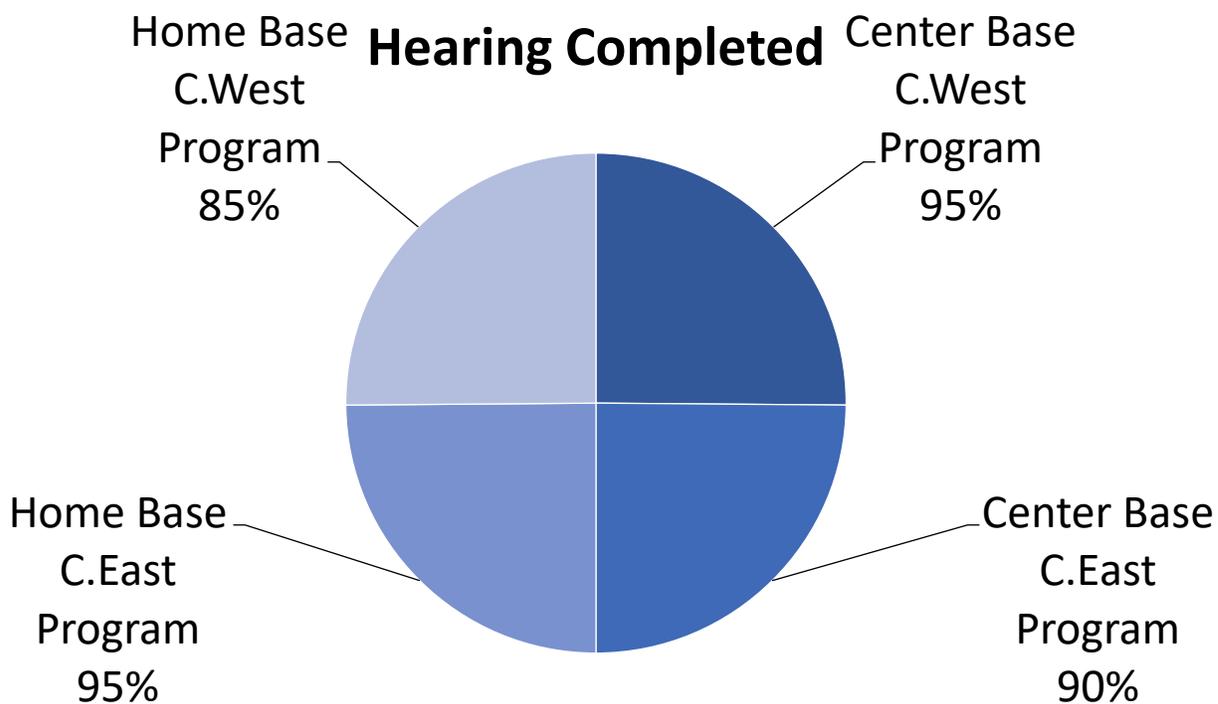
The audit for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018 was conducted by Bert Smith & Co., Independent Auditors. The type of auditor's report issued on the Financial Statement was "Unmodified" and the type of auditor's report issued on compliance for Federal Awards--major programs (which includes Early Head Start) was "Unmodified".

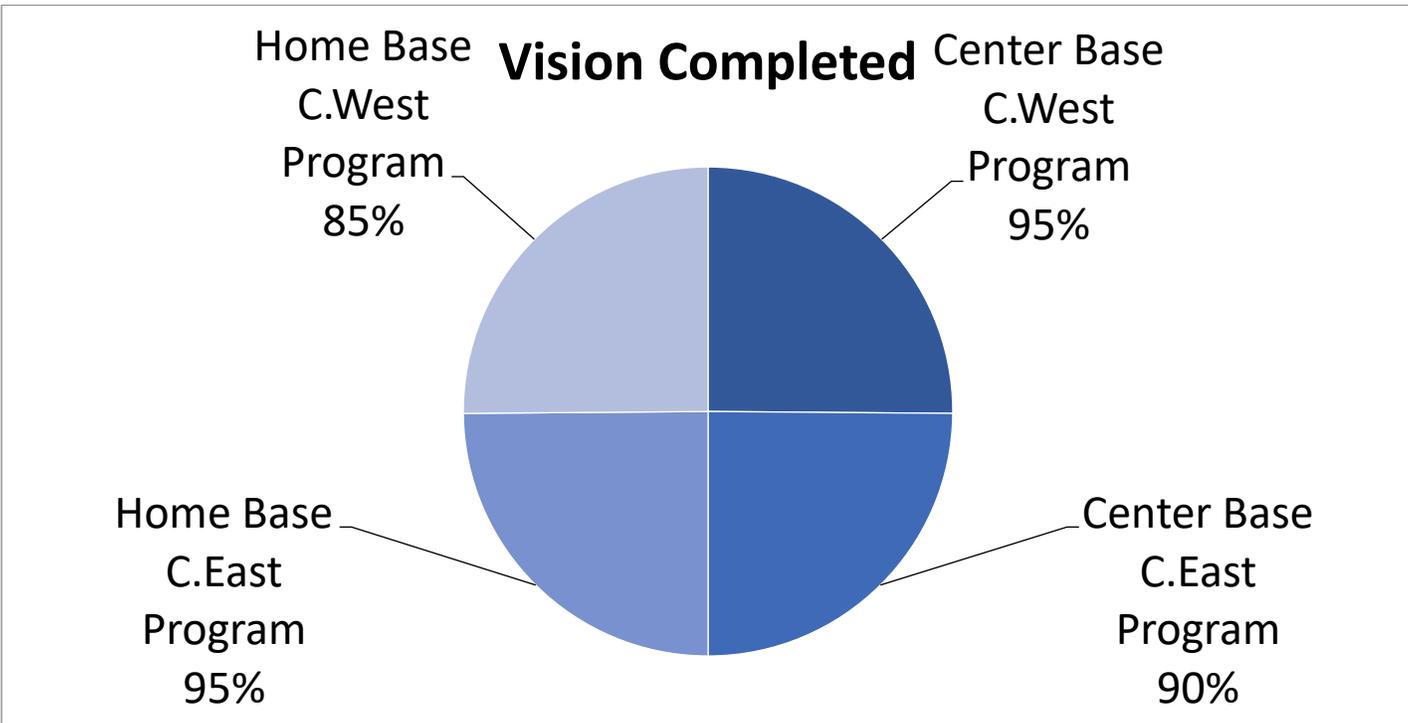
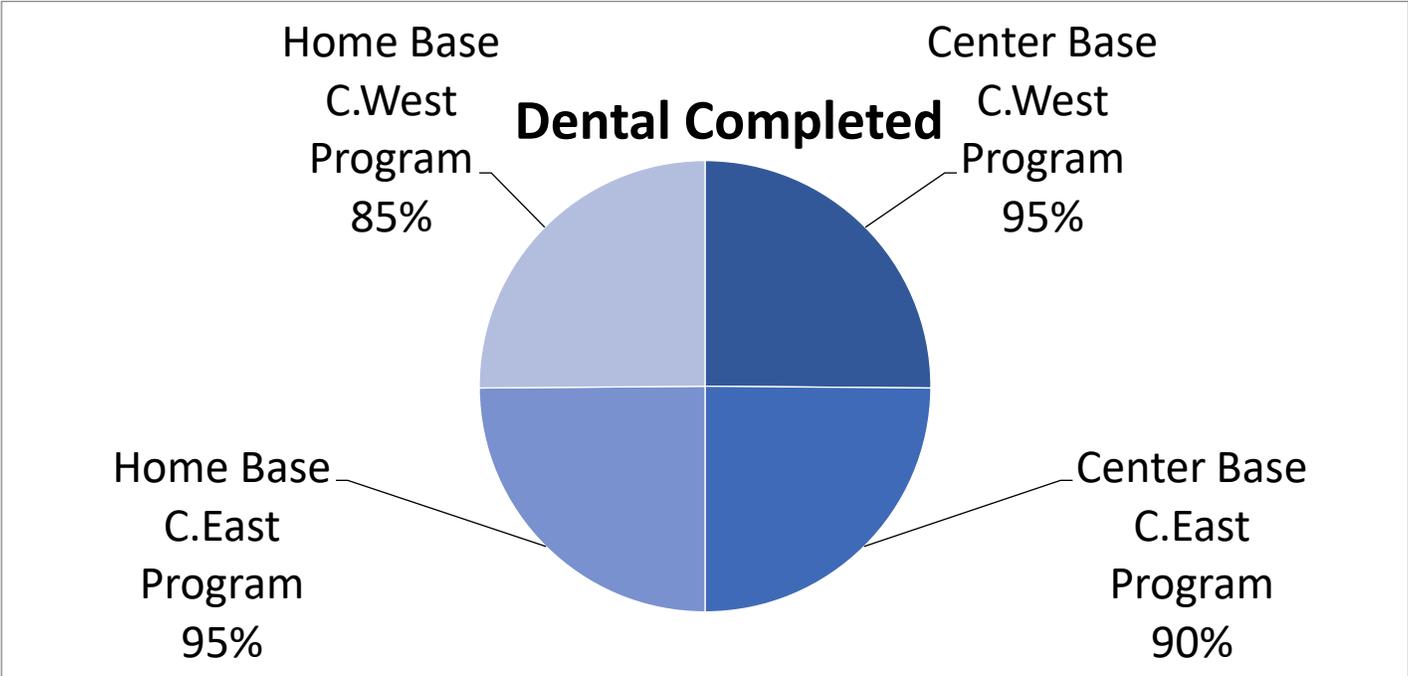
Health Services

Physicals Completed



Hearing Completed





Parent Involvement Activities

EHS recognizes and reinforces that Parents are their children's first and most influential teachers. With this said, parents are encouraged to be as involved as possible in the program and partner with the teachers to maximize the success of their children and the EHS Program. The following are examples of activities, events and workshops which parents were encouraged to participate in to support the developmental transformation of their children and EHS:

- ◇ **Parent Volunteers:** Parents are encouraged to volunteer in classrooms or events
- ◇ **Parent Orientation:** Parents are encouraged to attend and learn about EHS policies and services offered
- ◇ **Parent/Teacher Conference:** Parents are encouraged to take advantage of this one-on-one opportunity to meet with the teachers and review the progress of their child's development
- ◇ **Policy Council:** Parents are encouraged to join and become part of a governing body that has the ability to make programmatic changes and suggestions
- ◇ **Parent Committee Meetings:** Parents are encouraged to establish a forum for them to share ideas and information to support the improvement and success of EHS
- ◇ **Parent Meetings:** Parents are encouraged to attend these meetings to keep up to date on program updates, events and announcements
- ◇ **Home Visits:** Parents are encouraged to participate in Teacher/Parent home visits to establish a mutual partnership of child-teacher roles, discuss the child's strengths/any concerns, and set goals.
- ◇ **Socializations:** Parents are encouraged to attend informational and educational sessions and engage in a variety of fun activities while socializing with other EHS parents from their and other EHS program options.



FATHERHOOD INITIATIVES

- ◇ **Fathers Open Discussion:** Fathers, grandfathers and/or father figures participated in an open discussion about the important role they play in their child's life as it pertained to guiding their young ones as they begin their education.
- ◇ **Workshop Topics:**
 - Fathers as Role Models and Mentors
 - The Power of a Father
 - Leaving a Legacy for Your Child/ren

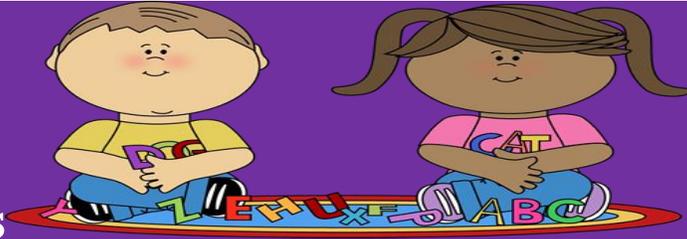
Parent Involvement Activities

SOCIALIZATIONS, EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS

- ◇ Meet and Greet
- ◇ Dental Screenings
- ◇ Vision Screenings
- ◇ Story Time Socialization
- ◇ Tie Dye Socialization
- ◇ Smoothie Socialization
- ◇ Picture Frame Socialization
- ◇ Spring Hunt Socialization
- ◇ Fun in the Park Socialization
- ◇ Learning to KNOW your Plant Socialization
- ◇ Fire Station Socialization
- ◇ Scavenger Hunt Socialization
- ◇ Rising Star Steel Pan Socialization
- ◇ Baking Socializations
- ◇ Keeping Your Skin Healthy Socialization
- ◇ Farewell Socialization
- ◇ Designing Pillow Cases Socialization
- ◇ Early Head Start to Head Start Transition Fieldtrip and Meeting
- ◇ Healthy Food Parade
- ◇ Week of a Young Child Celebration
- ◇ Health Fair
- ◇ Literacy Development Workshop
- ◇ Challenging Behaviors Workshop
- ◇ Managing Child Temperament Workshop
- ◇ Women's Pampering Workshop
- ◇ Poison Control Workshop
- ◇ Parents as Partners Workshop
- ◇ Employment Preparation Workshop
- ◇ Disaster Preparedness Workshop
- ◇ Healthy Relationship Workshop
- ◇ S.T.E.M Activity: (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)
- ◇ Hand Foot and Mouth Educational Session
- ◇ Health Workshop: Preventing Childhood Illnesses
- ◇ Head Start Transition Meeting
- ◇ African Heritage and Cultural Socialization



School Readiness



Early Head Start (EHS) continues year after year to ensure that School Readiness is a top priority. The program is committed to setting School Readiness goals that will prepare students for Kindergarten. The following is a summary of steps made within the past year to support school readiness:

EHS Approach to School Readiness

School Readiness Team

The mission of School Readiness Team was established: To prepare infants and toddlers developmentally – including in the domains of approaches to learning, social and emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development – for preschool and/or Head Start, working with parents to observe and plan developmentally-appropriate activities to ensure that children successfully meet the EHS School Readiness Goals.

Summary of Results for Children Transitioning from EHS in August 2019

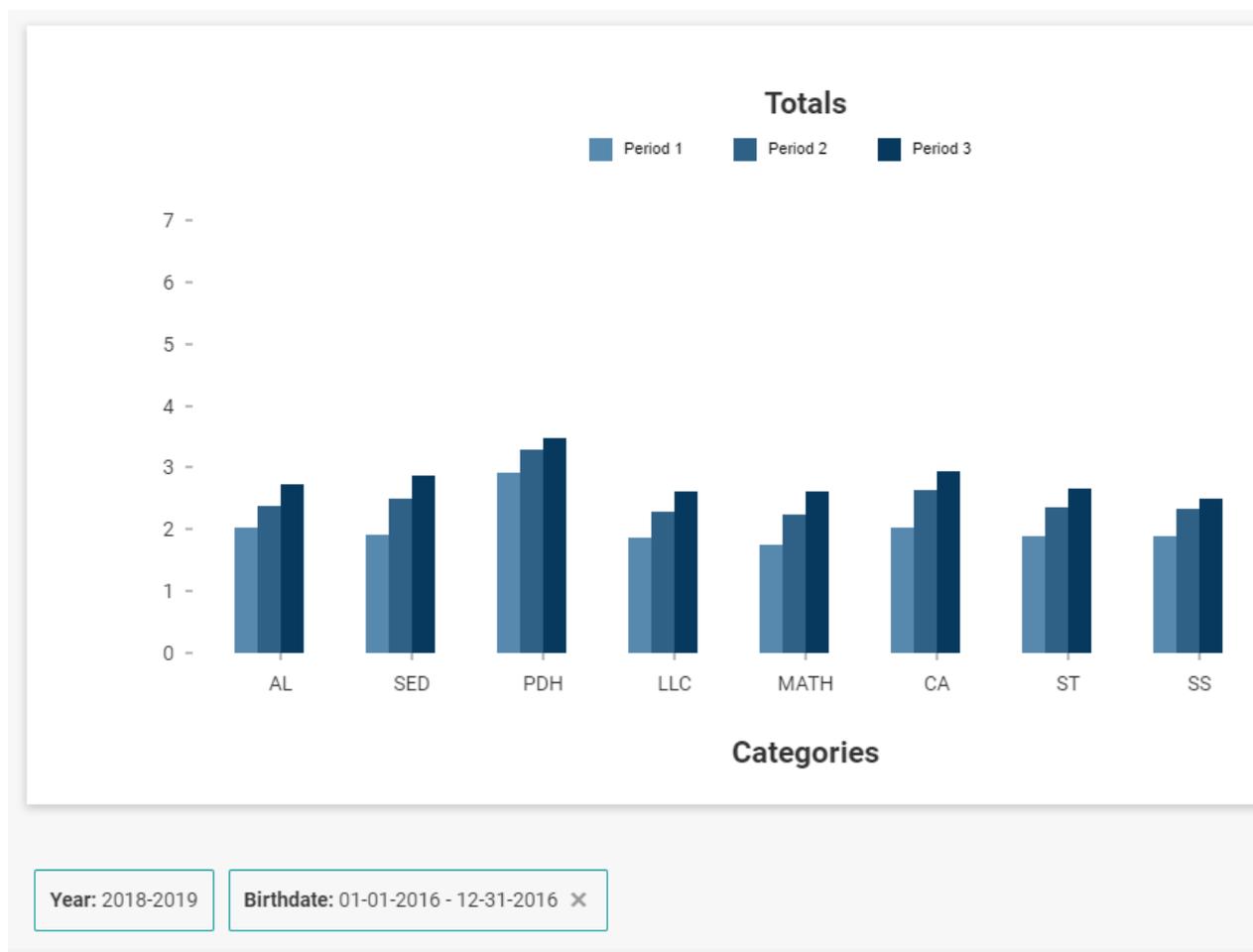
Teachers collected information through their observations of children's behavior and activities during the typical day throughout the child's enrollment in Early Head Start. Through the online system, COR assists teachers in the analysis of this information as it relates to children's growth and development. This information is used to facilitate planning of children's achievements of developmental milestones and School Readiness Goals.

Results and analysis of the COR for all children provide valuable information for administration as part of its self-assessment, continuing quality improvement process, and for designing professional development opportunities. The analysis of results for children transitioning from the EHS program are instructive in planning for quality program improvement and staff professional development.

Children born in the year 2016 transitioned out of EHS at the end of the 2018-19 school year due to age. Children typically transition between 2.8 and 3.7 years in synchronization with the Virgin Islands Head Start and Department of Education Kindergarten entry requirements, which have cut-off dates of December 31st.

Results include all children, both class-based and home-based, those with disabilities and or/developmental delays, and those who are dual language learners. There was a total of 39 children who transitioned.

All average scores in all domains were within the range of 2.50 to 3.47, demonstrating that, as a group, the children achieved the benchmark goals for the EHS program for children moving on to preschool. The highest average score was in Physical Development and Health.



As illustrated in the above graph, all average scores in all domains were within the range of 2.50 to 3.47, demonstrating that, as a group, the children achieved the benchmark goals for the EHS program for children moving on to preschool. The highest average score was in Physical Development and Health and the lowest was in Social Studies.

Once children transition from EHS, they enroll in a variety of preschool programs, although most enroll in the Department of Human Services Head Start program. The following chart indicates where children will be attending preschool for the 2019-20 academic year.

Preschool Program	Number of Children
Head Start	33
Reading Rainbow	1
Other private center - Unknown	1
Undecided	4

Conclusion

In this third year that the COR Advantage has been implemented, staff has become more diligent and thorough in ensuring that scores are recorded for children in all subdomains. As they have become more familiar in utilizing the assessment tool, it is anticipated that there is greater accuracy.

It is important that children with disabilities and/or developmental delays and children who are dual language learners be identified within the system to enable the data to be aggregated more easily – even if a change is made in status during the year. It is recommended that information be used to inform strategies for professional development and program quality improvement.

In the coming year, the program will be implementing the Parent Portal which will enable parents to access information about their child's progress and communicate with staff. It will be important to analyze this aspect as the program seeks to increase family engagement.

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ANNUAL REPORT!***



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- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) E-mail: program.intake@usda.gov

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