

# Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands

## *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 there are three programs that 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:**

To partner with parents to promote the development of the total child providing for their approaches to learning, social and emotional, cognitive, language, and physical needs while assisting 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.

At the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year, EHS was fully ready and excited about meeting our goals and objectives. We engaged in a new functioning parent committee, fatherhood engagement activities, coaching for teachers, and parenting curriculum with plans to roll out our new CDA (Child Development Associate) certification program for current and former parents.

In March of the 2019-2020 school year, however, in-person services were discontinued due to the global pandemic Coronavirus (COVID-19). As a result, we re-strategized and implemented virtual instruction and interaction with our students and families. Our program teaching and home visiting staff (center base, home base, and pregnant women) began remote teaching and virtual visits immediately. Staff contacted and communicated with students and families by way of phone and/or other technology as a means to provide continued services. Parents were informed of the important role that they had to commit to in order for remote learning to be successful. As in most cases of remote learning, the parent must take on the role of a co-teacher. The teacher explained and demonstrated the lessons and activities to the parent, and the parent had to implement it with their child. Our teachers were responsible for submitting lesson plans and identifying any family/child challenges. Teachers were allowed to come into the center to identify resources and prepare materials to assist parents in delivering virtual services.

The leadership team weekly called staff for health wellness checks and information about remote learning. In June 2020, teachers administered the social and developmental screenings ASQ (Ages and Stages Questionnaires) and ASQ-SE (Ages and Stages Questioners- Social Emotional) to all of our students. The results of the screenings tabulated by the program's Education and Disability Manager indicated that none of our students showed any regression during the period of remote learning.

## Program Enrollment

**Monthly Enrollment: 2019-2020 School Year** from August 2019 through August 2020, EHS was fully enrolled 98% of the school year. The Pregnant Women program and the Home-Base program had vacant slots.

- September 2019: Fourteen Pregnant Women slots were filled, and ten remained vacant.
- October 2019: Five Pregnant Women slots were filled, and five remained vacant.
- November 2019: Three Pregnant Women slots were filled, and two remained vacant.
- December 2019: One Pregnant Women slots were filled, and one remained vacant.
- January 2020: One Pregnant Women slot remained vacant.
- February 2020: Final Pregnant women slot filled.
- May 2020 - August 2020: Home Base program experienced the death of a student and was unable to fill the space the remaining of the school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- July 2020: Center Base program had one student who relocated.

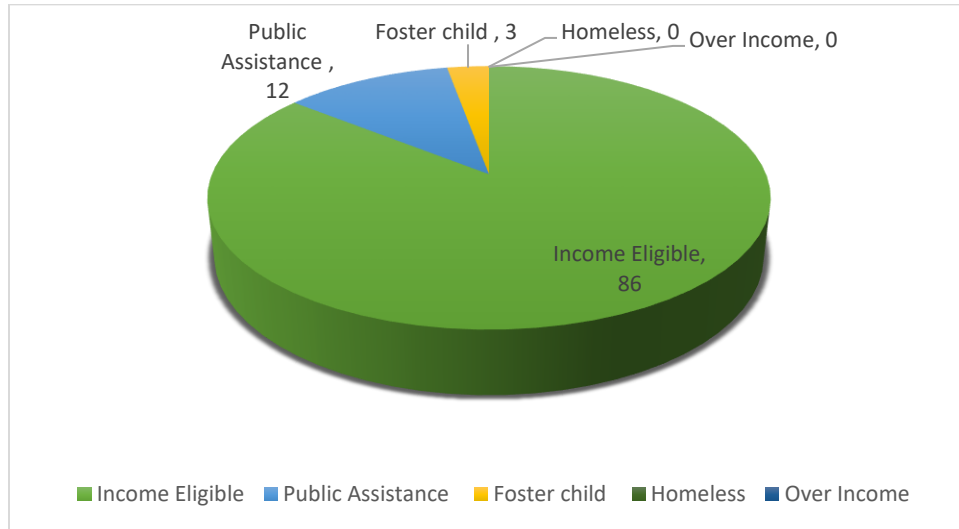
The average monthly enrollment for the EHS programs was as follows:

<u>Month/Year</u>	<u>Enrolled</u>	<u>% of Funded Enrollment</u>
Sep19	110	92%
Oct-19	115	96%
Nov-19	118	98%
Dec-19	119	99%
Jan-20	119	99%
Feb-20	120	100%
Mar-20	120	100%
Apr-20	120	100%
May-20	119	99%
Jun-20	119	99%
Jul-20	118	98%
Aug-20	119	99%

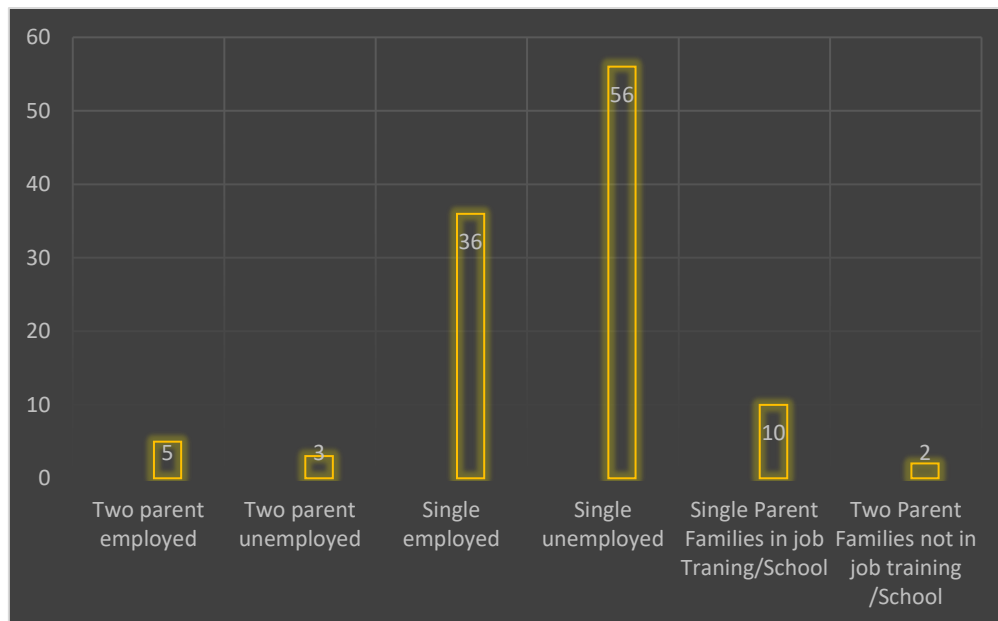
**The cumulative enrollment for the 2019-2020 school year was 125.**

# Eligibility

**Figure 1-----Type of Eligibility Number or Children=101**



**Figure 2-----Type of Household Number of Families=108**  
Two-Parent Families: N=8      Single Parent Families N=100





## 5-Year Grant Cycle

### 5-Year Grant-Performance and Progress Summary

#### **Sub Section A: PROGRAM GOALS**

**Goal #1:** Provide a quality program to serve the needs 0-3 children in St. Croix.

Objective	Strategy Update/Progress
1a. Keep enrollment at 120 through accurate data management, monitoring of community needs, and maintenance of waiting lists	1a. Family and Community Partnership Coordinators maintained program enrollment by recruiting through radio and newspapers.  EHS Managers and Home Visitors received training on utilizing Child Plus data management system for a week in March 2020. The program plans to utilize Child Plus for the 20-21 school year.
1b. Achieve an attendance rate of at least 85% through accurate data management, parent communication, and adequate transportation	1b. Early Head Start was awarded a grant to hire a Registered Nurse to address families' health and wellness and high absenteeism rate due to students' illnesses. The nurse's starting date was delayed until the end of the school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Goal #2:** Develop a life plan for children and provide services as indicated.

Objective	Strategy Update/Progress
2a. Complete Physical Health, Mental Health, Vision, Dental, Hearing, Development screenings for 100% of children within prescribed time frames	2a. The ASQ developmental screenings were over 98% completed. For the dental, vision, and hearing screening see results on pages 11 to 14 of this report. The program is currently recruiting a Health Service Coordinator to track and ensure all screening requirements are scheduled and completed.
2b. Develop Life Plans for 100% of children	2b. Family and Community Partnership Coordinators trained parents who enrolled in the Positive Solutions-Parenting Curriculum on creating a daily schedule and managing their child's temperament; this aided in creating life plans.

2c. Make appropriate referrals in all 6 areas	2c. Referrals were made to the Infant and Toddlers program for students with suspected developmental needs. Students who did not pass their hearing screenings were referred to the Charles Harwood Clinic for further testing.
2d. Provide quality nutrition program that meets USDA guidelines and student needs	2d. The program currently partners with USDA to ensure all meals served meet recommended nutritional guidelines. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the program initiated weekly food distributions to center-based students with periodic food distribution to home-base and pregnant women families.
2e. Provide quality prenatal program to 24 women at a time	2e. The program actively recruited pregnant women through social media, newspaper, and radio advertisements to achieve the goal of services to 24 women.

**Goal #3:** To deliver appropriate learning experiences in preparation for Kindergarten

Objective	Strategy Update/Progress
3a. Implement High Scope Curriculum with fidelity for all children to progress on school readiness benchmarks in all areas as measured by the COR assessment.	3a. Early Head Start continued to train and retrain our staff on the High Scope Curriculum. During the 2019-2020 school year, EHS held five days of training on High Scope to ensure implementation of the curriculum with fidelity. All of our teaching staff and leadership attended and received training. After training, it was observed that individual teachers needed reinforcement. The teachers needing additional support completed virtual professional development on Early Learning Childhood Knowledge Center (ELCKC) and on My Peers.
3b. Continue implementing PD training plan for improving classroom environment through improved professional development, coaching, and peer monitoring	3b. EHS continues to implement its Professional Development Plan. Professional Development and training days are scheduled on the school's calendar throughout the year with special focus on High Scope, data collection and analysis, mental health, and parent engagement.
3c. Implement cultural activities in line with Head Start and the Department of Education	3c. Throughout the year, cultural awareness was demonstrated by a culturally diverse menu. Culture is promoted through programs, nutrition, language, posters, classroom decorations, and music.

3d. Maintain MOU and working relationship with Head Start to provide for smooth and effective transition	3d. Family and Community Partnership Coordinators continued to communicate with Head Start to assist students and parents in preparation for the transition from Early Head Start to Head Start. Field trips to the Head Start centers were arranged and scheduled; visits were postponed due to COVID-19.
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**Goal #4:** Assist families in implementing a life plan for themselves and children

Objective	Strategy Update/Progress
4a. Develop a partnership with community partners to cross-train parents to enter into the workforce	4a. Family and Community Partnership Coordinators (FCPC) routinely posted at the centers and sent to parents employment opportunities. FCPC continuously looks for community partners that can cross-train parents.
4b. Develop high-quality Individual Family Partnership Agreements with 100% of families	4b. Family and Community Partnership Coordinators continuously engaged parents in making goals for their families. These goals are updated when met and are reviewed annually.
4c. Train staff in Fatherhood Initiative to include and encourage participation of fathers of EHS children	4c. Although the program had an increase in fatherhood participation, the growth was not satisfactory; therefore, the program is considering requesting training and support from our Training and Technical Assistant to improve in this area.

**Goal #5:** Maintain an effective Governance and Management structure

Objective	Strategy Update/Progress
5a. Conduct Annual Policy Council Orientation in August of each year	5a. The Policy Council receives orientation at the beginning of each new council term within the first three meetings. In this orientation, council members receive training on conducting council meetings, by-laws, and making and passing motions.
5b. Conduct Board /Policy Council training each year	5b. One joint LSSVI Board and EHS Council training meeting is scheduled annually, typically before the end of the calendar year. Council members are encouraged to attend and be active participants.
5c. Maintain a quality Human Resource staff tracking program with 100% qualified and trained staff.	5c. Human Resources with EHS Director carefully screen candidate qualifications to ensure minimum requirements are met. EHS Director tracks all required certifications to ensure renewals occur before expiration.

5d. Continue effective management of all finances	5d. Monthly monitoring of grant funds by budgeted categories occurred. Major expenditures are reviewed and approved by policy council approval.
5e. Re-Focus on data management and analysis for reporting and information to inform program and budget decisions	5e. Program continues to collect data, refining processes used for data collection to ensure adequate information is used and considered when making programmatic and significant financial decisions.
5f. Continue to enhance transportation and facilities, including bus replacement plan and facilities maintenance plan	5f. Program procured a grant to purchase two new school buses. The program utilizes savings from the regular operating grant for program facility improvement.



## Financial Information — Program Operations

### Funding:

US Department of Health and Human Services	
Administration for Children & Families .....	\$1,799,872
USVI Department of Education – Special Nutrition Program.....	\$40,488
Non-Federal .....	<u>\$129,568</u>
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b> .....	<b><u>\$1,969,928</u></b>

### Expenditures:

Salaries .....	\$1,147,146	(58%)
Benefits .....	\$321,622	(16%)
Supplies .....	\$125,130	(6%)
Other .....	\$129,130	(7%)
Property & Maintenance .....	\$79,622	(4%)
Training .....	\$37,490	(2%)
Non Federal .....	<u>\$129,568</u>	(7%)
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b> .....	<b><u>\$1,969,928</u></b>	

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION – DISASTER ASSISTANCE

As of September 30, 2020, two Disaster Assistance grants were approved;  
*Grants are for a two-year period*

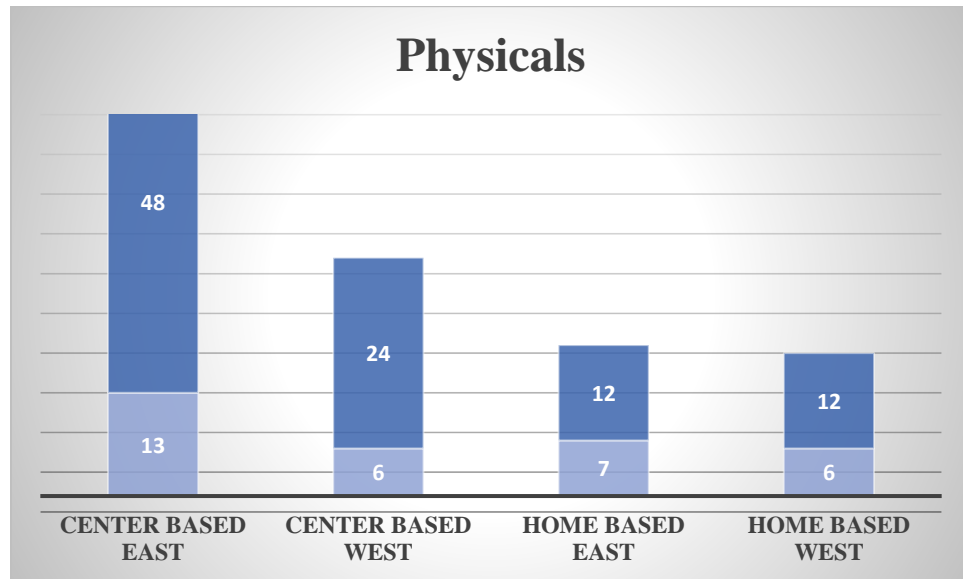
Approved Disaster Assistance.....	\$2,111,786
Expenditures .....	\$1,243,768

## Health Services

Early Head Start remains committed to meeting the health screening requirements in an effort to ensure the wellness of our students. While our territory continues in the rebuilding stage, Early Head Start is hopeful that additional health providers and services will be available.

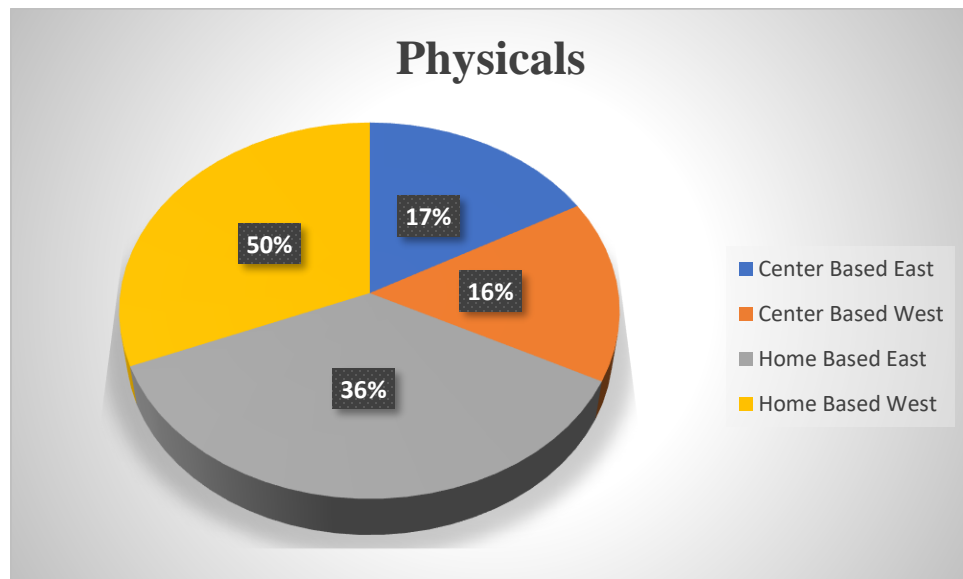
The following factors affected Early Head Start's ability to meet screening compliance deadlines throughout the school year:

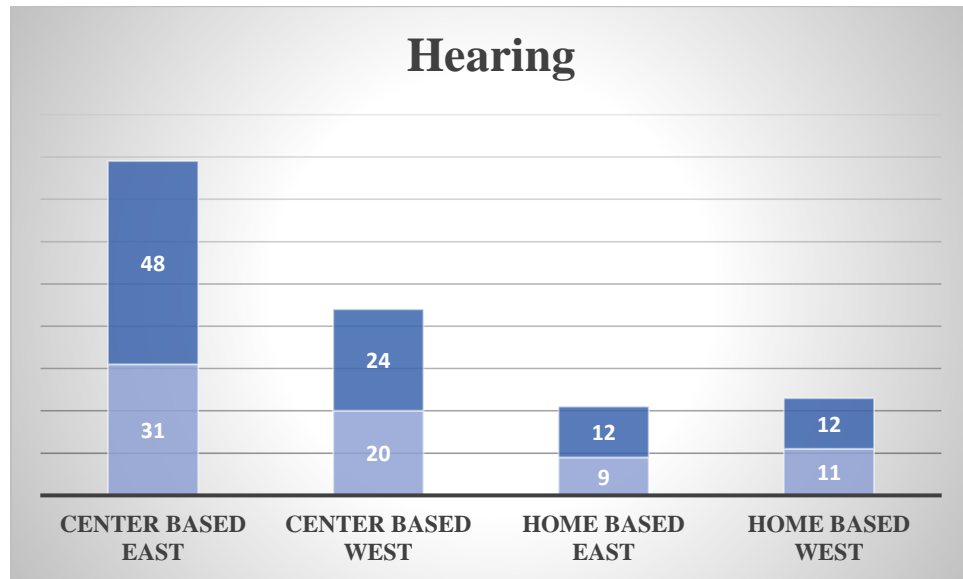
- Limited health service providers with the capacity to provide essential services to Early Head Start's clients and the community at large; a lingering effect of the 2017 hurricanes in this region
- Lack of parent participation in attending appointments, despite offering transportation and providing multiple reminders
- Recurring rescheduling of appointments by providers due to service capacity
- Absence of a Health Service Coordinator throughout the school year
- Health services interruption due to the COVID 19 pandemic



\*Light blue indicates the amount of student completed the requirement

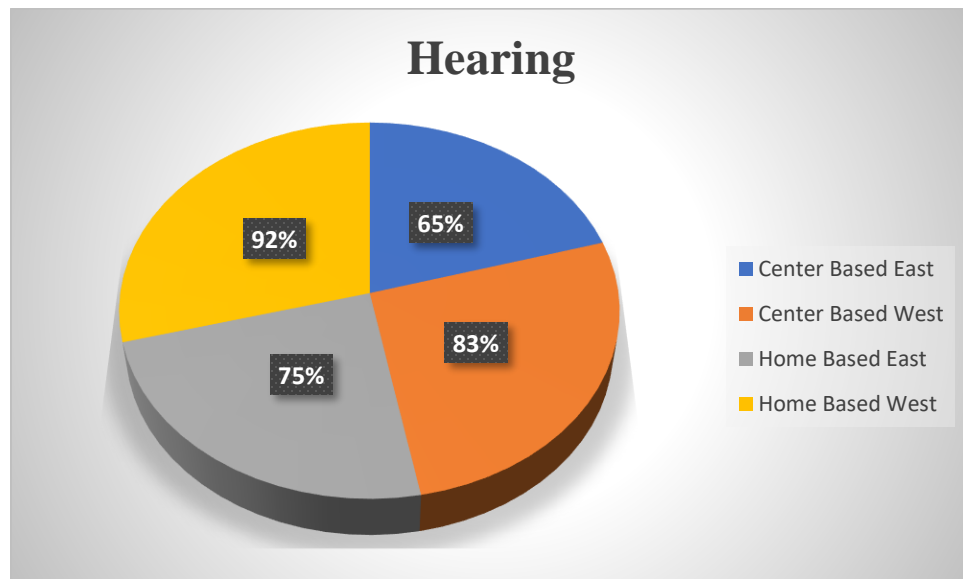
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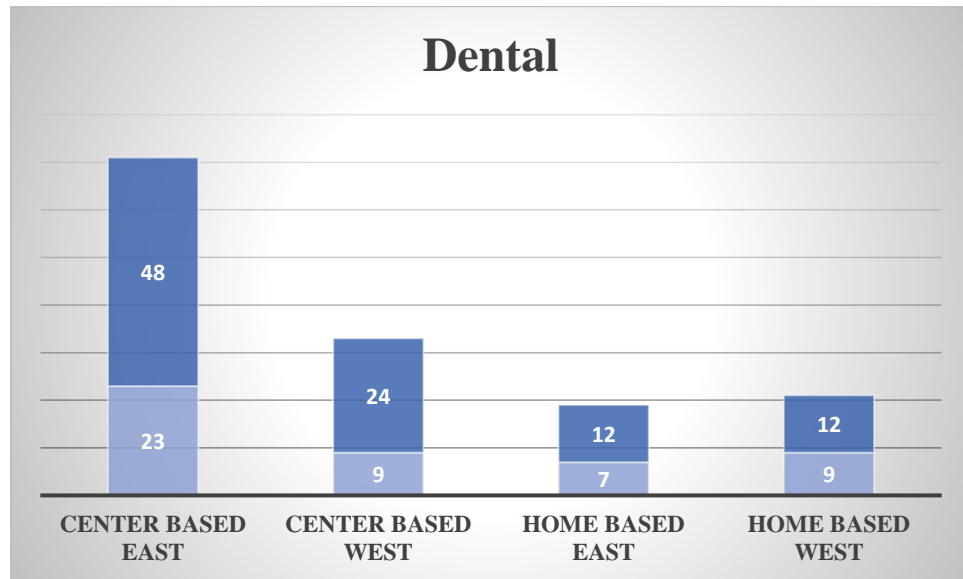




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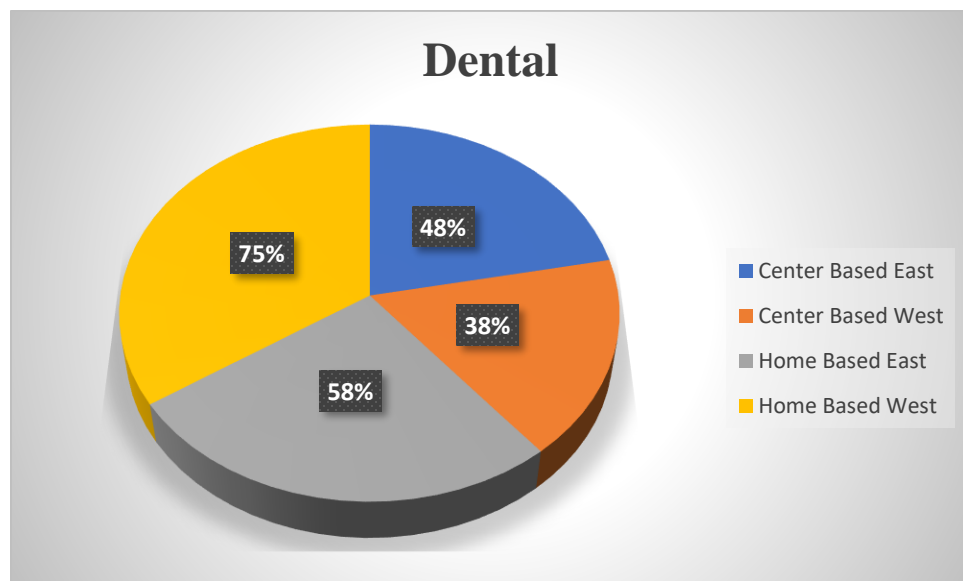
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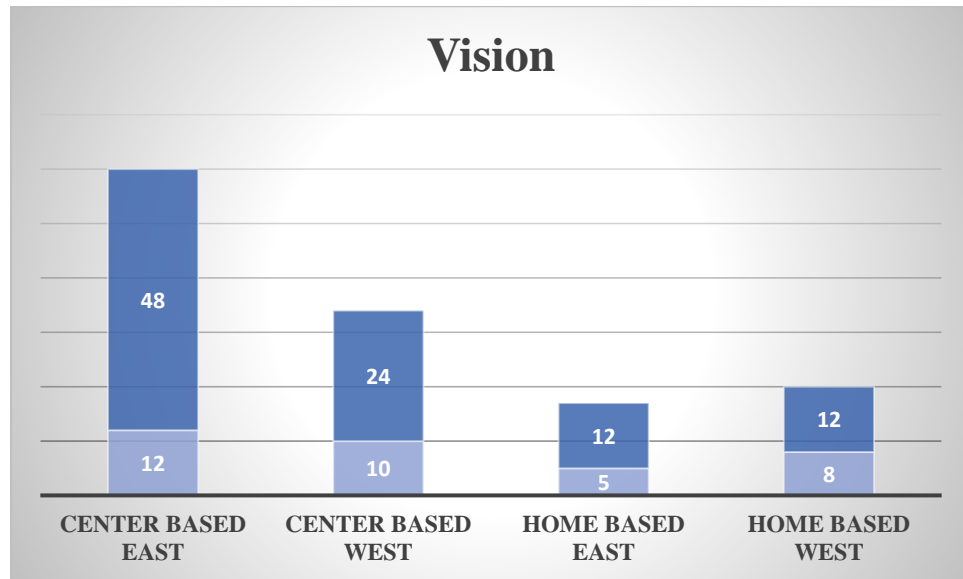




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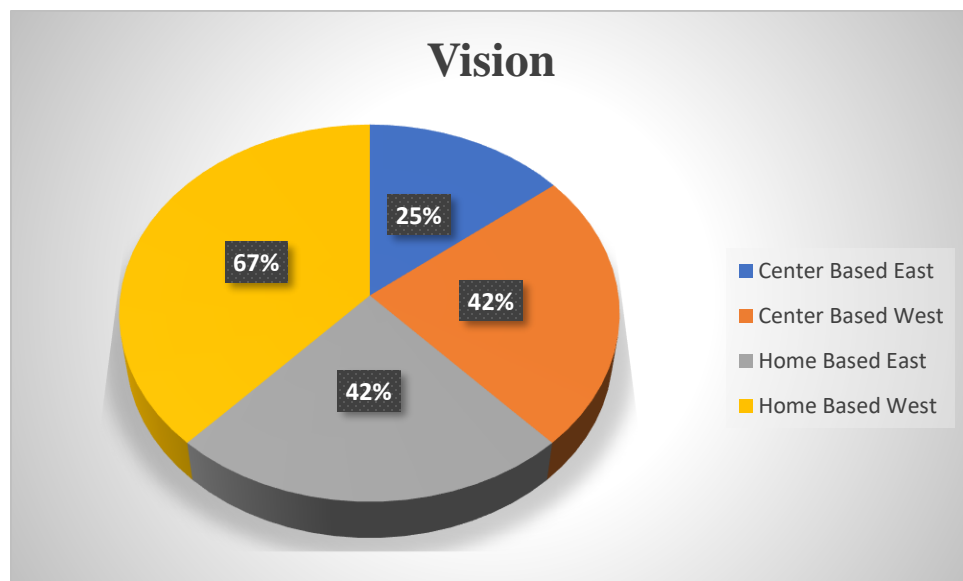
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\* Dark blue indicates the amount of student in each based





## Parent Engagement Activities

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

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



### **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:**  
Dads you can make a difference
- **Event:**  
National Dad Day-Take your child to school

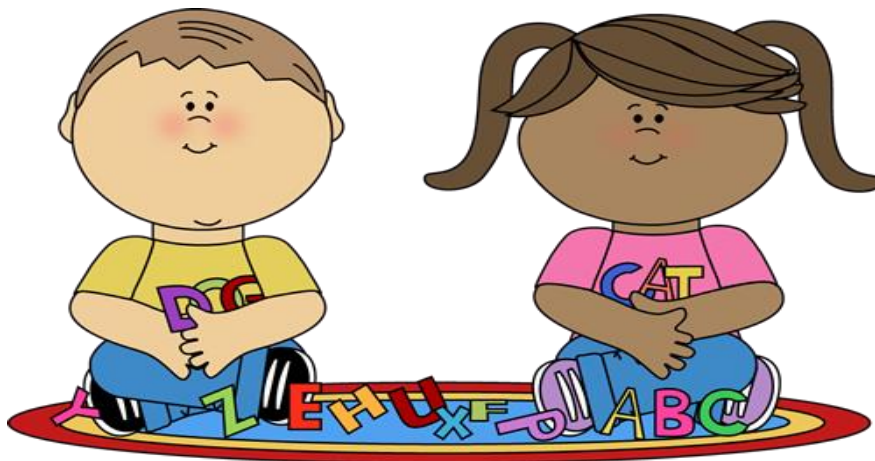


## Parent Involvement Activities Socialization, Activities and Workshops

- All Goals are Achievable Socialization
- Family Fun Day Socialization
- Earthquake and Tsunami Preparedness Parent Workshop
- African Heritage Socialization
- Me Time Socialization (Creating a little 'Me Time' can help you recharge and feel like yourself again)
- Childhood Illnesses Parent Workshop
- Seasonal Festive Ornament Making Socialization
- DIY Seasonal Décor Socialization and Luncheon
- Hello, Fall Socialization
- DVSAC Parent Workshop
- Disaster Preparedness Parent Workshop
- Fire Safety Socialization
- Come and Learn Money Saving Tips and Strategies
- Come out and get to know your home visitor
- Fatherhood Initiative (Dads you can make a difference)
- National Dad Day (Take your child to school)
- Making Sombreros and Listened to Spanish Stories-Center Activity
- Making Seasonal Centerpieces-Center Activity
- Making Seasonal Cookies -Center Activity



## School Readiness



Early Head Start (EHS) continues to ensure that School Readiness is a top priority. The program is committed to setting School Readiness goals that will prepare students eventually 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 Mission:**

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 2020**

As of this report, the 2019-2020 school year, the COR Assessment data for most children is not accessible. This occurred due to a technical glitch resulting in incomplete and/or incorrect data. The system locked at the end of the 2019-2020 school year, and the scores cannot be retrieved (per conversation with COR Management team). A manual tabulation and analysis will be added to this report, if possible, as an addendum.

**WE ARE EXCITED TO  
ANNOUNCE**

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and are looking forward to the  
expansion of our program to include  
two brand new state of the art  
facilities!





# THANK YOU

for checking out our annual report.

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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