



Annual Report

2024-2025

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by the following means:**
Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands, Inc. -
Website and Facebook Page
Early Head Start Facebook Page
Early Head Start Parent Bulletin Board
Virgin Islands Daily News Publication Notification

Program

Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands (LSSVI) is a multi-service nonprofit organization that began as Queen Louise Home for Children (QLH), which has been in continuous operation since 1904. Located on the QLH campus are three programs that serve as a safe haven for children and families. These programs include Cottages A and B, which provide residential care for children who have been abandoned, abused, or neglected, including a safe and supportive environment for teenage girls; Sister Emma Cottage, which serves children and young adults with special needs; and the Early Head Start program.

In September 2003, LSSVI opened the only Early Head Start program in the Virgin Islands, located at Concordia West. In late 2009, LSSVI/Early Head Start was awarded an expansion grant for Concordia East, with services beginning in July 2010.

The LSSVI/Early Head Start program serves a total of 120 children, families, and pregnant women. This includes 72 children enrolled in the Center-Based Program, 24 children enrolled in the Home-Based Program, and 24 participants in the Pregnant Women Program. The Early Head Start program is funded for a total enrollment of 120 and serves families across the entire island of St. Croix.

Mission

To partner with parents to promote the development of the whole child by supporting approaches to learning; social and emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development; and by assisting parents in building the skills needed to support their child's growth and development, with special emphasis on school readiness.

Early Head Start seeks to accomplish this mission by adhering to the following guiding principles:

Guiding Principles

- Each child is unique and can succeed within the context of supportive relationships and nurturing environments.
- Families are children's most important caregivers. Teachers, and advocates and are empowered within Early Head Start and the broader community.
- Nurturing, responsive, and consistent care helps create safe environments in which children feel secure and valued.
- All areas of development including approaches to learning; social and emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development are equally important and are integrated, recognizing that children learn multiple concepts and skills simultaneously.
- 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 brings diverse strengths rooted in culture, background, language, and beliefs.
- Fostering relationships with the larger community ensures that families and staff are supported through a network of partnering community agencies.
- Developing a continuum of care, education, and services allows for stable transitions and consistent support for children and families during and beyond their Early Head Start experience.

During the 2024 - 2025 school year, all Early Head Start services were delivered in full compliance with Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands' Early Head Start grant requirements, ensuring adherence to program standards, internal policies, and applicable federal regulations.

The program continued its partnership with the Frederiksted Health Center to provide both in-house and in-office dental screenings for all enrolled children and pregnant women participating in the Early Head Start program. This partnership ensures families have timely access to preventive dental care, supports early identification of oral health needs, and promotes appropriate follow-up and referrals when necessary. Vision and hearing screenings were successfully completed in-house through the purchase and consistent use of evidence-based screening instruments. These tools enhanced the program's ability to conduct screenings efficiently and accurately, supporting early identification of potential developmental concerns and compliance with Early Head Start Performance Standards. Screenings not completed in-house were referred to local health clinics or completed by a healthcare provider at the parent's preference.

Children continued to receive instruction through the HighScope Curriculum, which supports active learning and developmentally appropriate practices. The program utilized the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE), and the Child Observation Record (COR) to monitor and support children's development. These assessment tools ensure that children receive appropriate services and that referrals are completed in a timely manner. Overall, children met expected developmental milestones, and subgroups of children with disabilities and English language learners demonstrated measurable improvement throughout the year (see COR report at the end of this report).

Forward Progress

The Early Head Start new building project continues to advance through several targeted improvements designed to enhance the overall safety, functionality, and well-being of children, families, and staff. Recent upgrades and accomplishments include the installation of child-appropriate privacy half-doors in children's restrooms; upgrading to a larger generator to ensure consistent power during outages; re-fencing the property perimeter; construction of a concrete wall to increase playground fence height; installation of fencing around the retention pond; new cabinetry in all classrooms; and the addition of emergency lighting throughout hallways and classrooms.

These improvements reflect the program's ongoing commitment to maintaining a secure, high-quality learning environment. The program also anticipates transitioning into its new Early Head Start facility in early 2026. The new building is designed to expand capacity and further enhance the quality, safety, and continuity of services provided to children and families.



Program Enrollment

From August 2024 through July 2025, the program was fully enrolled for 67% of the school year.

- August 2024: The Center-Based option was fully enrolled; the Pregnant Women option had 11 vacancies, and the Home-Based option had 4 vacant slots.
- September 2024: The Pregnant Women option had 8 vacancies, and the Home-Based program was fully enrolled.
- October 2024: The Pregnant Women option had 7 vacancies.
- November 2024: The Pregnant Women option was fully enrolled.
- June/July 2025: Children withdrew due to families relocating to the mainland U.S.

Monthly Program Enrollment

Month/Year	Enrolled	Percentage of Funded Enrollment	Children Served	Children Served % of Funded Enrollment
Aug-24	105	88%	92	96%
Sep-24	108	90%	92	96%
Oct-24	113	94%	96	100%
Nov-24	120	100%	96	100%
Dec-24	120	100%	96	100%
Jan-25	120	100%	96	100%
Feb-25	120	100%	96	100%
Mar-25	120	100%	96	100%
Apr-25	120	100%	96	100%
May-25	120	100%	96	100%
Jun-25	119	99%	95	99%
Jul-25	119	99%	95	99%

The cumulative enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year was 137.



Services to Pregnant Women



The Early Head Start Program (EHS) provides comprehensive services to at least 24 pregnant women and their babies each year. These services are designed to support healthy pregnancies, positive birth outcomes, and strong family well-being. Services include, but are not limited to:

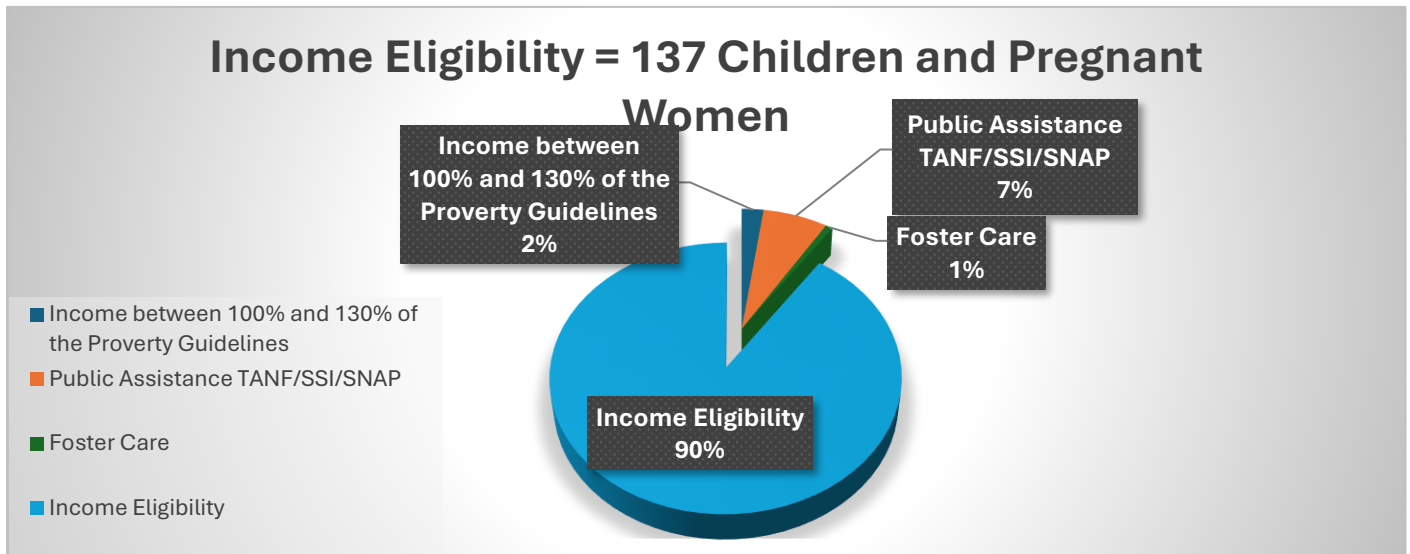
- Prenatal education to promote healthy pregnancy and childbirth
- Nutritional counseling to support maternal and infant health
- Oral health education and access to care
- Mental health support and referrals, as needed
- Substance use prevention education and support services
- Socialization opportunities to build peer connections and reduce isolation
- Connections to community partners and essential resources
- Transportation assistance to medical and prenatal appointments
- Ongoing family support and case management

Through these comprehensive services, EHS supports pregnant women and their families in building a strong foundation for their child's healthy development and long-term success. Recognizing that a child's development begins in the womb, EHS provides guidance, education, and access to essential resources during this critical period. These efforts promote healthy pregnancies and deliveries, strengthen positive birth outcomes, and enhance overall family well-being.



Eligibility

Figure 1-Type of Eligibility Number of Children= 109 and Pregnant Women=28

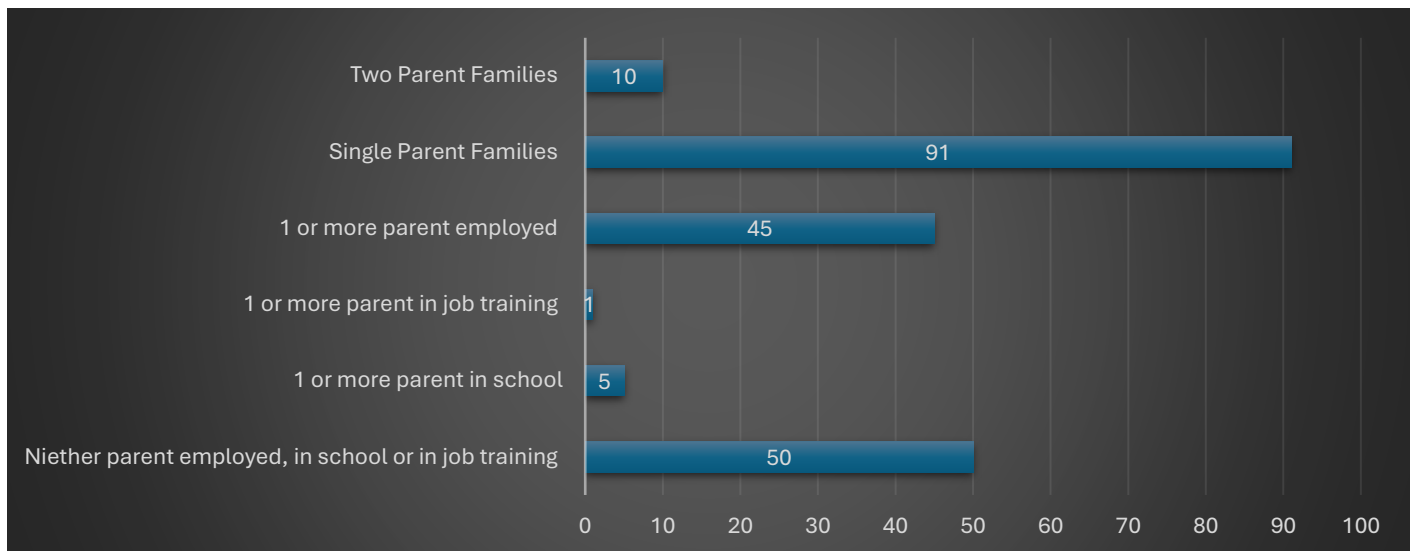


*Chart above reflects the eligibility documentation used by families at the time of application for services.

Figure 2-Type of Household & Number of Families= 101

Two Parent Family: N=10 Single Parent Family: N= 91

Note: Some families have multiple enrollees



5-Year Grant Cycle

Year 1: Five-Year Grant Performance and Progress Spotlight

The Early Head Start (EHS) Program conducts an annual Community Assessment using current economic and demographic data to guide recruitment strategies and ensure services are aligned with community needs. This process ensures that families with the greatest need have equitable access to services and that program resources are targeted effectively.

Community Assessment data indicate the following trends:

- An increase in minors requiring services related to domestic violence and child abuse.
- 36.3% of children live in poverty and reside within public or low-income housing communities.
- A total of 361 babies were born on St. Croix in 2023.
- Approximately 909 children under five years of age reside on St. Croix.

Child/Family Care Centers include:

- 5 Head Start programs
- 6 Granny Pre-K programs
- 24 additional programs classified as child and family care centers

The EHS program is designed to provide a safe, nurturing, and high-quality learning environment that supports children's growth and development while empowering families through education, access to resources, and ongoing support to strengthen family and child outcomes.

The program actively engages both the Policy Council and Parent Committee by providing structured opportunities for participation, feedback, and the submission of recommendations related to program goals and priority focus areas.

The goals listed below represented a collaborative effort among program leadership, governance, and the parent committee, reflecting shared decision-making and family engagement in program planning.

PROGRAM GOALS

Goal 1: Early Head Start will be recognized as a leader in early childhood education and services to pregnant women, ensuring high-quality and comprehensive services to children and families in the community.
Goal 2: Expand partnerships with health care providers and the public health insurance provider to align service delivery with health screening requirements.
Goal 3: Increase awareness and promote resilience by expanding opportunities for health and wellness, understanding and identifying trauma, and implementing sensitive strategies to meet the diverse needs of families and staff.
Goal 4: Maintain an effective governance and management structure, including reducing program vacancies and turnover, encouraging staff to build credentials, and increasing staff retention.
Goal 5: Empower families to take the lead in their child's Early Head Start experience, providing a foundation for families to be proactive in their child's success in school and beyond.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Goals	Measurable Objective Description
Goal 1: Early Head Start will be recognized as the leader in early childhood education, and services to pregnant women, ensuring high quality and comprehensive services to children and families in the community.	1a. Create structured, safe and predictable learning environments, where children and families feel valued and have opportunities to actively engage in developmentally appropriate skills and activities designed to enhance children and family outcomes. 1b. Establish presence at community events, build program image through informing the community of program offerings and successes, building on social media presence, following community trends. 1c. Keep enrollment at 120 through accurate data management, monitoring of community needs and maintenance of waiting lists. 1d. Implement High Scope Curriculum and Pyramid Mode with fidelity for all children to progress on school readiness benchmarks in all areas as measured by the COR assessment. 1e. Ensure staff are qualified and receive annual training, coaching and professional development, geared towards relationship skill building, and timely response to the needs and challenges faced by children and families.
Goal 2: Expand partnerships with health care providers, and the public health insurance provider, to align service delivery with health screening requirements.	2a. Increase partnerships with local health providers to gain access for health determinations and screenings for: physical health, mental health, vision, dental, hearing and development screenings for 100% of children, with services to families. 2b. Improve the current screening/health screening referral system to ensure timely screenings and/or follow ups are made. 2c. Align services for pregnant women with other comparable community agencies throughout enrollment in the program. 2d. Initiate conversations with the local public health insurance provider, in an effort to collaborate with EHS families needing screening and medical assessment opportunities.
Goal 3: Increase awareness and promote resilience by expanding opportunities for health and	3a. Provide enhanced health and wellness trainings and opportunities for families and staff at least three times during the program year. 3b. Provide families and staff with access to mental health and trauma-related services based on individual needs and experiences.

wellness, understanding and identifying trauma, and implementing sensitive strategies to meet the diverse needs of families and staff.	3c. Provide safe and supportive spaces for families and staff to share experiences without judgment. 3d. Engage families in wellness challenges and activities throughout the school year.
Goal 4: Maintain an effective governance and management structure, to include reducing program vacancies/turnover, empowering and encouraging staff to build credentials, while increasing program retention.	4a. Conduct annual policy council orientation and board /policy council training. 4b. Retrain Human Resources on compliance requirements, and initiate updated staff tracking system to ensure compliance with criminal record checks and HS and OCCRS requirements. 4c. Oversee effective management of all finances to include previews of monthly tracking of expenditures by program leadership and governing boards. 4d. Monthly collect and synthesize information to; prepare for the annual Self- Assessment process, and to inform program and budget decisions. 4e. Enhance transportation services including replacement of aging equipment and recruiting transportation staff. 4f: Recruit and hire qualified staff to fill all program vacancies.
Goal 5: Empower families, to take the lead in their child's Early Head Start experience, providing foundation to be proactive in their child's success in school and beyond.	5a. Increase family opportunities to learn about their child's development. 5b. Identify and remove barriers to support families who have chronic absenteeism. 5c. Support families through the referral process by collaboratively determining what their child's strengths and areas for development are, creating a shared vision for improvement. 5d. Engage families in school readiness activities for their child in the home, to support school readiness activities in the classroom. 5e. Engage fathers in positive experiences, encouraging active commitment to their child's educational and development experiences.

Measurables and Progress Spotlight

Goal 1: Early Head Start will be recognized as the leader in early childhood education, and services to pregnant women, ensuring high quality and comprehensive services to children and families in the community.

- Create structured, safe, and predictable learning environments where children and families feel valued and have opportunities to actively engage in developmentally appropriate skills and activities designed to enhance child and family outcomes.
- Establish a presence at community events and build the program's image by informing the community of program offerings and successes, strengthening social media presence, and following community trends.
- Maintain funded enrollment at 120 through accurate data management, monitoring of community needs, and maintenance of waiting lists.
- Implement the HighScope Curriculum and Pyramid Model with fidelity so that all children demonstrate progress toward school readiness benchmarks in all domains, as measured by the COR assessment.
- Ensure staff are qualified and receive annual training, coaching, and professional development focused on relationship-building skills and timely responses to the needs and challenges faced by children and families.

Progress Spotlight:

To increase visibility and strengthen community relationships, the program expanded its presence at local community programs such as WIC and the Frederiksted Health Clinic and actively promoted program services and successes through outreach efforts and social media engagement. These efforts enhanced public awareness, supported recruitment, and reinforced Early Head Start's reputation as a trusted community resource for families with young children and pregnant women.

Staff qualifications and professional growth remained a program priority. Staff maintained and renewed required credentials and actively participated in annual training and professional development opportunities. Training topics included relationship-building practices, implementation of the HighScope curriculum, strategies for addressing challenging behaviors, brain development, adult-child interactions, and responsive approaches to meeting the evolving needs of children and families. Ongoing coaching and reflective supervision further strengthened staff capacity to deliver high-quality, individualized, and developmentally appropriate services.

The program engaged families monthly through workshops designed to build knowledge, awareness, and skill capacity. In addition, the program offered a comprehensive parent curriculum skills course each year, free of charge, to support families in developing effective parenting strategies and strengthening the home environment.

Partnerships with community organizations and local service providers assisted the program in connecting families with a wide range of resources that promote family well-being, improve child outcomes, and contribute to a stronger and more dynamic community.

Through these combined efforts, Early Head Start continues to demonstrate leadership in early childhood education and comprehensive services, strengthening outcomes for children, families, and the broader community.

Goal 2: Expand partnerships with health care providers, and the public health insurance provider, to align service delivery with health screening requirements.

- Increase partnerships with local health providers to ensure access to required health determinations and screenings for 100% of enrolled children, including physical health, mental health, vision, dental, hearing, and developmental screenings, with appropriate follow-up services for families.
- Improve the current health screening and referral system to ensure timely completion of screenings and follow- up appointments.
- Align services for pregnant women with comparable community agencies throughout their enrollment in the program.
- Initiate collaboration with the local public health insurance provider to support EHS families in accessing required screenings and medical assessment opportunities.

Progress Spotlight:

The program established a new working relationship with a local health care provider during this period, expanding access to important services for children and families. While the relationship is not yet a formal partnership, it represents meaningful progress toward strengthening community health collaborations.

The program strengthened and maintained partnerships with local health providers to support completion of required health screenings, including physical health, vision, dental, hearing, and lead screenings. Through coordinated referrals and follow-up processes, families were supported in accessing services, reducing barriers to care, and understanding the importance of ongoing health monitoring.

Improvements were made to the health screening and referral tracking system to promote the timely completion of screenings and follow-up appointments. Enhanced data monitoring by the leadership team, increased communication between the Health Services Coordinator, health service providers, and families, and regular reviews of health files contributed to improved compliance with screening timelines and stronger follow-through on referrals and treatment plans.

Through these strategic partnerships and system improvements, Early Head Start continues to strengthen its comprehensive health services, ensuring timely screenings, coordinated care, and improved health outcomes for children, pregnant women, and families.



Goal 3: Increase awareness and promote resilience by expanding opportunities for health and wellness, strengthening understanding and identification of trauma, and implementing sensitive strategies to meet the diverse needs of families and staff.

- Provide enriched health and wellness trainings and opportunities for families and staff at least three times during the program year.
- Provide families and staff with access to mental health and trauma-related services based on individual needs and personal experiences.
- Provide safe and supportive spaces for families and staff to share experiences without judgment.
- Engage families in wellness challenges and activities throughout the school year.

Progress Spotlight:

The program provided enriched health and wellness training for families at least three times during the program year and offered multiple training opportunities for staff. In addition, the program delivered targeted trainings tailored to specific family members and provided additional sessions as needed in response to relevant events and emerging needs. Through these efforts, the program prioritized creating supportive, inclusive environments that honored the diverse experiences, strengths, and needs of both families and staff.

Throughout the year, the program also offered health and wellness activities focused on mental health awareness, stress management, self-care, and trauma-informed strategies. These opportunities helped families and staff build coping skills, deepen their understanding of emotional well-being, and strengthen overall resilience.

Families and staff were offered access to mental health services, ensuring timely consultation, referrals, and individualized support. The program partnered with mental health consultants and community organizations to reduce barriers to care and ensure services were culturally responsive.

Through these efforts, Early Head Start continues to advance trauma-informed, wellness-focused practices that promote resilience, emotional health, and positive outcomes for children, families, and staff.

Goal 4: Maintain an effective governance and management structure, including reducing program vacancies and turnover, encouraging staff to build credentials, and increasing staff retention.

- Conduct annual Policy Council orientation and Board/Policy Council training.
- Retrain Human Resources staff on compliance requirements and implement an updated staff tracking system to ensure compliance with criminal record checks and Head Start (HS) and Office of Child Care Regulatory Services (OCCRS) requirements.
- Ensure effective financial management through monthly monitoring of expenditures by program leadership and governing bodies.
- Collect and analyze program data monthly to prepare for the annual Self-Assessment process and to inform program and budget decisions.
- Enhance transportation services by replacing aging equipment and recruiting qualified transportation staff

- Recruit and hire qualified staff to fill all program vacancies.

Progress Spotlight:

Early Head Start continued to strengthen its governance and management systems to ensure effective oversight, regulatory compliance, and program sustainability. Efforts focused on reducing staff vacancies and turnover, supporting staff professional growth, and strengthening retention through intentional leadership and workforce development strategies.

The program actively implemented several key operational efforts to strengthen overall effectiveness. This included ensuring strong financial management through monthly reviews of expenditures conducted with program leadership and governing boards. Each month, the program also collected and synthesized data to support the annual Self-Assessment process and to guide informed programmatic and budgetary decisions.

Through strengthened governance, improved systems, and workforce-focused strategies, Early Head Start continues to build a stable, compliant, and effective management structure that supports high-quality services for children and families.

Efforts to recruit and hire qualified personnel to fill all program vacancies are ongoing, despite reduced applicant interest influenced by uncompetitive salaries and the high cost of living in the Virgin Islands.

Goal 5: Empower families to take the lead in their child's Early Head Start experience, providing a foundation for families to be proactive in their child's success in school and beyond.

- Increase opportunities for families to learn about their child's development.
- Identify and remove barriers to support families experiencing chronic absenteeism.
- Support families through the referral process by collaboratively identifying children's strengths and areas for development and creating a shared vision for improvement.
- Engage families in school readiness activities for their child in the home to reinforce school readiness instruction in the classroom.
- Engage fathers in positive experiences that encourage active commitment to their child's educational and developmental growth.

Progress Spotlight:

Early Head Start continues to empower families to take an active role in their child's learning and development, providing a strong foundation for school readiness and long-term success. The program emphasizes collaborative partnerships with families, supporting them to understand, guide, and advocate for their child's growth.

Families were provided with increased opportunities to learn about their child's development through parent-teacher conferences, developmental screenings, home visits, in-class activities, volunteer opportunities, and educational workshops and training. These opportunities strengthened family understanding of child development milestones and fostered proactive engagement in learning.

The program also prioritized father engagement by offering opportunities for fathers and male caregivers to participate in positive learning experiences and encouraging their active commitment to their child's education and development. These efforts strengthened family bonds, promoted positive role modeling, and enhanced children's social-emotional growth.

Through these intentional strategies, Early Head Start continues to foster family leadership in children's learning, promote proactive engagement, and support school readiness and long-term success.

Annual Self-Assessment

The program completes an annual Self-Assessment in the fall of each calendar year. As part of the Self-Assessment preparation process, the program conducts an in-depth review of its processes, procedures, and outcomes and compares them to the Head Start Program Performance Standards and other applicable regulations.

The Self-Assessment includes program highlights, areas of opportunity and growth, and identifies strategies to guide future program performance and continuous improvement. The most recent Self-Assessment was completed in the fall of 2025.

The final Self-Assessment report is made available annually to enrolled families, program governing boards, and other interested stakeholders, and is submitted to the Office of Head Start by February of the following calendar year.



Financial Information: Program Operations

Funding:

US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families	\$2,005,015
USVI Department of Education – Special Nutrition Program	66,930
Non-Federal (\$643,751 Public Contributions, \$38,662 In-Kind match, \$36,000 VI Government	718,413
TOTAL	<u>\$2,790,358</u>

Expenditures:

Salaries (47%)	\$1,318,947
Benefits (15%)	423,440
Supplies (5%)	148,964
Other (2%)	41,096
Property Maintenance (3%)	90,259
Training (2%)	49,239
Non-Federal (Include \$361,431 of Property & Liability Insurance (26%)	718,413
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$2,790,358</u>

Financial Information: Disaster Assistance

Total Federal Expenditures (10/1/2024 - 9/30/2025)	\$1,093,587
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Health Services

The Early Head Start (EHS) Program prioritizes the health and well-being of enrolled children by meeting health screening requirements and promoting positive health outcomes for each child. The program actively educates families on the importance of completing required screenings and establishing a medical home. Families are encouraged to enroll in the Medical Assistance Program (MAP) to gain access to free health services through local clinics and private providers, allowing them to establish a consistent medical home at no cost.

Currently, the program provides in-house hearing and vision screenings. The program also works to assist families without medical insurance in obtaining MAP coverage and establishing a medical home.

Challenges Impacting Health Screening Compliance

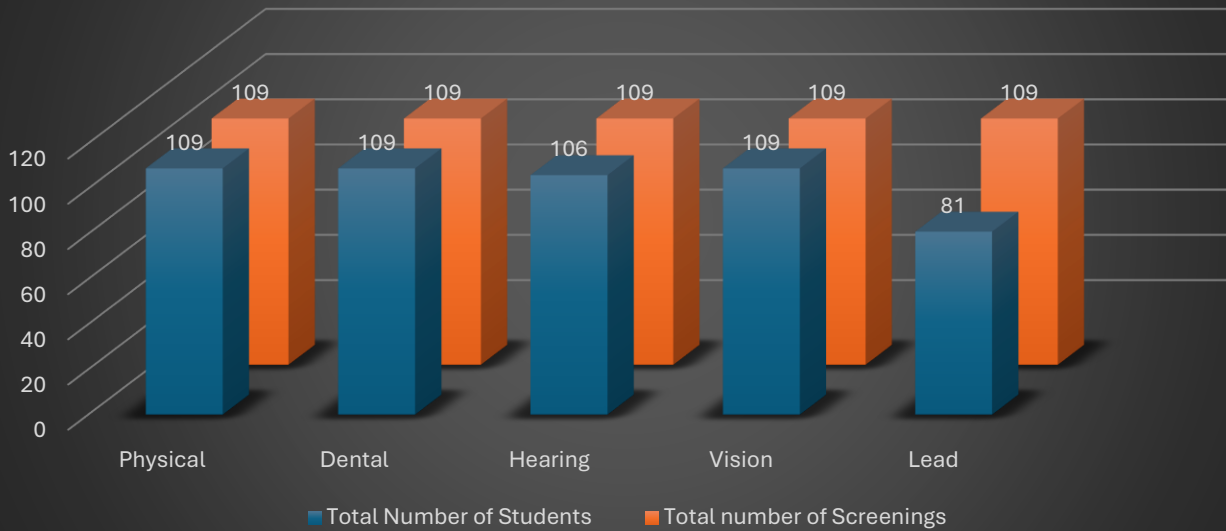
- **Missed Appointments:** Many families missed scheduled appointments and did not reschedule, even when the program offered support such as scheduling assistance and transportation services. To address these barriers, the program implemented reminder calls and assisted families with rescheduling missed appointments to ensure continued access to services. In some cases, with parent consent, the program transports children to medical appointments.
- **Provider Restrictions:** Some families face barriers to care because certain health care providers decline to accept MAP patients, citing funding instability and other government-related challenges.

Steps to Improve Health Screening Compliance

- **Strengthened Collaboration with Providers:** EHS will continue engaging with health service providers to ensure families complete all required screenings.
- **Strengthened Parent Engagement:** The program will increase collaboration with families to ensure children attend scheduled screenings and follow-up appointments.
- **In-House Screenings:** Vision and hearing screenings will continue to be conducted in-house by the program's Health Services Coordinator and designated staff.

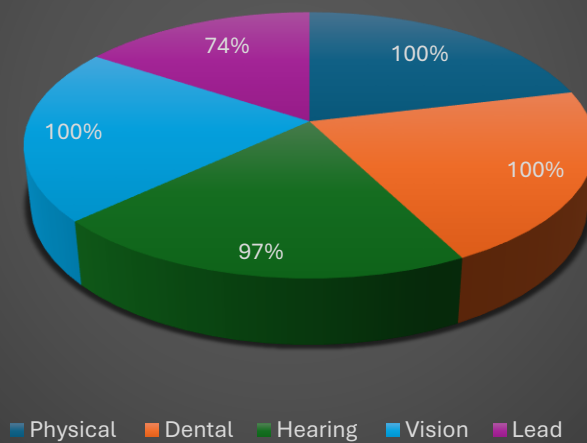


HEALTH SCREENINGS



Infants under the age of 12 months are typically eligible to receive lead screenings.

NUMBER OF SCREENINGS COMPLETED OUT OF 109 STUDENTS



Parent Engagement

Early Head Start recognizes the vital role parents play in their children's developmental success as their child's first teacher. To foster collaboration between parents and teachers, the program actively promotes family involvement through activities, events, and workshops. These efforts strengthen partnerships between parents and teachers and establish a supportive network that enhances children's growth and learning at home and at school. Below are key activities designed to engage parents:

Classroom Activities

Parents are encouraged to participate in their child's classroom by:

- Reading with children to support early literacy and language development.
- Assisting with arts and crafts to foster creativity, fine motor development, and hands-on learning.
- Helping with special events to strengthen family engagement and create a sense of community within the classroom.

These opportunities help parents strengthen their connection to their child's learning, reinforce skills at home, and support a positive and inclusive classroom environment. They also offer meaningful ways for parents to engage in their child's education and build stronger relationships among families, teachers, and the classroom community.

Parent Orientation

To introduce families to EHS policies, procedures, and available program services, the program conducted four scheduled orientations, in addition to a separate orientation for Spanish-speaking families and additional one-on-one orientations based on individual family needs. This approach ensured full participation, supported language equity, and helped parents become familiar with program offerings and expectations.

Parent -Teacher Conferences

These one-on-one meetings provided parents with opportunities to:

- Review their child's progress using COR (Child Observation Record) data and gain a clear understanding of strengths and areas for growth.
- Discuss specific needs or challenges, allowing open communication and shared problem-solving.
- Collaborate with teachers to set developmental goals, ensuring strategies are aligned between the classroom and home.

These conferences strengthen family-teacher partnerships, promote shared decision-making, and support consistent, individualized approaches that enhance children's learning and school readiness.

Policy Council

Parents are encouraged to join and actively participate in the program's governing body as Policy Council members. As active participants in decision-making and program oversight, parents contributed to:

- Shaping policies that guide program services and operations.
- Setting program goals based on family and community needs.
- Ensuring the program remains responsive to the needs of children and families.

Parent Committee

A Parent Committee is established annually. Parent Committee activities included planning and supporting center events. Through leadership roles, parent members:

- Organized center activities and events.
- Guided and supported activities with the assistance of the Family and Community Partnership Coordinators (FCPCs).
- Served as a liaison between families and the Policy Council.

Parent Meetings

Parents are encouraged to attend meetings to stay informed about:

- Program updates and changes.
- Upcoming events and activities.
- Important announcements and resources.

These meetings provide valuable opportunities for parents to engage directly with the program, ask questions, share feedback, and participate in discussions about their child's development and program activities.

Home Visits

Home visits between teachers and parents play a critical role in building strong partnerships between families and the EHS program. These visits provide opportunities to connect with families in familiar and comfortable settings, strengthening relationships and supporting child development. During these visits:

- Teachers build strong, positive relationships with families using culturally responsive practices.
- Trust and communication are strengthened, allowing families to share insights, concerns, and goals for their child.
- Individualized goals tailored to each child's unique strengths, needs, and developmental progress are collaboratively developed.

Home visits also support continuity between home and program environments by aligning strategies used by families and staff, ultimately promoting positive child outcomes and family engagement.

Socializations

Parents are encouraged to participate in informational sessions, educational activities, and family-focused events where they can socialize with other EHS families. These gatherings allow parents to:

- Gain valuable knowledge related to child development and parenting.
- Build connections with other parents.
- Actively support their child's growth and development through shared learning experiences.

These activities foster a sense of community, strengthen family connections, and enhance overall family well-being.



Fatherhood Initiatives

The program implements intentional strategies designed to actively engage fathers and male caregivers, ensuring they feel welcomed, supported, and valued. These efforts encourage fathers and male caregivers to:

- Feel confident and supported in their role as caregivers.
- Participate actively in their child's learning experiences and daily life.
- Engage in safe and supportive spaces where they can learn, share experiences, and build connections with other fathers and male caregivers.

EHS fathers and male caregivers participated in four events designed specifically for them:

Mental Health Impact in a Stressful Community:

Fathers and male caregivers learned about challenges impacting families within the community, including:

- The impact of layoffs
- Coping strategies for managing stress
- Current crime rates and their effects on families

Building Relationships:

This workshop supported fathers and male caregivers in strengthening positive, nurturing relationships with their children by focusing on:

- Effective communication
- Active engagement
- The important role fathers play in supporting their child's social, emotional, and developmental growth

The Importance of Fathers in a Child's Life:

Fathers and male caregivers participated in a review of Bill No. 34-0055, which promoted:

- Awareness and validation that fathers are essential to children's growth and development
- Increased understanding of fathers' rights
- Active and positive involvement in children's lives

Dads Bring Your Child to School Day:

During this annual national event, fathers and male caregivers brought their children to school and participated in commemorative photo-taking activities. Some fathers met their child's teacher and/or visited the center for the first time. All participating families received a printed photograph to commemorate the experience.



Workshops and Socializations

Workshops

- Child Passenger Safety
- Alcohol Awareness-Distracted Driving
- Holiday Safety
- Trauma
- Fire Prevention
- Preventing Childhood Illnesses
- Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect
- Literacy, Health Screenings
- Resume Writing
- Furthering Your Education
- Disaster Preparedness
- CSEFEL Parenting Curriculum Series
- Parent Meeting I
- Parent Meeting II
- Parent Meeting III
- Parent Meeting IV

Socializations

- Fire Trucks Presentation
- Hispanic Heritage Sip and Paint
- Making a Musical Instrument
- DIY Fall Craft Activity
- Book Reading and Book Parade
- Budgeting and Making Piggy Banks
- Visit to Frederiksted Park
- Meet and Greet
- We are Thankful, How About You
- Making Homemade Sand
- Eating Lunch with Mom
- Spring Arts and Craft
- Let Us Make Slime
- V.I. History Paint and Storytime
- Starting a Garden
- Farewell
- Spring Egg and Toy Hunt
- Making Homemade Playdough



Parent Committee Initiated Activities

VI History Painting a Cultural Flower

Mom and I Make Flowers

Sprint Hunt

Lunch with Mom

Make a Hat, Let's Have a Parade

Tie Dye T-Shirt with Me

Career Day Parade

Blow Bubbles with Me

Shoe Box Activity

Hand Painting

Make a Birdhouse with Dad



School Readiness



Early Head Start (EHS) continues to ensure that School Readiness remains a top priority. The program is committed to establishing School Readiness goals that prepare children for eventual entry into kindergarten. The following is a summary of actions taken during the past year to support school readiness:

School Readiness Mission:

To prepare infants and toddlers developmentally, including in the domains of approaches to learning, social and emotional development, cognition, language, and physical development, for preschool and/or Head Start, while working collaboratively with parents to observe children's progress and plan developmentally appropriate activities that support children in meeting the EHS School Readiness Goals.

Early Head Start School Readiness Goals

The Head Start Act requires programs to analyze children's progress toward meeting School Readiness Goals established by the program. The following chart delineates the School Readiness Goals and the assessment criteria used to measure children's progress toward achieving these goals. As the reader reviews the analysis of COR Advantage data, it is important to keep these goals in mind.

While aggregated results indicate that progress has been made across developmental domains, continued efforts are needed to ensure that children meet age-level benchmarks and that professional development supports teachers in building the knowledge, skills, and expertise necessary to promote optimal development in all areas.

To support curriculum implementation and equip teachers to deliver instruction and caregiving with fidelity, the program engages in Practice-Based Coaching annually. Practice-Based Coaching is an evidence-based coaching framework designed to strengthen teachers' use of effective practices in the classroom. This approach directly supports the program's School Readiness efforts by improving instructional quality and promoting consistent implementation of developmentally appropriate practices.

Domain/Sub-Domain	School Readiness Goal	COR Assessment Alignment
Approaches to Learning:	Children will demonstrate increasing ability to: • Manage feelings, emotions, actions, and behavior with the support of familiar adults. • Focus, maintain attention, and engage and persist in activities.	• Emotions • Building relationships with adults • Conflict resolution • Initiative and planning • Problem solving with materials
Social and Emotional Development:	Children will demonstrate increasing ability to: • interact, play, and engage in positive interactions with other children, as they express, manage, and interpret emotions and express care and concern for others	• Building relationships with other children • Conflict resolution • Emotions
Language, Communication and Literacy:	Children will demonstrate increasing ability to: • communicate their needs and engage in interactions and conversations with others, as they understand and use a greater variety of words. • repeat, retell, relate to, and talk about songs, books, stories, and rhymes and gain meaning from them	• Speaking • Listening and comprehension • Building relationships with adults • Building relationships with other children
Cognition:	Children will demonstrate increasing ability to: • actively explore people and objects to understand and communicate about their characteristics, how they work, about cause and effect, and about	• Problem solving with materials • Experimenting, predicting, and drawing conclusions • Observing and classifying • Natural and physical world

	their similarities and differences.	• Tools and Technology • Initiative and planning
Cognition:	Children will demonstrate increasing ability to: • Actively explore people and objects to understand and communicate about their characteristics, how they work, about their similarity and differences. • Develop a sense and understanding of number and quantity, identify shapes, understand spatial relationships, categorize objects, and recognize simple patterns.	• Number and counting. • Measurement
Perceptual Motor and Physical Development:	Children will demonstrate increasing ability to: • use sensory and perceptual information to understand and act on objects, experiences, and interactions within the environment.	• Experimenting, predicting, and drawing conclusions • Geography

COR Summary Results

2024-2025

Overview:

This report is based on the aggregation of data collected by classroom teachers and home visitors during the 2024-2025 school year using the HighScope Child Observation Record (COR) Advantage, an assessment tool designed for children ages birth to six (6) years and aligned with the HighScope curriculum. The COR Advantage assesses children's development in the following nine (9) domains:

- Approaches to Learning (AL)
- Social and Emotional Development (SED)
- Physical Development and Health (PHD)
- Language, Literacy, and Communication (LLC)
- Mathematics (MATH)
- Creative Arts (CA)
- Science and Technology (ST)
- Social Studies (SS)
- English Language Learning (ELL) (for Dual Language Learners)

Within each domain are several subdomains. Scores range from 0-7 and are inclusive of children ages birth through kindergarten. Please note that a score of zero (0) does not mean a lack of skill, but rather represents skills and behaviors for the youngest infants. Scores are not equated with ages, but indicate developmental progressions within each domain. Generally, expectations for children's achievement/scores are anticipated to be within the following guidelines. Note, that there is an overlap of scores from age to age, recognizing that there is normal variability in children's development.

- Infants and toddlers: 0-3
- Preschool: 2-5
- Kindergarten: 4-7

Teachers and home visitors collect information through observations of children's behavior and activities throughout the child's enrollment in Early Head Start. Data is collected and analyzed three times per year, or periods. Through the online system, the COR assists them in the analysis of this information as it relates to children's growth and development. Teachers and home visitors use this information to plan for individual children and the group as they facilitate children's achievement of developmental milestones and EHS School Readiness Goals.

Collection and Analysis of Assessment Information:

The following information depicts the completion rates of individual classrooms and home visits for each period. Please note, children in the Pregnant Women's Program are not assessed using the COR until the following year, when they are either enrolled in the home visiting or class-based programs.

When reviewing the data, one would need to consider attendance records, as well as when children entered the program to obtain a full view of the issues related to gathering data.

Classroom	1st period - %	2nd period - %	3rd period - %
Concordia West			
Classroom 1	75	75	100
Classroom 2	100	100	100
Classroom 3	90	97	100
Home Visiting	28	18	1
Concordia East			
East 1	75	100	100
East 2	87	88	95
East 3	100	100	53
West 1	87	100	100
West 2	100	99	100
West 3	87	100	100
Home Visiting	76	78	64

Classroom completion rates significantly decreased from the year prior with six of the nine classrooms achieving 100% completion for all three collection periods and only one classroom achieving 100% for all three periods. Completion is critical for monitoring and tracking the progress of children throughout the school year. Completion is a concern for the program and especially for the home visiting program, as this has been an ongoing issue.

When data is not completed on an individual child at both the beginning and the end of the year, growth cannot be determined. It is critical for teachers and home visitors to obtain baseline data on each child's level of development in order to plan appropriate activities and interactions that facilitate and scaffold developmental growth for each child. This is particularly concerning for the home visiting program as there is little data for tracking children's progress and for planning appropriately to meet each child's developmental needs.

It is recommended that the program explore the issues surrounding the lack of completion of data collection. For example - Is child absenteeism an issue? Is adequate time allotted for the input of data? Is more training needed, particularly how to stimulate responses in natural play situations? Do staff and children move to different classrooms to ensure adequate coverage, leading to less time for teachers to observe specific children?

Early Head Start School Readiness Goals

The Head Start Act requires that programs analyze progress of children toward meeting the School Readiness Goals as outlined by the program. The following chart delineates the School Readiness Goals and the assessment criteria that the program uses to measure the progress toward achieving these. As the reader of this report reviews the analysis of the COR Advantage data, it is important to keep the school readiness goals in mind. While aggregated results indicate that progress has been made in all domains, there is much work to be done to further ensure that children reach the benchmarks expected for their ages and that professional development supports teachers in their acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and expertise needed to assist children in achieving optimal development in all these areas.

Domain/Sub-Domain	School Readiness Goal	COR Assessment
Approaches to Learning:	Children will demonstrate increasing ability to: • manage feelings, emotions, actions, and behavior with the support of familiar adults • focus, maintain attention, and engage and persist in activities	• Emotions • Building relationships with adults • Conflict resolution • Initiative and planning • Problem solving with materials
Social and Emotional Development:	Children will demonstrate increasing ability to: • interact, play, and engage in positive interactions with other children, as they express, manage, and interpret emotions and express care and concern for others	• Building relationships with other children • Conflict Resolution • Emotions
Language, Communication, and Literacy:	Children will demonstrate increasing ability to: • communicate their needs and engage in interactions and conversations with others, as they understand and use a greater variety of words. • repeat, retell, relate to, and talk about songs, books, stories, and rhymes and gain meaning from them	• Speaking • Listening and comprehension • Building relationships with adults • Building relationships with other children
Cognition:	Children will demonstrate increasing ability to: • actively explore people and objects to understand and communicate about their characteristics, how they work, about cause and effect, and about their similarities and differences.	• Problem solving with materials • Experimenting, predicting, and drawing conclusions • Observing and classifying • Natural and physical world • Tools and Technology • Initiative and planning
Cognition:	Children will demonstrate	• Number and counting • Measurement

Domain/Sub-Domain	School Readiness Goal	COR Assessment
	increasing ability to: develop a sense and understanding of number and quantity, identify shapes, understand spatial relationships, categorize objects, and recognize simple patterns.	- Geometry: Shapes and spatial awareness - Problem solving with materials - Data analysis - Patterns - Observing and classifying
Perceptual Motor and Physical Development:	Children will demonstrate increasing ability to: use sensory and perceptual information to understand and act on objects, experiences, and interactions within the environment.	- Experimenting, predicting, and drawing conclusions - Geography

Strengths and Opportunities for the Total Program:

All children for which there are scores are included in the aggregation of scores for the purpose of determining strengths and opportunities. Please note, there will always be some subdomains with the highest scores and some subdomains with the lowest scores. Delineating these is not intended to be punitive or a reflection of teachers' capabilities, but instructive in helping the program to determine professional development needs and in helping teachers plan additional meaningful experiences and improve their intentional teaching practices, particularly in the curriculum areas designated as "opportunities." Remember, there will always be subdomains in the "opportunities" area.

The COR is divided into eight (8) domains and 34 subdomains (with exclusion of the English Language Learning domain which will be analyzed individually later in the report). Even though there was growth in all domains and subdomains, children scored on average higher in some subdomains than others.

The chart below represents the five (5) highest scoring subdomains for the third collection period (highest to lowest).

Domain	Subdomain
Physical Development and Health	Personal Care and Healthy Behavior
Physical Development and Health	Gross Motor Skills
Physical Development and Health	Fine Motor Skills
Creative Arts	Movement
Social and Emotional Development	Building Relationships with Other Children

Comparing the strengths of the 2024-2025 to the five previous school years (2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024), the following subdomains were at the top of the list of strengths all years:

- Personal Care and Healthy Behavior
- Gross Motor Skills

Comparing just 2024-2025 to the prior year (2023-2024), the following subdomains were consistently at the top of the list for strengths:

- Personal Care and Healthy Behavior
- Gross Motor Skills
- Building Relationships with Children
- Movement

The chart below represents the five lowest scoring subdomains for the third and final collection period (lowest to highest) and are thus considered “opportunities”:

Domain	Subdomain
Social and Emotional	Emotions
Mathematics	Data Analysis
Social Studies	Knowledge of Self and Others
Language, Literacy, and Communication	Reading
Social Studies/ Language, Literacy, and Communication	History/ Phonological Awareness

Comparing the opportunities, or lower scores, of the 2024-2025 school year to the previous five school years (2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024), two of the subdomains were the same. These include:

- Emotions
- Reading

Results indicate the potential need for professional development, as the same areas are persistently among the lower scores. Remember, there will always be lower scores as there must be some subdomains at the bottom; however, the goal is for all subdomains to rise to the highest level possible with all areas hovering at the top level. The range of scores from highest to lowest is 2.86 to 1.81. Both the highest score and the lowest score were higher than those of the previous year at 2.83 to 1.41.

The greatest gains in scores from the first to the last period, and therefore indicating the greatest growth, were in the following subdomains:

- Creative Arts: Music
- Social and Emotional Development: Building Relationships with Adults
- Development and Health: Personal Care and Healthy Behavior
- Mathematics: Number and Counting

The least amount of gains in scores from the first to the last period indicating the least amount of growth, were in the following subdomains:

- Approaches to Learning: Initiative and Planning
- Social Studies: Geography
- Social and Emotional Development: Conflict Resolution
- Social Studies: History
- Social and Emotional Development: Community
- Mathematics: Data Analysis

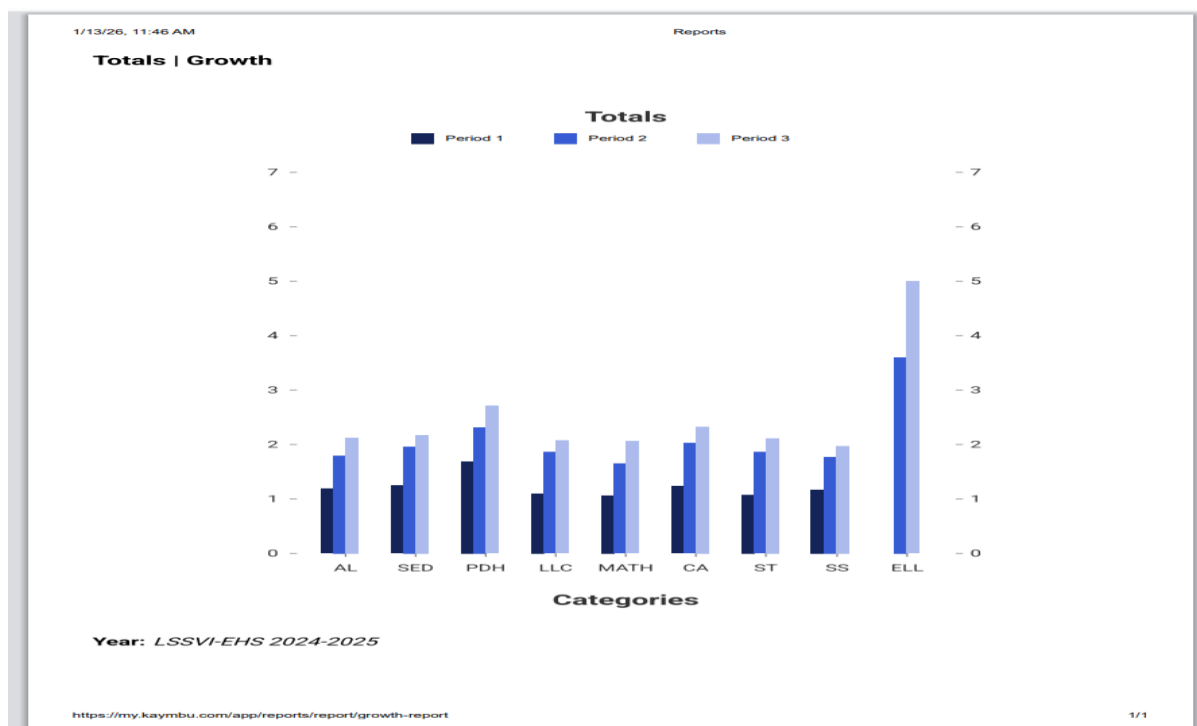
As professional development is planned, it is recommended that consideration be made to emphasize training in strategies to promote and facilitate development of the following areas: Emotions, and Reading – as children have been scoring consistently lower in these areas over the past five (5) years. It is also recommended that training include strategies to promote Data Analysis skills as this subdomain was scored in the opportunities realm and also demonstrated less growth over the year. It is also recommended that growth patterns be shared with teachers throughout the year and they learn to track growth using the COR portal – after each data collection period – so that they can ensure that attention is paid to all subdomains of development in their planning.

Analyzing Data and Growth:

As we analyze data within and across classrooms, there are some cautions to consider in reviewing and analyzing the data. For example, there may be a 5-month-old and a 12-month-old in the same classroom, which means that expectations will be very different, and scores will reflect these differences. Therefore, analysis must be based on realistic expectations depending on the child’s age. There may be varied expectations for children with disabilities or developmental delays or children who are dual language learners. Our goal is for each child to demonstrate progress in all domains.

In most cases, when reviewing the scores for children within classrooms, those who have the lowest scores tend to be the youngest or those identified with disabilities and/or developmental delays – which is to be expected. Scores of younger children and children with disabilities and/or developmental delays may impact classroom average scores. Therefore, aggregated analysis by classroom is not evaluated here. Caution should also be taken when comparing classrooms, even those of the same age group, because the ages often vary within each and among classrooms. One class may have a greater number of younger children and another more older children, yet within the same age group; and some may have more children with developmental delays or dual language learners. Therefore, average scores for classrooms are not considered or compared.

Instead, what is important is that each child experiences progress in all domains and subdomains. The following graph shows the growth of all children within the program across the three collection periods. Only children for whom scores were obtained for both the first and last period are included in the analysis. As illustrated in the graph, the average growth for all children for whom scores were obtained indicates that there was growth in all domains.



The following chart indicates the number of children whose scores decreased from the first or second period to the final period.

	>or = to 5 domains	4 domains	3 domains	2 domains	1 domain
# Children	2	4	4	6	10

The program needs to analyze the potential causes of the lack of growth for each child. When individual children do not experience growth, it is often due to poor attendance as a result of chronic illnesses. It is recommended that the program provides additional support to families regarding how to support their child’s learning at home when there are absences to ensure that children are making good developmental progress. For other children who may be experiencing absenteeism not due to illness, it is important to communicate to families the importance of attendance to their child’s growth and development. Other reasons may be related to teacher absenteeism or staff turnover.

It is important that staff learn to track progress using the COR portal throughout the year to monitor individual children’s growth and to conduct enough observations to ensure that each child’s highest scores are observed and recorded.

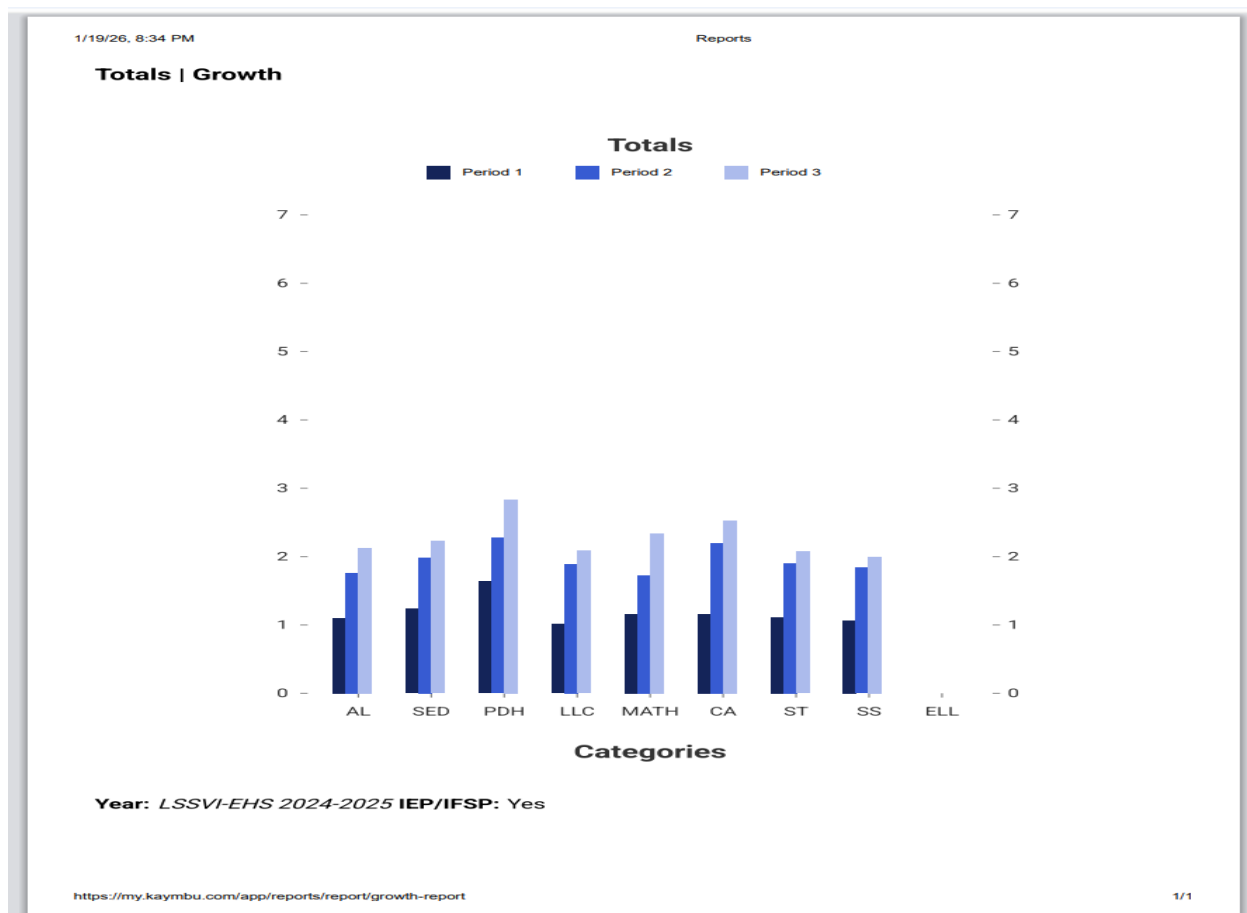
There were not any specific domains that stood out as areas that showed less growth across classrooms or staff, rather individual teaching teams/home visitor may need to assess to determine patterns among the children in their care. It is recommended that after each recording period teaching staff meet with their supervisor to review class results and develop strategies to use the results to inform individual professional development goals, planning, and intentional teaching strategies to improve child outcomes.

Progress of Children with Disabilities and/or Developmental Delays

Nineteen (19) children with disabilities and/or developmental delays were enrolled in the EHS class-based and/or the home visiting program for the 2024-2025 school year – representing about 20% of children enrolled. Children with disabilities and/or developmental delays are those with an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and receive services from the Department of Health Infants and Toddlers Program until their third birthday or with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and receive services from the Department of Education Preschool Services program once they have turned three years.

The following chart illustrates the growth and progress for children with disabilities and/or developmental delays. It should be noted that of the 19 children who were identified as having a disability and/or developmental delay, 15 were identified as such on the COR: therefore, the graph below represents the progress of only the 15 in the COR. The difference in numbers may be because children have been identified as having a disability and/or developmental delay during the school year and the changes were not made to the COR data to reflect their status.

As indicated in the graph, the aggregated scores for those children with an IFSP or an IEP showed growth in all domains.

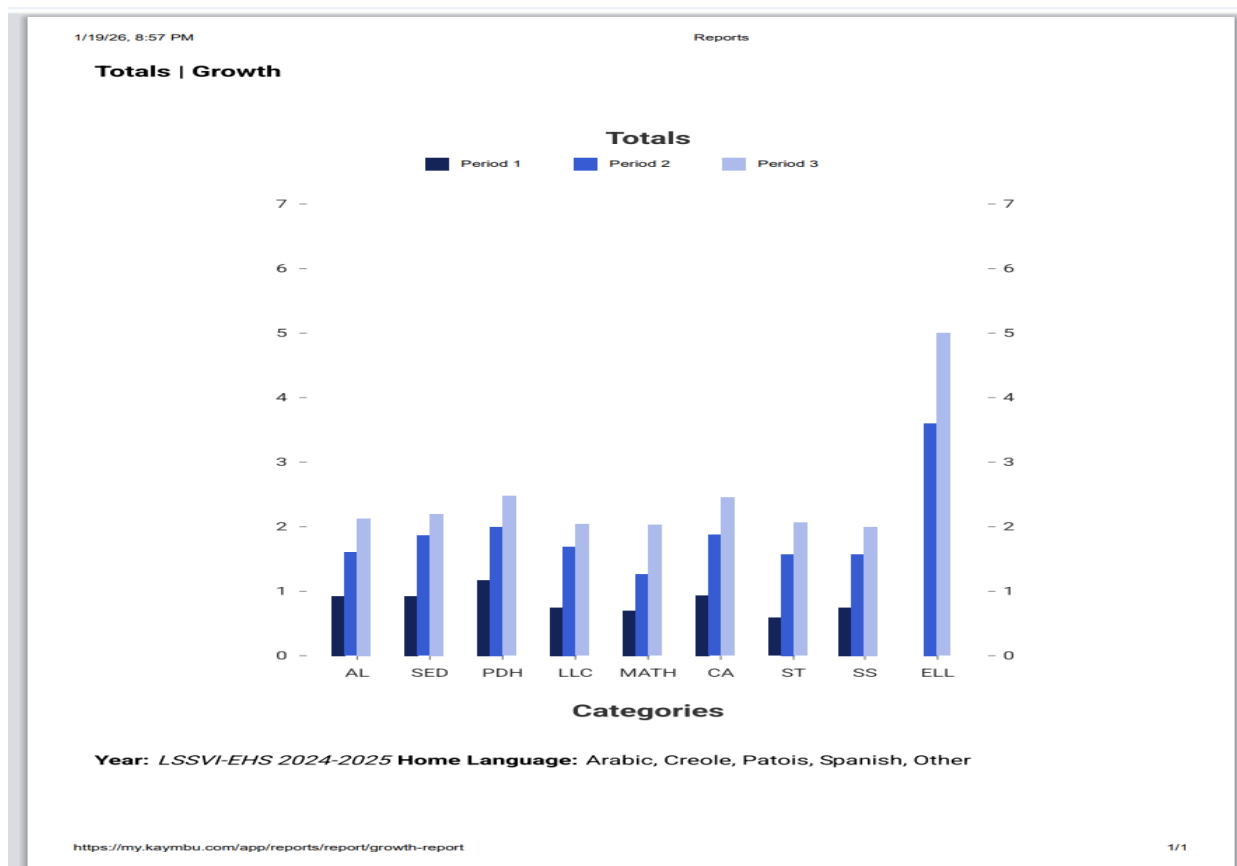


It may be helpful for staff to record how many children who had IFSPs while enrolled in Early Head Start are no longer in need of continued special education services as they transition out, indicating that they no longer have a developmental delay and have made significant progress to perform as expected for their age.

Dual Language Learners (DLL)

Twelve (12) children, representing 12% of those enrolled in the EHS class-based and/or the home visiting program in the 2024-2025 school year were DLL as reported by families on their enrollment forms and gathered by the Family Community Partnerships Coordinators. Of those identified on enrollment forms, only ten (10) were indicated as DLL within the COR. Of those that were reported in the COR as being DLL, only four (4) were scored in the “English Language Learner” domain. Only those indicated on the COR are reflected in the chart below. It is recommended children are identified appropriately in the COR; and when demographic information is entered into the COR, that all DLL children be identified as such. Additionally, teachers and home visitors need to score DLL children in the “English Language Learner” (ELL) domain to ensure that DLL children are making progress in this area.

The following chart illustrates the growth and progress for children who are dual language learners. Because not all DLL children were scored in the ELL domain, it is difficult to determine growth in that area. This domain is specifically designed to document the progress of children who have a home language other than or in addition to English and their acquisition of English – both in listening and understanding English and speaking English. Children included as DLL experienced growth in all domains.



Summary of Results for Children Transitioning from EHS in August 2023

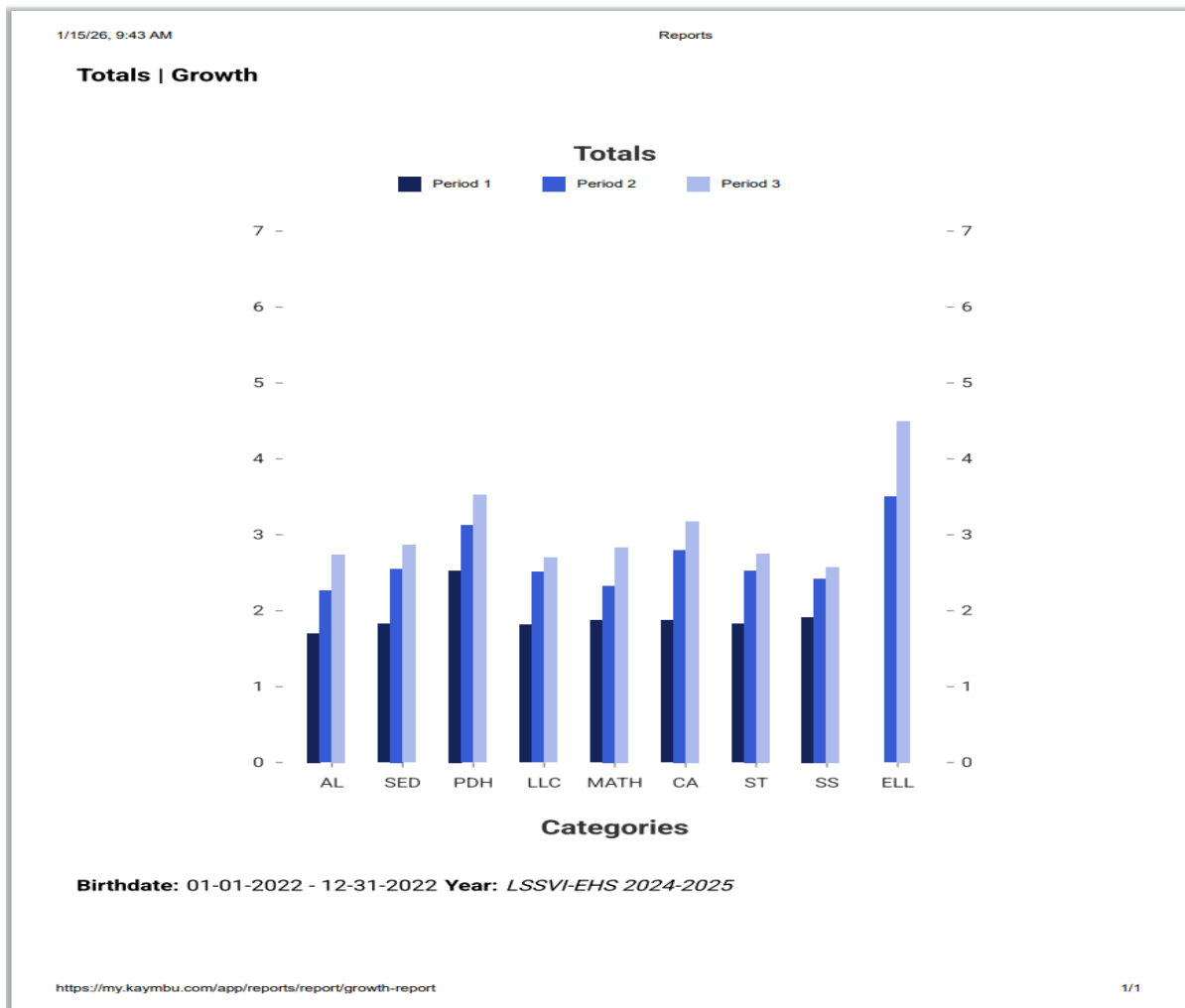
The chart below indicates aggregated results of the COR Advantage assessment for children who transitioned out of EHS at the end of the 2024-2025 school year due to age – those children with 2022 birthdays. Children transition between 2.8 and 3.7 years in synchronization with the Virgin Islands Head Start Program and Department of Education Kindergarten entry requirements, which have cut-off dates of December 31st. Results include all children, including class-based, home-based, those with disabilities and/or developmental delays, and those who are dual language learners who are transitioning out of Early Head Start.

As stated above, scores are not equated with ages but represent developmental levels within each domain and subdomain. Generally, expectations for children's achievement/scores are expected within the following guidelines. Note, that there is an overlap of scores from age to age, recognizing that there is normal variability in children's development.

- Infants and toddlers: 0-3
- Preschool: 2-5
- Kindergarten: 4-7

With this in mind, it is the hope and intention of EHS that children who are transitioning from the program achieve a score at or above 2 in all domains and subdomains.

The following graph illustrates the aggregated domain scores for children who scored at each level who transitioned from the EHS program due to their date of birth, between January 1, 2022, and December 31, 2022.



In analysis of the graph above, the focus is on the third and last collection period which indicates that according to aggregated results of all children transitioning from the Early Head Start program, scores are above level 2 in all domains.

The chart below provides aggregated scores for individual subdomains. As illustrated, all aggregated subdomain scores were above level 2 indicating that children leaving Early Head Start meet developmental expectations.

Subdomain	Aggregated Score for 3 rd Period
Approaches to Learning	
Initiative and planning	2.55
Problem solving with materials	2.84
Reflection	2.84
Social and Emotional Development	
Emotions	2.58
Relationships with adults	3.00
Relationships with other children	3.10
Community	2.88
Conflict resolution	2.74

Subdomain	Aggregated Score for 3rd Period
Physical Development and Health	
Gross Motor	3.52
Fine Motor	3.27
Personal care and healthy behavior	3.80
Language, Literacy & communication	
Speaking	3.10
Listening and comprehension	2.71
Phonological awareness	2.45
Alphabetic knowledge	2.81
Reading	2.36
Book enjoyment and knowledge	2.97
Writing	2.52
Mathematics	
Number and counting	2.77
Geometry, shapes, spatial awareness	3.00
Measurement	2.90
Patterns	2.90
Data analysis	2.60
Creative Arts	
Art	3.10
Music	2.82
Movement	3.52
Pretend play	3.26
Science and technology	
Observing and classifying	2.83
Experimenting, predicting, drawing conclusions	2.64
Natural and physical world	2.67
Tools and technology	2.88
Social Studies	
Knowledge of self and others	2.63
Geography	2.55
History	2.56

Benchmark Report

The Benchmarks Report is designed to identify how students' performance compares to national averages for each of the COR Advantage categories. The Benchmark Report reflects student performance compared to peers within the same 3-month age window. The report is grouped into Above, Meeting, and Below, which reflects the following groups relative to the national averages:

- Above = performing above-age-level norms (top 25%)
- Meeting = performing consistently with age-level norms (middle 50%)
- Below = performing below age-level norms (bottom 25%)

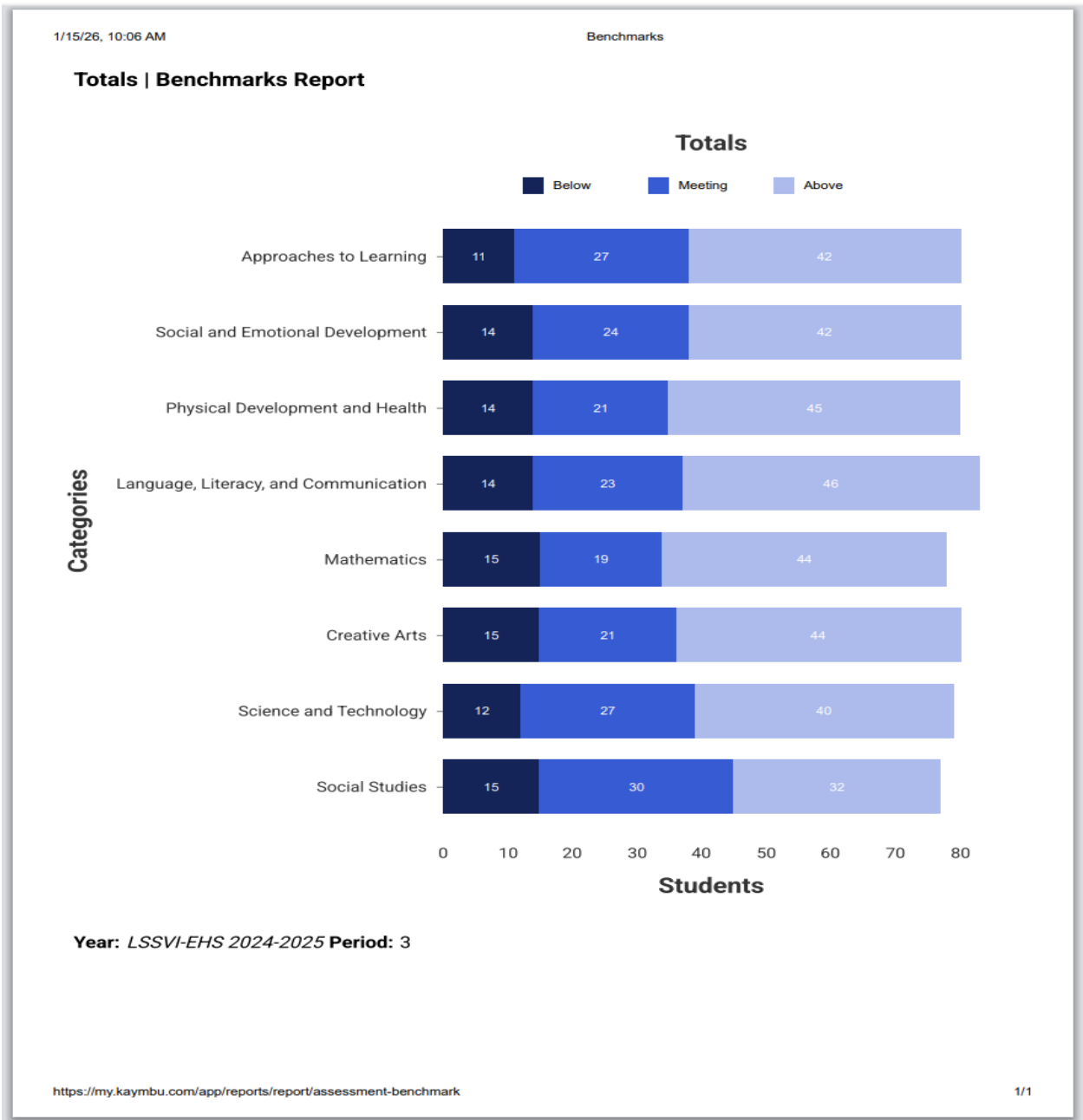
This is the fourth year that data analysis has looked at Benchmarks. It can be very instructive moving forward. The graph below depicts the number of children enrolled in EHS and how they compared to the national average of children evaluated using the COR who are the same age at the end of the school

year, the third collection period. The aggregated scores are inclusive of all children including dual language learners and children with disabilities and/or developmental delays.

While this benchmark graph is an aggregation of the total program, teachers should look at the benchmarks achieved in each subdomain at each period for each child to provide guidance for individualization. The goal should always be focused on working towards every child, reaching optimal development in all areas.

The results can also be instructive in guiding professional development to enable teachers to acquire the knowledge and skills to facilitate children's learning in each domain, as well as guiding plans for parent education. Even though not all children in the comparative study are within the same demographic as the LSS Early Head Start children, it is recommended that a goal of the program should be to improve the benchmark scores.

When comparing the Benchmark scores between last school year (2023-2024) to scores in 2024-2025, it is noted that in the domains of Approaches to Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development and Health; Language, Literacy, and Communication; Mathematics; and Creative Arts there were marked gains with fewer children scoring below the Benchmarks and more either meeting or above the benchmarks.



Use of the Data

Individual children's results and aggregated results by classroom are shared with teachers. Teachers have access to view the data at any time. This information assists teachers in taking note of individual children's progress and needs and provides information for planning for individual children and the group. This information also assists teachers in noting their own strengths in implementing curricula focused on the different subdomains and in identifying individualized professional development needs. Informed by the analysis of COR results, it is the goal of the program to support teachers in their professional development through reflective and on-going supervision, consultations, workshops, and training materials designed to help each teacher to improve their abilities to meet the needs of the children in their care.

Communication with Families through the COR Advantage Portal

The COR Advantage family portal provides opportunities for staff and families to communicate about the progress of children and other issues and events of EHS. During the 2024-2025 school year, the only documented usage was regarding Family Announcements of events and activities posted by the

Families and Community Services Managers. There was a total of 121 announcements. The portal calculates the number of families who open the communication.

There were no daily notes or daily sheets sent through the portal to families by teaching staff. Daily notes may have been sent through other means. Additionally, there were no comments sent by families.

The data indicates that both staff and families are not using the family portal to the fullest. The family portal may be an excellent tool for communicating with families in this digital world. It is recommended that families be surveyed to determine the best way they prefer to receive communications. At the same time, it is recommended that the program explore what may be the barriers for using the portal by both staff and families. Perhaps training is needed for both staff and families regarding how to use the portal and the benefits.

Conclusion

The major take-away from the analysis of the COR results for the 2024-2025 school year is that the majority of children enrolled in the LSS Early Head Start make developmental progress and that children leaving Early Head Start due to aging out meet expectations collectively. This is evident in children's aggregated scores.

While overall the data highlights the positive benefits of the Early Head Start Program – and there are many – there are recommendations for the program to consider as it engages in its self-assessment and continuous improvement processes. There are opportunities for growth and professional development highlighted in this report that are summarized below:

- It is acknowledged that it is often more difficult for Home Visitors to collect COR data due to the limited time spent with children. However, it is important for data collection to be complete so that children's progress can be monitored in all subdomains and individual needs can be addressed. Home visitors received training focused on strategies to improve the gathering of data during home visits to increase the completion rate. It is anticipated that completion rates will improve for the 2025-2026 school year as a result.
- Results for the first collection period indicated that only 3 classrooms achieved 100%, which was less than the previous year. It is recommended that the program explore the potential barriers/situations that lead to the lack of completion in the first period and what support staff may need.
- As professional development is planned, it is recommended that consideration be made to emphasize training in strategies to promote and facilitate development of the following areas: Emotions, and Reading – as children have been scoring consistently lower in these areas over the past five (5) years.
- The number of children who did not experience growth in all areas needs to be a focus as part of the continuous improvement process. It is important for teaching staff to have on-going access to and training in how to analyze reports that are available online on the COR portal so that they can monitor progress and use information for individual planning.
- In recognition of the fact that children experience many absences, it is recommended that the program provide additional support to families regarding how they can support their child's learning at home to ensure that children are making good developmental progress. This was particularly important for this school year as transportation for many children was a challenge this school year. Additionally, for those who are chronically absent and not due to illness or program transportation issues, it is recommended that the program communicate to families the importance of attendance and the impact on their child's development.
- It was noted that of the 19 children who were identified as having a disability and/or developmental delay, only 15 were identified as such on the COR. It is, therefore, important to be diligent in updating and documenting information within the COR throughout the school year to obtain an accurate picture of progress for all children with a developmental delay and/or disability.

- It may be helpful to know how many children who had IFSPs while enrolled in Early Head Start are not in need of continued special education services as they transition out, indicating that they no longer have a developmental delay.
- It was noted that of the 12 children identified as dual language learners on enrollment forms, only ten (10) were indicated as DLL within the COR and only 4 were scored in the ELL domain. It is recommended that staff be aware of those children identified as DLL on enrollment forms so that they can support the child's home language, facilitate their learning of English, and score appropriately on the COR.
- While the Benchmark data showed considerable improvement and gains, it is important to continue to monitor all children to ensure that every child has the opportunity to reach optimal developmental progress in all areas.
- The family portal may be an excellent tool for communicating with families in this digital world. It is recommended that families be surveyed to determine the best way they would prefer to receive communication. Would families rather get information via text or email or written? At the same time, it is recommended that the program explore what may be the barriers for using the portal by both staff and families. Do families lack access to technology, for example? Perhaps training is needed for both staff and families for how to use the portal and the benefits.

End COR Report

Thank you for checking out our Annual Report!



And we are on our way to another exiting year!





**Early Head Start:
A Nurturing Home Away From Home,
Helping Children Grow With Confidence and Love.**

USDA

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To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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