

**Worcester Child Development Head Start Program
Worcester Public Schools**



Building a Future for Children and Their Families

2015-2016 Annual Report



Children are likely to live up to what you believe of them.

- Lady Bird Johnson

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Community, Friends, Partners,

The Worcester Child Development Head Start program is proud to present the 2015-2016 Annual Report.

This past year was a very busy year for the staff, families and children of the Worcester Child Development Head Start. After receiving our 5 year non-competitive grant in 2015, we were placed on the Office of Head Start's (OHS) three year monitoring review schedule. I am thrilled to share that our three, FY 2016 monitoring reviews were a huge success and wish to thank all staff and families for their support during this review year.

Our first review, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), was held in November 2015. During this review two reliable raters from DANYA, Inc. observed 25 randomly selected classrooms from our 36 classrooms, over a four day review. This review looked at three domains and ten dimensions of teacher-child interactions and measured those observed interactions on a seven point scale. I am happy to share that our program scored higher in all but one category as compared to the 2015 national overview of grantee CLASS scores.

In March 2016 we had our second review. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted an Environmental Health and Safety (EnvHS) across our program. During this three day review, two reviewers visited each site to ensure our program was implementing and promoting healthy practices and routines, as well as providing healthy, safe environments to children, families, and staff. They interviewed staff and examined our sites, policies, protocols, and transportation equipment and procedures. I was delighted, but not surprised when we received our overview of findings for this review and there were no area of noncompliance found during the course of this review.

Our last review, the Comprehensive Service/School Readiness review was held in May of 2016. This review is conducted to ensure programs and services provided met each child and family's unique needs. During this review teams of staff and parents were interviewed, over sixty student files and a percentage of staff files were examined and each site was visited by the reviews. I am pleased to report that there were no area of noncompliance found from this review and that the reviewers stated that our program was one of the most organized and efficient programs that they had reviewed to date.

Throughout this review year it was evident that the commitment staff and families had for our program was second to none and I have so proud to be a member of this wonderful Head Start Family. It has been an extraordinary year and we look forward to our 2016-2017 school year. I would personally like to thank the Worcester Public Schools administration, the School Committee, Policy Council, Regional Office staff, the Head Start Management team, staff and families. Fulfillment of our program's mission would not be possible without their commitment, encouragement and support.

Laurie Kuczka, Head Start and Early Childhood Director

Our Mission

The mission of the Worcester Child Development Head Start Program, Worcester Public Schools, is to provide a high-quality preschool program that prepares children to succeed in tomorrow's world. The program enhances the self-esteem and personal growth of all children including those with special needs while preparing every child to enter school ready to learn. Respectfully building on each family's strengths, goals and role as their child's first teacher, Head Start works in partnership with children, families and the community to promote and advocate for healthy development.

Our Core Values

- Establish a supportive high-quality learning environment for children, parents and staff.
- Understand that the empowerment of families occurs when program governance is a responsibility shared by families, governing bodies and staff.
- Embrace a comprehensive vision of health for children, families and staff.
- Respect the importance of all aspects of an individual's development.
- Build a community in which each child and adult is treated as an individual.
- Foster partnerships and collaborations with the community.
- Develop a continuum of care.

Funding Sources

- Federal (Office of Head Start)
- State – Universal Pre Kindergarten
- State – Inclusionary Preschool Learning Environments
- State – Income Eligible Contract
- State – Head Start State Supplemental

Administrative Staff

Laurie Kuczka, M. Ed
Director

Karen Waters, BA
*Assistant Director & Family Services
Coordinator*

Carlene Sherbourne, EdD
Education Manager

Maryann Rollings, BS, RN
Health Coordinator

Darlene Donaldson, M. Ed
Disabilities/Mental Health Coordinator

Linda Jackson
Family Engagement/Transportation Specialist

Sarah Petersen
Administrative Coordinator

Administrative Office

Taylor Building
770 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01610
508-799-3237 / 508-799-3662

School Locations

Greendale School
130 Leeds Street
Worcester, MA 01606

Mill Swan School (A&B)
337 Mill Street
Worcester, MA 01602

Millbury St. School
389 Millbury Street

Worcester, MA 01610

Short History and Overview

The Worcester Child Development Head Start Program, Worcester Public Schools, is a license exempt preschool program servicing children and families residing in the City of Worcester, Massachusetts. It has been in existence for over 49 years. The focus of the program is to promote school readiness skills of low-income children by enhancing their cognitive, social and emotional development. The program provides learning environments that support children's growth in language, literacy, mathematics, science, creative arts, physical skills, social and emotional functioning, and approaches to learning. In addition, comprehensive services that focus on health, mental health, special needs support, nutrition, oral health and social services are provided based on individual child and family needs. Families have opportunities to participate in parenting support groups, Adult Education classes, leadership opportunities and other workshops or trainings that support parents/guardians' roles as their children's first teachers. A combination of half-day and full-day services are offered in three buildings located in the city. The program employs over 150 staff and more than 20% are current or former Head Start parents.

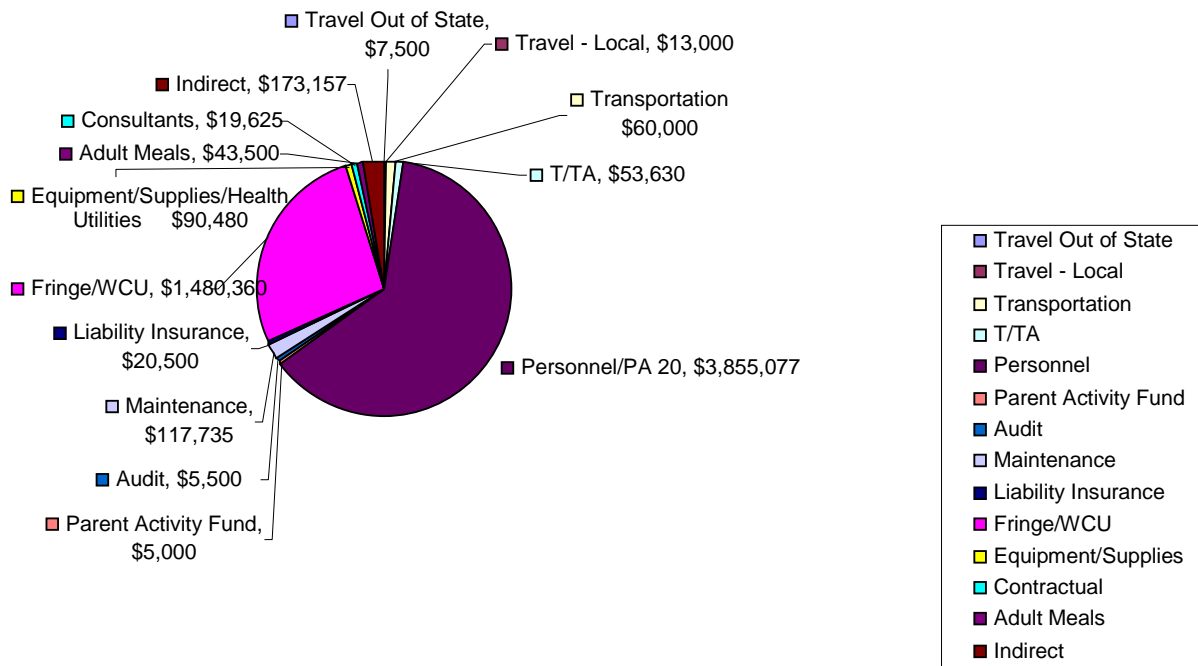


Under new provisions contained in the *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*, Head Start programs are now required to make available to the public a report published at least once during each fiscal year with the following categories and information.

Funding: For the 2015-2016 grant year, The Worcester Child Development Head Start Program was funded for a 12 month period and received \$5,945,064.00 in federal funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and \$1,042,394.00 in supplemental state funding from the Department of Early Education and Care. Funding for FY17 is projected to be level funded.

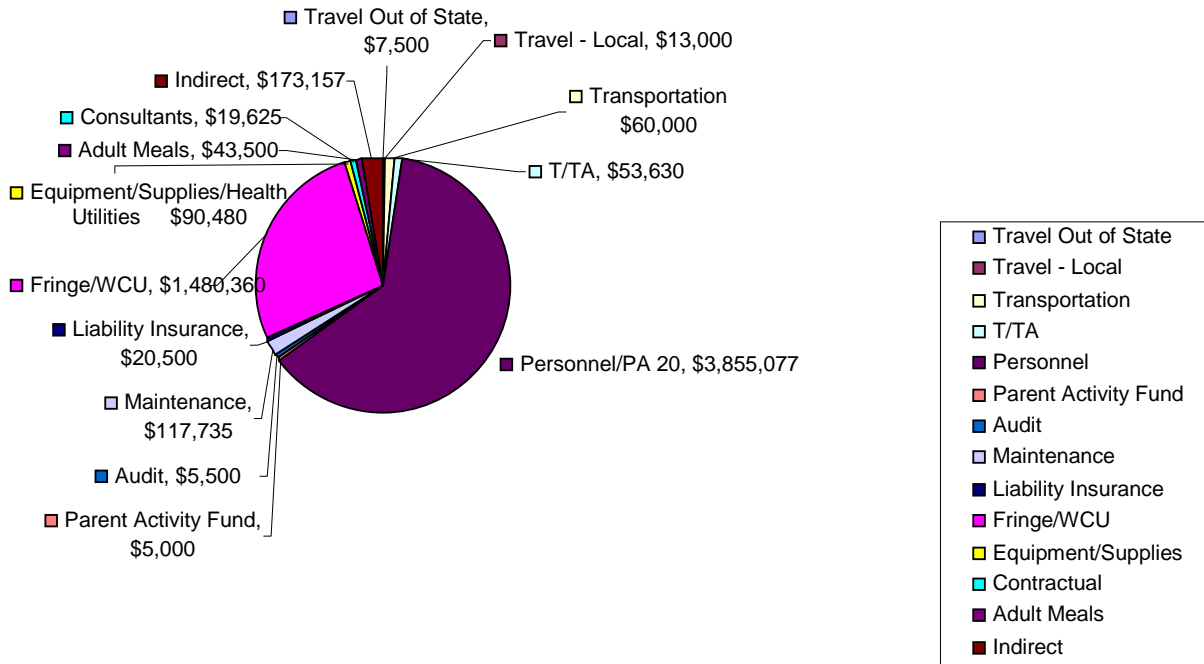
Budgetary Expenditures FY16

Budgetary expenditures FY '15:



This graph is an indicator of a 12-month grant cycle

Proposed Level Funded Budget FY17



This graph is an indicator of a 12-month grant cycle

Funded Enrollment: For the 2015-2016 program year, The Worcester Child Development Head Start Program served 615 children and families throughout the City of Worcester. The program also served 6 children through a state Income Eligible contract.

Thanks to a mild winter, the Worcester Child Development Head Start was successful in maintaining a high average daily attendance. Throughout the year, the program maintained its full enrollment and in some cases exceeded 100% of ACF funded enrollment. Approximately, 92% of children served were from income-eligible families.

Results of the Most Recent Financial Audit: The most recent financial audit was conducted by CliftonLarsonAllen LLP and there were no program findings.

Mental Health/Special Education: The program's Mental Health Services support the social and emotional development of children, families and the community. The Worcester Child Development Head Start Program mental health professionals and Health Services Advisory Council annually revise these services to expand its focus on three levels of information: prevention, identification/referral and treatment/support. The program recognizes the importance of providing immediate support to a child and family confronted with traumatic situations and has developed contingency plans to address these situations. Collaborations with the Department of Family, Medicine and Community Health at UMass Memorial Health Care, and Community Healthlink "Together for Kids Project" provide comprehensive early childhood mental health interventions and resources to support children, families and staff.

Percentage of Enrolled Children That Received Medical and Dental Exams: During the 2015-2016 program year, 100% of enrolled children received physical exams and 100% received dental exams.

Information about Family Engagement Activities: The Program offers a variety of family engagement opportunities and activities. These are designed to enhance families' unique skills and strengths and promote self-sufficiency. Newly developed Homework Activities, family meetings, support groups and workshops were held or shared throughout the year on a variety of topics based on family interest surveys. Other family engagement opportunities include classroom volunteering and participation in home visits, parent-teacher conferences, transitions, leadership opportunities, Know Your School Night, advocacy events, Policy Council, Advisory Councils and Head Start conferences.

Preparing Children for Kindergarten: The Worcester Child Development Head Start Program uses research-based curriculums that focus on individual domains of learning that include social-emotional development, approaches to learning, literacy, language development, math, science, creative arts, logic and reasoning, social studies, and physical health and development. Qualified teaching teams work with children individually and in small and large groups to support learning. Our classrooms are well equipped with materials and activities to stimulate learning in all developmental areas. Our program sites are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and are participating, self-assessed level 3 programs in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).

The program uses the Work Sampling System (WSS) of assessment three times throughout the year to document and assess children’s skills, knowledge, behavior and accomplishments across a wide variety of curriculum areas. This child assessment process allows teaching teams to monitor children’s continuous progress and individualize instruction. This year a two year comparison study of the Spring WSS data revealed that both our three and four year old children had made significant gains across all 7 WSS domains. The chart below reflects this comparison.

| Work Sampling Performance Domain | Age of Children Assessed | Percentages of Proficiency Spring 2015 | Percentages of Proficiency Spring 2016 | Percentage of Growth from 2015 to 2016 |
|--|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Physical Health and Development (Health Knowledge and Practice, Gross Motor and Fine Motor Skills) | 3 year olds | 88% | 88.9% | .9% |
| | 4 year olds | 94.3% | 96.48% | 2.18 |
| Social & Emotional Development (Social Relationships, Self-Concept & Self-Efficacy, Self-Regulation, Emotional & Behavioral Health) | 3 year olds | 81.95% | 87% | 5.05% |
| | 4 year olds | 85.93% | 90.18% | 4.25% |
| Approaches to Learning (Initiative and Curiosity, Persistence and Attentiveness, Cooperation) | 3 year olds | 72.9% | 79.7% | 6.8% |
| | 4 year olds | 87.4% | 87.88% | .48% |
| Logic and Reasoning (Reasoning and Problem Solving, Symbolic Representation) | 3 year olds | 72.1% | 77.6% | 5.5% |
| | 4 year olds | 86.15 | 91.23% | 5.08% |
| Language Development (Receptive Language, Expressive Language) | 3 year olds | 71.63 | 75.6% | 3.97% |
| | 4 year olds | 83.8% | 87.9% | 4.1% |
| Literacy Knowledge and Skills (Book Appreciation and Knowledge, Phonological Awareness, Alphabet Knowledge, Print Concepts and Conventions, Early Writing) | 3 year olds | 64% | 76.3% | 12.3% |
| | 4 year olds | 78.3% | 87.23% | 8.93% |
| Mathematics Knowledge and Skills (Number Concepts and Quantities, Number Relationships and Operations. Geometry and Spatial Sense, Patterns, Measurements and Comparisons) | 3 year olds | 60.6% | 62.5% | 1.9% |
| | 4 year olds | 67.1% | 80% | 12.9% |
| Science Knowledge and Skills (Scientific Skills and Method, Conceptual Knowledge of the Natural and Physical World) | 3 year olds | 64.5% | 78.3% | 13.8% |
| | 4 year olds | 69.68% | 89.7% | 20.02% |
| Creative Arts Expression (Music, Creative Movement and Dance, Art, Drama) | 3 year olds | 67.7% | 81.1% | 13.4% |
| | 4 year olds | 75.55% | 87.9% | 12.4% |
| Social Studies Knowledge and Skills (Self, Family and Community, People and the Environment) | 3 year olds | 61.7% | 68.9% | 7.2% |
| | 4 year olds | 69.63% | 79.9% | 10.27% |
| English Language Development (Receptive Language, Expressive language, Engagement in English Literacy Activities) | 3 year olds | 53% | 61.9% | 8.9% |
| | 4 year olds | 58.3% | 63.9% | 5.6% |

Our program has also been very busy developing the Worcester Child Development Head Start STEM Initiative. The Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) initiative has proven to be critical in the development of our children's foundational science and inquiry learning skills. Our program, through the guidance of Carlene Sherbourne Education Manager, and members from our truly invested STEM committee, created our first STEM room in our Mill Swan B site and is in the process of creating a second state of the art STEM room for children and families at our Greendale site that will support and sustain this foundation of inquiry through rich STEM related activities.

Part of our mission is to use these rooms for professional trainings for Head Start staff as well as early childhood educators throughout the community. Our hope is to design and facilitate trainings to strengthen STEM knowledge and classroom implementation of creative STEM related activities for educators so that young children will be gaining these powerful inquiry skills as they enter into kindergarten and beyond. Through hands-on, interactive training, the STEM rooms will be a powerful resource for Head Start children, families and staff, as well as other local community agencies.

In addition to our high quality curriculum and instruction, developmental hearing and vision screenings for all children are conducted within 45 days of the child's entry. Screening results are shared with teaching teams and families in order to plan activities and offer services that meet individual children's needs. If applicable, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children requiring additional support and services is developed in collaboration with the Worcester Public Schools Special Education Department, our programs Disabilities staff and families. Though our Response to Intervention (RTI) model, a small group approach to supporting children who fall within "at risk" categories, but are not eligible for Special Education services, our program works in a multi-tier approach, identifying children who are challenged with learning and behavioral needs. The RTI process begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all children. Once identified, struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning and social development.

In order to better prepare families for the transition to a kindergarten program, workshops are offered and families are encouraged to visit schools and attend the Kindergarten Open House held in June. The child's Preschool Progress Report including other pertinent information is forwarded directly to each child's new school with parental consent. Individual Education Plans (IEP) of those children who require special educational services upon entering Kindergarten are also sent to provide continuity of service delivery. The Worcester Child Development Head Start Program works in partnership with Worcester Public Schools to host Transition Evenings within public schools in which our Head Start children will be transitioning. All children receive a transition packet that contains valuable information for both the child and family.

Funded Enrollment

621 children and families that reside in the City of Worcester

Classrooms

35 Center Based Classrooms

Class size

1 teacher and 1 teacher assistant to 19 children

Teacher Credentials

5 teachers – Master’s Degree

31 teachers – Bachelor’s Degree

2 teacher assistants – Master’s Degree

8 teacher assistants – Bachelor’s Degree

26 teacher assistants – Associates Degrees

Family Demographics

Hispanic 54.5%

Black or African American 24%

White 19.5%

Asian 2%

NAEYC

National Association for the Education of Young Children

Each of The Worcester Child Development Head Start Program building is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) which sets high standards and criteria that define quality and recognize programs that have demonstrated the capacity to sustain the highest quality services.



The Head Start Approach to School Readiness

The Head Start Approach to School Readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. Historically, Head Start has led the early childhood field with a strong, clear and comprehensive focus on all aspects of healthy development, including physical, cognitive, social and emotional development, all of which are essential to children getting ready for school. Head Start programs are required to establish school readiness goals which are defined as "the expectations of children's status and progress across domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches to learning, physical health and well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development that will improve readiness for kindergarten goals" and that "appropriately

reflect the ages of children, birth to five, participating in the program” (45 CFR Chapter XIII Head Start Regulation Part 1307.2 and 1307.3 (b)(1)(i), as amended).

Head Start views school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life. For parents and families, school readiness means they are engaged in the long-term, lifelong success of their child.

The Worcester Child Development Head Start Program’s school readiness goals are aligned with the State’s early learning guidelines, the MA Curriculum Frameworks and the Worcester Public Schools High Quality Teaching and Learning Framework.

