



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

STEP Early Learning: Serving children and families in Lycoming and Clinton counties during the 2023-2024 program year. Early Learning programs are funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, PA Department of Human Services, PA Department of Education, and the Affordable Care Act.



STEP Head Start Program Vision:

to be a catalyst for inspiring positive change and fostering hope in children, family, and community.



STEP Head Start Program Mission:

to foster hope, growth, self-sufficiency, and social competence in children and their families through partnerships with parents and the community.

STEP Head Start is a part of STEP's Early Learning Pathway to Success



STEP's **mission** is to engage diverse individuals, families, and communities in the pursuit of social and economic success.

STEP Early Learning 2023-2024 RISK AND REACH

STEP Head Start is committed to helping children and families succeed. The program implements its vision through Head Start, Early Head Start, PA Pre-K Counts, and PA Family Support Program. STEP Head Start gives children the tools they need to succeed in school and in life, and families the tools they need to maximize their children's success as well as their own. Parent engagement is the cornerstone of STEP Head Start.

The following Risk and Reach information is from the Office of Child Development and Early Learning Program Risk and Reach Assessment, State Fiscal Year 2016-2017, published January 2019.

RISK

The overall Risk Level of Clinton and Lycoming counties is Moderate High:

- ▶ **Economic Risk: Clinton County**
35.3% of children under age five live in economically high-risk families (100% federal poverty level or below).
- ▶ **Economic Risk: Lycoming County**
26.8% of children under age five live in economically high-risk families (100% federal poverty level or below).
- ▶ **Academic Risk: Clinton County**
Based on the PA Statewide Reading Proficiency Assessment, 42.4% of children are below proficient reading in 3rd grade.
- ▶ **Academic Risk: Lycoming County**
Based on the PA Statewide Reading Proficiency Assessment, 27.8% of children are below proficient reading in 3rd grade.

REACH

The Reach of STEP Head Start:

- ▶ **29.9%** of eligible children under age five are served in Clinton County.
- ▶ **28.7%** of eligible children under age five are served in Lycoming County.



STEP Head Start

PROGRAM GOALS

- 1 Increase capacity to achieve results.
- 2 Ensure facilities are located in areas to provide optimal service delivery.
- 3 Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive environments.
- 4 Partnerships among providers of services to low-income people are achieved.
- 5 Ensure that Head Start facilities are prepared to address any emergency situation that may occur.
- 6 Head Start families will be strengthened.

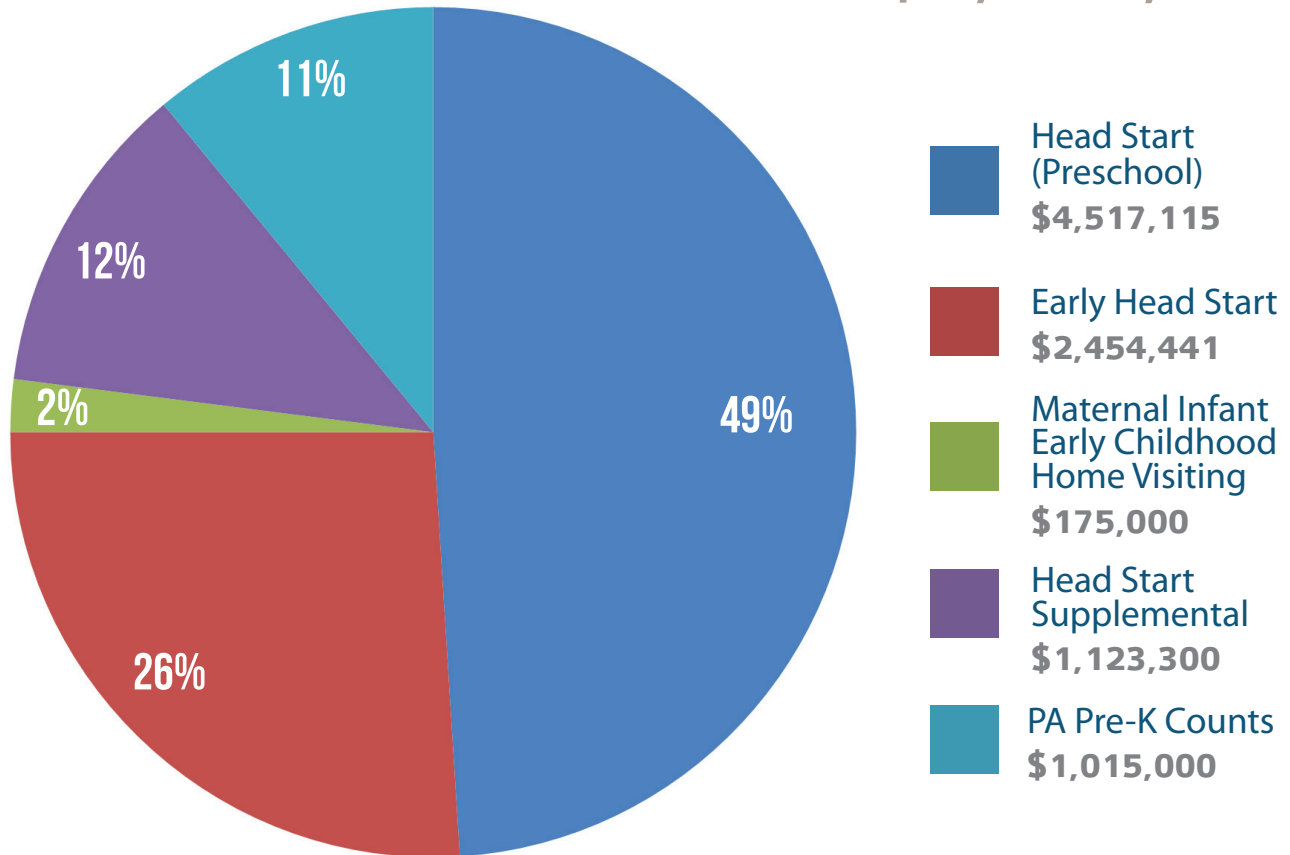
STEP Head Start

PHILOSOPHY

- 1 Children's educational achievement and growth are key to their success in life.
- 2 Children must be understood in the context of their family, community, and culture.
- 3 Children and their families must be well to do well.
- 4 Children's potential is best realized when they are healthy, well nourished, and nurtured, when their parents are active partners in their educational experiences, and when they are supported by their communities.
- 5 Parents are a child's first and most important teachers. We respect them and honor their love and care for their children.
- 6 Communities have a moral, ethical, and practical responsibility to help low-income children and families succeed.
- 7 Staff investment of time, energy, resources, care, and compassion fosters hope, growth, self-sufficiency, and social competence in children and their families.
- 8 Staff can inspire positive change. We are proud of our staff, of who they are as human beings, of their commitment to children, families, and the program, and the high quality of the work that they do.
- 9 Our program is enriched by our individual differences and the diversity of our children, families, staff, and communities.
- 10 Head Start is a sound investment in the future. We take seriously our responsibility as stewards of public funds.

STEP Early Learning 2023-2024 FISCAL EXPENDITURES

\$9,284,856



AUDIT REPORT

The March 11, 2024 Audit Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023 reported no findings.

The most recent Monitoring Review was an FA1 conducted on January 9-11, 2023. There were no deficiencies, areas of concern, or areas of noncompliance.

Unaudited Expenditures for Agency Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (7/1/2023-6/30/2024)

Expenditures	Head Start	Early	Maternal Infant	Head Start	PA Pre-K Counts
	(Preschool)	Head Start	Early Childhood Home Visitation	Supplemental	
Personnel - Wages	\$ 2,533,102	\$ 1,423,542	\$ 88,760	\$ 685,673	\$ 635,062
Personnel - Fringe Benefits and Occupancy	936,170	518,068	35,861	251,287	218,758
Communication	366,124	242,276	25,693	100,571	76,427
Supplies & Equipment	31,423	15,616	1,330	6,869	4,464
Transportation	111,325	36,138	1,009	29,717	45,246
Contract Services	95,421	34,120	4,031	4,098	5,719
Other	105,685	46,700	17,872	39,731	20,891
Total Expenditures	337,865	137,981	444	5,354	8,433
	\$ 4,517,115	\$ 2,454,441	\$ 175,000	\$ 1,123,300	\$ 1,015,000

PROGRAM IMPACTS

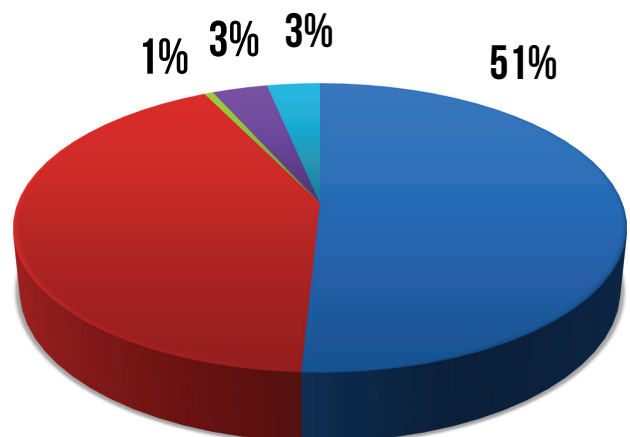
2023-2024 Federal and PA Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program

Preschool Head Start provides comprehensive child development, school readiness, and family support services to children three and four years old, including those with disabilities, and their families during the school year.

- ▶ **395** preschool Head Start children benefited from comprehensive, individualized child development services during the 2023-2024 program year.
- ▶ **210** enrolled children were 4–5 years old and will transition to kindergarten in the fall.
- ▶ **185** enrolled children were 3–4 years old and will return to Head Start.
- ▶ **100%** of Head Start children and their families received regular nutrition education.
- ▶ **363** Head Start families were supported in their roles as primary educators of their children and offered opportunities for participation, decision making, and personal growth.
- ▶ **93** children with disabilities (**24%** of enrollment) received inclusive education and treatment services in Head Start:
 - **29** children were diagnosed for the first time during the 2023-2024 Head Start program year.
 - **8** children were referred to mental health services, and **4** of those children received mental health services outside of Head Start.
- ▶ **100%** of Head Start children were linked with a source for ongoing, accessible medical and dental care:
 - **93%** of children were up to date on a schedule of age-appropriate preventive and primary health care.
 - **100%** of children have continuous accessible dental care.
 - **90%** of children completed a dental exam.
 - **100%** of children are up to date on immunizations.

Head Start - Enrollment by Eligibility

- Income below 100% FPL*
- Public Assistance
- Foster Child
- Temporary Living Situation **42%**
- Over income



* Federal Poverty Level

PROGRAM IMPACTS

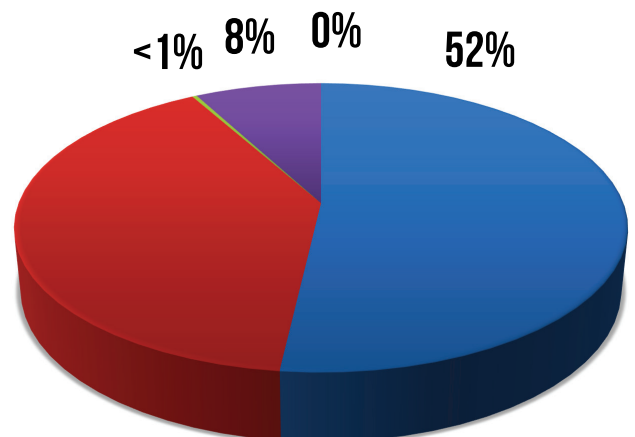
2023-2024 Early Head Start and Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting

Early Head Start provides early, continuous, and comprehensive year-round child development and family support services to pregnant woman, infants and toddlers, including those with disabilities, and their families.

- ▶ **185** infants and toddlers benefited from comprehensive, individualized child development services during the 2023-2024 program year.
- ▶ **100%** of Early Head Start children and their families received regular nutrition education.
- ▶ **143** Early Head Start families were supported in their roles as primary educators of their children and offered opportunities for participation, decision making, and personal growth.
- ▶ **33** children with disabilities (**18%** of enrollment) received inclusive education and treatment services:
 - **19** children were diagnosed prior to the 2023-2024 Early Head Start program year.
- ▶ **100%** of Early Head Start children were linked with a source for ongoing, accessible medical and dental care:
 - **75%** of children are up to date on a schedule of age-appropriate preventive and primary health care.
 - **100%** of children have continuous accessible dental care.
 - **96%** of children are up to date on immunizations.

Early Head Start - Enrollment by Eligibility

- Income below 100% FPL*
- Public Assistance
- Foster Child
- Temporary Living Situation
- Over income



* Federal Poverty Level

PROGRAM IMPACTS

2023-2024

PA Pre-K Counts

PA Pre-K Counts provides early learning and school readiness experiences to center-based classes of preschool children.

- ▶ **150** three- and four-year-old children benefited from a comprehensive, individualized educational program, including quality early learning experiences to foster social, emotional, intellectual, and physical growth.
- ▶ **150** Pre-K Counts families were supported in their roles as primary educators of their own children and offered opportunities for participation, decision making, and personal growth.
- ▶ **100%** of children are up to date on immunizations.
- ▶ **100%** of children received snack and lunch, meeting one-third of their daily nutritional requirement, and regular nutrition education.
- ▶ **13** children with disabilities (**9%** of enrollment) received inclusive education and early intervention services.

2023-2024

Volunteers

Most of our volunteer hours are contributed by parents who practiced parenting and other child development skills, requested and received training on a wide variety of subjects, and participated in program planning and decision making.

- ▶ **6,848** volunteer hours were contributed to the preschool programs by **552** volunteers, including Head Start and PA Pre-K Counts parents.
- ▶ **4,010** volunteer hours were contributed to the Early Head Start program by **135** volunteers, including Early Head Start parents.





SCHOOL READINESS

Goals



SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

Children will develop positive relationships with adults and peers, demonstrate self-regulation by managing emotions, internalize rules and routines, and display a sense of confidence and compliance.



PHYSICAL

Children will demonstrate an understanding of their environment by utilizing their perceptual motor and physical development skills.



LANGUAGE & LITERACY

Children will demonstrate literacy and language skills by expanding their vocabulary, developing phonological awareness, increasing knowledge of print, and improving emergent writing skills in English and their home language.



APPROACHES TO LEARNING

Children will develop persistence, solve problems, and show curiosity.



COGNITIVE & GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Children will develop reasoning, memory, problem solving, and thinking skills.

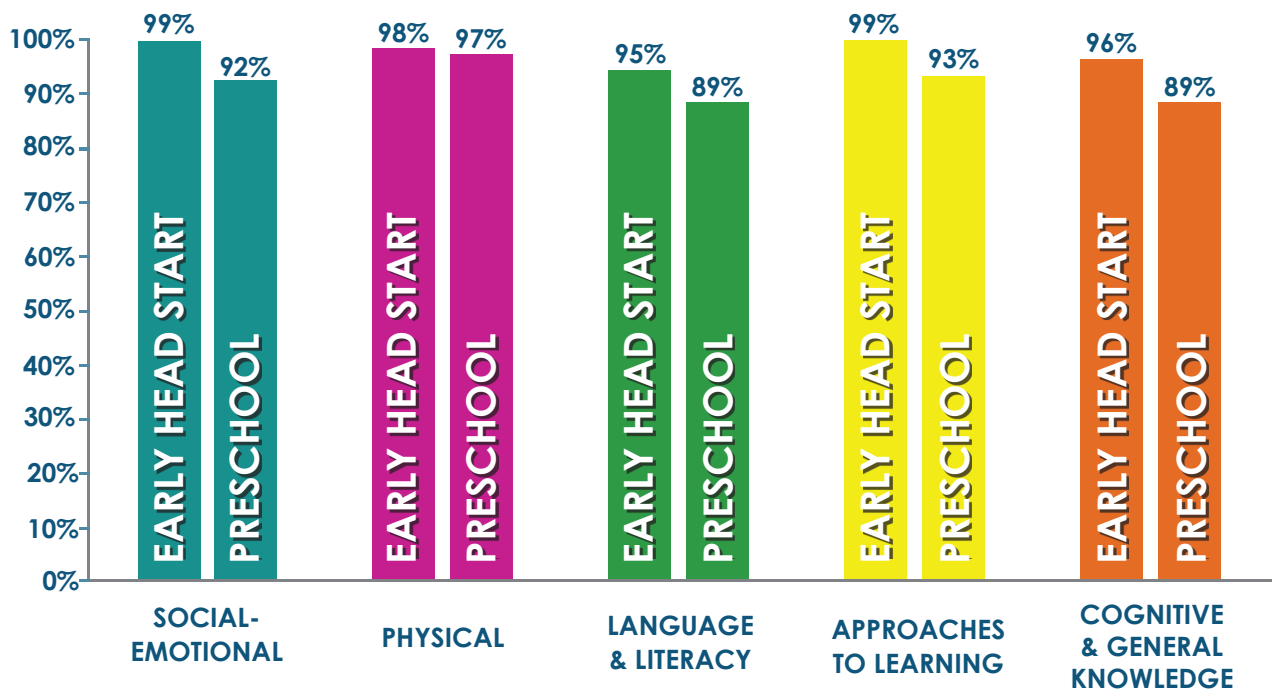
SCHOOL READINESS

2023-2024 Outcomes

Percentage of children birth through kindergarten entrance who met or exceeded School Readiness Goals

- ▶ Early Head Start (EHS): children birth through age 3
- ▶ Preschool includes Head Start and PA Pre-K Counts: children age 3 to kindergarten entrance

STEP HEAD START SCHOOL READINESS OUTCOMES 2023-2024



SPECIAL INITIATIVES AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

► PBIS Fall Kickoff

STEP Head Start classrooms in Lycoming and Clinton counties opened their doors to parents and caregivers of Head Start children for the 2023 Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) Fall Fest from October 4 through 11. The celebrations offered a hot meal and a wide variety of activities including pumpkin decorating, calm down bottles, play dough feeling faces, and a turtle technique craft. STEP's PBIS mascot, Phoebe, provided a dance party video for all children to watch and join in with a fun dance!

PBIS is being implemented agency-wide in all STEP Early Learning programs. The event engaged children and families in a variety of activities to promote social-emotional development based on three Program-Wide Expectations: Be Safe, Be Kind, and Be Responsible. PBIS promotes positive interactions and behavior in all settings. It provides a framework for parents and staff to work together to prevent and address challenging behavior.



► Early Head Start Family Fun Days

Every year STEP Early Head Start holds a Family Fun Day in each county of our service area for Home-Based and Center-Based families to engage with each other and Early Head Start staff.

Lycoming County's Family Fun Day was held on Friday, July 12, 2024 at the South Williamsport park complex. Families enjoyed making sensory bottles, water play, taking pictures with Phoebe, puffer fish painting, ice play, and a sand scavenger hunt.

STEP Early Head Start in Clinton County held their Family Fun Day on Friday, July 19, 2024 at the Clinton County Community Center in Lock Haven. Children and their families were greeted by Head Start's PBIS mascot, Phoebe, and had their photographs taken. Children and their families enjoyed making bubbles, sand play, face painting, spray tie dye, and finger painting.



► Flat Phoebe & Baby Bee

For the third year, STEP Head Start and Early Head Start implemented the Flat Phoebe & Baby Bee Project. Flat Phoebe was sent home with preschool age children, and a plush Baby Bee was sent out to each Early Head Start child.

The project is a fun reminder for children and their families to continue following our PBIS “Bee Rules” (Be Safe, Be Kind, and Be Responsible) outside of the classroom.

Families were encouraged to take a photo with their Phoebe anytime a child is caught being Safe, Kind, and Responsible at home!



► Vision Screenings

Did you know that 1 in 4 children have a vision issue that needs attention before entering kindergarten?

To address this need, STEP Head Start is proactive with vision screening! All children had their vision screened during the 2023-2024 program year, and **140** children were referred to a vision specialist for follow up. Here are our results:

56 children received glasses or are actively doing patch therapy.

31 children are being monitored for possible future vision problems.

35 children are awaiting their appointments.

5 children didn't qualify.

3 parents refused to follow up.

10 children left our program before their appointment dates.



► Week of the Young Child

STEP Head Start celebrated Week of the Young Child from April 6-12, 2024. The Week of the Young Child is an annual observance hosted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

STEP Head Start families and staff organized a fun-filled week celebrating early learning, young children, their teachers, families, and communities. The week's activities included Music Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Work Together Wednesday, Artsy Thursday, and Family Friday.



Music Monday

Through music, children develop math, language, and literacy skills - all while having fun and being active! STEP Head Start children had the opportunity to explore a variety of musical instruments including drums, guitar, keyboard, symbols, and the xylophone.



Tasty Tuesday

Cooking together connects math with literacy skills, science, and more. Head Start encourages healthy nutrition and fitness habits. Some of the tasty treats enjoyed by Head Start children were fruit salad, tacos, and frozen treats!



Work Together Wednesday

When children build together, they explore math and science concepts, and develop their social and early literacy skills. In one of our Head Start classrooms, children worked together to build a tower!



Artsy Thursday

Children develop creativity, social skills, and fine motor skills with open-ended art projects where they can make choices, use their imaginations, and create with their hands. Children were encouraged to get creative with coloring, painting, and tracing.



Family Friday

Engaging and celebrating families is at the heart of supporting our youngest learners. We applaud family members' role as young children's first and most important teachers. To celebrate Family Friday, families were invited to stay for fun activities.



Success Through Engagement and Partnership

The Mission of STEP, Inc. is to engage diverse individuals, families, and communities in the pursuit of social and economic success.

The Head Start program is a part of STEP's Early Learning Pathway to Success.



STEP does not discriminate in its enrollment, employment, or activities on the basis of age, sex, color, religion, ancestry, disability, or national origin.

For more information, to apply for enrollment, volunteer your time, or to make a contribution please contact STEP Head Start :

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