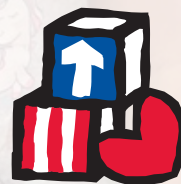


Providing
HIGH QUALITY
early childhood
education and
family services

SINCE
1965



ANNUAL REPORT **2022 - 2023**



LUZERNE COUNTY
HEAD START INC.

The **Head Start** **APPROACH**

www.lcheadstart.org

570-829-6231

800-551-5829

**SERVING PREGNANT WOMEN, CHILDREN BIRTH TO AGE FIVE, AND THEIR FAMILIES
IN LUZERNE AND WYOMING COUNTIES**



“As proven leaders in early childhood education and family development, Luzerne County Head Start is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for low-income children and their families in Luzerne and Wyoming Counties. Our knowledgeable and caring staff accomplish our mission by providing early care and education for pregnant women and children from birth to five-years-old, emphasizing healthy outcomes and school readiness, promoting family self-sufficiency, and partnering with individuals, school districts, and our community.”



from our **LEADERSHIP TEAM:**



Luzerne County Head Start, Inc. (LCHS) has been providing high quality, income-based early childhood education and comprehensive services for families using the Head Start Approach since the national program's inception back in 1965. This model focuses on the idea that each child is unique and can succeed, and that learning occurs within the context of relationships. It also emphasizes families as children's first and most important teachers and that children learn best when they are emotionally and physically safe and secure.

LCHS's early learning programs support children's growth from birth to age five through services that promote early learning and development, health, and family well-being. Education, nutrition, physical and mental health, family involvement, social services and referrals all help to meet the needs of young children and their families who are enrolled in our programs. Head Start staff actively engage parents, recognizing family participation throughout the program as key to strong child outcomes. The two-generational approach is committed to using a collaborative and individualized approach to empower families and, ultimately, to improve child, parent, and family outcomes.

We, as leaders of this organization, recognize the needs of our children are changing, and the support systems they need are greater than ever before. During the past program year, LCHS focused on several topics that impacted early learning including poverty, mental health, trauma, social-emotional learning, intercultural and inter-generational support. As we move forward, we will continue to educate our staff on these topics, so they can be better prepared to help serve our children and their families. Our leadership team also remains focused on the mental and physical health of our workforce. Early childhood educators help lay the foundation for education and discovery for the rest of a child's life. Their health and well-being are vital to the success of our young learners.

As we approach the new program year, our leadership team will continue to address the changing needs of the children and families that our agency serves. We remain focused on educating our staff to help recognize what children need to become successful learners and what their families need to help support them as they move to kindergarten and beyond.

Sincerely,



George Rable
President, Board of Directors

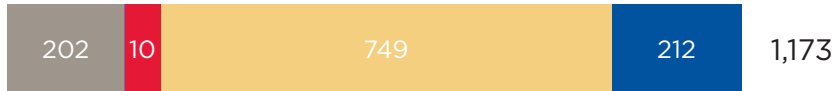


Lynn Evans Biga
Executive Director



children & families WE SERVE:

Funded Enrollment



- Early Head Start Infants, Toddlers and Pregnant Women
 - United Way Early Head Start Infants, Toddlers
 - Head Start Children*
 - Pre-K Counts Children*
- *includes 105 children in blended funded classrooms



Head Start/Pre-K Counts Sites **21**
Early Head Start Sites **5**



Head Start/Pre-K Counts Classrooms **52**



Number of Head Start Children Who Received Transportation **233**



Pregnant Women **2**



Number of Meals Served **167,590**

SCHOOL DISTRICTS SERVED

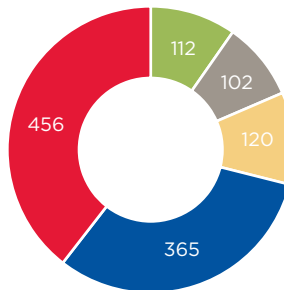
- Crestwood
- Dallas
- Greater Nanticoke Area
- Hanover Area
- Hazleton Area
- Lake-Lehman
- Pittston Area
- Tunkhannock Area
- Wilkes-Barre Area
- Wyoming Valley West
- Wyoming Area

DEMOGRAPHICS

(numbers represent those served in the Early Head Start and Head Start programs)

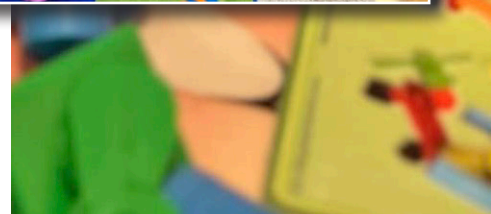
Total Number of Families **1051**

- Under 1
- 1-year-old
- 2-years-old
- 3-years-old
- 4-years-old

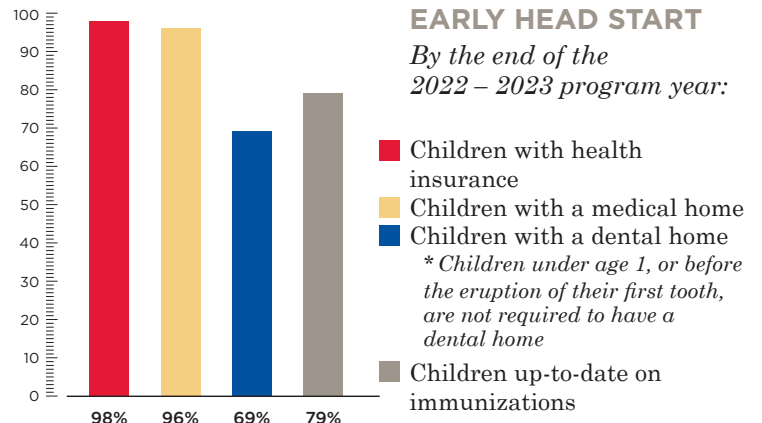
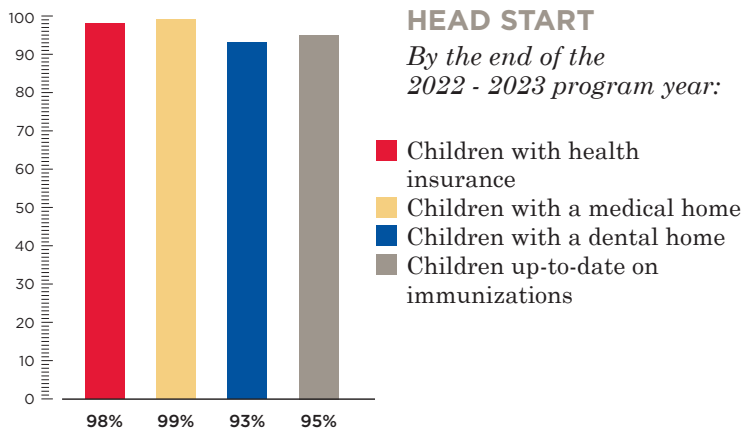


	21/22	22/23
Children Experiencing Homelessness	49	67
Foster Children	39	27
Families Receiving Public Assistance	200	549
Children with Diagnosed Disabilities	161	221
Single-Parent Families	629	613
Dual-Language Learners	389	450

*According to the most recent data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count Data Center in 2021 approximately 22% of children in Luzerne County and 17% of children in Wyoming County from birth to age five were living at or below 100% of the federal poverty level (FPL). Statewide, 18% of children from birth to age five were living at or below 100% of the FPL. Data also shows that in 2022-2023, approximately 38% of children ages 3-4 living in households that were at or below 300% of the FPL in Luzerne County had access to publicly funded, high-quality pre-k in PA, while only 24% of children in Wyoming County had access. Statewide, 43% of children ages 3-4 had access to high quality pre-k programs. High-quality pre-k programs include Pre-K Counts, Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program and Child Care Works enrollments in Keystone STARS 3 and 4; Head Start; and school district pre-k.



health & dental **OUTCOMES:**



SUPPORTING ORAL HEALTH AT HEAD START

The Benco Family Foundation supports Head Start's role in helping children develop positive oral health habits. As part of the Head Start Performance Standards, all children are encouraged to participate in daily classroom toothbrushing. During the 2022-2023 school year, the Benco Family Foundation donated 3,100 toothbrushes to the Head Start program. The Foundation has been taking part in this initiative for more than 20 years. This donation helps to offset the cost of supplies needed to successfully carry out oral health practices at Head Start.



HEAD START CHILDREN WHO RECEIVED LEAD SCREENINGS

558

APPROXIMATELY 66% OF ITS 2022-2023 ENROLLMENT

LCHS ADDRESSES ELEVATED LEAD LEVELS IN CHILDREN

LCHS in collaboration with Luzerne County Community College held a roundtable discussion that focused on elevated lead levels in young children. During the 2022-2023 program year, elevated lead levels were detected in 34 of 558 (6%) Head Start children who received the routine screening. Lead exposure at a young age can result in damage to the nervous system and brain, learning difficulties, behavior issues, and problems with impulse control, which can lead to juvenile and adult crime. The goal of the event was to bring awareness to this growing concern and to secure resources to help families whose children have elevated lead levels.



HEAD START ADOPTS NEW APPROACH TO SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Conscious Discipline is a school wide comprehensive program that incorporates social emotional learning with discipline and classroom management strategies. It helps adults to better understand how to respond and care for other children and their peers. Head Start implemented the Conscious Discipline program into its classrooms during the 2022-2023 program year. LCHS will continue the use of this social-emotional learning approach in the fall of 2023.



screening, assessment & child **OUTCOMES:**

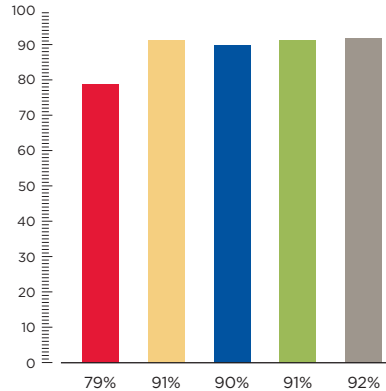
LCCHS is committed to supporting children and families with school readiness, self-sufficiency, and success in life. Our program provides children with comprehensive health, nutrition, and other family support services, as well as a developmentally appropriate early childhood education.

LCCHS uses Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) as the assessment tool for our Head Start program and Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP) as the assessment tool for our Early Head Start program. Both tools support the goals and objectives of the curriculums we use in our early learning programs.

EARLY HEAD START CHILDREN 0 TO 3-YEARS-OLD

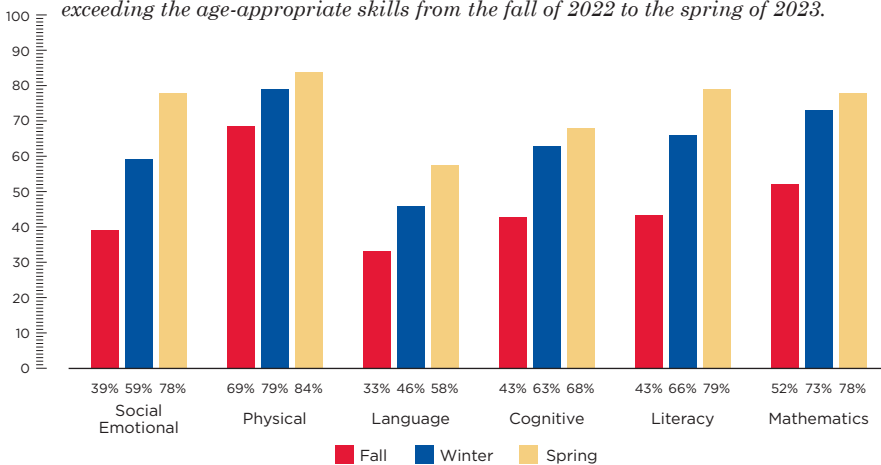
These graphs represent the gains demonstrated by Early Head Start children who were assessed for at least two terms (six months) during the 2022-2023 program year.

- Language and Literacy Skills – 79%
- Approaches to Learning – 91%
- Physical Development and Health – 90%
- Cognitive and General Knowledge – 91%
- Social and Emotional Development – 92%



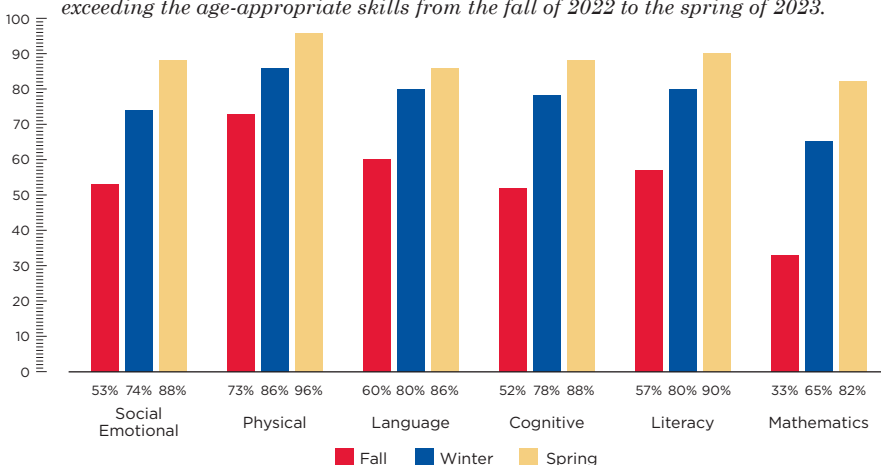
HEAD START/HSSAP CHILDREN 3-YEARS-OLD

These graphs represent the percentage of Head Start children meeting or exceeding the age-appropriate skills from the fall of 2022 to the spring of 2023.



HEAD START/HSSAP CHILDREN 4-YEARS-OLD

These graphs represent the percentage of Head Start children meeting or exceeding the age-appropriate skills from the fall of 2022 to the spring of 2023.



transition:

Preschool children make the transition into kindergarten more successfully when their schools and families prepare together, and when their preschool and kindergarten teachers connect. LCHS has a system in place to help children transition from one program to the next. This includes the transition from Early Head Start to Head Start and Head Start to kindergarten.

MOUs

MOUs: Luzerne County Head Start has 12 Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with school districts in the two counties we serve. These signed agreements recognize the importance of facilitating a process between school districts and LCHS, which allows children to successfully transfer from our program to kindergarten and beyond.

- Crestwood
- Dallas
- Greater Nanticoke Area
- Hanover Area
- Hazleton Area
- Lake-Lehman
- Northwest Area
- Pittston Area
- Tunkhannock Area
- Wilkes-Barre Area
- Wyoming Valley West
- Wyoming Area



- # of children who aged out of Early Head Start **83**
- # of children who transitioned from Early Head Start to Head Start **61**
- # of children who transitioned from Early Head Start to another child care program **15**
- # of children who did not enter another early childhood program **7**

SUMMER LEARNING EXPERIENCE RESUMES SERVICES:

Navient and LCHS once again partnered to offer Jump Start, a summer learning experience to help 30 three and four-year-old children get a 'head start' to their early childhood education experience. The children who participate in the program will attend Head Start programming in the fall. This was the first time the Jump Start program was offered to children since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.



parent, family & community **ENGAGEMENT:**



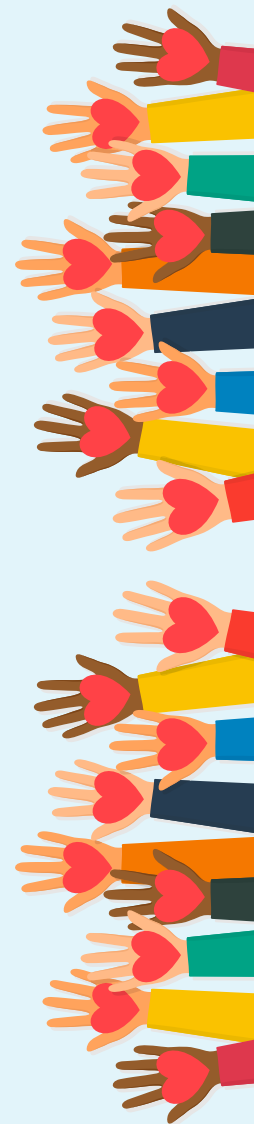
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT: THE CORNERSTONE OF HEAD START

For the first time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, LCHS's Parent Committee teams resumed their in-person meetings. Parent volunteers came up with ideas for their centers including a holiday clothing drive, team building exercises, painting activities, guest speakers, and more. LCHS also continued its use of the Positive Solutions for Families parent curriculum. The curriculum provides information to families on how to promote children's social and emotional skills, understand their problem behavior, and use positive approaches to help learn appropriate behaviors.

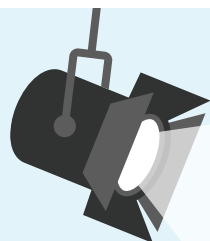


PARENT CAFÉS ENCOURAGE SUPPORT AMONG FAMILIES

LCHS expanded its Parent Café program during the 2022-2023 program year. The program is offered through the nonprofit organization Be Strong Families and promotes family leadership by creating an intimate safe place where parents can interact with each other and build positive outcomes. This year, 25 families participated in ten Parent Cafés that were held at LCHS's Beekman St. Center. Several new employees also took part in a training course which prepared them to implement place-based Parent Cafés. Their addition to the team will allow LCHS to expand the presentation of Parent Cafés to other regions in our service area.



parent, family & community **ENGAGEMENT:**



SPOTLIGHT ON NONPROFITS: CONNECTING WITH LEADERSHIP NORTHEAST

Leadership Northeast is a community-based leadership development program in NEPA whose mission is to empower leaders, strengthen the community, and drive change. During the 2022-2023 program year, three LCHS employees participated in Leadership Northeast's programs. Each program is designed to provide opportunities to explore an individual's potential and allow participants to engage in authentic relationships with other leaders in their community.



LCHS POLICY COUNCIL

LCHS believes a parent is a child's first and most important teacher. Families are encouraged to be part of Head Start & Early Head Start program planning. Policy Council members are elected each year and meet monthly. Those involved participate in meetings and provide feedback on LCHS services. Members can be currently enrolled parents, as well as community members.

2022-2023 Chairperson:

Devin Reese, *Head Start Parent*

FORK OVER LOVE FEEDS LCHS FAMILIES

LCHS partnered with Fork Over Love, a nonprofit that helps communities feed its neighbors. Fork Over Love was founded in 2021 to help local restaurants affected by the pandemic and to feed those in need of a hot meal. Four separate food distributions took place at LCHS's Wilkes-Barre and Hazleton sites. More than 400 meals provided by two local restaurants were handed out to families who were part of LCHS's programming. The next food distribution is scheduled to take place in the fall of 2023.



Head Start **HIGHLIGHTS** 2022-2023:



AGENCY HOLDS 58TH ANNUAL LUNCHEON CELEBRATION

LCCHS held its 58th annual anniversary celebration and alumni scholarship luncheon on May 15th at Mohegan Pennsylvania. Thirty-five individuals were recognized for milestone years of service at Head Start. Four community members also received the agency's Outstanding Community Partner award for their exemplary dedication

to the mission of Head Start. Additionally, 15 Head Start alumni who graduated from high school in June of 2023 received scholarship awards to use toward their post-secondary education.

Former Head Start student, Amber Grohowski, served as keynote speaker. Grohowski is a 2016 graduate from Greater Nanticoke Area High School who received her degree in neuroscience from Wilkes University. She is employed as a surgical neurophysiologist at Procirca's Center for Clinical Neurophysiology in Williamsport. The event was sponsored by The Benco Family Foundation.



FIFTEEN STUDENTS RECEIVE HEAD START ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

The Head Start Alumni Scholarship program was established in 1987 to honor the achievements of former Head Start students graduating from high school and continuing their education. This past spring, 15 students from six school districts in two counties received awards totaling \$22,100. Since 1987 scholarships totaling nearly \$335,000 have been awarded to students who began their educational journey at Head Start. The scholarship program is supported entirely by individuals, organizations, and businesses in the community.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HONORED WITH LEADERSHIP AWARD

Executive Director, Lynn Evans Biga, received LCCHS's third annual 'Bold Leadership Award' at the agency's 58th annual luncheon. The award is given to a staff member who demonstrates initiative, serves as an outstanding role model, and inspires others to work collaboratively and creatively, while serving as a champion for young children. Evans Biga was also recognized at the event for 45 years of service; 34 of those years where she has served as the organization's executive director.

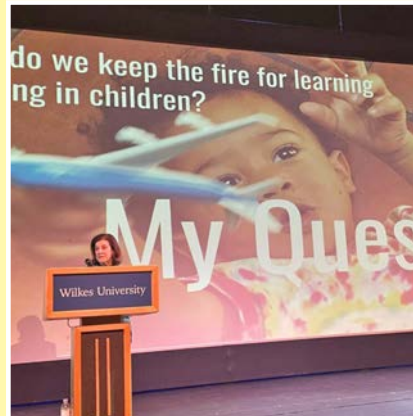


Head Start **HIGHLIGHTS** 2022-2023:



HEAD START RECOGNIZES 2023 OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The LCHS Outstanding Community Partner Award recognizes area businesses, organizations and individuals who have made significant contributions to the Head Start program. This year, LCHS recognized four individuals for their dedication to our agency. They included: Beth Kratz, Greater Nanticoke Area Family Center & Pre-K Counts; Marie Meade, Harveys Lake Community News; Trooper Anthony Petroski, Pennsylvania State Police, Hazleton and Darcie Schaffer, Volunteers in Medicine. The award recipients were recognized at LCHS's 58th annual luncheon.



LCHS WELCOMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR TO WILKES-BARRE

Ellen Galinsky, author of "Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs," was invited by LCHS in the spring of 2023 to speak at the Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts at Wilkes University. Galinsky's keynote presentation titled "Learning and Thriving: Questions and Lessons Learned" addressed the science behind early childhood learning and development. The event was held as a professional development opportunity for Head Start staff as well as aspiring early childhood education professionals at Wilkes University.



Head Start **AWARENESS:**

STATE LEADERS VISIT HEAD START PROGRAM

To help celebrate the life changing impact the Head Start program has made on young children and their families, LCHS invited several state leaders to spend time in our classrooms. State Senator, Marty Flynn, was welcomed by children at LCHS's Beekman St. Center in Wilkes-Barre. He read *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* and *Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See* to two classrooms of children. U.S. Senator, Robert P. Casey Jr., stopped by LCHS's Beekman St. Center in the fall of 2023. The purpose of this visit was to discuss the importance of early childhood education and the services Head Start provides to at-risk children and their families. In the spring of 2023, LCHS welcomed Congressman Matt Cartwright to its central office location. Leaders at LCHS discussed important issues with the Congressman like lead mitigation in young children, employee wages, and recruiting and retaining qualified staff.



HEAD START SEEKS COMMUNITY INPUT FOR PROGRAM PLANNING

During the spring of 2023, LCHS held a planning meeting to gain information from a variety of different perspectives. This multi-stakeholder meeting was an opportunity to hear the voices of various groups within LCHS's service area. It also served as an opportunity for these groups to hear each other. Invitees included Head Start parents, parent Policy Council, Board Members, transition advisory committee, community partners and LCHS staff. The purpose of this discussion was to secure information, opportunities, and collaborative processes to improve and expand upon the Head Start mission.



CELEBRATING THE HISTORY OF HEAD START

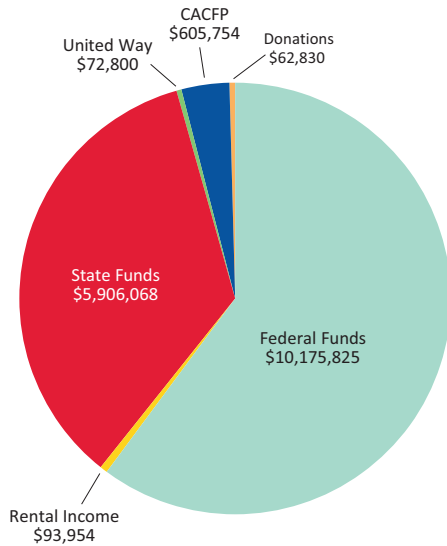
Head Start Awareness month is celebrated in October each year. Throughout the month, LCHS invited guest readers into its classroom to celebrate Head Start's role in promoting language and literacy among children. Members from LCHS's Board of Directors, Adopt-A-Classroom program and other community partners visited Head Start centers across Luzerne and Wyoming Counties. These individuals spent some time in the classrooms and shared their favorite stories with Head Start students.



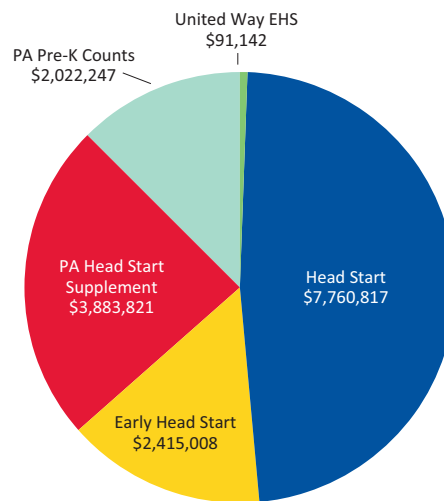
budget & FINANCIALS:

Results of the 2023 financial audit of Luzerne County Head Start, Inc. reported no findings or material weaknesses.

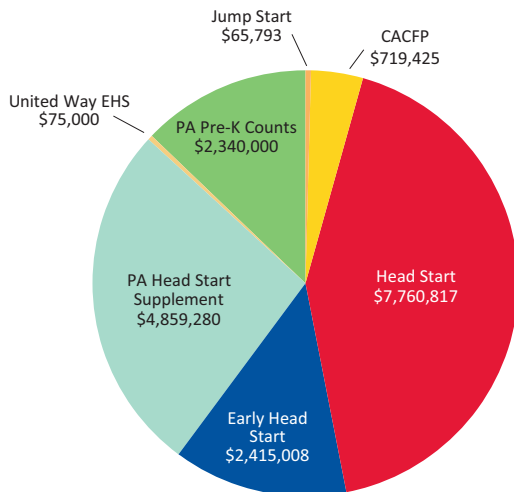
2022 FUNDING SOURCES



2022 EXPENSES BY PROGRAM



2023 PROJECTED BUDGET BY PROGRAM



ACCOUNTABILITY

Luzerne County Head Start, Inc.'s most recent monitoring report dated July 15, 2022, determined our program was out of compliance in one instance of health and safety. All other regulations met and exceeded the standards set forth by the Office of Head Start. A corrective action plan was developed and corrected this oversight.



ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- 2022 administrative costs were \$1,549,769 or 11.6% of total expenses
- LCHS has a minimum cost sharing of 20% of our federal funds awarded; in 2022 that share was \$2,759,858
- 2022 transportation costs were \$646,013 transporting 233 children



LCHS LEADERSHIP:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: George Rable – *Benco Dental*

Vice President: Stacey Kile – *Geisinger Health Plan*

Treasurer: Andrea Caladie – *Baker Tilly*

Secretary: Angela Ferri – *PNC Financial Services*

Ahmad Ali – *Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce*

Lars H. Anderson, Esquire – *Hourigan, Kluger & Quinn P.C.*

Cynthia Feng, MD, MPA – *Neurogene, Inc.*

Phil Gelso, Esquire – *Law Offices of Philip Gelso*

Carl F. Goeringer, Jr. – *Century 21 Smith Hourigan Group*

Dan Landesberg – *Geisinger, Northeast Region*

Francis Langan – *Keystone College*

Chris Langley – *Allied Services*

Mainet Mejia-Arroyo – *Community Representative*

Phyllis Mundy – *Former State Representative*

Terri Ooms – *The Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development*

Lisa Stashik – *Navient*

Mike Tomalis – *Fran Tomalis & Son, Inc.*

Gary Williams – *Community Representative*

EXECUTIVE STAFF

Lynn Evans Biga, *Executive Director*

Beth White, *Assistant Executive Director*

Maureen Zabolski, *Director of Finance*

Kelly Chamberlain, *Director of Education*

Dawn Smith, *Director of Operations*

Britany Shoemaker, *Early Head Start Director*



LCHS LEADERSHIP:

HEAD START BOARD PRESIDENT APPOINTED TO PA EARLY LEARNING INVESTMENT COMMISSION



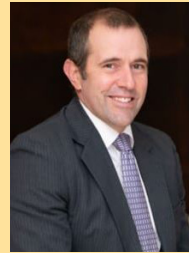
George Rable, who serves as President of the LCHS Board of Directors, was recently appointed by Pennsylvania's Governor to the Early Learning Investment Commission (ELIC). The ELIC is a partnership of business leaders dedicated to making the success of every child in the state a

top priority. Rable joins dozens of other influential leaders across the Commonwealth who work together to secure support for public investment in early learning. Rable is employed as Chief Culture and People Officer at Benco Dental in Pittston.

LCHS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS TO GOVERNING BOARD



Luzerne County Head Start, Inc. recently welcomed Philip Gelso, Esquire, and Chris Langley to its Board of Directors. Gelso is a criminal defense attorney at the Law Offices of Philip Gelso in Kingston. Langley serves as VP of Information Systems at Allied Services in Clarks Summit.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE: LORI NOCITO



LCHS would like to thank Lori Nocito, former long-time executive director of Leadership Northeast, for her years of service as a member of its Board of Directors. Nocito was appointed to the Board

back in 2004 and served as President from 2010-2011. She continued to be an active member until February of 2023. Thank you, Lori, for your nearly 20 years of dedication to the children and families at LCHS.





LUZERNE COUNTY HEAD START INC.

23 Beekman Street | Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702

2022-2023

annual report **TO THE COMMUNITY**

www.lcheadstart.org



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www.instagram.com/luzernecountyheadstart

Luzerne County Head Start, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer.



United Way
of Wyoming Valley



570-829-6231 • 800-551-5829

Visit www.lcheadstart.org to learn more about the comprehensive services we provide to children and their families.