EARLY HEAD START
ANNUAL REPORT

Serving eligible families in Middlesex County

ACES
EARLY HEAD START SERVICES
300 WASHINGTON STREET
MIDDLETOWN, CT 06457
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WHO WE ARE

OUR MISSION
At ACES Early Head Start, our mission is to foster a future where each individual thrives within resilient communities grounded in authentic connections and secure attachments. We aim to nurture enduring success through comprehensive education, health and family services.

OUR VISION
At ACES Early Head Start, we envision a future where equality and prosperity are the norms, where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Through education, health, and family services, we nurture individuals and family’s potential, creating a more equitable and just society.

OUR GOAL
The goal of this program is to promote the development of 60 infants/toddlers and pregnant persons and enable caregivers to fulfill their roles as parents and move toward self-sufficiency.

EARLY HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL
Jessica Stark, Policy Council Co-Chairperson
Jordan Paisley, Policy Council Co-Chairperson

ACES GOVERNING BOARD
Susan Riccio, Chair

Advocacy, Commitment, Excellence, Service.
Dedicated to enhancing and transforming lives through education, innovation, and leadership.
Greetings Middlesex County,

As we reflect on the accomplishments of the past fiscal year, I am pleased to share with you the highlights of ACES Early Head Start’s activities and achievements during 2023.

Despite the ongoing challenges, ACES Early Head Start maintained full enrollment throughout the year. Moreover, we exceeded the 10% mandate for enrolling children with disabilities (those whom are Part C eligible), underscoring our commitment to inclusive early childhood education.

I am proud to report that our financial stewardship remained exemplary, with the most recent ACES financial audit as of June 30, 2023, yielding no findings for Early Head Start. This achievement reflects our unwavering dedication to fiscal responsibility and transparency.

Despite facing a staffing shortage at the beginning of the 2023 program year, our team ensured no home visits were missed, thanks to the steadfast support of our Family Development Coordinator and Education and Disability Manager. Their dedication ensured uninterrupted support for our families. In October 2023, we welcomed a new Home Visitor/Family Advocate, further enhancing our community service. Her professionalism and dedication embody the values of ACES Early Head Start, and we are grateful to have her on our team.

I am delighted to highlight our FA2 (Focus Area 2) Federal Review that took place the week of July 24, 2023. This intense, week-long review scrutinized each component, including Education, Health, Mental Health, Family Service, ERSEA, and Fiscal. Staff and child files were meticulously reviewed; and parents, staff, community members, and governing bodies were interviewed. After a few months of waiting, we received our FA2 report, which showed no citations—a perfect outcome for any Early Head Start program.

Furthermore, for the fiscal year 2023, ACES Early Head Start successfully housed five families through the utilization of the ECHO (Early Childhood and Housing Opportunity) voucher program. ECHO, a collaborative effort between the Connecticut Department of Housing and the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, aims to address housing challenges faced by families.

After hearing concerns about transportation at last year's community brunch, I initiated a partnership with River Valley Transit. Originally intending to offer staff a “Transit Ride,” the collaboration has grown significantly. Now, not only does an individual attend ACES Early Head Start’s Policy Council, but I also serve on the River Valley Transit Advisory Committee. This partnership fosters direct connections between families and community partners. Additionally, we're developing opportunities for families to experience a “Transit Ride” and learn about the system firsthand.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our community partners, the ACES Governing Board, our Policy Council members, families, and staff for their tireless efforts in making 2023 another remarkable year for ACES Early Head Start. Together, we will continue to nurture children and families through quality early childhood education and support services.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to our mission.

Warm regards,

Heather M. Granja
Program Director
FISCAL YEAR 2023 EXPENDITURES

The EHS (Early Head Start) budget is separated into two categories:
1. OPERATIONS, which are costs related to the day-to-day management of the program, including staff salaries and costs to support services to families. This also includes Training & Technical Assistance, which are costs related to the training of EHS staff.
2. NON-FEDERAL SHARE, which are in-kind donations or services received from third parties or contributed by the agency during the program period. Total must equal 25% of federal award, unless a waiver is applied for an approved by the Regional Office.

This report reflects funded enrollment, funding sources and activities for ACES Middlesex County Early Head Start Partnership for the fiscal year January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023, in accordance with Head Start Act 644(a)(2).

Total Federal Share: $1,102,394
Total Non-Federal Share (In-Kind Contributions): $289,314 ($275,599 required)

### FEDERAL SHARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td>$389,860</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>$53,474</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>$99,320</td>
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<td>Contractual – Middlesex Health</td>
<td>$391,858</td>
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<td>Training &amp; Technical Assistance</td>
<td>$15,250</td>
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<td>Other – Building Maintenance</td>
<td>$105</td>
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<td>Other – Local Travel</td>
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<td>Other – Advertising</td>
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<td>Other – Consultants</td>
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<td>Other – Communication</td>
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<td>Other – Computer Software</td>
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<td>Other – Technology Support</td>
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<td>Other – Technology Leases</td>
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<td>Other – Translation Services</td>
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<td>Other – Dues &amp; Fees</td>
<td>$6,643</td>
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<td>Other – Parent Services</td>
<td>$3,408</td>
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**TOTAL EXPENDED** $1,102,394

### NON-FEDERAL SHARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACES Facilities &amp; Office Space</td>
<td>$158,332</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDSX Facilities &amp; Office Space</td>
<td>$35,935</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salaries &amp; Benefits (Consultants)</td>
<td>$26,161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers – Governance</td>
<td>$68,886</td>
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</table>

**TOTAL NON-FEDERAL SHARE** $289,314
WHO WE SERVED

All demographic data based upon 2022-2023 Program Information Report (PIR) unless otherwise noted.

PROGRAM OPTIONS:
- 60 Home Visiting slots available:
  - Children ages 0-3 years: 54
  - Expectant People: 6

2022-2023 SERVICE NUMBERS:
- 97 total children
- 90 total families
- 20 total expectant people

AVERAGE REPORTED MONTHLY ENROLLMENT: 100%

CHILD AGES
- Under 1 year: 23%
- 1 year old: 41%
- 2 years old: 31%
- 3 years old: 5%

ELIGIBILITY
- Income eligible: 15%
- Public Assistance: 47%
- Foster Care: 29%
- Homeless: 7%
- Over Need: 2%

ETHNICITY
- Hispanic or Latino origin: 35%
- Non-Hispanic or Non-Latino origin: 65%

LANGUAGE
- English: 80%
- Spanish: 7%
- Middle Eastern & South Asian Languages: 2%
- East Asian Languages: 8%
- European & Slavic Languages: 1%
- African Languages: 1%

RACE
- Asian: 19%
- Black/African American: 22%
- White: 52%
- Biracial/Multi-racial: 7%

CHILD HEALTH OUTCOMES

EHS is not interested only in the children enrolled in the program, but in the entire family. We ensure that families have quality information on good health habits and offer workshops and in-service training. Our staff assists families in obtaining the most up-to-date physicals and vaccinations, and link families to dental services in the community.

88% of enrolled children were up to date on a schedule of age-appropriate preventive and primary health care, and oral health care, according to the CT Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) schedule for well childcare.
ACES Early Head Start developed nine school readiness goals for the 2019-2020 program year to align with the five central domains of the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (2015):

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Language and Literacy
- Cognition
- Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development

During our 2019-2020 Winter cycle, we piloted the ChildPlus Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) assessment and made the full switch to using that assessment for the 2020-2021 program year. The DRDP is a child assessment for children birth through age five, developed in California as part of their technical support system. ChildPlus is offering this assessment as part of their information system, providing all child data in one system. This assessment better suits our needs and allows for more parent-friendly reports that are informative as well as easy to understand.

The growth data in this report reflects a subset of children with sufficient data through the 2021-2022 program year (September 1, 2022 – August 31, 2023). The DRDP assessment compares children to themselves with growth being determined by an increase in scoring bands. The bands are as follows: Responding Earlier, Responding Later, Exploring Earlier, Exploring Middle, Exploring Later, Building Earlier, Building Middle, Building Later & Integrating Earlier.

**APPROACHES TO LEARNING – SELF-REGULATION: GROWTH**
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: GROWTH

IDENTITY OF SELF IN RELATION TO OTHERS

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL UNDERSTANDING

RELATIONSHIPS & SOCIAL INTERACTIONS WITH FAMILIAR ADULTS

RELATIONSHIPS & SOCIAL INTERACTIONS WITH PEERS

UNDERSTANDING OF LANGUAGE (RECEPTIVE)

COMMUNICATION & USE OF LANGUAGE (EXPRESSIVE)

RECIPIROCAL COMMUNICATION & CONVERSATION

RESPONSIVENESS TO LANGUAGE

INTEREST IN LITERACY

LANGUAGE & LITERACY DEVELOPMENT: GROWTH
COGNITION, INCLUDING MATH AND SCIENCE: GROWTH

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT: GROWTH
PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

POLICY COUNCIL
➢ Members were elected from Early Head Start parents, as well as ACES Governing Board and community representatives
➢ Met regularly, approved hiring, and approved grant proposals
➢ Volunteer sub-committees met in the areas of Personnel and Self-Assessment
➢ Head Start Orientation and Governance training was provided to all interested parents and community members

PARENT COMMITTEE ALLIANCE
➢ In-Person, Middletown, CT
  o Held 8 meetings
  o Average attendance: 4 parents
  o 17 parents met during the Family Fun Day event in Middletown
➢ Grace Church
  o Held 2 meetings
  o Average attendance: 2 parents

Topics Addressed:
➢ Parent Observations
➢ Policy Council Updates
➢ Program Updates
➢ Health and Safety
➢ Parent Advocacy
➢ Community Events
➢ Parent Suggestions
➢ Meeting Their Needs

PARENT EDUCATION
Topics included: health and wellness, safety in the home and outdoors, promoting language acquisition, family goal setting, child development, importance of music and movement, dental health, healthy nutrition, reading to children and reading children’s cues.

FAMILY FUN DAY
➢ The annual event was held August 4, 2023 in Middletown at the EHS office on 300 Washington St.
➢ Families engaged in games and movement activities, as well as interacting with some of our community partners and their resources.

SOCIALIZATION PLAYGROUPS
The purpose of our socialization playgroups for infants and toddlers is to support the child’s development by strengthening the parent/child relationship. Socialization playgroups are designed to reinforce many of the activities and goals that are developed by the family and home visitor during their home visits. Parents are very hands-on during socialization playgroups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Activities</th>
<th># Events</th>
<th>Average # Parents</th>
<th>Average # Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACES Early Head Start Socialization</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Episcopal Church Socialization</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk &amp; Talk</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

• City of Middletown
• Columbus House
• Community Health Center, Inc.
• CT Birth to Three
• CT Dental Health Partnership
• CT Dept. of Children and Families
• CT Foodbank
• Diaper Bank of CT
• ECHO Program
• Faith Lutheran Church
• Grace Episcopal Church
• Hallie House
• Injury Free Kids
• Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS)

• LEARN Young Children and Families
• Liberty Bank
• Middlesex Central CT Chapter of the American
• Middletown Adult Education
• Middlesex Health
• Middletown Fire Department
• Middletown Police/PAL
• Middletown School Readiness Council
• Middlesex United Way
• River Valley Transit
• Russell Library
• Shoreline Soup Kitchens and Pantries
• The Connection, Inc.
• Women, Infants & Children (WIC)

BIRTH TO THREE PARTNERS

• ABC Intervention
• American School for the Deaf
• Beacon Services of Connecticut
• Creative Interventions
• Easter Seals of Greater Waterbury
• Jane Bisantz & Associates, LLC
• LEARN: Partners for Birth to Three
• Reachout, Inc.
• Rehabilitation Associates of CT, Inc.
• Sarah, Inc. – Kidsteps
• TheraCare

LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY PARTNERS

• Clinton Public Schools
• Cromwell Public Schools
• Middletown Public Schools
• Old Saybrook Public Schools
• Portland Public Schools
• Westbrook Public Schools